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Brunetto Latini's rhetorical translations of Ovid

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ABSTRACT

This article examines medieval translations of Ovid's *Heroides* by thirteenth-century Italian diplomat and notary Brunetto Latini. It explores how in two different works composed in the years 1260-1266, his French *Tresor* and his Italian *Rettorica*, Latini translates quotations from the *Heroides* so as to demonstrate the rhetorical strategies most apt to persuade an audience and to obtain its goodwill. In fact, these quotations that Latini translates from the *Heroides* serve as didactic illustrations of what he considers to be effective rhetorical practice for the communal activities, ranging from public debate to diplomacy, in which notaries (including Latini himself) were most involved. This paper thus describes the quotation and translation of passages from the *Heroides* beyond the practice of literary allusion, providing an expanded perspective on medieval translation that transcends our modern binary of literary translation as utterly distinct from specialist translation. More important, it argues that Latini considered these literary-mythic Ovidian letters as models of rhetorically effective discourse vital for the administration and governing of the *comune*.

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To assert that a notary would translate a literary work for rhetorical purposes is to transgress several modern 'truths': first, that rhetoric is philosophically-inflected, and so has nothing to do with literature; second, that notaries are more responsible for legal transactions than linguistic transfers (i.e. translations). And yet, in the Middle Ages, Brunetto Latini (ca. 1220–1294), the ambitious Florentine notary and chancellor instrumental in continuing the Ciceronian rhetorical tradition in the thirteenth century, makes rhetorical use of Ovid, and in particular, of the *Heroides*. As I argue here, Latini translates passages from the *Heroides* in both his French *Tresor* and Italian *Rettorica* to illustrate the techniques of persuasion (including the *captatio benevolentiae*) considered as foundational for effective discourse for both the *ars dictaminis* (the art of letter writing) and the *ars arengendi* (the civic speeches used in the assembly of citizens [*arenga*]), and thereby as valuable for notarial activities (e.g. consiliar debate; diplomacy) in the *comune*.

Chronicler Giovanni Villani (1276–1348) described Latini in the early fourteenth century as a master of rhetoric (*maestro in rettorica*), philosopher (*filosofia*), and communal notary (*dittatore*), who transmitted the rhetorical and political knowledge of

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Antiquity to thirteenth-century Florence. In having espoused Cicero's *Rhetoric*, claims Villani, Latini taught his fellow Florentines the principles of good speech; through his vision of politics, he demonstrated how to lead and maintain the Florentine republic (Villani, 1991, pp. 27–28).[1]

But Latini's significance for rhetoric and political discourse had already been well established prior to the fourteenth century. This is patent not only in the significant role he played in communal government after his return to Florence ca. 1266 (Ceva, 1965; Milner, 2000, pp. 71–74), but, moreover, in two seminal works, his *Tresor* and *Rettorica,* both most likely composed during the years 1260–1266 while he was in exile in France.

In the French *Tresor,* Latini presents a treasure of his knowledge in the form of a vernacular encyclopedia, marking his authority as translator and compiler (Bolduc, 2020, pp. 141–147). While Latini may have come to know the form of the encyclopedia while in exile (Witt, 2000, pp. 178–179 and 182), his joining of rhetoric to the governing of cities in *Tresor* Book 3 reshapes it as a genre (Meier, 1992, pp. 173–175; see also Ventura, 1997, p. 504). True to the genre of the encyclopedia, the *Tresor* includes in book 1, history and natural history, and in book 2, ethics and morality. However, in book 3 appears the *Tresor*'s most precious subject matter: rhetoric and politics. Here, he offers a paraphrastic translation of Ciceronian rhetoric, which in the Middle Ages included both Cicero's *De inventione* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, erroneously attributed to Cicero (see the essays in Cox & Ward, 2011; Murphy, 1967; Cox, 2014; Murphy, 1981).

In *La rettorica,* Latini explicitly advances the contemporary relevance of Ciceronian rhetoric (Cox, 2011, p. 117). Milner (2009, pp. 239–240) describes it as a vernacular *ars arengendi*. *La rettorica* comprises Latini's Italian translation of the first seventeen chapters of *De inventione;* it is accompanied by Latini's explicative gloss, and interwoven with citations from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and the commentaries on Cicero by Victorinus and Boethius, as well as by such contemporaries as Boncampagno da Signa, Guido Faba, and Bene da Firenze (Alessio, 1979, pp. 126–130; Keen, 2016, p. 6). He may have conceived of the *Rettorica* prior to 1260 while he was still in Florence, and where he would have had easy access to rhetorical manuals, such as those used in the dictaminial courses that he may have followed in Bologna (Alessio, 1979, pp. 126–127).

