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Sermo absentium: Rhetoric, Epistolarity, and the Emergence of Italian Literary Culture

by

Scott Sims Millspaugh

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requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in Charge:

Professor Steven Botterill, Chair
Professor Albert R. Ascoli
Professor Joseph J. Duggan
Professor Frank Bezner

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Abstract

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The goal of this dissertation is to propose a theory for the emergence of Italian literary culture in the *Duecento*, with particular reference to the lyric production of Giacomo da Lentini and Guittone d'Arezzo, as well as to the Dantean literary history of *Purgatorio* XXIV and XXVI. 'Le origini', the label long preferred by Italian literary criticism to describe the period between 1230 and 1300, presupposes a coherent national narrative framed, on one side, by an irrepressible vernacular spirit that defies political fragmentation and, on the other, by Italy's hard-won unification in the nineteenth century. Though Italian studies has done much to undermine this fiction for all periods of Italian literature, significant gaps in scholarship remain for the *Duecento*. This is due to complications arising, first of all, from the traditional division of disciplinary labor, but also from the condition of the literary record, which is limited chronologically to the years around 1300 and geographically to Tuscany and Bologna. A third challenge faced by scholars of the Italian thirteenth century is the overwhelming presence of Dante, whose self-consciously ambitious *Commedia*, along with the *De vulgari eloquentia*, provides the most complete, if problematically teleological, literary history available from the period.

　　　Recent advances in the history of rhetoric – in particular Ronald Witt's *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy* – have opened critical space for a non-teleological *Duecento* that is, nevertheless, acutely aware of Dante's influence. It is within that space that I intend to formulate a theory for the emergence of Italian literary culture that accounts not only for the writing practices of thirteenth-century Italian lyric poets, but also for the Dantean literary history that structures their reception. This dissertation argues that the three traditional movements of early Italian poetry – the *scuola siciliana*, the *siculo-toscani*, and the *Dolce stil nuovo* – can mapped onto the bifurcation of medieval Latin into the 'legal-rhetorical' documentary culture of the communes, which emerged as a result of the Investiture Struggle in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and the revival of Carolingian 'traditional book culture' that accompanied the 'rise of the *signori*' at the end of the thirteenth century. The lyric poetry of the communal period – that of Giacomo da Lentini and Guittone d'Arezzo – results from the importation of Occitan song into a discursive milieu defined by the *ars dictaminis*. The effect of the practical rhetorical arts on the *Duecento* lyric can be seen, on

the one hand, in its epistolary orientation, which is most fully manifest in the sonnet, *tenzone*, and *canzoniere*; and, on the other, in the pessimistic ambiguity of Guittone's *trobar clus*, which foregrounds the troubling polysemy of courtly signifiers. Toward the end of the thirteenth century, however, renewed interest in 'traditional book culture' attends the collapse of the commune, and Dante's *Commedia* disparages the association of Italy's early lyric tradition with the 'municipal' activities of notaries and *dictatores*. Instead, Dante's classicizing tendencies, nourished not only by Brunetto Latini's Ciceronian revival, but also by early Paduan humanism, lead him to reject lyric poetry outright, which brings to a close the first stage of development of Italy's vernacular literary culture.

For Mom and Dad

Contents

Acknowledgements

This has been a long process. Longer, I'm sure all involved would agree, than it should've been. Nevertheless, thanks are owed, and thanks I shall give; for this project could never have reached completion without the discerning criticism and unflagging support – emotional, financial, and otherwise – of a handful of very special people.

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And last, I offer my thanks once more, Mom and Dad, for your unending love. This faltering step, the first of many more, I dedicate to you.

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Abbreviations

CSEL	*Corpus scriptorum eccliasticorum Latinorum*
DDP	*Dartmouth Dante Project*
Inf.	*Inferno*
Par.	*Paradiso*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
Purg.	*Purgatorio*
ST	*Summa theologica*

Introduction

This dissertation is an attempt to re-theorize the development of the *Duecento* lyric within thirteenth-century Italian textual culture. From the notaries and lawyers of Emperor Frederick II's administrative court to the communal chanceries of Tuscany and the intellectual crucible of the University of Bologna, vernacular Italian literary culture emerged between c. 1230 and 1300 after the Occitan love lyric had declined in southern France.[1] Though the two are demonstrably related,[2] the social, economic, and political factors that led to the impoverishment of Occitan court culture – and the attendant exodus to Italy of troubadours like Raimbaut de Vaqueiras and Gaucelm Faidit – are not solely responsible for the birth of Italy's vernacular tradition. Nor was early Italian poetry merely derivative of its Occitan sources, as was the hypothesis of most Italian criticism until at least the latter half of the twentieth century.[3] Rather, I propose that Italian literary culture emerged from the confluence of Occitan song with the two very different Latin traditions described in Ronald Witt's *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of*

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[1] See Phillipe Martel, 'Vers la construction de l'Occitanie' in *Histoire d'Occitanie*, eds Andre Armengaud and Robert Lafont (Paris: Hachette, 1979), 179-255 (pp. 209-210, 215-217), and Ruth Harvey, 'Courtly Culture in Medieval Occitania' in *The Troubadours: an Introduction*, eds Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8-27 (p. 12). The increasing financial hardship experienced by Occitan nobility toward the end of the twelfth century has traditionally been viewed as a result of hereditary practices. Rather than passing patrimonies down to the first-born son, Occitan nobles typically divided land and possessions equally between their children in a system of *coseigneurie*. This, and not the Albigensian Crusade, is the most likely reason for the migration of troubadours out of Occitania at the end of the twelfth century. See William Paden's 'The Troubadours and the Albigensian Crusade: A Long View' in *Romance Philology* 49 (1995), 168-191. For a comprehensive account of the strife between Occitania, northern France and the Papacy during this period, see Joseph R. Strayer's *The Albigensian Crusades* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

[2] The direct relationship between the gradual decline of Occitan culture and the birth of the Italian vernacular tradition is best exemplified by the *oeuvre* of the troubadour Raimbaut de Vaqueiras. Born between 1155 and 1160 near Orange, Raimbaut travelled to northern Italy where he found employ at the court of Montferrat in the 1180s. Supported by Marquis Boniface I, he flourished in Italy until his death in 1207, composing both a multilingual *descort* in Occitan, Italian, Old French, Gascon, and Galician-Portuguese, as well as a *tenso* in Occitan and Genovese. This *tenso* is likely the earliest attestation of any courtly love poetry composed in an Italian dialect and, apart from its great linguistic interest, merits critical attention for its representation of the unlikely importation of Occitan *fin'amors* into an urban Italian setting. See *The Poems of the Troubadour Raimbaut de Vaqueiras*, ed. and trans. Joseph Linskill (The Hague: Mouton, 1964), Emilio Pasquini and Antonio Enzo Quaglio, *Le origini e la scuola siciliana*, 2nd ed. (Bari: Laterza, 1975), pp. 133-138, Furio Brugnolo, *Plurilinguismo e lirica medievale. Da Raimbaut de Vaqueiras a Dante* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1983), Simon Gaunt, 'Sexual Difference and the Metaphor of Language in a Troubadour Poem' in *The Modern Language Review* 83 (1988), 297-313.

[3] Francesco De Sanctis, in his *Storia della letteratura italiana*, ed. Benedetto Croce, 2 vols (Bari: Laterza, 1954) I, writes of the Sicilians: 'Vennero in voga traduzioni, imitazioni, contraffazioni di poemi, romanzi, rime cavalleresche' (p. 11). Giulio Bertoni echoed the same sentiment in 1940, disparaging 'la schiavitù del convenzionalismo e dell'imitazione' of the Sicilians. See 'Imitazione e originalità nei poeti siciliani del primo Duecento' in *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 115, 1-14 (p. 3). Even as recently as 1971, Guido Baldi wrote: 'Anche qui negli anni fra il 1230 e il 1240 cominciano a sorgere imitatori della poesia trobadorica; solo che, a differenza che nel Nord, non viene impiegata l'originaria lingua d'*oc*, ma il volgare locale; non proprio il dialetto nella sua crudezza, ma una sua forma letteraria, depurata e stilizzata, impreziosita dall'apporto di latinismi e di provenzalismi'. *Storia della letteratura italiana*, eds Giovanni Getto, Roberto Alonge, Guido Baldi, and Giorgio De Rienzo (Milan: Rizzoli), p. 33.

Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy.[4] In the three chapters that follow, I argue that the courtly love lyric, which originated as a primarily oral genre, underwent perceptible structural changes when imported into Italian textual culture, be it the 'documentary culture' of communal Italy and the Swabian court or the 'traditional book culture' of Padua's late thirteenth-century humanists. Furthermore, ideological pressure exerted by these two cultures led to opposing strains of literary development in the vernacular. The first, darker strain is a distinctively Italian *trobar clus* that derives from the practical rhetoric of chancery and commune, while the second, classicizing strain is most evident in the *trobar leu* of the *Dolce stil nuovo* and Dante's *Commedia*. In both cases, however, the uniquely Italian art of letter writing, or *ars dictaminis*, provides both a model for the reorientation of the lyric from performance to written correspondence, which is demonstrated by the invention of the sonnet and its incorporation into macrotextual *tenzoni* and *canzonieri*, and the foundation upon which Dante constructs early Italian literary history.

The assertion that Italian vernacular poetry emerged out of a primarily Latinate culture was one of the defining contributions of twentieth-century criticism to the literary historiography of the *Duecento*. From Renaissance humanism until the nineteenth century, Italian literary history was thought to begin with the decline of Latinity during the long, dark centuries of the Middle Ages.[5] The language and learning of ancient Rome deteriorated until the *volgare* was all that remained, at once a shadow and a perversion of the great heights of Roman achievement, and Latin culture would only be resuscitated during the so-called *Renaissance*. This thesis, epitomized by Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1789),[6] was unable to explain what appeared to some late eighteenth-century critics as a conspicuous continuity of Latin culture in non-literary fields, like rhetorical education and church administration.[7] During the next century, however, Romantic criticism sought to correct the classical biases of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, positing the birth of vernacular poetry – at least in France and Germany – as a kind of popular rebellion against clerical high culture. The spontaneous creation of a 'natural literature' resulted from an upwelling of 'native' spirit, which was itself the product of centuries of barbarian intermingling with the Latin remnants of the Roman Empire.[8]

For Italian literature, however, this thesis proved unsatisfactory. Given the influence of troubadour song on the poetry of the *scuola siciliana*, the origins of the Italian tradition appeared a mere echo of the popular cultures of Provence and northern France. Imagining the Sicilian court of Frederick II, with its Arab architecture and Norman heritage, as the exotic

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[4] New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

[5] In his *Stile e critica. Avviamento allo studio della letteratura italiana* (Bari: Adriatica, 1967), pp. 183-194, Giorgio Petrocchi provides a summary of critical approaches to the literary history of the *Duecento* from the Renaissance to the mid-twentieth century.

[6] Ed. David Womersley, 3 vols (New York: Penguin, 1994).

[7] See in particular the third volume of Girolamo Tiraboschi's *Storia della letteratura italiana* , 9 vols (Florence: Molini Landi, 1805-1813). Tiraboschi, the director of the Este family's library in Modena, compiled the first comprehensive history of Italian literature between 1772 and 1782. Understanding 'literature' to mean all written cultural production, Tiraboschi's history emphasizes the continuity between ancient Rome and his contemporary Italy and includes, in its third volume, an extensive treatment of medieval jurisprudence and the founding of the University of Bologna. See Peter Carravetta, 'Historiography' in *Encyclopedia of Italian Literary Studies*, ed. Gaetana Marrone, 2 vols (New York: Routledge, 2007) I, 941-946.

[8] Of particular note here is the *oeuvre* of Gaston Paris. See Petrocchi, *Stile e critica*, p. 185.

playground for French knights en route to the Levant, Francesco De Sanctis writes in his monumental *Storia della letterature italiana*: 'la coltura siciliana avea un peccato originale. Venuta dal di fuori, quella vita cavalleresca, mescolata di colori e rimembranze orientali, non avea riscontro nella vita nazionale'.[9] Instead, De Sanctis positions the true *origini* of Italian literature at Bologna later in the *Duecento*: 'la scienza fu madre della poesia italiana, e la prima ispirazione venne dalla scuola. Il primo poeta è chiamato « il Saggio », e fu padre della nostra letteratura: fu il Bolognese Guido Guinicelli'.[10] Following in the wake of De Sanctis' first attempt at formulating a coherent narrative for the literature of the fledgling nation, a new generation of scholars, weary, perhaps, of the methodological dilemma posed by Romantic notions of indigenous authenticity, turned again to the idea of classical continuity in the Middle Ages.[11] Voicing the concerns of contemporary criticism, Francesco D'Ovidio wrote in 1898:

> In quella età di decadenza, ma non di assoluta barbarie, la tradizione latina era pure la traccia lumiosa a cui tutti gli occhi si volgevano. Basti pensare all'efficacia che doveva avere la liturgia. Erano sì i chierici che componevano i canti liturgici, ma in chiesa non c'era il popolo? non ne usciva con certe melodie e certi ritmi nell'orecchio? non li ebbe ad accompagnare anche con la voce? in latino e in volgare?[12]

Here D'Ovidio opens the possibility for an understanding of *le origini* that accounts for both the vernacular and Latin cultures of medieval Italy, insisting that whatever linguistic and educational divide existed between its clerical and lay populations was permeable. One could, and should, expect considerable cross penetration between the Latin culture of institutional Italy and the popular expression of its agricultural and mercantile classes.

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[9] De Sanctis, *Storia,* p. 11. In its historical context, this reads as nothing short of a crisis for De Sanctis. In the years immediately following Italian unification in 1861, the task of *Storia della letteratura italiana* was to construct the literary history of a non-existent nation. In the introduction to her recent *Pinocchio Effect: on Making Italians 1860-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg identifies the history of post-unification Italy as one of 'a state in search of nation' (p. 1) and writes that De Sanctis' '*Storia della letteratura italiana . . .* was a study that single-handedly constructed the idea of a specifically Italian literary tradition, one that was nevertheless poised on the point of fundamental paradox. While dedicated to proving the existence of an Italian literature, his book nonetheless depends on the basic argument that Italians quite simply do not exist, except as a retroactive *effect* of De Sanctis's book itself' (p. 15). For this reason, it was imperative that De Sanctis disavow the *italianità* of the *scuola siciliana* and *siculo-toscani*; a distinctly Italian literary tradition simply could not derive from a culture so foreign to Italy's 'vita nazionale'. Please see the Epilogue of this dissertation for a more thorough treatment of the problem of *le origini* in the first volume of De Sanctis' *Storia della letteratura italiana.*

[10] De Sanctis, *Storia*, p. 27

[11] Adolf Gaspary's *The History of Early Italian Literature to the Death of Dante*, trans. Herman Oelsner (London: George Bell and Sons, 1901) begins: 'When the Germanic tribes put an end to the Roman empire, it was merely a shadow that they destroyed. But the recollection of the mighty past imparted even to this shadow an imposing grandeur; the Roman name and the mere idea of the Roman state were so powerful that the barbarians bowed before them, even whilst demolishing the reality. That power lasted on, and unceasingly influenced the destinies of Europe in the Middle Ages – those of Italy, indeed, till the most recent times. Traces of the ancient civilisation still remained, however much that civilisation itself was declining. In the Middle Ages a meagre classical tradition never ceased to exist, supplying in later centuries the connecting link for that revival of studies from which modern literary life takes its start' (p. 1).

[12] 'Sull'origine dei versi italiani. A proposito d'alcune più o men recenti indagini' in *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 32, 1-89 (p. 22). D'Ovidio's argument is based on an analysis of medieval Latin metrical forms and the occurrence of traditional meters in the poetry of the *le origini*, like the *contrasto* of Cielo d'Alcamo.

Since the turn of the nineteenth century, Italian criticism has followed D'Ovidio, and every history of early Italian literature must, in some way, account for the influence of medieval Latin culture on the emergence of Italy's vernacular literary tradition. This became an even greater imperative following the publication of Curtius' highly infuential *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* in 1948.[13] In the foreward to the 1953 English translation, Curtius describes the ideological motivation behind his book as a reaction to the small-minded nationalism that led to the horrors of the Second World War:

> It seeks to serve an understanding of the Western cultural tradition in so far as it is manifested in literature. It attempts to illuminate the unity of that tradition in space and time by the application of new methods. In the intellectual chaos of the present it has become necessary, and happily not impossible, to demonstrate that unity. But the demonstration can only be made from a universal standpoint. Such a standpoint is afforded by Latinity. Latin was the language of the educated during the thirteen centuries which lie between Virgil and Dante. Without this Latin background, the vernacular literatures of the Middle Ages are incomprehensible.[14]

Even if Curtius' methodology – and the ideological framework within which it derived – seems, by today's critical standards, too universalizing, too 'humanistic', too muddied by a subjective interest in continuity and harmony,[15] *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* nevertheless made possible the sort of post-national comparative studies that remain a hallmark of the Humanities in the present academy.[16] Curtius effectively dismantled the nationalist discourse that led De Sanctis, almost 100 years earlier, to dismiss the poetry of the *scuola siciliana* as 'too foreign' for inclusion in the history of Italy's literary tradition. He writes:

> A historical concept of Europe is a presupposition for our investigation. Europe is merely a name, a 'geographical term' (as Metternich said of Italy), if it is not a historical entity in our perception. But the old-fashioned history of our textbooks cannot be that. General European history does not exist for it; it sees merely a coexistence of unconnected histories of peoples and states. The history of today's or yesterday's 'great powers' is taught in artificial isolation, from the standpoint of national myths and ideologies. Thus Europe is dismembered into geographical fragments. By the current division into Antiquity, the Middles Ages, and the Modern Period, it is also dismembered into chronological fragments.[17]

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[13] Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon, 1953). The original German edition was published by A. Francke AG Verlag in Bern.

[14] Curtius, *European Literature*, p. viii.

[15] This is one of the points made by Roberto Antonelli in 'Storia e geografia, tempo e spazio nell'indagine letteraria' in *Letteratura italiana. Storia e geografia*, dir. A. Asor Rosa, 3 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1987) I, 2-26.

[16] The inclusion of Curtius' 1953 preface to the English translation of *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* in the recent *Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: from the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*, eds David Damrosch, Natalie Melas, and Mbongiseni Buthelezi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) is evidence of his foundational role in the field of comparative literature.

[17] Curtius, *European Literature*, p. 6.

Curtius' study is thus invested not only in geographical unity, but also in a radical re-evaluation of the traditional periods of European literature. In this way, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* can be viewed as the ultimate fulfillment of the literary-historiographical turn toward Latin continuity that began before the eighteenth century.

This type of comparative approach has had profound consequences for the study of medieval Europe's various vernacular traditions. Following the revelation of Curtius' 'universal standpoint' in the post-war period, other scholars refined his deductive framework by allowing for its disruption in a number of ways.[18] Peter Dronke, notably, revived nineteenth-century 'popular' literary-historiography by grafting it onto Curtius' Latin continuity when he posited the unity of the 'courtly experience' in *Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love-Lyric*.[19] Though Dronke endorses universality as a given,[20] his approach is nevertheless more cautious and more inclusive. He writes:

> What can we know about the beginnings of vernacular love-poetry in Europe? In its ideas and images, what is universal, what is confined to a particular time and place? Where does originality end and mannerism begin? What part do popular traditions play, and what part learned? How are the medieval Latin ranges of thought and poetry related to the first flowering in the modern languages?[21]

Dronke goes on to theorize that particular expressions of love in the medieval courtly lyric are enabled by, though not necessarily derivative of, the 'mystical, noetic, and Sapiential' Latin traditions, and,[22] in so doing, represents the balanced application of Latin and vernacular comparatism that has been a hallmark of Medieval Studies for the last forty years.[23]

Despite its narrower scope, the contributions made by post-war Italian philology to the study of medieval Romance traditions also conform to this model. Aurelio Roncaglia and D'Arco Silvio Avalle, without whom *Duecento* studies would be much impoverished, interpreted the

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[18] This includes the pioneering work of Paul Zumthor, whose *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1972) was influenced both by the Structuralism of Saussure and Jakobson and by his personal connection with the 'Parisian School' in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Though Zumthor embraces European universalism, unthinkable in Medieval Studies without the intervention of Curtius, *Essai de poétique médiévale* is more concerned with the ontology of the medieval text than with its sources. My own approach – and, in particular, the central place afforded the notion of 'open' and 'closed' textuality in the present argument – is indebted to Zumthor and his intellectual descendents. The purpose of this introduction, however, is to present, in brief, the narrative of 'Latin continuity' as it relates to medieval Italian literary history. Chapters 1 and 2 will engage with Zumthor much more explicitly.

[19] New York: Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 3. Dronke attempts to balance what can be described as 'vernacular continuity' – the influence of folk forms of cultural production, now lost to the historical record, and their preservation within the 'literary' vernacular traditions that flowered in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries – with Curtius' Latin continuity.

[20] Dronke states in his preface, however, that the purpose of his study is the interpretation of particular texts and not the elaboration of literary history. See p. vii.

[21] Dronke, *Medieval Latin*, p. vii.

[22] Dronke, *Medieval Latin*, p. 97.

[23] Such a balanced application of Curtius' methodologies is also evident in Dronke's other most influential study, *The Medieval Lyric* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), which treats vernacular production and its folk antecedents much more extensively than *Medieval Latin*.

development of early Italian poetry within the wider context of medieval vernacular culture.[24] Their rigorous textual criticism not only diverted scholarly debate away from tired questions of authenticity and imitation,[25] but also provided a necessary Romance context for scholars focused more exclusively on the early Italian tradition. Gianfranco Contini's *Poeti del Duecento* and Mario Marti's *Poeti del Dolce stil nuovo*,[26] as well as post-war editions of the *Commedia*, *Decameron*, and *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*,[27] regard the literary production of the *Due-* and *Trecento* as an effect of both historically contextualized linguistic forces and material culture. New critical editions of the *scuola siciliana* and Guittone d'Arezzo, in addition to poststructuralist inquiries in the 1980s and 90s into the development of lyric subjectivity and a commitment to text as cultural object, have now completely altered the terrain of *Duecento* studies.[28] 150 years after De Sanctis, scholarship on early Italian poetry has been almost entirely liberated from teleological narratives of national fulfillment and anxiety over imitation.

Despite the fact that I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the present generation of *Duecento* scholars, I remain dissatisfied that no contemporary narrative exists for the emergence of early Italian literary culture that accounts for the intersection of Latin continuity, structural theories of medieval poetics, and geographical particularity. Regarding Giacomo da Lentini, Guido delle Colonne, Bonagiunta or Guittone d'Arezzo from a philological standpoint has doubtless been productive, as Roncaglia and Avalle were able to frame their poetic

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[24] Roncaglia's significant contributions to two histories of Italian literature ('Le origini' and 'La letteratura franco-veneta' in Garzanti's *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. 1 of 9, *Le origini e il Duecento*, dirs Emilio Cecchi and Natalino Sapegno, Milan, 1987-1988, and 'Le corti medievali' in Einaudi's *Letteratura italiana*, vol. 1 of 8, ed. A. Asor Rosa, Turin, 1982-1991) should be read alongside his critical editions of Old French and Occitan poetry (*La chanson de Roland*, Modena, Società Tipografica Modenese, 1947, and *Venticinque poesie dei primi trovatori*, Modena, Società Tipografica Modenese, 1949) and, in particular, his greatest philological contribution to the field: *La lingua dei trovatori. Profilo di grammatica storica del provenzale antico* (Rome: Ateneo, 1965). While still interested in textual criticism (see *La letteratura medievale in lingua d'oc nella sua tradizione manoscritta: problemi di critica testuale*, Turin, Einaudi, 1961, and *Bassa latinità. Il latino tra l'età tardo-antica e l'alto Medioevo con particolare riguardo all'origine delle lingue romanze*, Turin, Giappichelli, 1968-1971), Avalle's commitment to semiotics and participation in the Scuola di Pavia led to the publication of *Ai luoghi di delizia pieni. Saggio sulla lirica italiana del XIII secolo* (Milan: Ricciardi, 1977).

[25] See in particular the *oeuvre* of Giulio Bertoni, whose less forward-thinking brand of philology produced such representative works as 'Imitazione e originalità nei poeti siciliani del primo Duecento'.

[26] Milan: Ricciardi, 1960, and Florence: Le Monnier, 1969, respectively.

[27] In particular Giorgio Petrocchi's *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, 4 vols (Milan: Mondadori, 1966-1967), Vittore Branca's *Decameron: Edizione critica secondo l'autografo hamiltoniano* (Florence: l'Accademia della Crusca, 1976), and Contini's *Francisci Petrarchae laureati poetae Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (Paris: Tallone, 1949). My choice of these editions is not to diminish the astute scholarship of other twentieth-century Italian luminaries who produced editions of or comments to these seminal texts, including, but not limited to, Giuseppe Petronio, Marco Santagata, Natalino Sapegno, Cesare Segre, and Antonio Enzo Quaglio.

[28] See Antonelli's *Giacomo da Lentini: Poesie* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1979), Lino Leonardi's *Canzoniere: i sonetti d'amore del Codice Laurenziano* (Turin: Einaudi, 1994), and the three volumes of the impressive *Poeti della scuola siciliana* (Milan: Mondadori, 2008): *Giacomo da Lentini*, ed. Roberto Antonelli, *Poeti della corte di Federico II*, ed. Costanzo di Girolamo, and *Poeti siculo-toscani*, ed. Rosario Colluccia. For lyric subjectivity see the collection *Alle origini dell'Io lirico. Cavalcanti o dell'interiorità*, ed. Roberto Antonelli (Rome: Viella, 2001) and Olivia Holmes' *Assembling the Lyric Self: Authorship from Troubadour Song to Italian Poetry Book* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). Holmes' rejection of Lachmannian textual criticism in favor of particular manuscript versions is highly representative of the new American school of *Duecento* studies, which interprets lyric production within the material context of extant manuscript anthologies. To date, the most fruitful outcome of this approach is Justin Steinberg's *Accounting for Dante: Urban Readers and Writers in Late Medieval Italy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), which interrogates the mercantile reception of late *Duecento* poetry.

production within the unquestionably significant development of western European vernacular culture. In terms of narrating literary history, however, methodologies that emphasize textual materiality have also been startlingly effective: the discovery, for example, that MS Vaticano Latino 3793 was copied in *mercantesca* has far-reaching ramifications for both the manufacture and consumption of literary anthologies in late thirteenth-century Italy.[29] While contextualizing reception is certainly an important aspect of literary history, it still remains unable to describe where the *Duecento* lyric came from in the first place and how it developed. Thus, the questions that I wish to address in this dissertation are the following: 1) what formal characteristics distinguish thirteenth-century Italian poetry from twelfth-century troubadour song? 2) what cultural factors led to the possibility for such a distinction? 3) how do these cultural factors govern the evolution of the early Italian lyric in the *Duecento*; and 4) how can this evolution be narrativized historically to provide a satisfactory theory for the emergence of early Italian literary culture?

The responses I offer in the following pages were formulated by close reading particularly significant troubadour and early Italian lyric texts within a framework provided by recent advances in the history of rhetoric. In her introduction to *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, Virginia Cox describes the traditional perception that classical rhetoric was 'neglected, fragmented, or muted' in the Middle Ages and only 'revived in something like its ancient form during the Italian Renaissance'.[30] The

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[29] See Armando Petrucci, "Le mani e le scritture del Canzoniere Vaticano" in *Canzonieri della lirica italiana delle origini*, ed. Lino Leonardi, 4 vols (Florence: Galluzzo, 2001) IV: *Studi critici*, 25-41.

[30] Eds Virginia Cox and John O. Ward (Boston: Brill, 2006), p. xv. Though Cox's output has primarily focused on rhetoric in the Renaissance (*The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary Dialogue in its Social and Political Contexts, Castiglione to Galileo*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), her 'Ciceronian Rhetoric in Italy, 1260-1350' in *Rhetorica* 17 (1999), 239-288 and 'Ciceronian Rhetorical Theory in the *volgare*: A Fourteenth-Century Text and its Fifteenth-Century Readers' in *Rhetoric and Renewal in the Latin West 1100-1540: Essays in Honor of John O. Ward*, eds Constant J. Mews, Cary J. Nederman, and Rodney M. Thomson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 201-226 are both useful for the medieval period. As part of a re-evaluation of the usefulness of rhetoric that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s and following closely in the wake of James J. Murphy (especially *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: a History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974, and his essays collected in *Latin Rhetoric and Education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), Cox, along with a half dozen other literary scholars and historians of rhetoric, has sought to recuperate the medieval rhetorical tradition. See Martin Camargo in *Ars dictaminis / ars dictandi* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991) and *Essays on Medieval Rhetoric* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012); Mary Carruthers in *The Book of Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 'Boncampagno at the Cutting-edge of Rhetoric: Rhetorical *Memoria* and the Craft of Memory' in *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 6 (1996), 44-64, and *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Rita Copeland in *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) and 'Ancient Sophistic and Medieval Rhetoric' in *Latin Grammar and Rhetoric: from Classical Theory to Medieval Practice*, ed. Carol Dana Lanham (New York: Continuum, 2002), 258-283; Kathy Eden in *Hermeneutics and the Rhetorical Tradition: Chapters in the Ancient Legacy and Its Humanist Reception* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); Marc Fumaroli in *L'Âge de l'éloquence. Rhétorique et 'res literaria' de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique* (Paris: Michel, 1994); Peter Mack in 'Rediscoveries of Classical Rhetoric' in *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rhetoric*, ed. Erik Gunderson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 261-277; Brian Vickers in 'Rhetorical and Anti-Rhetorical Tropes: On Writing the History of *elocutio*' in *Comparative Criticism: a Yeark Book*, vol 3, ed. Elinor S. Shaffer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 105-132 and 'The Recovery of Rhetoric: Petrarch, Erasmus, Perelman' in *History of the Human Sciences* 3 (1990), 415-441; and John O. Ward in 'From Antiquity to the Renaissance: Glosses and Commentaries on Cicero's *Rhetorica*' in *Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory*

quintessentially medieval arts of letter writing, poetry, and preaching – the *artes dictaminis, poetriae,* and *praedicandi* – reveal far more than an uninspired application and incomplete knowledge of Cicero, as was the opinion of most historians of rhetoric until at least the mid-twentieth century. This perception derived from the fact that the two most studied rhetorical treatises in the Middle Ages were Cicero's poorly regarded *De inventione* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* falsely attributed to him,[31] and from the conspicuous absence of *rhetorica* from the liberal arts curriculum of twelfth-century cathedral schools and thirteenth-century universities.[32] The medieval 'decline of rhetoric', then, is only a valid proposition from the perspective of Latin education, traditionally conceived. Indeed, the twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed a boom in rhetorical theory and practice, though in fields far removed from the libraries of Paris or Chartres. The practical rhetoric of the *ars dictaminis* was born from the legal and diplomatic crises of the Investiture Struggle and came into maturity in Italy's papal and communal chanceries two centuries later.[33] Likewise, the *ars praedicandi* was necessitated by the growth of an educated laity,[34] and the *ars poetriae* distilled traditional Latin rhetoric into a sort of prescriptive grammar for a literate audience that, nonetheless, lacked a traditional grammar education.[35] Thus, a type of rhetoric developed in the Middle Ages that, while still

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and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 25-67, 'Rhetoric and the Art of *dictamen*' in *Méthodes et instruments du travail intellectuel au moyen âge: études sur le vocabulaire*, ed. Olga Weijers (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 20-61, and 'Rhetorical Theory and the Rise and Decline of *Dictamen* in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance' in *Rhetorica* 19 (2001), 175-223.

[31] See John O. Ward, 'The Medieval and Early Renaissance Study of Cicero's *De inventione* and *Rhetorica ad Herennium*: Commentaries and Contexts' in Cox and Ward, *The Rhetoric of Cicero*, pp. 3-75. In 1928, C.S. Baldwin wrote: 'Nor were the large philosophy of rhetoric in Cicero's *De oratore*, the great survey of Quintillian [the *Institutio oratoria*], the later medieval guides. The prevalent textbooks were Cicero's *De inventione* and a second book universally attributed to him, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. Though the survival of these minor works may be due partly to the accidents of manuscripts, their persistence has other causes. *De inventione* reduces to summary what the middle age taught least, those counsels of preparation and ordering which ancient teaching had progressively adjusted to oral discourse, and for which the earlier middle age had less opportunity. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, comparatively summary also as to analysis and sequence, is devoted largely to style, and reduces stylistic ornament to a list so conveniently specific that medieval schools made it a ritual ... Medieval rhetoric was generally a lore of style'. *Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic (to 1400): Interpreted from Representative Works* (New York: Macmillan), pp. viii-ix.

[32] Karin Margareta Fredborg, 'Rhetoric and Dialectic' in Cox and Ward, *The Rhetoric of Cicero*, 165-192 (p. 166).

[33] Here and throughout I follow Ronald Witt's convention of referring to the Investiture Controversy as the Investiture Struggle. Witt thoroughly develops the assertion that the *ars dictaminis* emerged from the period of strife between Church and Empire in the decades around 1100, decades that mark the defining transition from earlier Carolingian book culture to Italy's new 'documentary culture'. See his chapter entitled 'The Investiture Struggle and the Emergence of the Communes' in *The Two Latin Cultures*, pp. 181-225. Other historians of rhetoric, such as James J. Murphy, tend to be more cautious in contextualizing the developments of the new medieval arts. He writes, 'Looking back over the development of the *ars dictaminis* from Alberic of Montecassino (1087) to Lawrence of Aquilegia (1300), we can see that the dictaminal movement was essentially an attempt to apply Ciceronian rhetoric to a specific compositional problem – that of writing letters' (*Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, p. 266). Murphy is reticent, however, about why writing letters should have been a concern of Alberic's in the first place.

[34] Michelle Bolduc, 'The *Breviari d'Amor*: Rhetoric and Preaching in Thirteenth-Century Languedoc' in *Rhetorica* 24 (2006), 403-426 (pp. 404-405). For the importance of preaching to the laity in thirteenth-century Italy, see Carol Lansing, *Power and Purity: Cathar Heresy in Medieval Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 16.

[35] There has been no comprehensive study of the *artes poetriae* since Edmond Faral's *Les arts poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe siècle. Recherches et documents sur la technique littéraires du moyen âge* (Paris: Champion, 1924), and secondary material devoted to their study remains scarce. Nonetheless, William M. Purcell's Ars poetriae*: Rhetorical and Grammatical Invention at the Margin of Literacy* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press,

formed from the study of key Ciceronian texts, was radically new – bound as it was to the textual needs created by historical circumstances with no classical precedents – and thus radically different from classical Latin oratory, or *rhetorica*.

The bifurcation of classical rhetoric into 'the theory of persuasive speech' – understood as foundational, along with *grammatica* and *dialectica,* for the *Trivium* in the liberal arts – and the prescriptive systemization of rules for written composition, whether epistolary, predicatory, or poetic, problematizes the Latin continuity espoused by *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*. Even though Curtius acknowledges the 'new development' of the *ars dictaminis* as a rhetorical art, letter writing in the Middle Ages nevertheless had important classical precedents in Pliny, Symmachus, Sidonius, and Cassiodorus.[36] He continues in a dismissive vein: 'what is new in the eleventh century is the attempt to subordinate all rhetoric to the art of epistolary style'.[37] Fortunately, however,

> In the twelfth century there stands beside and above the *ars dictaminis* the antique ideal: rhetoric as the integrating factor of all education. The concept was common to Cicero, Quintilian, and Augustine. It survives in Martianus Capella's idea of arranging a marriage between Mercury and Philology. In the first half of the twelfth century it nourishes the Humanism of the School of Chartres. Its atmosphere pervades the writings of John of Salisbury. Both as man and writer, he is one of the most attractive figures of the twelfth century. Through him we become acquainted with the change in the educational ideal.[38]

From the perspective of contemporary rhetorical historiography, it is clear that Curtius misunderstands the relationship between the *ars dictaminis* and John of Salisbury's 'antique ideal'. They are represented here as antagonistic, and Curtius' language of hierarchy – 'subordinate', 'beside and above' – suggests an 'either/or' scenario, as though upstart *dictatores* threatened the preservation of Antique culture by infiltrating the liberal arts, but were thankfully repelled by sensible humanists.[39]

1996) briefly treats all six *artes poetriae* – including Mathew of Vendôme's *Ars versifiatoria*, produced in Orleans in 1175, and Geoffrey of Vinsauf's verse *Poetria nova*, which was written between 1208 and 1213 – and collects known biographical information on the 'auctores poetarium' in a single section (pp. 53-55). See also: Marjorie Curry Woods' recent *Classroom Commentaries: Teaching the* Poetria nova *across Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010), Ernest Gallo's *The* Poetria nova *and its Sources in early Rhetorical Doctrine* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), and O. B. Hardison, Jr. and Leon Golden's *Horace for Students of Literature: The* Ars poetica *and its Tradition* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1995). The *Poetria nova* is also included in Murphy's *Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts* under 'The New Poetics' (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 27-108

[36] This is not to exclude the letters of Seneca and Cicero, which would become important models for the early humanists in Padua and for Petrarch later in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

[37] Curtius, *European Literature*, p. 76.

[38] Cutius, *European Literature*, pp. 76-77.

[39] It should come as no surprise, then, that *dictamen*'s only significant contribution to medieval culture was the confused multiplication of literary discourse, in Antiquity regarded as unitary, into prose, rhymed prose, metrical verse, and rhythmic verse, each with its own set of regulations (p. 149). Curtius' poor view of the *ars dictaminis* was, no doubt, a reproduction of the early modern bias first outlined by Petrarch, whose *Epistolae familiares* attempt to recuperate the classical tradition of epistolography at the expense of the 'new' rhetorics of the Middle Ages. See Ronald Witt, 'Medieval *Ars dictaminis* and the Beginnings of Humanism: A New Construction of the Problem' in

In reality, the practical rhetorical arts of letter writing, poetry, and preaching occupied radically different discursive milieux than the *rhetorica* of Martianus Capella and should not be understood as mutually exclusive. In *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy*, Ronald Witt offers a timely update of Curtius' Latin continuity by mapping the terrain of Italy's textual cultures.[40] He writes:

> Essential to my analysis of Italian Latin culture is the fact that Italy, in contrast to the rest of Europe, had essentially two cultures , which from the tenth century became increasingly well defined: on the one hand, the traditional book culture, dominated by grammar and including the corpus of Latin literature of the ancient educational curriculum together with the liturgical and patristic heritage of the late ancient Christian Church; and, on the other, a legal culture, which developed in two stages. First came the culture of the document, which the Carolingian conquerors found already active in the *regnum*; and second, a new book culture, centered on the Justinian corpus and spawned by the documentary culture, which emerged in the course of the eleventh century. The development of the *ars dictaminis* (the art of letter writing) and the discipline of canon law in the twelfth century, both of which were immediate outgrowths of the Investiture Struggle, served to reinforce the legal culture and to augment the grip the legal mentality had on Italian intellectual life.[41]

By charting where and when medieval Italian 'documentary culture' and 'traditional book culture' overlap, Witt provides the framework for a new interpretation of medieval Italian literary culture that takes into account both the 'universal standpoint' of Latinity and the specificity of the social, economic, and political circumstances that shaped the particular discursive formations of the *Duecento*.

My dissertation takes its start from the supposition that Witt's hypothesis is correct. I believe, to borrow a formulation from Curtius, that without this Latin background, the vernacular literature of Italy is incomprehensible. Not only is the Occitan courtly lyric demonstrably altered by its contact with Italian textual culture, but early Italian poetry evolves in ways determined by the cultural alignment of its practitioners. I argue that the 'practical' rhetoric of the *ars dictaminis* governed the production and circulation of lyric poetry through much of the *Duecento*. The theory and practice of letter-writing, necessary for the administration of Empire, Church, and commune, imbued the lyric expression of troubadour song with a new rhetorical orientation most evident in the sonnet, which was invented by the

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Renaissance Quarterly 35 (1982), 1-35 (pp. 28-35) and the essays collected in Part VI of the recent *Petrarch: A Critical Guide to the Complete Works*, eds Virginia Cox and Armando Maggi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), particularly 'Petrarch's Epistolary Epic: *Letters on Familiar Matters* (*Rerum familiarum libri*)', 309-320.

[40] Witt's initial interest in the medieval origins of Italian humanism began with an investigation of fourteenth-century Florentine intellectual culture: *Coluccio Salutati and his Public Letters* (Geneva: Droz, 1976) and *Hercules at the Crossroads: the Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1983). Convinced that the origins of Renaissance Humanism could be traced earlier still, Witt then produced *'In the Footsteps of the Ancients': the Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Boston: Brill, 2000), which should be read as a companion-piece to *The Two Latin Cultures*.

[41] Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures*, pp. 3-4.

clerks and lawyers of Frederick II's imperial court and developed, by the time of Dante, into a sophisticated tool for poetic correspondence. By 1270, however, pride in rhetorical utility, such as that expressed by Boncompagno da Signa a century earlier, gives way to a revival of Ciceronian rhetoric in the protohumanism of Brunetto Latini. This classicizing shift in discursive milieu, together with the new Bolognese Aristotelianism, both contextualizes the development of what Dante will later define as the *dolce stil nuovo* and, along with his exposure to late thirteenth-century Paduan humanism, provides the basis for his rejection of the 'municipal', rhetorically complex poetry of Guittone d'Arezzo.

In the first chapter, entitled 'Troubadours and the *Scuola siciliana*', I argue for the exemplarity of Giacomo da Lentini's 'Madonna, dir vo voglio'. Rafaelle Pinto has written that this foundational *canzone*, the first reproduced in the late thirteenth-century anthology Vaticano Latino 3793, indicates 'i contenuti essenziali, e quindi le principali linee di svolgimento, della tradizione lirica italiana',[42] even though its first two stanzas are a translation of Folquet de Marselha's 'A vos, midontç, voill retrair'en cantan'. The importance of Giacomo's translation, however, is revealed by the formal characteristics that distinguish it from Folquet's original. Its theme of expressive failure, for example, emerges through a sequence of rhymed words that cluster around first-person pronouns and verbs, a phenomenon that indicates, in my view, a connection between the speaker's subject position and the impossibility of face-to-face communication with his addressee. When compared to Guilhem IX's 'Farai un vers de dreit nïen', which I analyze in the first half of the chapter, this connection appears to be generated by the instability of *dire*, which means both 'to compose' and 'to sing', but also 'to tell' or 'to say', as in modern Italian. For the troubadours, the act of composition and the act of performance, represented by *trobar* and *faire*, are understood as separate, and Guilhem's *canso*, one of the earliest of the troubadour corpus, clearly privileges the enunciation of its message over its content. Though this leads to a particular set of problems for the speaker of 'Farai un vers' – namely, the subjective indeterminacy produced when live performance for a court audience obviates the needs for sincere expression – he is nonetheless able to communicate. In the second half of the chapter, I then offer a reading of 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', which was written by a notary steeped in the 'documentary culture' of Federick II's administrative court. For Giacomo da Lentini, composition and enunciation are collapsed into a single expression, *dire*, which indicates a kind of absent speech. Thus, the separation of subject from object that occurs on a formal level in the *canzone* represents the literal separation of speaker from addressee in the context of the written poetic message. In this way, the physical absence of 'Madonna' creates a tension that can only be resolved by way of a conscious re-orientation of the communicative function of courtly love poetry.

This re-orientation takes as its model the *ars dictaminis*. In my second chapter, entitled 'Textual Culture and the Early Italian Lyric', I argue that the compromised lyric subjectivity of a writing poet, indicated by the expressive failure of the speaker in 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', finds its voice in the sonnet. This new lyric form, widely considered an 'invention' of Giacomo da Lentini, should be viewed as the poetic manifestation of twelfth and thirteenth-century Italian

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[42] Raffaele Pinto, 'La Parola del Cuore' in *La poesia di Giacomo da Lentini. Scienza e filosofia nel 13⁰ secolo in Sicilia e nel Mediterraneo occidentale. Atti del Convegno tenutosi all'Università autonoma di Barcellona. 16-18, 23-24 ottobre 1997* (Palermo: Centro di Studi Filologici e Linguistici Siciliani, 2000), 169-191 (p. 169).

textual culture, which was characterized by the functionality of the new notarial and epistolary rhetorical arts. The sonnet substitutes, in most cases, direct appeal to a female love-object for quiet contemplation, whether on the nature of love or on matters of natural philosophical interest. Most significantly, however, the sonnet was used, from its inception, as poetic correspondence. *Tenzoni*, such as the exchange of sonnets between Giacomo da Lentini and the Abbot of Tivoli, indicate the essential epistolarity of the new lyric form and situate its development as a kind of dictaminal poetry. The new communicative function of the sonnet, furthermore, is also attested by its aggregation in macrotextual *canzonieri*, such as that produced by Guittone d'Arezzo and preserved in MS Laurenziano-Rediano 9. By way of sonnet collections, writers are able to construct poetic debates between fictive speakers – such as the personae of a poet-lover and his female love-object – in a way that resembles juridical debate. Thus the epistolary function of the sonnet is still in play, but elaborated in a completely fictitious framework that obviates the need for poems to be *sent* or *received* like real letters.

