

Vernacular Encounters with Aristotle's *Politics* in Italy, 1260–1600

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I declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own.

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the use and dissemination of Aristotelian political theory in Italian literature from the late medieval period, when the first fragments of Aristotle's political thought appeared in the West, to the sixteenth century, when vernacular Aristotelian literature flourished. I show how late medieval and Renaissance authors employed Aristotle's *Politics* in various ways, according to their political background and allegiances, their approach to the text and their intended audience. I also demonstrate how, reciprocally, the vocabulary and classifications in the *Politics* shaped their understanding of their own political context.

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter offers an overview, for comparative purposes, of the Latin and Greek reception of the *Politics* in Western Europe. The remaining chapters proceed chronologically. Chapter Two explores the place of the *Politics* in Italian vernacular literature of the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries. Chapter Three does the same for the fifteenth century, as well as considering the impact of Neo-Platonism and the 'questione della lingua' on vernacular political Aristotelianism.

The three remaining chapters cover the sixteenth century. Chapter Four concerns Antonio Brucioli, who composed a series of Aristotelian political dialogues in the 1520s and in 1547 produced the first vernacular translation of the *Politics*. The subject of Chapter Five is Bernardo Segni, whose translation of the *Politics*, accompanied by the first full vernacular commentary, was published in 1549. Chapter Six deals with a representative selection of the wide-ranging vernacular material written on the *Politics* in the second half of the sixteenth century.

The dissertation concludes with an evaluation of the changing uses of the *Politics* in Italy from the late thirteenth century to the end of the sixteenth, examining the different ways in which the treatise served as a key to understanding politics and political reality.

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Editorial Principles

Translations:

All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

Transcriptions:

When transcribing from manuscripts or unedited printed works I have expanded all abbreviations, including ampersands. I have preserved the source spelling, apart from changing *v* to *u* and *j* to *i* where necessary, and have preserved punctuation and accents, except in the rare instance that this is confusing (for example *e* meant as *è*).

Citations:

When citing Aristotelian works as simply title and Bekker number, my source is always Aristotle, *The Complete Works*, ed. J. Barnes, 2 vols (Princeton NJ, 1984).

Pagination/Foliation:

Where I have assigned page or folio numbers, this is indicated with square brackets. An additional asterisk indicates that my assigned numbers are for pages of a text which precede existing pagination or foliation.

Introduction

Aristotle, ‘Il maestro di color che sanno’, the master of those who know. In one short phrase, Dante sums up the place which Aristotle held in late medieval culture and scholarship: the teacher of all knowledge. Aristotle was not merely a philosopher, but the Philosopher. The assumption that this ceased to be the case with the arrival of the Renaissance and the rise of Neo-Platonism was challenged three decades ago by, in particular, Charles B. Schmitt, F. Edward Cranz and Charles H. Lohr, who initiated a wave of scholarship which has affirmed the enduring and dominant place of Aristotelianism in Renaissance thought. The extensive bibliographical research of Cranz, Schmitt and Lohr was a cornerstone of this reassessment. Cranz’s *Bibliography of Latin Aristotle Editions*, revised and substantially enlarged by Schmitt,¹ and Lohr’s comprehensive account of medieval and Renaissance Latin Aristotelian commentaries,² document the sheer quantity of Aristotelian texts produced in Latin in the Middle Ages and throughout the Renaissance, comprising manuscript and printed editions in a myriad of different forms.

In addition, Schmitt’s magisterial *Aristotle and the Renaissance* demonstrated not only the persistence of Aristotelianism but also the tradition’s variety, subtlety and ability to adapt to changed intellectual and cultural circumstances. He argued that we should speak of Renaissance ‘Aristotelianisms’ rather than a unified and monolithic Aristotelianism, and he described the concept of ‘eclectic Aristotelianism’, the incorporation of ideas from other philosophies which strengthened the Aristotelian tradition.³ The work of these scholars and of others has been expanded and refined in the decades since, giving ever more detail to the reception of Aristotle in different

¹ F. E. Cranz, *A Bibliography of Aristotle Editions, 1501-1600*, 2nd ed. rev. C. B. Schmitt (Baden-Baden, 1984).

² C. H. Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, rev. C. B. Schmitt, 5 vols (Florence, 1988-2013).

³ C. B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge MA, 1983), chapter IV: ‘Eclectic Aristotelianism’.

branches of knowledge,⁴ the writings of individual Renaissance Aristotelians,⁵ and the continuing dominance of Aristotle in the universities,⁶ especially Padua.⁷ Luca Bianchi's article, 'Continuity and Change in the Aristotelian Tradition', published in the 2007 *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*, offers a recent assessment of the field, accepting Schmitt's conclusions about Renaissance 'Aristotelianisms' but emphasising the inadequacy of standard demarcations ('scholastic', 'humanist') to describe the diversity which it encompassed.⁸

Recognition of the central place of Aristotelianism in Renaissance scholarship has paved the way for scholars to expand their investigations beyond the corpus of Latin translations and commentaries. The project 'Vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy, c. 1400–c. 1650', jointly run by the University of Warwick and the Warburg Institute, and of which this thesis is a part, has begun exploring the many manifestations of Aristotelian philosophy in Italian. While Schmitt's assertion that most learning and teaching of Aristotle occurred in Latin is unquestionably true,⁹ the study of the vernacularisation of Aristotelian philosophy offers a view into a previously obscure area of late medieval and Renaissance intellectual culture. The database of vernacular Aristotelian literature compiled for the project by Eugenio Refini has continued the pioneering work of Cranz and Lohr,¹⁰ as well as raising numerous new research questions. How did Italian works utilise Aristotle, and were their methods different from those of Latin Aristotelianism? What form did these Italian texts take, and who read

⁴ See, e.g., C. Leijenhorst, C. Lüthy and J. Thijssen (eds), *The Dynamics of Aristotelian Natural Philosophy from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden, 2002); D. Des Chene, *Life's Form: Late Aristotelian Conceptions of the Soul* (Ithaca NY, 2000); P. R. Blum, *Studies on Early Modern Aristotelianism* (Leiden, 2012).

⁵ See D. A. Iorio, *The Aristotelians of Renaissance Italy: A Philosophical Exposition* (Lewiston NY, 1991).

⁶ See C. B. Schmitt, *The Aristotelian Tradition and Renaissance Universities* (Cambridge MA, 1984); D. A. Lines, *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance (ca. 1300-1600): The Universities and the Problem of Moral Education* (Leiden, 2002).

⁷ See G. Piaia (ed.), *La presenza dell'aristotelismo padovano nella filosofia della prima modernità* (Rome and Padua, 2002); A. Poppi, *Introduzione all'aristotelismo padovano* (Padua, 1991).

⁸ L. Bianchi, 'Continuity and Change in the Aristotelian Tradition', in J. Hankins (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 49-71.

⁹ Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, p. 64.

¹⁰ Centre for the Study of the Renaissance, University of Warwick, 'Vernacular Aristotelianism in Renaissance Italy, c. 1400-c. 1650: A Database of Aristotelian Works', [http://137.205.247.154/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=VERNACULAR_ARISTOTELIANISM_3July2013&-loadframes] (accessed 11 November 2014)].

them? What part did they play in vernacular culture, and how far did they interact with the Latin tradition?

These questions are increasingly under discussion. Luca Bianchi, an associate member of the project, has outlined the state of the field, noting the important place occupied by Italy in the vernacularisation of Aristotle and the variety of forms this diffusion took. He has also provided a wide-ranging account of the readership of vernacular Aristotelian philosophy.¹¹ Others have contributed important case-studies on particular works, genres or authors.¹² One of the most significant developments in this new scholarship is the impulse to pay attention to lesser-known thinkers, who nevertheless composed works of importance in the vernacular and whose thought often represents the medieval and Renaissance world-view better than that of more intellectually innovative figures.

This PhD dissertation supplements and advances this work by offering the first extensive study of vernacular Aristotelianism in Italy, exploring the use and importance of one work – the *Politics* – in Italian thought and culture from the arrival of the treatise in Europe in around 1260 until 1600. The story begins at the end of the thirteenth century, rather than in 1400, because it was at that time that the *Politics* became known in Western Europe.

Unlike other Aristotelian works, the *Politics* did not find widespread popularity in Byzantium, although it was certainly studied there;¹³ nor was it translated into Arabic.¹⁴ The *Politics* was one of the last texts to arrive in the Latin West, translated in the late

¹¹ L. Bianchi, 'Per una storia dell' Aristotelismo "volgare" nel Rinascimento: problemi e prospettive di ricerca', *Bruniana e Campanelliana*, 15 (2009), pp. 367-385; and his 'Volgarizzare Aristotele: per chi?' *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 59 (2012), pp. 480-495.

¹² Examples include P. Olmos, 'Humanist Aristotelianism in the Vernacular: Two Sixteenth-Century Programmes', *Renaissance Studies*, 25 (2011), pp. 538-558; D. A. Lines, 'Rethinking Renaissance Aristotelianism: Bernardo Segni's *Ethica*, the Florentine Academy, and the Vernacular', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 66 (2013), pp. 824-865; S. A. Gilson, "'Aristotele fatto volgare" and Dante as "peripatetico" in Sixteenth-Century Dante Commentary', *L'Alighieri*, 39 (2012), pp. 31-64.

¹³ A. Kaldellis, 'Aristotle's *Politics* in Byzantium', in V. Syros (ed.), *Well Begun is Only Half Done: Tracing Aristotle's Political Ideas in Arabic, Syriac, Byzantine, and Jewish Sources* (Tempe AZ, 2011), pp. 121-143, at p. 123.

¹⁴ J. Janssens, 'Ibn Bājjā and Aristotle's Political Thought', in V. Syros (ed.), *Well Begun is Only Half Done: Tracing Aristotle's Political Ideas in Arabic, Syriac, Byzantine, and Jewish Sources* (Tempe AZ, 2011), pp. 73-95, at p. 73.

thirteenth century from the Greek rather than from an Arabic source, the route of transmission for many of Aristotle's works into Latin. This study will therefore start from a point at which the *Politics* was not known at all in either Latin or the vernacular. I shall then trace how and why material from the treatise began to appear in Italian. Finally, I shall examine the two mid-sixteenth-century translations which made the complete text available in Italian, and the related literature which was produced in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Aristotle (384–322 BC) spent most of his life as a foreigner in cities where he had no political power, so his *Politics* was a work of observation rather than personal experience, outlining the political situations and problems he saw in the Greek city-states or the monarchical kingdom of Macedonia.¹⁵ He regarded all humans as inherently social and, in particular, political animals¹⁶ – destined for life in a community, which, as a cohesive unit, was more perfect and important than the individual. The *Politics* introduces the idea of the civic community, the city, as necessary for humankind's self-sufficiency and for reaching humanity's final end or *telos* – the good life. The concept of the community and of government as fundamentally positive, the means to a good end, provided Western Europe with a new understanding of political life. These tenets are contained in the first book of the *Politics*, as well as a discussion of slavery and wealth management; the remaining seven books go on to provide extensive information on various political systems.

The second book of the *Politics* deals with 'model' constitutions: both those found in the political writings of other philosophers, especially Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*, and historical examples, such as the political systems of Sparta, Crete and Carthage. While Aristotle is severely critical of the ideas for government laid out by Plato, above all holding goods and women in common,¹⁷ he praises the mixed constitutions of Sparta and Carthage, which include a council, a body of magistrates and a kingly office.¹⁸

¹⁵ D. Keyt and F. D. Miller, 'Introduction', in D. Keyt and F. D. Miller (eds), *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics* (Oxford and Cambridge MA, 1991), pp. 1-12, at p. 3.

¹⁶ *Politics*, 1253a3-4.

¹⁷ *Politics*, 1261a1-1264b25.

¹⁸ *Politics*, 1269a29-1273b26.

Book Three offers a wide-ranging discussion of the theory of the state: the identity of the citizen; the tripartite classification of governments (monarchy, aristocracy and polity) and their perversions (tyranny, oligarchy and democracy);¹⁹ the question of who should hold the supreme authority in a state; and, finally, a discussion of kingship. Book Four continues the detailed examination of constitutions: democracy, oligarchy, aristocracy, polity and tyranny, with descriptions of their features and examples of each drawn from the city-states with which Aristotle was familiar.

The preservation and revolution of states is covered in Book Five, with each type of constitution treated separately. In the short Book Six, Aristotle considers magistracies and offices, while in Book Seven he deals with the best state, and how the state can ensure the best life for its citizens through its composition, location and social mores. Book Eight details the education of the citizen, preparing him for his place in the state and enabling him to attain the ultimate goal of the good life. Although it provides no definite answers to questions such as which of the constitutions should be considered the best, the treatise – concentrated on the political unit of the *polis*, the Greek city-state – contained much which could be applied to the cities of medieval and Renaissance Italy.