Latini's translations of Ciceronian rhetoric in the *Tresor* and the *Rettorica* are rare examples of *volgarizzamente*. He not only appropriates Cicero's *auctoritas* and translates into two different vernaculars using two different textual models (exegesis and paraphrase), but also offers an uncommonly synthetic vision of rhetoric, which merges both Classical and medieval forms of rhetoric (Bolduc, 2020, pp. 174–189) as well as the *ars dictaminis* and the *ars arengendi* (see *Rettorica* 76.4; in Latini, 1915/1968, p. 143; Latini, 2016a, p. 91; see also Bolduc, 2020, pp. 136–150, 174–189; Milner, 2011; Wieruszowski, 1971, pp. 359–377; Witt, 1983).[2]

In his quest to establish rhetoric as a vital tool of the *vita activa politica,* Latini translates not only Ciceronian rhetoric, but also Classical literary texts, and namely quotations from Ovid. This may seem counterintuitive, as of the rhetorical arts, only the *ars poetriae* is thought to have had no direct connection with politics (Milner, 2011, p. 369; see also Giansante, 1998). And yet, we know that medieval Italian notaries studied language and literature, and were trained to imitate the poetry and philosophical works of classical authors (Novati, 1925, p. 248; Wieruszowski, 1971, pp. 589–627). While Latini's

vernacular citations of Classical authors (especially in the *Tresor*) derive chiefly from medieval compendia, including Guillaume Perrault's *Summa Aurea de Virtutibus* and Isidore of Seville's *Sententia,* we also know that his acquaintance with classical literature was significant, and that he may have even had a private library containing classical works (Davis, 1965, pp. 418–419).

Latini's inclusion of quotations from Ovid is unsurprising, given the massive interest in Ovid's works – and in translating them – in the Middle Ages, a period considered, and especially the twelfth century, as an *aetas Ovidiana* (Traube, 1911, vol. 2, p. 113).[3] Indeed, his *oeuvre* establishes a broad familiarity with Ovid. In *Tresor* 1.160,7, Latini briefly refers to Ovid's exilic poem *Ibis* (Latini, 2007, p. 274, and p. 275, n. 297); in *Tresor* 2.86,5, he paraphrases two lines from a letter (*Ex ponto* 1.5, 5–6) that Ovid had written while in exile (Latini, 2007, p. 534; Ovid, 1924/2014, pp. 290–1). In his *Tesoretto* (vv. 2357–75; Latini, 2016b, pp. 126–127), on the other hand, Latini as protagonist speaks in Tuscan to the Ovid of the *Remedia amoris*.[4] This episode pointedly recalls the *Tresor* – named as the 'gran tesoro' (*Tesoretto* v. 1351; Latini, 2016b, p. 74) – and presents an argument for using Italian rather than French (vv. 1345–56; Latini, 2016b, pp. 74–75), in contrast to the justification he had made in *Tresor* 1.1,7 for using French (Latini, 2007, p. 7).[5] These allusions thus unveil Latini's extensive knowledge of Ovid and, moreover, suggest two specific areas of personal concern for him: exile and the language in which he writes.

More important for the present study, Latini followed in a long-established Italian tradition of associating Ovid with rhetoric (see Barthes, 1970, p. 182). Allusions to and translations of Ovid, often via intermediary Latin sources, are common in the work of Italian notaries, both in treatises of the *ars arengendi* and the *ars dictaminis*. For example, in his vernacular *Arringhe* XLV, the thirteenth-century Bolognese rhetor Matteo dei Libri includes a citation from Ovid's *Heroides* in the model speech a military leader might give to his enemies when trying to broker a peace agreement (Libri, 1974, p. 129). Ovid was particularly important for the *ars dictaminis*: Alberic of Montecassino (d. 1105) used quotations from Ovid (Alberic, 1938/1973, p. 132); his successor Adalberto Samaritano begins his twelfth-century *Praecepta dictaminum* with a citation from the *Metamorphoses* (Black, 2011, p. 123). Even Latini's near contemporary Bene da Firenze, professor of *dictamen,* adapted Ovid (Clark, 2011, p. 9; see also Black, 2011, p. 124).

No work by Ovid was more important for rhetoric, and especially for the *ars dictaminis,* than the collection of epistolary poems ostensibly written by women to their lovers that constitutes the *Heroides*.[6] It was particularly well known in Italy, and especially in Latini's Florence: there exist 235 extant manuscripts dating chiefly from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Zaggia, in Ovid, 2009, Vol. I, pp. 149–160). More important, the *Heroides* stands alongside Ciceronian rhetoric – frequently used by teachers of the *ars dictaminis* (Camargo, 1991, p. 18; Witt, 2011, p. 55; see also Alessio, 2011) – as a model for letter-writing as early as the twelfth century (see Wheeler, 2015, p. 9). After 1350, paradigms from the *Heroides* were included in preceptive manuals of *dictamen* (Clark, 2011, p. 9; on the *dictamen*, see Ward, 2001). We find citations of the *Heroides* even in one of the Latin letters composed by Italian poet, jurist, and diplomat, Pier della Vigna (d. 1249) (see Zaggia, in Ovid, 2009, Vol. I, pp. 164–165, see also Bertoni, 1911).