Even though the sonnet derives from thirteenth-century rhetorical-legal culture and its epistolary function is constant throughout the *Duecento*, a certain tension nevertheless exists between the poetic output of the Sicilians and Siculo-Tuscans, on the one hand, and Dante on the other. This tension is represented most explicitly in *Purgatorio* XXIV and XXVI, in which Dante voices his disapproval of Giacomo da Lentini and Guittone d'Arezzo through Bonagiunta da Lucca. In my third chapter, entitled 'Rhetoric, Obscurity, and Dantean Literary History', I argue that the anxiety Dante exhibits in the *Divine Comedy* – over not just the poetry of his lyric forebears but also his own, earlier lyric output – can be mapped onto the history of Italian textual culture described by Ronald Witt. In the first section of the chapter, I address Guittone d'Arezzo's obscurity from the perspective of the 'rhetorical-legal mentality' that defined Italian intellectual life throughout the communal period. Guittone's ambiguity and virtuosic rhetorical displays, which can be understood as an evolution of Occitan *trobar clus*, disrupt communication in a way that threatens the absolute signification of Dante's ontotheology. In the second section of the chapter, I then read Dante's representation of rhetoric in the *Divine Comedy*, metaphorized by Bonagiunta's knot in *Purg*. XXIV, within the context of the late thirteenth-century classicizing shift described by Witt. Positioned at the crossroads between the practical rhetoric of 'documentary culture' and the resuscitation of 'traditional book culture', Dante reframes early Italian literary history by way of Augustinian hermeneutics. Textual interpretation is perhaps the most important aspect of Dante's salvific journey, and rhetoric for the sake of rhetoric, which Dante understands as the *raison d'être* of Guittone's lyrical ambiguity, is contrary to the divine purpose of language. Thus, the great poet abandons the courtly love lyric altogether and effectively severs vernacular Italian poetry from its legal-rhetorical roots.

Finally, in the epilogue to this dissertation, entitled 'The Problem of *Le origini* in Francesco De Sanctis' *Storia della letteratura italiana*', I interrogate the notion of origins as a problematic for histories of the emergence of Italian literary culture. Recent scholarship, and particularly that of Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, has demonstrated that the Italian criticism and literary-historiography of the 1870s functioned primarily as an apparatus for state building, an ideological consequence of the well-known Liberal assertion: "L'Italia è fatta. Restano da fare gli

italiani".[43] First among its strategies, at least as conceived and executed by Francesco de Sanctis in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, was the rigorous exclusion from Italy's new literary tradition, if not its history, of all texts thought to be too foreign, too exotic or too removed from 'la vita reale'. The courtly love lyrics of the s*cuola siciliana*, the obscurity of Guittone d'Arezzo, and the philosophical contemplation of the early *Dolce stil nuovo* are thus pushed to the margins of Italy's literary history and summarily divested of their status as originary. De Sanctis then struggles to position Dante's *Commedia* as the true point of origin for Italian literature, but in so doing evacuates all meaning from the concept of origins. Furthermore, the biases exhibited by De Sanctis' literary history are also virulently anti-rhetorical, as nineteenth-century perceptions of literary 'sincerity' and 'authenticity' preclude the acceptance into the Italian canon of any poetic text redolent of poseur-like artificiality. However, as demonstrated by the three chapters of my dissertation, Italy's early literary culture was born from the confluence of a foreign poetic tradition and the 'rhetorical-legal mentality' that dominated intellectual life during the communal period. It is thus imperative that scholars of the *Duecento* lyric dismantle the remaining vestiges of Risorgimento critical thought and embark on a thorough reassessment of early Italian literary culture from precisely the perspective that De Sanctis rejects: the uniquely medieval, and uniquely Italian, development of practical rhetoric.

A NOTE ON *SERMO ABSENTIUM*

Before turning to the main body of my dissertation, a brief explanation of its title seems fitting. During the course of my graduate studies, my primary research goal has been to generate a satisfactory theory to account for the transformation of the Occitan courtly lyric in its thirteenth-century Italian context. Influenced by Sarah Kay's *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry*,[44] my initial attempt at interpreting the early Italian lyric focused on Giacomo da Lentini's development of a writing subject position in 'Madonna, dir vo voglio'. This reading, however, was largely ahistorical, and I took for granted that troubadour poetry was oral, early Italian poetry was written, and proceeded to find evidence for this difference in Giacomo's foundational *canzone*. Despite the fact that the first and second chapters of this dissertation are heavily indebted to these more formalist analyses, the goal of this dissertation has been explicitly literary-historical. That is to say, I have attempted to historicize the early Italian lyric in such a way that 'writing' is its defining characteristic, that which separates Giacomo and Guittone and Cavalcanti and Dante from Guilhem IX, Marcabru, Bernart de Ventadorn, and Arnaut Daniel. I believe that 'writing' and the concerns of written expression have left formal traces in the lyric poetry of the *Duecento*, and my project has been to tell the story of those traces.

In the course of my research, I discovered the rich history of the *ars dictaminis* and became acquainted with the innovative work of Virginia Cox, John O. Ward, Rita Copeland, and others who have led the charge against traditional conceptions of rhetoric in the field of medieval and early modern history. I then decided – having received excellent advice from my dissertation committee – that medieval rhetoric, in general, and the *ars dictaminis*, in

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[43] Massimo d'Azeglio, *I miei ricordi*, ed. Alberto M. Ghisalberti (Turin: Einaudi, 1971), p. 1867.
[44] New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

particular, would provide the framework I needed to historicize 'writing' in the early Italian lyric. At that point, while researching dictaminal theory, Giles Constable furnished me my title. In *Letters and Letter-Collections*, he writes that the 'essence of the epistolary genre, both in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, was not whether a letter was actually sent but whether it performed a representative function'.[45] This function can be described as the signification of speech when oral communication is made impossible by time or distance. In this way, 'the letter was thus regarded as half of a conversation or dialogue between the sender and the addressee, and it involved a quasi-presence and quasi-speech between the two'; it was, as Constable paraphrases Ambrose of Milan, 'sermo absentium quasi inter presentes'.[46]

This trope has a long and storied history. The formulation seems to originate from the comic playwright Sextus Turpilius in the first century CE, who writes that a letter 'sola res est, quae homines absentes praesentes facit' ('is the only thing that makes absent men present').[47] Nearly three centuries later, St. Jerome quotes Turpilius in his excoriating letter to Niceas (*Ep.* 8),[48] a friend who corresponds only infrequently, and reframes the trope in *Ep.* 29 in terms of *amicitia*.[49] Ambrose, too, regards epistolary discourse as a conversation between absent friends, writing in *Ep.* 66:

> There is no doubt that letter-writing was invented that we might hold a sort of converse with the absent, . . . whereby is really produced a sort of image of actual presence, even though they are separate in body; for by such offices love attains its growth, just as it is augmented by our mutual letters between ourselves.[50]

Not until 1534, however, was 'sermo absentium' coined by the prolific Spanish humanist, Juan Luis Vives, who wrote: 'Epistola est sermo absentium per litteras' ('A letter is speech between those absent').[51] Constable's error presumably derives from Vives' elaboration on this point:

> [The letter] was invented to convey the mental concepts and thoughts of one person to another as a faithful intermediary and bearer of a commission. 'The purpose of the letter', said Saint Ambrose to Sabinus, 'is that though physically separated we may be united in spirit. In a letter the image of the living presence emits its glow between persons distant from each other, and conversation committed to writing unites those

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[45] Turnhout: Brepols, 1976, p. 13.

[46] Constable, *Letters*, p. 13.

[47] *Turpilii comici fragmenta*, ed. Ludovica Rychlewska (Leipzig: Teubner, 1971), 213. See also Michèle Lowrie, *Writing, Performance, and Authority in Augustan Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 214.

[48] Andrew Cain, *The Letters of Jerome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 28.

[49] 'Epistolare officium est de re familiari aut de cotidiana conversatione aliquid scribere et quodammodo absentes inter se praesentes fieri' ('We are obliged, in letters, to write about something personal or commonplace and, in so doing, to make present those absent from us'). Latin text cited from *CSEL* 54.

[50] 'Epistolarum genus propterea repertum, ut quidam nobis cum absentibus sermo sit, in dubium non venit . . . ut vere inter disjunctos corpore quaedam imago referatur praesentia: his enim adolescit officiis amor, sicut tuis ad me, aut meis ad te augetur litteris'. *PL* 16, 1054. Translation from *The Letters of S. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan* (Oxford: Parker, 1881), p. 400. This passage is, apparently, what Constable had in mind, as Ambrose, in reality, never wrote the words 'sermo absentium quasi inter presentes'.

[51] *De conscribendis epistolis*, ed. and trans. Charles Fantazzi, in *Selected Works of J. L. Vives*, gen. ed. C. Mattheeussen, 8 vols (Leiden, Brill: 1987-2006): 3, p. 22.

who are separated. In it we also share our feelings with a friend and communicate our thoughts to him'.[52]

'Sermo absentium', then, indicates a kind of epistolary ontology, which is distinct both from 'speech', construed as direct address between two or more present speakers, and 'writing', construed (broadly) as communication between an absent writer and a mostly unidentified audience of anonymous readers. 'Sermo absentium', or 'speech' transmitted over time and space, is thus a middle way between the immediacy and intimacy of the spoken word and the absence implied by writing. It is, in other words, speech that is not speech and writing that is not writing; it mediates between the two and thus describes the kind of personal communication that occurs in correspondence between parties that are, nevertheless, absent. I believe, moreover, that this communicative mode accurately describes the passage from twelfth-century troubadour song to thirteenth-century Italian poetry, which pulls Occitan orality into the ambit of writing. The *Duecento* lyric, however, is not 'writing' in the way that Aquinas' *Summa theologica* or even Dante's *Commedia* is 'writing'. Instead, it is epistolary in nature and should thus be regarded as a type of 'sermo absentium'; even if thirteenth-century Italian poetry was never actually *sent* and *received* as correspondence, it nevertheless transmits a courtly enunciation across time and space to, very frequently, a known correspondent and, in this way, conforms to the epistolary function described by Giles Constable.

For this reason, the following chapters have been elaborated under the aegis of *sermo absentium*. Even though only one chapter, '*Tenzoni* and *Canzonieri*', directly addresses epistolarity in the early Italian lyric, the other two – 'Troubadours and the *Scuola siciliana*' and 'Rhetoric, Obscurity, and Dantean Literary History' – are nevertheless still concerned with the 'written' status of their textual objects. Because the goal of this dissertation project has been to historicize the early Italian lyric as 'writing', and because 'writing' in medieval Italy was largely governed by the practical rhetoric of the *ars dictaminis*, I feel that *sermo absentium* accurately reflects the new literary history I present herein. And so I offer: Sermo absentium: *Rhetoric, Epistolarity, and the Emergence of Italian Literary Culture*.

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[52] 'In hoc enim ea est reperta, ut conceptus animi et cogitata aliorum ad alios fida mandati interpres at nuntia perferat. "Epistolarum usus est", inquit D. Ambrosius ad Sabinum, "ut disiuncti locurum intervallis affectu adhaereamus, in quibus inter absentes imago refulget praesentiae et colluctio scripta separatos copulat, in quibus etiam cum amico miscemus animum et mentem ei nostram infundimus"'. Latin text and translation from Fantazzi, *De conscribendis epistolis*, pp. 22-23. Vives' citation of Ambrose comes from *Ep.* 49 and can be found in *PL* 16, 991.

Troubadours and the *scuola siciliana*

At its most fundamental, the difficulty inherent in theorizing early Italian poetry derives from questions of distinction. A cursory glance at *Le fonti provenzali dei poeti della scuola siciliana* reveals the source for much early twentieth-century hand-wringing over imitation: most, if not all, of the earliest Italian lyric production was adapted or directly translated from troubadour 'originals'.[1] Perhaps the clearest example of this is Giacomo da Lentini's 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', which, as the first *canzone* copied in MS Vaticano Latino 3793, is often regarded as the first poem of the tradition.[2] Despite the fact that even contemporary scholars discern in 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' 'i contenuti essenziali, e quindi le principali linee di svolgimento, della tradizione lirica italiana',[3] its first two stanzas are a translation of Folquet de Marselha's 'A vos, midontç, voill retrair'en cantan'.[4] Leaving aside questions of performance and writing for a moment, and beyond simple linguistic difference, how does one distinguish these two stanzas? Both poems enunciate the conventional courtly desire for reciprocated love from a haughty, disdainful lady, and both poems use almost identical language to do so: 'vas l'arguogll gran' becomes 'inver' lo grande orgoglio', 'Donc muer e viu?' becomes 'Dunque mor'e viv'eo?' and 'a vos, dompna, c'ieu am' becomes 'per voi, donna, cui ama'. Rafaelle Pinto's declaration that 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' indicates both the essential thematics and principal lines of development for the entire Italian lyric tradition is astounding in the face of these similarities. If Giacomo's *canzone* is an imitation of Folquet's 'A vos, midontç', why is it afforded such a place of prestige in discussions of the origins of Italian literature?

  In this chapter, I will make a case for the importance of Giacomo da Lentini and the poetry of the *scuola siciliana* by offering *explications de texte* of Guilhem IX's 'Farai un vers' and 'Madonna, dir vo voglio'. I argue that the poetic effects deployed by these poems reveal a preoccupation with the absence or presence of their fictional addressees and, thus, of their

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[1] Aniello Fratta, Le fonti provenzali dei poeti della scuola siciliana. I postillati del Torraca e altri contributi (Florence: Le Lettere, 1996).

[2] This distinction is largely unfounded. 1230 to 1250 are the dates generally given for Giacomo da Lentini, recognized as the first of the poets of the *scuola siciliana* for the primacy accorded him in MS Vaticano Latino 3793. Five notarial documents from this period bear Giacomo's signature. Two from 1233 were penned 'per manus Iacobi de Lentino notarii et fidelis nostri scribi', and a third and fourth 'per manus Iacobi notarii'. Another autographed document dating from 1240 contains similar wording. These were all issued in Sicily and southern Italy: Palermo, modern-day Enna, Messina, and Basilicata, and other evidence suggests that Giacomo was later present at Frederick's court in Tivoli in 1241. See Roberto Antonelli's introduction to both *Giacomo da Lentini: Poesie* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1979), pp. ix-xvi, and the first volume of *I poeti della scuola siciliana*, *Giacomo da Lentini* (Milan: Mondadori, 2008), pp. xix – xx, as well as Frede Jensen, ed. and trans., *The Poetry of the Sicilian School* (New York: Garland, 1986), pp. xxv – xxvii. December 13th 1250 was the date of Frederick's death and thus closes the period of literary production thought to have been encouraged by the emperor. See David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (London: Allen Lane, 1988), p. 406.

[3] Raffaele Pinto, 'La Parola del Cuore' in La poesia di Giacomo da Lentini. Scienza e filosofia nel 13° secolo in Sicilia e nel Mediterraneo occidentale. Atti del Convegno tenutosi all'Università autonoma di Barcellona. 16-18, 23-24 ottobre 1997 (Palermo: Centro di Studi Filologici e Linguistici Siciliani, 2000), 169-91 (p. 169).

[4] See p. 34 below for the first two stanzas of 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' and 'A vos, midontç, voill retrair'en cantan'.

real, historical audience. When read in the context of its performance and transmission, the courtly lyric from twelfth-century Occitania to thirteenth-century Italy emerges as a literary form particularly sensitive to its communicative function. Giacomo da Lentini was a notary in the administrative court of Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen and, accordingly, was a professional *writer* rather than a professional *performer*. Though there is little material evidence that can corroborate thirteenth-century Italian lyric poetry as written, I argue that the formal characteristics that distinguish 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' from its source text indicate that its speaker's subject position is that of a writer. Subject and object are separated formally in the *canzone* – 'io' and 'voi' dominate alternate stanzas and rarely intermingle - and thus mark out courtly expression in a context of writing as abortive. The formal estrangement of subject from object in Giacomo's poetic discourse, which reflects the actual circumstance of written lyric production in its thirteenth-century Italian context, generates the need for a reorientation of lyric expression. This reorientation, manifest in the invention of the sonnet, will then be the focus of Chapter 2, 'Textual Culture and the early Italian Lyric'.

I. GUILHEM IX AND THE RIDDLE OF PRESENCE

Even though troubadour poetry had flourished in the swath of southern France from Poitiers to Marseilles from as early as the 1090s,[5] only eight of the ninety-five extant manuscripts that contain troubadour poetry can be dated to before the thirteenth century.[6] Astonishingly, only nineteen of these manuscripts were produced in Occitania, while fifty-two were produced in Italy, including seven major *chansonniers* that were compiled in the latter half of the 1200s.[7] In other words, more than half of the extant troubadour manuscripts are Italian in origin, while almost twenty percent of the most important *chansonniers* are roughly contemporaneous with the poetic activity of the *scuola Siciliana* (fl.1230 – 1250), Guido Guinizzelli (fl.1250 – 1276), Guittone d'Arezzo (fl.1250 – 1294) and Guido Cavalcanti (fl.1275 – 1300).[8] In this context, the production of troubadour poetry as cultural artifact can, and should, be seen as constituting part of whatever is meant by *le origini*. To be more precise: the chronological gap between the composition of troubadour song and its inscription in the *chansonniers* must be accounted for when attempting to theorize the emergence of the Italian tradition. Despite the continuing

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[5] Guilhem de Peiteus (1071-1127) is the earliest known troubadour. Extant documentation attests to Guilhem's composition of songs upon his return from the first Crusade in 1101, though he was more than likely active as a troubadour before this date. See Gerald A. Bond, *The Poetry of William VII, Count of Poitiers, IX Duke of Aquitaine* (New York: Garland, 1982).

[6] Clovis Brunel catalogues a total of 376 literary manuscripts in Occitan in his *Bibliographie des manuscrits littéraires en ancien provençal* (Paris: Droz, 1935). See also William Paden's essay 'Manuscripts' in *A Handbook of the Troubadours*, eds F. R. P. Akehurst and Judith M. Davis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 307-333.

[7] Of the remaining twenty-four manuscripts, fourteen were produced in northern France and ten in Catalonia (Paden, 'Manuscripts', p. 309). See also Martín Riquer, *Los trovadores: historia literaria y textos*, 3 vols (Barcelona: Planeta, 1975) for the thirteenth-century Italian *chansonniers* (vol. 1, pp. 12-14). Paden also notes that Manuscript D, housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Estense in Modena, including a scribal reference to 1254, is perhaps a later thirteenth-century copy of a lost original (p. 308).

[8] Riquer places the number of major *chansonniers* at forty-two (*Los trovadores*, vol. 1, p. 125).

popularity of Lachmannian textual criticism throughout the twentieth century,[9] scholarly consensus now supports the hypothesis that most troubadour poetry was composed mentally, transmitted orally, and only committed to writing during the period that witnessed the compilation of the great thirteenth-century anthologies.[10] Beyond the relatively late date of the *chansonniers*, this hypothesis is, in my mind, confirmed by scholarship on the sometimes radical textual variance of particular songs from one anthology to the next, by the visual evidence provided by illustrations in Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.819, and by references to oral composition in the songs themselves.

In his influential *Essai de poétique médiévale*, Paul Zumthor outlined a theory of textual mobility for a vast body of medieval literature that defied Lachmann's idea of the original, authoritative manuscript. Zumthor noticed a high degree of variance in manuscript copies of anonymous, or lesser known *trouvères*, as opposed to the relative stability of copies in different manuscripts of the work of more famous poets, such as Charles d'Orleans. This variance, or *mouvance*, was due, Zumthor surmised, to the essential 'open textuality' of late medieval poetry in the vernacular. Unlike for classical authors, or medieval works in Latin, vernacular poetry in the twelfth century formed a 'vaste texte virtuel et objectif',[11] mostly co-created by generations of composers and performers who exercised no authorial control over the songs they invented or transmitted. Specific iterations of songs performed by individual *trouvères* were simply one step in the constant evolution of the poem as open text. This explains, Zumthor concluded, why so much textual variation exists from one manuscript copy of a song to the next: in such an open culture of poetic transmission, there exists no one 'correct' version, but rather many versions that are equally valid and equally interpretable.

Amelia Van Vleck argues, however, that this theory of *mouvance* is too formalist to be applied in its entirety to the corpus of troubadour lyric. For Zumthor, the majority of *trouvères*

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[9] This is particularly true for the Italian philologists. See, for example, D'Arco Silvio Avalle's *Letteratura medievale in lingua d'oc nella sua tradizione manoscritta. Problemi di critica testuale* (Turin: Einaudi, 1961).

[10] In this regard, criticism of troubadour lyric has moved away from what Sarah Kay calls the 'autobiographical assumption', which was the dominant model of interpretation until the mid-twentieth century. Kay writes in *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) that this model 'consists in assuming the "I" of an individual text refers in some way or other to its supposed author and the ideas and feelings expressed there are in some sense his or hers' (p. 2). Thus, much like in De Sanctis' assessment of the early Italian poets, the great troubadour scholar Alfred Jeanroy establishes 'sincerity' as the primary criterion for judging a song's inherent quality in *La Poésie lyrique des troubadours* (Paris: Didier, 1934). This judgment is only possible, though, if one affords primacy to the written text and assumes that the troubadours were poets, interested first and foremost in written self-expression, before they were performers. Subsequent troubadour scholarship, however, particularly in the wake of Paul Zumthor's *Essai de poéque médiévale* (Paris: Éditions du Sueil, 1972), *Langue, texte, énigme* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975), and *Introduction à la poésie orale* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1983), as well as Michel Zink's *La subjectivité littéraire. Autour du siècle de saint Louis* (Paris: PUF, 1985), has taken for granted the necessary distinction between a troubadour's persona, as presented by the speaker in a particular song, and the troubadour as historical personage. This distinction, furthermore, breaks radically from the 'autobiographical assumption', in that it envisions twelfth-century oral culture and the fact of performance as the primary determinants of meaning for troubadour lyric. In addition to Kay's *Subjecitivty*, the most influential works of scholarship based on this approach are Simon Guant's *Troubadours and Irony* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Amelia Van Vleck's *Memory and Re-Creation in Troubadour Lyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), and Olivia Holmes' *Assembling the Lyric Self: Authorship from Troubadour Song to Italian Poetry Book* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

[11] Zumthor, *Essai*, p. 82.

were imitators who simply positioned pre-existing stylistic elements or motifs into new arrangements. The poetic tradition itself, 'valeur-maîtresse de la culture médiévale', was far more important than the individual poets to which it gave rise.[12] In response to this 'mechanistic' view, Van Vleck writes:

> To include Occitan poetry in the *poésie formelle* described by Guiette, Dragonetti, and Zumthor, we would have to ignore a fundamental difference between the troubadours and the trouvères: originality and individuality were of prime importance to the troubadours, whereas the trouvères strove primarily to refine convention.[13]

Despite the fact that Van Vleck, in my opinion, places too much emphasis on 'originality and individuality' as natural categories of poetic value, she nevertheless successfully updates Zumthor's theory of *mouvance* by insisting on its operation within the context of oral transmission . Some poets, she argues, resist the mechanics of open textuality by consciously *closing* their texts; that is to say, they employ the elaborate *trobar clus* style or use other devices to ensure the faithful transmission of their songs. She writes:

> When we think of 'closed poetry' in the context of transmission, we might expect something that 'excludes' part of its potential audience by restricting who may hear it, who can understand it, or who can learn and retransmit it. Or a poem might 'close itself' by 'drawing to a close,' declaring itself 'entire' or 'complete' and admitting no further lines of verse, no new strophes. Its lines might interlock, shutting out revisions: in this case, poems whose stanzas are linked would be more 'closed' than *coblas unissonans*, since linked stanzas restrict transposition. And yet, because they serve as a mnemonic aid, linked stanzas make a song *plus leu ad aprendre*, 'easier to learn'.[14]

Such textual closure leads to the relatively faithful transmission of songs by Raimbaut d'Aurenga or Arnaut Daniel, for example, while songs by troubadours who practice *trobar leu*, such as Jaufre Rudel or Bernart de Ventadorn, are subject to wild variation in the *chansonniers*. Van Vleck's conclusions are not only stunningly original, but also prove that the transmission of troubadour song until its codification in the thirteenth century was primarily oral.

Other scholarship, particularly that of Sylvia Huot, has taken a more visual approach in its demonstration of the fundamental orality of troubadour poetry.[15] Of the ninety-five extant troubadour manuscripts, nine include illustrations and miniature paintings.[16] One of these, Pierpont Morgan Library MS M.819, was likely produced in Padua toward the end of the thirteenth century, and contains both historiated initials, marking each section devoted to an

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[12] Zumthor, *Langue*, p. 163.
[13] Van Vleck, *Memory*, p. 4.
[14] Van Vleck, *Memory*, p. 134.
[15] See in particular *From Song to Book: the Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987) and 'Visualization and Memory: the Illustration of Troubadour Lyric in a Thirteenth-Century Manuscript' in *Gesta* 31 (1992), 3-14.
[16] Paden, 'Manuscripts', p. 311.

individual troubadour with a miniature portrait, and detailed marginal illustrations of the narrative events described in some poems.[17] Huot notes that, in M.819 at least, even the

Figure 1: Folquet de Marselha in MS M.819 (fol. 63), Pierpont Morgan Library

portraits of troubadours that suggest writing foreground the act of performance. Folquet de Marselha (fol. 63), for example, is seated at a writing table with a long scroll of parchment, but spreads his arms in wild gesticulation as he gazes out toward some unseen audience beyond the margins of the text.[18] Even if this image of Folquet leaves aside any reference to music, per se, it nonetheless indicates that 'lyric composition is conceived at once as an act of writing and as an inspired performance'.[19] This is of particular interest with respect to Folquet, who, as a member of the 'third generation' of troubadours, flourished late in the twelfth-century (1178 – 1195) and, as the future Bishop of Toulouse, was undoubtedly literate.[20] Folquet can be seen, then, as a figure of the 'writing troubadour' for the compilers of the thirteenth-century *chansonniers*, but this illustration demonstrates how such a figure is nonetheless contextualized by the historical fact of the primacy of troubadour orality and performance.

Beyond both notions of *mouvance* and the visual evidence provided by such richly illustrated *chansonniers* as Pierpont Morgan M.819, the texts of some troubadour songs

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[17] Huot, 'Visualization and Memory', p. 3.

[18] Huot, *From Song to Book*, p. 4. Figure 1 reprinted from the frontispiece of *From Song to Book*.

[19] Huot, From Song to Book, p. 4.

[20] After a life-altering conversion experience in 1195, Folquet joined the Cistercians and, having purportedly placed his wife and children in monastic institutions, ascended the ranks of the order until 1205, when he became Bishop of Toulouse under Pope Innocent III. Folquet was also a central figure in the Albigensian Crusade and was instrumental in Innocent's plan to curb heresy and corruption in the Diocese of Toulouse. See Nicole M. Shulman's *Where Troubadours Were Bishops: the Occitania of Folc of Marseille (1150-1230)* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

contain references to composition that situate sound and melody in relation to the words of a song. Marcabru, for example, writes:

> Fez Marcabruns los moz e·l so.
> Auiaz qe di (XXXV.3-4)[21]

In this instance, melody (*so*) is given no precedence over the composition of words (*moz*). This is not true for Bernart Marti, however:

> De far sos novelhs e fres
> so es bella maestria
> e qui belhs motz lassa e lia
> de belh art s'es entremes. (V.73-6)[22]

Here musical composition comes first and the words later. *Motz* are bound (*lassa* and *lia*) after the fact to a pre-existing melody. Inventing a tune is 'bella maestria', while the molding of words to complement that tune constitutes 'belh art'. Though both are necessary for the troubadour lyric, verbal composition is clearly placed in a subordinate position to the musical fact. This is perhaps best expressed by yet another troubadour, Jaufre Rudel, who writes:

> No sap chantar qui so non di,
> Ni vers trobar qui motz no fa (IV, version 1.1-2)[23]

In the case of Bernart Marti and Jaufre Rudel, new, fresh melodies and the act of singing are clearly positioned as the first priorities for a troubadour, while verbal creation is regarded as ancillary, though still highly relevant, to the quality of a song. These poets thus establish a paradigm for composition that seems to be universally applicable to the Occitan lyric: the troubadour is first and foremost a composer of sounds; he is also a poet in a more traditional sense, certainly, but his art consists, in the first place, of song and performance.[24]

   The latter half of the thirteenth century, then, represents a period in which the troubadour corpus, composed as song and transmitted orally, is codified in a set of anthologies that nevertheless insist on the primacy of speech and performance. This is the context within which Occitan lyric generates meaning and that also allows its interpretation to be guided by the set of philosophical concerns voiced by Deconstruction, from Roland Barthes in *Writing Degree Zero* (1953) to Jacques Derrida's three most influential works, *Speech and Phenomena*,

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[21] 'Marcabru made the words and the melody. Listen to what he says'. Text and translation from *Marcabru: A Critical Edition*, eds and trans Simon Gaunt, Ruth Harvey, and Linda Paterson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000).

[22] 'È bella maestria comporre nuove e fresche melodie e chi allacia e lega belle parole si adopera in bell'arte'. Text and translation from *Il Trovatore Bernart Marti*, ed. and trans. Fabrizio Beggiato (Modena: Mucchi, 1984).

[23] 'He cannot sing who makes no tune, and he cannot write songs who makes no words'. Text and translation from *The Poetry of Cercamon and Jaufre Rudel*, eds and trans George Wolf and Roy Rosenstein (New York: Garland, 1983).

[24] 'Qui motz no fa' does not necessarily refer, however, to written composition. 'Faire motz' may equally refer to a certain mastery of language and not to the act of setting words down on a page.

Of Grammatology, and *Writing and Difference*, all published in 1967.[25] From the perspective of Barthes, the history of troubadour criticism points out a profound anxiety over the status of Occitan lyric as Literature; while the *oeuvres* of certain troubadours are enclosed within the *chansonniers* and are very often marked off by *vidas* and *razos*, the demonstrable open textuality of twelfth-century troubadour culture ruptures the illusion of this textual closure. In other words, Occitan lyric is, historically, pure *text* and can be regarded as Literature only when one accounts for the peculiar strategies employed by scribes, illustrators, and book-binders in the thirteenth century to force its conformity to notions of authorship. The materiality of troubadour poetry as text, however, is further complicated by the fact that these same *chansonniers* reproduce, in their construction, the hierarchy of speech over writing that governs the troubadours' assumptions about composition in their own time. The fact that both Bernart Marti and Jaufre Rudel conceive of words as merely attached to sound and melody is unsurprising from a Derridean point of view, since western culture from Socrates and Plato has privileged speech over writing. In the words of Barbara Johnson, the inimitable late reader of Derrida: 'speech is seen as immediacy, presence, life and identity, whereas writing is seen as deferment, absence, death, and difference'.[26] This tendency to hierarchize speech over writing and presence over absence is nowhere more apparent than in the troubadour corpus.

I contend, then, that Occitan lyric, as it was codified in manuscript form in the latter half of the thirteenth century, can and should be interpreted as a site of crisis between speech and writing. Guilhem de Peiteus, ninth duke of Aquitaine and the earliest known troubadour,[27] outlines the contours of this crisis in his 'riddle poem', 'Farai un vers de dreit nïen' (IV). This *canso*, attested in only two manuscripts,[28] has eight stanzas that follow the metrical scheme: 8a, 8a, 8a, 4b, 8a, 4b, where the 'b' rhyme is the same in every stanza (-*au*). The first stanza reads:

> Farai un vers de dreit nïen;
> Non er de mi ni d'autra gen,
> Non er d'amor ni de joven
> Ni de ren au,
> Qu'enans fo trobatz en durmen
> Sus un chivau. (1-6)[29]

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[25] The editions used here are Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, trans Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977) and Jacques Derrida, *'Speech and Phenomena' and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), and *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978).

[26] Barbara Johnson, 'Writing' in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, 2nd ed., eds Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 39-49 (p. 43).

[27] See n. 5 above.

[28] These are C and E, both of which were produced in Occitania in the fourteenth century and are now housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. For textual notes to this song, please see Bond, *The Poetry of William VII*, p. 63.

[29] 'I'll do a song about nothing at all; / It won't be about me nor about others, / It won't be about love nor about happiness / Nor about anything else, / For it was composed earlier while (I was) sleeping / On a horse'. Text and translation reprinted from Bond, *The Poetry of William VII*.

Guilhem's initial positive declaration that he will compose a song (*farai un vers*) is immediately compromised by an explosion of negativity. Not only will the song be about absolutely nothing (*dreit nïen*), but the speaker also specifies, through a chain of negative conjunctions (*non . . . ni*), that it will treat none of the traditional topics of the courtly *canso*: it will neither be autobiographical (*non er de mi*) nor address his relationships with others (*ni d'autra gen*), and it will presume to espouse nothing about love (*non er d'amor*) or youth (*ni de joven*).[30] The 'riddle' of the song, then, is this: 'What is it *about*, if it's about nothing at all?' The answer, I believe, is that the song is not a riddle, but rather states with great precision its subject, which is *nïen*.[31] Throughout its eight stanzas, the *canso* unfolds as a meditation on nothingness that frames the metapoetic binary of *faire/trobar*, so important to the Occitan lyric, as a play between presence and absence.

The last two lines of the first stanza, 'Qu'enans fo trobatz en durmen / Sus un chivau' can be read in direct opposition to the *canso*'s first line. The verb *trobar*, from which *troubadour* derives, developed by way of medieval Latin *tropāre* from Greek τρόπος, which can mean a 'way, manner, or method', 'turning' or 'musical style'.[32] Its sense as 'linguistic turn' gives modern English 'trope', while *trouver* and *trovare* now mean 'to find' in French and Italian. Of all the possible meanings of *trobar*, the specific derivation of the Occitan word is more than likely from medieval liturgical practice, in which a 'trope' was 'a newly composed text with music added to an established liturgical chant'.[33] A 'trope', then, is a *supplément*, in its fullest Derridean sense: it both adds to a pre-existing text, in this case the original chant, and *substitutes* for it, because the new text includes but also replaces the original. Textual evidence suggests that *trobar*, in the troubadour corpus, is most often analogous to 'musical composition', but if the logic (or ambiguity) of supplementarity can indeed be mapped onto its function as a signifier in the Occitan lyric, then its correspondent 'original' in Guilhem's song must be represented by the verb *faire*. 'Farai un vers . . . qu'enans fo trobatz' presents a puzzling contradiction, however: in the narrative time of the song, the speaker claims that composition occurred prior to performance, which is, of course, the expected sequence of events. The structure of the stanza, though, privileges the active *farai* over the passive *fo trobatz*, not only in voice but in position. This contradiction can only be resolved if we regard *faire* as a supplement to *trobar*, as the latter is clearly marked off as the lower term in its particular binary hierarchy. Even if *trobar* derives from the liturgical 'trope', performance here substitutes for and replaces the act of composition.

That the circumstance of composition sets in motion the song's negative discourse attests to the ambiguous relationship of *trobar* to *faire*. The *canso* was composed, but also 'found', while the speaker was sleeping on a horse. The subordinating conjunction *que* (in

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[30] I prefer the traditional translation of *joven* as youth to Bond's use of 'happiness'.

[31] In this I follow the conclusion of Joseph Duggan in 'Guilhem IX of Aquitaine's Poem about Nothing (PC 183, 7) and the Generation of Meaning' in '*Contez me tout': Mélanges de langue et de littérature médiévales offerts à Herman Braet*, eds Catherine Bel, Pascale Dumont, and Frank Willaert (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006), 813-23.

[32] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, 'τρόπος' in *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968).

[33] Charles M. Atkinson, 'Tropes to the Ordinary of the Mass' in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Joseph R. Strayer, 14 vols (New York: Scribner, 1982-2004), xii (1982), p. 209. See also Alejandro Enrique Planchart, 'Trope (i)' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, eds Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (New York: Grove, 2001).

qu'enans, 'since earlier') establishes such passive composition as the cause of the song's meaninglessness: 'I will sing a song about nothing, since earlier it was composed while (I was) sleeping on a horse'. Furthermore, the speaker's somnolence, comedic value aside, indicates a lack of presence that is directly opposed to the full presence declared by *farai*. The not-quite-absence of sleep, the condition of the speaker upon the song's composition, leads, in the following two stanzas, to an additional series of negative statements that compromise his integrity as a subject:

> No sai en qual hora·m fui natz,
> No soi alegres ni iratz,
> No soi estranhs ni soi privatz,
> Ni no·n puesc au,
> Qu'enaisi fui de nueitz fadatz
> Sobr'un pueg au.
>
> No sai cora·m sui endormitz,
> Ni cora·m veill, s'om no m'o ditz;
> Per pauc no m'es lo cor partitz
> D'un dol corau (7-16)[34]

Not only does the song deliberately negate meaning, but this negation corresponds to the instability of the speaker's identity. His forgetfulness of everything constitutive of self (circumstance of birth, state of mind, personal relationships) is emphasized by the repetition of 'No sai', 'No soi' and 'Ni' in a sequence of lines that recalls the insubstantial nature of the song itself. This sequence in the second stanza, however, leads into another assertion about the cause of the speaker's compromised identity: he was enchanted at night on a tall hill ('de nueitz fadataz / Sobr'un peug au'). The traditional interpretation of 'fadatz' as 'enchanted by love' makes sense in the context of the following stanza.[35] The speaker is unaware of his state of wakefulness because he has fallen in love, but the absence or disdain of his love-object causes his heart to break ('m'es lo cor partitz') and drives him to distraction.

At this point, the song could potentially turn to a full rendering of the disdainful lady *topos*, present in so much of the troubadour corpus. As noted above, however, the *canso* is organized, first and foremost, around the distinction between *faire* and *trobar* and, as such, goes on to rehearse the ambiguity of supplementarity in its remaining stanzas. The love-object in question here is a 'woman-friend' (*amigua*) that the speaker neither knows nor has ever seen ('non sai qui s'es / C'anc no la vi', vv. 25-26). Not that it matters, however, as he knows yet another lady who is more noble and beautiful than the first, even if she, too, is equally unknown:

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[34] 'I don't know what time I was born, / I am not happy or sad, / I am not a stranger or an intimate friend, / Nor can I do anything about it; / For so I was enchanted at night / Upon a high hill. / I don't know when I am asleep, / Nor when I am awake, if someone doesn't tell me; / My heart is almost split apart / By a heartfelt pain'
[35] Bond, The Poetry of William VII, p. 63.

> Qu'ie·n sai gensor e belazor,
> E que mais vau.
>
> No sai lo leuc ves on s'esta,
> Si es en pueg ho es en pla (34-37)[36]

The nonsense of the *canso* at first turns on the speaker's declaration that it means absolutely nothing, followed by a description of the loss of his subjective awareness and completed by the utter lack of distinction between two female love-objects. This wheel of meaninglessness spins, both structurally and thematically, around 'fo trobatz en durmen', or the act of composition as absent-presence. In the narrative of the song, the speaker cannot distinguish between sleeping and waking, cannot distinguish between his love-objects, cannot even distinguish himself from others because of desire, yet these repetitions of different types of absolute non-meaning or non-difference occur in a sequence that begins with composition. Ultimately, the 'riddle' of the song is easily solved by regarding 'dreit nïen' as the *substance* of composition, or the content of the lyric. As mentioned above, the speaker declares at the outset that the song is about nothing, and so it is: but this *nïen* is comprised entirely of a set of tropes, all definitive of the troubadour corpus, that the *canso* itself regards as merely supplemental to the act of performance.

Just as 'Farai un vers' begins with a declarative that indicates the performer's full presence in the moment of performance, its last stanza turns again to the stage of its recital. The *envoi*, or *tornada*, that seemingly provides closure to the *canso* runs thus:

> Fait ai lo vers, no sai de cui;
> Et trametrai lo a celui
> Que lo·m trametra per autrui
> Enves Anjau,
> Que·m tramezes del sieu estui
> La contraclau. (42-47)[37]

Continuing the cycle of copies and substitutions that governs the rhetorical progression of Guilhem's *canso*, the speaker declares he will send his song to someone, who will send it to someone, who will send it to Anjou, from whence a 'counter-key' ('contraclau') to the last sender's 'box' ('estui') will be returned. Though these lines are more playful, and certainly more ambiguous, than a typical troubadour *tornada*, they nevertheless serve the same function: the subjective atemporality of the speaker's emotional experience gives way in the last stanza to a metapoetic present in which the song is released for delivery to its addressee.[38] It would be

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[36] 'For I know one more gentle and beautiful, / Who is worth more. / I don't know the place where she stays, / Whether it's in the hills or the plains'

[37] 'I've done the song, about whom I don't know; / And I'll send it over to the one / Who will send it for me through another / Toward Anjou, / So that (she) might send me a copy of the key / To her coffer.'

[38] More conventional *tornadas*, such as those found in the *cansos* of Bernart de Ventadorn, usually address a messenger who is to deliver the poem to its interlocutor: 'Ma chanson apren a dire, / Alegret; e tu, Ferran, / porta

wrong, however, to conclude, like most interpreters of the Occitan lyric from the authors of thirteenth-century *vidas* to Alfred Jeanroy, that the mechanics of troubadour *tornadas* correspond to the actual sending and receiving of written text. In the first place, if we ascribe some truth value to the relationship between poet, messenger, and addressee described by the numerous *envois*, the overwhelmingly oral transmission and reception of this poetic corpus still necessitates an oral, and not written, model; in other words, the troubadour might have a *joglar* memorize a song and instruct him on its proper delivery, or performance, at a later date.[39] Though this hypothesis is convincing with respect to the phenomenon of oral transmission, a more sociological approach to troubadour lyric, such as that advanced by Erich Köhler in his seminal 'Observations historiques et sociologiques sur la poésie des troubadours',[40] obviates the need, in the context of performance, to even imagine a female love-object as the real addressee of a song. Köhler understood the *senhal*, most often thought to be a pseudonym for a particular poet's female interlocutor, as concealing the economic exchange between patron and artist. Though his Marxism has been incorporated within and supplanted by subtler poststructuralist readings of courtly love poetry,[41] Köhler's assertion that *fin'amors* 'n'est en dernière instance que la projection sublimée de la situation matérielle et sociale de la basse noblesse' still reveals much in regard to the *tornada*'s function.[42] For if this hypothesis is true, if courtly signifiers can be understood as moving freely between the mirror registers of love and economic exchange, then the performance of a song is privileged over its transmission. In other words, the fullness of its meaning is only intelligible as a function of its delivery to an audience that can guarantee the troubadour's status and livelihood. Sarah Kay writes of performance:

> The role of the performer, and that of the listeners, are in large measure created by the songs, but they also possess an extra-textual reality. The *domna* may well be a rhetorical fiction, but named patrons and other members of the audience are often identifiable historical figures, whose political circumstances may be explicitly alluded to. Similarly, the performer, by his physical presence, and through the activity of singing, coupled

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l·am a mo Tristan' ('Learn to sing my song, Alegret, and you, Ferran, take it to my Tristan', II, vv. 61-63). Text reprinted from Bernart de Ventadorn: *Canzoni*, ed. and trans. Mario Mancini (Rome: Carocci, 2003); my translation.

[39] This is the model most thoroughly endorsed by Van Vleck in *Memory and Re-Creation*: 'It is not at all surprising that a poet, before sending his song off to its destination by way of a *jongleur*, would like to know how it will sound when it gets there' (p. 49).

[40] Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale 7 (1964), 27-51.

[41] See in particular Kay's *Subjectivity* and William E. Burgwinkle's *Love for Sale: Materialist Readings of the Troubadour Razo Corpus* (New York: Garland, 1997). Though deeply indebted to Köhler, both Kay and Burgwinkle argue against the notion that troubadour lyric necessarily subsumes individual subjectivity within collective experience (*Subjectivity*, p. 41, and *Love for Sale*, pp. 16-17).

[42] Köhler, 'Observations', p. 28. This position finds convincing support in Burgwinkle, who reads the troubadour *vidas* and *razos* entirely in light of economic exchange. Regarding the early thirteenth-century troubadour Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, who served at the northern Italian court of Montferrat, Burgwinkle writes that his use of senhals 'would tend to confirm our long-standing suspicion that it was common practice in the troubadour tradition to address songs to patrons of either gender in the person of an unnamed, perfect, and inaccessible woman' (*Love for Sale*, p. 256).

possibly with gestures and mime, provides a visible and social presence that serves to anchor the song to the actual, at least for the duration of the performance.[43]

In this context, then, a conventional *tornada* may be understood not as a reference to any real 'sending' of a song over time and space, but rather as a condensation of its self-consciousness as performance into a postal trope. The troubadour 'addresses' an 'audience', just as one 'delivers' a letter to his 'addressee'. Furthermore, the ambiguity inherent to these terms is most probably necessitated by the actual economic and political circumstances of the troubadour and his court. Thus, the postal trope is not *sermo absentium*, per se, but rather the elaboration of a fictive epistolarity that concretizes the 'here and now' of performance.