When identifying and analysing the vernacular encounters with Aristotle's *Politics* which took place in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance – involving not only the authors who used the *Politics* in composing their Italian works but also the readers who came across Aristotelian political philosophy in the vernacular – it is useful to lay out specific research objectives which, when completed, will provide a rounded picture of the topic. In the first place, the genres of literature which conveyed vernacular Aristotelianism need to be established. Since the instances of Aristotelian politics in the Italian vernacular were initially few and since the Italian language itself was in a nascent state in the late thirteenth century, I have widened the definition of what can be considered 'political literature'. It is important to consider all manifestations of vernacular philosophical expression, whether in poetry, sermons, dialogues or political treatises, and to study the best-known texts, such as Dante's *Commedia*, alongside

¹⁹ *Politics*, 1279a31-1279b10.

works which, although they had very little circulation, still reveal the changing use of political philosophy in the Italian vernacular. As the Italian language gained confidence and ever more outspoken supporters, it increasingly became a medium for philosophical and political discussion: this study of Aristotelian vernacular political thought is also the story of the development of the vernacular itself.

Secondly, the dissertation will seek to determine the reasons why authors composed these works, and what kinds of reader they intended to reach. The use of Aristotelian political philosophy could have many motives: to instruct those with governmental power on how best to use their influence in the management of a good state; the education of a lay readership on how to understand politics and to interpret literature concerned with politics; to persuade their audience of the best form of the state, and how to live best within the state; and to praise or condemn constitutions, current, past or imagined.

Thirdly, I shall highlight those teachings from the *Politics* which were considered to be particularly relevant to the authors of vernacular works and explain how these choices reflect contemporary cultural and political concerns. In the Latin tradition, the arrival of the *Politics* had an immediate impact on ideas of what politics entailed, the understanding of political systems and even the vocabulary used to talk about politics – all areas which would remain indebted to Aristotle until the end of the period covered here. In this dissertation, I shall attempt to see whether the same can be said of the vernacular tradition – whether political discussion in Italian took place in specifically Aristotelian terms, and if vocabulary and classification schemes found in the *Politics* shaped vernacular authors' and readers' understanding of their own political environment.

Certain doctrines and concepts contained in the eight books of Aristotle's *Politics* spoke with particular resonance to the authors of vernacular texts in medieval and Renaissance Italy. Some subjects, such as the question of the best state – whether it should be a monarchy, either tempered or absolute, oligarchy, polity or a mixed constitution made up of all three types – remained a topic for discussion throughout the centuries, while

others held significance for certain locales or periods. It is worth noting here that although this dissertation is intended as a study of Italy as a whole, it appears to be especially focused on the north of the country. I did look for examples of vernacular political Aristotelianism originating in southern or central regions, but the sources which I found were overwhelmingly composed in northern Italy, reflecting the developments in the Italian language that took place in Tuscany and, later, the predominance of Venice as a publishing centre.

I have always attempted to determine, as far as possible, the relationship between the use of the *Politics* by vernacular authors and their political and cultural environment. The period examined in this dissertation was one of varied and turbulent political and cultural change in Italy, which had a profound effect on Italian identity and literature. On the political side, there was the rise of the communal city-states, the increasing domination of *signorie* and the growing influence of foreign powers in the Italian peninsula; and in cultural terms, the rise of humanism, the championing of the vernacular and the development of the printing press. It may be that interactions with the *Politics* in the vernacular mirrored political developments more closely than the university-based Latin tradition.

Finally, the relationship between Latin and vernacular works on the *Politics* must be examined. Vernacular engagement with Aristotle's *Politics* did not take place in isolation from the Latin Aristotelian tradition. Far from it, since before the widespread availability of the Greek text (and often after) vernacular political Aristotelianism depended on Latin sources. Therefore, in the first chapter, I outline the translation and discussion of the *Politics* in scholarly Latin (and Greek) contexts, in order to provide a point of comparison with the vernacular compositions discussed in the rest of the dissertation. This chapter summarises the presence of the text in Latin translation, starting from the first version made by William of Moerbeke around 1260, then moving on to the fifteenth-century humanist translation by Leonardo Bruni. It also explores the ways in which the treatise was interpreted, firstly, in the influential commentary of Thomas Aquinas and those of other scholastic authors such as Albert the Great and Ptolemy of Lucca, and then in later years by humanist scholars, including John

Argyropoulos and Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples.

The second and third chapters trace the use of the *Politics* in vernacular Italian literature, from 1260 to 1400 and from 1400 to 1500 respectively, after the Latin text became known in Western Europe but before a vernacular translation was available. The portions of the text which were singled out, commented on and repeated offer a valuable insight into the priorities and concerns of authors of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Works studied include: the Italian translations of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* and other vernacular mirrors-for-princes written to educate both monarchs and the ideal republican citizen; the political sermons of figures such as Girolamo of Pisa and Savonarola; Dante's *Convivio* and the commentary tradition on his *Commedia*, which often contained digressions on political topics. These texts frequently drew on parts of the *Politics* which emphasised the social nature of man and the necessity of co-habiting peacefully in the *polis* in order to achieve happiness – of particular importance in the city-state environments of much of northern and central Italy. In the fifteenth century, the influence of humanism led thinkers to concentrate more on Aristotle's maxims on education and the raising of children, and the rise of interest in Platonism later in the century also had an impact on how the *Politics* was read and interpreted.

Attention turns to the sixteenth century in the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters. Chapter Four deals with the output of the first translator of the *Politics* into Italian, Antonio Brucioli. In addition to studying his translation, I will address the political dialogues he composed in the 1520s, which shed light on his humanist Aristotelianism and on the ways in which the use of the text changed in the sixteenth century. Brucioli belongs to the trend described by Schmitt as 'eclectic Aristotelianism', which differs considerably from the approach generally adopted in the previous two centuries.

Chapter Five examines the second sixteenth-century Italian translation of the *Politics*, by Bernardo Segni, as well as his commentary on the treatise: it was the first work to offer vernacular readers a key to the understanding of the *Politics* in its entirety. Like Brucioli, Segni represents a humanist response to the *Politics*, but also one steeped in

the linguistic and political concerns of his native city of Florence: the vernacularising efforts of the Accademia Fiorentina, of which Segni was a member, were aimed at glorifying both the Italian language and the cultural munificence of the Medici.

The final chapter explores the proliferation of vernacular political treatises, paraphrases and dialogues in the second half of the sixteenth century. These were often written by *poligrafi* who worked in tandem with the printing presses of Venice and other cities, and they illustrate the great variety of responses to the *Politics* in the wake of its translation into the vernacular. They also show how the power of the printing press and the rising stock of the Italian language increased the number of readers gaining access to the material contained in the *Politics*. While some vernacular works on the *Politics* began to rival those composed in Latin in their sophisticated and detailed treatments of the text, others were addressed to a readership unfamiliar with, and uninterested in, the scholarly subtleties of the Latin tradition.

Chapter One

The Latin and Greek *fortuna* of Aristotle's *Politics* in Europe, 1260-1600

It is impossible to study Italian vernacular treatments of Aristotle's *Politics* in isolation from the Latin and Greek traditions of the treatise. All the vernacular works examined in this dissertation, over a 340-year time span, were fundamentally influenced by the Latin learning through which the *Politics* first became known and subsequently explained to Western European readers. Often, these works are vernacularisations of Latin texts, composed with constant reference to Latin translations of and commentaries on the *Politics*, but also challenging the Latin culture which dominated Italian intellectual life in these centuries. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as knowledge of Greek gradually became more widespread, some scholars were able to gain direct access to Aristotle's text in the original without relying on Latin as an intermediary. This chapter will offer a (necessarily) brief summary of the European *fortuna* of the *Politics* in Latin and Greek, as the intellectual backdrop for the treatise's diffusion and influence in the Italian vernacular.

The appearance in approximately 1260 of the text of the *Politics* in Europe, in William of Moerbeke's Latin translation, was one of the final events in the process of the recovery of Aristotle which had begun in the early twelfth century. This involved not only the rendering of the text into Latin from either Greek or Arabic, but also the translation of many interpretative works by Greek commentators of late antiquity and Byzantium and by Arabic commentators of the earlier Middle Ages.

A few Aristotelian treatises were available in Latin before the late Middle Ages, in the translation of the greater part of the *Organon* from Greek by Boethius (c. 480–c. 526) – the *Categories*, *Peri hermeneias*, *Prior Analytics*, *Topics* and *Sophistici elenchi*.¹ Apart

¹ These works have been edited in the Aristoteles Latinus series: Aristotle, *Categoriae vel Praedicamenta. Translatio Boethii, editio composite, Translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka, Lemmata e Simplicii Commentario decerpta, Pseudo-Augustini Paraphrasis Themistiana*, ed. L. Minio-Paluello (Bruges and Paris, 1961); *De interpretatione vel Periermenias. Translatio Boethii*, ed. L. Minio-Paluello (Bruges and Paris, 1965); *Analytica priora. Translatio Boethii (recensiones duae), Translatio anonyma, Pseudo-Philoponi aliorumque scholia*, ed. L. Minio-Paluello (Bruges and Paris, 1962); *Topica. Translatio Boethii*,

from these logical works, however, little was known of the contents of the Aristotelian corpus. In the mid-twelfth century James of Venice produced Latin versions (translated from the Greek) of the *Physics*, *De anima*, *Metaphysics* and *Parva naturalia*, and made new versions of some of the works translated by Boethius, as well as composing and translating commentaries on Aristotelian logic.² A century later further translation activity took place at the court of the Emperor Frederick Hohenstaufen, where Michael Scot (1175–c.1232) made a version of *De animalibus* and also, more significantly, translated the Arabic commentaries of Averroes (1126–1198)³ on the *Physics*, *De caelo*, *De anima*, and *Metaphysics* into Latin in the 1220s and 1230s.⁴ As for the treatise closest in content to the *Politics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, two twelfth-century fragmentary translations, the *Ethica nova* and the *Ethica vetus*, possibly by Burgundio of Pisa (c. 1110–1193),⁵ preceded a thirteenth-century complete version made in Oxford around 1246-7 by Robert Grosseteste (c. 1175–1253).⁶ This translation was revised in the late thirteenth century by William of Moerbeke, as part of his revision of the entire

Fragmentum Recensionis Alterius et Translatio Anonyma, ed. L. Minio-Paluello (Brussels and Paris, 1969); *De sophisticis elenchis. Translatio Boethii, Fragmenta Translationis Iacobi et Recensio Guillelmi de Moerbeke*, ed. B. G. Dod (Leiden and Brussels, 1975). See S. Ebbesen, ‘The Aristotelian Commentator’, in J. Marenbon (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 34-55, at p. 36; J. Shiel, ‘Boethius’ Commentaries on Aristotle’, *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 4 (1958), pp. 217-244.

² Two of these works have been edited in the *Aristoteles Latinus* series: Aristotle, *Physica. Translatio Vetus*, ed. F. Bossier and J. Brams; *Translatio Vaticana*, ed. A. Mansion, 2 vols (Leiden and New York, 1990); *Metaphysica, lib. I-IV.4. Translatio Iacobi sive ‘Vetustissima’ cum scholiis et translatio composita sive ‘Vetus’*, ed. G. Vuillemin-Diem (Brussels and Paris, 1970). *De anima. Translatio Iacobi*, ed. J. Decorte, rev. J. Brams, is available in the ‘Aristoteles Latinus Database (ALD1)’, ed. J. Brams and P. Tombeur (Turnhout, 2003). See L. Minio-Paluello, ‘Iacobus Veneticus Grecus: Canonist and Translator of Aristotle’, in his *Opuscula: The Latin Aristotle* (Amsterdam, 1972), pp. 189-228, at p. 189; B. G. Dod, ‘Aristoteles latinus’, in N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny and J. Pinborg (eds), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism 1100-1600* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 45-79, at pp. 54-55.

³ On Averroes and Aristotle, see G. Endress and J. A. Aertsen (eds), *Averroes and the Aristotelian Tradition: Sources, Constitution and Reception of the Philosophy of Ibn Rushd (1126–1198)* (Leiden, 1999).

⁴ Dod, ‘Aristoteles latinus’, p. 48.

⁵ Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea: translatio antiquissima libr. II-III, sive “Ethica vetus”, et translationis antiquioris quae supersunt, sive “Ethica nova”, “Hoferiana”, “Borghesiana”* ed. R. A. Gauthier (Leiden, 1972). On Burgundio and his authorship of these fragments, see D. A. Lines, *Aristotle’s Ethics in the Italian Renaissance (ca. 1300-1600): The Universities and the Problem of Moral Education* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 46-47; V. A. Buffon, ‘The Structure of the Soul, Intellectual Virtues, and the Ethical Ideal of Masters of Arts in Early Commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*’, in I. P. Bejczy (ed.), *Virtue Ethics in the Middle Ages: Commentaries on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, 1200-1500* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 13-30, at pp. 13-14.

⁶ Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea ... sive “Liber ethicorum”* transl. Robert Grosseteste, ed. R. A. Gauthier (Leiden, 1972). Dod, ‘Aristoteles latinus’, p. 61. On Grosseteste, see J. McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford, 1982), and R. W. Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1986).