Latini's quotations of Ovid's *Heroides* fall within the broad movement to translate them in the Middle Ages, and yet they are unusually rhetorical.[7] In fact, he does not

quote and translate the *Heroides* simply in order to demonstrate his extensive knowledge, if indirect, of this literary material.[8] Nor does he translate from the *Heroides* for a specific patron, and by extension, for private moral concerns, as will Filippo Ceffi in 1325 (see Zaggia, in Ovid, 2009, Vol. I, pp. 127–133, who suggests that Ceffi's translation contained a moralizing lesson aimed at women in specific). Rather, for an Italian notary like Latini, letters and speeches were considered essential for addressing the public assemblies and councils of the new civic governments in Italy (see Milner, 2009, p. 224; Segre, 1963, p. 3). As a result, as I argue here, Latini sees in the *Heroides* material for effective, persuasive discourse.

In the *Tresor*, Latini's translations of Ovid's *Heroides* might go unnoticed, because they are few in number and distributed over both books 2 and 3 of this encyclopedia; however, they stand out for their rhetoricity. The first reference appears in book 2, which begins with a partial and indirect translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (*Tresor* 2, 1–50).[9] This, book (*Tresor* 2, 51–132) concludes with a commentary on the vices and virtues, based on the *Moralium dogma philosophorum,* Peraldus's *Summa de virtutibus,* and Albertano da Brescia's *Liber de doctrina dicendi et tacendi* (see Briggs, 2007, p. 262; Carmody, 1948/1998, pp. xxviii–xxx).[10] That Latini understood Ovid as appropriate for a book on the vices and virtues was not unusual. The twelfth-century *accessus* to Ovid's *Heroides* explains that Ovid is classified under ethics because he 'is an instructor of good manners and an eradicator of evil' [Ethice subiacet quia bonorum morum est instructor, malorum uero exstirpator] (see Wheeler, 2015, pp. 26–27). In his *Summa de viciis et virtutibus,* the Bolognese teacher of rhetoric and Latini's contemporary, Guido Faba, paraphrases one line from Ovid's *Remedia amoris* [l. 139, 'Otia si tolles, periere Cupidinis arcus'] 'for the specific purposes of moral theology' (Robertson, 1962, p. 92 n. 69). Accordingly, Latini's vernacular quotation of the *Heroides* in *Tresor* Book 2 is marked, as we will see, by its moral quality.

In *Tresor* 2.62, 2 (Latini, 2007, pp. 466–467), Latini evokes the *Heroides* when he counsels the speaker to be sure of his equanimity before speaking, and not to speak when overemotional ["garde se tu es en ton bon sens, paissiblement, sens ire et sens torblement dou coraige, car autrement dois tu taire"]. Having quoted from Cicero, Seneca, and Cato, he then quotes from Briseis's letter in *Heroides* 3.85, where she entreats Achilles, "'vince animos iram que tuam, qui cetera vincis!'" (Ovid, 1971, p. 68) ['Conquer your pride and your rage, as you conquer everything else'] (Ovid, 2017, pp. 35).

Latini translates Briseis's lines within indirect speech, as: "Ovide dit: Veinque ton coraige et ta ire, tu qui veinques totes choses" [Ovid says: conquer your emotion and your anger, you who conquer all things].[11] Rather than Ovid's *anima,* Latini uses *coraige*, recalling French literary tradition, and demonstrating his familiarity with it (C. J. Campbell, 2008, p. 54). His quotation of *Heroides* 3 is mediated by Albertano da Brescia's *Liber de doctrina dicendi et tacendi* 1.1 ["Inde etiam Ovidius dixit: 'Vince animos iramque tuam qui cetera vincis'" (Albertano, 1998, p. 4)], signifying that even in this book on ethics, Latini's primary concern is for effective, persuasive speech. He deploys Briseis's words to illustrate diplomatic restraint; moreover, he also provides further evidence for Artifoni's argument (2009) that in the works of notaries, the virtues were often imbricated with oratorical precepts.

It is in the final book of the *Tresor* that Latini explicitly grounds his translation of the *Heroides* within Ciceronian rhetoric. Book 3 (*Tresor* 3.1–72) begins with Latini's

paraphrastic translation of Ciceronian rhetoric, which comprises in addition model speeches (*dits*) from Julius Caesar and Cato deriving from the *Fets des Romains*. It concludes (*Tresor* 3.73–105) with a discussion of politics and governance, which makes extensive use of Giovanni da Viterbo's ca. 1250 *De regimine civitatum* and the *Oculus pastoralis*, a collection of speeches assembled ca. 1222 (see Napolitano, 2018).

