Three Notes on Dante and Horace[1]

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The present article has very limited ambitions: to provide supplementary documentation for a substantial chapter on Dante's debts to Horace that I have recently completed,[2] and which itself is part of a longstanding research project I have been pursuing on the relationship between the two poets.[3] The 'three notes' are little more than footnotes to the aforementioned study; however, because of their length, interconnections, and the range of issues each one raises, I felt that, if I had included them in the chapter, they would have overburdened and unbalanced the logic of its argument. The main thrust of the present notes, like that of all my work on Horace's impact on Dante, is to demonstrate that the Florentine's reception of the *venusinus* can only be understood in terms of the medieval *lectura Oratii* – something which, over the years, Dantists have largely failed to recognize.[4] It is a knowledge of the complex ways in which Horace was read, studied, and transmitted in the Middle Ages[5] that allows us, with due historical sensitivity, to judge and contextualize both the conventional and the unconventional roles which Dante had Horace play in his *oeuvre*. And Horace, in his guise of poet and poetic preceptor,[6] was vitally important for Dante, who accorded him a position of privilege in each of his major works (see Baranski, '*Magister satiricus*').

i. *In principio* (*Conv.* II, xiii, 10 and *D.V.E.* II, iv, 4)

Dante twice quotes passages from the *Ars poetica* which he indicates are taken from the *epistola*'s 'beginning':

> E queste due proprietadi hae la Gramatica: ché per la sua infinitade li raggi della ragione in essa non si terminano, in parte spezialmente delli vocabuli; e luce or di qua or di là, in tanto [in] quanto certi vocabuli, certe declinazioni, certe

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construzioni sono in uso che già non furono, e molte già
furono che ancor saranno: si come dice Orazio nel principio
della Poetria, quando dice: 'Molti vocabuli rinasceranno che già
caddero'.(*Conv.* II, xiii, 10)

and

Ante omnia ergo dicimus unumquenque debere materie pondus
propriis humeris coequare, ne forte humerorum nimio gravata
virtute in cenum cespitare necesse sit: hoc est quod Magister
noster Oratius precipit cum in principio Poetrie: 'Sumite
materiam' dicit. (*D.V.E.* II, iv, 4)

The two Horatian *auctoritates* which Dante was recalling are:

multa renascentur quae iam cecidere, cadentque
quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula [...] (*AP*, 70-71)

and

sumite materiam uestris, qui scribitis, aequam
uiribus, et uersate diu, quid ferre recusent,
quid ualeant umeri. [...] (*AP*, 38-40)

At first sight, the references to the *Ars poetica*'s *principium* raise a
number of problems. It may seem odd, especially to modern eyes, that
Dante should have considered passages forty and seventy lines into a
476 line poem as constituting its 'beginning'. More seriously, given
the lack of critical agreement regarding which of Horace's works the
poet may have read,[7] the vague allusions to the *Poetria*'s *principio*
might suggest his lack of familiarity with the epistle, especially given
the extremely wide circulation in the Middle Ages of quotations
excerpted from the *Ars poetica*. The 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas*, as
is well known, was especially popular; Dante himself repeated it four
times.[8] If considered 'medievally', however, the mention of the
Poetria's 'beginning' should not be judged as problematic. In fact, it
provides useful evidence of medieval thinking on textual organization
in general and on the *Ars poetica*'s *ordo* in particular, as well as a clue
to Dante's knowledge of Horace's poem and its exegesis.

It was a commonplace of medieval literary criticism to posit that 'Partes autem libri sunt principium, medium et finis'.[9] Quite sensibly, the actual dimension of each of these 'parts' was left vague, allowing *lectores* the freedom to partition a text as they saw fit (it is enough to think of the different ways in which Dante 'divided' his poems during the course of the *Vita nuova*, or of his allusion to 'lo Genesí dal principio' (*Inf.* XI, 107) as a means of referring to Genesis III, 17 and 19); in addition, the conventions of the *divisio textus* allowed for the further subdivision of each of the three principal sections.[10] In itself, therefore, Dante's phrase 'in the beginning of the *Poetria*' is a topical critical formula which cannot cast light either way on whether or not the poet was acquainted with the *Ars poetica*. Yet, when the phrase is combined with the 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas*, as occurs in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, it both acquires consequence and does appear to point to Dante's close knowledge of the *Poetria* – a fact that, in any case, is confirmed by a wealth of other evidence.[11]

The most basic way in which the *Ars poetica* was interpreted during Dante's lifetime was as a work that presented both the 'vices' and 'virtues' of poetic composition. Before the eleventh century, there was no special emphasis on this aspect of the poem;[12] subsequently, it became a standard notion: 'rogaverunt Pisones Horatium, ut certas poeticae artis daret praeceptiones, quas ipse, sicut Victorinus praecepit, dupliciter tradit, dicendo primum, quid vitandum, deinde quid tenendum sit'.[13] In addition, on reaching lines 38-41, the anonymous author of this assertion noted that

> *Sumite materiam.* hactenus dixit, quid vitandum sit; nunc incipit dicere, quid tenendum sit. quasi diceret: quia multi sic decipiuntur specie recti, ergo sumite et caetera. dat causam, quare sit sumenda materia aequa viribus cuiusque. (*Scholia Vindobonensia*, p. 4)

During the twelfth century, the general idea that Horace had first dealt with the negative features of writing before addressing the positive ones became transformed into a precise key for explaining the *Poetria*'s make-up. Given the poem's lack of an obviously defined structure, it is not surprising that medieval commentators and teachers, who read the *Ars* as a preceptive manual, should have wanted to impose on it a rigorous and coherent organization. Thus, an influential *accessus* to the *Ars poetica* explained that

construzioni sono in uso che già non furono, e molte già furono che ancor saranno: si come dice Orazio nel principio della Poetria, quando dice: 'Molti vocabuli rinasceranno che già caddero'.(*Conv*. II, xiii, 10)

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Cum ergo precepta det in omne genus scribendi, rectum
ordinem servat, prius removendo quae sunt vitanda, dehinc
docendo quae sunt facienda. Est autem Poetria quadripertita: in
prima parte removet tria vitia quae maxime scribentibus obesse
solent, videlicet eiusdem personae vel alicuius rei inequalitatem
et ineptam commutationem, inutilem digressionem, ut ubi:
Inceptis gravibus [14], incongruam stili variationem, ut ibi:
Maxima pars [24]; in secunda parte ostendit quae et qualis
materia cuique sit eligenda, quae scilicet par sit viribus suis, ut
ibi: *Sumite* [38]; in tercia parte quibus rethoricis coloribus
materiam electam poliat et exornet, ut ibi: *Tu quid ego* [153];
in quarta parte quibus iudicibus et correctoribus illam
committat emendandam, ut ibi: *Tu nichil invita* [385].[14]

The idea that lines 1-37 dealt with *vitia* was especially popular, not
least because the lines were ever more detailedly subdivided in order to
accommodate the analysis of a growing number of 'vices', as in the
'Materia' commentary's very successful six-part distribution: 'Sex
itaque sunt que dicit in carmine esse uitanda, non quod non sint et alia,
sed ista precipue'.[15] As a result, the association between poetic error
and the beginning of the *Poetria* became canonical. For instance,
when Geoffrey of Vinsauf discusses *vitia* in his *Documentum*, his
presentation is basically a commentary to the first thirty-seven lines
of the *Ars poetica*;[16] while both Conrad of Hirsau and Matthew of
Vendôme refer directly to the opening of Horace's poem when
speaking of 'vices':

in ipsa operis sui [the *Poetria*] fronte quadam comparatione
irrationabilis monstri vitiosa poemata detegens et dampnans
opus debito carens ordine [...] pro certo noveris, quod in
taxatiuncula brevis epistolae fabulam formae monstruosae
liminari paginae prefixae videris incurrere, si stilum tuum non
ordinaveris scribendi ratione[17]

and

Sunt etiam alia vitia, quae Oratius docet evitare in principio
Poeticae artis, quae, causa vitandae prolixitatis, quae noverca
est memoriae, ad preasens praetermittimus, et diligentiam
auditoris ad inquisitionem poeticae facultatis delegamus.[18]

Given the established stress on the intimate association between the *Ars poetica*'s *principium* and its opening thirty-seven lines, Dante's declaration that line 38, which traditionally marked the start of Horace's assessment of correct poetic composition, in fact belonged to the poem's 'beginning', would seem to imply that he was poorly versed in contemporary analysis of the epistle, and hence unfamiliar with the text itself. Such a perspective is, in fact, almost certainly erroneous. Line 38, as the point of transition between the *Poetria*'s two principal sections, had become associated in the commentary tradition with both parts of Horace's teaching, functioning as a kind of bridge between them. This is already apparent in the mid-to-late eleventh-century *Scholia Vindobonensia* – '*Sumite materiam.* hactenus dixit, quid vitandum sit; nunc incipit dicere, quid tenendum sit' – , and becomes even more explicit in the 'Materia' commentary:

> ¶ 38 SUMITE. Huc usque illa sex uitia et unde ipsa contingant ostendit, modo quod expediat quid facere debeamus subiungit. Continuatio: Dixi ex grauibus inceptis pannum assui, dixi ex imperfectione operis infelicitatem sequi. Ne igitur pannus assuatur, ne infelicitas illa sequatur, pro capacitate ingenii sumenda est materia. (p. 343)

Thus, it is interesting to note how the commentator, while clarifying *quid tenendum*, is still also insisting on *quid vitandum*. In this context, it is, therefore, not at all surprising that Dante should have linked 'Sumite materiam' to the *Ars poetica*'s 'beginning'. Indeed, a later commentator of the *Art of Poetry* actually had the first part end with line 38:

> Libri titylus hic est: 'Incipit liber Poetrie Oracii'. Diuiditur autem liber in quatuor partes, in quarum prima prohibet, in secunda precipit, in tercia promittit, in quarta punit. [...] Prima durat usque ad locum illu‹m› [38] 'Sumite materiam', secunda usque [347] 'sunt delicta tamen', tercia [453] 'ut mala quem scabies'; ibi quarta, et durat usque ad finem.[19]

Dante's inclusion of line 38 in the epistle's *principium* was quite acceptable and understandable as far as contemporary perceptions of the *Ars* were concerned; and, rather than point to ignorance, it reveals the

poet's clear sense of the exegetical tradition surrounding the *Poetria* and of the possibilities that this offered.