Aristotelian corpus;⁷ in addition, a Latin translation of an Arabic epitome of the *Ethics* was made by Hermannus Alemannus.⁸

In the course of the thirteenth century, Aristotelianism established itself as the dominant tradition in the new centres of academic study, the universities: Aristotle's works became the foundation of the Arts degree, a required course of study for all those enrolled at university.⁹ They were soon part of the common currency of knowledge shared by Latin-literate scholars across Europe, although the qualms which some had over teaching the writings of a pagan philosopher led to bans on certain aspects of Aristotle's philosophy at some universities, most famously by Bishop Étienne Tempier at Paris in 1277.¹⁰ In one sense, these bans demonstrate the rapid spread and influence of Aristotelian learning: its popularity was such that the church decided it was necessary to take steps to curb its impact.

That it was not possible to stem the tide of Aristotelianism is obvious from the vast amount of Latin literature on Aristotle which began to be produced, with particularly significant commentaries written by the Dominicans Albert the Great and his pupil Thomas Aquinas. The recovery of the Aristotelian corpus caused the conception and arrangement of knowledge itself to be reordered along Aristotelian lines of classification, with philosophy divided into *theoria*, which was contemplative and included logic and metaphysics, and *praxis*, which was active and encompassed the practical philosophies of ethics, oeconomics and politics.¹¹

The late appearance of the Latin translation of the *Politics*, at the very end of this period of recovery, did not prevent scholars from gaining access to some aspects of Aristotelian political philosophy, gleaned from the texts which were available in Latin. So, even though no translation of or commentary on the *Politics* existed in the otherwise rich

⁷ Dod, 'Aristoteles latinus', p. 49.

⁸ Dod, 'Aristoteles latinus', pp. 59-60.

⁹ A. Kenny and J. Pinborg, 'Medieval Political Literature', in N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny and J. Pinborg (eds), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism 1100-1600* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 11-42, at p. 13.

¹⁰ See J. A. Aertsen et al. (eds), *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277: Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts: Studien und Texte = After the Condemnation of 1277: Philosophy and Theology at the University of Paris in the Last Quarter of the Thirteenth Century: Studies and Texts* (Berlin, 2000).

¹¹ C. J. Nederman, 'Aristotelianism and the Origins of "Political Science" in the Twelfth Century', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52 (1991), pp. 179-194, at p. 184.

tradition of Arabic Aristotelian thought, clues as to the arrangement of Aristotle's philosophy, and some hints as to his moral and political thought, could be found in the works of Cicero and Boethius. Cary Nederman has identified the glimmerings of Aristotelian political thought, drawn from these fragments, in the *Didascalion* of Hugh of St Victor (c. 1096–1141), and in the works of William of Conches (c. 1090–post 1154) and John of Salisbury (c. 1120–1180).¹² In addition, Dominicus Gundissalinus (d. post 1181) included political science when describing practical philosophy in his *De divisione philosophiae*.¹³

It was not the case, however, that there was a vacuum of political thought in medieval Europe before the reintroduction of Aristotelianism. The most influential account of political society was contained in the writings of St Augustine (354–430), especially the *De civitate Dei*, which conceives of humanity as belonging to two cities – the rightful City of God and the Earthly City, motivated by self love. While Augustine paved the way for a central tenet of Aristotelian practical philosophy by describing human beings as the most social of all animals and drawn to each other by their nature,¹⁴ he did not, as R. W. Dyson has pointed out, consider mankind to be naturally political (as Aristotle does).¹⁵ His approach to the concept of government was entirely different from that of Aristotle: unconcerned with the specifics of governance, Augustine saw political rule as existing simply to restrain and police a sinful humanity, prone, above all, to discord.¹⁶ This pessimistic approach to politics retained some appeal throughout the late Middle Ages and Renaissance.

It was the translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* which introduced medieval Europe to the fundamental concepts of Aristotelian political philosophy. With portions of the *Ethics* available a century before the translation of the *Politics*, and Grosseteste's complete *Ethics* translation preceding it by at least a decade, the significance of the

¹² Nederman, 'Aristotelianism and the Origins of "Political Science"', pp. 183-189.

¹³ Dominicus Gundissalinus, 'De divisione philosophiae, ca. 1150-1160', in R. Copeland and I. Sluiter (eds), *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300-1475* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 461-483, at p. 468.

¹⁴ Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XII.28.

¹⁵ R. W. Dyson, 'Introduction', in Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. and transl. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge, 1998), pp. x-xxix, at p. xvii.

¹⁶ Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XII.28; P. Weithman, 'Augustine's Political Philosophy', in E. Stump and N. Kretzmann (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 234-252, at pp. 237-240.

Ethics in preparing the ground for the arrival of Aristotle's complete thought on politics cannot be overestimated. It was accompanied, too, by many explanatory works to aid understanding of the text – Grosseteste also translated Greek commentaries on the *Ethics*, including those of Eustratius and Michael of Ephesus, into Latin,¹⁷ before Albert the Great, Albert of Saxony and Thomas Aquinas added to the commentary literature.¹⁸

The political material contained in the *Nicomachean Ethics* means that it is possible to begin a study of vernacular political Aristotelianism before the arrival in Western Europe of the text of the *Politics* itself. The political concepts found in the *Ethics* were central to important authors such as Brunetto Latini and Dante Alighieri, both of whom are discussed below in Chapter Two. The *Ethics* introduces the concept of politics as a science worthy both of study and of dedicated practice, explaining in Book Six that: 'Of the wisdom concerned with the city, the practical wisdom which plays a controlling part is legislative wisdom, while that which is related to this as particulars to their universal is known by the general name "political wisdom"; this has to do with action and deliberation, for a decree is a thing to be carried out in the form of an individual act.'¹⁹ Another key point raised is the idea that people group together in order to achieve self-sufficiency²⁰ – an idea further developed in the *Politics*.²¹

Also, and particularly significantly – as it was an obsession of medieval, as well as Renaissance, political thought – the types, and best kind, of rule are examined in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In chapter ten of Book Eight the Aristotelian classification of governments is laid out in some detail, with the three main types said to be kingship (rule for the common benefit by one – the best form), aristocracy (rule by the few for the common benefit) and timocracy/polity (rule by the many for the common benefit – the least good form), and their deviations described as tyranny, oligarchy and democracy.²² While the *Ethics* offered a fairly straightforward assessment of monarchy as the best form of government, this view would be tempered and the issue confused when the subtleties and ambiguities contained in the *Politics* were revealed; no definite

¹⁷ H. P. F. Mercken (ed.), *The Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle, in the Latin Translation of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln (d. 1253)* (Leiden and Leuven, 1973–).

¹⁸ Lines, *Aristotle's Ethics in the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 160-162.

¹⁹ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1141b24-28.

²⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1134a25-28.

²¹ *Politics*, 1252b28-1253a2.

²² *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1160a31-1160b22.

answer can be taken from the *Politics* on the question of the best regime, and there is material in the treatise which can be used in support of several different types. The *Ethics* also, and fundamentally, served to highlight the existence of Aristotle's political work, with the last paragraph of the text acting as an introduction to the *Politics* – 'now our predecessors have left the subject of legislation to us unexamined; it is perhaps best, therefore, that we should ourselves study it, and in general study the question of the constitution, in order to complete to the best of our ability the philosophy of human nature. . . . Let us make a beginning to our discussion.'²³

The first translation of the *Politics* from Greek into Latin was made by the Flemish Dominican William of Moerbeke (c.1215–1286).²⁴ Born in the village of Moerbeke in present-day Belgium, he was probably educated in Louvain.²⁵ We know very little about his life, but it seems that he spent time at the Dominican convent in Thebes and in Nicea,²⁶ before serving at the court of Pope Clement IV (1265–1268).²⁷ He was papal chaplain and confessor at Viterbo by 1271 and in 1278 was made the Archbishop of Corinth in Greece, a position he held until his death.²⁸ His time in the Greek-speaking cities of Thebes, Nicea and Corinth, and his study of ancient Greek, perhaps through reading the Eastern Church Fathers and the New Testament in the original,²⁹ equipped him for translating Aristotelian texts.

The circulation and popularity of Aristotle's works increased in the thirteenth century,³⁰ with William's new translations and revisions of previously available Aristotelian works; for example, he made his own Latin versions of the *Meteorologica* and the *De caelo*, and revised James of Venice's version of the *Posterior Analytics*, Boethius's translation of the *Sophistici elenchi* and Grosseteste's rendering of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. William also made Latin translations of the last two great Aristotelian works not

²³ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1181b12-23.

²⁴ Aristotle, *Politicorum libri octo cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, ed. F. Susemihl (Leipzig, 1872).

²⁵ Dod, 'Aristoteles latinus', p. 63.

²⁶ Dod, 'Aristoteles latinus', p. 63; G. Verbeke, 'Moerbeke, traducteur et interprète: un texte et une pensée', in J. Brams and W. Vanhamel (eds), *Guillaume de Moerbeke: recueil d'études à l'occasion du 700e anniversaire de sa mort* (Leuven, 1989), pp. 1-22, at p. 2.

²⁷ J. Schmidt, 'A Raven with a Halo: The Translation of Aristotle's *Politics*', *History of Political Thought*, 7 (1986), pp. 295-318, at p. 298.

²⁸ Dod, 'Aristoteles latinus', p. 63.

²⁹ Verbeke, 'Moerbeke, traducteur et interprète', p. 2.

³⁰ Dod, 'Aristoteles latinus', pp. 50-51.

yet known in Europe: the *Poetics* and the *Politics*.³¹

The dating of Moerbeke's translation of the *Politics* is uncertain, but the consensus is that it was completed in its entirety in the first half of the 1260s.³² The work was undertaken in two stages. A partial translation of Books I – II.11, attributed to Moerbeke, survives in three manuscripts,³³ while there are 107 extant manuscripts of a complete translation – the large number of surviving copies indicating widespread interest in the treatise.³⁴ The complete translation is a significant improvement on the first partial one, with the sense of Aristotle's Greek better represented and the translation displaying more confidence. It may be, as Verbeke has suggested, that Moerbeke returned to the text once a better Greek exemplar became available to him and that, in the meantime, he had acquired greater skill in the Greek language.³⁵

William of Moerbeke's translation has traditionally been criticised – beginning with Leonardo Bruni, the first Renaissance translator of the *Politics* – on account of its *ad verbum* approach and its apparent unreliability compared to Bruni's version, which was made some 150 years later and contained significantly different readings of Aristotle's text.³⁶ Certainly, William's rendering of the *Politics* was extremely close to the Greek: he preserved the word order as far as possible and, when he could not find a Latin equivalent, he resorted to transliteration or simply left the word in Greek characters.³⁷ In recent times, however, there has been a more favourable evaluation of William's competence and method. His translation has been judged to be fairly accurate, with significant mistakes only in certain books;³⁸ and it now seems that William made an effort to take account of the context in which unclear words were placed – this is

³¹ Dod, 'Aristoteles latinus', p. 49.

³² Schmidt, 'A Raven with a Halo', p. 298; J. Dunbabin, 'The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*', in N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny and J. Pinborg (eds), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism 1100-1600* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 723-737, at p. 723.

³³ Dod, 'Aristoteles latinus', p. 78; Verbeke, 'Moerbeke, traducteur et interprète', p. 6. An edition of this incomplete translation has been made: Aristotle, *Politica (libri I-II, 11)*, *Translatio prior imperfecta interprete Guillelmo de Moerbeka (?)*, ed. P. Michaud-Quantin (Bruges and Paris, 1961).

³⁴ Dod, 'Aristoteles latinus', p. 78.

³⁵ Verbeke, 'Moerbeke, traducteur et interprète', p. 20.

³⁶ C. J. Nederman, 'The Meaning of "Aristotelianism" in Medieval Moral and Political Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 57 (1996), pp. 563-585, at pp. 566-567.

³⁷ Schmidt, 'A Raven with a Halo', p. 298; Dunbabin, 'The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*', p. 723.

³⁸ Dunbabin, 'The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*', p. 723.

particularly evident when the complete translation is compared to the less accomplished partial version.³⁹ Furthermore, the faithful method of translation employed by William of Moerbeke was a conscious choice rather than the result of incompetence. Eloquence, so important to the later Bruni, was a lesser priority in the late Middle Ages than the obligation to pay respect to the text by not imposing, as a translator, between the original work and the readers of the translation.⁴⁰

Nevertheless, the difficulties encountered by William in making the translation were undoubtedly also experienced by readers when they came into contact with the Latin text of the *Politics*. For example, James Schmidt has highlighted Moerbeke's uncertainty about translating Aristotle's 'koinonia politike' at a time when any conception of 'the political' beyond the notion of the *polis* as a geographical entity was extremely vague.⁴¹ It fell to the first Latin commentators on the *Politics* to offer a reading of the text which was comprehensible to scholars and students in medieval Europe.

Albert the Great (c. 1200–1280) was the author of the earliest full Latin commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*. His student Thomas Aquinas began writing a commentary on the *Politics* which cannot be definitively dated as after Albert's, as one of the two texts relied directly on the other;⁴² however, it seems most likely that it was written later. Albert's commentary has been dated to around 1265.⁴³ Thirteen manuscripts of the text survive, along with some fragments and a compendium of the text. A study of the earliest exemplar has indicated that the commentary circulated in and was used at the University of Paris.⁴⁴

There is little certainty about Albert's life; but he appears to have studied in Padua and Cologne before moving in the early 1240s to Paris, where he became a master, gave lectures and encountered the new translations of the Aristotelian corpus.⁴⁵ In around

³⁹ Verbeke, 'Moerbeke, traducteur et interprète', p. 10.