In *The Post Card*, Jacques Derrida exploits the slippage between notions of spoken and written address to elaborate on his critique of the logocentrism of western philosophy.[44] The majority of Derrida's meditation is constituted by a series of fictional love letters, called *envois*, written on the backs of hundreds of identical postcards that reproduce an image from the frontispiece of *Prognostica Socratis basilei* in MS Ashmole 304. Derrida ran across the image one day in 1977 at the Oxford Bodleian library and 'stopped dead, with a feeling of hallucination . . . Socrates writing, writing in front of Plato, I always knew it'.[45] The image

Figure 2: Frontispiece of *Prognostica Socratis basilei*
in MS Ashmole 304 (fol. 31v), Oxford Bodleian Library[46]

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[43] Kay, *Subjectivity*, p. 132.
[44] Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987).
[45] Derrida, *The Post Card*, p. 9.
[46] Image reprinted from the frontispiece of *The Post Card*.

appears to invert the student-teacher relationship of the two Greek philosophers just as it problematizes the persistent hierarchy of speech over writing. Derrida continues: 'Socrates, the one who writes – seated, bent over, a scribe or docile copyist, Plato's secretary, no?'.[47] Later, he explains the image as obscene, 'Obsence, understand, in each of its traits':[48]

> I tell you that I see *Plato* getting an erection in *Socrates*' back and see the insane hubris of his prick, an interminable, disproportionate erection traversing Paris's head like a single idea and then the copyist's chair,[49] before slowly sliding, still warm, under *Socrates*' right leg, in harmony or symphony with the movement of this phallus sheaf, the points, plumes, pens, finger, nails and *grattoirs*, the very pencil boxes which address themselves in the same direction . . . *Plato* wants to emit. Seed, artificially, technically. That devil *Socrates* holds the syringe. To sow the entire earth, to send the same fertile card to *everyone*.[50]

Derrida's description of the postcard's obscenity points out the alignment of desire with writing (Plato's erection is an analogue to Socrates' pen in the image), and in so doing exposes the lie of presence. Whereas western philosophy, since the time of these seminal Greeks, has ordered speech on the side of life and identity, the reproduction of knowledge, or the reproduction of this specific body of philosophical knowledge, exists only as a function of writing. This reversal, so evident in the inversion of Plato dictator / Socrates scribe, is also demonstrated by Derrida's *envois* as love letters. Love and desire, which are unthinkable outside the bounds of some present subjective experience, are revealed as merely constructions of writing, or as functions of language: 'and when I call you my love, my love, is it you I am calling or my love?'[51] The full presence of desire is compromised by the endless reproducibility of its expression, a reproducibility emphasized to great effect by Derrida's conceit of writing hundreds of love letters on the backs of identical postcards that themselves illustrate the reversal of the hierarchy of speech over writing.

That speech / presence is 'always already' confused by writing / absence is nowhere more apparent, however, than in Derrida's use of the word *envoi*. In the translator's preface to *The Post Card*, Alan Bass writes that *envoi*, as a noun,

> can mean the action of sending (*envoi de lettres*: the sending of letters), kickoff (as in the start of a football game), something that is sent (especially in the senses of messages, missive, or dispatch), the concluding stanza of a ballad that typically serves as a dedication, and, in the legal sense (*envoi en possession*), the right to enter into possession of an inheritance . . . Every possible play on *envoi* and *envoyer* is exploited throughout. For example, the English 'invoice,' meaning bill of sale, is actually derived from *envoi* (and *inviare*), thus linking the senses of sending, message, and debt. Both

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[47] Derrida, *The Post Card*, p. 9.
[48] Derrida, *The Post Card*, p. 17.
[49] Matthew Paris was the author of *Prognostica Socratis basilei*.
[50] Derrida, *The Post Card*, pp. 18, 28.
[51] Derrida, *The Post Card*, p. 8.

'invoice' and *envoi* are homonyms of 'in voice' and *en voix*: the 'Envois' are written in many voices.[52]

Returning, finally, to the *envoi* of 'Farai un vers', Guilhem's postal trope can be understood as generating meaning in the space that exists between speech and writing, or performance and composition. The speaker's repetition of the verb *trametre* ('Et *trametrai* lo a celui / Que lo·m *trametra* per autrui . . . Que·m *tramezes* del sieu estui') is structured by the chain of indefinite pronouns that constitutes the first three 'A' rhymes in the stanza (*cui*, *celui*, *autrui*). The absolute lack of difference between the two love-objects mentioned earlier by the speaker is thus reiterated by a series of undifferentiated addressees, all whom are notable only for their position in a cycle of sending. The presumed final destination of the song, which is either someone in Anjou or someone represented by that *senhal*, is also not conclusive, as he or she sends something ('del sieu estui / La contraclau') back to the speaker.[53] Every instance of *trametre*, then, leads back to the site of performance. Derrida's playful collapse of *envoi* into *en voix* is fully anticipated by Guilhem's *tornada*, which understands transmission as a closed circuit rather than a linear progression; the song *returns to* the speaker in its fictionalized narrative, but also *turns around* the performer, is enabled by 'his physical presence', his singing, his gestures.[54] In other words, the *envoi* is quite literally *en voix*, a contradiction that allows an interpretation of the song as a meditation on absence as presence, or absence within presence.[55]

'Farai un vers' situates the activity of singing, or the fact of performance, against the circumstances of its composition. With regard to the bewildering proliferation of contradictions and negations in the song, all of which are traces of 'fo trobatz en durmen', the only sure fact is its performance. 'Farai un vers' and 'Fait ai lo vers' side with presence, speech and identity, while 'dreit nïen', the song's subject, finds its place with absence, sickness and death ('Malautz soi e cremi morir', v. 19). The relationship of supplementarity that exists between *faire* and *trobar* is uncertain, however, as the song inverts the expected sequence of composition followed by performance, just as Derrida's postcard inverts the expectation of Socrates then Plato, or speech then writing.

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[52] Bass, *The Post Card*, pp. xx-xxi.
[53] Worth noting is the indeterminate gender of Guilhem's ultimate addressee. 'Del sieu' agrees with the masculine 'estui', and there are no other grammatical indications of gender in the final lines of the song. Bond notes, however, that, following convention, we should assume 'her coffer' rather than 'his coffer' (*The Poetry of William VII*, p. 64). In my view, however, the distinction is probably irrelevant, because Guilhem's rhetoric of ambiguity is far more important than the narrative described by the song.
[54] Kay, *Subjectivity*, p. 132.
[55] Also delightful is the notion that a troubadour *envoi* can also be read as *invoice*. For, if Köhler's sociological hypothesis is correct, the *tornada* sung in court is also a request for payment after the fulfillment of a contract (the performance). It is an *envoi* delivered *en voix*, an invoice delivered *in voice*.

II. GIACOMO DA LENTINI'S WRITING SUBJECT

Here, I would like to turn back to another relationship of supplementarity: Giacomo da Lentini's translation and elaboration of Folquet de Marselha's 'A vos, midontç, voill retrair'en cantan'. The question I posed at the beginning of this chapter has yet to be answered: how can 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', a *canzone* whose first two stanzas are a nearly exact translation of a troubadour *canso*, indicate, as Rafaelle Pinto writes, 'i contenuti essenziali, e quindi le principali linee di svolgimento, della tradizione lirica italiana'?[56] The answer, and the assertion upon which this dissertation is founded, is that the formal characteristics of Giacomo's *canzone* reveal the evolution of the troubadour lyric in the context of medieval Italian documentary culture. Even if material artifacts or the historical record have yet to conclusively prove the primary 'orality' of troubadour song or the status of early Italian poetry as written, I believe that the evidence exists within the poems themselves: in the grammar they subvert, in the poetic effects they deploy, and in the subject position inhabited – or not – by their speakers. In my discussion of 'Farai un vers' above, I demonstrated that the act of composition, or *trobar*, is subordinated to performance, or *faire*, and that Guilhem's *envoi* obviates the need for any single addressee, as the poem always returns to the site of its enunciation. Giacomo da Lentini's 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', however, betrays a completely different set of preoccupations that turn, nevertheless, around questions of absence and presence, audience and addressee.[57]

Giacomo da Lentini was a notary in the court of Frederick II Hohenstaufen, Holy Roman Emperor and King of Germany and Sicily. In the eleventh century, Frederick's Norman ancestors had found employ as mercenaries in southern Italy,[58] which represented the border between the medieval Mediterranean's 'three major cultural zones: Latin-Christian Western Europe, the Greek-Byzantine East, and Arab-Islamic North Africa and Spain'.[59] The geo-political unit comprising the island duchy of Sicily, the principality of Capua, and the duchies of Apulia and Calabria had been consolidated and pacified by Richard, a Norman leader in Aversa, and Robert Guiscard, following investitures given them by Pope Nicholas II in 1059.[60] The region was not fully unified, however, until Roger II, nephew of Robert Guiscard, was crowned King of Sicily by

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[56] Pinto, 'La Parola del Cuore', p. 169.

[57] Two important studies that examine the relationship between 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' and 'A vos, midontç' are Aurelio Roncaglia, 'De quibusdam provincialibus translatis in lingua nostra' in *Letteratura e critica. Studi in onore di Natalino Sapegno*, eds Walter Binni et al. (Rome: Bulzoni, 1975), 1-36, and Michelangelo Picone, 'The Formation of Literary Italian: Aspects of Poetic Tradition and Translation in the Thirteenth Century' in *The Italianist* 16 (1996), 5-19. Because the text of 'A vos, midontç' comes to an abrupt halt at the end of the second stanza, Roncaglia and Picone only execute comparisons of the first two stanzas of each poem.

[58] Contemporary sources emphasize the piety of the Normans and posit their arrival in southern Italy as a matter of pilgrimage. Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 11. For an exhaustive history of the early Norman experience in Italy, see John Julius Norwich, *The Normans in the South, 1016-1130* (London: Longmans, 1967), reprinted as the first half of *The Normans in Sicily* (New York: Penguin, 1992). A more recent, and historically exacting, study is Graham A. Loud's *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (New York: Longman, 2000).

[59] Hiroshi Takayama, 'Law and Monarchy in the South' in *Italy in the Central Middle Ages: 1000-1300*, ed. David Abulafia (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 58-81 (p. 59).

[60] Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom*, pp. 15-19.

the anti-pope Anacletus II in 1130.[61] Until the death of his grandson William II in 1189, the Kingdom of Sicily was not only highly centralized and bureaucratic, with a magnificent and powerful royal court in Palermo, but successfully incorporated the region's disparate ethnic and religious groups, including Arab Muslims, Byzantine Greeks, and Latin western Europeans.[62]

The Kingdom of Sicily fell into confusion, however, following the heirless William II's death, and its unity would not be restored until Frederick II, grandson of Roger II by his mother and heir to the German house of Hohenstaufen by his father, attempted to re-impose royal governance following his fourteenth birthday in 1208.[63] Political tensions north of the Alps, which stemmed from a conflict between the houses of Hohenstaufen and Welf over the succession to Henry VI,[64] led to Frederick's assumption of the German crown in 1211, at which point the young king departed from Sicily and would not return until 1220.[65] For the next thirty years, however, Frederick II ruled his 'bureaucratic kingdom in the Mediterranean' by adopting and modernizing the administrative style of the twelfth-century Kingdom of Sicily.[66] Even though his court, no longer based at the Norman palace in Palermo, was highly mobile,

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[61] Hubert Houben, *Roger II of Sicily: A Ruler Between East and West*, trans Graham A. Loud and Diane Milburn (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.50-59.

[62] The hospitality offered by Sicilian King William II to Ibn Jubayr, an Iberian Muslim shipwrecked in the Straits of Messina in 1189 while returning from Mecca, is recorded in a chapter of his travel narrative. He writes of the monarch: 'King William is wondrous for the excellence of his conduct, and for the use he makes of the Muslims in his kingdom. He employs eunuchs, all or most of whom conceal their Islamic faith but follow Islamic law. He places much trust in Muslims and relies on them in his affairs and the most important matters of his work . . . Among the marvels reported concerning him is that he reads and writes Arabic, and his '*alama* [an honorific title] – according to what one of his personal servants told us – is "Praise be to God; it is righteous to praise him".' Translation by Karla Mallette, *The Kingdom of Sicily, 1100-1250: A Literary History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), pp. 149, 150. While Mallette provides select translations from of Ibn Jubayr, a full translation is available in *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. R.J.C. Broadhurst (London: Jonathan Cape, 1952). Arabic critical edition available in *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, ed. William Wright, 2nd edition revised by M.J. De Goeje (Leyden, Holland: Brill, 2007). Mallette notes that, despite the multi-ethnic wonder of William II's court, Ibn Jubayr is also concerned with the hardship experienced by Sicilian Muslims. See *The Kingdom of Sicily*, pp. 1-4. For a full account of the Islamic conquest of Sicily and Muslim life through the end of the twelfth century, see Alex Metcalfe, *Muslims and Christians in Norman Sicily: Arabic Speakers and the End of Islam* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003). It is worth noting, for the purposes of the present chapter, that thirteenth-century Sicily during the reign of Frederick II had changed considerably from the age of Roger II and his heirs with respect to ethnic and religious diversity. By 1220, Sicily had become almost entirely Latin, and Frederick II, though often regarded as a medieval model of tolerance, violently dispatched the Muslim leadership that remained in the western region of the island and deported the Saracen population that remained to the mainland city of Lucera. See Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 144-148, and James M. Powell, 'Frederick II and the Muslims: the Making of an Historiographical Tradition' in *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middles Ages*, ed. L.J. Simon (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 261-269.

[63] Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 106-109. Though twentieth-century scholarship on Frederick II has been produced overwhelmingly in German, Abulafia's biography remains essential for English-speaking students of thirteenth-century Sicily.

[64] This was the same conflict that led to the formation of the Guelph and Ghibelline parties in Italy.

[65] Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 112-131.

[66] Takayama, 'Law and Monarchy', p. 75. Norman administration in the Kingdom of Sicily consisted of a network of local chamberlains and justiciars, as well as highly specialized and hierarchized royal officials: Takayama, 'Law and Monarchy', pp. 66-68. See also pp. 77-81 of Takayama's more extensive *The Administration of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (New York: Brill, 1993).

Frederick's administrators were drawn almost exclusively from southern families cultivated by the crown at the University of Naples to serve as its notaries and lawyers.[67]

It is these notaries and lawyers, then, along with Frederick II himself and Manfred, his son, who comprised the first 'school' of poetry in vernacular Italian, the *scuola siciliana*.[68] Notaro Giacomo da Lentini and his colleagues, including Pier delle Vigne, a master rhetorician and author of Frederick II's *Constitutions of Melfi*, and Guido delle Colonne, the 'Judge of Messina', were a radically different group of poets than their twelfth-century troubadour predecessors. Whether they were powerful lords and kings (Guilhem IX and Alfonso II of Aragon), landed nobility (like Bertran de Born and Raimbaut d'Aurenga), knights (Peire Vidal), or itinerant artists in search of patronage (Marcabru), the troubadours thrived in a socioeconomic context determined, first and foremost, by the life of the court. Despite the fact that political circumstances differed radically from region to region in twelfth-century Occitania,[69] wealth and advantage flowed from all its centers of power, and the entertainment provided by professional troubadours and *joglars* was bound inextricably to economic exchange. In contrast, none of the members of the *scuola siciliana* were professional poets, let alone professional performers. Instead, they were clerks and administrators, bureaucrats active at all levels of regional and imperial government. While Frederick II's *magna curia* was thought by most historians to be a paragon of medieval tolerance, scientific inquiry, and cultural

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[67] One of which was the Aquino family, which produced Rinaldo d'Aquino, one of the members of the *Scuola siciliana*. Abulafia, *Frederick II*, p. 210.

[68] Following the institutionalization of the Italian literary critical establishment by Francesco de Sanctis and Benedetto Croce (see the epilogue to this dissertation for an analysis of De Sanctis' reading of *le origini*), criticism of thirteenth-century Sicilian poetry was either openly hostile to or, at best, apologetic for its imitation of the troubadours. Mustering a defense for the rare ingenuity of the Sicilians, Giulio Bertoni wrote in 1940: 'Ma non è altrettanto noto che in mezzo a un innegabile e freddo tecnicismo, che mortifica l'ispirazione entro schemi rigidi e fissi, si sente non di rado il palpito dell'anima commossa. Imagini iridescenti dànno talora vivacità e splendore a questi antichi versi volgari, e vi si aprono anche fiori luminosi di parole, e il sentimento rompe, qua e là, la schiavitù del convenzionalismo e dell'imitazione, esprimendosi in una lingua mossa, agitata, personale' (from 'Imitazione e originalità nei poeti siciliani del primo Duecento' in *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 115 (1940), 1-14 (p. 3). As recently as 1970, Angelo Monteverdi noted, in *Cento e Duecento. Nuovi saggi su lingua e letteratura italiana dei primi secoli* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1971), that it was 'opinione prevalente' that the Sicilians were simply imitators of the Occitan tradition (p. 282). In the wake of post-nationalist contributions to the study of medieval poetry made by Curtius, Zumthor, and Dronke, as well as the roughly contemporaneous philological advances made in the study of both Occitan and early Italian poetry by Aurelio Roncaglia and D'Arco Silvio Avalle, recent criticism of the *scuola siciliana* has been, on the whole, much more favorable, if still sparse. Scholarship that offers a wide view of the production of Sicilian poetry has been confined to Italian literary histories, most notably Gianfranco Folena's 'Cultura e poesia dei Siciliani' in *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, eds Emilio Cecchi and Natalino Sapegno, 9 vols (Milan: Garzanti, 1987-1988), I: *Le origini e il Duecento*, ed. Natalino Sapegno (1987), 291-372 and Furio Brugnolo's 'La scuola poetica siciliana' in *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, ed. Enrico Malato, 14 vols (Rome: Salerno, 1995-2005), I: *Dalle origini a Dante*, ed. Enrico Malato (1995), 265-337. Beyond these literary historical surveys, critical material has focused almost exclusively on the poetic production of Giacomo da Lentini or has continued in the philological vein of Roncaglia and Avalle, such as Aniello Fratta's 1996 *Le fonti provenzali dei poeti della scuola siciliana*. The most valuable recent contribution made to the study of the *scuola siciliana*, however, was offered by Roberto Antonelli, Costanzo di Girolamo, and Rosario Colluccia in their three-volume *I poeti della Scuola siciliana* (2008), which provides critical editions of and commentary on the entire Sicilian and Siculo-Tuscan corpus.

[69] Ruth Harvey, 'Courtly Culture in Medieval Occitania' in *The Troubadours: An Introduction*, eds Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8-27 (p. 10).

splendor, recent scholarship concedes that the degree of its magnificence was inflated by largely ideological concerns.[70] Reacting primarily against the early twentieth-century historiography of Charles Homer Haskins, Abulafia has revealed that the court of Frederick II, while still cosmopolitan by late medieval standards, was less progressive than the twelfth-century Kingdom of Sicily.[71] This was due, in large part, to the broad scope of the Emperor's interests, tasked, as he was, with bringing to heel the Welf-allied northern city-states and asserting his secular authority over Pope Gregory IX, all the while governing two vast, and separate, geographical regions: Germany and southern Italy. Rather than retreating from public life and living in opulent splendor surrounded by physicians, astrologers, and men of arts and letters, as had Roger II's successors, Frederick II focused his attention and resources on administration, diplomacy, and war.

For this reason, early Italian poetry was born not from the court, but from the university. David Abulafia describes the relative dearth of patronage for Latin literature at the Swabian court, but goes on to write: 'There was one important way in which Latin letters at Frederick's court were developed to a high pitch. Piero della Vigna and his secretaries gave further impetus to the study of rhetoric by composing florid, but for their time very accomplished, orations and letters'.[72] This phenomenon is explained by Ronald Witt in his two studies *'In the Footsteps of the Ancients': The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* and *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy*. Though Chapters 2 and 3 will engage much more thoroughly with Witt's hypothesis, it is necessary, for the moment, to offer a brief summary in order to contextualize the poetic production of Giacomo da Lentini. Witt posits the bifurcation of Latin continuity in medieval Italy into two distinct textual cultures: a 'traditional book culture', which derived from Carolingian educational reform in the ninth century and was revived in northern Italy in the late thirteenth century, and a 'documentary culture', born from the Investiture Struggle of the eleventh and

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[70] This tendency derives from the perception of the Kingdom of Sicily, from the age of Roger II, as a precursor to the modern European nation state. See Paul Oldfield, *City and Community in Norman Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 3-6. Its international character, highly centralized government, and opposition to the universal power assumed by the Pope were thought to foreshadow the long process of federalization that occurred in Britain and France. See Antonio Marongiu, 'A Model State in the Middle Ages: the Norman and Swabian Kingdom of Sicily' in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 6 (1963-1964), 307-320.

[71] *Frederick II*, pp. 251-267.

[72] *Frederick II*, pp. 264-265. For Sicilian and Papal style in the mid-thirteenth century see Helene Wieruszowksi's collected essays in *Politics and Culture in Medieval Spain and Italy* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1971). More recent studies are Ronald Witt's 'Medieval *Ars dictaminis* and the Beginnings of Humanism: A New Construction of the Problem' in *Renaissance Quarterly* 35 (1982), 1-35, 'Boncompagno on Rhetoric and Grammar' in *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 16 (1986), 8-16, and his book-length studies *'In the Footsteps of the Ancients': The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Boston: Brill, 2003), p. 135, n. 47, and *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 414-418. For Frederick's imperial correspondence see *Historia diplomatica Friderici secundi*, ed. Jean Louis Alphonse Huillard-Bréholles, 6 vols (Paris: Plon, 1852-1861), and for Pier delle Vigne see Benoît Grévin, *Rhétorique du pouvoir médiéval: les Lettres de Pierre de la Vigne et la formation du language politique européen (XIIIe-XVe siècle)* (Rome: Bibliothèque des Écoles français d'Athènes et de Rome, 2008).

twelfth centuries,[73] that placed a premium not on classical literature but on the efficacy of notarial and epistolary rhetoric. Despite the fact that imperial Germany was closely associated with the proliferation of cathedral schools across of Alps, where Carolingian educational ideals flourished into a new book culture during the twelfth century, Frederick's court was thoroughly Italian with regard to its discursive milieu. The imperial chancery during Frederick's reign was engaged in often confrontational and intense correspondence with the papal curia, and Pier delle Vigne, in particular – who had been trained in the *ars dictaminis* at the University of Bologna – elaborated the most complex dictaminal style in the history of the art, the *stilus obscurus*. Witt writes:

> Called *obscurus* probably because of the intensive use of the full range of *colores rhetorici* so as to maximize the symbolic potentiality of the language, this style had a complexity in its expression of ideas that often demanded a hermeneutical analysis of the contents in order to determine the intent of the author. As might be expected, the tendency to ambiguity was even greater in private correspondence.[74]

From this perspective, Frederick II and his administrators can be understood as significant players at the apex of Italy's documentary culture in the mid-thirteenth century. Their position not only explains the relative dearth of literary patronage at Frederick's imperial court, but should also be the point of origin for any analysis of Sicilian poetry.

The poetic production of the *scuola siciliana*, then, represents neither an upwelling of native Italian vernacular spirit nor the high-minded pursuit of a culturally progressive ruler, but rather the importation into a highly developed documentary culture of specific forms of vernacular poetry that originated in performance. The intersection of these two discursive modes produces the early Italian lyric. Far from being a mere imitation of 'A vos, midontç, voill retrair'en cantan', Giacomo da Lentini's 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' should be read as the space where oral vernacular and written documentary culture collide, and the tensions produced by this collision indicate the particular ways that the early Italian lyric would develop over the next century. In the subsequent analysis of Giacomo's *canzone*, I will demonstrate that its formal characteristics indicate a profound concern with the deployment of a performative subjectivity, such as that crafted by Guilhem IX, in a written context that lacks any real addressee. The purely fictive construction of the female love object, as opposed to her correlation with a live audience for the troubadours, leads to a failure of the communicative function of the twelfth-century Occitan lyric, which necessitates a re-constellation of the relationship between subject and object.

Folquet de Marselha's *canso*, 'A vos, midontç, voill retrair'en cantan', or at least its two extant stanzas, are either a pair of *coblas doblas* or were the first in a series of *coblas unissonans*. The stanzas are composed of eleven decasyllabic lines with the rhyme scheme *A B B A A C D D C C D* and, unlike most Italian *canzoni*, are not composed of *fronte* and *sirima*.

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[73] In addition to Witt, see Brian Tierney's classic *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050-1300. With Selected Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), as well as Maureen Miller, *Power and the Holy in the Age of the Investiture Conflict: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: St. Martin's, 2005).
[74] Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures*, p. 416.

Giacomo's 'Madonna, dir vo voglio, on the other and, adds three more stanzas to Folquet's original two. All five stanzas are *coblas singulars* divided evenly into *fronte* and *sirima*, with the rhyme scheme *a b a C, d b d C; e e f (f)G, h h i (i)G*. Twelve of the sixteen lines that comprise each stanza are *settenari*, while the last line of each *piede* and *volta* is hendecasyllabic. Lastly, the final line of each *volta* contains an internal rhyme at the seventh syllable, designated as (*f*) and (*i*) in the rhyme scheme above. Beyond the obvious metrical and rhythmic complexity of 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', however, there are other distinguishing formal elements present in its first two stanzas that, I believe, indicate profound compositional differences from its source text. The two most relevant to the present discussion are the semantic weight allotted to end rhymes, as well as to the sound patterns they govern, and the ratio of first- to third-person verbs and pronouns.

The first two stanzas of 'A vos, midontç' and 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' are as follow:[75]

A vos, midontç, voill retrair'en cantan
cosi·m destreign Amors e men'a fre
vas l'arguogll gran, e no·m aguda re,
qe·m mostras on plu merce vos deman,
mas tan mi son consir e l'afan
qe viu quant muer per amor finamen.
Donc muer e viu? Non, mas mos cors cocios
mor e reviu de cosir amoros
a vos, dompna, c'ieu am tan coralmen;
sufretç ab gioi vid'al mort cuisen,
per qe mal vi la gran beutat de vos.

Madonna, dir vo voglio
como l'amor m'à priso,
inver' lo grande orgoglio
4   che voi, bella, mostrate, e no m'aita.
Oi lasso, lo meo core,
che 'n tante pene è miso
8   che vive quando more
per bene amare, e teneselo a Vita!
Dunque mor'e viv'eo?
No, ma lo core meo
12   more più spesso e forte
che no faria di morte   naturale,
per voi, donna, cui ama,
più che se stesso brama,
16   e voi pur lo sdegnate:
Amor, vostra 'mistate   vidi male.

Parer non pot per dig ni per semblan
lo bens ce vos vogll ab...fe
mas niens es so ce vos dic: si·m te
al cor us fiocs que no·s ...
Per cals raisons no·m ausi consuman?
Savi dion e·l autor veramen
qe longincs us, segon drec e raisos
si convertis e natura, don vos
deves saber car eu n'ai eissamen
per longinc us en fioc d'amor plaisen

Lo meo 'namoramento
20   non pò parire in detto,
ma sì com'eo lo sento
cor no lo penseria né diria lingua;
e zo ch'eo dico è nente
24   inver' ch'eo son distretto
tanto coralemente:
foc'aio al cor non credo mai si stingua,
anzi si pur alluma:
28   perché non mi consuma?

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[75] The text of 'A vos, midontç' is reprinted from Fratta, *Le Fonti*, p. 41, and 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' from Antonelli's *Giacomo da Lentini*.

La salamandra audivi
che 'nfra lo foco vivi   stando sana;
32 eo sì fo per long'uso,
vivo 'n foc'amoroso
e non saccio ch'eo dica:
lo meo lavoro spica   e non ingrana.

In the first line of Folquet's *canso*, the two words that most clearly delineate the theme of unrequited love – 'midontç' and 'voill' – fall in the center of the line. Giacomo, however, alters the syntax of his source text and places 'Madonna' and 'voglio' in first and last position. The most consequential effect of this change is that 'voglio', an expression of strong subjective desire, initiates the first stanza's sequence of rhymes, while the infinitive object of 'voglio' – 'dire a voi' – is relegated to a position in the line that is not strongly correlated to either its meter or rhyme. While it seems plausible, even if unverifiable, that Folquet was neither proficient enough a composer of 'moz' nor interested enough in verbal play to join content seamlessly to form, one could just as easily argue that 'cantan' is stressed by 'A vos, midontç' as result of its transmissional context.[76] Either way, the final result of Giacomo's translation of Folquet's first line is the same: the nameless female love-object, Madonna, and subjective desire, voglio, are elevated to positions of structural prominence. The theme of expression introduced by 'dir vo', however, is not only subordinated syntactically, but intervenes between 'Madonna' and 'voglio' and thus reveals the obstacle separating the union of object and subject.

As the first stanza of the *canzone* unfolds, the speaker's clearly defined subject position, indicated by the prominence of 'voglio' in v. 1, becomes troubled by a paraphrase that has no equivalent in Folquet's *canso*. In vv. 5-16, Giacomo constructs a lexical and phonetic sequence that begins with the repetition of 'core' and 'more':

5:   Oi lasso, lo meo core
7:   che vive quando more
9:   Dunque mor'e viv'eo?
10: No, ma lo core meo
11: More più spesso e forte

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[76] The transmissional context being, of course, performance, memorization, oral transmission, and then codification in writing, in exactly the way described by Van Vleck in *Memory and Recreation*. Though Folquet was undoubtedly a 'writing troubadour' (see n. 20 above), convention seems to have demanded an emphasis on song, whether or not 'A vos, midontç' was actually performed. That 'cantan' initiates Folquet's *A* rhyme, followed in v. 4 by 'deman', is nevertheless interesting from the perspective of Köhler's 'Observations historiques e sociologiques'. For Köhler, the language of courtly love codified in troubadour poetry masks the economic exchange between a lord and a performer at his court (see p. **??** above). If this hypothesis is correct, then the rhyme of 'retrair'en cantan' with 'on plu merce vos deman' can be read as an indicator of this sort of economic exchange: the troubadour's performance is structurally bound to his plea for recompense. From this perspective, Giacomo's inclination to deemphasize the exchange of song for material goods, encoded as the addressee's 'merce', is further proof that the unique context of Frederick II's imperial court exerted formal effects on its production of courtly love poetry.

Whereas Folquet gives 'mas tan mi son consir e l'afan' in v. 5, Giacomo's translation expresses paraphrastically the longing and agony felt directly by the speaker of 'A vos, midontç'; it is 'lo meo core' that is subject to the experience of love, and not Giacomo's lyric 'I'. In the line that follows, Folquet's poet-persona lives and dies ('viu quant muer') and not his heart, as in 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' (v. 7). 'Dunque mor'e viv'eo?' (v. 9) is an exact translation of 'Donc muer e viu?', and the response to both questions is the same: 'No(n)' (v. 10). However, the effect of this rhetorical question differs radically between the two poems. In Folquet's case, the highly illogical *topos* of death-in-life, though common in the troubadour corpus, highlights the emotional torment of unreciprocated love and serves as a guarantee that the poet's enunciation is grounded in experiential reality.[77] Giacomo's *canzone*, on the other hand, posits a separation between the subject position of its speaker and the sensation of pain. In these lines, one imagines Giacomo's poet-persona as a curious observer, a bystander to the biology of love, with little subjective investment in the experience beyond intellectual interest.[78]

In the first line of the second stanza, the speaker of 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' reveals the true cause of his despair: 'Lo meo 'namoramento / non pò parire in detto'. The state of his anguish can neither be conceived intellectually ('cor no lo penseria'), nor described in words ('né diria lingua') (v. 20), which causes his poem, his 'detto', to be evacuated of signifcance: 'zo ch'eo dico è nente' (v. 21). What follows in vv. 24-31 is an extended metaphor that elaborates on the *topos* of the 'foco d'amore' that contains a noticeably higher ratio of first to third-person subjective constructions than in the first stanza.[79] 'Foc'aio al cor', Giacomo's poet-persona complains, though he doubts it will ever be extinguished (v. 25). He is like the salamander, which was thought to live in the midst of flame, and persists even though consumed by 'foco amoroso' (v. 30). If the anguish of love is experienced by the speaker's heart, however, and separated from the first-person subject position, why do first-person verbs and pronouns seem to cluster around the *foco* sequence of the second stanza?

'Madonna, dir vo voglio', much like 'Farai un vers de dreit nïen', provides a blueprint for its interpretation in the first line. Giacomo's *canzone* is not an expression of love for an unattainable noble lady, but rather a bitter lament over the failure of language. Despite the fact that 'A vos, midontç' gives voice to the ineffability *topos* – 'Parer non pot per dig ni per semblan / lo bens ce vos vogll' (vv. 12-13), the despair experienced by Folquet's poet-persona is due to love, not to the inexpressible nature of that love. After asking, 'Donc muer e viu?', the speaker responds: 'Non, mas mos cors cocios / mor e reviu de cosir amoros / a vos, dompna, c'ieu am

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[77] This is from the point of view of performance. With regard to the subject position of the speaker, the operation of this sort of illogical proposition is far more complicated, as Sarah Kay points out while addressing irony and hyperbole in *Subjectivity,* pp. 18-37: 'Hyperbole opens up a space within which determinate reading becomes impossible. Its excessive claims are ironic in that they conduce to an emptying out of meaning. Irony works by insinuating divergence from or uncertainty about the claims of the text; more restricted in its import, hyperbole presents the reader within a scale of possible positions, none of which can be justified at the expense of others . . . The status of the central reference-point of the lyric, the subject 'I', is clearly implicated in this indeterminacy' (pp. 23, 26).

[78] Picone suggests that this separation of speaker from heart is a logical resolution to the paradox of 'viu quant muer': it is physically impossible to live and die simultaneously, so Giacomo introduces this metonymy into the *canzone* in order to achieve the same rhetorical effect while resolving its absurdity (Picone, 'Formation', p. 16).

[79] Of these seven lines, five contain either a first-person verb or pronoun, as opposed to vv. 5-16, which contain just two ('dunque mor'e viv'eo?').

tan coralmen' (vv. 7-9). 'I love' ('ieu am') is the subjective expression of love that eludes the speaker of 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', whose desire is oriented not toward 'Madonna', but toward 'dire'; after all, 'dir vo' is inserted as a kind of communicative barrier between 'Madonna' and 'voglio' in the first line. Furthermore, Giacomo's translation of 'coralmen' ('wholeheartedly' or 'profoundly') appears not in the *more/core* sequence of the first stanza, but in the *foco* sequence of the second: 'e zo ch'eo dico è nente / inver' ch'eo son distretto / tanto coralemente' (vv. 21-23). Thus, while Folquet's speaker professes a profound and all-consuming love for his *dompna*, the poet-persona of 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' is so thoroughly bound by love ('distretto' echoes Folquet's 'cosi·m destreign Amors' of v. 2)[80] that he can only profess his desire to profess.

In stanzas III through V, 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' expands upon the primary theme of its second stanza and rehearses the speaker's desire for expression in three additional analogies: he is like a man with an unscratchable itch (vv. 33-40), like an unsuccessful painter (vv. 41-46), and like a ship sinking in stormy seas (vv. 49-64). Unlike 'A vos, midontç', which is constructed from two stanzas that share identical rhymes, the five stanzas of Giacomo's *canzone* are *coblas singulars* containing completely new sets of rhyme words. Because of this, the trans-stanzaic meaning of the poem is governed by *rime ripetute*, or recurring pairs of end rhymes. In contrast to the formal stability and paced progression of Folquet's *canso*, 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' unfolds erratically, and the pace of its seemingly disjointed stanzas depends on the density of sound patterning and the frequency of *rime ripetute* in any given stanza.[81] An example of this occurs in the third stanza's itch analogy, where the *–ore* rhyme of the *more/core* sequence recurs again in the final line of each *piede*:

> Madonna, sì m'avene
> ch'eo non posso avenire
> com'eo dicesse bene
> la propria cosa ch'eo sento d'amore:
> sì com'omo in prudito
> lo cor mi fa sentire,
> che giamai no 'nd' è quito
> mentre non pò toccar lo suo sentore. (vv.33-40)

Not only does 'amore' form a rhyme with 'sentore' (that which feels, or in this case, itches), but the full meaning of the simile only activates when read as a continuation of the *more/core* sequence in stanza I. 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' neatly divides its two principal themes – unreciprocated love and the expression of that love to the beloved – along the line of subjective experience: the poet-persona *desires*, to be sure, but what he desires most is expression, not love. This is his itch that needs scratching. Even so, the speaker's heart seems to be imbued

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[80] See Antonelli, *Giacomo da Lentini*, p. 23-24, n. to vv. 22-23.
[81] This effect has been observed by Rocco Vanasco: 'Le analisi delle articolazioni sonore, sintattiche e tematiche mostrano che l'unità poetica risiede nella strofa piuttosto che nella canzone' in *La Poesia di Giacomo da Lentini. Analisi strutturali* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1979), p. 36.

with its own type of subjectivity: the heart lives, the heart dies, and the heart burns (v. 14) as though independent from the experience of Giacomo's poet-persona.

If 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' enforces a formal separation between speaker and sentiment, the *canzone* also troubles the subject position occupied by its addressee. In total, there are ten direct references to 'Madonna' in the poem, four in the first stanza, none in the second, one in the third, two in the fourth, and three in the final stanza:

1 (I):   Madonna, dir vo voglio
4 (I):   che voi, bella, mostrate, e no m'aita.
13 (I):   per voi, donna, cui ama,
15 (I):   e voi pur lo sdegnate:
33 (III): Madonna, sì m'avene
49 (IV):   Lo vostr'amor che m'àve
56 (IV):   a voi, bella, li miei sospiri e pianti
66 (V):   a voi, bella spietata,
67 (V):   ma creio ch'e' dispiacerïa' a voi pinto.
76: (V)   e non facesse motto   a voi, sdegnosa;

Of these ten lines, 'Madonna' is the subject of a verb in only two: she displays pride ('orgoglio') in v. 4 and disdains the speaker's heart in v. 15. Giacomo's female love object is thus relatively present and active in the first stanza, but references to her disappear in the next, and slowly accrete again until the *canzone* reaches its conclusion on v. 80. This distribution of second-person plural subjects and objects indicates an affinity, born out by other formal characteristics, between the first and last stanzas. Not only is the presence of 'Madonna' felt acutely in both, but the ratio of first- to third-person verbs is almost identical in the two stanzas. In stanza I, the poet begins by stating his desire to tell 'Madonna' how Love has taken him, while the opening lines of stanza V state that his task is complete: 'Assai mi son mostrato […] come'eo so innamorato' (vv. 65-7). However, he continues: 'ma creio ch'e' dispiacerï' a voi pinto' (v. 68). This recalls the painting image used by the Notaro in stanza III ('com'on che pinge e sturba, / e pure li dispiace / lo pingere che face', vv. 42-4), which metaphorizes the poet's inability to communicate exactly what he feels for 'Madonna'. The verb 'mostrare' of v. 7 is repeated in v. 65, but instead of the second-person plural 'mostrate', the first person is invoked in the fifth stanza ('mi son mostrato').

Other similarities abound: 'Madonna' is referred to directly as the speaker's interlocutor in both cases, 'donna spietata' (v. 66) in the fifth stanza reflecting 'orgoglio' in the first (v. 2). Also, the second-person 'sdegnate' (v. 15) is repeated again in stanza V in adjectival form: 'a vo', sdegnosa' (v. 76). The poet's exclamation of despair in stanza I ('Oi lasso', v. 5) is echoed twice in stanza V, but this time in rhyming position:

69: Poi c'a me solo, lasso,
71: perché no mi 'nde lasso?

The structural similarities between the two stanzas are further amplified by the presence of a rhetorical question near the division between *fronte* and *sirima*. 'Dunque mor'e viv'eo?' (v. 9) resonates in stanza V's 'perché no mi 'nde lasso?' (v. 71). Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, the initial desire for expression that forms the *incipit* of the canzone is reworked in the fifth stanza:

> 1: Madonna, dir vo voglio
> 73: Vorria c'or avenisse
> 74: che lo meo core 'scisse

The poet's original expression of desire is in the present indicative and serves as the auxiliary verb for 'dire'. In stanza V, however, this desire has become subjunctive and the poet seems to have abandoned any thought of verbal expression. Rather than *tell* 'Madonna', he wants his heart to leap out of his chest, 'come 'ncarnato tutto, / e non facesse motto / a voi, sdegnosa (vv. 75-6).[82] The poet has resolved, finally, that words can never express the pitiful state of his heart; 'Madonna' must see it physically incarnated in order to have sympathy on the poet.

The particular position inhabited by Giacomo's lyric 'io' is bound structurally to expressive failure in the same way that Giulhem's 'ieu' is bound to negation. In 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', the pronouns 'eo' and 'voi' have inverse distributions. 'Eo' occurs only once in the first and fifth stanzas and three times in the third and fourth, while the second stanza, which lacks any reference to the *canzone*'s addressee, contains five instances of the first-person subject pronoun:

> 19: ma sì com'eo lo sento
> 21: e zo ch'eo dico è nente
> 22: inver' ch'eo son distretto
> 29: eo sì fo per long'uso,
> 31: e non saccio ch'eo dica:

In each of these cases, 'eo' is the subject of clauses that express frustration that 'Lo meo 'namoramento / non pò parire in detto' (vv. 17-18). This tightly packed cluster of first-person subject pronouns recalls vv. 7-9 of 'Farai un vers':

> No sai en qual hora·m fui natz,
> No soi alegres ni iratz,
> No soi estranhs ni soi privatz,

Even though there are no instances of 'ieu' here, the repetition of 'no' plus the first-person verbs 'sai' and 'soi' at the beginning of each line emphasize the negative construction of the speaker's subject position. As I demonstrated above, this negativity is produced by the

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[82] 'Dicesse' is given instead of 'facesse' in three manuscripts, of which the *Vaticano Latino 3793* is included (Antonelli, *Giacomo da Lentini*, p. 14).

circumstances of its composition – 'fo trobatz en durmen / Sus un chiavu. (vv. 5-6). For Giacomo da Lentini, however, both *trobar* and *faire* collapse into *dire*, which signifies composition *and* performance simultaneously. 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' means both 'My lady, I want to tell you', which indicates speech and presence, and 'My lady, I want to compose a poem for you', which indicates writing and absence. Furthermore, that the subject position of the speaker is situated alongside expressive failure belies the absurdity of the kind of 'written' performance that the Notaro attempts to stage. The entire *canzone* can thus be read as an expression of frustration at the limitations imposed by writing on a primarily oral form. The speaker's love object, 'Madonna', is constructed by and large as the recipient of a message that cannot be received, and the final, hypothetical resolution to the speaker's frustration is that incarnated speech not speak, that it be transmitted across space and time *as though* it were speech.

CONCLUSION

Furio Brugnolo noted that that there is, in 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', an 'equiparazione analogica di "cuore" e *verbum*, parola'.[83] This interpretation makes sense in the context of the first stanza, in which the speaker's heart 'more più spesso e forte / che non faria di morte naturale' (vv. 11-12), as each attempt to communicate with 'Madonna' is aborted. In the next three stanzas, Giacomo's primary concern is the failure of communication between subject and object, and the *canzone*'s central images – a man with an itch, an unsuccessful painting, and a ship lost at sea – all illustrate the impossibility of the desire enunciated in the first line: 'Madonna, dir vo voglio'. Brugnolo's analysis is even more suggestive in the context of the fifth stanza, however, as the Johannian formulation of 'verbum caro factum est' is inverted. The remedy for the speaker's crisis of communication, illustrated so fully in the first four stanzas, is that his heart, or his '*verbum*, parola', leap incarnate from his body. Here, though, v. 76 presents a paradox: if poetic representations of the heart are analogous to speech, then the desire that it not 'fare motto' is puzzling. Brugnolo describes the 'parola del cuore', to borrow from Rafaelle Pinto, as 'una parola che . . . paradossalmente "non parla", non "fa motto"'.[84] For the speaker of 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', the only communication possible is imagined as a word that doesn't speak, a word that doesn't say a word.

This, I believe, is *sermo absentium*, the written word of the epistolary mode, not the spoken word of performance. In song, just as in speech, language is a thing of the body: words are formed by constricting and relaxing the muscles of throat and mouth, by regulating air pushed up from the lungs, by closing or opening moistened lips. Speech is saliva and gurgled phlegm. In the context of courtly love, speech is, in a biological way, feeling enfleshed. That Sicilian poetry was written and not performed is attested by the communicative failure represented by 'Madonna, dir vo voglio'. In the case of Guilhem IX's 'Farai un vers', the subjective experience related by the speaker is compromised by its performance, which is far more important than either its original composition or any of the courtly *topoi* it evokes. For the Notaro, the subjective experience related by the speaker is also compromised by the

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[83] '"Accessus" ai Siciliani. ‹‹Madonna, dir vo voglio››' in *Siculorum Gymnasium* 53 (2000), 113-133 (p. 119). See also Pinto's 'Parola del cuore'.
[84] '"Accessus" ai Siciliani', p. 119.

circumstances of its production and transmission, but this time the context is writing: the speaker's ''namoramento / non pò parire in detto' (vv. 17-18) because the written poetic text precludes *dire* in the first place.