There are other explanations too as to why Dante may have wanted to present *Ars poetica* 38 as belonging to the epistle's opening. When he cited the *auctoritas* in the *De vulgari eloquentia* – as I shall discuss further in the following note – , Dante, as part of his strategy to define his work's key characteristics, was primarily intent on alluding to Horace's poetic doctrine in its entirety, rather than on offering specific practical advice. As a result of the totalizing connotations which, on account of its strategic position, the commentary tradition had assigned to 'Sumite materiam', the phrase served as a handy shorthand reference to the complete system of Horatian poetics. Thus, when Dante declared that 'hoc est quod Magister noster Oratius precipit cum in principio Poetrie: "Sumite materiam" dicit', he was not just employing a standard formula in order to align his own work of poetic instruction with the vocabulary and purview of the commentaries to the *Ars Poetica*, thereby dutifully acknowledging his debts to the tradition, but, and more significantly, he was also drawing equations and distinctions between the broad aims of his treatise and those of Horace's work.[20] As a result, *principium*'s meaning in the *De vulgari eloquentia* is twofold. First, it has the specific significance that it had acquired in the *Ars poetica* commentary tradition, namely, the 'first part of the *Poetria* dealing with *vitia*'. S econd, the term also embraces the looser commonplace sense of 'opening' – a meaning which had fallen into disuse as far as Horace's poem was concerned, but which Dante was once again reviving. By alluding to the epistle's opening, Dante was underscoring the standard proemial function of this part of the text – a feature which the *Ars poetica*'s exegetes, by concentrating so insistently on lines 1-37's relationship to the *vitia*, had suppressed, but which he, as a mark of his independence and his clearsighted understanding of the norms of contemporary literary criticism, was restoring. According to convention, the *prooemium* was supposed to evoke the overall logic and intent of a text,[21] precisely the elements which the richly connotative line 38 could be deemed to encapsulate, and which the poet was keen to highlight in order to help him clarify his own treatise's remit. In the *De vulgari eloquentia*, as the author of a groundbreaking vernacular *ars poetica*, Dante was concerned both to demonstrate his debts to Horace and the neo-Horatian critical tradition – the sole arbiters of correct poetic theorizing – and to show his autonomy from these. His manipulation

of the term *principium* offers a microcosmic insight into this complex operation.

As regards Dante's use in the *Convivio* of the phrase 'si come dice Orazio nel principio della Poetria', the complex values and implications that the almost identical syntagma has in the *De vulgari eloquentia* are of little relevance to the philosophical treatise. The *Convivio* does not have an intimate ideological relationship with Horace and the *Ars poetica*, and hence its application of *principio* is not circumscribed by Horatian exegesis. In addition, as far as the exegetical tradition was concerned, lines 70-71 did not have anything like the strategic and connotative significance of the 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas*: the lines had little bearing on the appreciation of the poem as a whole.[22] As I implied earlier, 'nel principio della Poetria', where *principio* stands for an 'opening section' of the *Ars poetica*, designated without any particular emphasis or further specification, is banally and unproblematically generic – something which is quite the opposite to what occurs to the word in the *De vulgari eloquentia*.

ii. *Inventio (D.V.E.* II, iv, 4)

When glossing Dante's quotation of line 38 of the *Ars poetica*, Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo, the leading modern scholar of the *De vulgari eloquentia*, writes:

> la citazione o parafrasi di questi versi era di regola, come cardine precettistico dell'*inventio*, nei trattatisti recenti, che potranno aver fornito mediazioni: Giovanni di Garlandia, *Poetria*, p. 887; Guido Fava, *Summa dict.*, II, lxxviii, p. 334; Goffredo di Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*, 1085-6 [...]; 1992-4 [...], e anche 293 sgg.; Brunetto, *Rett.*, p. 151. (p. 164)[23]

It is certainly true that John and Guido did introduce the *auctoritas* into their presentations of *inventio*:

> *De Inventione*. Sicut dicit Oratius in Poetria de inuencione materie et electione, prius debemus inuenire quam inuenta eligere, et prius eligere quam electa disponere, Dicit ergo:

Sumite materiam uestris, qui scribitis, equam
Viribus, et uersate diu quid ferre recusent,
Quid ualeant humeri; cui lecta potenter erit res,
Nec facundia deseret hunc, nec lucidus ordo.

Exposicio istorum uersuum patebit inferius. Prius igitur
tractemus de arte inueniendi quam de aliis partibus premissis.
De Arte Inueniendi et Quid Sit Inuencio. Inuenire est in
ignote rei noticiam ductu proprie rationis uenire. Et sicut dicit
Tullius in Secunda Rethorica: 'Inuencio est rerum uerarum et
veri similium excogitatio que causam probabilem reddant.'
[*Rhet. ad Her.* I, ii, 3]
De Speciebus. Sub inuencione species sunt quinque: vbi,
quid, quale, qualiter, ad quid.[24]

and

LXXVIII. Quomodo inveniatur, disponatur et ordinetur oratio.
Dictator sagax debet esse, diligens et discretus ad inveniendam
materiam[25] suo ingenio congruentem, iuxta illud Horatii
'Sumite materiam vestris qui scribitis equam'; et postquam
invenerit, circa dispositionem laboret ut ordinetur sub
verborum serie competenti, et postmodum ad colores procedat
rethoricos quibus depingat eandem ornamento circumposito,
quasi quodam pallio et florifero tegumento. (pp. 334-35)

On the other hand, however, it is not accurate to claim that Geoffrey
and Brunetto had recourse to Horace's words when they came to
discuss 'invention'. Geoffrey of Vinsauf undoubtedly did allude more
than once to *Ars poetica* 38-41 during the course of the *Poetria nova*:

Si quem jactatrix praesumptio durius inflet,
Hanc inflaturam verbis tam mollibus unge:
Praecurrant gressus oculi; circumspice mentem;
Et vires metire tuas. Si fortis es, aude
Grandia; si fragilis, humeris impone minora (292-96)

Immo suas, cum quo loqueris. Da pondera verbis
Aequa suis humeris et pro re verba loquaris. (1085-86)

[...] Est simili gustanda scientia lege,
Quae cibus et potus animae: sic nutriat illam,
Ut se praestet ei jocundam, non onerosam.
Scire sitis hanc rem totam: sit secta minutis
Particulis, pluresque simul ne sume, sed unam
Fer semel et partem minimam multoque minorem
Quam valeant humerique velint; erit ergo voluptas
Et nullum pondus in pondere. [...] (1987-94)

Yet, as is immediately obvious, none of the above three allusions to the *auctoritas* has anything to do with *inventio*, which Geoffrey briefly addressed in lines 43-76 of his *ars*. The first serves to embellish a model exercise demonstrating how to apostrophize a presumptious individual; the second is part of a wide-ranging discussion of the need for clarity (1061-93); while the third is deployed to offer advice on training the memory. Brunetto's supposed utilization of Horace's famous passage is even more problematic. The 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas* quite simply does not appear in the *Rettorica*. Specifically, there is no trace of it either in Brunetto's gloss on *invenzione*[26] or on page 151, which, as part of a broad presentation of 'quelle partite della diceria o d'una lettera dittata' (p. 148) deals with the subjects and stylistic choices open to the *dittatore*, as well as with the relationship between form and content. Not even this last question, which focuses on the treatment of *materia*, has any ties with *Ars poetica* 38-41:

Et dice 'convenevolemente aconcio a quella cosa' però che conviene al dittatore asettare le parole sue alla materia. Et ben potrebbe il dittatore dicere parole diritte et ornate, ma non varrebbero neente s'elle non fossero aconcie alla materia. (p. 151)

Thus, it does not seem quite correct to suggest that the 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas* 'era di regola, come cardine precettistico dell'*inventio*, nei trattatisti recenti'. In addition, it is not clear what Mengaldo precisely means by *inventio*, especially if the term is supposed to be applied to the *De vulgari eloquentia*, not least because Dante himself did not make use of it.[27] The problem is further compounded by the fact that, at the start of the fourteenth century, especially in the Horatian tradition – the tradition with which Dante's

treatise has strong and obvious ties – , the long-established Ciceronian idea of 'invention', namely, the mental search for and the (re-)discovery of plausible and persuasive arguments in support of a particular position,[28] had lost, as we shall very soon see, much of its precision and rigour.