In *Tresor* 3, Latini's translation from Ovid appears as a part of his paraphrase of *De inventione* 1.24. Here, he advises how to begin a speech when the subject matter is displeasing to the listeners, providing an example from Oenone's letter to Paris from *Heroides* 5.143, where she discusses her response to her rape by Apollo: "nec pretium stupri gemmas aurumque poposci" (Ovid, 1995, p. 54) [I sought no gems or gold as the price of my ravishing (translation mine[12])]. Michalopoulos (2020) reads this line, and the letter as a whole, as revenge for her abandonment by Paris, who left her for Helen. These particular lines, observes Michalapoulos, gesture at Apollo's gift of healing to her, which she will later refuse to use to heal Paris.

Latini renders this quotation in *Tresor* 3.29,4 as 'Ce dist la premiere amie Paris en ses letres que elle li envoia puis que il l'avoit deguerpie por amor Eleine: "Je ne demande", fist ele, "ton argent, ne tes joiaus por loier de mon cors" (Latini, 2007, p. 684) [This is what Paris's first beloved said in the letters that she sent him after he had left her for the love of Helen: "I do not ask," she said, "for your money or your jewels in return for my body"]'. That Latini omits Oenone's name, calling her simply Paris's first beloved (*la premiere amie*), whom he had abandoned for Helen (*il l'avoit deguerpie por amor Eleine*), eliminates any sentiment of revenge found in the original. It also places the accent on the medieval matter of Troy, which Latini may have known through Benoît de Sainte-Maure's twelfth-century *Roman de Troie*.[13] In addition, Latini inserts Oenone's discourse within his narrative, firmly controlling its emotional tenor. He tones down the violent aspect of ravishing denoted by *stupri*, whose meaning in the classical world was intensely gendered and sexual (it referred to the disgrace cast on a woman who had engaged in an illicit sexual act) by replacing it with the noun *loier*, and which means "salaire; recompense" (Godefroy, 1982; see http://micmap.org/dicfro/previous/dictionnaire-godefroy/19/5/loier), which, unlike Ovid's original, only subtly suggests that the exchange with Apollo was both economic and sexual. Indeed, Latini does not quote from the line that follows (*Heroides* 5,144), where Ovid makes the sexual exchange explicit: 'turpiter ingenuum munera mihi tradidit artes' (Ovid, 1996, p. 54) [gifts are shameful in exchange for a free-born body], and thus produces an example of rhetorical 'passing over' of material left unsaid, or *praeteritio*.

Whereas in the *Tresor* Latini embeds his translations of the *Heroides* within rhetorical situations, in the *Rettorica*, on the other hand, he explicitly deploys them to illuminate Cicero's teachings on obtaining the audience's goodwill. That is, he integrates his translations of the *Heroides* 7 and 17 within his gloss on Cicero's four modes of the *captatio benevolentiae* (Latini, 1915/1968, pp. 174ff).[14] Typically employed in the *exordium* to render the audience well disposed to one's speech, these four modes – based on *De inventione* 1.22 (Cicero, 1949/2014, p. 44), and evoking *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1.8 (2012, pp. 7–8; see Maggini, 1912, p. 45) – aim to obtain the audience's support for the speaker and the case he makes. In the *Rettorica,* Latini introduces his translations of Ovid with a description of each particular mode, so that they must be considered through the lens of rhetorical practice.

The first mode, from the person of the speaker (*ab nostra persona*), is used to gain the sympathy for the speaker (and his client; Lausberg, 1963/1998, § 275, pp. 129–130). As Latini notes, the speaker is meant to present the facts and the details of his actions courteously and without pride: "Il primo modo si è se noi dicemo sanza soperbia, dolcemente e cortesemente, de' nostri fatti e de' nostri officii" (Latini, 1915/1968, p. 176) [the first is a soft and polite way to present our facts and our actions without arrogance (Latini, 2016a, p. 106)]. By way of example, Latini provides a quotation from Ovid's *Heroides* 7, 89–90, when Dido recalls her warm welcome of Aeneas after his shipwreck at Carthage: "'fluctibus eiectum tuta statione recepi / uixque bene audito nomine regna dedi'" (Ovid, 1995, p. 64) ['You were cast ashore, and I gave you a welcome and a safe anchorage; I'd hardly heard your name when I gave you my throne'] (Ovid, 2017, p. 79). Ovid's Dido stresses Aeneas's abject condition after the shipwreck (*fluctibus eiectum*). However, by means of the first-person perfect tense forms that conclude each line (*recepi*; *dedi*), with their plosives 'p' and 'd', she sharply recalls her kindnesses to him (Jacobson, 1974, p. 87).