⁴⁰ Dod, 'Aristoteles latinus', pp. 64-66.

⁴¹ Schmidt, 'A Raven with a Halo', pp. 299-300.

⁴² F. Cheneval, 'Considérations presque philosophiques sur les commentaires de la "Politique" d'Albert le Grand et de Thomas d'Aquin', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 45 (1998), pp. 56-83, at p. 64.

⁴³ Dunbabin, 'The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*', p. 724.

⁴⁴ Cheneval, 'Considérations', pp. 58-60.

⁴⁵ I. M. Resnick, 'Albert the Great: Biographical Introduction', in I. M. Resnick (ed.), *A Companion to*

1248 he returned to Cologne – accompanied by his student Thomas Aquinas – to set up a Dominican *studium generale*. The rest of his long life was spent alternating between his scholarly work in Cologne and his ecclesiastical duties. He took on the role of prior provincial of the German Dominicans between 1254 and 1257, was appointed bishop of Regensburg by Pope Alexander IV in 1260 and preached the crusade at the request of Alexander’s successor, Urban IV.⁴⁶

Albert’s commentary on the *Politics* is just one of a series he wrote covering the Aristotelian corpus, as well as several spurious works.⁴⁷ One of his methods of making Aristotle’s text more digestible was to divide it into sections, after first considering the structure of the book as a whole. He drew a distinction between the first book of the *Politics* and the seven subsequent ones, stating that the first was directed towards oeconomic rather than political concerns.⁴⁸ Albert subdivided each book into chapters,⁴⁹ and began his treatment with a short summary setting out the main points. His use of contemporary examples throughout his commentary, no doubt, made certain concepts contained in the *Politics* easier for his readership to apprehend.⁵⁰ Beyond this, however, his close adherence to Moerbeke’s terminology meant that the text remained obscure in many respects.⁵¹ It was to be the commentary of Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne which went further in laying out the text in an understandable way for readers.

Thomas was born in southern Italy, the son of the count of Aquino, and educated firstly at the Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino and the University of Naples (where he entered the Dominican Order) and then at Paris and Cologne under Albert the Great.⁵² He was incepted as a master in Paris in 1256, and after 1259 spent his time both there and in Italy, where he was part of the papal circle.⁵³ Although in the thirteenth century it was Albert who perhaps enjoyed the greater fame,⁵⁴ Thomas subsequently became the

Albert the Great: Theology, Philosophy and the Sciences (Leiden, 2013) pp. 1-11, at pp. 4-6.

⁴⁶ Resnick, ‘Albert the Great’, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁷ Resnick, ‘Albert the Great’, p. 10.

⁴⁸ Cheneval, ‘Considérations’, p. 65.

⁴⁹ Dunbabin, ‘The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle’s *Politics*’, p. 724.

⁵⁰ Cheneval, ‘Considérations’, p. 57.

⁵¹ Dunbabin, ‘The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle’s *Politics*’, p. 724.

⁵² A. A. Ewing, ‘Thomas Aquinas: Doctor and Saint’, *The Sewanee Review*, 23 (1915), pp. 385-408, at pp. 387-389.

⁵³ J. Catto, ‘Ideas and Experience in the Political Thought of Aquinas’, *Past & Present*, 71 (1976), pp. 3-21, at pp. 4 and 10.

⁵⁴ Resnick, ‘Albert the Great’, p. 1.

dominant force in late medieval theology and philosophy, with a vast corpus of works ranging from religious works such as the *Summa contra Gentiles* to his commentaries on the Aristotelian corpus. His great *Summa theologiae*, written between 1266 and 1273, combined the earthly and the spiritual in a comprehensive statement of the medieval world-view.⁵⁵

While Thomas probably read the text of the *Politics* soon after its translation by William of Moerbeke in around 1260,⁵⁶ his incomplete commentary on the treatise was most likely written in the years 1269–1272,⁵⁷ when he was preparing commentaries of many works in the Aristotelian corpus. His explanation of the text is clear and concise; although, unlike Albert, he does not make frequent recourse to illustrative examples drawn from contemporary political experience, he endeavours to make the text more accessible by providing a structure for Aristotle's sometimes obscure reasoning. For instance, he frequently lays out the process by which Aristotle addresses a topic, as when discussing the relationship between the city and other communities:

He compares the city to these other societies, in which respect he makes three points. First, he lays out the false opinion of certain individuals. Second, he shows how the falsity of the stated opinion can become known. ... Third, according to the method indicated, he lays out the true relationship between the city and other communities.⁵⁸

Thomas also helps to elucidate the *Politics* by dividing it up, going further than Albert by subdividing Aristotle's arguments into sections and linking subjects which were not necessarily grouped together in the treatise. For instance, in Thomas's commentary on the beginning of Book Three, on the forms of government, he writes:

⁵⁵ C. J. Nederman and K. L. Forhan, 'Introduction to Thomas Aquinas', in C. J. Nederman and K. L. Forhan (eds), *Medieval Political Theory – A Reader: The Quest for the Body Politic, 1100-1400* (London, 1993), pp. 97-99, at pp. 98-99.

⁵⁶ Catto, 'Ideas and Experience in the Political Thought of Aquinas', p. 8.

⁵⁷ Dunbabin, 'The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*', p. 725; Catto, 'Ideas and Experience in the Political Thought of Aquinas', p. 8; Nederman and Forhan, 'Introduction to Thomas Aquinas', p. 98.

⁵⁸ Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, *In octos libros Politicorum Aristotelis expositio*, I.1.12: 'Comparat civitatem ad alias communitates: et circa hoc facit tria. Primo ponit quorundam falsam opinionem. Secundo ostendit quomodo positae opinionis falsitas innotescere possit... Tertio secundum assignatum modum ponit veram comparisonem civitas ad alias communitates.' Transl. from Nederman and Forhan (eds), *Medieval Political Theory – A Reader*, p. 139. See *Politics*, 1252a9-22.

After the Philosopher inquires into the forms of government according to the teachings of others in Book Two, he begins to develop them according to his own opinion. And this is divided into two parts. In the first, he makes clear the diversity of governments. In the second, he teaches how to establish the best government, in the beginning of Book Seven. Now, the first part is divided into two. In the first, he determines what pertains to the government in general. In the second, he divides the governments.⁵⁹

Thomas continues, dividing the arguments into their constituent parts, so that the broad topic addressed by Aristotle is easily connected to the statements on which his arguments rest.

Thomas's commentary was left unfinished and was completed by Peter of Auvergne (d. 1304). Peter undertook this work between 1274 and 1290, during which period he had access to the complete commentary of Albert the Great.⁶⁰ Born in Crocq, in Auvergne, Peter became a master in the Faculty of Arts in Paris in the 1270s, and obtained a chair in theology there in 1296. Best known for his Aristotelian works, he also completed Thomas Aquinas's commentary on *De caelo*, as well as writing a series of *quaestiones* on the *Politics*.⁶¹

The commentary of Thomas and Peter went further than Albert's in providing readers with the tools needed to understand William of Moerbeke's Latin translation of the *Politics*.⁶² Yet while later commentaries were generally indebted to the commentary of Thomas and Peter, they, significantly, followed the example of Albert the Great in supplying contemporary examples. Walter Burley, whose paraphrase of the *Politics* was written in 1338–1339, referred to the English parliament when discussing the potential

⁵⁹ Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, *In octos libros Politicorum Aristotelis expositio*, III.1.348: 'Postquam Philosophus in secundo libro inquisivit de politiis secundum traditionem aliorum, hic incipit prosequi de eis secundum propriam opinionem. Et dividitur in partes duas. In prima manifestat diversitatem politiarum, in secunda docet qualiter optima politia sit instituenda, in principio septimi libri. ... Prima autem pars dividitur in duas. In prima distinguit politias. In secunda determinat de singulis earum.' Transl. from Nederman and Forhan (eds), *Medieval Political Theory – A Reader*, pp. 140-141.

⁶⁰ Dunbabin, 'The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*', p. 725.

⁶¹ See Peter of Auvergne, 'Commentary and Questions on Book III of Aristotle's *Politics* (Selections)', in A. S. McGrade, J. Kilcullen and M. Kempshall (eds), *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts, Volume Two: Ethics and Political Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 216-256.

⁶² Dunbabin, 'The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*', p. 726.

of the multitude to rule;⁶³ Guy of Rimini, also writing in the first half of the fourteenth century, used the example of rulers in Lombardy when discussing tyranny.⁶⁴ It is clear that, from the beginning of the reception of the *Politics*, commentators were inclined to draw parallels between Aristotle's political theory and the political realities of medieval Europe.

As well as inspiring commentaries, the *Politics* almost immediately became a staple point of reference in Latin political literature more generally. This is especially apparent in the works of Thomas Aquinas, who made use of the *Politics* when discussing political matters in several of his most significant works, especially the *Summa theologiae* and the *De regno*, which belonged to the 'mirror for princes' genre which was gaining popularity in the late thirteenth century.⁶⁵ The central place of Thomas in late medieval thought meant that his writings became closely linked to those of Aristotle, and Aristotle was often viewed through a Thomist lens.

One of the most important aspects of Thomas's treatment of the *Politics* in terms of its later reception was his attempt to reconcile Aristotle's vision of human society with Christianity. His conception of human reason and God-given revelation as two paths to the same divine truth made it possible to benefit from the insights which 'pagan' Aristotelianism offered to the sciences.⁶⁶ With respect to the *Politics* in particular, Aristotle's doctrine that living well and self-sufficiently within the *polis* is the final end of human action could be accepted once Thomas had made it clear that this was correct with regard to the secular affairs of humanity, but that theology and Christian salvation were above such reasoning.⁶⁷

As we have seen, Aristotle's statements about the best form of government in the *Ethics* and the *Politics* were not entirely compatible. This confusion was increased by Thomas, whose approach to the text did not generate concrete answers to this question. Indeed,

⁶³ Walter Burley, *Commentarius in VIII libros Politicorum Aristotelis*, III.2.3, cited in S. Simonetta, 'Searching for an Uneasy Synthesis between Aristotelian Political Language and Christian Political Theory', in L. Bianchi (ed.), *Christian Readings of Aristotle from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 273-285, at p. 280.

⁶⁴ Dunbabin, 'The Reception and Interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*', p. 728.

⁶⁵ Catto, 'Ideas and Experience in the Political Thought of Aquinas', p. 7.

⁶⁶ N. Aroney, 'Subsidiarity, Federalism and the Best Constitution: Thomas Aquinas on City, Province and Empire', *Law and Philosophy*, 26 (2007), pp. 161-228, at p. 168.

⁶⁷ Aroney, 'Subsidiarity, Federalism and the Best Constitution', p. 170.

there is still debate today over what Thomas actually thought.⁶⁸ *De regno*, his unfinished ‘mirror for princes’, later completed by Ptolemy of Lucca, was perhaps written for the king of Cyprus and, unsurprisingly, offered a number of arguments in favour of monarchy. These relate in particular to the idea that one ruler represents unity and therefore peace, which Thomas identifies as the ultimate goal of government. It follows therefore that a single ruler is best able to preserve unity in a kingdom:

Therefore, the more effective a government is in preserving the unity of peace, the more useful it will be. For we say that that which leads to the end is more useful. It is evident that what is one in itself can better bring about unity than can many, just as the most effective cause of heat is that which is hot in itself. Therefore, the government of one man is more useful than that of many.⁶⁹

Thomas also presents the negative result of rule by many to illustrate this point, adding weight with a biblical quotation:

This is also apparent from experience. Provinces and cities that are not governed by one labour under dissensions and are tossed about without peace, so that what the Lord bewailed through the prophet seems to be fulfilled: ‘Many shepherds have demolished my vineyard.’⁷⁰ On the contrary, provinces and cities that are governed by one king rejoice in peace, flourish in justice, and are gladdened by their affluence. This is why, as a great gift, the Lord promised his people through the prophets that he would put in place one head for them and that there would be one ruler in their midst.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Aroney, ‘Subsidiarity, Federalism and the Best Constitution’, p. 167. Aroney believes that Thomas favoured a monarchy tempered by constraints.

⁶⁹ Thomas Aquinas and Ptolemy of Lucca, *De regno ad regem Cypri*, I.3.17: ‘Quanto igitur regimen efficacius fuerit ad unitatem pacis servandam, tanto erit utilius. Hoc enim utilius dicimus, quod magis perducit ad finem. Manifestum est autem quod unitatem magis efficere potest quod est per se unum, quam plures. Sicut efficacissima causa est calefactionis quod est per se calidum. Utilius igitur est regimen unius, quam plurium.’ Transl. J. M. Blythe, in Ptolemy of Lucca, *On the Government of Rulers: De Regimine Principum* (Philadelphia, 1997), p. 66.

⁷⁰ Jeremiah 12.10.