Indeed, the questionable nature of Mengaldo's assertion regarding the close inter-relationship between *inventio* and *Ars poetica* 38-41 becomes even more apparent when a number of other matters, ranging from the status of 'invention' in the *artespoetriae* to the interpretation of lines 38-41 by the Horace commentators, is taken into consideration. John of Garland is unusual, when compared to most of the other writers of arts of poetry, quite simply because he employs the term *inventio*. He is further unique because he pays the concept considerable attention and attempts, not always successfully, to discuss 'invention' according to established criteria, as is evident from the emphasis he places on the 'species [...] quinque', namely, the *circumstantiae*.[29] Thus, Matthew of Vendôme neither mentions *inventio* nor directly dedicates any space to it;[30] and the same occurs in Gervais of Melkley and in Eberhard the German.[31] Geoffrey of Vinsauf, without using the term, does address, albeit somewhat idiosyncratically, matters relating to 'invention' in the opening of the *Poetria nova*,[32] and actually goes so far as to mention it explicitly at the end of his poem when, in discussing 'delivery', the fifth of the conventional main parts of rhetoric, he unexpectedly, though banally, introduces the other four:

> [...] Sic simul ergo
> Omnia concurrant, inventio commoda, sermo
> Continuus, series urbana, retentio firma. (2061-63)

Furthermore, in the *Documentum*, Geoffrey 'skips over invention and begins with disposition according to natural and artificial order'.[33]

It is clear that *inventio* was not a primary concern of the authors of the medieval arts of poetry. This is obvious not only if one considers the extremely rare overt references they made to it in their treatises, but also the loose, eclectic, and confused manner in which they presented elements which traditionally belonged to the sphere of 'invention'. Particularly striking are the ways in which they amplified *inventio*'s scope and integrated it with matters that were normally deemed to be separate from it. We have already seen John fusing

inventio with 'selection', 'disposition', 'elocution', etymology, and grammar; and we similarly find him and others, who also merge 'invention' with grammar and *elocutio*, equating it with exegesis.[34] *Inventio* in itself – I believe – was not a concern of the authors of the *poetriae* because it was not a significant issue in the Horatian tradition,[35] the major point of reference for their arts of poetry and for their quintessentially pragmatic type of instruction; and it was not an issue for readers of the *Ars poetica*, because the epistle was deemed to give concrete, rather than abstract, advice about the specifics of poetic composition. Geoffrey and his peers naturally discussed elements relating to 'invention', but they did this in terms which suited the structure, logic, and demands of their *poetriae* – and these terms, as is obvious from the ways in which they integrated *inventio* with *elocutio* or exegesis, were closely related to the practicalities of reading and writing. On the other hand, the notion of *inventio* was of greater interest to writers adhering more openly to a Ciceronian paradigm, where 'invention', as befitted its centrality for the great Latin rhetorician, continued to be accorded a position of importance and treated rather more canonically.[36] Given the prestigious standing of Horatian poetics and Ciceronian rhetoric, as well as the cross-contaminations between the two currents,[37] it is not surprising that, occasionally, as happens in John of Garland's *Parisianapoetria* and in Guido Faba's *Summa dictaminis*, a writer, when tackling *inventio materiae*, should have attempted to integrate elements relating to 'matter' taken from both traditions. Indeed, the association between 'invention' and the 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas*, rather than constituting a generally recognized cultural norm, appears to have been restricted to the *artes dictaminis*, and in particular to those which placed special stress on *inventio*.[38]

The *De vulgari eloquentia*, as Dante himself made quite clear – 'hoc est quod Magister noster Oratius precipit' – , is a neo-Horatian *ars poetriae* with very little interest in prose and none in letter writing,[39] which, in addition, excludes any overt references to Cicero and the Ciceronian tradition (see the next note). It is thus safe to assume that, in keeping with the Horatian tradition's general disregard for *inventio*, Dante's allusion to the 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas* has little or nothing to do with this part of rhetoric, especially as Horace's lines, as we have seen both in the present and in the previous note, were not normally interpreted as being relevant to 'invention'. If it is indeed the case that Dante was not referring to *inventio* in Book II chapter iv, the

problem remains of the *auctoritas*'s specific function in the *De vulgari eloquentia*.

As I have just stated, *inventio* did not play a notable role in the *Ars poetica* and its tradition; and the same can be said not simply of Book II chapter iv, but also of Dante's treatise as a whole. To put it simply, the poet not only did not use the term 'invention' – something which, as we have seen, was in itself unremarkable – , but also never raised the issue of the mental processes of selection upon which composition is predicated.[40] In fact, unlike some of the authors of the Latin arts of poetry, Dante was so little interested in *inventio* that, during the course of the *De vulgari eloquentia*, he did not even resort to lines 119-52 of the *Poetria*,[41] the lines which, by addressing *exsecutio materiae*, can be said to have touched, tangentially at least, on the topic. On the other hand, in keeping with the *artes poetriae*, the poet was deeply concerned with the concrete question of *materia* and its elaboration. However, once more distinguishing himself from writers such as Matthew of Vendôme and Geoffrey of Vinsauf, he did not treat *materia* according to precise and recognizable Horatian criteria.[42] The lack of specific links between Dante's presentation of *materia* and the Horatian tradition in no way undermines the *De vulgari eloquentia*'s Horatian credentials. Dante's intention was not so much to follow Horace on specific points of doctrine as to establish general correspondences between his treatise and the *Ars poetica*: hence their common marginalization of *inventio* and privileging of *materia*. In order to guarantee its 'authority', Dante was keen to show that, for all its novelty, his vernacular *poetria* nonetheless belonged to the tradition of Horatian poetics. At the same time, as the author of a work addressed to 'eos qui vulgariter versificantur' (*D.V.E.* II, iv, 2), he was also bent on highlighting his treatise's necessary independence from Latin literary criticism. It is at this general level that the 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas* primarily functions and acquires significance in the *De vulgari eloquentia*.

Chapter 4 of Book II plays a major role in determining the treatise's neo-Horatian character. It is the work's ideological centre – at least as regards its preceptive ambitions –, since it is here that, for the first time, the *De vulgari eloquentia* presents itself as the *poetria* for those hoping to achieve success as vernacular poets. Thus, in chapter 4, the precise point where he began to concentrate on providing practical advice on writing poetry in the *vulgaris* – 'modum cantionum, quem casu magis quam arte multi usurpare videntur,

enucleemus; et qui hucusque casualiter est assumptus, illius artis ergasterium reseremus' (II, iv, 1) –, Dante indicated both his debts to the normative tradition having its origins in Horace and his necessary independence from this. I have examined elsewhere the complex strategies which the poet employed to achieve these ends (see *'Magsiter satiricus'*; but see also the preceding note); here I am only concerned with the reverberations of the 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas*.

The quotation cannot be separated from its context, especially from Dante's declaration of Horace's 'magistracy' over him. Book II of the *De vulgari eloquentia* transforms the broad linguistic analysis of the 'illustrious vernacular' of Book I into a narrowly literary, specifically poetic, problem: 'primo secundum quod metricum est ipsum [latium vulgare illustre] carminemus' (II, i, 1). In chapter 1, Dante goes on to demonstrate which poets are 'most worthy' to employ the 'illustrious vernacular', which he defines as the supreme form of ornamentation ('cum nullum sit tam grandis exornationis quam vulgare illustre': II, i, 2); while, in chapters 2 and 3, he establishes, respectively, the subjects and the metrical form best suited to the 'so great vernacular' (II, iii, 1). Chapter 4, as I have stated, begins to offer practical advice on composing in the 'illustrious vernacular'. Before focusing on this chapter, it is important to appreciate the logic and implications of the poet's presentation at the beginning of Book II. As occurs in several of the *poetriae*, Dante is eliminating the need for *inventio* by fixing unambiguously not just the *materia* that poets need to treat, but also the form and 'ornamentation' in which they are to carry out this task. All that vernacular poets intending to write in the 'illustrious vernacular' have to do, therefore, is select from these pre-ordained general elements and ensure that they elaborate them according to the correct criteria as presented by Dante in the rest of Book II. And the same holds good for those poets who are not worthy of the 'illustrious vernacular', but who wish to use one of the less distinguished *vulgaria*, on which Dante will provide instruction elsewhere in the treatise (II, iii, 2; iv, 6). According to Dante, there is thus no need for poets to go through the traditional planning stages of *inventio* and *dispositio*.[43] In addition, they can find examples of successful writing primarily in the works of the *auctores* (II, iv, 3), though they can also learn from other vernacular poets (II, ii, 8). As we saw occurred elsewhere in the Horatian tradition, in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, too, *imitatio* takes over the space formerly occupied by *inventio*.