Many readers of 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' justifiably point out that *dire* alludes 'verosimilmente a un testo non più composto insieme alla musica e quindi non "cantato"'.[85] The technical meaning of *dire* for early Italian poetry as 'dire per rima' or poetic composition is not up for debate here. My argument, however, does challenge the notion that *dire* signifies flawlessly. The fact that the poets of the *scuola siciliana* and their successors write 'say' to mean 'compose' or 'say by means of verse' indicates the ambiguity between composition and enunciation also evident in Guilhem's 'Farai un vers'. In contemporary epistolary writing, 'I wanted to tell you' is an acceptable exordium, even if the speaker is composing an email or the increasingly rare letter. In a written form that it is pure text, such as this dissertation, invoking the spoken word runs contrary to prescribed expectations and is deemed unacceptable. The difference is that an email is *sermo absentium*: it conforms to the rules for speech, or *sermo*, ('I just wanted to tell you'), while still being a written form. The present dissertation, on the other hand, cannot be *sermo*, even if communication still occurs *inter absentes*.

Thus, when Giacomo writes, 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', he invokes the desire for a kind of communication that is personal and subjective, but not constrained by the presence necessary for troubadour lyric to function. In this way, the explicit separation between subject and object in Giacomo's *canzone*, which also structures its relentless thematization of expressive failure, is the effect exerted by writing on the troubadour lyric. This is why, I argue in the following chapter, 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' indicates 'le principali linee di svolgimento' for the early Italian tradition: writing demands the discursive reorientation of the courtly lyric that will ultimately result in both the invention of the sonnet and the construction of macrotextual *tenzoni* and *canzonieri* later in the *Duecento*.

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[85] Antonelli, Giacomo da Lentini, p. 15, n. to v. 1. See also Roncaglia, 'Sul "divorzio tra musica e poesia" nel Duecento italiano' in L'Ars Nova italiana del Trecento, IV. Atti del 3° Congresso internazionale sul tema ‹‹La muscia al tempo del Boccaccio e i suoi rapporti con la letteratura››, ed. A. Ziino (Certaldo: Centro di studi sull'Ars Nova italiana del Trecento, 1978), 365-397, and Brugnolo, "'Accessus" ai Siciliani', p. 118.

Textual Culture
and the Early Italian Lyric

In the preceding chapter, I investigated the effects exerted by the textual culture of Frederick II's administrative court on the poetry of Giacomo da Lentini. The *canzone* 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' is not only recognized as the first courtly lyric of the Italian tradition, due to the primary position afforded it by MS Vaticano Latino 3793, but its prestige also derives from its delineation of early Italian poetry's principal thematics. A translation and elaboration of Folquet de Marselha's 'A vos, midontç, voill retrair'en cantan', 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' diverges from its source text by periphrastically representing the subjective experience of the speaker in the third person – 'Oi lasso, lo meo core, / che 'n tante pene è miso / che vive quando more / per bene amare' (vv. 5-8) – and by emphasizing the first-person subject (*eo*) and second-person object (*voi*) in alternating stanzas. The *canzone*'s theme of expressive failure is also governed by rhymes in *–ore* – as in 'more', 'core', and 'amore' – that cluster around Giacomo's periphrastic constructions. Most importantly, however, when the speaker of 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' wishes that his heart would burst incarnate from his chest and 'not say a word', the *canzone* imagines an alternate lyric mode in which words are silent and able to communicate beyond the limitations of presence.

This new lyric mode, I will argue in the present chapter, is a type of *sermo absentium*, or epistolary speech. In addition to authoring the first courtly lyric of the early Italian tradition, Giacomo da Lentini is credited as the inventor of the sonnet. Though the precise circumstances of its origin may never be recovered, the compact fourteen-line lyric form eschews a direct appeal for mercy to a female love-object for the exposition and resolution of a philosophical question. In the first section of this chapter, I will claim that the highly rhetorical nature of the sonnet not only derives from the discursive milieu of mid-thirteenth-century Italian textual culture, but that it also takes the *ars dictaminis*, or art of letter-writing, as its model. Indeed, from its inception, the sonnet is used a kind of poetic epistle, which allows the poet to address, in writing, a real correspondent. *Tenzoni*, such as Giacomo da Lentini's exchange of sonnets with the Abbot of Tivoli, should be regarded as the fulfillment of the new communicative function for lyric poetry imagined in 'Madonna, dir vo voglio'. The dialogic nature of the sonnet, moreover, allows for the construction of macrotexts much larger than any individual poem. In the second section of this chapter, I will interrogate the emergence in the *Duecento* of *canzonieri*, such as Guittone d'Arezzo's amorous exchange with a fictional lover contained in MS Laurenziano-Rediano 9. The triumph of the *canzoniere*, at least in the context of thirteenth-century Italian textual culture, is that it encloses lyric production explicitly within writing; the sonnet collection is unimaginable without the manuscript, which provides poets, like Guittone d'Arezzo, and later Dante and Petrarch, a poetic enclosure that both reflects and criticizes the urban space of late medieval Italy and the 'legal-rhetorical mentality' to which it gives rise.

I. THE INVENTION OF THE SONNET

In addition to his status as the *caposcuola* of the Sicilian poets, Giacomo da Lentini is also thought to have invented the sonnet. And just as 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' is the first *canzone* anthologized in MS Vaticano Latino 3793, Giacomo's *tenzone* with the Abbot of Tivoli, composed of the five earliest datable sonnets in Italian literature, inaugurates the section of the manuscript devoted to the new, uniquely Italian, lyric form.[1] The Sicilian sonnet is composed of fourteen hendecasyllabic lines arranged in one octave and one sestet. The most common rhyme scheme of the Sicilian sonnet is *A B A B A B A B, C D E C D E*, though *C D C D C D* is also used occasionally in the sestet.[2] This alternative rhyme scheme can either be understood as two tercets or three distichs.

Scholars of the early Italian lyric have been divided between three theories for the development of the sonnet. Some suggest that its model was the *strambotto*, derived from the popular Sicilian *canzuna*, which consists of eight hendecasyllabic lines with the rhyme scheme *A B A B A B A B*.[3] This theory, however, cannot explain the presence of the sestet in the sonnet, which must be viewed either as an additional six-line *strambotto*, or as 'a flash of inspiration' on the part of Giacomo da Lentini.[4] The second theory for the sonnet's origin posits

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[1] Salvatore Santangelo, in *Le tenzoni poetiche nella letteratura italiana delle origini* (Geneva: Olschki, 1928) was the first to confirm 1241 as the date of the *tenzone*'s composition (pp. 88-89). It was in this year that the court of Frederick II, along with the imperial army, was in the Roman countryside negotiating the conditions of a peace council with the Emperor's bitter enemy, Pope Gregory IX. David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (London: Allen Lane, 1988), pp. 340-350. In his introduction to *Giacomo da Lentini* (vol. 1 of *I poeti della scuola siciliana*, eds Roberto Antonelli, Costanzo di Girolami, and Rosario Coluccia, 3 vols, Milan: Mondadori, 2008) Antonelli analyzes the order of the sonnets presented in the MS (pp. xxviii-xxx) and offers its unbalanced ratio of *tenzoni* to single-authored sonnets as an explanation for the choice of Giacomo's *tenzone* with the Abbot of Tivoli as the section's inaugural lyrics. For the invention of the sonnet and its development in the *Duecento*, see Leo Spitzer, 'Una questione di punteggiatura in un sonetto di Giacomo da Lentino (e un piccolo contributo all storia del sonetto)' in *Cultura neolatina* 18 (1958), 61-70; Ernest Hatch Wilkins 'The Invention of the Sonnet' in *The Invention of the Sonnet and Other Studies in Italian Literature* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1959), 11-39; Walter Mönch, *Das Sonett: Gestalt und Geschichte* (Heidelberg: Kerle, 1954); Edoardo Sanguineti, *Sonetti della scuola siciliana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965); Paul Oppenheimer, 'The Origin of the Sonnet' in *Comparative Literature* 34 (1982), 289-304; Roberto Antonelli, 'L''invenzione' del sonetto' in *Cultura neolatina* 46 (1986), 35-76; and the *oeuvre* of Christopher Kleinhenz, including 'Giacomo da Lentini and the Advent of the Sonnet: Divergent Patterns in Early Italian Poetry' in *Forum Italicum* 10 (1976), 218-232, 'Giacomo da Lentini and Dante: The Early Sonnet Tradition in Perspective' in *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 8 (1978), 217-234, and his book-length study *The Early Italian Sonnet: the First Century* (Lecce: Millella, 1986).

[2] Kleinhenz, *The Early Italian Sonnet*, p. 23.

[3] This is the theory supported by Ernest Hatch Wilkins' 'The Invention of the Sonnet'. The likelihood of the *strambotto* as the lyrical model for the sonnet presumes, however, the musicality of the genre. Until recently, it was assumed that the word 'sonetto' derived from 'suono', which fit nicely within the framework of an entirely musical early Italian tradition; a sonnet would be a 'little sound' or 'little song', in comparison to the *canzone*, which was thought to be a full song, in the manner of the troubadour *canso*. The musicality of the sonnet was taken for granted by Wilkins – and later, by Mönch and Sanguineti – who determined that the eight-line *strambotto*, itself a musical form that had derived from earlier Siculo-Arabic music, was the most likely candidate for the sonnet's precursor. See Oppenheimer's 'The Origin of the Sonnet' for a full recounting of this critical history. Given the consensus in recent years that early Italian poetry was, in fact, not intended as song – even if occasionally accompanied by music – Wilkins' *strambotto* hypothesis seems increasingly less tenable.

[4] Wilkins, 'Invention of the Sonnet', p. 38.

the single *canzone* stanza as the model for the later form.[5] Supported by the fact that isolated *canso* stanzas, or *coblas esparsas*, were not uncommon in the generic repertoire of the troubadours, the sonnet could have derived from the formalization of the *fronte* and *sirima* of the *canzone* into one octave and one sestet. A third theory, which is a variation on the second, suggests that the formal unity and rhetorical complexity of the *canso* itself provided the inspiration for the sonnet, while the individual *canzone* stanza provided its metrical and rhythmic structure.[6] Of these three theories, the third seems most plausible, at least from the perspective of the sonnet's formal derivation. Given the metrical and rhythmic fixity of the form, it seems unlikely that it could have been modeled on the *cobla esparsa* alone. One of the distinctive features of the *canzone* is its flexibility: the number of stanzas, number of lines per stanza, and metrical and rhythmic structure differ radically from one song to the next. A single stanza could take any form the poet wished, as long as it conformed to the metrical scheme of the *canzone* as a whole.[7] Because of this, it seems likely that the sonnet was patterned after the *effect* produced by the whole *canzone*, even if the stanza's division into *fronte* and *sirima* – as well as its further subdivision into *volte* and *piedi* – was concretized as octave and sestet.

More central to the argument of my dissertation, however, is not the precise formal derivation of the sonnet, but rather how its invention can be understood with respect to thirteenth-century Italian textual culture. As I demonstrated in the preceding chapter, Giacomo's 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' can – and, I argue, should – be read a poetic manifesto that rejects troubadour orality and expresses the desire for a re-orientation of the communicative function of courtly poetry. In *The Early Italian Sonnet,* Christopher Kleinhenz has identified a similar sentiment in another of the the Notaro's *canzoni*, 'Amor non vole ch'io clami', which he interprets as a statement of purpose for the sonnet's invention. The first stanza of the *canzone* is as follows:[8]

> Amor non vole ch'io clami
> merzede c'onn'omo clama,
> né che io m'avanti c'ami,
> c'ogn'omo s'avanta c'ama,
> che lo servire c'onn'omo
> sape fare nonn-à nomo,
> e no è in pregio di laudare
> quello che sape ciascuno:
> a voi, bella, tale dono
> non vorria apresentare. (IV.1-10)

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[5] Kleinhenz, *The Early Italian Sonnet*, pp. 22-25. See also Marco Santagata, *Dal sonetto al canzoniere. Ricerche sulla preistoria e la costituzione di un genere* (Padua: Liviana, 1989), p. 88.
[6] This is the theory elaborated in Kleinhenz's *The Early Italian Sonnet*. See in particular pp. 30-33.
[7] Take, for example, the difference between Giacomo's 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', whose rhyme scheme is *a b a C, d b d C; e e f (f)G, h h i (i)G* (see p. 35 above), and 'Meravigliosa-mente', whose rhyme scheme instead is *a b c a b c d d c*. Lower-case letters here represent *settenari* and upper-case letters represent *endecasillabi*.
[8] Text reprinted from Antonelli's *Giacomo da Lentini*.

Throughout 'Amor non vole ch'io clami' the speaker disparages the herd of would-be poets ('onn'omo') who overuse the language and *topoi* of courtly love. He compares them to monkeys ('Per zo l'amore mi 'nsegna / ch'io non guardi a l'antra gente, / non vuol ch'io resembli a scigna', vv. 10-13) and their poems to faded flowers ('Ịnviluto li scolosmini / di quel tempo ricordato, / ch'erano sì gai e fini, / nulla gioia nonn-è trovato', vv. 31-34). The speaker concludes in v. 50 by telling his female love-object that he would rather die ('inanzi voria morire') than gain favor by deploying tired *topoi* and imitating the enunciations of others. The irony of the *canzone* is, however, that Giacomo utilizes the same conventional form and the same commonplaces he appears to criticize.[9] Kleinhenz thus suggests 'that the sonnet form was born of his conscious desire to effect a successful change in both the form and content of the Italian lyric, and, thus, to invent a new form to rival the excellence and supremacy of the *canzone* and its predecessor, the Provençal *canso*'.[10]

While this argument is generally convincing, and while the dissatisfaction expressed in 'Amor non vole ch'io clami' echoes 'Madonna, dir vo voglio''s thematization of expressive failure, it seems unlikely that Giacomo was interested in poetic supremacy. The poetry of the *scuola siciliana* conforms to medieval French 'open textuality' more than it anticipates the self-authorizing strategies of Dante half a century later.[11] By citing 'open textuality' here, my intention is not to claim that Sicilian poetry is either oral or subject to the *mouvance* so common for both the troubadours and trouvéres; rather that 'tradition', as conceived by Zumthor, applies to the *scuola siciliana* in ways unthinkable before the recent rhetorical historiography of Virginia Cox, John O. Ward, Rita Copeland, and especially of Ronald Witt. Zumthor writes:

> Tradition appears in the abstract as a continuum of memory bearing the mark of successive texts that are realizations of one single nuclear model, or of a limited set of models that act as a norm. Tradition, the world of Ideas in which intertextual relationships are generated, blends so completely with these models that the production of a text is more or less clearly conceived as a re-production of the model. From a social point of view, tradition lies at the root of the community, linking author and audience through the text, much less owing to an adherence to the text itself than to adherence to a virtually immutable poetic system.[12]

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[9] It should be noted, however, that Giacomo's lexicon is vast and includes words drawn from semantic fields other than courtly love. In this poem, 'scolosmini' (v. 31) is unique in the early Italian repertoire and means either 'turquoise' (Antonio Pagliaro, *Nuovi saggi di critica semantica*, Messina: D'Anna, 1963) or a type of flower, likely jasmine. See Antonelli, *Giacomo da Lentini*, p. 98, n. to v. 31. In any case, 'scolosmini', along with 'scigna' (v. 13), indicates here a predilection for words drawn from natural philosophy, which is already divergent from the manner in which 'onn'omo clama'.

[10] Kleinhenz, *The Early Italian Sonnet*, pp. 29-30.

[11] See Albert R. Ascoli's *Dante and the Making of Modern Author* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), which charts in impressive detail the complex literary-historical, political, and theological background of Dante's claim to authority.

[12] Paul Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics*, trans. Phillip Bennet (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 50, originally published as *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972).

Rather than affirming, like Kleinhenz, Giacomo's position as an innovator, I argue for a Zumthorian reading of the sonnet that engages with this notion of 'tradition'. If tradition, though, is a sort of cultural memory established by a long procession of texts through history that conform to one or more essential models, how can we define 'tradition' for the Sicilians, who were estranged linguistically and culturally from the poetic forms they imported from the troubadours? The answer, I believe, is that 'tradition', for Giacomo, as well as for Pier delle Vigne, Guido delle Colonne, and the other poets of the *scuola siciliana*, is constituted by the practical rhetorical arts that characterized the textual culture of late medieval Italy. Specifically, I argue that the *ars notaria* conditions the emergence of troubadour poetry in its thirteenth-century Italian context, while the *ars dictaminis* determines the trajectory of its development in the new lyric form of the sonnet. Before turning back to Giacomo da Lentini, however, it is necessary to delineate exactly what constituted rhetorical tradition not only for the Sicilians, but also for Guittone d'Arezzo, and, later, for Dante and the poets of the *Dolce stil nuovo.*

In the history of the European Middle Ages, Italy is unique for the political structure that developed and flourished in the urban centers of Tuscany and Lombardy from roughly 1080 to 1300.[13] Historians generally agree that, in contrast to the highly centralized Norman Kingdom of Sicily, the commune emerged as a consequence of the decentralization of the *regnum italicum*, which had been governed from afar by the Ottonian and Salian dynasties since the mid-tenth century.[14] As a consequence of popular unrest fomented by the reform efforts of Pope Gregory VII during the Investiture Struggle (1075-1122), powerful bishops, who had previously been invested by German kings to represent their transalpine subjects, ceded secular power to local citizens and institutions. From this political reorganization, which occurred in every major Tuscan and Lombard city between roughly 1080 and 1120, emerged the commune.[15] The new political structure consisted of regular assemblies of citizens for the discussion of common issues; short-term consuls elected from a combination of the military aristocracy (*capitanei*),

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[13] In *The Italian City-State: From Commune to Signoria* (New York: Clarendon, 1997), Philip Jones offers the most comprehensive English-language study of the Italian commune to date. See also Daniel Waley's *The Italian City-Republics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973) and John Kenneth Hyde's *Society and Politics in Medieval Italy: The Evolution of the Civil Life, 1000-1350* (New York: St. Martin's, 1973). Renato Bordone's *La società cittadina del regno d'Italia. Formazione e sviluppo delle caratteristiche urbane nei secoli XI e XII* (Turin: Deputazione subalpina di storia patria, 1987) is an essential Italian-language study. Also useful, though wider in scope, are Giovanni Tabacco's *The Struggle for Power in Medieval Italy: Structures of Political Rule*, trans. Rosalind Brown Jensen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and two works by Paolo Cammarosano: *Italia medievale. Struttura e geografia delle fonti scritte* (Rome: La Nuova Italia scientifica, 1991) and *Storia dell'Italia medievale. Dal VI all'XI secolo* (Rome: Laterza, 2001). Edward Colemon provides a brief, but thorough, history of the commune, along with an essential bibliography, in 'Cities and Communes' in *Italy in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. David Abulafia (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 27-57.

[14] From 774 to 875, the period during which the Carolingians settled and controlled the central and northern Italian Lombard territories, Frankish power was guaranteed by a strong military presence, just as administrative responsibilities shifted gradually from the Lombard capital of Pavia to numerous local dioceses. For the history of earl medieval Italy's various invaders and the development of episcopal power, see Chris Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society, 400-1000* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1981).

[15] Colemon notes that the emergence of the commune is notoriously difficult to date, as the documentary record provides few solid clues that mark the transition of power from bishops to communal bodies. For this reason, instead of regarding the birth of the commune as a violent revolution in medieval Italian politics, he suggests that 'we should perhaps be thinking in terms of a long transition between pre-communal and communal worlds, of interface rather than interruption' (pp. 32-33).

lower nobility (*valvassores*), and common citizenry (*cives*); and the careful curation of legal documents that would form the first city statutes in the late twelfth century.

The development of the communes, from the first colleges of consuls to the rise of the *popolo* in the thirteenth century,[16] was attended by a radical shift in the discursive milieu of Italian intellectual culture. According to Ronald Witt's hypothesis, the same Investiture Struggle that severed the German empire from its loyal Italian bishops also marked a conscious turn away from 'traditional book culture', which had been associated with the Carolingian Renaissance of the ninth century and the development of the liberal arts curriculum in cathedral schools.[17] Subsequent to the Frankish conquest of the *regnum*, Charlemagne left in place the lay notariate that had developed under Lombard administration, while Italian clerics benefited from the educational reforms outlined by the king in the *Admonitio generalis* and *De litteris colendis*, both written around 790 (pp. 18-19).[18] The ostensible goal of these reforms was to produce, by way of cathedral chapters, an educated, literate clergy, but they also had the effect of cementing the late-Antique bias toward *grammatica* as the most important of the liberal arts. Grammar, Witt notes, 'embraced not merely letters, syllables, words, and parts of speech, but also elements like figures of speech, prosody, poetry, fables, and history' (p. 28). Thus, for the great Carolingian intellectual and educator Alcuin, *grammatica* was 'the science of letters and the guardian of right speech and writing', making it the essential cornerstone of all learning.[19]

Though cathedral chapters and schools, established, respectively, for the education of resident clergy and to provide higher education for young men of means entering ecclesiastical life, persisted in the *regnum* following the end of the Carolingian dynasty, Italian intellectual output was unable to match that of France or southern Germany until the thirteenth century.[20] Whether due to the lack of sponsorship for intellectual activity on the part of secular and religious leaders or to a disassociation of education from literary productivity (p. 55), the advances made by the Carolingian Renaissance seem to have been more profoundly

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[16] Between these two phases of communal organization is the period of the *podestà*. In the latter half of the twelfth century, consular administration proved ineffective for maintaining order. Communes thus began employing extracommunal professional administrators, attended by a retinue of notaries, lawyers, and soldiers, who were given short-term commissions to execute city laws and exert authority over unruly *consorterie* engaged in devastating urban warfare. Hyde, *Society and Politics*, pp. 94-104. The rise of the *popolo*, which occurred in mostly Tuscan communes in the first half of the thirteenth century, indicates the deep divisions that had existed between Italy's various social classes from the end of the eleventh century. The communes had not been democracies in any real sense, because the old military aristocracy sought to protect its own interests through the colleges of consuls and the office of *podestà*. Merchants and tradesmen managed to wrest control of civic power from these magnates, however, by way of guild-affiliated militias and subsequently enacted laws, such as Florence's Ordinances of Justice (1293), that excluded the military aristocracy from all aspects of civic life. Colemon, 'Cities and Communes', pp. 52-55.

[17] For the following, in-text citations refer to *The Two Latin Cultres and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[18] For Carolingian education, see Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977) and C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideas in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

[19] Latin text in *Ars grammatica* in *PL* 101, cols 857d-858a. Translation from Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures*, p. 50.

[20] Between 850 and 1200, France produced 106 new copies of pagan and patristic literature, Germany 85, and Italy a mere 34. See table in Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures*, p. 53.

entrenched north and west of the Alps than in the *regnum*.[21] In contrast, the Lombard notariate, which was strengthened and institutionalized by the Franks in the ninth century (p. 62), became increasingly lay and more cohesive in the tenth, while documentary culture in the old Carolingian territories seems to have declined (p. 69). The growing distinction between an imperially sponsored, primarily German, and cathedral-based 'book culture' north of the Alps and a cohesive lay notariate in the *regnum* provided the foundations for what Witt describes as the 'specificity' of Italian textual culture in the later Middle Ages.

With respect to the history of the commune, the educational program of the Franks, which included the study of classical Latin literature and patristic theology, was soured for Italy's pre-communal intellectual elite by its association with foreign rule. Rather paradoxically, the Church reformers who opposed German domination of northern Italian politics eschewed the florid rhetorical style and *exemplum*-based argumentation associated with the cathedral schools, preferring instead the sort of legal argumentation that had been made possible by the recovery of the *Corpus iuris civilis*. Of the four components of the Justinian corpus, the *Institutes* seem to have been recovered the earliest, as attested by citations in the *Lex romana canonice compta* from the ninth century; followed by the *Novellae*, between 1055 and 1079; the *Codex*, between 1070 and 1090; and last, the *Digest*, which was cited by Pepo in the Marturi plea in 1076 (p. 170).[22] The recovery and dissemination of the Justinian Corpus was also accompanied by a radical shift in approach toward legal study: before 1000, lawmen appear to have been primarily interested in discerning the appropriate law for a particular case, while during the eleventh century they were increasingly called upon to defend the theoretical bases of their legal opinions (pp. 169-170). This was particularly true in Pavia, where lawyers and notaries had operated for centuries within the theoretical framework of the *leges langobardorum*. In Bologna, however, where no such framework existed, the study of Roman law flourished from the eleventh century onward, and the city would not only come to represent the full manifestation of the 'legal-rhetorical mentality' of late medieval Italy, but would also develop into the primary center of legal study for all of western Europe until the end of the early modern period.[23]

Centrally located and with a fertile *contado* large enough to feed a sizeable student population (p. 235), Bologna was already home to a number of private teachers that had revolutionized the instruction of the *ars notaria*. In the middle of the eleventh century, Bolognese notaries made several crucial advances that modernized notarial practices, including the theorization of the notarial document as distinct from the juridical performance that it

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[21] Another contributing factor is almost certainly the northern migration of Italian intellectuals during the ninth century. This trend, which Witt amusingly, though not incorrectly, calls a 'brain-drain', began with the absorption of the nascent Lombard book culture – represented by Paolo Diacono, Pietro of Pisa, Fardolfo, and Paolino of Aquileia – into the Frankish retinue after Charlemagne's initial conquest of 774 (17-23).

[22] For the recovery of the Justinian corpus, see Charles Radding and Antonio Ciaralli, 'The *Corpus iuris civilis* in the Middle Ages: A Case Study in Historiography and Medieval History' in *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Romanistische Abteilung* 117 (2000), 274-310, as well as their book-length study *The* Corpus iuris civilis *in the Middle Ages: Manuscripts and Transmission from the Sixth Century to the Juristic Revival* (Boston: Brill, 2007).

[23] For the University of Bologna from its formation through the sixteenth century, see Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), pp. 5-21.

records (p. 173).[24] As a result of its reputation for training notaries and lawyers and, presumably, its ability to accommodate large numbers of students, Bologna also became a center for the study of the new *ars dictaminis*. Despite the illustrious tradition of classical epistolography – formed by Cicero and Seneca, Sallust, Cassiodorus, and the fathers of the early Church, and revived by Petrarch in the fourteenth century – the art of letter-writing was never considered a branch of rhetoric before the intervention of Alberico of Montecassino toward the end of the eleventh century.[25] Though some debate exists as to whether Alberico should be regarded as the inventor of the *ars dictaminis*,[26] his *Flores rhetorici* and *Brevarium de dictamine*, which established the medieval tradition of dividing a letter into five constituent parts, were intended to simplify and formalize the instruction of epistolography to meet the needs of a changing society gripped by the Investiture Struggle and in the process of rapid social, economic, and political development. Following Alberico, who is unique in the history of the *ars dictaminis* for both his monastic profession and geographical location, interest in the new art took root in Bologna (pp. 255-257). Adalberto of Samaria, a private lay teacher, devoted his *Praecepta dictaminum* (c. 1112-1118) exclusively to letter-writing and indicated in a model letter that epistolography should be the end goal of formal education. He writes: 'For what advantage is it to anyone to sweat for a long time in the profession of grammar, if he does not know how, when it shall be necessary, to write at least one letter?'.[27] This was also the approach of Adalberto's contemporaries, Enrico Francigena (*Aura gemma*, c. 1119-1124) and Ugo of Bologna (*Rationes dictandi prosaice*, c. 1119-1124), who popularized the plane dictaminal style ('stilus humilis') that would characterize Italian epistolography until the early Renaissance (p. 257).

The century following Adalberto represents the apex of Italian *dictamen*. By the mid-1100s, the *ars dictaminis* had spread north of the Alps, and a lively dictaminal culture developed in *Orléans*, where the study of classical grammar had been preserved at the city's cathedral school (pp. 384-397). Though French dictaminal style was more elaborate, more referential, and more studied than its Bolognese counterpart, French students – including Stephen of Tournai, Peter of Blois, and Walter of Châtillon – nevertheless studied with Italian *dictatores* in Bologna (p. 384). Likewise, French teachers also travelled south of the Alps to find employ at the bustling university, where their ornate style might give them a competitive advantage in procuring students (p. 385-386). The encounter that occurred at the University of Bologna between transalpine learning, which had developed out of the 'traditional book

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[24] See also Giorgio Cencetti, '*Studium fuit Bononie*: Note sulla storia dell'Università di Bologna nel primo mezzo secolo della sua esistenza' in *Studi medievali* 3.7 (1966), 781-833.

[25] This was due to the oratorical and public orientation of ancient rhetoric. As early as Corax and Tisias in the fifth century B.C. rhetoric had been divided into three categories: forensic, deliberative, and demonstrative. These categories all relate to public eloquence, whether juridical testimony, political speech, or epideictic oratory on celebratory occasions. This orientation persisted at least through Cicero, who conceived of his personal letters as a profoundly different type of communicative act than public oratory. For the fundamental orality of rhetoric, see Samuel IJsseling, *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976).

[26] The debate centers on Alberico's lack of exclusivity in his treatment of letter-writing. Both the *Flores rhetorici* and *Brevarium de dictamine* situate epistolography alongside other types of composition and rhetorical forms. See Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures*, p. 255.

[27] 'Quid enim prodest alicui diu gramaticae professioni insudare, si nescierit cum oportuerit – saltim unam epistolam dictare?'. Original Latin and translation quoted from Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures*, p. 256. Adalberto's letter can be found in Ugo of Bologna's *Rationes dictandi prosaice* 84.

culture' of the Carolingian revival, and native Italian practical rhetoric explains the vehemence of Boncompagno da Signa, who arrived in Bologna in 1193 or 1194 and railed against the teachings of French *gramantes* in his *Rhetorica antiqua*, published in two editions in 1215 and 1226-1227. Boncompagno writes:

> Before my arrival a cancerous heresy raged among prose writers, because everyone who promised to teach prose writing sent letters that he adorned painstakingly with the elaborate works of someone else or with philosophical dictums. This furnished proof that the orator was skilled, and thus untrained and ignorant people purchased gilded copper for gold. Because I criticized proverbs and condemned the use of obscure composition, the masters and their supporters maintained that I had no knowledge of literature. Nor did they ascribe to talent the fact that I wanted always to write quickly, but considered it a vice and a product of fickleness.[28]

Boncompagno thus defends the practicality of the Italian dictaminal style by alluding to the superfluous ornamentation and protracted labor required to attain the pompous grandiosity of French *dictamen*. The 'traditional book culture' of the northern cathedral schools is more concerned, the *Rhetorica antiqua* suggests, with the leisurely pursuit of eloquence than with the needs of professional clerks staffing the hundreds of chanceries spread throughout papal, imperial, and communal Italy. This self-consciously anti-classical orientation is also evident in Boncompagno's *Rhetorica novissima* (1235), which understands law as the foundation of rhetoric and disposes of the discipline's traditional division into *inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria,* and *pronuntiatio* in favor of a tripartite *causa, persuasio,* and *dissuasio*.[29] The outspoken Bolognese *dictator* is also, and perhaps most importantly for the present discussion, highly critical of Cicero, boasting in the prologue to his *Palma* that he neither imitates the great Roman orator nor recalls having ever delivered a lecture on him.[30] Along with Guido Faba,

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[28] 'Ante adventum meum pullularat in prosatoribus heresis cancerosa, quia omnis qui pollicebatur in prosa doctrinam exhibere, litteras destinabat quas ipse magno spacio temporis vel alius picturato verborum fastu et auctoritatibus philosophicis exornarat. Cuius testimonio probatus habebatur orator. Unde rudes et inscii pro auro cuprum deauratum emebant. Magistri vero et eorum fautores ex eo quod depreciabar proverbia et obscura dictamina contempnebam, dicebant me litteratura carere. Nec ascribebant virtuti sed vitio et levitati quod semper in presentia dictare volebam'. English translation and Latin text from MS Bibioteca Apostolica vaticana, *Archivio San Pietro*, H 13, fol. 19, reprinted in Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures*, pp. 386-387. For Boncompagno, see Ronald Witt, 'Boncampagno and the Defense of Rhetoric' in *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 16 (1986), 1-31.

[29] Paolo Bagni, '*Artes dictandi* e tecniche letterarie' in *Retorica e poetica tra i secoli XII e XIV. Atti del secondo Convegno internazionale di studi dell'Associazione per il Medioevo e l'Umanesimo latini (AMUL) in onore e memoria di Ezio Franceschini. Trento e Rovereto 3-5 Ottobre 1985*, eds Claudio Leonardi and Enrico Menestò (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1988), 201-220 (p. 205).

[30] 'Est preterea liber iste mee rethorice prologus, licet in rethorica Tullium non fuerim imitatus. Nunquam enim memini me Tullium legisse nec secundum alicuius doctrinam me aliquid in rethoricis traditionibus vel dictamine fecisse profiteor'. Edition of the *Palma* from *Aus leben und Schriften des Magisters Boncompagno*, ed. Carl Sutter (Freiburg: Akademische Verlagsbuchhandlung von J.C.B. Mohr, 1894), 105-127. Gian Carlo Alessio writes in 'The Rhetorical Juvenilia of Cicero' in *The Rhetoric of Cicero in its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, eds. Virginia Cox and John O. Ward (Boston: Brill, 2006), 335-364: 'In any case, Boncompagno's position is perhaps better regarded as reflecting a commitment to modernity and functionality in rhetorical study rather than a particular objection to Cicero' (p. 357, n. 73). Virginia Cox also treats Boncompagno's anti-Ciceronianism in her essay 'Ciceronian Rhetoric in Late Medieval Italy: The Latin and Vernacular Traditions' from

notable for his *Gemma purpurea* and *Parlamenti ed epistole*, both composed in the vernacular,[31] Boncompagno represents the functionality and self-aware modernity that characterized not only the 'rhetorical-legal mentality' of the University of Bologna, but also the discursive milieu of communal Italy between the period of the Investiture Struggle and the 'rise of the *signori*' in the decades around 1300.[32]

Despite the fact that both the *ars notaria* and *ars dictaminis* emerged within a context of popular revolt against the German empire and the educational system with which it was associated, textual culture at the court of Frederick II should be regarded as distinctively Italian. One of the triumphs of the Hohenstaufen emperor was the revival of the administrative style of the twelfth-century Kingdom of Sicily, in which Roger II and his successors must have adapted, to some extent, the new notarial and legal instruments of central and northern Italy to meet the needs of the sprawling southern kingdom.[33] Frederick's foundation of a southern university modeled after Bologna and designed to train a corps of lay administrators, his subscription to

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the same volume (pp. 109-146). One of the fullest treatments to date of Boncompagno's milieu at the University of Bologna can be found in John O. Ward, *Ciceronian Rhetoric in Treatise, Scholion, and Commentary* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), pp. 126-129, 290-292.

[31] Guido Faba is also recognized as one of the earliest contributors to the *ars arengandi*, which borrowed heavily from the style of dictaminal manuals while theorizing the art of public speaking. According to Witt, the new art, which represents, rather paradoxically, a return to oratory by way of writing, developed as a response to the political evolution of the commune. By the early thirteenth-century, both the office of the *podesà* and large communal assemblies required public oratory in the vernacular. *'In the Footsteps of the Ancients': The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Boston: Brill, 2003), p. 354. See also Giuseppe Vecchi, 'Le *arenge* di Guido Faba e l'eloquenza d'arte civile e politica duecentesca' in *Quadrivium* 4 (1960), 61-90. For Guido Faba and *dictamen* see Charles B. Faulhaber, 'The *Summa dictaminis* of Guido Faba' in *Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. James J. Murphy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 85-111.

[32] For the purposes of my argument for Sicilian poetry, I stress the relationship between Boncompagno's defense of practical rhetoric, the 'legal-rhetorical mentality' of Italy's professional schools, and the political and economic exigencies of communal life. Recent scholarship, including that of Ronald Witt, has been emphatic about the degree to which 'the two Latin cultures' intermingled following the dictaminal contributions of Adalberto, Ugo of Bologna, and Enrico Francigena. In the early thirteenth century, the *Candelabrum* of Bene of Florence does as much to recuperate Ciceronian rhetoric as Boncompagno's *Palma* does to diminish it. Gian Carlo Alessio writes: 'By comparison with earlier manuals, Bene da Firenze's *Candelabrum* seeks to present Ciceronian rhetorical doctrine in a far more comprehensive manner and one far more faithful to the emphases of the original'. 'The Rhetorical Juvenilia of Cicero', p. 354. See also Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures*, p. 394, n. 38. The greatest champion of Ciceronian rhetoric in the thirteenth century, however, was Brunetto Latini, whose vernacular translation of and commentary on Cicero's *De inventione* sought to demonstrate the relationship between rhetoric and ethics in a way more reminiscent of antique Ciceronianism than the work of any previous *dictator*. See Ronald Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients*, pp. 204-206. The effects exerted by 'traditional book culture' on the development of early Italian poetry will be the focus of Chapter 3.

[33] Hiroshi Takayama's *The Administration of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (New York: Brill, 1993) focuses primarily on the development in Sicily of a unique administrative hierarchy meant to accommodate the ethnic diversity of the realm, but never addresses northern Italian influence. Donald Matthew, however, notes that, before the foundation of the University of Naples in 1224, southern Italians in search of an education had no option but to travel north. *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Histories of the Kingdom of Sicily have primarily focused on its status as a precursor to the modern nation-state to the detriment of synchronic comparisons between the two halves of the peninsula. This tendency is being corrected in contemporary scholarship, however, as is evident in the work of Paul Oldfield, whose *City and Community in Norman Italy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009) eschews the traditional 'top down' approach of historiography on medieval Sicily. For the relationship between south and north in the twelfth century, see David Abulafia, *The Two Italies: Economic Relations Between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976). For the following, also refer to pp. 31-34 above.

the notarial practices of the north, and his *Constitutions of Melfi*, based preponderantly on the *Codex iuris civilis*,[34] all indicate a predilection to exploit the documentary culture of the Tuscan and Lombard communes for imperial gain. Beyond the bureaucracy of his administration, Frederick's campaigns in the north also brought his court into close contact with northern intellectuals, as is evident in the exchange of sonnets between Giacomo da Lentini and the Abbot of Tivoli. For these reasons, I argue, the textual tradition inherited by the poets of the *scuola siciliana* had nothing to do with either troubadour song or the Occitan court culture that sustained it. Giacomo's 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' was a translation in its purest Latin sense: the Notaro not only offered a new version of 'A vos, midontç, voill retrair'en cantan' in Italian vernacular, but he carried the *canso* into a new economic and political territory defined, in part, by its fully formed sense of the communicative function of text. Thus, the textual tradition of twelfth and thirteenth-century Italy, as well as the 'rhetorical-legal mentality' from which it derives, not only throws the performative subjectivity of troubadour song into confusion, but it drives the development of early Italian poetry until the end of the thirteenth century.

To return briefly to Zumthorian formalism, the invention of the sonnet as a new, and distinctively Italian, lyric form is most convincingly explained as the hybrid result of a foreign literary idiom – the language of courtly love – animated by Italy's native textual tradition. Zumthor has certainly been criticized for his all-encompassing notion of 'tradition', which imagines singers and poets as cogs in the machinery of language and culture.[35] Individuality and originality do, indeed, have a place in discussions of the troubadours – as Van Vleck so ably demonstrates in *Memory and Re-Creation in Troubadour Lyric* – and even of Guittone d'Arezzo, Guido Cavalcanti, and Dante. Yet I remain unconvinced that Giacomo da Lentini should be regarded as an innovator who consciously strove 'to invent a new form to rival the excellence and supremacy of the *canzone*'.[36] The Sicilian situation is complicated both by the fact of writing and by the specter of 'imitation', which had been so thoroughly vilified by the post-Risorgimento critical establishment. Kleinhenz, I believe, goes too far in his correction of De Sanctis, Croce, Bertoni, and countless others when he declares for the absolute originality of the Notaro. From the perspective of the evolution of the courtly lyric from twelfth-century Occitania to thirteenth-century Italy, the sonnet does seem shockingly new; from the perspective of the Italian 'documentary culture' that reached its fevered climax in the decades around 1250, however, the sonnet may, indeed, be entirely 'traditional'. Zumthor writes:

> The text is a surface phenomenon; tradition lies in the hidden depths of poetic space with all the tendencies and tensions of true poetry. For the medieval audience tradition was neither more nor less than a particular competence; the poem was it performance . . . Tradition appears as a preexisting goal of the text and one that determines the way it works . . . This means that it is highly predictable, without ever being totally so. As a locus of 'writing', tradition constitutes a space with its own dimensions within which it is inscribed and in relation to which 'works' and texts are judged . . . (pp. 54-55)

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[34] For the *Constitutions of Melfi*, see Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 208-214.

[35] Sarah Kay's *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and Amelia Van Vleck's *Memory and Re-Creation in Troubadour Lyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) are both notable for their dialogue with Zumthorian poetics.

[36] Kleinhenz, *The Early Italian Sonnet*, p. 30.

The 'tradition' that lies at the hidden depths of Sicilian poetry, and of the sonnet in particular, is the practical rhetoric of the *ars dictaminis*, not the poetic tradition of the troubadours. For, if 'tradition' is 'a continuum of memory bearing the mark of successive texts that are realizations of one single nuclear model, or of a limited set of models that act as a norm',[37] the 'successive texts' of the *scuola siciliana* are notarial documents and diplomatic epistles, while the 'nuclear model' was provided by the same dictaminal manuals that governed all written production for those lay intellectuals trained as notaries, judges, and lawyers at the Universities of Naples and Bologna. On the other hand, troubadour poetry, and the 'tradition' from which it derived, was entirely foreign to the Sicilians, and the way that Occitan 'tradition' manifested formally in troubadour song – from its *senhals* and pleas for mercy to its most persistent *topoi*, such as Folquet's 'muer quant viu' – is merely laid over Italian rhetorical 'tradition' like a thin verbal veneer. This is what Zumthor would call the 'surface phenomenon', whereas the 'competence' of the Sicilians, the expectations of both poet and audience, and 'the preexisting goal of the text' is entirely determined by medieval Italian 'documentary culture'. Thus, I argue, the sonnet must be understood first and foremost as a poetic manifestation, in the vernacular, of dictaminal writing. Whereas the expressive failure thematized by 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', as well as the dissatisfaction with conventional poetry expressed by 'Amor non vole ch'io clami', reflects the tension between poetic idiom and rhetorical tradition, the sonnet resolves this tension by subordinating courtly love to rhetoric.

Of the fifteen complete *canzoni* of certain attribution edited in Roberto Antonelli's recent critical edition of Giacomo da Lentini, twelve are structured as direct addresses to 'Madonna', while the other three lament the speaker's geographical separation from his love-object.[38] In contrast, only six of Giacomo's nineteen independent sonnets contain apostrophes to a second-person addressee, although a seventh is addressed to 'Amore' (1.32).[39] That 80% of Giacomo's *canzoni* address 'Madonna', compared to 32% of the sonnets, indicates that the new lyric form, whatever its actual origin, is structured according to the needs of an entirely different communicative situation. Despite the fact that most of Giacomo's sonnets still signify within the context of courtly love, they evince a fascination with the interiority of the amorous experience that recalls the first stanza of 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', in which the speaker describes his heart's travails with distant curiosity. In 'A l'aire claro ò vista ploggia dare', the Notaro writes:

> A l'aire claro ò vista ploggia dare,
> ed a lo scuro rendere clarore;
> e foco arzente ghiaccia diventare,
> e freda neve rendere calore;   4

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[37] Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics*, p. 50.

[38] I have not counted the fragments attributed to Giacomo, 'Non so s 'en gioia mi sia' and 'Amore, paura m'incalcia' (1.10 and 1.15 in *Giacomo da Lentini*). The *canzoni* without addresses to 'Madonna' are 'Troppo son dimorato' (1.9), 'S'io doglio no è meraviglia' (1.14), and 'Poi no mi val merzé né ben servire' (1.16).

[39] The six sonnets are: 'Lo giglio quand'è colto tost'è passo' (1.20), 'Donna, vostri sembianti mi mostraro' (1.24), 'Ogn'omo ch'ama de' amar so 'nore' (1.25), 'Sì alta amanza à pres'a lo me' core' (1.30), 'Sì como 'l parpaglion ch'à tal natura' (1.33), 'Chi non avesse mai veduto foco' (1.34), and 'Angelica figura e comprobata' (1.37).