⁷¹ Thomas Aquinas and Ptolemy of Lucca, *De regno ad regem Cypri*, I.3.20: ‘Hoc etiam experimentis apparet. Nam provinciae vel civitates quae non reguntur ab uno, dissensionibus laborant et absque pace fluctuant, ut videatur adimpleri quod dominus per prophetam conqueritur, dicens: pastores multi demoliti sunt vineam meam. E contrario vero provinciae et civitates quae sub uno rege reguntur, pace gaudent, iustitia florent, et affluentia rerum laetantur. Unde dominus pro magno munere per prophetas populo suo promittit, quod poneret sibi caput unum, et quod princeps unus erit in medio eorum.’ Transl. J. M. Blythe, in Ptolemy of Lucca, *On the Government of Rulers*, pp. 66-67. See also Jeremiah 30:21.

However, a contrasting approach can be found in other of Thomas's works. The *Summa theologiae* provides arguments in favour of a mixed constitution, as found in *quaestio* 105 of the 'Prima secundae':

I answer that, two points are to be observed concerning the right ordering of rulers in a state or nation. One is that all should take some share in the government: for this form of constitution ensures peace among the people, commends itself to all, and is most enduring, as stated in *Politics* Book Two. The other point is to be observed in respect of the kinds of government, or the different ways in which the constitutions are established. For whereas these differ in kind, as the Philosopher states (*Politics* Book Three), nevertheless the first place is held by the 'kingdom', where the power of government is vested in one; and 'aristocracy', which signifies government by the best, where the power of government is vested in a few. Accordingly, the best form of government is in a state or kingdom, where one is given the power to preside over all; while under him are others having governing powers: and yet a government of this kind is shared by all, both because all are eligible to govern, and because the rules are chosen by all. For this is the best form of polity, being partly kingdom, since there is one at the head of all; partly aristocracy, in so far as a number of persons are set in authority; partly democracy, i.e. government by the people, in so far as the rulers can be chosen from the people, and the people have the right to choose their rulers.⁷²

⁷² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 'Prima Secundae', 105.1: 'Respondeo dicendum quod circa bonam ordinationem principum in aliqua civitate vel gente, duo sunt attendenda. Quorum unum est ut omnes aliquam partem habeant in principatu: per hoc enim conservatur pax populi, et omnes talem ordinationem amant et custodient, ut dicitur in II Polit[icorum] [*Politics*, 1270b17-22]. Aliud est quod attenditur secundum speciem regiminis, vel ordinationis principatum. Cuius cum sint diversae species, ut Philosophus tradit, in III Polit[icorum] [*Politics*, 1279a32-b10], praecipuae tamen sunt regnum, in quo unus principatur secundum virtutem; et aristocratia, idest potestas optimorum, in qua aliqui pauci principantur secundum virtutem. Unde optima ordinatio principum est in aliqua civitate vel regno, in qua unus praeficitur secundum virtutem qui omnibus praesit; et sub ipso sunt aliqui principantes secundum virtutem; et tamen talis principatus ad omnes pertinet, tum quia ex omnibus eligi possunt, tum quia etiam ab omnibus eliguntur. Talis enim est optima politia, bene commixta ex regno, inquantum unus praesit; et aristocratia, inquantum multi principantur secundum virtutem; et ex democratia, idest potestate populi, inquantum ex popularibus possunt eligi principes, et ad populum pertinet electio principum.' Text and translation from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I-II (Pars Prima Secundae), transl. Fathers of the English Dominican Province [Project Gutenberg. <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/17897/pg17897.html> (accessed 14 October, 2014)].

The view which has generally been taken to be Thomas's own is that monarchy, in principle, is the best form of rule but that it was by no means infallible and required checks and balances, since Aristotle's works had shown how easily it could descend into tyranny.⁷³ As Thomas states in the 'Prima secundae':

A kingdom is the best form of government of the people, so long as it is not corrupt. But since the power granted to a king is so great, it easily degenerates into tyranny, unless he to whom this power is given be a very virtuous man: for it is only the virtuous man that conducts himself well in the midst of prosperity, as the Philosopher observes (*Ethics* Book Four). Now perfect virtue is to be found in few: and especially were the Jews inclined to cruelty and avarice, vices which above all turn men into tyrants. Hence from the very first the Lord did not set up the kingly authority with full power, but gave them judges and governors to rule them.⁷⁴

Thomas's endorsement of monarchy was by no means unconditional. Moreover, he noted inconsistencies in Aristotle's treatment of the subject, indicating that while at one point in the *Politics* the virtuous are said to be the best suited for governance, elsewhere it is stated that all citizens should play a part.⁷⁵ Thomas's treatment of the ideal ruler thus left later interpreters of Aristotle a good deal of room for manoeuvre on this issue.

Thomas extended Aristotelian political philosophy beyond Aristotle's notion of the perfectly self-sufficient political unit – the *polis* – to entities familiar in the Middle Ages: the region and kingdom. By maintaining that a larger political community – the region – must be more self-sufficient than the *polis*, Thomas altered one of Aristotle's

⁷³ D. Kries, 'Thomas Aquinas and the Politics of Moses', *The Review of Politics*, 52 (1990), pp. 84-104, at p. 91; Catto, 'Ideas and Experience in the Political Thought of Aquinas', p. 13.

⁷⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 'Prima Secundae', 105.1: 'Regnum est optimum regimen populi, si non corrumpatur. Sed propter magnam potestatem quae regi conceditur, de facili regnum degenerat in tyrannidem, nisi sit perfecta virtus eius cui talis potestas conceditur: quia non est nisi virtuosus bene ferre bonas fortunas, ut Philosophus dicit, in IV Ethic[orum] [*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1124b1-2]. Perfecta autem virtus in paucis invenitur: et praecipue Iudaei crudeles erant et ad avaritiam proni, per quae vitia maxime homines in tyrannidem decidunt. Et ideo Dominus a principio eis regem non instituit cum plena potestate, sed iudicem et gubernatorem in eorum custodiam.' Text and translation, with slight modifications, from Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part I-II ('Pars Prima Secundae'), transl. Fathers of the English Dominican Province [Project Gutenberg]. <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/17897/pg17897.html> (accessed 14 October, 2014).]

⁷⁵ Kries, 'Thomas Aquinas and the Politics of Moses', p. 92.

most characteristic doctrines:

There is, no doubt, some sufficiency for life in one household living in one home – that which pertains to natural acts of nutrition, giving birth to offspring, and other things of this kind – and in one neighbourhood with respect to the things pertaining to one craft. But in a city, which is the perfect community, there is sufficiency with respect to the necessities of life, and it is even more present in a province, since there is a necessity of fighting together and giving mutual aid against the enemy.⁷⁶

Thomas also veered away from the letter of the *Politics* at other points. Throughout his political works (other than the commentary on the *Politics*), he softens Aristotle's view of man as an essentially political being by changing the philosopher's 'political animal' to a 'social' or 'domestic' one.⁷⁷

In the late thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries the *Politics* played a pivotal role in the development of the political and moral thought of a number of significant figures, whose writings in turn increased the understanding (or misunderstanding) of the treatise. Among the most important of these works are Peter of Auvergne's *Quaestions* on the *Politics*, Ptolemy of Lucca's continuation of Thomas's *De regno*, Marsilius of Padua's *Defensor Pacis* and the *De regimine principum* of Giles of Rome.⁷⁸ This last treatise, which belongs to the 'mirror for princes' tradition and which discusses ethics, oeconomics and politics with almost continual reference to Aristotle, was translated almost immediately into Italian and therefore receives a fuller treatment in the next chapter.

As has been mentioned, a key challenge to the assimilation of Aristotle's *Politics* into

⁷⁶ Thomas Aquinas and Ptolemy of Lucca, *De regno ad regem Cypri*, 1.2: 'Habetur siquidem aliqua vitae sufficientia in una familia domus unius, quantum scilicet ad naturales actus nutritionis, et proliis generandae, et aliorum huiusmodi; in uno autem vico, quantum ad ea quae ad unum artificium pertinent; in civitate vero, quae est perfecta communitas, quantum ad omnia necessaria vitae; sed adhuc magis in provincia una propter necessitatem compugnationis et mutui auxilii contra hostes.' Transl. J. M. Blythe, in Ptolemy of Lucca, *On the Government of Rulers*, p. 64. See *Politics*, 1252b10-1253a2.

⁷⁷ Aroney, 'Subsidiarity, Federalism and the Best Constitution', p. 177.

⁷⁸ Thomas Aquinas and Ptolemy of Lucca, *De regno ad regem Cypri*, ed. I. T. Eschmann and J. Kenny, transl. G. B. Phelan (Toronto, 1949); Marsilius of Padua, *The Defensor Pacis of Marsilius of Padua*, ed. C. W. Previt -Orton (Cambridge, 1928); Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum* (Rome, 1607).

late medieval European culture was the contrast it provided with the influential Augustinian vision of politics, and political writers of the time devoted much effort to making these two distinctive philosophies compatible. In his *Quaestiones* and his continuation of Thomas's *Politics* commentary, Peter of Auvergne tried to reconcile Aristotle's positive view of the political community with Augustine's deeply pessimistic outlook by conceiving of two multitudes: the bestial, which required governance to keep it in check (as Augustine believed was the role of all governments) and the non-bestial, which was capable of self-governance.⁷⁹ Peter, however, regarded this second kind of populace as a virtually non-existent ideal, so that in nearly all cases the best form of government was that of a virtuous king, an 'optimus vir'.⁸⁰

A similar distinction was also made by Ptolemy of Lucca (c. 1236–c. 1327), who concluded in his completion of *De regno* that some communities required rule by a monarch; and since he equated regal rule with despotism, he believed that a populace which required governing in this way was entirely incapable of participating in its own government or of placing restraints on its ruler. In those places, however, where the populace was not servile (such as Italy), Ptolemy preferred 'political' government which had its foundation in law,⁸¹ and he favoured, in particular, government controlled by the middling class, as recommended by Aristotle in Book Four of the *Politics*: those at the mean between the very rich and very poor.⁸²

The role of the people was enlarged even further by Marsilius of Padua (c. 1275–c. 1342) in his *Defensor Pacis*, composed in the second decade of the fourteenth century.⁸³ Here, the people are the primary force in government, the 'Legislator',⁸⁴ who makes the

⁷⁹ V. Syros, 'The Sovereignty of the Multitude in the Works of Marsilius of Padua, Peter of Auvergne, and some other Aristotelian Commentators', in G. Moreno-Riaño (ed.), *The World of Marsilius of Padua* (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 227-248, at p. 231.

⁸⁰ Simonetta, 'Searching for an Uneasy Synthesis', pp. 276-278.

⁸¹ D. E. Luscombe, 'The State of Nature and the Origin of the State', in N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny and J. Pinborg (eds), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism 1100-1600* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 757-770, at p. 765.

⁸² J. M. Blythe, *The Worldview and Thought of Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca)* (Turnhout, 2009), p. 135. See *Politics*, 1295b2-1296a21.

⁸³ Marsilius of Padua, *The Defensor Pacis*, ed. C. W. Previté-Orton (Cambridge, 1928). See also F. Godthardt, 'The Life of Marsilius of Padua', in G. Moreno-Riaño and C. J. Nederman (eds), *A Companion to Marsilius of Padua* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 13-56, at p. 22.

⁸⁴ Luscombe, 'The State of Nature and the Origin of the State', p. 759; B. Koch, 'Marsilius of Padua on Church and State', in G. Moreno-Riaño and C. J. Nederman (eds), *A Companion to Marsilius of Padua* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 139-179, at p. 156.

law and may elect, or depose, rulers who act in its name.⁸⁵ Marsilius also made use of the *Politics* in developing his conception of the state as a part of nature. Rather than the Augustinian notion that the state is necessary solely to control mankind's baser instincts after the Fall, Marsilius argues that men naturally seek community in order to live a sufficient life, as stated by Aristotle in *Politics* Book One.⁸⁶

These examples illustrate the variety of interpretations of Aristotle's *Politics* which emerged in the Latin tradition of the late Middle Ages and show that the Augustinian view of politics was increasingly challenged by the naturalistic and positive Aristotelian approach.

The study of Aristotle's philosophy in Italy gained new impetus in the second half of the fourteenth century, as interest in reviving the culture and learning of ancient Rome – the beginnings of Renaissance humanism⁸⁷ – started to take hold, spearheaded by Petrarch and Boccaccio. Since a key part of ancient Rome's education had been the study of Greek,⁸⁸ Italian humanists began to pay attention to ancient Greek language and literature: Petrarch's possession of Greek manuscripts and his sorrow that he could not read them are well known.⁸⁹ In 1360, following Boccaccio's entreaties, Leonzio Pilato (who had translated Homer into Latin) was appointed to a newly created chair in Greek in Florence.⁹⁰

It was, however, the arrival of the Byzantine scholar Manuel Chrysoloras (c. 1355–1415) – invited to Florence in 1397 by the chancellor, Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406)⁹¹ – which made it possible for a small circle of intellectuals to learn Greek. Salutati

⁸⁵ Luscombe, 'The State of Nature and the Origin of the State', p. 770.