Given the ramifications of the opening of Book II, the 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas*, which marks the start of the specifically preceptive part of the Book, has both a particular and a general function:

> Ante omnia ergo dicimus unumquenque debere materie pondus propriis humeris coequare, ne forte humerorum nimio gravata virtute in cenum cespitare necesse sit: hoc est quod Magister noster Oratius precipit cum in principio Poetrie: 'Sumite materiam' dicit. (*D.V.E.* II, iv, 4)

Taken narrowly, all that Dante is saying is that poets need to be careful to choose, from the pre-established concrete alternatives available to them, a *materia*, and hence a language and a metre, suited to their abilities. Paragraphs 5 and 6, which introduce and distinguish between the three *stili*, offer further practical advice on this process of selection. The injunction of paragraph 4 thus conforms to the emphasis on the need for discrimination which dominates the first four chapters of the Book. It is also in keeping with the restricted readings of line 38 offered by the commentators to the *Ars poetica*:

> Id est: Antequam incipias scribere, uide, si materiam, quam adgrediaris, possis inplere. [Praecipit poetis, ut eam materiam eligant, quae uires (sensuum) eorum non excedat.][44]

> Hoc autem praecepto (38): *sumite materiam uestris qui scribitis aequam* praecipit nunc eis, qui sunt poetae, ut eam materiam eligant, (in) qua possint placere. (Porphyrion II, 651)

> Idest antequam incipias scribere, vide, si materiam, quam adgrediaris, possis inplere (Pseudo-Acro II, 315)

> 38) SUMITE MATERIAM] Praecipit poetis ut eam materiam eligant quae vires sensuum illorum non excedat. (Botschuyver I, 425)

> 38) SUMITE MATERIAM] Quasi dicant illi: quandoquidem non licet nobis materiam variare vel simplicitatem sermonis mutare, quid ergo censes? – Ad hoc: 'sumite materiam'. Ideo dico sumite talem et versate, quia hunc, cui idest a quo res idest

materia erit electa potenter, vel potenter obtinebit hoc, quod nec facundia et cetera. (Botschuyver, IV, 459)

¶ 38 SUMITE MATERIAM [...] vos QUI scribere vultis, SUMITE MATERIAM AEQUAM VIRIBUS ingenii vestri ET VERSATE et cetera. tractum est ab oniferis, qui diu solent versare onus, utrum possint ferre an non, probantes. et ex versata materia quis fructus proveniat, dicit: CUI RES, id est materia, ERIT LECTA POTENTER et pro suo posse (*Anonymus Turicensis*, p. 249)

¶ 38 SUMITE [...] Ne igitur pannus assuatur, ne infelicitas illa sequatur, pro capacitate ingenii sumenda est materia. [...]
¶ 40 CUI LECTA. Ad materiam pro possibilitate ingenii sumendam inuitauit. Modo uero quis fructus inde sequatur subiungit, scilicet et scientia ad materiam ordinandam et copia uerborum ad ipsam explanandam. [...]
¶ 42 ORDINIS. Primum de ordine, deinde exequitur de facundia. ('Materia', p. 343)[45]

However, as we saw in the previous note, the Middle Ages also interpreted the 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas* in a wide-ranging manner. Horace's lines were considered as microcosmically alluding to the whole of the *Poetria*'s teaching. Thus, at the very moment when Dante declared his debts to his *Magister*, he also indicated the particular source of his indebtedness, the doctrines of the *Ars poetica*, thereby making explicit the neo-Horatian character of his treatise. Whether we interpret the *auctoritas* narrowly or broadly, we can be confident that, when he cited it, Dante was not intending to refer to *inventio*. Line 38's conventional exegesis, the tradition of the *poetriae*, and the logic of the *De vulgari eloquentia* all militate against this possibility; as does the far from inconsequential fact, explored in the final note, that Dante deliberately ensured that his treatise could not be read as a Ciceronian text.

iii. Alios qui usi sunt altissimas prosas (*D.V.E.* II, vi, 7)

Scholars have long asked themselves why Dante should have made no reference to Cicero or his writings in his work on 'vernacular

eloquence';[46] a work, which at least two fourteenth-century readers felt justified in designating *Rectorica Dantis*.[47] What makes the poet's silence all the more noticeable is the fact that, in Book II chapter vi of the *De vulgari eloquentia*, he had the perfect opportunity to evoke Tully's name:

> Nec mireris, lector, de tot reductis autoribus ad memoriam: non enim hanc quam suppremam vocamus constructionem nisi per huiusmodi exempla possumus indicare. Et fortassis utilissimum foret ad illam habituandam regulatos vidisse poetas, Virgilium videlicet, Ovidium Metamorfoseos, Statium atque Lucanum, nec non alios qui usi sunt altissimas prosas, ut Titum Livium, Plinium, Frontinum, Paulum Orosium, et multos alios quos amica sollicitudo nos visitare invitat.[48]

Astonishingly, not only did Dante, in conflict with contemporary popular opinion,[49] not deem Cicero a prose *auctor* worthy of imitation, but he further undermined the great orator's cultural standing by replacing him as a canonical model of style with four writers who were not normally presented in this exalted guise[50] – a fact made even more prominent by the undisputed *auctoritas* of the four 'tragic' poets with whom they are symmetrically but inappropriately yoked. In addition, while it is almost certain that the poet was familiar with several of Cicero's works,[51] it is equally likely that, as far as his mysterious quartet was concerned, he had direct knowledge solely of Orosius's writings.[52] Dante's decision to fashion a highly idiosyncratic canon of 'authoritative' prose stylists was obviously calculated and provocative.

More provocative and problematic than Cicero's exclusion as a model of style is the fact that, in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante not only avoided openly acknowledging Tully's rhetorical 'authoritativeness', but also did not include a single intertextual element which can unambiguously and exclusively be returned to the Latin rhetorician.[53] This approach was the precise opposite of what the authors of the *artes dictaminis* and of the *artes poetriae* did almost as a matter of course.[54] Despite the quite calculated manner in which the poet marginalized Cicero, it is a cliché of much Dante criticism to assert that both the *De inventione* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* are key sources for the treatise.[55] I would suggest that there are two reasons for this misunderstanding. First, given Cicero's impact on

medieval and Renaissance rhetorical thought, it must have seemed 'obvious' to generations of scholars that he could not but also have exerted a notable influence on the *De vulgari eloquentia*. Second, Dantists have failed to recognize the implications of the fact that the passages that have been presented as Ciceronian echoes in the treatise were, as a norm, widely circulating contemporary rhetorical commonplaces. There is little doubt, therefore, that Dante was firmly intent on maintaining a clear separation between the *De vulgari eloquentia* and the Ciceronian tradition. Once more there are two principal reasons for this state of affairs. First, it is part of Dante's broad strategy to underscore the 'uniqueness' of his work. Unlike other medieval works of poetic and rhetorical instruction, the *De vulgari eloquentia* distinguishes itself by not drawing on Cicero; and it has an excellent motive for doing this. I suspect that Dante excluded the Latin orator because, in the Middle Ages, his teaching on the use of language was primarily associated with rhetoric – 'Rettorica èe scienzia […] la quale insegna dire, e di questa tratta Tulio' (Brunetto Latini, *La Rettorica*, p. 3) – and with prose composition, specifically the *ars dictaminis*. Cicero was thus not strictly appropriate as an *auctoritas* for someone like Dante aiming to offer advice on writing poetry. Indeed, I believe that, by not making recourse to Cicero in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante was, *inter alia*, passing a negative judgement on the authors of the *artes poetriae* for having failed to appreciate that Tully was an 'unsuitable' mentor as regards matters relating to poetry. The *De vulgari eloquentia*, on the other hand, and this constitutes the second reason for his having barred Cicero from its pages, is entirely and properly focused on offering instruction *de arte poetica*. As a result, given Horace's status as 'artis poeticae optimus praeceptor' (*Anonymus Turicensis*, Accessus, p. 246), only the great *venusinus* could serve as Dante's 'Teacher' in the treatise: 'hoc est quod Magister noster precipit' (*D.V.E.* II, iv, 4).

Looked at narrowly, from the perspective of Dante's rigorous definition both of himself as a 'poetic preceptor' in the Horatian mould, and, of the *De vulgari eloquentia* as a work which, in line with the *Poetria*, 'dare praecepta in artem poeticam intendit' (*Anonymus Turicensis*, Accessus, p. 246), the reason why he excluded Cicero from his list of eminent prose writers, and instead included Livy, Pliny, Frontinus, Orosius, is not really all that 'surprising'.[56] Cicero – as we have seen – could have no place in his poetic treatise; and Dante underlined this fact by fashioning a most unusual grouping of

prose writers, whose very peculiarity could not but highlight Cicero's absence, given the Latin orator's conventional standing as an established model of prose style. The four authors, therefore, are not so much important in themselves, but as a means – and, at first sight, this can be deemed 'surprising' – to encourage readers to meditate on the implications of the absence of Cicero. Such a deliberately striking strategy, however, is typical of the metaliterary Dante who, time and again, in order to clarify the specificities of one of his works, performed textual and cultural operations of eye-catching and thought-provoking audacity (see Baranski, *'Sole nuovo, luce nuova'*).

Yet, what remains 'riskier' to 'hypothesize' are the reasons why the poet selected the particular four authors that he did, as well as the implications, both specific and general, of his choice. What is most unlikely, given the care with which Dante normally constructed his arguments, is that his choice was entirely arbitrary. In addition, if the poet had picked the four names at random, the danger would have existed that they would not have functioned effectively as stimuli for reflecting on the reasons for Cicero's exclusion. For instance, if Dante had mentioned two such recognized stylists as Sallust and Seneca, the extent to which Tully's absence would have been noticed is questionable. Furthermore, Dante needed to think about the intellectual rigour and coherence of the *De vulgari eloquentia*: the names listed had to make sense in relation to the specific ostensible argument that he was presenting. In Book II chapter vi, Dante was offering examples of writers who had employed the *suprema constructio*. It seems to have been his aim to demonstrate that this type of 'construction' was the common property not just of Latin and vernacular poets, but also of writers of prose, hence the allusion to those 'qui usi sunt altissimas prosas'. Since the 'supreme construction' is a key feature of the 'tragic style' (*D.V.E.* II, vi, 1-2), what unites everyone using it, as is confirmed by the identities of the four *regulati poetae*, is their status as 'tragedians'. It thus seems not unreasonable to hypothesize that, given the traditional association between 'tragedy' and the writing of history,[57] Dante selected Livy, Orosius, and Frontinus, all of whom were firmly established as historians of note,[58] in order to confirm the 'tragic' character of the *suprema constructio*. This explanation, however, does not appear to cast light on the reasons for Pliny's presence in the list. Even if he remained largely unread, the Middle Ages did have a sense of Pliny as the author of the *Naturalis Historia*.[59], since Dante only mentions

Pliny this one time in the whole of his *oeuvre*, it is extremely difficult to surmise what actual information the poet may have had about him. It is nonetheless safe to assume, in the light of Dante's dearth of references to the Latin writer, that this must have been extremely rudimentary. In these circumstances, I should like to 'risk the hypothesis' that Dante's source on Pliny, instead of referring to the *Naturalis Historia*, simply labelled it *Historia* and/or described the encyclopaedist as *historicus*; or even, and perhaps most likely, as we have just read in the *Policraticus* (see note 58), Dante found Pliny mentioned in a context which presented the encyclopaedist as a historian. Given the company which Dante had Pliny keep, such conjectures – at least to me – do not seem entirely implausible. In particular, they have the merit both of ensuring the coherence of Dante's discussion of the 'supreme construction', and of guaranteeing the cohesion of his system of 'tragic' *auctoritates*. In fact, on further reflection, given Dante's likely knowledge of John's political treatise, I would go so far as to hazard the view that *Policraticus*, VI, xi-xii is the primary source behind the 'most lofty prose writers' of *De vulgari eloquentia*, II, vi, 7.