In Latini's medieval version, we read: "Et così dicendo Dido d'Eneas acquistò la benivolenza degli uditori: 'Io' dice ella, 'accolsi e ricevetti in sicura magione colui ch'era cacciato in periglio di mare, et quasi anzi ch'io udisse il nome suo li diedi il mio reame'" (Latini, 1915/1968, p. 176) [This is how Dido, when speaking of Aeneas, won the benevolence of her audience. She said: 'I gave safe shelter in my house to one who was in serious danger after a shipwreck, and even before I heard his name, I gave him my kingdom'] (Latini, 2016a, p. 106). Latini's translation syntactically and semantically frames Dido as a figure of generous hospitality, and stresses that she did not just receive Aeneas but welcomed him to the kingdom that she gave him, and which was explicitly hers (*mio reame*). Moreover, unlike Ovid, who emphasizes Dido's dynamic actions in direct address to Aeneas, Latini brackets Dido's words within reported speech, softening their plosive effect and amplifying the pathos of Aeneas's situation by describing him not only as in danger from the sea, but also hunted [*cacciato*].

For the second mode (*ab adversariorum persona*), which concerns attaching blame to an adversary to eliminate sympathy for him (Lausberg, 1963/1998, § 276, pp. 130–131), Latini quotes Helen writing to Paris from *Heroides* 17: 173–174: "de facie metuit, uitae confidit et illum / securum probitas, forma timere facit" (Ovid, 1996, p. 49; see also Michalopoulos, 2006) [My looks cause fear, my way of life arouses confidence; he is reassured by my virtue, made afraid by my beauty] (Ovid, 2017, p. 205).[15] In Ovid's original, Helen expresses the dilemma of the moral ideal of chastity versus the physical ideal of beauty (Belfiore, 1980, p. 146).

In Latini's translation, we read: "Tutto altressì Elena, vogliendosi levare la sospeccione che 'l suo marito avea di lei, disse: 'Elli che ssi fida in me della vita, dubita per la mia biltade; ma cui assicura prodezza non dovrebbe impaurire l'altrui bellezza'" (Latini, 1915/1968, p. 177) [In exactly the same way, Helen, wishing to allay her husband's suspicions of her, said: 'He who trusts me when his life is concerned is suspicious of my beauty, but a brave man should not be afraid of a woman's beauty' (Latini, 2016a, p. 106)]. Latini emphasizes how Helen obscures her adultery to her husband Menelaus by shifting the focus to his suspicion of her beauty. Further, he also gestures at the medieval notion of masculine bravery as separate from the world of love, as found in *chansons de geste*.[16] He paints a resolutely medieval picture of Helen: she is not only an exemplary

imago, a beautiful face upon which the ideal beloved could be grafted (recall the comparison of Iseult to Helen in Bernart de Ventadorn's "Tant ai mo cor ple de joya," vv. 45–48; in Nichols et al., 1965, p. 170), but also the example *par excellence* of how the love of a woman is dangerous for heroic action (e.g. *Le Roman de Troie,* vv. 4342–58; in Constans, ed. pp. 223–224).[17]

Latini then evokes the third mode (*ab iudicum [auditorum] persona*), in which the speaker praises the audience for their discernment (Lausberg, 1963/1998, §277, p. 131), and here, sensitivity to the speaker's on-going distress: "se noi contiamo i mali che sono advenuti e li 'ncrescimenti che sono presenti" (Latini, 1915/1968, p. 178) [when we lament the evil we have suffered and the difficulties that are still extant (Latini, 2016a, p. 106)]. By way of example, he quotes again from *Heroides* 7, 115–116: "exul agor, cineresque uiri patriamque relinquo, / et feror in dubias hoste sequente uias" (Ovid, 1995, p. 65)[18] ['Driven into exile, I left my homeland and husband's ashes; I had a fraught journey, pursued by my enemies'] (Ovid, 2017, p. 80). In a significant revision of Virgil's account (Jacobson, 1974, pp. 79–80), Ovid aligns ashes with both Dido's homeland and her husband, emphasizing how she has been driven out of Carthage and how, in her exile, she is still pursued.

Latini renders Ovid's lines as "Et Dido, dicendo i suoi mali dopo il dipartimento d'Eneas, acquistò la benivolenza per la sua misaventura, e disse : 'Io sono cacciata et abandono il mio paese e lla casa del mio marito e vo fuggendo per graviosi cammini in caccia de' nemici'" (Latini, 1915/1968, p. 178) [And Dido, when lamenting her sufferings after the departure of Aeneas, obtained the pity of her audience by saying: 'I am banished. I am going to leave my country, my husband's house and walk strange lands to chase my enemies'] (Latini, 2016a, p. 107).[19] Latini presents an ambiguous vision of Dido, as much hunted (*cacciata*) as hunter (*in caccia*), reflecting how Dido "transgresses the standard boundaries for female behavior within feudal ideology" (Desmond, 1994, p. 101).[20]

Latini's use of this term denoting hunting [*cacciare*] in the above examples has significant personal resonance, for it echoes the description he had made in *Rettorica* 1.10 of the exile of the Guelfs from Florence and, by extension, of his own exile "Brunetto Latini … fue isbandito della terra quando la sua parte guelfa … fue cacciata e sbandita della terra" [Brunetto Latini was exiled from his city … when the Guelf faction was expelled and banished from the land] (Latini, 1915/1968, p. 7; Latini, 2016a, p. 27). By employing *cacciare,* Latini thus pulls the reader from the story of Dido's exile back to the tragedy of the Guelfs' exile. It also recalls his allusions to Ovid's exilic works in the *Tresor*, and the references he makes to both the Guelfs' exile and his own in *Tresor* 1.93.3 (Latini, 2007, p. 126).