⁸⁶ G. Moreno-Riaño and C. J. Nederman, 'Marsilius of Padua's Principles of Secular Politics', in G. Moreno-Riaño and C. J. Nederman (eds), *A Companion to Marsilius of Padua* (Leiden, 2001), pp 117–138, at p. 122; Syros, 'The Sovereignty of the Multitude', p. 239. See *Politics*, 1252b28–1253a2.

⁸⁷ The literature on Renaissance humanism is vast; but for an overview see J. Kraye (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism* (Cambridge, 1996).

⁸⁸ E. Berti, 'Leonardo Bruni traduttore', *Moderni e antichi*, 2-3 (2004-5) [2006], pp. 197-224, at p. 201.

⁸⁹ Petrarch, *Lettres familières*, V: *Livres XVI-XIX*; *Rerum familiarum Libri XVI-XIX*, ed. U. Dotti, transl. A. Longpré (Paris, 2005), XVIII.2, pp. 232-239.

⁹⁰ P. Hetherington, 'Vecchi, e non antichi: differing responses to Byzantine culture in fifteenth-century Tuscany', *Rinascimento*, 32 (1992), pp. 203-211, at p. 204; P. F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore MD, 2002), p. 78.

⁹¹ P. Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo Manetti and Desiderius Erasmus* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 7; see also Berti, 'Leonardo Bruni traduttore', p. 200.

encouraged the promising young men in his circle, including Leonardo Bruni (c. 1370–1444), to undertake the study of Greek with Chrysoloras, citing the opinion of Cicero that knowledge of Greek was vital for a true mastery of Latin.⁹² Chrysoloras was an inspired teacher, composing a simplified grammar – the *Erotemata* – and introducing his students to a wide range of pagan Greek prose.⁹³ The study of Greek became a vital part of the humanist programme, with a handful of scholars travelling to Constantinople and Crete, among other places, to search for works of ancient learning unknown in the West.⁹⁴

Chrysoloras's best-known student, Leonardo Bruni, went on to formulate a new theory of translation which he applied to the works of Aristotle, including the *Politics*. Bruni felt that the writings of Aristotle needed to be retranslated on account of the absurdities, misrepresentations and mistakes made by medieval translators such as Robert Grosseteste and William of Moerbeke, who had employed a word-for-word method of rendering Greek. In the preface to his new humanist version of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, completed in 1416, he described the translation of his medieval predecessor as 'more barbarian than Latin'.⁹⁵

Bruni's *De interpretatione recta* of 1425 was a response to criticism which he had received for his attack on the medieval translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In this short treatise, Bruni resolved to state his opinions in a more even-handed manner, protesting that he did not consider the medieval translator to be a bad person, just a bad translator.⁹⁶ His list of the necessary qualifications for the ideal translator was long, including not only a mastery of both languages and the subject under discussion, but also knowledge of the literature and culture of the original author's time and

⁹² J. Hankins, 'Chrysoloras and the Greek Studies of Leonardo Bruni', in R. Maisano and A. Rollo (eds), *Manuele Crisolora e il ritorno del greco in occidente* (Naples, 2002), pp. 175-203, at p. 178. On Bruni see C. Vasoli, 'Bruni (Brunus, Bruno), Leonardo (Lionardo), detto Leonardo Aretino', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), XIV, pp. 618-633.

⁹³ J. Herrin and S. M. McManus, 'Renaissance Encounters: Byzantium meets the West at the Council of Ferrara-Florence 1438-39', in M. S. Brownlee and D. H. Gondicas (eds), *Renaissance Encounters: Greek East and Latin West* (Leiden 2013), pp. 35-56, at p. 39.

⁹⁴ Herrin and McManus, 'Renaissance Encounters', p. 41.

⁹⁵ Aristotle, *Ethicorum lib[ri] X*, transl. Leonardo Bruni (Lyon, 1542), f. 2r: 'Barbari magis quam latini'. See Berti, 'Leonardo Bruni traduttore', p. 210.

⁹⁶ Leonardo Bruni, *Sulla perfetta traduzione [De interpretatione recta]*, ed. and transl. P. Viti (Naples, 2004), pp. 76-77: 'Ego hunc non malum hominem, sed malum interpretem esse dixi.' See Leonardo Bruni, 'On the Correct Way to Translate', transl. J. Hankins, in G. Griffiths, J. Hankins and D. Thompson (eds), *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts* (Binghamton NY, 1987), pp. 217-229.

understanding of the rhythm and flow of his prose.⁹⁷ Bruni thought the medieval translators had failed in all these respects. In his preface to the *Nicomachean Ethics* he claimed that the author of the earlier Latin version ‘was sufficiently acquainted neither with the Greek nor with the Latin’,⁹⁸ and, after listing his faults, at the end of *De interpretatione recta* he wrote that:

His translation is full of similar and even greater absurdities and ravings which miserably transform all the understanding and literary distinction of the original, making rough what was smooth, shapeless what was shapely, tangled what was elegant, cacophonous what was sonorous.⁹⁹

Bruni regarded it as necessary that a translation should capture not only the precise meaning but also the individual style of each writer.¹⁰⁰ Representing the eloquence of a Greek author in equally eloquent Latin, without using neologisms or transliterations, was crucial to the success of a translation; and Bruni regarded Aristotle as an eloquent writer, whose rhetoric demanded finesse on the part of the translator.¹⁰¹ Speaking of the *Politics*, he writes:

The subject is political and therefore admits of rhetorical treatment. There is almost no passage without its rhetorical glitter and flourish, which from time to time results in an oratorical liveliness.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*, p. 53.

⁹⁸ Aristotle, *Ethicorum lib[ri] X*, transl. Leonardo Bruni, f. 2r: ‘Neque grecas: neque latinis literas satis scivisse.’ Translation from Leonardo Bruni, ‘Preface to the Appearance of a New Translation of Aristotle’s *Ethics*’, transl. J. Hankins, in G. Griffiths, J. Hankins and D. Thompson (eds), *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni: Selected Texts* (Binghamton NY, 1987), pp. 213-217, at p. 213.

⁹⁹ Bruni, *Sulla perfetta traduzione [De interpretatione recta]*, pp.122-123: ‘Est enim plena interpretatio eius talium ac maiorum absurditatum et delirationum, per quas omnis intellectus et claritas illorum librorum miserabiliter transformatur fiuntque ii libri ex suavibus asperi, ex formosis deformes, ex elegantibus intricati, ex sonoris absoni.’ Translation from Bruni, ‘On the Correct Way to Translate’, transl. J. Hankins, p. 229.

¹⁰⁰ Bruni, *Sulla perfetta traduzione [De interpretatione recta]*, pp. 84-85: ‘Nam cum singulis fere scriptoribus sua quedam ac propria sit dicendi figura, ut Ciceroni amplitudo et copia, Sallustio exilitas et brevisitas, Livio granditas quedam subaspera: bonus quidem interpres in singulis traducendis ita se conformabit, ut singulorum figuram assequatur.’

¹⁰¹ Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*, p. 42.

¹⁰² Bruni, *Sulla perfetta traduzione [De interpretatione recta]*, pp. 100-101: ‘Materia est civilis et eloquentie capax, nullus fere locus ab eo tractatur sine rhetorico pigmento atque colore, ut interdum etiam festivitatem in verbis oratoriam persequatur.’ Translation from Bruni, ‘On the Correct Way to Translate’, transl. J. Hankins, p. 223.

These then were the standards he set for himself in translating, first, Aristotle's *Ethics* in 1416, then the *Oeconomics* in 1420, and, finally, the *Politics*, begun by 1435 and completed in 1437.¹⁰³

An example of Bruni's treatment of a passage from the *Politics* on the city-state shows the contrast between his approach and that of William of Moerbeke. It probably helped that the world of the *polis* described by Aristotle was much more familiar to Bruni, who lived in the city-state of Florence, than it would have been to William. The passage occurs in chapter two of Book Four and reads in English:

In our original discussion about governments we divided them into three true forms: kingly rule, aristocracy, and constitutional government, and three corresponding perversions – tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. Of kingly rule and of aristocracy, we have already spoken, for the inquiry into the perfect state is the same thing with the discussion of the two forms thus named, since both imply a principle of virtue provided with external means. We have already determined in what aristocracy and kingly rule differ from one another, and when the latter should be established. In what follows we have to describe the so-called constitutional government, which bears the common name of all constitutions, and the other forms, tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy.¹⁰⁴

This is translated by William of Moerbeke as:

Quoniam autem in prima methodo politiarum divisimus tres quidem rectas politias, regnum, aristocratiam, politiam, tres autem harum transgressiones, tyrannidem quidem regni, oligarchiam autem aristocratiae, democratiam autem politiae, et de aristocratia quidem et regno dictum est (de optima enim politia considerare idem et de hiis est dicere nominibus: vult enim utraque consistere secundum virtutem diffusam), adhuc autem quid differant invicem aristocratia et regnum et quando oportet regnum putare, determinatum est prius: reliquum de politia percurrere ea, quae communi nomine appellatur, et de aliis politiis,

¹⁰³ Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁴ *Politics*, 1289a28-39.

oligarchia et democratia et tyrannide.¹⁰⁵

And here is Bruni's version:

Cum vero in precedentibus dictum sit a nobis tres esse rerumpublicarum species rectas: regnum, optimatum, et eam quae appellatur respublica, ac tres earum transgressiones et labes: cum regnum in tyrannidem, optimorum autem gubernatio in paucorum potentiam, respublica autem in popularem statum labatur. Et de optimatum gubernatione et regia sit dictum. Nam de optima respublica considerare idem est: ac de illis dicere. Vult enim utraque illarum per virtutem (cui suppetant caetera) consistere. Et in super quid inter se differant regia potestas, et optimorum gubernatio, et quando regia gubernatio putanda sit: determinavimus est prius. Restat nunc: ut de illa quae appellatur respublica dicamus: et de caeteris gubernandi formis, et de paucorum potentia, ac de populari statu, et de tyrannide.¹⁰⁶

Bruni's rendering of the text shows how he applied the principles which he had laid down in *De interpretatione recta*. While William had used transliterations of Greek words such as 'aristocratia', 'politia' and 'democratia', Bruni instead conveyed the meaning of these terms by using classical Latin phrases: 'optimorum gubernatio' and 'de paucorum potentia' for oligarchy, 'respublica' for polity and 'de populari statu' for democracy. His Latin also reads far more smoothly, since he does not attempt to preserve the Greek word order as Moerbeke had done.¹⁰⁷ It is little wonder that Renaissance readers found Bruni's text more attractive and easier to understand.

The study of Greek by Florentine humanists was aided by the appointment to a chair in Greek language, literature and philosophy of John Argyropoulos (1415–1487), who took

¹⁰⁵ Aristotle, *Politicorum libri octo cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, ed. Susemihl, pp. 377-378.

¹⁰⁶ Aristotle, *In hoc libro contenta. Politicorum libri octo...* transl. Leonardo Bruni, comm. Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Paris, 1526), f. 58r.

¹⁰⁷ Eugenio Garin has shown, however, that translators such as Bruni often relied on their medieval predecessors more than they cared to admit, improving them with reference to the original Greek; although he also demonstrates that Bruni took most care over his translation of the *Politics*. E. Garin, 'Le traduzioni umanistiche di Aristotele nel secolo XV', *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia Fiorentina di scienze morali 'La Colombaria'*, 8 (1951), pp. 3-50, at pp. 10-14.

up this position in 1456.¹⁰⁸ A Byzantine Greek émigré, Argyropoulos had studied Arts in Padua, where he befriended the Florentine exile Palla Strozzi, before taking up permanent residence in Italy following the fall of Constantinople in 1543.¹⁰⁹ His appointment to the chair in Florence was strongly supported by Strozzi's grandson, Donato Acciaiuoli (1429–1478), who would go on to become one of Argyropoulos's most devoted students.¹¹⁰

Argyropoulos taught in Florence from 1456 to 1471.¹¹¹ At the time when Marsilio Ficino was working on his translations of and commentaries on Plato, Argyropoulos was lecturing on Aristotle, in which he followed the progression of subjects prescribed by the medieval educational system: first logic, then moral philosophy – ethics, oeconomics and politics – before moving on to natural philosophy and finally metaphysics.¹¹² Donato Acciaiuoli took detailed notes on many of the lectures which he attended, earning renown among his friends for his ability to write at great speed.¹¹³

Acciaiuoli's records of Argyropoulos's lectures on the *Nicomachean Ethics* reveal the Byzantine's criticisms of Bruni's Latin version of the treatise.¹¹⁴ Jerrold Seigel has suggested that Argyropoulos regarded them as too focused on eloquence rather than faithfulness to the source (reflecting the values of medieval translators like William of Moerbeke).¹¹⁵ Argyropoulos made his own Latin translation of the *Ethics*, which was published in 1478, together with a commentary by Acciaiuoli, consisting – as he announces in the preface – of an expanded version of his notes on Argyropoulos's lectures.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁸ L. Bianchi, 'Un commento "umanistico" ad Aristotele: l'*Expositio super libros Ethicorum* di Donato Acciaiuoli', in his *Studi sull'aristotelismo del Rinascimento* (Padua, 2003), pp. 11-39, at p. 11; A. Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy of Florence* (Princeton NJ, 1988), p. 55.