With Pliny, we seem to have moved a very long way from Horace. However, it was only by appreciating Horace's role in the *De vulgari eloquentia* that Dante's treatment of Cicero, and, by extension, the logic of his presentation of the four prose writers, could become better apparent. Even though my discussion in this article has focused on relatively minor details, these have nevertheless helped to illuminate the closeness of Dante's ties to Horace, particularly in the *De vulgari eloquentia*. Most significantly, all three notes, and especially the latter two, have highlighted the considerable care which Dante took to define his treatise as a work overwhelmingly, if not exclusively, dedicated to poetics. This is something which, in general, I am not convinced that Dante scholarship on the *De vulgari eloquentia* has properly appreciated, not least because, unlike the poet and his culture, it has tended to blur the distinction between rhetoric and poetics,[60] namely, between Cicero and Horace – between, as far as Dante's treatise is concerned, a 'non-person' and a *Magister*.[61]

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NOTES

[1] I should like to thank Ted Cachey, Claire Honess, and Giulio Lepschy for their comments on an earlier version of this article. As I prepare, after more than twenty years, to leave the University of Reading, it seems fitting that I should mark my departure with an article in *Reading Medieval Studies* (unfortunately, owing to the competing demands of university life, not as substantial as I would have wished). All quotations from and references to the *Ars poetica* are taken from the following edition: *Horace on Poetry. The 'Ars Poetica'*, ed. by C. O. Brink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

[2] *'Magister satiricus*: Preliminary Notes on Dante, Horace and the Middle Ages', to appear in *Dante and His Literary Predecessors*, ed. by J. C. Barnes & J. Petrie (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).

[3] See 'The "Marvellous" and the "Comic": Toward a Reading of *Inferno* XVI', *Lectura Dantis*, 7 (1990), 72-95, now in a revised version in *'Sole nuovo, luce nuova'. Saggi sul rinnovamento culturale in Dante* (Turin: Scriptorium, 1996), pp. 153-82; my review of B. Delmay, *I personaggi della Divina Commedia*, in *Romance Philology*, 44 (1991), 508-16 (p. 513); ' "Primo tra cotanto senno": Dante and the Latin Comic Tradition', *Italian Studies*, 46 (1991), 1-36 (pp. 9-10, 18-19); ' "Tres enim sunt manerie dicendi...". Some Observations on Medieval Literature, "Genre", and Dante', in *'Libri poetarum quattuor species dividuntur'. Essays on Dante and 'Genre'*, ed. by Z. G. Baranski, Supplement 2 of *The Italianist*, 15 (1995), pp. 9-60 (pp. 41-42, 48-49); 'Notes on Dante and the Myth of Orpheus', in *Dante. Mito e poesia*, ed. by M. Picone & T. Crivelli (Florence: Franco Cesati Editore, 1999), pp. 133-54; *'Chiosar con altro testo'. Leggere Dante nel Trecento* (Florence: Cadmo, 2001), pp. 61-63. I am at present completing a book on Dante and Horace, provisionally entitled *Dante's Master Satirist: Horace, Allegory, Comedy*, which aims to dispel the long-established critical notion that the Florentine owes little to the *venusinus*.

[4] Three studies may be exempted from this criticism: G. Brugnoli & R. Mercuri, 'Orazio Flacco, Quinto', in *E.D.*, IV, 173-80; C. Villa, 'Dante lettore di Orazio', in *Dante e la 'bella scola' della poesia*, ed. by A. A. Iannucci (Ravenna: Longo, 1993), pp. 87-106; S. Reynolds, *'Orazio satiro (Inferno* IV, 89): Dante, the Roman Satirists, and the Medieval Theory of Satire', in *'Libri poetarum*

quattuor species dividuntur', pp. 128-44. For a fuller bibliography on Dante and Horace, see *'Magister satiricus'*.

⁵ On Horace's medieval *fortuna*, see at least M. Manitius, *Analekten zur Geschichte des Horaz im Mittelalter (bis 1300)* (Göttingen: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1893); G. Curcio, 'Commenti medio-evali ad Orazio', *Rivista di filologia e d'istruzione classica*, 35 (1907), 43-64; A. Monteverdi, 'Orazio nel Medio Evo', *Studi Medievali*, n.s. 9 (1936), 162-80; B. Bischoff, 'Living with the Satirists', in *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 500-1500*, ed. by R. R. Bolgar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 83-94; K. Siewert, *Die althochdeutsche Horazglossierung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); K. Friis-Jensen, *'Horatius liricus et ethicus*: Two Twelfth-century School Texts on Horace's Poems', *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin*, 57 (1988), 81-147; M.-B. Quint, *Untersuchungen zur mittelalterlichen Horaz-Rezeption* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988); C. Villa, ' "Ut poesis pictura": appunti iconografici sui codici dell'*Ars Poetica*', *Aevum*, 62 (1988), 186-97; K. Friis-Jensen, 'The *Ars Poetica* in Twelfth-Century France. The Horace of Matthew of Vendôme, Geoffrey of Vinsauf, and John of Garland', *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin*, 60 (1990), 319-84; C. Villa, 'Per una tipologia del commento mediolatino: l' "Ars Poetica" di Orazio', in *Il commento ai testi*, ed. by O. Besomi & C. Caruso (Basle-Boston-Berlin: Birkhäuser Verlag, 1992), pp. 19-46; K. Friis-Jensen, 'Horace and the Early Writers of Arts of Poetry', in *Sprachtheorien in Spätantike und Mittelalter*, ed. by S. Ebbesen (Tübingen: Narr, 1995), pp. 360-401; S. Reynolds, 'Glossing Horace: Using the Classics in the Medieval Classroom', in *Medieval Manuscripts of the Latin Classics: Production and Use*, ed. by A. Chavannes-Mazel & M. M. Smith (Los Altos Hills, CA-London: Anderson-Lovelace-Red Gull Press, 1996), pp. 103-18; S. Reynolds, *Medieval Reading. Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); 'Fortuna dal medioevo all'età contemporanea', in *Orazio. Enciclopedia oraziana*, 3 vols (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 1996-98), III, 79-524.

⁶ In the Middle Ages, Horace was deemed the foremost literary, and specifically poetic, preceptor: see Villa, 'Per una tipologia', pp. 20-21, 41; Friis-Jensen, 'Horace and the Early Writers of Arts of Poetry', p. 361.

[7] See, for instance, Brugnoli and Mercuri; Villa, 'Dante lettore di Orazio'; Reynolds, '*Orazio satiro*'; M. Tavoni, 'Il titolo della *Commedia* di Dante', *Nuova Rivista di Letteratura Italiana*, 1 (1998), 9-34.

[8] See *V.N.* XVIII, 9; *Conv.* III, iv, 3; *D.V.E.* II, iv, 4; *Par.* XXIII, 55-66.

[9] The 'Materia' commentary to the *Ars poetica*, ¶ 1, 14, in Friis-Jensen, 'The *Ars Poetica* in Twelfth-century France', pp. 336-84 (p. 336; cited henceforth as 'Materia'). See also 'Carminis ingressus, quasi verna facetus, honeste / Introducat eam. Medium, quasi strenuus hospes, / Hospitium sollemne paret. Finis, quasi praeco / Cursus expleti sub honore licentiet illam': Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*, I, 71-74, in E. Faral, *Les Arts poétiques du XIIe et XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Champion, 1971), pp. 194-262 (p. 199).

[10] See A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 2nd edn (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1988), pp. 145-59.

[11] See Brugnoli & Mercuri; Villa, 'Dante lettore di Orazio'; Reynolds, '*Orazio satiro*'; Baranski, '*Magister satiricus*'.

[12] See Friis-Jensen, 'Horace and the Early Writers of Arts of Poetry', p. 365.

[13] See *Scholia Vindobonensia ad Horatii Artem Poeticam*, ed by J. Zechmeister (Vienna: Apud C. Geroldum Filium Bibliopolam, 1877), 1 (p. 1).

[14] *Accessus ad auctores*, in *Accessus ad auctores*, ed. by R. B. C. Huygens, 2nd edn (Leiden: Brill, 1970), pp. 18-54 (p. 50).

[15] 'Materia', ¶ 1, 12 (p. 336). On the 'six vices', see Friis-Jensen, 'Horace and the Early Writers of Arts of Poetry', pp. 367-82.

[16] Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Documentum de arte versificandi*, II, 3, 154-62, in Faral, pp. 265-320, (pp. 314-17).