Latini also illustrates the fourth mode of *captatio benevolentiae* from the case or subject itself (*a causa [a rebus ipsis]*) (Lausberg, 1963/1998, §278, pp. 131–132), locating it within an appeal for mercy: "Il quarto modo è se noi usiamo preghiera o scongiuramento umile et incline, cioè devotamente e con reverenza chiamare merzede con grande umilitade" (Latini, 1915/1968, p. 178) [the fourth way occurs whenever we humbly entreat or ask for mercy; that is, we devoutly and reverently ask for mercy with great humbleness (Latini, 2016a, p. 107)]. Latini adapts this mode of the Ciceronian appeal to the professional context in which he has significant expertise. In these repeated signs of humility, Latini infuses the *captatio benevolentiae a causa* with a diplomat's gestures, recalling his lengthy experience as an ambassador.

To illustrate, he employs two quotations from *Heroides* 7. First, he translates *Heroides* 7.3–6 to describe an entreaty made without the speaker begging: "nec quia te nostra sperem prece posse moueri, / alloquor (aduerso mouimus ista deo) / sed meriti et famam corpusque animumque pudicum / cum male perdiderim, perdere uerba leue est" (Ovid, 1995, p. 61) [I'm not writing to you in the hope that pleas of mine could move you – a god's against this letter I've started. But as I've wasted my kindness, reputation, fidelity and chastity for nothing, wasting words doesn't matter.] (Ovid, 2017, p. 77). In Ovid's original, the accumulation of nouns joined by the conjunction 'que' in *famam corpusque animumque pudicumque* makes Dido's loss of reputation (*fama*) palpable, syntactically and semantically joining her body, her soul, and her purity.

Latini incorporates Dido's speech within his gloss on this fourth mode, writing: "sì come quelle di Dido in queste parole ch'ella mandò ad Eneas: 'Io' disse elle 'non dico queste parole perch'io ti creda potere muovere; ma poi ch'io ao perduto il buon pregio et la castitade del corpo e dell'animo, non è gran cosa a perdere le parole e le cose vili'" (Latini, 1915/1968, p. 179) [as in the words Dido sent to Aeneas: 'I am not saying this because I believe I can persuade you, but since I have lost my honour and the chastity of my body and soul, I can well waste a few unimportant words on a few insignificant things' (Latini, 2016a, p. 107)]. Unlike Ovid's original, Latini's translation explicitly indicates that Dido speaks via a letter she had sent (*mandò*), signalling the importance of the *Heroides* as a resource for letter-writing. He also evokes the medieval understanding of Dido as a morally ambiguous figure. On the moral level his translation aligns with medieval ideology: without mention of a god, he implicitly suggests that Dido alone was responsible for her loss of chastity. Indeed, Latini is more interested in her loss of chastity – of body and soul – than that of her honor (*pregio*).

He then immediately quotes from *Heroides* 7.157–158: "per matrem fraternaque tela, sagittas, / perque fugae comites, Dardana sacra, deos" (Ovid, 1995, p. 66) [I beg you, by your mother, by your brother Cupid's arrows, by Troy's sacred gods that are with you in exile (Ovid, 2017, p. 81)]. These lines embody the intensity of Dido's rhetorical argumentation, which, while derived from the *Aeneid,* is in Ovid 'intensified, exaggerated, and given additional rhetorical color' (Jacobson, 1974, p. 87).

Latini renders Ovid's Dido's lines as "Ma scongiuramento è quando noi preghiamo alcuna persona per Dio o per anima o per avere o per parenti o per altro modo di scongiurare, sì come Dido fece ad Eneas: 'Io ti priego' dissa ella 'per tuo padre, per le lance et per le saette de' tuoi fratelli e per li compagnoni che teco fuggiro, per li dei e per l'altezza di Troia' etc'" (Latini, 1915/1968, p. 179) [On the other hand, a plea occurs whenever we plead either in the name of God, for our soul's sake, to obtain something, or in the name of our relatives, as Dido did when she addressed Aeneas, saying, 'I plead in the name of your father, of your brothers' powerful weapons, of the companions who left Troy with you, of the gods and of the greatness of Troy,' etc] (Latini, 2016a, p. 107). Significantly, Latini changes mother to father, reflecting the importance of the patrilinear line in the Middle Ages, and thereby erases Aeneas's family lineage, including his mother Venus. He increases the number of brothers, reflecting a feudal military interest, and, separating matters of love from war, overlooks Aeneas' brother, Cupid. He also omits the reference to Dardanus's gods, problematic for a medieval Christian audience. However, he also insists on the greatness of Troy, a trope very familiar to in the Middle Ages, and especially in Italy, where the interest for ancient history, and especially Trojan, often came in

response to contemporary politics (Zaggia, in Ovid, 2009, Vol. I, pp. 13–14). [Consider too Filippo Ceffi, who translated Guido della Colonne's *Historia destructionis Troiae* (1287) in the same years (1324–1325) that he translated the *Heroides* (see Zaggia, in Ovid, 2009, Vol. I, p. 144).] Here again, Latini's intervention in the *Heroides* re-situates Dido's appeal, rendering it accessible for medieval readers.