¹⁰⁹ J. E. Seigel, 'The Teaching of Argyropoulos and the Rhetoric of the First Humanists', in T. K. Rabb and J. E. Seigel (eds), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton NJ, 1969), pp. 237-260, at p. 241.

¹¹⁰ E. Garin, *Medioevo e Rinascimento: studi e ricerche* (Rome and Bari, 1976), p. 203; Seigel, 'The Teaching of Argyropoulos', p. 241.

¹¹¹ Bianchi, 'Un commento "umanistico" ad Aristotele', p. 11.

¹¹² Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy*, pp. 114-115.

¹¹³ Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy*, p. 208.

¹¹⁴ Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy*, pp. 123-124.

¹¹⁵ Seigel, 'The Teaching of Argyropoulos', p. 247.

¹¹⁶ Aristotle, *Ethicorum ad Nicomachum libri decem*, transl. John Argyropoulos, comm. Donato Acciaiuoli (Venice, 1565), [sig. *2r].

Some years later, Acciaiuoli produced a Latin commentary on the *Politics*, at the request of the Duke of Urbino, Federico da Montefeltro.¹¹⁷ Since Argyropoulos did not translate the *Politics*, the source text for the commentary was Bruni's translation; and it is unclear whether it was based on Acciaiuoli's notes on Argyropoulos's lectures. It has been argued that the commentary departs from the influence of Argyropoulos in the direction of the Platonic studies which were gaining ground in Florence at the time.¹¹⁸ As Arthur Field has pointed out, Acciaiuoli mounts a defence of Plato's concept of communal wives and possessions, attacked by Aristotle in Book Two of the *Politics*;¹¹⁹ and this defence is also in evidence later in Book Two, when Acciaiuoli turns away from Aristotle's assessment of Plato's political philosophy, stating that it is necessary to consult the Neoplatonists to understand the value of Plato's theories:

In order to understand this better, we should cite what the Platonists say to be the opinion of Plato, and those things which could respond to the arguments of the philosopher just cited.¹²⁰

Acciaiuoli's *Politics* commentary did not enjoy the widespread popularity of his work on the *Ethics*: it circulated in manuscript but was printed only once and not until 1566. It does indicate, however, that knowledge of Plato's doctrines was increasingly available in fifteenth-century Italy and influencing readings of Aristotle.

The study of the Greek language and of Aristotle in Greek was complemented, and advanced, by the efforts of Venice's most famous scholar-printer, Aldus Manutius (1449/50–1515).¹²¹ Arriving in the city towards the end of the fifteenth century, Aldus dedicated himself to the recovery, study and printing of Greek texts. He sent scholars to the Venetian dominions in Greece to search for manuscripts, employed learned Greeks resident in Venice such as Marcus Musurus as editors for his press and, through the

¹¹⁷ Donato Acciaiuoli, *In Aristotelis libros octo Politicorum commentarii* (Venice, 1566). See M. A. Ganz, 'A Florentine Friendship: Donato Acciaiuoli and Vespasiano da Bisticci', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43 (1990), pp. 372-383, at p. 380.

¹¹⁸ Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy*, pp. 227-228.

¹¹⁹ Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy*, p. 228.

¹²⁰ Acciaiuoli, *In Aristotelis libros octo Politicorum commentarii*, f. 60v: 'Verum ut haec melius intelligantur, afferenda est in medium ea, quae a Platonice dicitur esse Platonis opinio, ac ea, quae responderi possent rationibus philosophi nuper allatis.'

¹²¹ See Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1979).

Aldine Academy, provided an opportunity for scholars to meet (and converse in Greek), which ensured that Venice was at the forefront of not only the publication of Aristotelian texts but also their critical study.¹²² His use of Greek scholars also contributed to the production of an appropriate typeface for the publication of Greek works. This enterprise resulted in the production of the first complete edition of Aristotle in Greek, published between 1495 and 1498.¹²³ Other Greek editions followed in the sixteenth century, including one with a preface by Erasmus.¹²⁴

Bruni's version of Aristotle's *Politics* remained very popular in the sixteenth century and was frequently reprinted;¹²⁵ but new Latin translations were also produced, among them a version first published in 1543 by the French humanist Joachim Périon (1498/1499–1559),¹²⁶ whose translations of Aristotle were praised for the elegance of his Ciceronian Latin but criticized for his failure to render the text accurately and his willingness to depart from long-established philosophical terminology.¹²⁷

Among the new interpretative works on the *Politics* carried out in the sixteenth century, many of which offered innovative ways of understanding Aristotle's text, the most important was that carried out by the French humanist and churchman Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (1460–1536). Educated in Paris (where he later spent many years teaching), he then travelled in Italy, coming into contact with the humanist approach to learning through encounters with Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Angelo Poliziano and Marsilio Ficino.¹²⁸ His writings on Aristotle cover almost the entire corpus and employ various different genres: short introductions, paraphrases and commentaries. He wrote an

¹²² Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius*, pp. 196-197.

¹²³ Aristotle, *Opera omnia* (Venice, 1495-1498).

¹²⁴ Aristotle, *Opera ... omnia* (Basel, 1531). See J. Krayer, 'Erasmus and the Canonization of Aristotle: The Letter to John More', in E. Chaney and P. Mack (eds), *England and the Continental Renaissance: Essays in Honour of J.B. Trapp* (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 37-49, at p. 37.

¹²⁵ F. E. Cranz, *A Bibliography of Aristotle Editions 1501–1600*, 2nd ed. rev. C. B. Schmitt (Baden-Baden, 1984), *ad indicem* 'Politica, b. Latin translations, 2; Leonardus Brunus Aretinus'.

¹²⁶ Aristotle, *De Rep[ublica] qui Politicorum dicuntur, libri VIII*, transl. and comm. Joachim Périon (Paris, 1543). On Périon, see C. B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge MA, 1983), pp. 72-78, and G. P. Norton, *The Ideology and Language of Translation in Renaissance France and Their Humanist Antecedents* (Geneva, 1984).

¹²⁷ Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, p. 76.

¹²⁸ E. Kessler, 'Introducing Aristotle to the Sixteenth Century: The Lefèvre Enterprise', in C. Blackwell and S. Kusukawa (eds), *Philosophy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Conversations with Aristotle* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 1-21, at p. 3; D. A. Lines, 'Lefèvre and French Aristotelianism on the Eve of the Sixteenth Century', in G. Frank and A. Speer (eds), *Der Aristotelismus in der Frühen Neuzeit: Kontinuität oder Wiederaneignung?* (Wiesbaden, 2007), pp. 273-289, at p. 273; C. H. Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries II: Renaissance Authors* (Florence, 1988), p. 138.

introduction to the *Politics* (first published in 1508 and reissued nine times before the end of the century) as well as a full-scale commentary (first published 1506 and reissued six times).¹²⁹

Unlike anything in the previous tradition of literature devoted to the explanation of the *Politics*, Lefèvre's introduction is designed to be read alone, without consultation of Aristotle's text.¹³⁰ It was certainly the most student-friendly way of getting to know the treatise, as it provided an overview showing unfamiliar readers what to expect and therefore minimised confusion when they were confronted by the apparent contradictions in the text. His treatment of the parts of the household is a good example of Lefèvre's style of exposition:

The parts of the household are: free persons, servants and possessions. Free persons: father and mother of the family, and their children. The rest: servants. Therefore, the divisions of the household are: first conjugal, second paternal, third lordly and fourth possession. Conjugal contains man and wife. Paternal, father, mother and children. Lordly, master and servant.¹³¹

His concise, staccato sentences give the reader the essence of the text without any ambiguity; his goal seems to have been to achieve what he and his followers most admired in the writings of the Church Fathers – simplicity.¹³²

Lefèvre's commentary on the *Politics* is also innovative. In addition to fairly standard comments on the text, he employs visual methods of presenting material – tables, in various different forms, which summarise or clarify the text. This use of tables to

¹²⁹ Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, 'In Politica Aristoteles Introductio', published Paris 1508, Strasbourg 1511, Paris 1512, Vienna 1513, Paris 1515, 1516, 1517, 1535, Freiburg 1542; the edition consulted here is Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, 'In Politica Aristoteles Introductio', in his [*Introductio in Politica Aristotelis*]... (Paris, 1512). His commentary was published in Paris 1506, 1511, 1515, 1515, 1515, 1526, 1543; the edition consulted here is contained in Aristotle, *In hoc libro contenta. Politicorum libri octo...* transl. Leonardo Bruni, comm. Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Paris, 1526). See Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries II: Renaissance Authors*, p. 142.

¹³⁰ Kessler, 'Introducing Aristotle to the Sixteenth Century', p. 14.

¹³¹ Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, 'In Politica Aristoteles Introductio', f. 1v: 'Partes domus sunt: liberi, servi, ac possessiones. Liberi: pater, materque familias, et eorum filii. Reliqui vero: servi. Id est partes domus sunt: una coniugalis, secunda paterna, tertia dominica et quarta possessio. Coniugalis continet virum et uxorem. Paterna patrem, matrem et liberos. Dominica dominum et servos.' See *Politics*, 1253b2-11.

¹³² E. F. Rice Jr., 'The Humanist Idea of Christian Antiquity: Lefèvre d'Étaples and his Circle', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 9 (1962), pp. 126-160, at p. 131.

rationalise information can be viewed, according to David Lines, as an attempt to organise the vast quantity of information newly available to sixteenth-century scholars.¹³³ Such visual devices are often associated with Peter Ramus (1515–1572), who popularised the use of dichotomous tables to present information.¹³⁴ Tables are the central feature of the *Politics* commentary by Ramus's student Theodor Zwinger (1533–1588), as is indicated by its title: *Politicorum libri VIII, scholiis et tabulis illustrati*,¹³⁵ and they are utilised extensively by the English Aristotelian John Case (1546–1600) in his *Sphaera civitatis* of 1588.¹³⁶

This very short account of the Latin and Greek reception of the *Politics* in Europe has not only highlighted the increasing diffusion of the text over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the production of an ever-expanding and diversified corpus of literature surrounding it, but has also pointed out some of the main issues which interpreters of the treatise faced, such as the extent to which Aristotle's views were compatible with a Christian vision of society, and how his description of ancient Greek political systems could be adapted to the realities of medieval and Renaissance Europe.

¹³³ D. A. Lines, 'Theodor Zwinger's Vision of Ethics: Three Unpublished Works', in S. Ebbesmeyer and E. Kessler (eds), *Ethik: Wissenschaft oder Lebenskunst?: Modelle der Normenbegründung von der Antike bis zur Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 2007), pp. 243-265, at p. 247.

¹³⁴ Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries II: Renaissance Authors*, pp. 374-376; C. B. Schmitt, 'The Rise of the Philosophical Textbook', in C. B. Schmitt et al. (eds), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 792-804, at p. 800. Ramus's own commentary on the *Politics*, the *Politica exposita et illustrata* (Frankfurt, 1601), is composed, not of tables, but of three columns on each page – the text of the *Politics* in Greek and in Latin, and a Latin commentary – with notes at the bottom of the page, and longer explanations in Latin interspersed throughout the work.

¹³⁵ Theodor Zwinger, *Politicorum libri VIII, scholiis et tabulis illustrati* (Basel, 1582); see Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries II: Renaissance Authors*, pp. 514-515.

¹³⁶ John Case, *Sphaera civitatis* (London, 1588). See Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries II: Renaissance Authors*, pp. 85-86. On Case's use of tables in general, see C. B. Schmitt, *John Case and Aristotelianism in Renaissance England* (Kingston, 1983), p. 145.

Chapter Two

The Earliest Reception of Aristotle's *Politics* in the Italian Vernacular: 1260-1400

The translation of Aristotle's *Politics* into the Italian vernacular in the sixteenth century was much later than its transfer into French, which occurred in the 1370s, through the efforts of Nicole Oresme at the behest of the French king Charles V.¹ This fact, indicative of both the more hesitant transformation of Italian into a standardised vernacular, and the persisting influence of Latin as the language of learned discussion in Italy, does not preclude either the demand for Aristotelian political material or its entry into the Italian vernacular in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance. On the contrary, awareness of – and access to – aspects of the *Politics* in vernacular literature followed swiftly after the rediscovery of Aristotle's political thought by the Latin West and occurred through diverse, and far reaching, means.

It was politics and the necessities of political life which gave vital impetus to the development of Italian, still only in a nascent state as a literary language in the thirteenth century. Communal government had become a defining feature of the north and central Italian political landscape in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, where cities appointed consulates to represent their citizens in the absence of any dominant monarchical or papal power; this development was prevented from occurring in the south of Italy due to the presence of Norman rule.² The power and influence of the city-states increased in the thirteenth century, filling the vacuum of power left by the death of the Emperor Frederick Hohenstaufen in 1190 and a papacy weakened by a series of short pontificates.³

This new form of rule demanded a new genre of political literature – one which catered to a governing class of elected officials who were by no means certain to be proficient in Latin, and whose office required them to address large civic councils and, at times,

¹ See C. R. Sherman, *Imaging Aristotle: Verbal and Visual Representation in Fourteenth Century France* (Berkeley CA, 1995).