[17] Conrad d'Hirsau, *Dialogus super auctores*, in *Accessus ad auctores*, pp. 71-131 (p. 113).

[18] Matthew of Vendôme, *Ars versificatoria*, I, 35, in Faral, pp. 109-93, (p. 118).

[19] MS Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 2° Cod. 119 (fifteenth century), 31r; I quote from Friis-Jensen, 'Horace and the Early Writers of Arts of Poetry', p. 366. It is noteworthy that the early twelfth-century Anonymus Turicensis commentary, which served as a major source for the 'Materia' commentator, also seems to consider line 38 as marking the end of Horace's discussion of the 'vices': '¶ 38

SUMITE MATERIAM. hucusque quae vitanda sunt. sic iunge: dixi illum infelicem in summa operis, quod ne vobis contingat': I. Hajdú, 'Ein Zürcher Kommentar aus dem 12. Jahrhundert zur Ars poetica des Horaz', Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge Grec et Latin, 63 (1993), 231-93 (p. 249; the commentary is printed on pp. 246-93). Villa makes some interesting observations regarding the 'Sumite materiam' auctoritas, though she underplays its significance in the De vulgari eloquentia ('Dante', pp. 90-91, 101).

[20] See the second and third notes below, and Baranski, 'Magister satiricus'.

[21] On medieval prologues, see H. Lausberg, Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik, 2 vols (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1960), I, 150-63; E. Gallo, 'Matthew of Vendôme: Introductory Treatise on the Art of Poetry', American Philosophical Society Proceedings, 118 (1974), 51-92 (pp. 59-60).

[22] See Pseudo-Acro, Pseudoacronis scholia in Horatium vetustiora, ed. by O. Keller, 2 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1902-4), II, 321; Scholia in Horatium, ed. by H. J. Botschuyver, vols 1, 3, 4 (Amsterdam: H. A. Van Bottenburg, 1935-42): neither of the two commentators edited by Botschuyver, the first from the early ninth century, the other from the turn of the eleventh to the twelfth century, bother to gloss lines 70-71 (I, 427 and IV, 461); Scholia Vindobonensia, 70-72 (p. 8); Anonymus Turicensis, p. 252; 'Materia', p. 347.

[23] Mengaldo appears to be developing here a suggestion first made in 1938 by Aristide Marigo: 'Introduzione', in De vulgari eloquentia, ed. by A. Marigo, 3rd revised edn (Florence: Le Monnier, 1968), pp. xiii-clvi (p. cxxi).

[24] The 'Parisiana Poetria' of John of Garland, ed. with Introduction, Translation and Notes by T. Lawler (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1974), I, 75-89 (pp. 6-8). Mengaldo's reference is to the older Mari edition of the Poetria: G. Mari, 'Poetria magistri Johannis Anglici de arte prosayca metrica et rithmica', Romanische Forschungen, 13 (1902), 883-965.

[25] Guido defines materia as follows: 'Materia est plena et artificiosa verborum ordinatio ex his que in themate assumuntur': Guido Faba, Summa dictaminis, LXXVII, quoted from A. Gaudenzi, 'Guidonis Fabe Summa Dictaminis', Il Propugnatore, n.s. 3-i (1890), pp. 287-338 (p. 334), and 3-ii (1890), 345-93.

[26] Brunetto Latini, *La Rettorica*, ed. by F. Maggini, 2nd revised edn (Florence: Le Monnier, 1968), pp. 73-74. As is clear from the reference on page 29 of his edition of the *D.V.E.*, it is certain that Mengaldo is alluding to this text and not to the 1912 first edition.

[27] Dante did not employ the term *inventio*, either with its precise technical meaning or more loosely, in any of his extant Latin works: see F. Tateo, 'Inventio', in *E.D.*, III, 489-90 (p. 489). He equally did not use it with its rhetorical value in his vernacular writings. In *Paradiso* XXIX, 95, the poet did utilize *invenzioni* to refer to oversubtle interpretations: 'Per apparer ciascun s'ingegna e face / sue invenzioni [...]' (94-95); while, in the *Convivio*, *invenzione* twice appears with the meaning of 'discovery' (IV, viii, 7; xi, 7). See V. Valente, 'Invenzione', in *E.D.*, III, 490.

[28] On *inventio*, see at least Lausberg, I, 146-240; B. Mortara Garavelli, *Manuale di retorica* (Milan: Bompiani, 1988), pp. 59-105. The main studies dealing with the complex standing of 'invention' in Dante's time are: D. Kelly, 'The Scope of Treatment of Composition in the Twelfth- and Thirteenth-century Arts of Poetry', *Speculum*, 61 (1966), 261-78; and 'Theory of Composition in Medieval Narrative Poetry and Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova*', *Mediaeval Studies*, 31 (1969), 117-48 (especially pp. 119-30); P. Bagni, 'L'*inventio* nell'*ars poetica* latino-medievale', in *Rhetoric Revalued*, ed. by B. Vickers (Binghampton NY: MRTS, 1982), pp. 99-114; R. Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 151-78; D. Kelly, *The Arts of Poetry and Prose* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), pp. 64-68. I have been unable to consult J. Banker, *Giovanni di Bonandrea's Ars Dictaminis Treatise and the Doctrine of Invention in the Italian Rhetorical Tradition of the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries*, PhD Thesis, University of Rochester, 1971.

[29] John examines *inventio* in *Parisianapoetria*, I, 75-523 (pp. 6-30) and II, 1-310 (pp. 32-50). Bagni declares that '[u]na vera e propria trattazione dell'*inventio* l'abbiamo solo in Giovanni' (p. 103). Lawler is both more cautious and precise: 'John's treatment of Invention [in chapter 1] is extremely sketchy, and arranged in a novel manner. It contains various dim recollections of the vast array of topics for invention in Cicero's *De inventione* and *Topica*; but the method of arrangement is peculiarly John's' (p. 230; but see the whole of his excellent note: pp. 230-31; see also Copeland, pp. 162-65). As

regards John's further analysis of *inventio* in chapter 2, Lawler observes: '[n]one of John's predecessors includes Selection [*electio*, the chapter's declared subject] among the parts of Rhetoric; to them, Invention is itself a selective process. John's division is based on *AP* 38-41, as his comment on that passage (see *1*, 76) indicates. He has virtually expanded Horace's single word *lecta* into a whole chapter. But the material he presents has little to do with Horace's dictum; that merely provides him with the name of the chapter, and its key verb. The actual material is drawn from Geoffrey's *Documentum*, and there is nothing in the processes described to distinguish them from Invention – we might substitute *invenire* for *eligere* throughout' (pp. 235-36). The lack of correlation between *Ars poetica* 38-41 and John's second chapter, once more underscores that, in the Middle Ages, the *auctoritas* was not normally linked to *inventio*. The precarious amorphousness of the medieval concept of 'invention' –thereby cautioning care when we come to use it – is especially apparent in someone like John who, unlike his peers, is keen to introduce the term into his discussion. Thus, John not only confuses *inventio* with *electio*, but also has it overlapping with etymology (Lawler, pp. 229-30; Kelly, *The Arts of Poetry and Prose*, p. 66 n. 92), with grammar (Lawler, p. 231), with *dispositio* (Bagni, p. 108), and with *elocutio* (Copeland, p. 165). See also Kelly, 'The Scope', pp. 275-77, which oversimplifies the nature of John's (and Geoffrey's) debts to Horace as regards their treatment of 'invention' and 'disposition'; see below note 35.

[30] 'In fact, there is nothing in the *Ars versificatoria* to suggest that Matthew even thought that *inventio* and *dispositio* in any form were relevant to his instruction […] indeed there is no need for them, since Matthew supplies his students with the *materia* all ready for ornamentation': Kelly, 'The Scope', p. 268; and see also Bagni, p. 102. Subsequently, though without acknowledging the change in his thinking, Kelly modified his views regarding the role of *inventio* in Matthew's *Ars*: *The Arts of Poetry and Prose*, pp. 66, 140. The reason for this shift is probably due to the fact that, in his book, unlike in his article, Kelly argues – far from unpersuasively in my view (see note 35 below) – that the *poetriae*, including Matthew's *Ars versificatoria*, express, normally without naming it, a broad sense of *inventio*, namely, 'the stages of invention by imagination as the passage from the brief *thema* to an elaborate *materia*, thence to the

order in which the work will be arranged and the ways by which it will be adapted and embellished. This general paradigm is applicable to every phase of composition, from the invention of the work to the invention of the word. Like the conception of the work first as an idea in the imagination, the smaller units of discourse – the sentence, the word – are first a mental image for which, second, suitable words are invented; in a third phase these words are given elegant form and elucidation in conformity with the principles of *gravitas/levitas* and material style' (p. 66). What this broad idea of *inventio* has in common with the Ciceronian, and hence traditional, notion of 'invention' is quite another matter, and one which lies beyond the remit of this note.

[31] See Kelly, 'The Scope', pp. 268, 278; Bagni, p. 102; see also the schematic presentations of the two works in Faral, pp. 328-30, 336-37.

[32] 'In Goffredo, [...] è [...] presente nella parte introduttiva una serie di esortazioni e consigli che configurano una sorta di *inventio*: dico una sorta di *inventio* perché non è tanto per il loro contenuto che sono assegnabili a questa categoria, quanto piuttosto per la loro collocazione nell'ordine del trattato' (Bagni, p. 102); and 'In Goffredo [...] un *invenire* che non si coordina tanto nella sequenza funzionale classica (*inventio, dispositio*, etc), quanto piuttosto si propone come "pensamento" che abbraccia la totalità della opera, suo "disegno interiore" più che fase della sua elaborazione' (Bagni, p. 108). See also Kelly, 'The Scope', pp. 271-73, 275-76, 278; Kelly, 'Theory of Composition', pp. 119-20.