There are several conclusions we may draw from this analysis.

First, because persuasion was an integral feature of the notary's public role in the governing and diplomacy of the *comune*, and because in Italy rhetorical practices took place in the vernacular, translations, and not only of rhetorical material, were valuable for the notary. Indeed, the vernacular use of rhetoric is specific to Italy, where rhetoric was tied to the teaching of law, where students were expected to enter into contemporary political and administrative debates, and where notaries progressively began using the vernacular in diplomacy (Segre, 1968–1970, vol. 1: pp. 121–123, vol. 2: pp. 171–175). But Latini is particularly notable for positioning his activity of translating, as much of these Ovidian epistles as of Ciceronian rhetoric, within the rhetorical practices used by notaries, and thus anticipates the 'explosion of translation activity' by notaries in Trecento Italy (Cornish, 2011, p. 2).[21] Latini's translated quotations of the *Heroides* serve as illustrative examples for notarial practice associated with both the *ars dictaminis* and the *ars arengendi*; rhetoric, then, guides his translation of these literary letters. Conversely, Latini also models how to marshall the *Heroides'* construction of pathos as an instrument of persuasion, recalling how Giovanni da Viterbo made a place for emotion in political discourse in his *De regimine civitatum* (Copeland, 2021, pp. 203–240).

Second, as illustrations of how to construct persuasive language, his translation of these quotations from the *Heroides* may be considered as much a part of Latini's rhetorical patrimony as his translations of Ciceronian rhetoric. They present a resource in the vernacular for notarial practice, offering, moreover, a medieval counterpart to the classical conception of *civitas* (see also Artifoni, 1994, p. 162). In fact, Latini's emphasis on persuasive rhetoric, including that of Ovid, was meant to teach how 'to resolve disputes through verbal sparring rather than physical violence' (Keen, 2016, p. 10), a skill essential for avoiding outright war in the debates of the *comune*. In this, his translations of these quotations from the *Heroides*, like his translations of Ciceronian rhetoric, may thus reflect 'a direct political engagement' (see Milner, 2009, p. 237), which suggests by extension that Latini translated them from a sense not only of literary, but also civic, responsibility (Zaggia, in Ovid, 2009, Vol. I, p. 4).

Notes

1. On the various possible readings of Villani's use of 'politics', including Aristotle's *Politics,* see Najemy, 1994, pp. 33–34. Latini likely had indirect knowledge of Aristotle's *Politics*, which was translated from Greek into Latin by William of Moerbeke ca. 1260, paraphrased by Albertus Magnus ca. 1265, and commented upon by Thomas Aquinas in the years 1267–1272. On the translation history of Aristotle's works, see Dod, 1982; Dunbabin, 1982, pp. 723–724; Schütrumpf, 2014.
2. Latini's conception of rhetoric, as attested in his description of the *tenzone* in *Rettorica* 76.14 (Latini, 1915/1968, p. 146; 2016a, p. 92), also upends Kennedy's division (Kennedy, 1999, pp. 14–15) of 'primary' (oral, civic) and 'secondary' (written and literary) forms of rhetoric. See Cox, 2014.