> e dolze cose molto amareare,
> e de l'amare rendere dolzore;
> e dui guerreri infin a pace stare,
> e 'ntra dui amici nascereci errore.   8
>   Ed ò vista d'Amor   cosa più forte,
> ch'era feruto e sanòmi ferendo,
> lo foco donde ardea stutò con foco;   11
>   la vita che mi dè fue la mia morte,
> lo foco che mi stinse ora ne 'ncendo,
> d'amor mi trasse e misemi in su' loco.   14

On the surface of the sonnet, the *topos* of life-in-death seems entirely conventional: the lover is both wounded and sustained by Amor (v. 12). Here, however, the paradoxical nature of love is considered one of many such occurrences operative in the natural world; darkness gives way to light (v. 2) and the sweet things in life inevitably become bitter with time (v. 6). Giacomo's interest in the ontology of love as a natural phenomenon is evident in other sonnets as well, such as 1.22, in which the speaker asks, 'Or come pote sì gran donna entrare / per gli ochi mei che sì piccioli sone?' (vv. 1-2). The Notaro, ignorant of optical science, meditates on the relationship between vision and the heart in a sonnet that reads more like philosophical inquiry than a desperate lover's plea.

From the perspective of thirteenth-century Italian textual culture, the meditative nature and inward orientation of the sonnet is explained by its status as writing. Freed from the fiction of performance, Giacomo da Lentini and the other poets of the *scuola siciliana* were able to craft a type of lyric expression unburdened by the physical absence of its presumptive addressee. This lyric expression, furthermore, also tends toward the epistolary, as is evident in the poetic correspondence that accompanies the emergence of the sonnet. It is, of course, impossible to date most of Giacomo's *oeuvre*, but the structure of the great thirteenth-century anthology, MS Vaticano Latino 3793, indicates that *tenzoni* were ascribed higher literary value than individual sonnets, or at least that the *tenzone* represented the fulfillment of the sonnet as a lyric form.[40] Indeed, that Giacomo's exchange with the Abbot of Tivoli opens the second half of the manuscript confers special importance upon the sonnet *as* poetic correspondence, a fact far more relevant to its invention, I argue, than the formal characteristics of the individual microtext alone.

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[40] For the preponderance of *tenzoni* in the section of the Vatican anthology reserved for sonnets, see Antonelli's introduction to *Giacomo da* Lentini, pp. xxx-xxxi. He writes: 'Una spiegazione per la relativa incongruenza con la quale, rispetto alle canzoni, l'ordinatore ha raccolto il materiale nella sezione dei sonetti può essere fornita dal carattere specifico del genere, aperto ai più vari impieghi stilistici e tematici (amoroso, gnomico, 'comico', politico, ecc.), ma soprattutto impiegato nella corrispondenza polemica nel dibattito (anche fittizio, ad esempio fra Amante e Amore: si veda Monte Andrea, nᵢ 870-881). Proprio le tenzoni occupano la gran parte della sezione (tre interi quaderni e un buon segmento di un quarto su complessivi otto, oltre a quelle iniziali); le partecipazioni incrociate che vi si realizzano, e la mescidanza tematica e stilistica, al di là della provenienza geografica dei protagonisti, erano probabilmente tali da scompaginare eventuali ripartizioni storicogeografiche e gerarchiche rigorose' (p. xxx).

II. URBAN SPACE AND TEXTUAL CLOSURE IN GUITTONE'S *CANZONIERE*

Unlike the troubadour *tenso*, which is a single 'debate' song in which two or more performers sing alternating *coblas*,[41] the Italian *tenzone* transforms poetic debate into *sermo absentium*, in which two or more writers engage in poetic discourse by transmitting their individual texts, like letters, across time and space. Thus, the innovation represented by the sonnet is not due as much to the formal characteristics of the individual text as to the way they activate independent from the original site of poetic production. Indeed, the compact form of the sonnet, which, at a mere fourteen lines of verse, is similar to a single *canzone* stanza, allows for the construction of macrotexts that are unbound by physical space, even if enclosed by the conventions of writing. In this section, then, I would like to turn from the invention of the sonnet to Guittone d'Arezzo's amorous *canzoniere*, contained in MS Laurenziano-Rediano 9, and interrogate the relationship between textual closure and urban space. I argue that the epistolarity of the sonnet, or its predilection to aggregate into macrotexts that generate meaning beyond geographical limitations, enable poets to establish textual enclosures that both reflect and criticize the thirteenth-century commune.

The idea of textual closure and its relationship to physical space is a *topos* present in poetic debates on style in both twelfth-century Occitania and thirteenth-century Italy. These debates, however, always turn on the correspondence between textual closure and the notion of exclusivity. In *Memory and Recreation in Troubadour Lyric*, Amelia Van Vleck explain 'textual closure' in the following way:

> When we think of 'closed poetry' in the context of transmission, we might expect something that 'excludes' part of its potential audience by restricting who may hear it, who can understand it, or who can learn and retransmit it. Or a poem might 'close itself' by 'drawing to a close,' declaring itself 'entire' or 'complete' and admitting no further lines of verse, no new strophes. Its lines might interlock, shutting out revisions: in this case, poems whose stanzas are linked would be more 'closed' than *coblas unissonans*, since linked stanzas restrict transposition. And yet, because they serve as a mnemonic aid, linked stanzas make a song *plus leu ad aprendre*. (p. 134)

In the case of the *tenzone* and *canzoniere*, groupings of sonnets, most often bound to each other by the recurrence of particular formal characteristics, create 'closed' or 'complete' macrotexts. Nevertheless, debates over textual closure, even for thirteenth-century Italians operating in a context of writing, invariably implicate *trobar clus*, or the obscure style of composition.[42] The best Italian example is, perhaps, tenzone XIX between Bonagiunta and Guido Guinizzelli, which begins 'Voi ch'avete mutata la mainera'.[43] Bonagiunta accuses his Bolognese interlocutor of altering 'li plagenti ditti de l'amore' and attempting to advance his own prestige at the cost of clarity (XIXa, 2-4). Even if his lyrics hail from a site of wisdom (the University of Bologna), Bonagiunta insists upon Guinizzelli's deliberate obscurity: 'non si può

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[41] For the Occitan genres, see *The Troubadour* Tensos *and* Partimens*: A Critical Edition*, eds Ruth Harvey and Linda Paterson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010).

[42] Italian *trobar clus* will be the focus of Chapter 3.

[43] Text reprinted from *Poeti del Duecento*, ed. Gianfranco Contini, 2 vols (Milan: Ricciardi, 1960) II, pp. 481-83.

trovar chi ben ispogna,/ cotant' è iscura vostra parlatura' (XIXa, 10-11). Though these accusations, to borrow from Barolini, seem misdirected,[44] they nevertheless foreground the enduring importance of the thematics of obscurity deriving from the troubadour lyric. In the much quoted tenso 'Ara·m platz', Raimbaut d'Aurenga, here called 'Lignaura', asks Giraut de Bornelh to explain his criticism of *trobar clus*:

> Ara·m platz, Giraut de Borneill,
> Que sapcha per c'anatz blasman
> Tobar clus, ni per cal semblan.
> Aiso·m digaz,
> Si tan prezatz
> So que es a toz communal;
> Car adonc tut seran egual. (XXXI, 1-7)[45]

Raimbaut immediately demands to know if his fellow poet really values that which is common to all, a proposition that implies equality amongst troubadours who are not necessarily equal in prowess. Giraut responds:

> Seign'en Lignaura, no·m coreill
> Si qecs s'i trob'a son talan.
> Mas eu son jujaire d'aitan
> Qu'es mais amatz
> E plus prezatz
> Qui·l fa levet e venarsal;
> E vos no m'o tornetz a mal. (8-14)[46]

Bonagiunta's representation of Guinizzelli as undemocratic ('Voi ch'avete mutata la mainera . . . per avansare ogn'altro trovatore') calls to mind this somewhat apologetic response. Even though Giraut is perfectly willing to allow other troubadours to compose according to their desire, those songs which are most 'amatz' and 'prezatz' are light and open ('levet' here is the opposite of 'clus') and universally understandable. Raimbaut retorts three stanzas later:

> Giraut, sol que·l miels appareil

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[44] Teodolinda Barolini, 'Dante and the Lyric Past' in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 14-33: 'For modern readers, who find Guittone's rhetorical virtuosity so much more of a barrier than Guinizzelli's modest importation of philosophy into poetry, Bonagiunta's critique may seem misdirected' (p. 21).

[45] 'Now I should like to know, Giraut de Bornelh, why you keep finding fault with the closed style and for what reason. Tell me this: if you really esteem so highly what is common to everyone; for then all will be equal'. Citations of this *tenso* follow the text of Walter T. Pattison's critical edition *The Life and Works of the Troubadour Raimbaut d'Orange* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1952), while translations are from Linda Paterson, *Troubadours and Eloquence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), pp. 106 and 146-147.

[46] 'My lord Sir Lignaura, I do not object if everyone composes for himself according to his own taste; but I prefer to judge this way: that a song is better liked and more highly esteemed if one makes it easy and commonplace; and do not take me wrongly in this'.

> E·l dig'ades e·l trag'enan,
> Mi non cal sitot non s'espan.
> C'anc granz viutaz
> Non fon denhtaz:
> Per so prez'om mais aur que sal,
> E de tot chant es atretal. (29-35)[47]

Echoing his insistence from the first stanza that a poem must be judged according to its intrinsic worth, Raimbaut asserts that if he continually tries to fashion and perform the best poem, it is inconsequential if it remains unknown to the multitudes. The question of audience also constitutes an undercurrent of reproof in Bonagiunta's sonnet to Guinizzelli: as a result of the Bolognese poet's 'parlatura iscura', his lyrics necessarily achieve only a limited readership, even though 'plagenti ditti de l'amore' should be comprehensible to and loved by all.

The most compelling aspect of these two exchanges, however, is their use of spatial metaphors and verbs to either attack or defend *trobar clus*. Raimbaut's nonchalant 'Mi non cal sitot non s'espan' is telling; 'espandre' conjures the image of a slow wave of verse spreading out from the original scene of performance, the court. Even if Raimbaut assumes an attitude of indifference regarding the relative diffusion of his songs, he also makes an implicit value judgment that privileges the spatially as well as linguistically 'closed'. Permeable boundaries between the court and its constitutive outside can, on occasion, render a poem worthless. Thus, in order for a song to be appreciated in its full rhetorical splendor, it must not only be *enclosed* linguistically within formal complexities, but also *enclosed* within a physical space that allows for its fullest comprehension.

Bonagiunta draws upon a similar spatial metaphor when he indicts the lamp-like Guinizzelli:

> avete fatto como la lumera,
> ch'a le scure partite dà sprendore,
> ma non quine ove luce l'alta spera,
> la quale avansa e passa di chiarore. (XIXa, 5-8)

Here the distinction between *clus* and *leu* is rendered as physical 'inside' and 'outside': Guinizzelli's 'parlatura iscura' is fit only for dark underground places removed from the blazing light of the sun. If his verses signify any discernible truth, it is earthly, base and material, capable of illuminating only the smallest of interior spaces; Bonagiunta's Truth, however, is resplendent with the authority of God and bathes the terrestrial in His abundant knowledge. These two poetic exchanges, then, demonstrate the metaphorization of *trobar clus* as physical space, whether the protected enclosure of the court or the dark underground recesses of ignorance. Marcabru, composing a generation before Raimbaut and the originator, at least for

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[47] 'Giraut, provided that I fashion the best and continually sing it and bring it forward, I do not care if it is not spread abroad. For great abundance was never something precious: for this reason gold is valued more highly than salt, and it is the same with all singing'.

Jeanroy, of the *trobar clus* extolled in his *tenso* with Giraut de Bornelh, develops a poetics of enclosure that will characterize, a century later, the stylistics of Guittone d'Arezzo.
The eleventh *cobla* of Marcabru's 'El son d'esviat chantaire' (V) reads:

> L'amors don ieu sui mostraire
> nasquet en un gentil aire
> el luoc on ill es creguda:
> es claus de rama branchuda
> e de chaut e de gelada,
> q'estrains no l'en puosca traire. (49-54)[48]

Love, which Marcabru represents in the juridical sense of 'mostraire', was born and grew up in a leafy bower 'claus de rama branchuda' and protected from heat and cold. The most important line of the stanza, however, is the last: 'q'estrains no l'en puosca traire'. The boundary that separates the garden of Love from the outside world is impenetrable; its leafy branches are so thick that no stranger can pull Love from its rightful place. Here Marcabru seems to be insisting on the spatiality of Love. It is tied to a place, the court, which has itself become debased like the perverted orchard in 'Al departir del brau tempier'.[49]

The same notion of enclosure is again expressed in *canso* IX, 'Auias de chan com enans' e meillura'. Marcabru opines that the current Holy Roman Emperor, Lothar III, who had been crowned in June 1133, achieved his political status through powers plays and greed:[50] 'pretz ni valor no vezem tener gaire / quan per aver es uns gartz emperaire' (19-20).[51] This lout of an emperor 'proeza franh et avolez mura / e no vol joi tener dins sa clauzura' (21-22).[52] The behavior of the emperor, then, is exactly the opposite of Marcabru's ideal: he ruptures probity and fortifies baseness, thereby ejecting joy from its enclosure, which may be read, I would suggest, as the orchard of Love from 'El son d'esviat chantaire'. Interestingly, this song begins with a statement of poetic prowess that also deploys linguistic enclosure:

> Auias de chan com enans' e meillura
> e Marcabru, segon s'entensa pura,
> sap la razo del vers lasar e faire
> si que autre no l'en pot un mot raire. (1-4)[53]

Marcabru implores his audience to hear how his song advances and how he is able to bind up ('lassar') the theme ('la razo') in such a way that it is protected from corruption. This sentiment

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[48] 'The love whose advocate I am was born into a noble line in the place where it has grown up: [this place] is enclosed by leafy branches, [protected from] heat and frost, so that no stranger can take it from there'. Translation from *Marcabru: A Critical Edition*, eds and trans Simon Gaunt, Ruth Harvey, and Linda Paterson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000).

[49] See my analysis of this *canso* below on pp. 76.

[50] Gaunt et al., *Marcabru*, p. 142, n. 20.

[51] 'We do not see merit or worth last long, now that a certain lout has become emperor through wealth'.

[52] 'He shatters excellence and builds fortifications around baseness and does not want to keep joy in his enclosure'.

[53] 'Hear how this song progresses and improves and Marcabru, according to his pure intention (*or* flawless judgment), knows how to make and bind up the theme of the *vers* so that no one can erase a word from it'.

echoes the line 'q'estrains no l'en puosca traire' almost exactly in syntax and rhyme. The difference between the two lines, however, is grammatical: in 'Auias de chan' Marcabru uses the present indicative, 'no l'en pot' (4), whereas the verb 'poder' takes the present subjunctive in 'El son d'esviat', rendering 'no l'en puosca' (54). This difference foregrounds the idea, ubiquitous in Marcabru's corpus, that the *actual* enclosure of the court, the space where *fin'amor*, *proeza* and *joven* should flourish, has been compromised by *malvatz*. The only protected space available to Marcabru is thus a poetic one, where his *vers entiers* can, unlike the reality of the court that corresponds to the perverted garden, remain intact and resistant to *fraichura*. The idea of the fractured enclosure of courtliness in Marcabru's poems is thus absolutely implicated in his notion of the degeneration of courtly values, while his use of *trobar clus* represents an attempt to enact an analogous enclosure within language, an alternate space that exists as both reaction and remedy to the breached walls of castle and court.

One primary difference exists, however, between Marcabru's careful poetic pruning of his idealized orchard and the elaboration of *trobar clus* in the early Italian lyric: troubadour song was overwhelming oral, while early Italian poetry was, from its inception, composed and transmitted as *writing*. In the first chapter of this dissertation, I argued that Giacomo da Lentini's 'Madonna, dir vo voglio' represents the crisis experienced by a writing subject when confronted by the real absence of his love-object, the same object whose presence motivates the economy of exchange in troubadour poetry between performer and patron. The solution to this crisis of absence is made manifest in Giacomo's invention of the sonnet, which can be viewed as the liberation of the 'writing subject' from oral conventions, and its insertion into a new lyric mode defined by literacy and writing. This liberation is possible, however, precisely because the sonnet is, by nature, a 'closed' text. It adheres to the process by which 'a poem might "close itself" by "drawing to a close", declaring itself "entire" or "complete" and admitting no further lines of verse, no new strophes'.[54] This particular type of textual closure, which differs from the stylistic and thematic closure of *trobar clus* discussed in Chapter 3, gives rise to precisely defined notions of Authorship later in the Duecento: as poets successfully 'close' their compositions using techniques possible only in the context of written transmission, they gain greater authorial control over their creations.[55] Furthermore, Guittone d'Arezzo is the first Italian poet to exploit this authorial control. Not only does he compose the first *canzoniere* in the Italian tradition,[56] understood here as a series of interlinking sonnets, but he meticulously organizes all of his lyrics in such a way that MS Laurenziano-Rediano 9 (hencefoth MS *L*)produces an autobiography, a macrotextual narrative of the poet's flight from a place of moral ruin and subsequent conversion.[57]

I argue that MS *L*, if indeed representative of Guittone's authorial organization of his poems, is the Italian analog to Marcabru's secret garden of virtue. Whereas this garden is

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[54] Van Vleck, *Memory*, p. 134.

[55] The best example of the relationship between textual closure, authorship and writing is Dante's use of *terza rima*. The *Comedy* resists corruption and interference precisely because its author uses rhyme as a textual lock to which he alone holds the key.

[56] Holmes writes: 'Guittone is the earliest vernacular poet in Italy from whom a fixed, extended sequence of poems has come down to us relatively unscathed by the fragmentizing tendencies of medieval literary anthologization' (*Assembling*, p. 47).

[57] Olivia Holmes, *Assembling the Lyric Self: Authorship from Troubadour Song to Italian Poetry Book* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

protected by a barrier of obscurity that confounds the prying eyes of base *lauzengiers* and amoral *moilleratz*, Guittone's protected poetic space is walled in by text. The chiastic structure of the codex (post-conversion *canzoni*, amorous *canzoni*, amourous sonnets, post-conversion sonnets) creates the effect of medieval urban architecture: concentric city walls create an enclosure that protects both the *palazzo* of the commune and the cathedral. Indeed, Guittone's experience of conversion, which is both municipal and religious in character, lies at the center of *L*'s elaborate chiasmus. Even if 'Ora parrà' is his 'manifesto of conversion', the moment of Guittone's flight is narrativized in the structural center of his amorous *canzoniere*.

Vincent Moleta has identified five cycles, bound by thematic or narrative similarities, within the larger sequence of Guittone's pre-conversion sonnets.[58] The first, from 1 to 18, 'stabilisce il modello del semplice idealismo del fino amore su cui gli altri cicli verranno giudicati' (p. 61). Sonnets 19 to 30 bring into sharper focus the first-person perspective of the sequence and thematize loyalty and reciprocal love, as opposed to the generic stance of the unrequited courtly lover of the first cycle (p. 74). The longest of the five, the third cycle is elaborated between sonnets 31 and 80 and contains a *tenzone* between the poet-speaker and a female interlocutor (37 to 49) and one other sonnet (59) written in her voice (pp. 84-114). The next and shortest cycle is another *tenzone*, this time between the poet-speaker and a 'donna villana' (81 to 86), followed by twenty-four more sonnets that abandon the narrativity of the first eighty-six and constitute a type of *ars amandi* (pp. 115-128).

In his critical edition of Guittone's amorous *canzoniere*, Lino Leonardi includes only the first eighty-six sonnets and offers, in his introduction, compelling evidence why the sequence should be viewed as belonging to a single uninterrupted narrative.[59] He writes: 'All'interno di questo contenitore metricamente così ben strutturato la « coerenza » formale del macrotesto è garantita da una fitta serie di connessioni « di scrittura », ossia di richiami lessicali o sintattici da un sonnetto all'altro'.[60] Leonardi's understanding of the structural cohesion of Guittone's amorous sequence is more compelling than Moleta's rendering of five cycles. For, if his hypothesis is accurate, the precise middle of the sequence, which is the precise middle of the first *tenzone*, is the fulcrum upon which *L*'s entire chiastic structure is balanced.

This mid-point between sonnets 43 and 44, I argue, represents a type of amorous conversion that both chronologically prefigures and textually recalls Guittone's religious conversion and narrativizes his departure from Arezzo as a consequence of the failure of courtly love. In sonnet 31, Guittone establishes the first of two *senhals* that will identify his love-object: 'Tuttor ch'eo dirò «Gioi», gioiva cosa, intenderete che di voi favello' (1-2).[61] The next five sonnets dwell obsessively on this *senhal*, as is evident in the following lines:

Oimè lasso, com'eo moro pensando,

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[58] *Guittone cortese* (Naples: Liguori, 1987). In this identification, Moleta agrees with the earlier scholarship of Achille Pellizzari in *La vita e le opera di Guittone d'Arezzo* (Pisa: Nistri, 1906). Subsequent citations of this work will be parenthetical.

[59] *Canzoniere: i sonetti d'amore del Codice Laurenziano* (Turin: Einaudi, 1994). Leonardi's exclusion of the *ars amandi* is not without reason. In *L* these sonnets are written in another hand and follow a grouping of sonnets by other poets. They are thus effectively detached from the amorous *canzoniere*.

[60] Leonardi, *Canzoniere*, p. xxx.

[61] This and all subsequent citations of Guittone's sonnets have been reproduced from Leonardi's *Canzoniere*.

> Gioia, di voi ver' me fatta noiosa! (32.1-2)

> C'al comenzar, gioisa Gioi, c'amando
> ve demostrai de me fed'amorosa (32.5-6)

> Gioi amorosa, amor, grazi'e mercede (33.1)

> Piagente donna, voi ch'eo Gioi apello (34.1)

> Gioiosa Gioi, sovr'onni gioi gioiva,
> onni altra gioi ver' voi noia mi sembra (35.1-2)

> Ai dolce Gioia, amara ad opo meo (36.1)

When Guittone's dialogue with 'Gioia' finally begins in sonnet 37 – 'Dett'ò de dir: dirò, Gioia gioiosa' (1) – the first two lines of sonnet 31 are immediately recalled. The previous six poems and their repetition of 'gioia' are thus framed by two enunciations of authorial intention. Juxtaposed alongside the *tenzone*, however, this group's conspicuous accumulation of variations on the same utterance seems characterized by anxiety: the imminent presence of the poet-speaker's female interlocutor threatens his ability to idealize Love, as is possible in her absence. The possibility for a disappointing outcome is suggested by the pairing of 'gioia / gioiosa' with 'noia / "noiosa' in sonnets 32 and 35. Despite the poet-speakers desire for 'grazi'e mercede', his dialogue with 'Gioia' might very well reveal the troubling truth behind the rhetoric of courtly love.

The *tenzone* begins:

> Dett'ò de dir: dirò, Gioia gioiosa,
> e credo piaccia voi darmi odïenza;
> però c'omo mentir e dir ver osa,
> fòr prova, non abbiate in me credenza. (1, 1-4)

The thematic contours of Guittone's poetic debate with 'Gioia' are established in these lines. Guittone's compulsive manipulation of 'dire' is contrasted with his frank admission that language can simultaneously be true or false. In v. 3, 'però c'omo mentir e dir ver osa', the auxiliary verb 'osa' (understood here as 'can') takes two infinitives, 'mentire' and 'dir ver', without adverbial qualification. Truth-telling and deception are both necessarily implicated in the act of speech and occur *at the same time*. Thus, the poet's deliberately obfuscating 'Dett'ò de dir: dirò' is further complicated by the very nature of 'dir' itself, and 'Gioa gioiosa' is revealed to be nothing but another slippery signifier in the lexicon of the courtly love lyric.

The stakes of the debate between Guittone and 'Gioia' are raised in the next sonnet. She responds: 'or mira bene se la parola è sana, / ché per amor, amor ti renderaggio, / e, del contraro, ciò ch'è ragion certana' (38, 6-8). 'Gioia' clearly understands the polyvalence of courtly speech, but, unlike other ladies in the past – 'non, com'altre già fan' (3) – insists on the transparency of language 'per ragion cortese e piana' (4). If the courtly suitor honestly intends

'amor', she will respond in kind. She will be justifiably outraged, however, if 'amor' conceals baser motivations, as she goes on to describe in sonnet 40: 'Reo è per lo pastor, ch'è senza fele, / lupo che pò d'agnel prender colore' (7-8). The poet-speaker reveals precisely such motivations when he offers a response in the following sonnet:

> Però vo prego, per mercé, che agio
> e loco date me du' pienamente
> demostrive s'eo son bon u malvagio:
> e, s'eo son bon, piacciavo pienamente,
> e, s'eo so reo, sofrir pena e mesagio
> voglio tutto, sì con' voi sera gente. (41, 9-14)

The poet-speaker's highly sexualized discourse is unambiguously revealed here. Rather than love for love's sake, the suitor requests a secret meeting place where he can 'fully' demonstrate his real intentions. As promised, 'Gioia' is incensed as much at his presumption as at his inability to speak the truth:

> E, folle o saggio ch'eo t'aggia trovato,
> resposto t'aggio senpre a pian parere . . .
> Ma, se dimandi alcun loco nascoso,
> prov'è che la ragion tua no è bella;
> per che né mo' né mai dar non te l'oso.
> Ora te parte ormai d'esta novella,
> poi conosciuto ài ben del mio resposo
> che troppo m'è al cor noios' e fella. (42, 5-6, 9-14)

In addition to insisting that, whether foolish or not, her words have always been true, 'Gioia' reproaches the poet-speaker for his sexual advances and, more significantly, insists that he stop speaking. Her words, 'Ora te parte ormai', constitute the principal theme of the second half of the *tenzone*, as Guittone tellingly conflates her reference to speech with geographical space.

The poet-speaker's desperate plea to 'Gioia' in sonnet 43 and her cold, unequivocal rebuke in 44 not only form the center of the *tenzone*, but also represent the structural heart of the chiastic organization of *L*. Guittone observes that only 'Gioia' has the power to give him leave – 'Bene vegg'io che di partir potenza / darmi potete' (43, 9-10) – to which she coolly offers, 'Consiglioti che parti' (44, 1). As Holmes notes of the entire amorous interlude, this exchange takes on the valence of a 'flashback' in *L*'s overarching narrative of the poet's life story.[62] The strongly deictic character of both 'Ora parrà' and Guittone's political *canzoni* imposes the perspective of *here* and *now* on the entire structure of the collection and represents experience pertaining to *there* and *then* as explanatory or causal. In this light, the

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[62] Olivia Holmes, '"S'eo varrò quanto valer già soglio": The Construction of Authenticity in the "Canzoniere" of Frate Guittone and Guittone d'Arezzo (MS Laurenziano-Rediano 9)' in *Modern Philology* 95 (1997), 170-199 (p. 176).

poet-speaker's hesitation to depart, as commanded by his love-object, can only be read as prefiguring Guittone's religious conversion.

The complete failure of courtly rhetoric staged in this *tenzone*, along with the poet's obsession with language as concealment and his depiction of secular love as malevolent and predatory, precipitates the moment of crisis that leads to Guittone's eventual conversion and self-imposed exile from his native city. Indeed, if Leonardi's interpretation that all eighty-six sonnets are part of the same narrative sequence is valid, then Guittone's amorous *canzoniere* can justifiably be read as representing his relationship with Arezzo. Accordingly, I argue that MS *L* is constructed as the poetic space in which Guittone's municipal ideals become manifest and from which the 'reality' of the commune may be safely criticized with impunity.

CONCLUSION

Guittone's elaboration of the amorous *canzoniere* represented by sonnets 1-86 in MS Laurenziano-Rediano 9 into a poetic space that both reflects and criticizes the commune of Arezzo demonstrates not only the dialogic potential of the early Italian sonnet, but also the relationship between thirteenth-century Italian courtly love poetry and the political structure that sustains it. Having imported a literary idiom born from a set of historical circumstances alien to the poets of the *scuola siciliana*, Giacomo da Lentini produced a new lyric form governed by the concerns of rhetorical, rather than courtly, tradition. Moreover, this tradition, which was constituted primarily by the *ars dictaminis* and the practical rhetoric of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Italian notariate, imbues the sonnet with an essential epistolarity; its terse fourteen lines were employed for poetic correspondence from its inception, and, according to the prestige afforded it by the compiler of MS Vaticano-Latino 3793, the epistolary *tenzone* can, and should, be understood as the fulfillment of the courtly love lyric within Italian textual culture.

The sonnets exchanged by Giacomo da Lentini and the Abbot of Tivoli and by Bonagiunta da Lucca and Guido Guinizzelli liberate troubadour song from the geographical and temporal specificity of a lyric 'here and now' and allow for the construction of macrotexts that signify as *sermo absentium*. In other words, the meaning of a sonnet is generated, despite disparities in time or place, by the written discourse between a poet and his real interlocutor, in contrast to the performance of a troubadour song, whose meaning is guaranteed by its performance to an audience in real time. Furthermore, the structural independence of the sonnet from the concerns of the court – concerns, I argue, that are represented by the constellation of subject and object in troubadour poetry – is clearly demonstrated by its aggregation into *canzonieri*, such as Guittone's collection of sonnets in MS *L*. The correspondence of 'Gioia', the poet-speaker's fictional interlocutor, with the city of Arezzo indicates the ability of the sonnet, as well as the *tenzone* and *canzoniere*, to approximate urban space. Ultimately, Guittone manipulates the lyric form derived from rhetorical tradition to criticize the political structure from which that tradition emerged.

Rhetoric, Obscurity, and Dantean Literary History

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I compared Guilhem XI's 'Farai un vers de dreit nïen' and Giacomo da Lentini's 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', which translates and expands Folquet de Marselha's 'A vos, midontç, voill retrair'en cantan', in order to determine the precise ways in which thirteenth-century Italian lyric subjectivity deviates from that of the twelfth-century troubadours. The Notaro's *canzone*, composed of five elaborate *coblas singulars* that deploy clusters of rhyme chains to bind Giacomo's lyric 'io' to the ineffability *topos*, enacts the physical absence of the speaker's love-object on a structural level. This phenomenon derives from a crisis produced by the communicative condition imposed by the Sicilian court's highly developed documentary culture: the immediate address of a performing subject must differ from the postponed address of a writing subject. Then, in the second chapter, I claimed that the invention of the sonnet should be understood as a response to the new transmissional context of the courtly love lyric. The 'legal-rhetorical mentality' of imperial court and commune, which had developed during the Investiture Struggle and was codified by eleventh- and twelfth-century *dictatores*, erupted into the vernacular lyric of the troubadours and produced a new epistolary genre. A sophisticated tool for long-distance debate between highly educated lay poets, the sonnet had been used for correspondence since its inception and, as a result, formed the building block of medieval Italy's unique macrotextual tradition. Far more than mere correspondence, however, the *tenzone*, as well as its more expansive iteration, the *canzoniere*, allowed Italians to respond to the deteriorating conditions of the late thirteenth-century commune.

Thus far, I have addressed all three movements of early Italian vernacular poetry – the *scuola siciliana*, *siculo-toscani*, and *Dolce stil nuovo* – as part of the same continuous evolution from twelfth-century Occitan oral culture to thirteenth-century Italian textual culture. If this is the case, however, how should one understand Dante's assertion in *Purgatorio* XXIV that the 'sweet new style' of 'Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore' represents a break from Giacomo da Lentini and Guittone d'Arezzo? On the terrace of the gluttonous, Dante, accompanied by both Virgil and Statius, along with Forese Donati, encounters the shade of Bonagiunta da Lucca, who says:

> 'O frate, issa vegg'io,' diss'elli, 'il nodo
> che 'l Notaro e Guittone e me ritenne
> di qua dal dolce stil novo ch'i' odo.
> Io veggio ben come le vostre penne
> di retro al dittator sen vanno strette,
> che de le nostre certo non avvenne;
> e qual più a riguardar oltre si mette,

non vede più da l'uno a l'altro stilo. (XXIV.55-62)[63]

Even if Dantean literary history relies on chronological continuity in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, here the poet insists on a clear *stylistic* rupture between the *scuola siciliana* and *siculo-toscani*, on one side, and the *Dolce stil nuovo* on the other.[64] In this chapter, I will interpret the literary history of Dante's *Commedia* as a symptom of the late thirteenth-century return to 'traditional book culture' described by Ronald Witt. I argue that Guittone d'Arezzo's obscurity is the poetic manifestation of the 'legal-rhetorical mentality' of the communes and that his *canzone*, 'Ora parrà s'eo saverò cantare', calls into question the ability of language to truthfully represent subjective experience. Furthermore, Guittone's conscious disruption of signification occurs in a municipal context, and his epideixis of scorn is bound explicitly to the failure of the communal project. In the *Commedia*, however, Dante attempts to redeem the possibility for perfect signification and rejects Guittonian rhetoric *tout corps*. Instead, he employs the figure of the knot (*nodo*) to redirect rhetoric back toward Ciceronian rhetoric and Augustinian hermeneutics. In this way, 'the two Latin cultures' of medieval Italy provide the context for the elaboration of a distinctly Italian *trobar clus*, which corresponds to the ambiguity made possible by the practical rhetoric of the thirteenth-century Italian commune, and *trobar leu*, represented by Dante as a *dolce stil novo* that conforms to the interpretive practices of the Church Fathers and the *rhetorica* of the traditional liberal arts.

I. ITALIAN *TROBAR CLUS*

While the distinction between *trobar clus* and *trobar leu* has provided scholars of the troubadour lyric a rich category of inquiry,[65] discourses of origins and influence have

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[63] This and subsequent quotations are from *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgata*, ed. Giorgio Petrocchi, 4 vols (Florence: Le Lettere, 1994).

[64] Important to note, however, is that the chronological continuity of the *De vulgari eloquentia* is predicated on the persistence of the illustrious vernacular in exemplary poetic texts, whether Occitan, Sicilian, or Tuscan, while Dante's criticism of Guittone in the *DVE* anticipates *Purg.* XXIV and XXVI. Despite the similarities, however, I would argue that the *Comedy* rejects continuity altogether. While early Dantean literary history understands romance lyric poetry as a teleological progression from troubadour, to Sicilian, to Tuscan, culminating with Dante himself, the literary history espoused in *Purgatorio* is far more theological: the *Comedy* is the fulfillment of lyric poetry rather than its logical *telos*.

[65] Scholarship on *trobar clus* and *trobar leu* has most often addressed Giraut de Bornelh and his *tenso* with Raimbaut d'Aurenga, 'Era·m platz', which I discussed in Chapter 2. Early criticism understood Giraut as having abandoned *trobar clus* for the morally and aesthetically superior *trobar leu*. See Adolf Kolsen, *Guiraut von Bornelh, der Meister der Trobadors* (Berlin: Vogt, 1894), pp. 41-43, Alfred Jeanroy, *La poésie lyrique des troubadours*, 2 vols (Paris: Didier, 1934) II, pp. 51-58, Bruno Panvini, *Giraldo di Bornelh, trovatore del secolo XII* (Catania: Università di Catania. Biblioteca della facoltà di lettere e filosofia, 1949), pp. 9-18, and Ulrich Mölk, *Trobar Clus / Trobar Leu: Studien zur Dichtungstheorie der Trobadors* (Munich: Fink, 1968), pp. 118-19. More recent studies, however, have troubled the clear distinction between *clus* and *leu* by foregrounding medieval theories of *eloquentia* as the context for 'Era·m platz' or reading Giraut's use of these terms as ironic. See in particular Linda Paterson, *Troubadours and Eloquence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), pp. 88-144, Sarah Kay, 'Rhetoric and Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry' in *The Troubadours and the Epic: Essays in Honor of W. Mary Hackett*, eds Simon Gaunt and Linda Paterson (Coventry: University of Warwick, 1987), 102-42 (pp. 125-29), Simon Guant, *Troubadours and Irony* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 167-78, and Sarah Spence, 'Rhetoric and Hermeneutics' in *The Troubadours: an Introduction*, eds Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 164-80 (pp. 173-76). Beyond this much discussed *tenso*, critical interest in troubadour style has been on the

traditionally subsumed questions of stylistic difference in the early Italian context. From the perspective of twelfth-century France, the earliest Italian poets are indebted to the entire Occitan tradition and are thus represented as merely *tending* toward, rather than exemplifying, one style or the other;[66] while from the perspective of Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*, geography trumps style (and chronology) as constitutive of influence in the literary-historical model of troubadours then Sicilians then Tuscans.[67] The authority of Dante's rendering of literary history in *Purgatorio* XXIV and XXVI has also greatly impacted discussions of early Italian style.[68] When the Florentine names his lyric style the 'dolce stil novo' by ventriloquizing Bonagiunta da Lucca, he creates a fiction of before and after that equates style with inspiration. What distinguishes Giacomo da Lentini, Guittone d'Arezzo, and Bonagiunta from Dante and his Tuscan contemporaries (if, indeed, 'le vostre penne' indicates a group of poets rather than Dante alone), is their inability to faithfully copy the words of *Amor dictator*.[69] Style is not imagined as

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rise since the late 1960s and early 1970s, when Aurelio Roncaglia and Erich Köhler debated its poetic function in two issues of *Cultura Neolatina*, '« Trobar clus »: discussione aperta' in 29 (1969), 5-55 and 30 (1970), 300-14. Of special interest here is Sarah Kay's reading of the relationship between the first-person subject position and rhetorical complexity in *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 17-49, and Amelia Van Vleck's *Memory and Re-Creation in Troubadour Lyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), which understands textual closure as a means to prevent transmissional corruption.

[66] See, for example, Gianfranco Folena's 'Cultura e poesia dei Siciliani' in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, eds Emilio Cecchi and Natalino Sapegno, 9 vols (Milan: Garzanti, 1965) I, 273-347 (pp. 282-83).

[67] *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, ed. and trans. Steven Botterill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), II.vi.6. Dante's list of illustrious *canzoni* is an example: five troubadours (Giraut de Bornelh, Folquet de Marselha, Arnaut Daniel, Aimeric de Belenoi, and Aimeric de Peguilhan) are followed by one poet in *langue d'oïl* (the King of Navarre), one Sicilian (Guido delle Colonne), one Bolognese poet (Guido Guinizzelli), and two Tuscans (Guido Cavalcanti and Cino da Pistoia) before culminating with Dante himself.

[68] Of particlar relevance to this chapter is Zygmunt G. Baranski's '"'nfiata labbia" and "dolce stil novo": A Note on Dante, Ethics, and the Technical Vocabulary of Literature' in *Sotto il segno di Dante. Scritti in onore di Francesco Mazzoni*, eds Leonella Coglievina and Domenico De Robertis (Florence: Le Lettere, 1998), 17-35. Teodolinda Barolini's *Dante's Poets: Textuality and Truth in the* Comedy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 85-123, remains valuable for its extensive treatment of the various historiographical issues at stake in these *canti*. Her recent 'Dante and the Lyric Past' in *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 14-33, also examines the poetic relationship of Dante to both Guittone d'Arezzo and Guido Guinizzelli, as does Justin Steinberg in *Accounting for Dante: Urban Readers and Writers in Late Medieval Italy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), pp. 32-48, but with an emphasis on the codicological presence (or absence) of these poets in the *Memoriali Bolognesi*. Other readings of these *canti* have de-emphasized the literary-historical in favor of the theological. See, in particular, Giuseppe Mazzotta's *Dante, Poet of the Desert: History and Allegory in the 'Divine Comedy'* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 192-226. While still tending toward the theological, Ronald Martinez in 'The Pilgrim's Answer to Bonagiunta and the Poetics of the Spirit' in *Stanford Italian Review* 4 (1983), 37-63, Robert Hollander in 'Dante's "*dolce stil novo*" and the *Comedy*' in *Dante: Mito e poesia. Atti del secondo Seminario dantesco internazionale (Monte Verità, Ascona, 23-27 giugno 1997)*, eds Michelangelo Picone and Tania Crivelli (Florence: Cesati, 1999), 263-281, and Robert Durling in '"Mio figlio ov'è?" (*Inferno* X, 60)' in *Dante: Da Firenze all'aldilà. Atti del terzo Seminario dantesco internazionale (Firenze, 9-11 giugno 2000)*, ed. Michelangelo Picone (Florence: Cesati, 2001), 303-29, foreground Dante's inspiration as the breath of the Holy Spirit and read *Canto* XXV's digression on 'aerial bodies' as necessary for the poet's definition of his new poetics. *Purg.* XXV is also central to John Freccero's analysis in *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 204-205, but with reference to Manfred's mutilated body in *Purg.* III.

[69] Bonagiunta asks Dante: 'Ma dì s'i' veggio qui colui che fòre / trasse le nove rime, cominiciando: / "Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore"?' (XXIV.49-51). Dante responds: 'I' mi son un che, quando / Amor mi spira, noto, e a quel modo / ch'e' ditta dentro vo significando' (52-54). The reference here is to Dante's youthful *libello*, the *Vita nuova*, in which Love personified often appears to the heart-sick poet and inspires his verses. Just as Dante decides

clus (dense, complex, precious, and impenetrable), *leu* (light and easily comprehended), or *rics* (virtuosic and playful), but as *inspired* or *uninspired*.

As is so often the case in the *Commedia*, however, the speech of neither Dante-pilgrim nor his interlocutors can be read uncritically as an indication of the poet's intentions. Even though Bonagiunta claims that 'qual più a riguardar oltre si mette, / non vede più da l'uno a l'altro stilo' (61-62), the proliferation in this passage of words that signify writing as *téknɛ* ('noto', 'ditta', 'Notaro', 'stil', 'penne', 'dittator', 'stilo') belies a deep concern over style in general, and over rhetorical complexity in particular. Zygmunt G. Baranski has noted that even the coining of *dolce stil novo* derives from 'Provençal debates about the relative merits of *trobar clus* and *trobar leu*':[70]

> the poet from Lucca acknowledges the desirability of a poetry which is clear and accessible. The key term in this respect is «dolce» (l. 57). In the Romance vernacular tradition, *leu / lieve*, and its synonyms *suaus / soave* and *douz / dolce*, were the typical characteristics of *leu chantar*, the opposite of «motz cobertz ni serratz».[71]

Dante, poet of the *Commedia*, thus identifies clarity as the stylistic objective for his youthful poetry of praise, but also grafts this notion onto a metaphysics of inspiration absent from the *Vita nuova*.[72] Though the *Comedy* is, at times, shockingly *clus*, it nevertheless insists that signifier and signified should exist in meaningful harmony and that any rupture between the two is a perversion of God's will.[73] No wonder, then, that Dante would disparage the difficult poetry of Guittone d'Arezzo: from a metaphysical point of view, its complexity obfuscates its meaning, or worse, its meaning is generated *by way of* deliberate obfuscation.[74]

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that his poetry should praise Beatrice openly, rather than concealing his love for her ('E però propuosi di prendere per matera de lo mio parlare sempre mai quello che fosse loda di questa gentilissima', XVIII.9), he experiences a moment of (perhaps) divinely inspired speech: 'Allora dico che la mia lingua parlò come per sé stessa mossa, e disse: *Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore*' (XIX.2). Despite the ambiguity of Dante-poet's attitude toward the *Vita nuova* in *Purgatorio* (see Baranski, 'A Note', pp. 24-26), Bonagiunta's post-morten perception of Dante's poetic success is clear: the poet, like a good scribe, merely copies what Love dictates. Quotations are from *Vita nuova*, ed. Domenico De Robertis (Milan: Ricciardi, 1995).

[70] 'A Note', p. 25.

[71] 'A Note', pp. 25-26; 'motz cobertz ni serratz' is from Giraut de Bornelh's 'Non puesc sofrir c'a la dolor' (73).

[72] Baranski draws a clear distinction between the younger Dante of the *Vita nuova*, whose perspective is represented by Bonagiunta in *Purg*. XXIV, and the more mature Dante of the *Commedia*, who implictly criticizes the *Vita nuova*'s lack of nuance with regard to style. See 'A Note', p. 28.

[73] Pluto's '*Pape Satàn, Pape Satàn aleppe*!' (*Inf.* III.1) is an example of this (see Baranksi, 'A Note', p. 18), as is Nimrod's '*Raphèl maì amècche zabì almì*' in *Inf.* XXXI.67. Read against *De vulgari eloquentia* I.vii.4-8, it is clear that Nimrod's gibberish is a consequence of the Fall: in the Garden of Eden, words signify perfectly - Adam speaks the name of God, 'El' (*DVE* I.iv.4), and names his creations - while Eve's presumption leads to a crisis of signification.

[74] Baranksi writes: 'Such formalist poetry is difficult to understand: a disjuncture exists between signifier and signified. By indulging in arcane stylistic games, the poet obfuscates the content of his verse. As a result his «penne» (the formal execution) no longer «closely follow» the promptings of their «dittator»' ('A Note', p. 27). Here Baranski understands *dittator* as simply 'the source of a poem's content', even though, from the perspective of thirteenth-century Italian rhetorical history, *dittator* signifies a master of the *ars dictaminis*, the medieval rhetorical art devoted to epistolography, who would both instruct pupils and offer letter-writing services to a commune. The presence of this word in *Purg.* XXIV further supports the relevance of the late medieval rhetorical context to Dante's understanding of poetic style.