[33] Kelly, 'Theory of Composition', p. 120; but see also pp. 123-25, 127, 130.

[34] See Copeland, pp. 165-78.

[35] Horace did not employ the term *inventio* in the *Ars poetica*; he did, however, twice utilize forms of the verb *invenire* and in contexts which, if his commentators had been so minded, they could have used as points of departure for lengthy considerations of 'invention': 'ignotum tragicae genus inuenisse camenae / dicitur et plaustris uexisse poemata Thespis' (275-76) and 'sic animis natum inuentumque poema iuuandis, / si paulum summo decessit, uergit ad imum' (377-78). The commentators, however, declined to take up this opportunity: see Pseudo-Acro, II, 354, 368; *Scholia in Horatium*, I, 442, 448; IV, 475, 481-82; *Scholia Vindobonensia*, pp. 33-34, 44;

Anonymus Turicensis, ¶ 275, (p. 264), ¶ 366 (p. 270); 'Materia', ¶ 275, 3 (p. 375), ¶ 374, 14 (p. 336). Interestingly, the *Anonymus Turicensis* prefaced his gloss of lines 275-77 with the following observation: 'vere Graeci sunt digni imitatione, quia sunt inventores omnis scientiae' (¶ 275, p. 264, and see the almost identical statement made by the 'Materia' commentator, p. 375). The reason why this statement is worthy of note in this context is because it offers a clue to the overlap, from the twelfth century onwards, of *imitatio* and *inventio*, at least as regards the broad-based version of this rhetorical concept (see Kelly, *The Arts of Poetry and Prose*, p. 66, quoted at note 30). In the light of the essentially pragmatic and preceptive character both of the commentaries to the *Ars poetica* and of the *artes poetriae*, when these discuss *materia*, they focus not so much on the problem of selection in abstract, but on the practical issue of what kind of pre-existing literary 'matter' to 'imitate'. In raising these 'inventive' issues, the authors of the commentaries and of the arts of poetry did not tie their observations to lines 38-41 but to lines 119-52: 'Materia', ¶¶ 119-51 (pp. 353-56); Matthew of Vendôme, *Ars versificatoria*, IV, 1-31 (pp. 180-87); Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Documentum*, II, 3, 132-62 (pp. 309-117). For studies of the tradition of interpretations of lines 119-52, see Kelly, The Scope', pp. 267-68; Kelly, 'Theory of Composition', pp. 120-30; K. M. Fredborg, ' "Difficile est proprie communia dicere" (Horats, A.P. 128). Horatsfortolkningens bidrag til middelalderens poetik', in *Studier i antik middelalderlig filosofi og idehistorie*, ed. by B. Alkjaer *et al.* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 1980) [= *Museum Tusculanum*, 40-43], pp. 583-97; Copeland, pp. 166-78; Friis-Jensen, 'Horace and the Early Writers', p. 364. Rita Copeland, in talking about John of Garland, makes a similar point, though with a slightly different emphasis, to the one I am trying to make here: 'John lists and explains seven figures "by which subject-matter is embellished and amplified," and in the manner of a grammarian, provides examples from classical authors (Virgil, Statius, Ovid). The concern of invention thus shifts to the formal properties of textual production. The ancient rhetoricians would have relegated this to secondary consideration under *elocutio*. But form and style is a primary consideration of the grammatical tradition of *enarratio poetarum*. John conflates these two traditions, conferring a primary status on *elocutio* by treating it as a function of *inventio*'

(pp. 164-65). Our positions are almost identical, however, when Professor Copeland notes that 'Matthew's application of the classical topics of invention thus pertains not so much to invention or discovery of material (as in Cicero) as to the development of material that has already been discovered' (p. 167). For other suggestions as to why the *poetriae* showed little interest in the traditional concept of *inventio*, see Kelly, 'The Scope', pp. 264, 266, 268, 278; Kelly, 'Theory of Composition", p. 140; Bagni, p. 111; Copeland, p. 166.

[36] See, for instance, Bene Florentini, *Candelabrum*, ed. by G. C. Alessio (Padua: Antenore, 1983), I, 4, 7; VII, 1, 1-5; VIII, 1, 2 (pp. 5, 211, 247); Brunetto Latini, *Rettorica*, pp. 73-74; Jacques de Dinant, *Ars arengandi*, 3, in A. Wilmart, 'L'*Ars arengandi* de Jacques de Dinant avec un appendice sur les ouvrages *De dictamine*', in *Analecta Reginensia* (Vatican City, 1933), pp. 113-52 (pp. 121-35; the passage to which I am referring may be found on p. 122). See also note 38.

[37] See Friis-Jensen, 'Horace and the Early Writers of Arts of Poetry', pp. 384-92.

[38] See Arsegino, *Quadriga*, MS. Padua, Biblioteca Universitaria 1182, 162r; Bene Florentini, *Candelabrum*, VII, 1, 1-5 (p. 211); Guido Faba, *Summa dictaminis*, LXXVIII (pp. 334-45). It is noteworthy in this respect that John of Garland, who in his *poetria* also provides instruction on letter-writing, should have included the 'Sumite materiam' *auctoritas* in his presentation of *inventio*: *Parisianapoetria*, I, 75-81 (pp. 6-8). I feel that Martin Camargo, in his generally excellent book, is too reductive when he claims that '[i]n contrast with the medieval commentators on the Ciceronian rhetorics, the *dictatores* concerned themselves with *dispositio* and *elocutio* to the virtual exclusion of the other three parts of rhetoric': M. Camargo, *Ars Dictaminis, Ars Dictandi* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), p. 19.

[39] Although Dante declares that the 'illustrious vernacular' can be used equally in poetry and in prose, he immediately relegates prose to a subordinate position: 'ante omnia confitemur latium vulgare illustre tam prosayce quam metrice decere proferri. Sed quia ipsum prosaycantes ab avientibus magis accipiunt et quia quod avietum est prosaycantibus permanere videtur exemplar, et non e converso – que quendam videntur prebere primatum –, primo secundum quod metricum est ipsum carminemus' (*D.V.E.* II, i, 1). As regards the relationship between prose and poetry in thirteenth-century rhetoric

and poetics, as well the implications of Dante's marginalization of prose in his treatise, see P. V. Mengaldo, 'Introduzione', in Dante Alighieri, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. by P. V. Mengaldo (Padua: Antenore, 1968), pp. vii-cii (pp. xxxix-xliv, xlviii); C. Grayson, *Cinque saggi su Dante* (Bologna: Patron, 1972), pp. 38-39. On Geoffrey of Vinsauf's attempts to unify instruction on composing in prose and in verse, see M. Camargo, 'Toward a Comprehensive Art of Written Discourse: Geoffrey of Vinsauf and the *Ars Dictaminis*', *Rhetorica*, 6 (1988), 167-94. As far as the sources of Dante's rhetorical knowledge are concerned, Mengaldo is undoubtedly correct when he writes that 'nel *De V. E.* confluiscono largamente [...] entrambe le grandi correnti della retorica dei secoli XII-XIII, quella delle *artes dictaminis* e quella delle *poetrie*' (p. xxxix). Yet, it should also be noted that Dante went to considerable lengths to distinguish the *De vulgari eloquentia* from the *artes dictaminis* and, to a lesser extent, from the *artes poetriae*. This largely stemmed from his desire to establish the 'purity' of his Horatian roots and the uniqueness of his treatise, and to remove his work from Cicero's sphere of influence. See the remainder of this note, as well as the third and final one, for a fuller discussion of these points.

[40] Tateo's attempt to equate Dante's use of *conceptio* with *inventio* is unpersuasive, as a quick glance at *D.V.E.* II, i, 8 – 'Sed optime conceptiones non possunt esse nisi ubi scienttia et ingenium est: ergo optima loquela non convenit nisi illis in quibus ingenium et scientia est' – immediately confirms (p. 490). Tateo undermines his own claim by going on to declare that 'Nel *De vulg. Eloq.* D. insiste soprattutto sul concetto della necessaria corrispondenza fra l'i. e l'*elocutio*, capovolgendo quasi i termini del dicorso tradizionale, in quanto parte dalla definizione dell'ottimo volgare per poi indicare la materia più idonea a essere trattata in quella forma' (p. 490). Rather than highlight the equation between *inventio* and *elocutio*, Tateo's assertion tends rather to confirm the absence of 'invention' in the treatise.

[41] See Mengaldo's discussion of Dante's borrowings from the *Ars poetica* in the notes to his edition of the *De vulgari eloquentia*: for the references, see 'Indice analitico dei nomi e delle cose notevoli contenuti nelle note', s.v. '*Ars poetica* (Orazio)'; and Brugnoli & Mercuri, pp. 174-76. Dante alluded to *Ars poetica*, 137 and 140-42, respectively, in *Inf.* XXX, 13-16 and in *Vita nuova*, XXV, 9. Both

Dantean passages, however, have nothing to do with *inventio* or even with the broad question of *exsecutio materiae.*

[42] The principal differences between the *De vulgari eloquentia*'s presentation of *materia* and the discussion of this in the *poetriae*, are the brevity and generality of Dante's treatment of 'matter' and his rejection of *Ars poetica*, 119-52 as an *auctoritas* on the subject.