3. Ovid's influence (especially that of the *Heroides*) on medieval literature has been frequently studied–see Fumo's bibliography (2017)–and is not the focus here. See, along others, Desmond, 1989, 1994, and 2011; Clark et al., 2011; Hardie, 2006; Miller & Newlands, 2014; Taylor & Cox, 2023; Weiden Boyd, 2002; Zaggia, in Ovid, 2009, vol. 1.
4. This episode, which privileges the *Remedia* over the *Ars amatoria* and *Amores,* and Italian over French, also rewrites Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose* (Brownlee, 1997, pp. 258–261; Van Peteghem, 2020, p. 7).
5. On Latini's use of the *volgare* while in France, see Cornish, 2011, pp. 144–145; Keen, 2016, p. 10.
6. The *Heroides* was well known from the twelfth century. On its commentary and *accessus* tradition, see Shooner, 1981; Engelbrecht, 2003; Zaggia, in Ovid, 2009, vol. 1, pp. 164–165; Copeland, 1991, pp. 187–188; 200–201; on Latin imitations, see Salvo García, 2015, p. 49; on its use as a school text, see Hexter, 1986; Black, 2001, p. 120, and 120 n. 382, pp. 247, 249–251.
7. The first French translations of full epistles of the *Heroides* appear as prose interpolations in the Prose V of the *Roman de Troie* (Rochebouet, 2021), conserved in the second version of the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, the oldest extant manuscript of which – British Library BL Royal MS 20.D. I – was most likely made ca. 1425 at the Angevin court of Naples (Constans, 1914; Jung, 1996; Otaka, 2016). If Italian prose translations of the *Heroides* are virtually contemporaneous with the French (see Barbieri, 2005, pp. 44–51; and Barbieri, 2007), at least one manuscript (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Gaddiano reliq. MS 71), containing translations into Italian of four epistles of the *Heroides,* derives from a late thirteenth-century French translation (see Ovid, 2009, vol. I, pp. 223–228). A Castilian translation of ten of Ovid's epistles also appears in Alfonso X's ca. 1270 *General estoria* (Salvo García, 2015, pp. 46–47), composed perhaps only a few years after Latini's stay at Alfonso's court (see *Tesoretto* vv. 123–126; Latini, 2016b, p. 12).
8. The quotations that Latini translates from the *Heroides* were most likely mediated through other sources, including Albertano da Brescia's *Liber de doctrina dicendi et tacendi,* which he quotes at length in book 2 of the *Tresor* (see Carmody, 1948/1998, pp. xxix–xxxi), or *Li Fet des Romains*, which he quotes in book 3 (see D'Agata D'Ottavi in Latini, 2016a, p. 18).
9. Latini may have made use of Hermannus Alemannus's translation of Averroes' middle commentary on *Nicomachean Ethics* (Briggs, 2007, p. 262; following Carmody, 1948/1998, pp. xxviii–xxix); he may have also used Taddeo Alderotti's thirteenth-century Tuscan translation of Alemannus. As Cornish (2011, p. 131), notes, following Gentili, Alemannus's (1243) Latin translation was based on a ninth-century Arabic translation of a compendium composed in Alexandrine Greek before the seventh century. On Alderotti's translation – which was inserted into the *Tesoro* (Cornish, 2011, p. 51) – see Gentili, 2005, pp. 31–49; Marchesi, 1903.
10. The *Moralium dogma philosophorum,* deriving from the French *Moralités des philosophes,* exists in five different Tuscan translations, two of which appear to date to the thirteenth century. Some Tuscan versions of the *Tesoro* replace the seventh book with the Tuscan translation of the *Moralium dogma philosophorum*, known as the *Libro di costumanza* or *Trattato di virtú morali*. See Cornish, 2011, p. 51; D'Agostino, 1979, pp. 580–581.
11. A citation to this passage appears in Matteo dei Libri's *Arringhe* (Libri, 1974, p. 129); Christine de Pizan (2008, p. 312) will quote this passage in her *Livre de la paix* 3.36.
12. The authenticity of lines 135–146 has been disputed; see Michalopoulos, 2020, pp. 250–251, n. 29. Knox (Ovid, 1996, p. 54) includes these lines, Murgatroyd (in Ovid, 2017, p. 60) excises them.
13. The *Roman de Troie* transmitted Dares Phrygius's sixth-century Latin *Historia de Troiae excidio*. The Italian manuscripts of the Prose versions 2 and 3 are late thirteenth century. See Jung, 1996, pp. 19–23; 331–332, 485, 499.
14. For a description of these modes, see Lausberg, 1963/1998, § 274–279, pp. 129–132.
15. The attribution of epistles XVI–XXI to Ovid is debated. See Heymouth, 2015, p. 142, n. 2.
16. Latini refers to the *Chanson de Roland* in his *Tesoretto*, vv. 144–145 (Latini, 2016b, p. 14).

17. These medieval reiterations of the figure of Helen suggest the infinite transposability of the classical past (Gumpert, 2001, p. 122; see also pp. 117–122, 132–142).
18. Dörrie reads *duras,* not *dubias* (Ovid, 1971, p. 110), which suggests an alternative reading that may explain Latini's *graviosi cammini* (Latini, 1915/1968, p. 178).
19. Latini's understanding of Ovid's phrase *hoste sequente* is problematic: he seems to have read *sequente* as referring to Dido as agent.
20. For contemporary vernacular writers of courtly literature, Dido's relationship with Aeneas amounts to a moral misdeed. Dido is the subject rather than object of desire in Chrétien de Troyes's *Erec et Enide*; in the *Roman d'Eneas,* she is a tragic woman whose inappropriate lovesickness leads her to hunt and subsequently couple with Aeneas (Desmond, 1994, pp. 102–103, 108–115).
21. On medieval translation generally, see, among others, Borsari (2020); E. Campbell (2024); E. Campbell and Mills (2012); Galderisi (2011); Galderisi and Vincensini (2017); Stahuljak (2024).

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