The *Comedy*'s representation of dangerous rhetoric is, however, only one contribution to the debate over textual closure and complexity that so occupied the troubadours and the earliest Italian lyric poets. Unfortunately for Giacomo da Lentini, Guittone d'Arezzo, and Bonagiunta da Lucca, though, Dante's presence looms so large over the *Duecento* that their individual significance has often been subsumed by perceptions of their teleological relationship to the *Comedy*. Until recently, scholarship on early Italian poetry regarded the *Scuola siciliana* and the *siculo-toscani* as a kind of Mosaic law to Dante's Christ: they are only readable as prophesying the inevitability of the great poem to come. Within this simplistic reading, the early Italian lyric (with the possible exceptions of Guido Guinizzelli and Guido Cavalcanti) only ever inhabits a purgatorial *in-between* where meaning is relational to a literary past (the troubadours) or a literary future (Dante). This has been especially true for Guittone, who has suffered like no other poet from the perpetuation of Dantean literary history. It is my intention, therefore, to recover the specificity of Guittone's *trobar clus* by demonstrating how his poetry adheres to the poetic practice of his troubadour predecessors, while adapting it a new socio-political context that embraced the 'rhetorical-legal mentality' of late medieval Italy's documentary culture.

Reputedly the most difficult poet of the *Duecento*, Guittone represents a synthesis of troubadour form with the notarial culture nurtured in central and northern Italy's proto-democratic communes.[75] Born around 1230 to Michele del Viva d'Arezzo, treasurer of the city, Guittone's early life was undoubtedly characterized by exposure to the civic institutions of late medieval Tuscany and to the wealth and status of the new *bourgeoisie*.[76] Succumbing to the political misfortunes of the time and dispirited by the Sienese rout of Florentine Guelphs at the Battle of Montaperti, however, Guittone joined the recently formed order of the Milites Beatae Virginis Mariae, or 'Frati Gaudenti', in 1265, abandoning both the city of his birth and his wife and three children.[77] Though significant in the context of the great thirteenth-century lyric anthologies and useful for mapping his literary production into two distinct periods, the influence of Guittone's 'conversion' has suffered under the scrutiny of recent scholarship. Vincent Moleta notes:

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[75] For general studies on the life and literary career of Guittone, see Claude Margueron, *Recherches sur Guittone d'Arezzo: sa vie, son époque, sa culture* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1966); Antonio Enzo Quaglio, 'L'esperimento di Guittone d'Arezzo' in *Le origini e la scuola siciliana* (Bari: Laterza, 1975), 259-300; Achille Tartaro, *Il manifesto di Guittone e altri studi fra Due e Quattrocento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1974); Vincent Moleta, *Guittone cortese* (Naples: Liguori, 1987); and the collection of essays *Guittone d'Arezzo nel settimo centenario della morte. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Arezzo (22-24 aprile 1994)*, ed. Michelangelo Picone (Florence: Franco Cesati, 1995). In his edition of Guittone's *Canzoniere*, Lino Leonardi outlines the most convincing argument to date for Guittone's position as one of the two principal intermediaries between the Occitan and Italian lyric traditions of the thirteenth century. The *canzone* 'Se de voi, donna gente' is dedicated to Corrado di Sterleto, a central Italian magnate responsible for commissioning Uc de Saint Circ's *Donat proensal*. Leonardi writes: 'S'apre qui un altro scenario, anzi l'altro grande scenario, accanto all'avventura siciliana, in cui si tentò una attualizzazione programmatica della tradizione lirica occitanica in Italia, il Veneto delle corti fra Cento e *Duecento*, dagli Esti ai Da Romano. Il contatto cui Guittone indirettamente poté attingere tramite Corrado sembra proprio con Uc de Saint Circ . . . la cui figura di editore e diffusore oltre che di poeta risulta sempre più centrale nell'opera di costituzione e sistemazione del corpus lirico trobadorico' (pp. xv-xvi). Also of note is the recent *Guittone d'Arezzo. Del carnale amore*, ed. Roberta Capelli (Rome: Carocci, 1997), whose introduction foregrounds Guittone's relationship to the late medieval rhetorical tradition (pp. 20-21).

[76] Margueron, *Recherches*, pp. 25-28.

[77] Margueron, *Recherches*, p. 36.

La sua conversione a mezza età nasconde una fermezza di temperamento, un originale padronanza di mestiere e un aperto didatticismo che sono presenti in tutti i suoi scritti e che conferiscono una certa unità al suo intero *corpus*.[78]

If there is, indeed, any unifying principle that cements Guittone's roughly 250 sonnets, fifty *canzoni*, and fifty Italian epistles into a seamless whole, it would doubtless be the specificity of his literary-historical position. Guittone's experience of the Italian communal project, combined with his exposure both to troubadour lyric and to the poets of the *Scuola siciliana*, produced a distinctly new type of Italian poetic consciousness. According to Antonio Enzo Quaglio,

L'intera esperienza letteraria, dalle rime alle lettere, rispecchia gli atteggiamenti civili e politici e le aspirazioni cortesi e morali della borghesia Toscana del tempo, di quella aretina in particolare, che assiste, cercando di opporvisi, al progressivo decadimento delle istituzioni e del prestigio comunale.[79]

It is upon the stage of the municipal, then, that Guittone presents his two poetic *personae* and dons the 'masks', to borrow from Antonello Borra,[80] of the courtly lover and morally outraged exile. He deploys a poetics of enclosure that clearly adheres to the lines of development charted by his troubadour predecessors, but that also represents the reality of thirteenth-century Italy's rhetorical-legal culture in a way absolutely opposed to Dante's understanding of divine signification, which I will address to a much fuller extent in the next section of this chapter.

In this way, Guittone's style can be considered a distinctly Italian manifestation of *trobar clus*, which, as a critical term, has been interrogated almost exclusively in the field of Occitan studies. Though the stakes involved in evaluating style in troubadour poetry have changed according to interpretive trends in the field, Carl Appel and Alfred Jeanroy established the contours of the debate in the first half of the twentieth century. Echoing Appel's classic introduction to the songs of Bernart de Ventadorn and quoting his own earlier *Poésie lyrique des troubadours*, Jeanroy wrote in 1945 that the first generation of troubadours was divided between two poetic schools, one 'idealist' and one 'realist':

les uns chantent un amour, sinon dégagé de toute aspiration sensuelle, au moins très réservé dans son expression et dont l'objet est parfois très vague: deux des pièces de Jaufré Rudel . . . s'adressent à une dame si «lointaine» qu'elle paraît irréelle; c'est un fantôme qu'il entrevoit dans un songe et qui se dissipera avec l'aurore . . . A l'autre pôle se placent de hardis réalistes qui décrivent en termes fort crus de répugnantes réalités.[81]

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[78] Moleta, *Guittone cortese*, p. 13.
[79] Quaglio, 'L'esperimento', p. 260.
[80] Antonello Borra, *Guittone d'Arezzo e le maschere del poeta: la lirica cortese tra ironia e palinodia* (Ravenna: Longo, 2000).
[81] Jeanroy, *Histoire sommaire de la poésie occitane des origines à la fin du XVIIIe siècle* (Toulouse: Pivat, 1945), pp. 39-40. The existence of at least one school is attested by references in poems by Bernart de Ventadorn and

The two schools, however, are equally prone to obscurity.[82] The obfuscating techniques of the first, or 'idealist' school, develop into *trobar ric*, complicated by a predilection for unusual rhymes and virtuosic displays of poetic mastery, typified late in the twelfth century, for example, by Arnaut Daniel's sestina, 'Lo ferm voler q'el cor m'intra'. The 'realist' school, on the other hand, evolves by the second generation of troubadours into *trobar clus*, 'dont le maître est Marcabru, qui déclare que bien peu de gens entendent ses vers et que lui-même n'y réussit pas toujours'.[83] According to Jeanroy, the obscurity of *trobar clus* is derived from an 'ambiguity of terms': the practitioners of this style of poetry 'avaient sans doute appris dans les écoles que toute expression peut être prise au sens littéral ou au sens figuré et peut s'appliquer à deux objets'.[84] *Trobar clus*, however, is not necessarily opposed to *trobar ric*, but to *trobar leu*, the 'light' or 'open' style of composition also derived from the 'idealist' school but lacking its formal complexities.

For scholars of the early Italian lyric, the boundaries between these stylistic distinctions appear to become more fluid as troubadour poetry is reinterpreted in a new idiom within a new socio-political context. As discussed in the first chapter, Aniello Fratta analyzes Sicilian glosses of troubadour songs and reveals numerous Occitan influences for each of Frederick's poets.[85] A single lyric, such as 'Madonna, dir vo voglio', contains references to both Giraut de Bornelh and Raimbaut d'Aurenga, exponents, respectively, of *trobar leu* and *trobar clus*.[86] In Gianfranco Folena's 'Cultura e poesia dei Siciliani', *trobar leu* provides a vague inspiration for the majority of the Sicilians, including Giacomo, while the preciousness of Guido delle Colonne, Stefano Protonotaro, and Inghilfredi da Lucca is said to be 'decisamente orientato verso il

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Marcabru to Ebles II de Ventadorn (fl. 1096-1147), vassal and poetic rival of Guilhem IX of Aquitaine. Marcabru rejects the foolishness of Ebles' poetic style: 'Jamai no farai plevina / eu per la troba n'Eblo, / car s'entensa folatina / manten encontra razo' (XXXI, vv. 73-76), while Bernart praises it: 'Ja mais no serai chantaire / ni de l'escola n'Eblo / que mos chantars no·m val gaire' (XXX, vv. 22-23). Despite the fact that none of Ebles' songs survive, he is regarded as the *caposcuola* of what Appel and Jeanroy define as the 'idealist' school of the second generation of troubadours, which included Jaufré Rudel and Bernart de Ventadorn. See Maria Dumitrescu, '"L'escola N'Eblon" et ses représentants' in *Mélanges offerts à Rita Lejeune* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1970), 107-118 and Amelia Van Vleck, 'The Lyric Texts' in *A Handbook of the Troubadours*, eds F. R. P. Akehurst and Judith M. Davis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 21-60 (p. 28).

[82] Roncaglia rightly points out in 'Trobar clus' (p. 6) that the obscurity Jeanroy perceives in both schools of troubadour poetry has more to do with contemporary readers' inability to understand its social and historical context than with pretensions on the part of the poets themselves: 'Quasi vien voglia di dire che tutto il *trobar* è, in certo senso e per certi rispetti, *clus*: chiuso in una condizione simile a quella enigmatica ed emblematica del *senhal*, ugualmente lontano dalla corposità immediata della passione come dall'astrattezza intelletuale della finzione, in bilico su un esile filo tra il giuco e l'*exemplum*; chiuso entro una spiritualità ed una società che riusciamo a penetrare, quando ci riusciamo, solo nelle zone di minor resistenza, dunque meno significative, e cui possiamo applicare senza gravi rischi d'anacronismo le misure, troppo romantiche o troppo razionalistiche, della mentalità moderna'.

[83] Jeanroy, *Histoire sommaire*, p. 40. Jeanroy is referring to 'Per savi teing ses doptanza', in which Marcabru praises the wise man who can understand what each word of his song means as its theme unfolds, even if 'eu mezeis sui en erranza / d'esclarzir paraula escura' (XXXVII, vv. 5-6).

[84] Jeanroy, *Histoire sommaire*, p. 40.

[85] Aniello Fratta, *Le fonti provenzali dei poeti della Scuola siciliana: i postillati del Torraca e altri contributi* (Florence: Casa editrice Le Lettere, 1996).

[86] Fratta, *Le fonti*, pp. 40-41.

trobar clus e l'esperienza arnaldesca'.[87] According to Folena, this orientation paves the way for a more pronounced 'realism' in the *siculo-toscani*, 'introducendo una nuova storicità, una dimensione critica, contatti e scelte individuali, piuttosto che un « contratto » collettivo, con la letteratura trobadorica'.[88]

Respecting Jeanroy's initial definition of *trobar clus* as a poetics of ambiguity oriented toward 'realism' and following Folena's suggestion that a particularly obscure stylistic vein in the *scuola siciliana* influences the development of the Siculo-Tuscan school, I argue that Guittone d'Arezzo is, without a doubt, a practitioner of *trobar clus*. This is nowhere more apparent than in his 'manifesto' of conversion, 'Ora parrà s'eo saverò cantare'.[89] More than likely composed at the time of Guittone's entrance into the 'Frati Gaudenti', this *canzone* is remarkable not only for its uncompromising rejection of secular love, but also for its status as the structural center of the narrativization of the poet's life story in MS Laurenziano-Rediano 9 (*L*).[90] 'Ora parrà' is the first poem of this anthology, which, even if not compiled by Guittone himself, is thought to respect the internal organization of his lyric corpus.[91] The manuscript begins with Guittone's letters, followed by 'Ora parrà' and the post-conversion *canzoni* of 'Frate Guittone'. The earlier, amorous *canzoni* are recorded next, followed by a *canzoniere* of love sonnets and, finally, by the religious sonnets. Olivia Holmes notes that this organization privileges 'Ora parrà' as the lens through which the entire *oeuvre* of Guittone must be read: the diachronic linearity of the poet's life is molded into a chiasmus by the force of the first poem's enunciation of conversion. In this way, 'the entire love interlude thus seems to function as a sort of "flashback" in Guittone's implied biography'.[92]

The *canzone* begins:

> Ora parrà s'eo saverò cantare
> e s'eo varrò quanto valer giá soglio,
> poiché del tutto Amor fuggo e disvoglio,
> e piú che cosa mai forte mi spare! (1-4)[93]

Guittone crafts this first *piede* as a challenge to his own poetic prowess. Immediately subverting the convention of the eternal lyric present, the initial word of the *canzone*, 'ora', clearly temporalizes the poem into a now and then, imposing a sharp contrast between a past of amorous indiscretion and a present of religious devotion. Despite this, however, Guittone's task is to demonstrate that his ability to compose poetry (*cantare*) has not diminished. Indeed, his

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[87] Folena, 'Cultura e poesia dei Siciliani', p. 282.

[88] Folena, 'Cultura e poesia', p. 282.

[89] In *Il manifesto* (p. 50), Tartaro writes that this 'canzone della conversione religiosa e letteraria' can be read as the '« manifesto » della nuova maniera guittoniana'.

[90] Tartaro, *Il manifesto*, p. 51. See also Olivia Holmes' '"S'eo varrò quanto valer già soglio": The Construction of Authenticity in the "Canzoniere" of Frate Guittone and Guittone d'Arezzo (MS Laurenziano-Rediano 9)' in *Modern Philology* 95 (1997), 170-199. MS Laurenziano-Rediano 9, along with MS Vaticano Latino 3793 and MS Banco Rari 217 (ex Palatino 418), is reprinted in *Concordanze della lingua poetica italiana delle origini (CLPIO)*, ed. d'Arco Silvio Avalle (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1992).

[91] Holmes, 'S'eo varrò', p. 173.

[92] Holmes, 'S'eo varrò', p. 176.

[93] All citations of Guittone's *canzoni* have been reproduced from Francesco Egidi's *Le rime di Guittone d'Arezzo* (Bari: Laterza, 1940).

spiritual rebirth has been accompanied by an awareness of the true nature of the value inherent in song, and his poetic mastery has become complete as a result. He writes in the next *cobla*:

> Ma chi cantare vole e valer bene,
> in suo legno nochier diritto pone,
> ed orrato saver mette al timone,
> Dio fa sua stella e ver lausor sua spene (16-19)

Like the first citation above, however, these four lines represent the first *piede* of the stanza, which is the least metrically complex unit of the *cobla* structure devised by Guittone. 'Ora parrà' is composed of five fifteen-line *coblas singulars* followed by a sixth *cobla* without the first *piede*. Its showy virtuosity is predicated upon a dizzying proliferation of internal rhymes in the sixth, eighth, ninth, eleventh, thirteenth and fourteenth lines, two of which (nine and fourteen) contain two internal rhymes at either the fourth or fifth and the seventh or eighth syllable. The rhyme scheme is as follows: A B B A A (a) C c | (c) A (a) (a) D E (e) F f (f) E (e) (e) D D. In the next seven lines of the first *cobla*, Guittone responds to his own poetic challenge by introducing into the *canzone* a series of spectacular technical elements:

> Ch'ad om tenuto saggio odo contare
> che trovare – non sa, né valer punto,
> omo d'Amor non punto;
> ma ch'è digiunto – da veritá mi pare,
> se lo pensare – a lo parlare – assembra;
> ché 'n tutte parte, ove distringe Amore,
> regge follore – in loco di savere. (5-11)

Despite the caesuras imposed here by the internal rhymes and their halting, almost disorienting effect, the rhyme words are nevertheless strung together in coherent semantic chains. *Contare*, *trovare*, *pare*, *pensare* and *parlare* are all grouped under the first A rhyme, *cantare*, and reflect the relationship between expression, appearance and song. The A chain in these seven lines, however, derives its force from *spare* in v. 4: the poet-speaker is repelled by *Amor*, to be sure, but the literalization of this repulsion becomes manifest in the *cobla*'s structure. *Spare* ruptures the chain of A rhymes and effectively severs *cantare* from the subsequent string of signifiers related to expression or knowledge. Also of note is Guittone's predilection for *rime care*, as in the first two rhymes of the C sequence: *punto, punto, digiunto*. In v. 6 *punto* is adverbial and reinforces the negation of 'non sa', while in v. 7 it functions adjectivally and modifies 'omo'. This is clearly not preciousness for its own sake, however, as both the *rima cara* of *punto* with *punto* and the entire C sequence embeds Guittone's critique of the courtly love lyric within the *canzone*'s structure: that a man not pierced by love knows neither how to compose poetry nor be of any worth is disjointed from the truth, even if 'digiunto – da veritá' is grammatically linked to the next line.

The madness of *Amor*, the disparity between emotion and expression, and even the sinfulness of adulterous courtly love are all conventional topoi for the troubadours. Given

Guittone's frequent citation of St. Augustine in his letters, neither can any originality be ascribed to 'Ora parrà' as a document of religious or literary conversion. What is astonishing, and astonishingly new, about this poem, however, is how its complexity, obscurity and ambiguity enact Guittone's themes on a structural level. In this sense, the poet's 'manifesto of conversion' is also a pronouncement on the efficacy of textual closure. *Trobar clus*, as a style, reveals more about the nature of love (as conceived by Guittone) than the easily apprehended transparency of *trobar leu*. As the poet-speaker notes in vv. 10-11, 'in all places that love constrains, madness reigns in place of wisdom'. Madness, however, is when thinking resembles speaking ('lo pensare – a lo parlare – assembra'), so wisdom reveals itself in ambiguity, in the uneasy estrangement of signifier from signified. In order to fully demonstrate this ambiguity in its cultural context, however, I would like to turn briefly to another pair of lyric texts: Marcabru's 'Al departir del brau tempier' and Guittone's 'Gente noiosa e villana'. Both poems can be read as epideictic screeds against the particular socio-economic circumstances that determined the formation of twelfth-century Occitan and thirteenth-century Italian poetic discourse.

Following the publication of Ulrich Mölk's *Trobar clus / Trobar Leu* in 1968, Aurelio Roncaglia rejected the 'two schools' theory of Appel and Jeanroy and re-opened the *trobar clus* debate. He writes:

> Tra i diversi indirizzi dello stile poetico e i diversi orientamenti dell'ethos amoroso non si può stablilire un'equazione biunivoca. Le due nozioni di *trobar leu* e *trobar clus* non corrispondono alle due « scuole » -- « idealistica » e « realistica » -- che la tradizione critica imperniata sugli studi dell'Appel e dello Jeanroy ha creduto d'identificare nella storia della lirica trobadorica. Anzi, la stessa individuazione tradizionale di quelle cosidette « scuole » risulta troppo semplicistica.[94]

Despite adopting Mölk's thesis on this point,[95] Roncaglia disputes his wholesale dismantling of the notion of ideological differences in courtly love, differences which had been implicit in Appel and Jeanroy's definition of *trobar clus* and *trobar leu*.[96] In effect, Mölk disputes the equation of 'idealist school' → *trobar leu* / 'realist school' → *trobar clus*, but goes too far when he minimizes the ideological differences between the two poles, suggesting that all troubadours subscribed to the same notion of courtly love.[97] This proposition is unnecessarily reductive, according to Roncaglia, who attempts to demonstrate that there was, indeed, an ideological split in the Occitan corpus. Marcabru (fl. 1130-1149), one of the most popular, if

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[94] Roncaglia, 'Trobar clus', pp. 9-10.

[95] Mölk writes: 'Die frühe provenzalische Lyrik kennt keine „école idéaliste" und „école réaliste", so wie A. Jeanroy und C. Appel diese Bezeichnungen verstanden wissen wollten. Damit entfällt auch die Möglichkeit, die Stilrichtungen des *trobar leu* und *trobar clus* den beiden „Schulen" zuzuordnen' (*Trobar Clus / Trobar Leu*, p. 38).

[96] For Jeanroy, the 'idealist' school of love poetry sought to represent a religious, quasi-mystical understanding of love, while the 'realist' school took as its inspiration the lived experience of an often adulterous carnal passion.

[97] This is the same position adopted by Moshe Lazar, for whom the 'two schools' theory introduces 'une distinction arbitraire entre des troubadours dont les conceptions amoureuses étaient en réalité parfaitement identiques'. *Amour courtois et 'fin amors' dans la littérature du XIIe siècle* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1964), p. 49.

least understood, troubadours,[98] develops in his songs a theory of *fin'amors* that is exclusively Christian and conjugal, as opposed to *fals'amistat*, which may be regarded as the adulterous love espoused by other, less morally inclined poets.[99] Furthermore, Marcabru, as an exponent of a Christian model of love, wields irony and satire as a weapon against the ideology of the courts, and may, in this regard, be considered a precursor of and model for the development of *trobar clus* in the Italian vernacular tradition:

> Tutti i passi in cui Marcabruno sembra associarsi ai cantori della *fin'amor* adultera, o assumere atteggiamenti di cinica spregiudicatezza in armonia con i costumi corrotti della società cortese, sono da intendere in senso ironico, sarcastico, satirico e parodistico.[100]

Even if 'una vera e propria poetica del *trobar clus* nasce solo più tardi e indipendentemente da quel contrasto ideologico', Marcabru may still be considered the originator of a 'gekünstelten Stiles' who paved the way for the obscure style of composition both in twelfth-century Occitania and thirteenth-century Italy through his affectation of an ironic poetic persona and his manipulation of ambiguity to parodic effect.[101] Thus Marcabru indeed emerges as a figure central to the development of *trobar clus*, but for reasons different than those cited by Jeanroy, for

> il cosidetto « idealismo » della *escola n'Eblo* accoglie spregiudicatamente nella propria stilizzazione dati e impulsi autentici della società e della cultura contemporanea, nei quali cerca e riconosce la realtà del sentimento umano e le forme attuali della sua vita. D'altra parte, il « realismo » marcabruniano, di là dal ricorso espressivo ad immagini concrete e icastiche, nella sua stessa tensione demistificatoria, finisce col travolgere e

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[98] Essential is the introduction to the most recent critical edition of Marcabru, edited by Simon Gaunt, Ruth Harvey and Linda Paterson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000). Active in the second quarter of the twelfth century, Marcabru's impact on successive generations of poets is attested by a deferential reference to him in MS R, a fourteenth-century Occitan chansonnier, as 'lo premier trobador qe fos', as well as by his two *vidas* preserved in MSS A and K, which remember him respectively as 'mout cridatz et ausitz pel mon' and as one of the first troubadours 'c'om se recort' (pp. 5, 37-38). See also Ruth Harvey, 'The Troubadour Marcabru and his Public' in *Reading Medieval Studies* 14 (1988), 47-76 (pp. 47-48). That Marcabru was exceptionally popular in his own day is attested by the forty-two poems attributed to him spread across sixteen chansonniers. This sizeable body of work indicates a fairly wide reception and long history of both oral and written transmission. See Gaunt et al., *Marcabru*, pp. 6-8, for a catalogue of MSS containing his poems.

[99] Roncaglia begins his discussion of Marcabru's conception of *fin'amor* with XL, 'ch'è il caso più lampante' in Marcabru's corpus (pp. 17-19). Notwithstanding his failure to mention the problematic textual history of this poem (see Gaunt et al., *Marcabru*, p. 503), Roncaglia identifies in it an 'unequivocal language' of Christian love derived, in part, from scripture. When the speaker begs mercy of pure love – 'Ai! Fin'amors, fon de bontat / c'a tot lo mon illuminat, / merce ti clam d'aquel grahus' – in Roncaglia's opinion 'non può essere e non è altro che figura dell'amore divino, metafora di Cristo stesso . . . Ecco almeno un testo, dove Marcabruno ha conferito al termine *fin'amor* un significato diverso ed opposto a quello più frequente presso gli altri trovatori' (p. 19). For 'fals'amistat', see V, vv. 3-5: '. . . fals'amistat menuda, / c'assi leu pren e refuda, / puois sai ven e lai mercada' is identified by Roncaglia as 'l'amore venale delle meretrici; ma anche, ed esso assimilato in una medesima condanna . . . l'amore adultero, che si diffonde nella generale corruzione dei costumi' (pp. 21-22).

[100] Roncaglia, 'Trobar clus', p. 31.

[101] See Roncaglia, 'Trobar clus', pp. 31-32, and Karl Vossler, 'Der Trobador Marcabru und die Anfänge des gekünstelten Stiles' in *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 11 (1913), 1-65.

rifiutare la realtà dei propri tempi, al cui dinamismo sociale e culturale contrappone, immobili, i valori convenzionali del passato e della trascendenza, insomma un moralismo ch'è difficile non qualificare di « idealistico ».[102]

Erich Köhler, for his part, responded to Roncaglia's invitation to the *trobar clus* debate in the following issue of *Cultura neolatina*.[103] Having already advanced a revolutionary sociological approach to the study of troubadour poetry in his influential 'Observations historiques e sociologiques sur la poésie des troubadours', Köhler questions Roncaglia's explicit lack of historicity in his argument for Marcabru's idealism.[104] Agreeing, however, with the assertion that there existed beyond any doubt two radically different views of *amour courtois*, Köhler rejects the notion that this contrast must necessarily be presented in terms of married versus adulterous love.[105] Rather, the two views of courtly love expressed by the relative 'idealism' and 'realism' of the poetic schools in question reflect the specific historical and economic circumstances of two distinct social groups: the traditional aristocracy, represented by the 'idealist' *escola n'Eblo*, and the 'realist' poetry of the *piccola nobiltà*, represented by Marcabru. In this way, Köhler argues, Marcabru can be viewed as the mouthpiece for his social class, the disaffected youth of the lesser nobility, who had previously employed demonstrations of adoration for the lady of the court as a means of upward mobility in the economic and political system of twelfth-century Occitania.[106] As soon as married lords and barons, those whose obligation it is to retain *Joven*, adopt courtly love as their own, the system of upward mobility described by Köhler is disrupted. Thus Marcabru's bitter invectives against the *moilleratz* do not derive from any specifically Christian idea of *fin'amors* as love in marriage.[107] Instead, they are born from the idea that married husbands committing adultery in the guise of courtly love perverts the social structure that was necessary to ensure the survival of the *piccola nobiltà*. Marcabru

> ritiene che solo *Joven* sia qualificato per aspirare alla *fin'amor* e combatte accanitamente la concezione dell'amore di una 'scuola' che mette sullo stesso piano di *Joven* la potente nobiltà tradizionale, i signori della corte.[108]

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[102] Roncaglia, 'Trobar clus', p. 45.

[103] Erich Köhler, 'Marcabru und die beiden "Schulen"' in *Cultura neolatina* 30 (1970), 300-311, translated and reprinted in Italian as 'Marcabru e le due « scuole »' in *Sociologia della fin'amor: saggi trobadorici*, ed. and trans. Mario Mancini (Padua: Liviana, 1976), 257-273.

[104] 'Observations historiques e sociologiques sur la poésie des troubadours', originally printed in *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 7 (1964), 27-51, was translated and reprinted as 'La piccola nobiltà e l'origine della poesia trobadorica' and 'Sulla struttura della cazone' in *Sociologia*, 1-37.

[105] Köhler, 'Marcabru e le due « scuole »', p. 259.

[106] Köhler, 'Marcabru e le due « scuole »', p. 265. This thesis is echoed by Ruth Harvey in 'The Troubadour Marcabru'. Harvey argues that Marcabru's intended audience were the 'soudadiers', or young aristocratic household retainers in Occitan courts, who were vying for seigneurial support with a new class of educated bourgeois officials and stewards.

[107] A typical invective of this type can be found in 'Al prim comenz de l'invernailh': 'Moilleratz, li meillor del mon / foratz, mas chascus vos faitz drutz, / qe vos cofon, / e son acaminat li con, / per q'es jovenz a fro[n] bauditz / e vox en apel' on cornutz' (IV, vv. 31-36). In Köhler's interpretation, the aristocratic husbands would be the best men in the world, but they have taken on the role of *Joven*, pursuing married ladies in the game of *amour courtois*.

[108] Köhler, 'Marcabru e le due « scuole »', p. 271.

The relationship between Marcabru's social position and his use of *trobar clus* is thus made clear:

> L'amarezza che nasceva dal sentimento della sua impotenza lo portò alla scelta di una lingua che da una parte chiamava le cose col loro nome, col più crudo realismo, ma che dall'altra era costretta a celare i suoi contenuti con la chiave dell'allegoria o con una voluta oscurità.[109]

For Erich Köhler, then, *trobar clus* emerges as a clever means of concealing the social and political agenda of *Joven* in the face of aristocratic patrons who had usurped the right of *fin'amors* from the lesser nobility.

To demonstrate, then, how *trobar clus* may be understood as concealing social and political critique, I would like to turn momentarily to Marcabru's 'Al departir del brau tempier'. Here, the troubadour develops an elaborate pastoral allegory that imagines the court as a perverted and sterile orchard. It begins, like many of Marcabru's other songs, with a seasonal incipit:

> Al departir del brau tempier,
> quan per la branca pueia·l sucs
> don reviu la genest' e·l brucx,
> e floreysson li presseguier
> e la rana chant' el vivier
> e brota·l sauzes e·l saücs,
> contra·l termini qu'es yssucs
> suy d'un vers far en cossirier. (1-8)[110]

Marcabru situates his desire to compose a *vers* at the end of the harsh season, when trees and flowers are revived from the cold of winter and the frog begins to sing anew in its pond. As Leslie Topsfield notes, however, the disconsonant phonic quality of this first stanza immediately provides an indication that all is not well in the earthly paradise.[111] The soft consonance of the flowering of the peach tree ('e floreysson li presseguier') is contrasted with the harsh rhyme in –*uc(x)s* of vv. 2-3 and 6-7, which seems to mimic the croaking of the frog, a symbol of garrulous, empty speech. Additionally, the broom and heather mentioned in v. 3 and the willow and elder in v. 6 are not fruit-bearing trees and, accordingly, may be read as representative of sterility. This sterility, then, establishes the context for Marcabru's vicious attack against the degeneration of the court, which is figured as 'un gran vergier' (9) where the trees, whose

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[109] Köhler, 'Marcabru e le due « scuole »', p. 273.

[110] 'At the end of the harsh season when through the branch rises the sap which brings new life to the broom and the heather, the peach-trees flower and the frog sings in the fishpond and the willow and the elder shoot, faced with the dry season, I am intent on composing a *vers*'. This and subsequent translations have been reproduced from *Marcabru: A Critical Edition*.

[111] Leslie Topsfield, *Troubadours and Love* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 75.

'fuelhs e flors paran de pomier, / son al fruchar sautz e saücs' (13-14).[112] Marcabru argues that nothing but willow and elder grows in the orchard of the court, whereas in the idyllic past, great and virtuous lords were abundant and passed down their courtliness to successive generations. In Marcabru's troubled times, however, the court is populated by 'rics malvatz' who 'paron saücx / per que·l segles es badalucx, / don malavey' e desturbier' (50-52).[113] The whole world has fallen into decay because the fruitfulness of the orchard has been perverted by rich and powerful men who have subverted its natural order and replaced it with loose license and whoremongering.

In the early Italian tradition, this same passionate rebuke of the degeneration of contemporary mores is nowhere more apparent than in Guittone's political *canzoni*, such as 'Gente noiosa e villana' (XV), 'Ahi lasso! or è stagion de doler tanto' (XIX), and 'O dolce terra aretina' (XXXIII). 'Gente noiosa e villana' begins:

> Gente noiosa e villana
> e malvagia e vil segnoria
> e giudici pien di falsìa
> e guerra perigliosa e strana
> fannome, lasso, la mia terra odiare
> e l'altrui forte amare. (1-5)

Bothersome, ill-intentioned, and thuggish aristocrats, along with false judges and perilous war have compelled Guittone to leave his native commune for another, unspecified city: 'però me departut'ho / d'essa e qua venuto' (6-7). Guittone's sentiments here resonate powerfully with those expressed in 'Al departir del brau tempier': the 'vil segnoria' of Arezzo is reminiscent of Marcabru's 'rics malvatz', metaphorical elder-trees that corrupt the once fertile soil of his *gran vergier*. Indeed, Arezzo's 'gente noiosa e villana' rivals the upstart *moilleratz* of Occitania in tastelessness and greed. Guittone is horrified when he remembers

> . . . ch'agiato e manente
> li è ciascun vile e fellone
> e mesagiato e povero lo bono;
> e sì como ciascono
> deletta a despregiare
> altrui, più ch'altro fare;
> e como envilia e odio e mal talento
> ciascun ver l'altro porta;
> e ch'amistà li è morta
> e moneta è 'n suo loco;
> e con solazzo e gioco
> li è devetato, e preso pesamento. (17-28)

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[112] 'Though putting on the leaves and flowers of apple-trees, are just willow and elder when it comes to fruiting'.
[113] 'For the wicked powerful men resemble elder-trees, which is why the world is foolish, from which it falls sick in confusion'.

In the same manner as Marcabru's garden, Guittone depicts a city in moral ruin, a topsy-turvy nightmare in which evil men reap benefit from evil deeds while those imbued with true worth are disparaged and kept in poor estate.

Adopting the suggestion of Tartaro and Holmes that Guittone's corpus, both pre- and post-conversion, be evaluated in relation to 'Ora parrà', 'Gente noiosa', typically conceived as representing the poet's exilic convictions, can also be understood as delineating the necessity for 'closed' composition. The second *cobla* of 'Ora parrà' continues:

> ché grande onor né gran ben non è stato
> conquistato, -- carnal voglia seguendo,
> ma promente valendo,
> ed astenendo – a vizi ed a peccato;
> unde 'l sennato – apparecchiato – ognora
> de core tutto e di poder dea stare
> ad avanzare – lo suo stato ad onore,
> no schifando labore;
> ché giá riccore – non dona altrui posare,
> ma 'l fa alungiare; -- e ben pugnare – onora (20-29)

The same themes Guittone develops in 'Gente noiosa' in a more explicitly political context are found here as well, though obfuscated by the technical complexity of the *canzone* and elaborated under the aegis of song and expression. The first *cobla*'s conception of 'Amor', from which the poet-speaker flees, is associated in v. 21 with 'carnal voglia', and v. 7's 'omo d'Amor non punto' here abstains from vice and sin (23), thus setting himself upon the path of righteousness and honor. Tellingly, however, Guittone also conflates carnal desire with easy riches and disregard for community. In 'Gente noiosa', friendship is dead in Arezzo 'e moneta è 'n suo loco' (25-26), while in 'Ora parrà' the 'vile e fellone' who presumes to profess the truth of love does so at the expense of others' well-being (28-29).

There is more than a coincidental connection between the lines 'però me departut'ho / d'essa e qua venuto' (XV, 6-7) and 'poiché del tutto Amor fuggo e disvoglio' (XXV, 3). I suggest that the ambiguous 'qua' of 'Gente noiosa' can be interpreted as the poetic space constructed within the enclosure of 'Ora parrà'. Despite their thematic similarities, Guittone's vicious attack on Arezzo is composed more in the manner of *trobar leu*: its syntax is clear, its meter is not confounded by multiple internal rhymes, and its signifiers unambiguously denote their signifieds in the conventional economy of courtly love. Indeed, the entire *canzone* resonates with the vitriol of expressions such as 'noiosa e villana' (1), 'malvagia e vil signoria' (2), 'falsia' (3), 'ciascun vil e fellone' (18), 'mal talento' (23), etc. The fact that this unproblematized expression is clearly associated with Arezzo, however, is precisely why the poet-speaker has fled. 'Ora parrà', more than a manifesto of Guittone's conversion, represents the capacity of *trobar clus* to create an alternate poetic space from which political systems and social mores may be criticized. For both Marcabru and Guittone, physical space, the space of the court and the space of the city, is substituted for textual enclosures that compensate for the degradation of courtly love.

Embedded in Guittone's particular *trobar clus*, then, is the history of the medieval Italian commune. As I described in the previous chapter, the commune represented a triumph of the local over the increasingly distant and disinterested German empire. Supported by the Reform Church of Popes Gregory VII and Urban II, Tuscan and Lombard cities reconfigured the traditional power structures of the old *regnum*: imperially invested bishops, who had maintained German hegemony with the support of the local military aristocracy, ceded power to new civic institutions intended to represent the best interests of all citizens. The mutation of these institutions, however – from the period of the consuls in the first half of the eleventh century through the assumption of *podestà* to the rise of the *popolo* in the thirteenth – indicates that the commune had always struggled to distribute power equitably between its constituent social classes. The old military aristocracy, which had not been completely marginalized by the first colleges of consuls, threatened the civic order required for trade and commerce; trade and commerce fattened the new nobility who profited from the labor of tradesmen; while tradesmen attempted to wrest power from both the landed aristocracy and the new merchant class by consolidating guild militias. The dark epideixis of Guittone, as well as the parodic double-voicing of his amorous *canzoniere*, recontextualizes troubadour courtly love by shifting its metonymic power from court to city. Rather than lamenting, like Marcabru, the deterioration of traditional systems of court patronage, Guittone bemoans the degradation of civility in Arezzo as a result of the ascendancy of the merchant class.

II. DANTE'S KNOT OF RHETORIC

In canto XVI of *Inferno*, after learning of his imminent exile from Brunetto Latini – the cherished tutor of Dante's youth and author of the *Trésor*, *Tesoretto*, and, importantly, a commentary on Cicero's *De inventione* –[114] the pilgrim encounters three thirteenth-century Florentine nobles, naked and greased like wrestlers, who form a human wheel. Iacopo Rusticucci asks Dante: 'cortesia e valor dì se dimora / ne la nostra città sì come suole / e se del tutto se n'è gita fora' (67-69). Dante then yells, with his face raised to the surface of the earth, or perhaps to God, 'La gente nuova e i sùbiti guadagni / orgoglio e dismisura han generata, / Fiorenza, in te, sì che tu già ten piagni' (73-75). That Dante excoriates the 'new people and sudden wealth' of Florence should come as no surprise, given the example of Guittone, for whom *amistà* is dead in Arezzo 'e moneta è 'n suo loco' (XV.25-26). Indeed, taking into account the *Commedia*'s many passages that bewail the deplorable state of Dante's once beloved Florence,[115] it would seem that the

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[114] That Latini was, indeed, Dante's teacher has never been conclusively proven. See Giorgio Petrocchi, *Vita di Dante* (Rome: Laterza, 1983), pp. 31-32. For the state of education in the Florence of Dante's youth, see Charles T. Davis' essay 'Education in Dante's Florence' in his collection *Dante's Italy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 137-165.

[115] Chief among them being episodes from the sixteenth canto of both *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. In the first instance, Marco Lombardo blames the world's wickedness on bad government ('mala condotta'): 'Soleva Roma, che 'l buon mondo feo, / due soli aver, che l'una e l'altra strada / facean veder, e del mondo e di Deo. / L'un l'altro ha spento, ed è giunta la spada / col pasturale, e l'un con l'altro insieme / per viva forza mal convien che vada, / però che, giunti, l'un l'altro non teme: / se non mi credi, pon mente a la spiga, / ch'ogn' erba si conosce per lo seme. / In sul paese ch'Adice e Po riga / solea valore e cortesia trovarsi / prima che Federigo avesse briga; / or può sicuramente indi passarsi / per qualunque lasciasse per vergogna / di ragionar coi buoni o d'appressarsi. / Ben v'èn tre vecchi ancora in cui rampogna / l'antica età la nova, e par lor tardo / che Dio a miglior vita li ripogna: / Currado da Palazzo e 'l buon Gherardo / e Guido da Castel, che mei si noma, / francescamente, il semplice Lombardo. / Dì oggimai che la

two poets share in the conviction that banking and commerce have ruined the civility of an earlier communal age. The primary difference between Guittone and Dante, however, and the focus of the present section, is the specific rhetorical orientation of their anti-communal invective. As illustrated above, Guittone's 'conversion' – which comprises not only a turning to God, but also a turning away from Arezzo – is narrativized in an Italian *trobar clus* that calls into question the courtly signifiers appropriated by the city's 'gente nuova'. The result is a vertiginous display of poetic prowess in 'Ora parrà s'eo saverò cantare' that insists on the virtue of rhetorical complexity, or, put in another way, the association of rhetorical complexity with virtue. Arezzo's 'gente noiosa e villana' can keep their false courtliness, their easy signification, their *trobar leu*. Dante's *Commedia*, on the other hand, indicts the Sicilians and Siculo-Tuscans by positing a connection between the practical rhetoric of the commune, Florence's 'gente nuova e i sùbiti guadagni', and the sin of fraud. This alignment, moreover, informs Dante's representation of early Italian literary history in *Purgatorio* XXIV and XXVI, which, I argue, can only be understood in the context of the bifurcation of medieval Italian 'Latin continuity'.

From the perspective of the new history of medieval rhetoric, Dante's move away from the 'legal-rhetorical mentality' of communal Italy should be understood, like so much else in the poet's *oeuvre*, as a response to papal and imperial politics.[116] The seed of medieval Italian literary culture had germinated in the soil of the Investiture Struggle: both the *ars dictamimis* and the recently recovered Justinian Code were tools wielded by the Reform Church against the Salian emperors, while the early communes rejected the traditional liberal arts of the

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Chiesa di Roma, / per confondere in sé due reggimenti, / cade nel fango, e sé brutta e la soma.' (*Purg*. XVI.106-129). Particularly relevant here is Dante's repetition of 'cortesia', 'valore', and the verb 'solere' from *Inf*. XVI, as well as the appearance of three noblemen who represent the civility of Florence past. For an extensive treatment of this passage, see *Dante's Political Purgatory* by John A. Scott (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996). Then, in *Paradiso*'s heaven of Mars, Cacciaguida regales Dante with a lengthy description of the city's ancient nobility and its subsequent degeneration, caused here not by the temporal power of the papacy but by the intermingling of Florentine with 'foreign' bloodlines ('la confusione de le persone / principio fu del mal de la cittade', *Par*. XVI.67-68), which stemmed from the annexation of Florence's *contado* during the twelfth century and, indirectly, from the Investiture Struggle. Cacciaguida blames these outsiders for importing the vice of money-lending into the city: 'Se la gente più traligna / non fosse stata a Cesare noverca, / ma come madre a suo figlio benigna, / tal fatto è fiorentino e cambia e merca / che si sarebbe vòlto a Simifonti, / là dove andava l'avolo a la cerca, / sariesi Montemurlo ancor de' Conti, / sarieno i Cerchi nel piovier d'Acone, / e forse in Valdigrieve i Buondelmonti' (58-61). In *The Transfiguration of History at the Center of Dante's Paradise*, Jeffrey Schnapp offers the fullest analysis to date of Cacciaguida's significance in the *Comedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986).

[116] See Scott's *Political Purgatory* and Albert R. Ascoli's *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). Ascoli's claim that Dante's construction of individual, poetic authority 'is inextricably linked to problems of "official," institutional *auctoritas*' guides his reading of the *Monarchia* (p. 229). While the focus of the present dissertation is the problem presented by practical rhetoric for the literary history of early Italian poetry, Ascoli's exhaustive analysis of authorship and authority in the *Commedia*, *Convivio*, and *Monarchia* has been instrumental for my understanding of Dante's return to the 'traditional book culture' described by Ronald Witt. Fundamentally, the same socioeconomic and political processes – including 'the dramatic shift from a feudal culture based on hierarchy and inherited nobility to a commercial and monetary economy', 'the gradual opening of possibilities for lay, and even non-aristocratic, participation in a literate culture previously dominated by clergy', and 'the emergence in Italy and elsewhere of new forms of statehood and political participation' (p 10) – that allow for the creation of modern authorship from the rigorously defined medieval *auctoritas* are precisely those that establish the conditions for medieval Italian rhetorical culture. In this way, Dante can be understood as mediating between 'the two Latin cultures' described by Witt, even if he rejects the explicitly rhetorical orientation of Sicilian and Siculo-Tuscan lyric poetry.