[43] As occurs with the term *inventio*, so *dispositio*, too, is never mentioned in the *De vulgari eloquentia.*

[44] Acro, *Acronis et Porphyrionis Commentarii in Q. Horatium Flaccum*, ed. by F. Hauthal, 2 vols (Berlin: J. Springer, 1864-66), II, 581.

[45] Karsten Friis-Jensen sees in these glosses an attempt by the commentator to accommodate the *Ars poetica* to the divisions of rhetoric: 'The commentator here paraphrases Horace and turns his expressions into more technical language: *sumite materiam* at line 38 becomes *materia sumenda*, *ordo* at lines 41 and 42 becomes *scientia ad materiam ordinandam*, whereas *facundia* at line 41 is glossed as *copia verborum*. The three quasi-technical expressions are clearly meant to reflect the three parts of rhetoric called *inventio*, *dispositio* and *elocutio* in a way which comes as close as possible to Horace's own terms' ('Horace and the Early Writers of Arts of Poetry', p. 366). I find this suggestion unpersuasive, since it attempts to introduce ideological structures into the 'Materia' commentary for which there is no support elsewhere in the *commentarium.*

[46] See, for instance, Dante Alighieri, *L'eloquenza in volgare*, ed. by G. Inglese (Milan: Rizzoli, 1998), p. 163; A. Martina, 'Frontino, Sesto Giulio', in *E.D.* III, 64-65 (p. 64); Mengaldo, 'Introduzione', pp. lxi-lxii.

[47] The designation is found in MS. Tübingen, Universitätsbibliothek, lat. folio 437, formerly Berlin, Staatsbibliothek. See P. V. Mengaldo, 'Nota al testo', in Dante Alighieri, *De Vulgari Eloquentia. I. Introduzione e testo*, ed. by P. V. Mengaldo (Padua, Antenore, 1968), pp. ciii-cxxi (pp. ciii-civ).

[48] For a selection of different interpretations of this difficult paragraph, see Marigo's notes to his edition of the *De vulgari eloquentia*, pp. 220-24; P. Renucci, *Dante disciple et juge du monde gréco-latin* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1954), p. 72; Mengaldo, 'Introduzione', pp. lxi-lxii n. 1; Grayson, pp. 37-38; Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. by S. Cecchin (Turin: TEA, 1988), pp. 122-23; M. McLaughlin,

Literary Imitation in the Italian Renaissance (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 15-17.

[49] See B. Munk Olsen, *I classici nel canone scolastico altomedievale* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1991), pp. 6, 82; F. Quadlbauer, *Die antike Theorie der 'Genera dicendi' im lateinischen Mittelalter* (Vienna: Hermann Böhlaus Nachf., 1962), pp. 221, 223-224; J. O. Ward, *Ciceronian Rhetoric in Treatise, Scholion, and Commentary* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), p. 172. For Cicero as a model of style, see also *Accessus ad auctores*, p. 47; Conrad d'Hirsau, 877-78 (p. 100), 1159 (p. 108); E. H. Kantorowicz, 'Anonymi *Aurea Gemma*', *Mediaevalia et Humanistica*, 1 (1943), 41-57 (p. 55).

[50] See Munk Olsen, passim. In particular, Munk Olsen notes the marginality of historians in the schools and the limited diffusion of their works (pp. 91-94). This is confirmed by R. Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[51] See E. Moore, *Studies in Dante*, 4 vols (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1896-1917), I, 258-73; A. Ronconi, 'Cicerone, Marco Tullio', in *E.D.* I, 991-97.

[52] A. Martina, 'Orosio, Paolo', in *E.D.* IV, 204-8. And see also G. Brugnoli, 'Plinio il Vecchio (C. Plinio Secondo)', in *E.D.* IV, 556-57; Martina, 'Frontino'; A. Martina, 'Livio, Tito', in *E.D.* III, 673-77.

[53] I base my conclusion on a comparison of the passages from Dante and Cicero which Mengaldo brings together in the notes to his edition of the *De vulgari eloquentia*. As Mengaldo frequently confirms, the vast majority of the Dantean passages, rather than borrowings from Cicero, are in fact rhetorical commonplaces (pp. 26, 27, 29, 31, 41, 55, 72, 79, 82, 84, 114, 116, 122, 127, 131, 133, 134, 141, 144, 157, 160, 166, 168, 179, 180, 196, 236). A couple of other passages bear only the scantiest similarity to the Ciceronian texts with which they are associated (pp. 27, 97). In 1968, Mengaldo affirmed that 'l'ambiente in cui si muove la cultura retorica dantesca, e si muove con agio, è soprattutto quello della trattatistica medievale recente, rispetto alla quale costituiranno solo uno sfondo ovvio i grandi classici, la *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, il *De Inventione*, l'*Ars poetica*, magari Isidoro [...] mentre sarebbe difficile sorprendere nel *De V. E.* elementi appartenenti a queste opere, siano verbali o concettuali, che

non appartengano anche ai continuatori medievali [...] ci si imbatte di continuo in formule e termini tipicamente medievali' ('Introduzione', p. xxxix). While I concur wholeheartedly with Mengaldo as regards his assessment of the *De vulgari eloquentia*'s debts to Cicero, my position as regards Horace is, naturally, different to his. I believe that, by not recognizing the full implication of the references to Horace and the *Ars poetica* in Book II chapter iv, Mengaldo has ended up by underplaying the influence of the *venusinus* on the *De vulgari eloquentia*.

[54] See Camargo, *Ars Dictaminis, Ars Dictandi*, p. 19; Ward, pp. 171-81 and passim. See also note 36.

[55] See, for instance, Marigo, pp. xxxvi, cxxii; G. Nencioni, 'Dante e la retorica', in *Dante e Bologna nei tempi di Dante* (Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1967), pp. 91-112 (p. 95); Renucci, p. 70; Ronconi, pp. 995-96; M. Shapiro, *De vulgari eloquentia: Dante's Book of Exile* (Lincoln-London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), p. 35.

[56] 'E qui, con inclusioni come quella di Frontino, non può non sorprendere l'esclusione di Orazio, Cicerone, Agostino': A. Schiaffini, ' "Poesis" e "poeta" in Dante', in *Studia Philologica et Litteraria in Honorem L. Spitzer*, ed. by A. G. Hatcher & K. L. Selig (Berlin: Francke, 1958), pp. 379-89 (p. 379); 'Infine, il canone dei prosatori è sempre parso sorprendente, sia per le inclusioni che per le esclusioni [...], come è evidente il suo carattere nettamente non-umanistico. Ogni ipotesi è rischiosa' (Mengaldo, 'Introduzione', pp. lxi-lxii n. 1).

[57] See H. A. Kelly, *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 12, 21, 38-39, 101.

[58] The status of Frontinus as a historian emerges particularly forcefully in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, ed. by C. C. I. Webb, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909): see the 'Index nominum propriorum' and 'Index auctorum', s.v. 'Frontinus'. John in fact referred to Frontinus in very near proximity to Orosius and Pliny. In Book VI, the close of chapter xi and the opening of chapter xii read as follows: 'Numantini, ne se dederent, fame mori praefixis foribus domuum suarum maluerunt: uicissentque Romanos auctore Orosio nisi illi sub Scipione pugnassent. [rubric for chapter xii] In eos uero qui ducis aut legis non obtemperabant arbitrio uaria animaduersio

procedebat. Nam alii in fortuna, in fama alii, alii in sanguine puniuntur. Frontinum relege et usquequaque ita esse inuenies'. Later in chapter xii, Frontinus appears next to Pliny: 'Apii Claudii sententia senatusque consultum omnes qui a Pirro rege Epirotarum capti et postea remissi erant equites ad peditem redegit, pedites ad leuem armaturam, omnibus extra uallum iussis tendere donec bina hostium spolia singuli referrent. Haec Frontinus. At Plinius asserit quia fuit haec quoque antiquitus animaduersio militaris, iubere ignominiae causa militi uenam solui et sanguinem dimitti'. A bit further on John openly asserts Frontinus' standing as a historian: 'Vt redeam ad Frontinum, Crassus a Sempronio Asello et plerisque aliis historiae Romanae scriptoribus traditur habuisse quinque rerum bonarum maxima et praecipua'. See below for a discussion of the relevance of *Policraticus*, VI, xi-xii for Dante.

[59] See Brugnoli, p. 556; M. Chibnall, 'Pliny's *Natural History* in the Middle Ages', in *Empire and Aftermath: Silver Latin II*, ed. T. A. Dorey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 57-78.

[60] The question of the relationship between rhetoric and poetics in the later Middle Ages is complicated. Useful information on the problem may begin to be found in M. C. Woods, 'A Medieval Rhetoric Goes to School – and to the University: The Commentaries on the *Poetria nova*', *Rhetorica*, 9 (1991), 55-65.

[61] The programmed manner in which Dante eliminated Cicero from the *De vulgari eloquentia* becomes even more apparent when we recall the important role that the orator plays in the near contemporaneous *Convivio*. At the same time, it is also important to recognize that, as in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, neither in the *Convivio* nor in the *Commedia*, is Cicero ever presented as an authority on poetic, or even literary, composition. Tully is invariably 'Tulïo [...] morale' (*Inf.* IV, 141). Dante is nothing if not consistent. It is time, I believe, for a major re-assessment of Dante's relationship to Cicero to be undertaken; in particular, it is vital to establish the poet's attitude towards Cicero the rhetorical 'authority', especially in the light of that renewed interest in his rhetorical theory in Due- and Trecento Italy, which Virginia Cox has recently so ably studied: 'Ciceronian Rhetoric in Italy, 1260-1350', *Rhetorica*, 17 (1999), 239-88.