Carolingian Renaissance – associated, as they were, with transalpine domination – in favor of the teaching of native Italian *dictatores*. The international political scene had changed drastically by Dante's lifetime, however; instead of reform-minded Popes struggling for the right to exercise spiritual authority, the failure of imperial Germany to prevent ecclesiastical abuse of temporal power led, in the decades after the fall of House Hohenstaufen, to the sort of corruption typified by Pope Boniface VIII.[117] Thus, Dante's hope for Empire, outlined first in the *Convivio* and later in the *Monarchia*,[118] follows the pendulum-like trajectory of medieval international politics: Dante yearns for imperial intervention in much the same way that his ancestor, Cacciaguida (c. 1091-1148), most likely celebrated the expulsion from power of imperially invested bishops.

The extirpation of the Hohenstaufen in the 1260s, which prefigured the complete failure of Empire during Dante's lifetime, also corresponds to the collapse of communal institutions and the subsequent 'rise of the *signori*'.[119] The three achievements of the commune, according to P. J. Jones in *The Italian City-State: From Commune to Signoria*, were 'an elaborate constitution, a strong administration and the nucleus of a permanent bureaucracy', all of which were undermined by political factionalism, clan warfare, and a lack of resources by the end of the thirteenth century (p. 403).[120] Not only was private support of the commune repaid with preferential treatment, but the persistence of clientage in much of northern Italy, as well as the tendency of powerful family clans to profit from state warfare, guaranteed the political involvement of the *signori*, just when the commune started collapsing under the weight of its own unwieldy institutions. Additionally, in the imperial vacuum of post-Hohenstaufen Italy, 'monarchial authority was re-created at the local level', first by Frederick II's top political and military advisors, such as Uberto da Pallavicino and Ezzelino da Romano, and then by the heads of local clans, like Azzo d'Este in Ferrara or Mastino della Scala in Verona.[121] Thus, despite the different processes by which the *signori* gained power in specific cities, the popular government of most central and northern Italian communes had been supplanted by powerful family clans before 1300. The rise of the *signori*, however, marked not only a radical shift in political power from public to private, but also a reorientation of intellectual discourse from the 'new' medieval 'legal-rhetorical mentality' of the commune back to the 'traditional book culture', which had thrived in northern France during the twelfth century.

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[117] The defeat of Manfred at the hands of Charles of Anjou's French army at the Battle of Benevento in 1266 marks the beginning of the 'Eclipse of Empire' that characterized the late thirteenth-century in Italy. J.K. Hyde defines this period as 'one of extreme political decentralisation . . . the wealth and freedom of the communes after the elimination of the Hohenstaufen threat allowed them to express their cultural and political individuality to the full'. *Society and Politics in Medieval Italy: the Evolution of the Civil Life, 1000-1350* (New York: St. Martin's, 1973), p. 124.

[118] See in particular Ascoli, *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author*, pp. 229-247.

[119] For what follows see: *Hyde, Society and Politics*; Giovanni Tobacco, *The Struggle for Power in Medieval Italy: Structure of Political Rule*, trans. Rosalind Brown Jensen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and P. J. Jones, *The Italian City-State: From Commune to Signoria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Trevor Dean's 'The Rise of the *Signori*' in *Italy in the Central Middle Ages: 1000-1300*, ed. David Abulafia (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 104-124, both summarizes these sources and provides introductions to the formation of *signorie* in Piacenza, Verona, Milan, and Ferrara.

[120] See also Dean, 'The Rise of the *Signori*', p. 105.

[121] Dean, 'The Rise of the *Signori*', p. 105.

From the emergence of the commune, Italian intellectuals were lay-educated and trained principally in law and dictaminal rhetoric, even though most probably had some exposure to Latin poetry in the form of the *Octo auctores*.[122] Beyond the Alps, however, the study of grammar far superseded interest in rhetoric, and the so-called 'twelfth-century Renaissance' would lead ultimately to the importation of a 'new aesthetic' based on classical Latin literature and vernacular romance into thirteenth-century Italy.[123] While Italian cathedral schools had been weakened by the Investiture Struggle, and the traditional curricula of the Carolingian revival mostly displaced by private, lay education, Church-sponsored learning and patronage flourished north and west of the Alps. Unlike in communal Italy, with its greater economic diversity and subsequent social mobility, the caste-like clergy in rural, agricultural Francia monopolized education and Latin literacy.[124] Thus, the great cathedral schools at Chartres and Orleans and, later, the University of Paris nurtured the classicizing pursuits of intellectuals like Matthew of Vendôme, John of Salisbury, Walter of Châtillon, and Peter of Blois, whose literary productivity was unrivaled anywhere else in twelfth-century Europe. By the thirteenth century, however, interest in classical literature appears to have waned,[125] and, with the discovery and proliferation of the entire Aristotelian corpus, the study of natural philosophy, theology, and logic – attended by an interest in prescriptive grammar – achieved primacy in northern French education.

Intellectual exchange between Francia and Italy had been common during the twelfth century, but the flow of ideas tended to originate with the civic-minded rhetoric of the Italian communes. After all, expanding populations in late medieval Europe meant larger urban centers, more developed religious and civic institutions, and frequent territorial disputes; Italian *dictamen*, accordingly, became essential for managing administration at all levels of society, even in those regions still dominated by post-Carolingian, monarchial sensibilities. While the northern French developed their own dictaminal style,[126] the flow of ideas had reversed by

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[122] Common grammar school texts included Cato's *Distichia*, Prosper of Aquitaine's *Epigrammata*, Aesop's *Fables*, the *Dittochaeon* of Prudentius, and the *Physiologus*. After studying these and a small handful of other popular texts, most Italian students began their professional education and quit the study of grammar before reaching the Roman poets. Ronald Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Boston: Brill, 2003), p. 133. For grammar-school texts: Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989) and Paul F. Gehl, *A Moral Art: Grammar, Society, and Culture in Trecento Florence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993). For twelfth-century Italian education: Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures*, pp. 268-290. Robert Black, in *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Tradition and Innovation in Latin Schools from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), provides an excellent overview of late medieval and early modern Italian education. Though not relevant to the present argument, I find it compelling to speculate on how the collision of practical, communal rhetoric with the 'new aesthetic' of twelfth-century northern French classicism might have affected Dante's appropriation of *auctoritas*, described in Ascoli's *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author*. It seems likely that the communal emphasis on rhetoric at the expense of the Roman poets must have degraded notions of poetic authority, thus setting the stage for Dante's own self-authorization.

[123] Witt describes this 'new aesthetic' in *In the Footsteps*, pp. 31-80. For what follows on the twelfth-century Renaissance, see Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures*, pp. 317-347.

[124] Here I follow Witt in the use of 'Francia' to denote monarchial northern France, as opposed to the southern third of the contemporary nation that constituted Occitania.

[125] Witt cites the diminished numbers of manuscript copies of and commentaries on Virgil, Horace, Statius, Juvenal, and Lucan as evidence (pp. 322-323).

[126] For French *dictamen*, see Witt, pp. 333-336.

1200, and communal Italy's newly literate 'gente nuova' – the upwardly mobile purveyors of financial services and trade goods – were desirous of the cultural caché bestowed by a grammar education. So too the end of the communal period and the 'rise of the *signori*' was attended by a revalorization of the dynastic oligarchy celebrated in old French courtly romance. Thus, by close of the thirteenth century, the 'legal-rhetorical mentality' that had dominated intellectual life in communal Italy for two hundred years had given way to a revival of 'traditional book culture', a phenomenon that would ultimately condition Dante's representation of rhetoric, and thus of literary history, in the *Commedia.*

Dante is nowhere more concerned with literary historiography than in *Purgatorio* XXIV and XXVI.[127] Here he defines his *dolce stil novo* as a poetics of inspiration and cleaves an enlightened literary 'now', represented by Dante himself and 'li altri, miei miglior' (*Purg.* XXVI.98), from a misguided 'then', whose principal exponents are Giacomo da Lentini, Guittone d'Arezzo, and Bonagiunta da Lucca.[128] Dante's circle of poets, the subject, presumably, of Bonagiunta's 'le vostre penne' (*Purg.* XXIV.58), is furthermore indebted to the stylistics of Guido Guinizzelli, to whom Dante refers as 'il padre / mio' in *Canto* XXVI (97-98). Finally, Dante criticizes Guittone again by way of comparison to the troubadour Girault de Bornelh and closes his brief literary historiography with no fewer than eight lines of Occitan, spoken by Arnaut Daniel, the 'miglior fabbro del parlar materno' (*Purg*. XXVI.117). Teodolinda Barolini is right to call these episodes an 'historiographical knot',[129] as references to twelfth-century Occitan and thirteenth-century Italian lyric poetry are bound together in a series of ambiguous signifiers with threads of autobiography, theology, and socio-economic history.

First among these ambiguous metaphors is the word 'knot' itself. Dante confirms his identity as the poet of 'Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore' by telling Bonagiunta

> . . . 'I' mi son un che, quando
> Amor mi spira, noto, e a quel modo
> ch'e' ditta dentro vo significando.' (*Purg*. XXIV.52-54)

The elder poet, satisfied that Dante Alighieri stands before him, admits that he now understands his poetic error:

> 'O frate, issa vegg'io,' diss'elli, 'il nodo
> che 'l Notaro e Guittone e me ritenne
> di qua dal dolce stil novo ch'i' odo.
> Io veggio ben come le vostre penne
> di retro al dittator sen vanno strette,
> che de le nostre certo non avvenne;
> e qual più a riguardar oltre si mette,
> non vede più da l'uno a l'altro stilo.' (55-62)

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[127] See n. 6 above.
[128] See Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, pp. 86-88, for the 'binary oppositions' that structure Bonagiunta's speech.
[129] Barolini, *Dante's Poets*, p. 85.

Much of the scholarship devoted to parsing these lines has turned on the ambiguity of *nodo* in line 55, which has been interpreted variously as a reference to the sin of gluttony,[130] the *vinculum linguae*,[131] or the leash of a falcon.[132] I will argue in the present section, however, that Bonagiunta's knot represents rhetoric. *Nodo*, for Dante, is bound to salvific exegesis, whether of scripture or of the poet's own source texts – Virgil's *Aeneid* the first among them.[133] Furthermore, I assert that *nodo* may also represent rhetoric, or persuasive eloquence, which, when 'untied', reveals an emptiness that works against salvation. The knot that separates Bonagiunta and Giacomo da Lentini and Guittone d'Arezzo from Dante amounts to little more than garrulous speech, devoid of any concern for either man's immortal soul or civic harmony on earth. In this way Dante indicts the obscurity and complexity of Guittone's *trobar clus* and represents the poets of the *scuola siciliana* and the *siculo-toscani* as beholden to a spiritually deleterious system of empty signification.

Pugatorio XXIV is far from the only attestation of *nodo* in the *Comedy*. The word appears nine other times, four of which are within rhyme chains identical, or nearly identical, to *Purg*. XXIV.53-57. Two of these chains occur elsewhere in *Purgatory* (XVI.20-24 and XXIII.11-15)[134], while the other two are in *Inferno* (X.95-99)[135] and *Paradiso* (VII.53-57)[136]. In all of these cases, *nodo* refers to some sort of interpretive difficulty that must be overcome, whether Dante's confusion over the ability of Hell's damned shades to see the future, the slow and painful correction of misdirected love on Mt. Purgatory, or Beatrice's expectation that the pilgrim will fail to grasp the relationship between just vengeance and just punishment. Of the five instances of *nodo* not in a *modo-odo-nodo* or *nodo-odo-modo* chain, one clearly bears the same meaning of 'interpretive difficulty',[137] while one is a simple anatomical catachresis.[138] More to the point of *Purg*. XXIV, however, are the three remaining instances of *nodo*, two of which explicitly stage

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[130] This interpretation reads *nodo* in light of *Purg.* 16, where the angry shades 'd'iracundia van solvendo il nodo' (24) and *Purg*. 23: 'Ombre che vanno / forse di lor dover solvendo il nodo' (13-14). See Richard Abrams, 'Inspiration and Gluttony: The Moral Context of Dante's Poetics of the "Sweet New Style"' in *Modern Language Notes* 91 (1985), 30-59.

[131] *Nodo* here would reference Mark 7.35, in which the hearing and speech of a deaf-mute is restored. See Guglielmo Gorni, *Il nodo della lingua e il verbo d'amore: Studi su Dante e altri duecentisti* (Florence: Olschki, 1981).

[132] Mark Musa, 'Le ali di Dante (e il Dolce stil novo). *Purg*. XXIV.' in *Convivium* 34 (1966): 361-67 and Lino Pertile, 'Il nodo di Bonagiunta, le penne di Dante e il Dolce Stil Novo' in *Lettere italiane* 46 (1994), 44-75.

[133] See Marianne Shapiro, *Dante and the Knot of Body and Soul* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998).

[134] In the first instance, Virgil and Dante enter the terrace of the wrathful: 'Pur "Agnus Dei" eran le loro essordia; / una parola in tutte era e un modo, / sì che parea tra esse ogne concordia. / "Quei sono spirti, maestro, ch'i' odo?" / diss'io. Ed elli a me: "Tu vero apprendi, / e d'iracundia van solvendo il nodo."' Similarly, in the second instance, Dante hears the gluttonous sing another hymn: 'Ed ecco piangere e cantar s'udiè / "Labïa mëa, Domine," per modo / tal che diletto e doglia parturìe. / "O dolce padre, che è quel ch'i' odo?" / comincia' io; ed elli: "Ombre che vanno / forse di lor dover solvendo il nodo."'

[135] Dante tells Farinata, 'Deh, se riposi mai vostra semenza / . . . solvetemi quel nodo / che qui ha 'nviluppata mia sentenza. / El par che voi veggiate, se ben odo, / dinanzi quel che 'l tempo seco adduce, / e nel presente tenete altro modo.'

[136] After Beatrice's discourse on just vengeance in the Heaven of Mercury, she tells Dante: 'Ma io veggi' or la tua mente ristretta / di pensiero in pensier dentro ad un nodo, / del qual con gran disio solver s'aspetta. / Tu dici: "Ben discerno ciò ch'i' odo; / ma perché Dio volesse, m'è occulto, / a nostra redenzion pur questo modo."'

[137] In *Par*. XXVIII, Dante cannot understand why the nine rings of Angelic Intelligences are the inverse of the physical spheres in terms of light and speed. Beatrice says, 'Se li tuoi diti non sono a tal nodo / sufficïenti, non è maraviglia' (58-9).

[138] Gianni Schicchi assaults Capocchio in *Inf*. XXX, biting him 'in sul nodo / del collo' (*Inf*. XXX.28-29).

'interpretive difficulty' within the contexts of reading and manuscript production. In *Purg.* XXIX *nodo* stands in for the books of the Old Testament, followed by Christ and the Church (the gryphon and chariot), in the procession Dante witnesses in the Earthly Paradise,[139] and in *Par.* XXXIII it describes the content of the 'Book of the Universe' at the center of Heaven's Empyrean.[140]

The tenth attestation of *nodo*, while not a book metaphor, *per se*, references two verses from Matthew that employ the language of *tying* and *untying*. The angel who guards Purgatory proper shows Dante the two keys of Heaven, one gold and one silver, and says

> Più cara è l'una; ma l'altra vuol troppa
> d'arte e d'ingegno avanti che diserri,
> perch' ella è quella che'l nodo digroppa. (*Purg*. IX.124-26)

This *terzina* alludes to Matthew 16.18-19, in which Jesus appoints Peter as the leader of his community on earth and gives him the keys to the kingdom of Heaven, saying: 'whatever you bind [ligaveris] on earth will be bound [erit ligatum] in Heaven; whatever you loose [solveris] on earth will be loosed [erit solutum] in Heaven'.[141] Dante's commentators have long understood the two keys of *Purg*. IX as representative of ecclesiastical authority to remit sins (the gold key) and the burden of sound sacerdotal judgment (the silver key),[142] which is the reading offered by St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica* (III Suppl. 17-19).[143] While the commentary

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[139] 'Appresso tutto il pertratto nodo / vidi due vecchi' (*Purg*. XXIX, 133-4). The 'due vecchi' are the first representations of books from the New Testament, *Acts* and the collected epistles of St. Paul. For the allegorical significance of the procession, see Charles S. Singleton, *Dante Studies I. Elements of Structure* (Cambridge, MA: University of Harvard Press, 1954).

[140] Dante is finally able to stare into the full light of God's grace in *Par*. XXXIII: 'Nul suo profondo vidi che s'interna, / legato con amore in un volume, / ciò che per l'universo si squaderna: / sustanze e accidenti e lor costume / quasi conflati insieme, per tal modo / che ciò ch'i' dico è un semplice lume. / La forma universal di questo nodo / credo ch'i' vidi, perché più di largo, dicendo questo, mi sento ch'i' godo' (85-93).

[141] Translation from the *New Jerusalem Bible*, ed. Henry Wansbrough (New York: Doubleday, 1990). The Vulgate, *Biblia sacra: iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, eds Bonifatio Fischer et al. **(**Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1975), reads: "Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam et portae inferi non praevalebunt adversum eam; et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum et quodcumque ligaveris super terram erit ligatum in caelis et quodcumque solveris super terram erit solutum in caelis".

[142] Two examples from the fourteenth-century commentary tradition are Jacopo della Lana ('Più cara è l'una, cioè l'autoritade della Chiesa. Ma l'altra, cioè che quella della discrezione è molto maiestrevole, ed è quella che disgruppa ogni nodo') and *L'Ottimo Commento* ('E dice, che quella d'oro, come quella ch'è a l'ultimo fine, è più cara; però che il suo effetto è più prezioso, sciogliendo, o legando. Ma la bianca vuole troppa arte ed ingegno, anzi che diserri; però che 'l prete vuole avere molta descrezione, e considerare la condizione e stato, etade e maturezza del peccatore, in considerare la qualitade del peccato, e le circustanzie, ed in cui, e contra cui è fatto, il luogo, il tempo, il dì ec.; altrimenti male andrebbe la diliberazione della penitenzia, che si dee ingiugnere'). Cited from the Dartmouth Dante Project database (dante.dartmouth.edu).

[143] 'And since the act of the key requires fitness in the person on whom it is exercised--because the ecclesiastical judge, by means of the key, "admits the worthy and excludes the unworthy," as may be seen from the definition given above (Article 2) – therefore the judge requires both judgment of discretion whereby he judges a man to be worthy, and also the very act of receiving (that man's confession); and for both these things a certain power or authority is necessary. Accordingly we may distinguish two keys, the first of which regards the judgment about the worthiness of the person to be absolved, while the other regards the absolution' (*ST* III Suppl. 17.3). Cited from *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*, second and revised edition (1920), online at http://www.newadvent.org/summa/index.html (Kevin Knight, 2008).

tradition emphasizes the *active* role of the priest in exercising discretion,[144] Thomas Aquinas predicates the efficacy of the keys on the readiness of the sinner for salvation: 'the use of the keys, in order to be effective, always requires a disposition on the part of the recipient of the sacrament' (*ST* III, Suppl. 18.1). The sacrament mentioned here is, of course, the sacrament of Penance, which is the allegorical referent of more than thirty lines in *Purg*. IX (94-129). The white step ('lo scaglion primaio / bianco marmo era', 94-5) represents contrition, or remembrance of and remorse for sin;[145] the purple-black step ('tinto più che perso', 97) represents confession to a priest;[146] and the last, blood-red step ('sì fiammeggiante / come il sangue che fuor di vena spiccia', 101-2) represents satisfaction of, or punishment for, the sin.[147] The angel presiding at the top of the steps then represents the absolution, by way of the power of the keys, that results from the satisfactory performance of the sacrament. While it is true that the angel locks and unlocks the kingdom of Heaven, the silver key will only function if the sinner possesses the correct 'disposition', brought about by active contrition, active confession, and active satisfaction. The silver key thus metaphorizes not only sacerdotal wisdom, but also the tripartite process of purgation that requires free will and the refinement of moral discipline.

The 'knot' of *Purgatorio* IX, then, is the same as in XVI and XXIII, in which the souls of the wrathful and gluttonous 'van solvendo il nodo'. They are *untying* the knot of their sins by wielding the power of the silver key ('quella che'l nodo digroppa', IX.126), which, as the angel indicates, is no easy process. It takes both art (*arte*) and understanding (*ingegno*) to loosen the knot. The full significance of *arte* and *ingegno* is only clarified higher on Mt. Purgatory, however, when Virgil utters his last words to Dante:

> . . . Il temporal foco e l'etterno
> veduto hai, figlio, e se' venuto in parte
> dov'io per me più oltre non discerno.
> Tratto t'ho qui con ingegno e con arte;
> lo tuo piacere omai prendi per duce:
> fuor se' de l'erte vie, fuor se' de l'arte.
> Vedi lo sol che 'n fronte ti riluce,

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[144] See n. 16 above. The angel judges with the first key and remits sin with the second ('Pria con la bianca, e poscia, con la gialla', *Purg*. IX.119), while the sinner remains passive.

[145] Thus the reflective property of the step: 'sì pulito e terso / ch'io mi specchiai in esso qual'io paio' (95-6).

[146] The step is broken ('crepata per lo lungo e per traverso', 99) because confession 'breaks' sin. Benventuo da Imola comments: 'quia confessio rimatur omnia secreta, et elicit inde saniem ex omni parte, sicut ignis facit exalare malum humorem ex terra scindendo eam, et aperiendo poros clausos'. There is little agreement among the ancient commentaries, however, about the meaning of the first two steps. Some, like Jacopo della Lana and the Anonymous Lombardus, understand the second step as contrition, rather than confession, while *L'Ottimo Commento* anticipates Benvenuto da Imola, but suggests the stone cracks from cold, instead of fire. Despite these disagreements, confession as the second 'step' in the sacrament of Penance seems more reasonable, given that Aquinas' *ST* gives the order contrition, confession, then satisfaction (III Suppl. 1-15). Cited from DDP.

[147] The 'flaming red' of the step both references purgatorial fire, and thus God's love, and foreshadows the punishment of lovers and poets in *Canti* 25-26, while the 'sangue che fuor di vena spiccia' explicitly calls to mind the sacrifice of Christ, without which the remission of sin would be impossible. In answering the question, 'Whether the keys should be in the Church', Aquinas quotes Augustine's *Enarratione in Psalmum 138*: 'And since "the sacraments of which the Church is built, flowed from the side of Christ while He lay asleep on the cross", the efficacy of the Passion abides in the sacraments of the Church' (*ST* III Suppl. 17.1)

> vedi l'erbette, i fiori e li arbuscelli
> che qui la terra sol da sé produce.
> Mentre che vegnan lieti li occhi belli
> che lagrimando a te venir mi fenno,
> seder ti puoi e puoi andar tra elli.
> Non aspettar mio dir più né mio cenno:
> libero, dritto e sano è tuo arbitrio,
> e fallo fora non fare a suo senno.
> Per ch'io te sovra te corono e mitrio. (XXVII.127-142)

As Albert R. Ascoli notes, Dante's coronation, while signifying the passage of poetic *autorità* from 'Virgil' – 'the ambulant *autore*-function'[148] – to Dante-*personaggio*, is also the climax of a cycle of *canti*, beginning with *Purg*. XVI, that thematize free will in relation to authority, both poetic and political, and chart Dante's evolution into a fully willful subject.[149] In addition to Ascoli's observations, I propose that these eleven *canti*, structurally significant for their position as the opening sequence of the second half of the *Comedy*, also bring the moral imperative represented by *libero arbitrio* into relation with the act of 'untying the knot', or interpretation.

Before turning back to *nodo*, however, I shall linger momentarily on *arte e ingegno*. Not only does the angel guarding the Gate of Purgatory tell Dante that the silver key 'vuol troppa / d'arte e d'ingegno avanti che diserri', but Virgil describes his guidance of Dante as having been conducted 'con ingegno e con arte'. This does not mean, however, that Virgil's authority over Dante has anything to do with purgation, or that Virgil, even with art and understanding, could successfully turn the silver key.[150] What, then, is the relationship between purgation and *arte e ingegno*? These two words occur as a pair in only two subsequent canti, *Paradiso* X and XIV, when Dante has ascended to the Heaven of the Sun.[151] In the first of these two instances, Dante deploys the ineffability topos to convey the blinding radiance of the sun's light:

> Quant'esser convenia da sé lucente
> quel ch'era dentro al sol dov'io entra'mi,
> non per color, ma per lume parvente!
> Perch'io lo'ngegno e l'arte e l'uso chiami,
> sì nol direi che mai s'imaginasse,
> ma creder puossi e di veder si brami. (40-45)

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[148] *Dante and the Making of a Modern Author*, p. 330.

[149] See 'Virgilio crowns "Dante"', pp. 329-357.

[150] As distinguished by Ascoli, I refer here to Virgilio, the character in Dante's fiction, and not to the historical author of the *Aeneid*.

[151] Comprising four and half *canti*, Dante's 655-line description of the Heaven of the Sun signals its importance for the symbolic structure of *Paradiso*. From *Inferno* 1, the *Comedy* has traced the centrality of intellect to Dante's journey to salvation, a preoccupation that has these *canti* (*Par*. 10-14) as its climax. See Giorgio Stabile, 'Temi di simbologia solare in Dante' in *Enciclopedia dantesca*, dir. Umberto Bosco, 5 vols (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia italiana, 1970-)V, 298-302, Gustavo Costa, 'Il canto XV del *Paradiso*' in *Esperienze letterarie* 27 (2002), 3-38, and Robert Durling and Ronald Martinez, 'The Primacy of the Intellect, the Sun, and the Circling Theologians' in *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Paradiso* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 708-714.

This passage follows the third and, as Durling and Martinez argue, the most important of *Paradiso*'s six direct addresses to the reader,[152] whom Dante urges to admire the perfection of the created universe. 'Leva, dunque, lettor, a l'alte rote / meco la vista' (7-8), commands Dante, in an action that mirrors God's own perpetual gaze.[153] After describing the meeting point of the celestial equator and the ecliptic, Dante then goes about the business of his narrative, just as he releases the attention of his reader, who is imagined sitting at a bench: 'Or ti riman, lettor, sovra 'l tuo banco' (22). In a chiastic structure that anticipates, perhaps, the chiasmus of the Heaven of the Sun,[154] Dante positions his apostrophe and the dual gaze of reader/scribe between claims for the perfection of God's creation and the imperfection of his own. The 'arte / di quel maestro' in line 11 is juxtaposed with 'lo'ngegno e l'arte e l'uso' of the earthly creator, which is inadequate for even imagining the beauty and radiance of God's creation. The suggestion of ineffability, however, is always accompanied by textual pyrotechnics, and *Paradiso* X is no exception. 'Perch'io lo'ngegno e l'arte e l'uso chiami / sì nol direi che mai s'imaginasse' serves primarily to foreground the spectacular parallelism constructed in this *canto* between God, author of the Book of the Universe, Dante, author of the *Commedia*, and Virgil, author of the *Aeneid*. Virgil, despite his damnation, led Dante to the very gates of paradise by employing *arte* and *ingegno* in his epic poem. Dante now expects his own readers to untie the knot of language and to use their own *arte* and *igegno* to interpret the *Comedy*, the process of which will ultimately lead them to salvation.

To return, then, to Bonagiunta's knot. When Dante claims of the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven that

> Più cara è l'una; ma l'altra vuol troppa
> d'arte e d'ingegno avanti che diserri,
> perch' ella è quella che'l nodo digroppa. (*Purg*. IX.124-26)

the silver key, which represents the willingness of the penitent to be saved, can be none other than the process of interpretation by which difficult texts are 'untied'; in other words, bending one's *arte* and *ingegno* to textual interpretation leads to the correct disposition for salvation. To claim that Dante embraces an Augustinian salvific hermeneutics is nothing new;[155] after all, when Statius describes his conversion in *Purg*. XXI, he leaves no doubt as to Virgil's role in his salvation:

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[152] Durling and Martinez, *Paradiso*, p. 215, note to lines 7-12.

[153] The *canto* begins: 'Guardando nel suo Figlio con l'Amore / che l'uno e l'altro etternalmente spira, / lo primo e ineffabile Valore / quanto per mente e per loco si gira / con tant'ordine fé ch'esser non puote / sanza gustar di lui chi ciò rimira' (1-6). Here, the three persons of the trinity are represented astronomically: at the center of the created universe is a cross (Christ) formed by the intersection of the celestial equator and the ecliptic. God stares endlessly at this point ('quel maestro che dentro a sé l'ama / tanto che mai da lei l'occhio non parte') and, along with his Son, breaths Love, or the Holy Spirit (11-12).

[154] Dante's journey through the third celestial sphere is framed by the biographies of Saints Francis and Dominic.

[155] Of the many studies on Dante that have approached the *Comedy* from the perspective of Augustinian hermeneutics, Simone Marchesi's *Dante and Augustine: Linguistics, Poetics, Hermeneutics* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2011) is both the most recent and convincing. See also Elena Lombardi, *The Syntax of Desire: Language and Love in Augustine, the Modistae, Dante* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). John Freccero's classic *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion*, ed. Rachel Jacoff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986) establishes Augustine's *Confessions* as the model for Dante's journey to salvation.

> Al mio ardor fuor seme le faville,
> che mi scaldar, de la divina fiamma
> onde sono allumati più di mille:
> de l'Eneïda, dico, la qual mamma
> fummi e fummi nutrice poetando:
> sanz'essa non fermai peso di dramma. (94-99)

What startles about Dante's use of the word *nodo*, however, is that it allows *Purg*. XXIV to stage a confrontation between two radically different discursive *milieux*; the type of exegetical intellectual activity associated with reading, translating, or commenting on the 'classics' – of which Dante's own *Commedia* is certainly an example – and the legal-rhetorical world of the Italian communes that produced Guittone d'Arezzo's stilted, obfuscating *canzoni*.

This occurs because the Bonagiunta episode unfolds at the intersection of two very different semantic axes: the first is represented by the repetition of the *modo-nodo-odo* rhyme chain and its implication in the process of salvation by way of interpretation, while the second is delineated by the repetition of words between vv. 49 and 60 that imply writing or rhetoric, or both. 'Nodo' is a near homophone of 'noto', which occurs in vv. 52-53 ('E io a lui: "I' mi son un che, quando / Amor mi spira, noto, e a quel modo') and again as 'Notaro' in v. 56 ('che 'l Notaro e Guittone e me ritenne'). The act of inspiration that Dante describes is thus reduced to the activity of a notary, like Giacomo da Lentini, who 'takes note' and documents and certifies the performance of legal ritual for posterity. The world of *dictamen*, moreover, is implicated by the many iterations in this passage of the verb 'dittare'. The god of love, Amor, 'dictates' as Dante takes note, and his quills ('penne'), along with those of his friends, faithfully reproduce the words of *Amor dictator*, who is imagined as a rhetoric teacher, just like the *dictatores* Boncompagno da Signa, Guido Faba, or even Brunetto Latini. In this way, the lyrics of Giacomo da Lentini, Guittone d'Arezzo, and Bonagiunta da Lucca are brought into close association with the world of the thirteenth-century notary, and the process of writing courtly love poetry is metaphorized by the sort of rhetorical education prevalent in the Tuscan communes during Dante's lifetime.

Crucial to this interpretation, however, is the idea that Dante not only disparages the poetry of the *scuola siciliana* and the *siculo-toscani*, but he rejects his own lyric past as well. In this, I agree with the analysis of Baranski that Dante's representation of Bonagiunta da Lucca in *Purg*. XXIV must be ironic.[156] The pilgrim responds to the elder poet using a vocabulary that he can understand, and, as such, Dante-poet makes no claims for the spiritual superiority of his youthful lyric production. True, 'Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore' may have been 'dolce', in the sense of *leu*, and *nuovo*, in the sense that all previous Italian lyric had tended toward the *clus*, but any distinction ends there. Dante-poet presents a younger version of himself in caricature: the author of the *Vita nuova* was an accomplished poet, to be sure, but also intellectually and spiritually immature, faithful, as he was, to the rhetorical mentality of the commune with its notaries and *dictatores*. In this way, the knot of rhetoric, which radiates out from this central point in the *Comedy* on ripples of rhyme, should be understood as the true

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[156] "'nfiata labbia" and "dolce stil novo. See n. 6 above.

barrier to Dante's salvation. From Francesca da Rimini, Pier delle Vigne, and Ulysses in *Inferno* to Casella and the young Dante Alighieri – poet and politician of communal Florence – in *Purgatorio*, the pilgrim is consistently beguiled by eloquence. With *arte* and *ingegno*, however, faithful study of classical literature reveals Bonagiunta's knot for what it is: a lie and an empty promise.

The possibility for studying classical literature, moreover, was provided Dante by the shifting fortunes of both the commune and the 'legal-rhetorical mentality' upon which its existence relied. The revitalization of 'traditional book culture', which led to the first flowering of humanism in Padua in the latter half of the thirteenth century,[157] had already taken root in the courts of Italy's *signori* well before Dante's dedication of *Paradiso* to Cangrande della Scala in 1321.[158] The agricultural communes of the Veneto, unlike Florence, had never developed a reliance on banking and commerce, earning revenue instead from the exploitation of their *contadi*, which afforded more political capital to land-owning magnates than in either Tuscany or Lombardy.[159] With the exception of the communal fervor following the extirpation of the da Romano family in 1260, the populations of Verona, Treviso, Vicenza, and Padua were loyal to three dominant family clans: the Estensi, the da Camino, and the Camposanpiero.[160] The administrative class in these cities was thus supported by a patrician nobility invested in the cultural capital of the twelfth-century northern French 'Renaissance', and the region, accordingly, developed into a crucible of intellectual exchange and multi-vernacular literary production. Not only did several late troubadours, such as Uc de St. Circ, find patronage at the courts of the da Romano and Malaspina, but bookbinders in the Veneto led in the production of Occitan *chansonniers*.[161]

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[157] Until recently, most scholars of Italian humanism disputed the notion that Petrarch's classicizing antecedents – Lovato dei Lovati, Albertino Mussato, and Giovanni del Virgilio – were humanists, ascribing to them instead the dubiously named 'prehumanism' that Ronald Witt disassembles in his influential study *In the Footsteps of the Ancients*. Of those scholars invested in the 'reconstruction' of 'prehumanism', only Roberto Weiss claimed that humanism proper began in the late thirteenth century (*The Dawn of Humanism in Italy*, London: University College, 1947). Despite his importance for the study of Lovato and the early humanism of Padua, Guido Billanovich still uses the term 'prehumanism'. See 'Il preumanesimo padovano' in *Storia della cultura veneta: Il Trecento* (Vicenza: Pozza, 1976). For reasons that I outlined in the introduction to this dissertation, the present analysis has been most influenced by *In the Footsteps of the Ancients*, in which Witt elaborates his hypothesis first presented in 'The Origins of Humanism as a Stylistic Ideal' in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, ed. Albert Rabil, 3 vols (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988) I, 29-70. Originally interested in Paul Oskar Kristeller's assertion in 'Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance' in *Byzantium* 17 (1944-1945), 346-374 – later published in *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, ed. M. Mooney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 85-105 – that Italian humanism in the Renaissance was a continuation of the medieval rhetorical emphasis on *dictamen*, Witt claims that Italian humanists, while operative as rhetoricians and teachers of rhetoric in public life, devoted their private study to concerns traditionally governed by grammar, such as poetry and history. In other words, 'the origins of Italian humanism are to be sought in developments in grammar and not rhetoric' (*In the Footsteps*, p. 17). This hypothesis, of course, predates *The Two Latin Cultures and the Foundation of Renaissance Humanism in Medieval Italy*, which is far more concerned with the practical rhetoric of Italy's twelfth- and thirteenth-century lay notariate and the essential bifurcation in medieval Italy of what Curtius labeled 'Latin continuity'.

[158] It is not my intention to take sides in the debate over the authenticity of Dante's Letter to Cangrande. Its authenticity, or lack thereof, in no way diminishes its significance as an indicator of the classical orientation of northern Italian intellectual life, which provided the context for the completion of the *Commedia*.

[159] See John K. Hyde's *Pauda in the Age of Dante* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), 193-194.

[160] Witt, *In the Footsteps*, p. 82.

[161] See pp. 17-18 above.

It was within this environment of intense linguistic exchange and production that Lovato dei Lovati received a primarily grammatical education at the *studio* of Padua in the 1250s and 1260s. Like his father before him and like so many other Italian intellectuals of the thirteenth century, Lovato was a notary;[162] unlike his peers in the lay notariate, however, Lovato broke from the legal-rhetorical traditions of the commune and composed two classicizing poetic epistles – the first 'since late antiquity to employ classical diction for the expression of private thoughts and feelings – to a friend in 1267 or 1268.[163] He also compiled a manuscript of Seneca's tragedies, authored an essay on Senecan metrics, referenced in his poetry works of Roman literature unmentioned for centuries, and produced editions of Ovid's *Ibis* and Martial's *Epigrams*.[164] Following Lovato's humanist advances in late thirteenth-century Padua, Albertino Mussato, roughly contemporaneous with Dante,[165] was the shining star of early *Trecento* humanism. Mussato wrote – again, for the first time since antiquity – a prose history that employed a highly classicizing style and that defied the rules of the dictaminal *cursus*, for which he was awarded the laurel crown in 1315.[166] Even though the Florentine likely never met Mussato, Giovanni del Virgilio, his interlocutor in two classicizing eclogues composed in the final years of his life, promises an introduction to the esteemed Paduan should Dante travel to Bologna to meet with him in person. Without doubt, therefore, is that Dante's twilight years brought him within the orbit of late *Due-* and early *Trecento* Paduan humanism, where the emergence of post-communal *signorie* under the family clans of d'Este and della Scala, among others, made possible the revival of Carolingian book culture.

Indeed, the *Commedia* would be unthinkable outside of the context of thirteenth-century Italy's passage from commune to seigneurial court. In the introduction to his translation of the *De vulgari eloquentia*, Steven Botterill writes:

> By early 1303, Dante Alighieri already had behind him two careers, as lyric poet and municipal politician, the first as distinguished as the second was disastrous; and he was emerging from a time of political turmoil and, no doubt, personal confusion, which had seen him involved first in the Florentine 'revolution' of 1300-1 and then, after his faction's defeat and expulsion from the city, in a variety of ineffectual attempts by the expelled to regain the power of which they had been so brutally deprived. All the evidence suggests that Dante quickly grew disenchanted with the machinations of his fellow 'fuorusciti', and instead directed his energies, as the first decade of the fourteenth century wore on, towards a programme of thinking and study based on his reading (or in some cases re-reading) of the most culturally potent writings he could find, in several fields of knowledge. The exact extent and, still more, the detailed sequence of this reading remains controversial and no doubt ultimately irrecoverable;

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[162] A document written in Padua in 1257 bears Lovato's signature: 'Lavotus filius Rolandi notarii, regalis aule notarius'. *In the Footsteps*, p. 95.

[163] The first was 227-line elegiac poem and the second was composed in dactylic hexameter. See *In the Footsteps*, pp. 96-99.

[164] Witt, *In the Footsteps*, p. 100.

[165] Mussato, born in 1261, was probably the illegitimate son of Paduan noble. He died in exile in 1329. Witt, *In the Footsteps*, p. 118.

[166] Entitled *Historia augusta*, the history recounts Emperor HenryVII's Italian exploits from 1310 to 1313. Witt, *In the Footsteps*, p. 130-146.

but it seems clear from later developments that, in the aftermath of the disappointment of all his most cherished hopes for earthly success, Dante underwent at this time an experience of profound and searching self-examination, which led him to try to rebuild the moral and intellectual structure of his personality from the foundations. (xiv)

Not only was the factional turmoil of late communal Florence to blame for Dante's radical re-evaluation of both self and career, but the reading that provided the impetus for Dante's 'searching self-examination' and ambitious philosophical and literary projects would have been impossible without the support of northern Italian *signori* and contact with the nascent humanism they promoted. For this reason, Witt writes that Dante's exile 'had enormous consequences for the poet's own development, because it put him in intimate contact with urban centers where manuscripts of ancient authors abounded and where their contents were passionately studied'.[167] This is not to say that classicizing tendencies in mid-thirteenth century Tuscan education had no influence on the eventual composition of the *Divine Comedy*; but rather the demonstrable paucity of references to classical authors in, for example, Brunetto Latini's *Trésor*, increase the likelihood that Dante's intimate knowledge of Virgil, Lucan, Ovid, and Statius; his familiarity with contemporary Aristotelianism, theology, and logic; and his mastery of the Church Fathers developed outside of the context of the commune's discursive *milieu*. The *Comedy*'s classicizing itinerary, and, in particular, its blatant disparagement of the highly rhetorical character of the thirteenth-century Italian courtly lyric, indicates instead Dante's indebtedness to the revitalization of 'traditional book culture' that accompanied the collapse of the commune.

CONCLUSION

In Book II of the *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante lists the poets of exemplary illustrious *canzoni*: Giraut de Bornelh, Folquet de Marselha, Aimeric de Belenoi, Aimeric de Peguilhan, the King of Navarre, the Judge of Messina, Guido Guinizzelli, Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoia, and Dante himself (VI.6). This gives five troubadours, one trouvère, and five Italians, four of which Dante associates with the *stil novo*. The chronological model of troubadours, then Sicilians, then *stilnovisiti* finds further traction in *Purg*. XXVI, where Dante encounters Guido Guinizzelli, 'il padre / mio e de li altri, miei miglior' (XXVI.97-98), and Arnaut Daniel, 'miglior fabbro del parlar materno' (XXVI.117). Always implicit in this canto, however, is Dante's own unrivaled superiority; even if Dante-pilgrim assumes an attitude of deference towards Guinizzelli and Arnaut Daniel, Dante-poet nevertheless rewrites 'Al cor gentil rempaira sempre amore' in *Inf*. V and domesticates Arnaut's Occitan in *Purg*. XXVI.[168] In the case of both the *De vulgari eloquentia* and *Commedia* then, Dante positions himself as the final expression of lyric accomplishment in a literary history that includes several, but certainly not all, troubadours; one Sicilian; one Tuscan from the previous generation who is, regardless, the spiritual father of the *stil novo*; and his close circle of friends and poetic correspondents.

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[167] Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients*, p. 214. For what follows, see pp. 213-224.
[168] Dante has Arnaut speak in a 'light' register to acknowledge his poetic error. See Baranski, 'A Note', p. 33.

   Within this literary history, Bonagiunta's '[i]l Notaro e Guittone e me' is an ugly rupture, an instrusion that has no place in the long line of illustrious versifying of which Dante is the *telos*. Leaving aside any speculation about his extraliterary motivations, it is clear that Dante regarded Giacomo da Lentini, Guittone d'Arezzo, Bonagiunta da Lucca, and perhaps even Arnaut Daniel, as pertaining to a different sort of tradition; one parallel to his own, to be sure, but with a different historical trajectory, different stylistic considerations, and different philosophical underpinnings. For this reason, Dante was right to exclude Guittone d'Arezzo from his self-serving teleology, even if this exclusion determined the narrative recounted by literary historiography well into the twentieth century. Guittone's lyric poetry is dense, pessimistic, and rhetorically complex: an Italian *trobar clus* that warps signifiers in order reveal the complicity of courtly ideology in the degradation of civic life. In this way, it is a manifestation of thirteenth-century communal rhetoric, which is to say the 'practical' rhetoric of the *ars dictaminis*, which transforms oral performance into *sermo absentium*, and the 'practical' rhetoric of the lawyer or bureaucrat, who wields words like vicious weapons.

   The lesson of Dante's treatment of rhetoric in the *Commedia*, however, is not that persuasion, complexity, or amiguous language *per se* is at odds with the virtue; far from it. The knot, which is the chief metaphor for rhetoric in the *Comedy*, is itself highly polysemous and indicates something that needs untying or solving, be it the absolution of sin, the resolution of a philosophical quandary, or the solution to a linguistic puzzle. The figure of the knot thus binds within Dante's poetry his commitment to both Augustinian hermeneutics and Scholasticism's neoplatonic ontotheology:[169] the divine is present, but veiled, and is revealed through epiphanatic experience and poetry, both of which demand interpretation. So rhetoric is necessary, and even good, insofar as it allows Dante to construct his poem in the first place, but it can never be more than a means to an end. Pure rhetoric tends toward evil, however, because revelation is not a precondition for persuasion or ambiguity in language. Sometimes a knot is just a knot, and language evacuated of meaning is nothing more than Pluto's '*Pape Satàn, Pape Satàn aleppe*!' (*Inf.* III.1) or Nimrod's '*Raphèl maì amècche zabì almì*' (*Inf.* XXXI.67).

   Central to this dissertation, then, is the idea that two distinct strains of Italian lyric poetry developed during the *Duecento*, both in response to the different processes by which Occitan poetry was absorbed into and transformed by late medieval Italy's 'two Latin cultures'. On the one hand, Dante's conception of the *dolce stil novo* derives from the vernacularization of traditional Latin 'book culture' and takes as its inspiration the clarity and accessbility of *trobar leu*; while, on the other hand, the complex virtuosity of Guittone d'Arezzo derives from

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[169] An inspiration for this chapter and for my current ideas about *trobar clus* is Päivi Mehtonen's introduction to *Illuminating Darkness: Approaches to Obscurity and Nothingness in Literature* (Helskinki: Finnish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 2007). In it, Mehtonen defines 'meontotheology' as the theology of non-being, or negation. As will become clear later in this chapter, I find 'meontheology' useful because it opens up the possibility of a metaphysical rhetoric. Whereas philosophy's antagonism toward rhetoric, present since at least the Socratic dialogues, stages metaphysics against the artificiality and emptiness of language, the idea of 'meontheology' allows for the reification of nothingness. It is entirely possible, though beyond the scope of the present dissertation, that Guittone d'Arezzo's *trobar clus* spiritualizes negation in precisely the way described by Mehtonen. If this is the case, Dante's accusation that Guittone's poetry is too 'municipal' is a gross oversimplification of the place of rhetoric in his lyric *oeuvre*. Rather, I suspect that Guittone embraces obscurity and rhetorical complexity in his epideixis of scorn not only to reveal the artificiality, the essential nothingness, of power relations deriving from human discourse, but also to demonstrate the folly of representing the divine as something expressable from within that same discourse.

the poeticization of the 'legal culture' of Italy's notaries, judges, and lawyers. Broadly speaking, this second strain is also 'darker' than the first: its meaning is often obscure and its reliance on irony and negation suggests an inversion of Dante's ontotheology. Furthermore, both strains are indebted to the epideictic orientation ascribed written verse by the late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century *artes poetriae* of Mathew of Vendôme and Geoffrey of Vinsauf, with the important distinction that the 'light' strain of Italian lyric typically traffics in panegyric and the 'dark' strain in blame or disapproval.

This is not to suggest that the 'light' and 'dark' strains of early Italian lyric represent immutable categories or that there is no overlap between the two. Indeed, the *Rime petrose* are a fine example of Guittonianism in Dante's own *oeuvre*,[170] even if *Purg.* XXIV – and, indeed, the whole *Comedy* – can be read as a rejection *tout corps* of the poet's lyric past.[171] Guido Cavalcanti, a member of the *stil novo*, wrote perhaps the most difficult *canzone* in the entire early tradition,[172] and Guittone himself makes frequent use of the 'light' style in his amorous *canzoniere*. More than an oversimplification, my division of the early Italian lyric into 'light' and 'dark' strains is intended to foreground two phenomena relevant to the present discussion: first, *trobar clus* and *trobar leu* remain significant interpretive categories for troubadour studies, even though criticism of the early Italian lyric has typically ignored stylistic continuity from the Occitan twelfth to the Italian thirteenth centuries. Thus by insisting on 'light' and 'dark' Italian poetry, my goal is to emphasize this continuity in an effort to undermine the disciplinary limitations of 'French Studies' or 'Italian Studies' that derive from nineteenth-century nationalist discourses. Second, the two strains of early Italian lyric represent the primary ways that Occitan song becomes rhetoricized by the *Duecento*'s 'two Latin cultures'. The 'dark strain' of Guittone is most closely associated with the 'practical rhetoric' of the notariate, while the 'light strain' of the *stil novo* not only situates itself against this rhetoric, but also embraces the Ciceronian revival of the later thirteenth century and channels earlier 'notarial' poetry in a new epistolary direction.

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[170] See Robert M. Durling and Ronald L. Martinez's *Time and the Crystal: Studies in Dante's* Rime petrose (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). The four canzoni known as the *Rime petrose* can be dated to the winter of 1296-1297 and represent a decisive departure from the *Vita nuova*'s poetics of praise, particularly due to their 'violently negative feelings'. Durling and Martinez explain that this 'aspect of the novelty of the *petrose* is in some respects the key to their significance . . . The *Vita nuova* was in part an elaborate refutation of the pessimistic naturalism with which Dante's friend and rival Guido Cavalcanti viewed love, and it included the death of a lady, as well as the death-oriented narcissism of the lover, as central problems, in order to urge that love, rightly followed, led beyond death. But the *dolce stil* had still remained within a quite limited register of stylistic effects, dominated by a cult of sweetness and euphony that Dante shows many signs in other works of wishing to transcend' (p. 4).

[171] The ultimate hypothesis of Baranski's 'A Note' is that *Purg.* XXIV condemns Dante's youthful error as a lyric poet by way of Bonagiunta's praise for 'Donne ch'avete' (p. 33).

[172] I refer here, of course, to 'Donna me prega', which owes just as much to Cavalcanti's dark pessimism as it does to Bolognese Neo-Aristotelianism. See Maria Corti's still seminal *La felicità mentale. Nuove prospettive per Cavalcanti e Dante* (Turin: Einaudi, 1983) and the essays collected in Maria Luisa Ardizzone's *Guido Cavalcanti: the Other Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

Epilogue: The Problem of *Le origini* in Francesco De Sanctis' *Storia della Letteratura italiana*

In the 1840s, a young Francesco De Sanctis (1817-1883) arrived in Naples to give a series of lectures on Italian literary history.[1] Here, his star student, Luigi La Vista, imagined De Sanctis' future as the first critic to compile an exhaustive history of Italy's literary triumphs and recorded enthusiastically in 1847, 'Una storia della letteratura italiana sarebbe una storia d' Italia. Che studi, che ricerche, che novità!'.[2] The collective dream of De Sanctis and La Vista would only come to pass, however, after the revolutions of 1848 and the ultimate unification of Italy under the House of Savoy in 1861. Subsequent to his first tenure as Minister of Education in the new Kingdom of Italy, De Sanctis secured financing for his *Storia della letteratura italiana* and published its two volumes beginning in 1870. Also as predicted by Luigi La Vista, *Storia della letteratura italiana* was indeed a history of the Italian nation, implicated as it was in the ideological formation of new citizens.[3] In the introduction to her recent *Pinocchio Effect: on Making Italians 1860-1920*, Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg identifies the history of post-unification Italy as one of 'a state in search of nation' and writes of De Sanctis:[4]

> *Storia della letteratura italiana* . . . was a study that single-handedly constructed the idea of a specifically Italian literary tradition, one that was nevertheless poised on the point of fundamental paradox. While dedicated to proving the existence of an Italian literature, his book nonetheless depends on the basic argument that Italians quite simply do not exist, except as a retroactive *effect* of De Sanctis's book itself.[5]

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[1] Critical interest in De Sanctis has waned in recent years, though *Francesco De Sanctis un secolo dopo*, ed. Attilio Marinari, 2 vols (Naples: La Terza, 1985) and *Francesco De Sanctis: recenti ricerche. Atti del convegno di studi organizzato dall'Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici e dall Provincia di Avellino. Avellino, 1-2 marzo 1985* (Naples: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1989) remain useful studies. See also Enzo Noè Girardi, *Manzoni, De Sanctis, Croce e altri studi di storia della critica italiana* (Milan: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1986) and Gerardo Bianco's recent *Francesco De Sanctis. Cultura classica e critica letteraria* (Naples: Guida, 2009).

[2] Luigi La Vista, *Memorie e scritti di Luigi La Vista raccolti e pubblicati da Pasquale Villari*, ed. Pasquale Villari (Florence: Le Monnier, 1863), pp. 182-183.

[3] The Neapolitan publisher Antonio Morano, financier of De Sanctis' magnum opus, originally intended *Storia della letteratura italiana* as a manual for instruction in public *licei* (source?), despite the fact that schools in northern Italy resisted introducing De Sanctis into their curriculum until the 1930s. Raffaele Colapietra, 'Ambiente e costume di provincia attraverso un viaggio elettorale' in *Recenti ricerche*, 27-35 (p. 27).

[4] Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect: on Making Italians 1860-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 1.

[5] Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect*, p. 15.

Put in another way, how could there be a history of Italian literature when Italy itself had been unified only a decade before? Italian literature thus only comes into existence, as Stewart-Steinberg points out, as an effect of De Sanctis' study, which meticulously constructs a mythologized reading of the nation's literary origins in an effort to distinguish its enlightened, republican character against the absolutism of the European monarchies that had long controlled the peninsula.

I would like to close this dissertation with a brief reading of the first chapter of De Sanctis' *Storia della letteratura italiana*. As I wrote in the introduction, the primary goal of this project has been to re-theorize the emergence of Italian literary culture by positing *Duecento* poetry as the manifestation, in vernacular Italian, of the 'two Latin cultures' described by Ronald Witt. Rather than associating 'Latin continuity', to borrow again from Curtius, exclusively with the 'traditional book culture' of the ninth-century Carolingian revival, twelfth-century French Renaissance, and late thirteenth-century Paduan proto-humanism, the point of origin for my analysis has been the 'documentary culture' of medieval Italy's notaries, judges, and lawyers. In the light of recent advances in the history of rhetoric, such as those outlined on pp. 7-10 above, I believe that the time has come to recuperate the historical relevance of the early Italian lyric. This task is even more critical given the historically poor treatment of Giacomo da Lentini, Guittone d'Arezzo, and even of Guido Guinizzelli and Guido Cavalcanti by the traditional Italian literary-critical establishment. This poor treatment, moreover, derives exclusively from the anti-rhetorical orientation of nineteenth-century nationalist discourse. Thus, in order to begin reframing the literary history of the *Duecento* as implicated in the practice and theory of medieval Italian rhetoric, it is essential to recognize how the nationalizing literary histories of De Sanctis, and later of Croce, were founded upon the idea of an enlightened *italianità* besieged by the unlearned barbarian hordes of the Germanic Middle Ages.

A perfect representation of this nationalist tableau can be found in a verse epistle written by Ugo Foscolo to Ippolito Pindemonte in 1806. The beleaguered poet addresses Florence:

> ma più beata che in un tempio accolte
> serbi l'itale glorie, uniche forse
> da che le mal vietate Alpi e l'alterna
> onnipotenza delle umane sorti
> armi e sostanze t'invadeano ed are
> e patria e, tranne la memoria, tutto. (*Dei sepolcri*, vv. 180-185)[6]

The temple to 'l'itale glorie' mentioned here is Santa Croce, the Franciscan basilica erected in the final years of the thirteenth century that houses the remains of, or cenotaphs to, many of Italy's greatest artists, poets and thinkers. Under frescoes by Giotto and Cimabue, the marble likenesses of Leon Battista Alberti and Lorenzo Ghiberti, Machiavelli and Galileo, Dante Alighieri and now Foscolo himself stand somber guard over the pre-history of an elaborately mythologized Italian nation. Despite the fact recent criticism has offered valuable contributions

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[6] Ugo Foscolo, *Poesie e saggi di prosa*, ed. Enrico Carrara (Milan: Vallardi, 1934), p. 127.

to Italy's post-unification history, Stewart-Steinberg's assessment that this 'period's status as a mythological moment' is 'strangely under-studied and under-theorized' is still true,[7] at least in regard to the relationship between Risorgimento ideology and literary history. For this reason, I take Santa Croce as a point of departure for my investigation of the problem of *le origini* for two important reasons. First, the basilica itself has become, at least since Foscolo's *Dei sepolcri*, an over-determined space where nationalist discourse finds expression in religious monumentality; the tombs and cenotaphs in the church's interior confuse spiritual devotion and patriotism ('are e patria') in a way that both anticipates and enshrines Risorgimento ideology. Second, the statue of Dante on Santa Croce's porch, erected in 1865 by sculptor Enrico Pazzi in honor of the sexcentennial anniversary of the Florentine poet's birth, organizes the space along lines analogous to De Sanctis' programmatic *Storia della letteratura italiana*. The basilica and the statue of Dante, as an analogy to De Sanctis' expansive literary history, represent the operations of a new national mythology that rigorously excludes all that is perceived as 'foreign' to *italianità*, while simultaneously re-inscribing all that is perceived as 'native' into a teleological reading of Italian cultural pre-history that points to the inevitability of nationhood.

The dedication of Pazzi's statue of Dante in 1865 coincided not only with the triumphal celebration of the poet's 600th year, but also with the movement of Italy's new federal government from Turin to Florence. Indeed, as Dante, crowned with a laurel bough, looks left to assess visitors to Santa Croce with unmoving haughtiness, an eagle gazes upward from behind his left foot. Four lions guard the corners of Dante's pedestal, upon which is inscribed: 'A Dante Alighieri / L'Italia / M·DCCC·LXV'. The general effect is one of heroic defiance;

Encrico Pazzi, Statue of Dante Alighieri, Florence (1865)

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[7] Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect*, p. 1.

protecting the eagle of Republicanism behind him, Dante stares down Foscolo's invading forces and protects the cultural treasures of Italy's imagined past that lie entombed in the basilica. Dante, or rather, a representation of Dante that is both highly stylized and overtly symbolic, is thus constructed by the space of the basilica as the righteous defender of cultural memory. Indeed, Foscolo's *Dei sepolcri*, which eulogizes a Florence and an Italy denied its independence by centuries of foreign invasion in general, and by Napoleon in particular, insists upon 'memoria' as the locus of national glory. By 1865, though, the long decades of revolutionary sentiment following the Napoleonic wars had finally given way to Italian unification, and Santa Croce, the 'temple of Italian glories', could finally serve as a true shrine to the nation only imagined as a future (or past) impossibility by Foscolo. An Italy newly formed thus reclaimed not only its 'patria', but also its 'are', and installed an imposing Dante Alighieri at the frontier of its national memory to remind posterity of exactly what it means to be Italian.

From a contemporary critical perspective, however, Foscolo's epistle to Ippolito Pindemonte, Pazzi's statue to Dante and even Niccolò Matas' slighter earlier neo-Gothic facade (1857-1863) can all be seen as implicated in a complex process of national mythologization. In particular, the defiance exhibited by Pazzi's Dante masks an absence made explicit by the historical record: Dante Alighieri, a Florentine citizen and dilettante poet with great political ambition, was expelled from Florence in 1302 and spent his middle age in exile, finally dying in Ravenna in 1321 without having ever returned to the city of his birth. The first record of Dante's exile in the Black Guelph *Libro del Chiodo*, which legalized his expulsion from the city, and a second entry threatening him with execution,[8] marked a radical move away from politics in his career.[9] During the next ten years, the committed White Guelph and author of the *Vita nuova*'s dreamy love lyrics matured into a moral philosopher, completed both the *Convivio* and *De vulgari eloquentia* by mid-decade, and finished a version of *Inferno* before 1310.[10] In these three works, along with his epistles from the same period, Dante rails against the conditions of his exile, condemns Florence as corrupt and barbarous, and exchanges local political allegiances for membership in an imagined community of fellow exiles, professional writers and poets. Perhaps Florence had reparations in mind when Pazzi was commissioned to mold Dante's likeness into the fierce guardian of Italy's cultural glories. Whatever the case, the historical Dante was subject to the vicissitudes of thirteenth-century Italian regional politics and only ever imagined, with longing, an Italy free from factional strife, ideally unified under the Holy Roman Emperor and unburdened by the influence of a corrupt clergy.

The mythologization of Italy's pre-history that occurred during the Risorgimento and in the decades following unification can thus be regarded as aggressively inclusive of seemingly

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[8] Randolph Starn offers an exhaustive treatment of the particulars of Dante's case in *Contrary Commonwealth: the Theme of Exile in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 60-85.
[9] Exile has been a persistently fruitful vein in Dante studies since Boccaccio's *Trattatello*. In addition to Starn's inestimable historiographical contribution to the field, recent valuable studies include *Dante e le città dell'esilio. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi. Ravenna (11-13 settembre 1987)*, ed. Guido di Pina (Ravenna: Longo, 1989) and Marianne Shapiro's *De vulgari eloquentia: Dante's Book of Exile* (Lincoln-London: University of Nebraska Press, 1990). See also in *Annali d'italianistica* 20 (2002): Giuseppe De Marco, 'L'esperienza di Dante *exul immeritus quale autobiografia universale*', 21-54; Robert Wilson, 'Exile and Relegation in Dante and Ovid', 55-72; and Guy P. Raffa, 'Dante's Poetics of Exile', 73-88.
[10] See Ronald L. Martinez and Robert M. Durling's excellent introduction to *Inferno*, ed. and trans. Robert M. Durling (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 12-15.

'native' Italian cultural heroes, just as it sought to exclude all that was perceived as 'foreign'. Furthermore, the process by which De Sanctis, in particular, excludes objectionable Italians from the first two chapters of his *Storia della letteratura italiana* introduces rhetoric as an additional category of alterity. To be more precise, his judgments against every poet until the *Dolce stil nuovo*, including Guido Guinizzelli, result from a distinctly anti-rhetorical stance that associates technical precision and complexity, in general, and the study and practice of classical Rhetoric, in particular, with otherness.

Before the advent of Sicilian poetry, De Sanctis writes that 'La sicilia avea avuto già due grandi epoche di coltura: l'araba e la normanna. Il mondo fantastico e voluttuoso orientale vi era penetrato con gli arabi, e il mondo cavalleresco germanico vi era penetrato co' normanni, che ebbero parte cosí splendida nelle Crociate' (p. 6).[11] Despite the hazy patina of fantasy that colors De Sanctis' description of both Arab and Norman culture in Sicily, his intention here is to distinguish native *italianità* from the bastard court of Frederick II, result, as it was, of so much foreign penetration. He continues:

> Ivi, piú che in altre parti d' Italia, erano vive le impressioni, le rimembranze e i sentimenti di quella grande epoca da Goffredo a Saladino; i canti de' trovatori, le novelle orientali, la Tavola rotonda, un contatto immediato con popoli cosí diversi di vita e di coltura, avea colpito le immaginazioni e svegliata la vita intelletuale e morale. (p. 6)

Though born from a world of fantasy long discounted by historians of the medieval Mediterranean, De Sanctis represents the 'original sin' of foreign cultural influence in Sicily from a literary-historical standpoint. Neither the tales of Arthur's knights or of Charlemagne or Saladin, nor the ethos of courtly love they espouse pertained at all to the daily experience of real Italians. All of this 'rimaneva estraneo all'anima e alla vita reale' (p. 11). Perhaps this would not have been the case, De Sanctis is quick to remind his readers, but the death of Frederick II in 1250 and the fall of the Hohenstaufen in Italy meant the end of Feudalism in Italy. Alas, 'la vittoria de' comuni nell' Italia centrale fecero della cavalleria un mondo fantastico', and Italy was allowed to develop along its natural course for the next 600 years (p. 11).

What is most curious about the first chapter of *Storia della letteratura italiana*, however, is the way in which De Sanctis yokes this essential Sicilian 'foreignness' to rhetorical excess. He claims that the vernacular was not at this point developed enough to sustain the weight of experiences and concepts not native to Italy: 'Essendo idee, sentimenti e immagini una merce bella e fatta, non trovate e non lavorate da noi, si trovano messi lí, come tolte da peso' (p. 11). The contrast between a language that is still 'rozza' and 'concetti peregrini e raffinati' produces a type of poetry that is simply unable to signify anything. It is bled of authenticity to the point where it becomes a rhetorical exercise: 'tutto è convenzionale, concetti, frasi, forme, metri', or, most disparagingly, 'un meccanismo' (p. 12).

The two poets most guilty of producing this cold, mechanical poetry are Guido delle Colonne and Giacomo da Lentini. After eviscerating Guido's 'Ancor che l'aigua', De Sanctis turns

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[11] This and all subsequent citations of *Storia della letteratura italiana* will be parenthetical.

to Giacomo, who pushes rhetorical complexity to the point of extravagance.[12] Particularly offensive, presumably, is the Notaio's use of internal rhyme, as De Sanctis cites four lines of 'Lo viso, e son diviso dallo viso' as an example of 'la piú goffa espressione di una maniera falsa e affetata' (p. 15). Better poets than these, De Sanctis writes, 'son quelli che scrivono senza guardare all'effetto e senza prentensione' (p. 12). Unfortunately for the origins of Italian literature, however, such was not the case for any of the poets of the *Scuola siciliana*.

Yet neither could this standard be applied to the *Siculo-toscani*, notwithstanding their distance from the artificiality and corrupting foreign influence of Frederick's imperial court. De Sanctis recounts at the end of *Storia della letteratura italiana*'s first chapter how, subsequent to Manfred's defeat at the Battle of Benevento in 1266 and the final dissolution of the House of Hohenstaufen in Italy, 'la libertà de' comuni fu assicurata. La vita italiana, mancata nell' Italia meridionale in quella sua forma cavallersca e feudale, si concentrò in Toscana. E la lingua fu detta « toscana », e « toscani » furon detti i poeti italiani' (p. 18). Despite the fact that the vernacular in Tuscany was still marred by a slavish devotion to the language of courtly love and its use of 'Madonna' and 'Messere' as stock characters in morally primitive allegories (p. 25), it nevertheless had given way to a type of expression characterized as more 'sincere' and undoubtedly more 'Italian' as a result. Even Guittone D'Arezzo, in the slim treatment allotted him by *Storia della letteratura italiana*, is praised for his strength of character and expressive energy:

> In Guittone è notabile questo: che nel poeta senti l'uomo; quella forma aspra e rozza ha pure una fisonomia originale e caratteristica, una elevatezza morale, una certa energia d'espressione. L'uomo ci è, non l'innamorato, ma l'uomo morale e credente, e dalla sincerità della coscienza gli viene quella forza. (p. 31)

However, interestingly, Guittone is still beholden to rhetoric in a way reminiscent of De Sanctis' condemnation of the Sicilians. Rather than adopting a style of unfeeling technical eloquence, however, Guittone is too philosophical. He is not a poet, De Sanctis claims, but a 'sottile ragionatore in versi' (p. 32).

De Sanctis' narrative of early Tuscan poetry, beginning with Guittone d'Arezzo, thus marks a turn away from his conspicuous fusion of rhetorical complexity with otherness, and necessarily so; after all, Tuscany was the birthplace of both Italy's literary vernacular and its greatest poet, Dante Alighieri, who must, in the *Storia della letteratura italiana*, be the *omega* of *le origini* and the *alpha* of Italian literary history. Thus, in place of cultural or geographical otherness, De Sanctis insists that, for the two generations of poets succeeding the *Scuola siciliana*, devotion to science and philosophy inevitably lead to rhetorical excess in poetry. Indeed, at this point in the *Duecento*, neither Guittone d'Arezzo nor Guido Guinizzelli are poets, per se; just as Guittone is too philosophical, Guinizzelli is an artist and a philosopher, but 'non è ancora un poeta' (p. 29). De Sanctis continues:

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[12] De Sanctis writes of Guido's canzone: 'Questi son concetti e freddure, dissimulate nell'artificio della forma; perché, se guardi alla condotta del periodo, all'arte de' passaggi, alla stretta concatenazione delle idee, alla felicità dell'espressione in dir cose cosí sottili e difficili, hai poco a desiderare' (p. 14).

> A quel contenuto cavalleresco, frivolo e convenzionale, cosí fecondo presso i popoli dove nacque, cosí sterile presso noi dove fu importato, succede Platone, la contemplazione filosofica. Non ci è ancora il poeta, ma ci è l'artista. Il pensiero si move, l'immaginazione lavora. La scienza genera l'arte. (p. 29)

Thus, 'science', broadly understood by De Sanctis as the confluence of Roman literature, canon law, scholastic Aristotelianism and developments in the natural sciences,[13] displaces the romantic imaginary for those poets trained at the University of Bologna. Science, however, is no substitute for sentiment, as is illustrated by Guinizzelli's 'Al cor gentil ripara sempre Amore'.[14] De Sanctis quotes selectively from the first four stanzas of the *canzone* and comes to the conclusion that, though occasionally veiled by a deliberate obscurity, it reveals 'le profondità di una mente sdegnosa di luoghi comuni e per lungo uso speculatrice' (p. 29). Curious here is De Sanctis' insistence that Guinizzelli's science revolts against the *topoi* of courtly love; rather than the conventional address to an unattainable lady from the perspective of a long-suffering knight, 'Al cor gentil' is more interested in speculating on the nature of love itself by utilizing a succession of metaphors taken from the natural sciences. Though elevated above the artificiality and unfeeling rhetoric of the Sicilians, Guinizzelli nevertheless lacks the interiority De Sanctis expects of a true Italian poet:

> Il contenuto non è ancora trasformato internamente, non è ancora poesia, cioè vita e realtà; ma è già un fatto scientifico, scrutato, analizzato da una mente avida di sapere, con la serietà e la profondità di chi si addentra ne' problemi della scienza, e illuminato da una immaginazione, eccitata non dall'ardore del sentimento ma dalla stessa profondità del pensiero. (p. 29)

Even though De Sanctis cannot concede that 'Al cor gentil' is truly poetry, Guinizzelli's science and, more importantly, his imagination provide an important bridge between the conventions of courtly love poetry and the passionate expression of Dante a generation later.

Before introducing Dante and the *Dolce stil nuovo*, however, De Sanctis takes a brief detour into the spiritual to provide his readers with an example of the sentiment Guinizzelli lacks. The Umbrian Iacopone da Todi, who famously renounced his worldly goods and legal career when his devout wife was unexpectedly killed in a dancing accident, became a Franciscan friar around 1268 and subsequently composed nearly 75 *laude* that reflect, according to De Sanctis, 'la vita italiana sotto uno de' suoi aspetti con assai piú di sincerità e di verità che non trovi in nessun trovatore' (p. 32). This aspect is, of course, religiosity. De Sanctis goes on to qualify, however, that which lends 'sincerità' to Iacopone's poetic expression: 'È il sentimento religioso nella sua prima e natia espressione, come si rivela nelle classi inculte, senza nube di teologia e di scolasticismo e portato sino al misticismo ed all'estasi' (pp. 32-33). De Sanctis' reveals here the degree to which his valorization of sentiment reflects the Romantic

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[13] De Santcis writes, 'Quel contenuto cavalleresco dovea parer frivolo e superficiale ad uomini educati con Virgilio ed Ovidio, che leggevano san Tommaso e Aristotele, nutriti di Pandette e di dritto canonico, ed aperti a tutte le maraviglie dell'astronomia e delle scienze naturali' (p. 27).

[14] For this and other incipits reprinted in the *Storia della letteratura italiana* I have retained De Sanctis' spelling, which in many cases differs from current convention.

populism of much Risorgimento rhetoric: Iacopone is characterized as *sincere* not because, like Guinizzelli, his thoughts reveal profound and serious curiosity, but, like Guittone, his language, 'aspra e rozza', conveys a lived experience that risks obfuscation by the clouds of higher learning. In this way De Sanctis establishes the 'vita reale' of the non-learned classes as that worthy of poetic expression; in other words, poetry only becomes poetry when unmediated by certain cultural factors that represent the dominant concerns of more educated artists. In the case of the poets previously interpreted by De Sanctis, these concerns include, in the first place, devotion to the outdated and foreign conventions of courtly love (the *Scuola siciliana*), and in the second, serious study of classical literature and philosophy, scholastic theology and canon law (Guinizelli and, to a degree, Guittone d'Arezzo). In both cases, however, the end result of these intellectual peregrinations is the introduction into poetic expression of rhetoric, which can be defined, at least in De Sanctian terms, as an unnecessary *excess* of language resulting from the intervention of particular cultural factors alien to what is perceived as *real*, *lived* experience.

No wonder, then, that Sicilian poetry results only in 'concetti, frasi, forme, metri' and that neither Guittone nor Guinizzelli are considered by De Sanctis to be 'poets' in any proper sense. As part of his introduction to Dante and the *Dolce stil nuovo* at the end of *Storia della letteratura italiana*'s second chapter, De Sanctis takes one last opportunity to impugn the rhetoric that so mars most of the *Duecento*'s lyric production by isolating Brunetto Latini as precisely the kind of vain thirteenth-century Italian intellectual that retarded the emergence of a mature poetic tradition. He writes:

> La scienza era come un mondo nuovo, nel quale tutti si precipitavano a guardare. Ma la scienza era come il Vangelo, che s'imparava e non si discuteva. A quel modo che troiani, romani, franchi e saraceni, santi e cavalieri erano nell'immaginazione un mondo solo, Aristotele e Platone, Tommaso e Bonaventura erano una sola scienza. Il maggiore studio era sapere, e chi sapeva piú era piú ammirato; nessuno domandava quanta concordia e profondità era in quel sapere. Perciò venne a grandissima fama ser Brunetto Latini. Il suo *Tesoro* e *Tesoretto* furono per lungo tempo maravaglia delle genti, stupite che un uomo potesse saper tanto ed esporre in verso Aristotele e Tolomeo. Di che nessuno oggi saprebbe piú nulla, se Dante non avesse eternato l'uomo e il suo libro in quei versi celebri: 'Sieti raccomandato il mio *Tesoro*, / nel quale i' vivo ancora'. (p. 43)

In this paragraph, which follows his extended praise of Iacopone's 'native' religiosity and expressive sincerity, De Sanctis restates that neither the world of the feudal court ('troiani, romani, franchi e saraceni, santi e cavalieri') nor the world of science ('Aristotele e Platone, Tommaso e Bonaventura') took part in what he defines as the 'rozzezza della vita italiana' (p. 43). Structured in this manner, Brunetto appears to represent the confluence of those two worlds far removed from anything real, creative, or, indeed, sincerely Italian. Furthermore, De Sanctis appears invested in diminishing Brunetto by momentarily assuming an exaggeratedly fawning voice ('grandissima fama', the 'maraviglia delle genti' who were 'stupite') before stating that Brunetto would have been lost to posterity were it not for *Inferno* 15. Nevertheless, the defamed Florentine *dictator* provides De Sanctis a way to introduce the *Dolce stil nuovo*, as he writes, 'Brunetto fu maestro di Guido Cavalcanti e di Dante, che compirono i loro studi

nell'università di Bologna, dalla quale uscí pure Cino da Pistoia' (p. 44). In this way, *Storia della letteratura italiana* is able to finally associate the 'science' of Guido Guinizzelli with the poets of the *stil nuovo* by way of Brunetto Latini, who was also implicated in the world of the French feudal courts.[15]

De Sanctis' final judgment on 'la scuola di Guinicelli', however, can be found in an extended passage on Guido Cavalcanti. He writes:

> In luogo di rappresentare i suoi sentimenti come poeta, egli gli sottopone ad analisi come critico e ne ragiona sottilmente. Posto fuori della natura e nel campo dell'astrazione, ogni limite del reale si perde; e quella stessa sottigliezza, che legava insieme i concetti piú disparati e ne traeva argomentazioni e conclusioni fuori di ogni realtà e di ogni senso comune, creava ora una scolastica poetica o, per dirla col suo nome, una rettorica ad uso dell'amore, piena di figure e di esagerazioni, dove vedi comparire gli spiritelli d'amore che vanno in giro e i sospiri che parlano. In luogo di persone vive, abbondano le personificazioni. In un sonnetto, de' meglio condotti e di grande perfezione tecnica, vuol dire che nella sua donna è posta la salute: mèta sí alta, che avanza ogni sforzo d'intelletto, e però non resta altro che morire. Questo è rettorica, non solo per la strana esagerazione del concetto, ma per il odo dell'esposizione scolastico e dottrinale. (p. 45)

This passage represents De Sanctis' most complete indictment of the role of rhetoric in *Duecento* poetry. In place of the passionate expression of sentiment derived from the lived experience of the uneducated, Cavalcanti's early lyrics traffic in a type of analysis and reasoned argumentation that activates only outside the bounds of reality. His poetry (or, as De Sanctis would prefer at this point in the poet's career, his 'artistry') is unquestionably accomplished ('di grande perfezione tecnica'), but the textual effect of such virtuoso composition is the proliferation of 'figure', 'esagerazioni', and 'personificazioni'. Ultimately, 'questo è rettorica' in its purest sense, and, as a result, is just as unsuitable in its representation of *italianità* as the *Scuola siciliana*.

Fortunately for Cavalcanti, however, De Sanctis views his long-term poetic production as evolving away from the dispassionate science of Guinizzelli and his school. After all, the *Dolce stil nuovo* must be taken into account, and De Sanctis anoints Cavalcanti as its progenitor. With all the 'perfezione tecnica' and 'scienza' of his contemporaries (p. 48), Cavalcanti nevertheless manages to imbue his lyrics with real sentiment, utilizing them as 'uno sfogo dell'animo' (p. 49).[16] Thus Guido 'divenne il capo della nuova scuola, il creatore del nuovo stile, e oscurò Guido Guinicelli' (p. 48). Furthermore, and for this same reason,

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[15] De Sanctis never explicitly criticizes Brunetto for his association with France. Despite this fact, however, it seems likely that equating the world of courtly love with that of philosophy as a way to introduce Brunetto was intended to serve the same purpose. In any case, his lack of *italianità* remains the target of De Sanctis' attack.

[16] Here De Sanctis clearly has in mind the first stanza of 'Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore', in which Dante writes, 'Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore / i' vo' con voi de la mia donna dire, / non perch'io creda sua laude finire, / ma ragionar per isfogar la mente' (vv. 1-4).

Guido è il primo poeta italiano degno di questo nome, perché è il primo che abbia il senso e l'affetto del reale. Le vuote generalità de' trovatori, divenute poi un contenuto scientifco e rettorico, sono in lui cosa viva, perché, quando scrive a diletto e a sfogo, rendono le impressioni e i sentimenti dell'anima. La poesia, che prima pensava e descriveva, ora narra e rappresenta, non al modo semplice e rozzo di antichi poeti, ma con quella grazia e finitezza a cui era già venuta la lingua, maneggiata da Guido con perfetta padronanza. (p. 49)

In this passage, De Sanctis provides a brief summary of the *Duecento* and finally isolates the point at which the real origins of Italian literature can be discerned. Just as Bologna is the birthplace of Italian poetry ('la scienza fu madre della poesia italiana, e la prima ispirazione venne dalla scuola', p. 27) Guido Cavalcanti is its 'primo poeta', as none before him had the ability to transform conventional or philosophical courtly love poetry into a genuine expression of interiority: 'Qui lo scienziato sparisce e la rettorica è dimenticata. Tutto nasce dal di dentro, naturale, semplice, sobrio, con perfetta misura tra il sentimento e l'espressione' (p. 50).

That the affectation and empty rigidity of earlier lyric expression could finally be made to accommodate such interiority is important for De Sanctis only in so far as Cavalanti plays John the Baptist to Dante's Christ, 'segnando la via nella quale Dante fece tanto cammino' (p. 50). Not surprisingly, more than a quarter of the first volume of *Storia della letteratura italiana* is devoted to Dante, whom De Sanctis introduces by quoting from *Purgatorio* XXIV: 'I' mi son un che, quando / Amore spira, noto ed a quel modo / ch'ei detta dentro, vo significando' (p. 50).[17] Seemingly unaware of Dante's own literary-historical project, De Sanctis happily interprets these lines in precisely the way the Florentine intended. The doctrinal statement offered by Dante-personaggio to a fictional and fawning Bonagiunta da Lucca ruptures the line of continuity in the development of early Italian poetry by introducing the complex of interiority, inspiration and expression as the marker of 'quality' in poetic speech. Whether Dante's real intention was to disparage Giacomo da Lentini, Guittone and Bonagiunta in order to impose this vision of early Italian literary history on posterity is unimportant, for De Sanctis nevertheless invests his interpretation of the *Duecento* lyric wholly in the poet's words here. With an uncritical eye, the great Risorgimento educator and critic is able to declare that Dante, alongside Cavalcanti, presides over the birth of a new poetic school 'rimasa per molti secoli l'ultima parola dell critica italiana' (p. 53). The *Dolce stil nuovo* is revolutionary because it rejects both 'rimatori stolti che usavano rettorica vuota di contenuto' and 'quelli che ti davano un contenuto scientifco nudo senza rettorica' (p. 53). It represents the perfect confluence of everything that had previously characterized Italian poetic production (the *topoi* of courtly love, technical complexity, scientific inquiry and philosophical sophistication) with sincerity and inspiration:

Fin qui giunge la coscienza di Dante. Se gli domandi piú in là, ti risponde come Raffaello: « Noto, quando Amore spira », ubbidisco all'ispirazione. E appunto, se vogliamo trovar

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[17] Worth noting is the fact that De Sanctis quotes from elsewhere in the *Comedy* throughout the first two chapters of *Storia della letteratura italiana*, without explicitly mentioning Dante. Most notable is his assessment of Guido Cavalcanti's usurpation of Guinizzelli's role as *caposcuola* for a new generation of poets, in which he cites *Purgatorio* XI ('Cosí ha tolto l'uno all'altro Guido / la gloria della lingua') without referring to Dante at all (p. 48).

Dante, dobbiamo cercarlo qui, fuori della sua coscienza, nella spontaneità della sua ispirazione. Innanzi tutto, Dante ha la serietà e la sincerità dell'ispirazione. Chi legge la *Vita nuova*, non può mettere in dubbio la sua sincerità. Ci si vede lo studente di Bologna, pieno il capo di astronomia e di cabala, di filosofia e di rettorica, di Ovidio e di Virgilio, di poeti e di rimatori; ma tutto questo non è la sostanza del libro: ci entra come colorito e ne forma il lato grottesco. Sotto l'abito dello studente ci è un cuore puro e nuovo, tutto aperto alle impressioni, facile alle adorazioni e alle disperazioni; ed una fervida immaginazione, che lo tiene alto da terra e vagabando nel regno de' fantasmi. (pp. 57-58)

Clearly De Sanctis is responding here to the image of Dante as a young man, the author of his own book of memory whose education is filtered through and transformed by ingenuous sincerity and a powerful imaginative faculty.

The same qualities, however, that allow him to invest the lyric world of the *Duecento* with 'maggior varietà e con piú chiara coscienza' lead him, years later, to craft the *Commedia*, which De Sanctis establishes as the barometer for the quality of all Italian poetic expression both before and after Dante. The poem, De Sanctis writes, is a '*Commedia dell'anima*' (p. 152), because Dante not only narrates his own individual journey through the three realms of the Christian afterlife, but represents 'l'anima . . . come essere colletivo, come società umana o umanità' (p. 154). Upon reaching the Empyrean in *Paradiso*, Dante is able to relate the experience of 'quel regno della pace che tutti cercavano, quel regno di Dio, quel regno della filosofia', a kingdom, not unlike the newly unified Italy, that is also a 'nuova civiltà' (p. 254). This new civilization, De Sanctis continues:

di cui avevi qua e là oscuri e sparsi vestigi, è qui compreso in una immensa unità, che rinchiude nel suo seno tutto lo scibile, tutta la coltura e tutta la storia. E chi costruisce cosí vasta mole, ci mette la serietà dell'artista, del poeta, del filosofo e del cristiano. Consapevole della sua elevatezza morale e della sua potenza intelletuale, gli stanno innanzi, acuti stimoli dell'opera, la patria, la posterità . . . (p. 254)

The *Commedia* thus comes to represent not only the fulfillment of every particular element of the poetic tradition of the *Duecento*, but also anticipates its function as an expression of De Sanctis' own idealized Italy. Dante embodies the sincerity, creativity and religiosity that *Storia della letteratura italiana* finds lacking in every poet that precedes him, and, not surprisingly, in Petrarch and Boccaccio as well.[18]

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[18] In the two chapters following De Sanctis' interpretation of the *Comedy*, *Storia della letteratura italiana* carefully dismantles both Petrarch and Boccaccio and offers copious evidence for their inferiority to Dante. In Petrarch's case, the disparity between 'una forma cosí finita e armonica e un contenuto cosí debole e contraddittorio' renders the *Canzoniere* a kind of 'doppio mondo' in which beauty and grace is undermined by lack of conscience and weakness of character (p. 280). Petrarch, however, fares better than Boccaccio, upon whom De Sanctis heaps the blame of centuries. The *Decameron* is a 'nuova « Commedia », non la « divina », ma la « terrestre Commedia ». Dante si avvolge nel suo lucco e sparisce dalla vista. Il medio evo, con le sue visioni, le sue leggende, i suoi misteri, i suoi terrori e le sue ombre e le sue estasi, è cacciato dal tempio dell'arte. E vi entra rumorosamente il Boccaccio e si tira appresso per lungo tempo tutta l' Italia' (p. 345).

In the critical environment of the early twenty-first century, however, no scholar of the *Duecento* lyric, let alone of Dante, Petrarch or Boccaccio, would ascribe any importance to De Sanctis' insistence on the purity of expression and clarity of conscience as markers of literary quality. In the case of Cavalcanti, for example, one need only invoke Maria Corti's essential *La felicità mentale* to support the assertion that his influence on the early Italian tradition was due to, not in spite of, his elaborate syllogisms and philosophical skepticism.[19] The point, however, is not that De Sanctis was wrong. Indeed, such a suggestion would be an exercise in gross understatement. Rather, the particular way that De Sanctis engineers his siege on almost every early Italian poet before the *Dolce stil nuovo* relies on the equation of sincerity with *italianità*, thus forcing an analogy between the *topoi* of courtly love and scholastic inquiry, and ultimately establishes rhetoric as the textual evidence *par excellence* for exclusion from the real origins of Italian literature. Were De Sanctis' judgments against rhetoric isolated to his reading of the thirteenth century, perhaps it would be possible to simply discount his importance in the debate over the meaning of *le orgini*. De Sanctis applies, however, the same parameters for assessing *italianità* inscribed early in his *Storia della letteratura italiana* to every other major writer in every period of Italian literary history up to and including the Risorgimento. In a section entitled 'La nuova letteratura' late in the second volume, he turns his critical eye to Carlo Goldoni, writing:

> Cosa manca a Goldoni? Non lo spirito, non la forza comica, non l'abilità tecnica: era nato artista. Mancò a lui quello che a Metastasio: gli mancò un mondo interiore della coscienza, operoso, espansivo, appassionato, animato dalla fede e dal sentimento. Mancò a lui quello che mancava da piú secoli a tutti gl' italiani e rendeva insanabile la loro decadenza: la sincerità e la forza delle convinzioni.[20]

Excluding his reference to Goldoni's 'forza comica', De Sanctis might as well be describing Guittone, Guinizzelli, or the early lyrics of Cavalcanti. Here he repeats the same formulation so common in the first two chapters of his literary history: Goldoni was 'nato artista' because his imagination was channeled through a masterly technical aptitude. We find in him, however, exactly that quality that *should* define all Italians and all Italian literature, but that which was lacking for most of the history of the pre-nation: an active interior world energized by faith and moral rectitude and characterized by passionate conviction and, above all, sincerity.

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[19] Maria Corti, *La felicità mentale: nuove prospettive per Cavalcanti e Dante* (Turin: Einaudi, 1983).
[20] *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. 2, p. 374.

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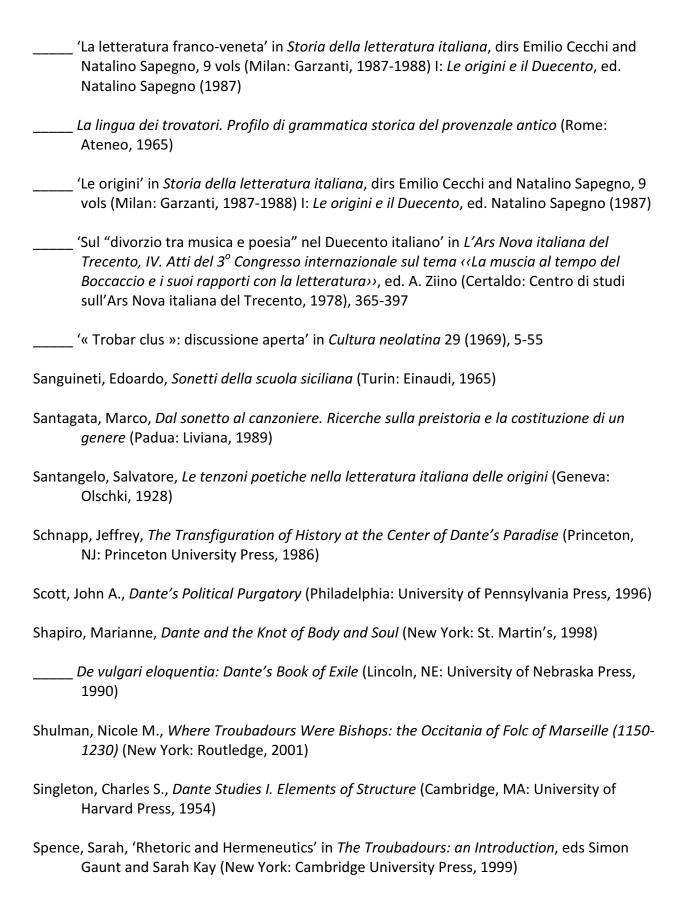Kolsen, Adolf, *Guiraut von Bornelh, der Meister der Trobadors* (Berlin: Vogt, 1894)

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