² D. Waley, *The Italian City-Republics* (London, 1990), pp. 1-10. On the origins of the Italian city-states, see P. Jones, *The Italian City-State: From Commune to Signoria* (Oxford, 1997), Chapter II: From Civitas to Commune, 500-1100.

³ J. Lerner, *Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch, 1216-1380* (London, 1980), p. 50.

the entire citizenry, in a language all could understand.⁴ Works of advice-literature were written explicitly for these figures, particularly the *podestà* (the foreign official elected to oversee a commune) in order to explain his duties; one of the first, the *Oculus pastoralis*, appeared as early as c. 1220.⁵ These texts, together with rhetorical handbooks such as Guido Fava's *Parlamenti ed epistole* (1242–43),⁶ began including vernacular exemplary material designed for those required to make speeches in Italian.⁷

In addition, information from classical texts of rhetorical and political instruction became available in vernacular paraphrases and translations. This included material taken from the *Politics*, which resonated with the late medieval political experience and which found an audience in the Italian peninsula. The medieval appetite for classification, for instance, embraced the Aristotelian categorisation of regimes and their system of development and degeneration, first outlined in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and then elaborated in the *Politics*.⁸ The focus on the notion of community in Aristotelian politics also connected it to one of the most important political themes in late medieval Europe, and one with significance for the city-states of northern Italy – the concept of the common good. The theme of the importance of the city as a whole and the necessity of offering one's individual service to ensure its preservation and well-being, also familiar to medieval audiences from the literature of Republican Rome, found widespread expression in the cultural output of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It has been claimed that works such as the 'Buon Governo' frescoes of Ambrogio Lorenzetti in Siena represented Aristotelian political thought through an evocation of the ideal city.⁹

⁴ S. J. Milner, "Le sottili cose non si possono bene aprire in volgare": Vernacular Oratory and the Transmission of Classical Rhetorical Theory in the Late Medieval Italian Communes', *Italian Studies*, 64 (2009), pp. 221-244, at p. 224.

⁵ H. Wieruszowski, *Politics and Culture in Medieval Spain and Italy* (Rome, 1971), p. 616; see also J. Coleman, *A History of Political Thought: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Oxford, 2000), p. 71.

⁶ On Fava, see F. Bausi, 'Fava (Faba), Guido (Guido Bonoiensis)', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), XLIV, pp. 413-419.

⁷ Milner, "Le sottili cose", p. 231.

⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1160a31-1160b22; *Politics*, especially 1279a23-1279b10.

⁹ Nicolai Rubinstein regarded Lorenzetti's frescoes as a representation of Aristotelian political theory; this interpretation has, however, been disputed by Quentin Skinner, who credits Cicero and the ideals of Republican Rome with their inspiration. N. Rubinstein, 'Political Ideas in Siennese Art: The Frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Taddeo di Bartolo in the Palazzo Pubblico', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 (1958), pp. 179-207; Q. Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Buon Governo* Frescoes: Two Old Questions, Two New Answers', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 62 (1999), pp. 1-28.

The diversity of Italian vernacular texts containing material drawn from the *Politics* in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries – ranging from translations of scholastic textbooks to transcriptions of sermons and literary works – testifies to its perceived relevance to an Italian-reading public. Moreover, the absence of a complete Italian translation of the *Politics* provides an opportunity to examine which aspects of Aristotelian political theory were selected for vernacular transmission, and to what extent their reception was conditioned by the authors who included this material in their writings.

Fragments of Aristotelian political material first became available in Italian in the mid-thirteenth century: an Arabic epitome of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, attributed to Averroes, was translated into Latin in the 1240s by Hermannus Alemannus,¹⁰ and turned into the vernacular by the Florentine Taddeo Alderotti (1215–1295).¹¹ Although rather cursory and inaccurate, the text nevertheless contained various Aristotelian doctrines on matters of governance: the recognition of politics as an extension and development of ethics, its position as the highest science, man's status as a social animal and Aristotle's tripartite classification of forms of rule into monarchy, aristocracy and polity.

In translating from the Latin Taddeo on occasion twisted Aristotle's words in order to favour the form of government practised in his native city. The Latin version of Hermannus Alemannus reads (following Aristotle): 'There are three types of civic rule: the rule of kings, the rule of good men and the rule of the community. And the best of all is the rule of kings.'¹² Taddeo's translation states, conversely, that: 'There are three types of rule: one is the rule of a king, another of good men, and the third is the rule of the community. And this is the best of all.'¹³ This is an early example of the persistent

¹⁰ B. G. Dod, 'Aristoteles latinus', in N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny and J. Pinborg (eds), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism, 1100-1600* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 45-79, at pp. 59-60.

¹¹ P. Divizia, 'Aggiunte (e una sottrazione) al censimento dei codici delle versioni italiane del "Tresor" di Brunetto Latini', *Medioevo Romanzo*, 32 (2008), pp. 377-394, at p. 377.

¹² Cited in E. Fenzi, 'Brunetto Latini, ovvero il fondamento politico dell'arte della parola e il potere dell'intellettuale', in I. Maffia Scariati (ed.), *A scuola con Ser Brunetto: Indagini sull'ricezione di Brunetto Latini dal Medioevo al Rinascimento. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Università di Basilea, 8-10 giugno 2006* (Florence, 2008), pp. 323-372, at p. 335: 'Principatus civiles tres sunt, principatus regum et principatus bonorum et principatus communitatem. Et omnium optimus est regum principatus.' *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1160a31-36.

¹³ Fenzi, 'Brunetto Latini', p. 335: 'Li principati ci sono tre, l'uno si è principato del re, l'altro si è delli

trend for manipulating Aristotle's thought when translating it into the vernacular.

The *fortuna* of Taddeo's translation is closely linked to one of the 'bestsellers' of late medieval Europe, Brunetto Latini's *Li livres dou trésor*. Famous for his appearance in the *Commedia* as Dante's teacher Ser Brunetto Latini (c. 1220–1294) was a notary and a prominent figure in the world of Florentine politics. During a six-year exile in France between 1260 and 1266, he composed three literary works – the *Trésor*, *Tesoretto* and *Favolello* – and an Italian translation of Cicero's *De inventione*. The *Trésor*, written in French, is an encyclopedic work containing biblical and historical material, ethical teaching and a book on rhetoric and governance aimed at the instruction of the *podestà*.¹⁴ Available in Italian almost immediately as the *Tesoro volgarizzato*, it follows in the tradition of advice-literature established in Italy by works such as the *Oculus pastoralis*, but it is the first such text entirely in the vernacular. The second book begins with a translation of Hermannus Alemannus' Latin paraphrase of the *Ethics* and, although the French text states that this is the work of Latini, at least one Italian version credits Alderotti with the translation.¹⁵

Alderotti's inversion of Aristotle's views on the best form of government is repeated in the *Trésor*, perhaps consciously. In the opinion of Sonia Gentili, Latini worked from both Taddeo's translation of the *Ethics* paraphrase and the Latin version;¹⁶ this would suggest that he was not only aware of Hermannus Alemannus' faithful rendering of monarchy as the best form of government but also of Alderotti's alteration, and that he chose the version which supported his own beliefs. Central tenets of Aristotelian theory are, however, preserved in Latini's work. The paraphrase of the *Ethics*, although focused for the most part on virtues and vices, instructs the reader that 'it is a natural thing for a man to be a citizen and to live among men and among other artisans. It would be against

buoni huomini, lo terço si è principato delle communitadi. E questo si è optimo intra li altri.'

¹⁴ On Latini, see G. Inglese, 'Latini, Brunetto', *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (1960-2014), LXIV, pp. 4-12.

¹⁵ According to the French text edited by P. Barrette and S. Baldwin, Latini made the translation: Brunetto Latini, *Li Livres dou Tresor*, ed. P. Barrette and S. Baldwin (Tempe AZ, 2003), II, prologue, p. 153. J. Bolton Holloway refers to an Italian version which gives Alderotti as the translator: J. Bolton Holloway, *Twice-Told Tales: Brunetto Latini and Dante Alighieri* (New York NY, 1993), p. 235. The earliest edition of the Italian *Tesoro volgarizzato* I have seen follows the French in asserting the authorship of Latini. Brunetto Latini, *Li livres dou tresor* [Italian] (Treviso, 1474), [f. 50v]: 'Luomo: che bon intenditore: podra vedere e conoscere alla parole: che mastro brunetto latino scrisse in questo libro ma in anzi vuole fondare suo edificio sopra lo libro daristotile: lo quale si chiama ethica e sillo trasmutera di latino in ramanzo.'

¹⁶ S. Gentili, *L'uomo aristotelico alle origini della letteratura italiana* (Rome, 2005), p. 42.

nature to live alone in the desert where no people live, because man naturally delights in company.¹⁷

The influence of Aristotle on Latini's work extends beyond the inclusion of the *Ethics* paraphrase. Latini's conception of politics as expressed in the *Trésor* and *Tesoro volgarizzato* is unmistakably influenced by Aristotle, with Ciceronian rhetoric used to fill in the gaps created by the absence of a full translation of the *Ethics* and of any knowledge of the *Politics*. Latini's discussion of tyranny in the third book of the *Tesoro volgarizzato* is drawn from Cicero, Seneca and Plato, without any mention at all of Aristotle.¹⁸ Yet, the structure of the text follows what Latini knew of Aristotle's classification of practical philosophy by placing politics (and rhetoric, which, for Latini, was a necessary part of politics), rather than theology, after his discussion of ethics.¹⁹ Indeed, he places politics above all other professions, stating that:

Without doubt it is the highest science and the most noble profession that there is among men; it teaches us to govern other people in a kingdom and in a city, and the populace of a commune, in times of peace and of war, and according to reason and justice.²⁰

The importance of Latini's work for the communication of Aristotelian political theory in the Italian vernacular derives not only from its popularity but also from the clearly political purpose to which Latini intended his work to be put. It was a text designed for practical use by those in government and, in particular, those governing an Italian city-state. Although composed in French and dedicated to Charles of Anjou, it is a work

¹⁷ Brunetto Latini, *Li livres dou tresor* [Italian], f. 46v: 'Natural cosa è all'uomo, chelli sia cittadino, e che e costumi com gluomini artificii. E anche non è naturale all'uomo: habitate ne deserti ne quive dove non siano gienti. Perche luomo naturalmente ama chompagnia.' In translating this passage, I have consulted the version by J. M. Najemy, in J. M. Najemy, 'Brunetto Latini's "Politica"', *Dante Studies*, 112 (1994), pp. 33-52, at p. 41. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1169b18-19: 'Man is a political creature and one whose nature is to live with others.'

¹⁸ Latini, *Li livres dou tresor* [Italian], f. 117r-v.

¹⁹ See G. Sørensen, 'The Reception of the Political Aristotle in the Late Middle Ages (From Brunetto Latini to Dante Alighieri). Hypotheses and Suggestions', in M. Pade (ed.), *Renaissance Readings of the Corpus Aristotelicum: Proceedings of the Conference held in Copenhagen 23-25 April 1998* (Copenhagen, 2001), pp. 9-26.

²⁰ Brunetto Latini, *Del Tesoro volgarizzato di Brunetto Latini... libro primo*, ed. R. de Visiani (Bologna, 1968), p. 47: 'Senza fallo ciò è la più alta isciencia e del più nobile mistiere che sia intra li omini: chè ella no' insegna a governare la stranie gente d'uno regno e d'una villa, et uno popolo d'uno comune, in tempo di pace e di guerra, secondo ragione e secondo giustizia.'

written with Italy in mind. The chronicler Giovanni Villani credited Latini with introducing the Florentines to truly ‘political’ government on his return from exile: ‘He was the one who began to teach the Florentines to be less coarse, and to make them skilled in speaking well, and in knowing how to guide and rule our republic *secondo la politica*’.²¹ Latini’s preference for the Italian republican style of politics is made abundantly clear: there are two methods of government, he writes:

One which is in France and other countries that are continually under the rule of a king or other princes who sell offices and grant them to those who offer them the most (with little regard for their own good or the interest of the burghers); and another which is in Italy, where the citizens and the burghers and the community of the city elect as their *podestà* and their *signorie* those who they believe will be most advantageous to the commune and serve the interest of the city and all its subjects.²²

The earliest dissemination of material taken directly from the *Politics* itself in the Italian vernacular also arrived in Italy in translation from France, and should likewise be classified as advice-literature, following in the tradition of medieval ‘mirrors for princes’. Nevertheless, the *Del reggimento de’ principi di Egidio Romano*, translated in 1288 from a French version of Giles of Rome’s *De regimine principum* (1277-80), is a work of an entirely different cast from Brunetto Latini’s encyclopedia.²³ While Latini’s sources were medieval compendia and paraphrases rather than Aristotelian works themselves and his *Trésor* incorporated a mixture of Greek and Roman political theory, Giles, an Augustinian friar and teacher at the University of Paris, displays a clear allegiance to Aristotle – whose works were available to him in Latin translations of the *Ethics* and *Politics* made from Greek texts and which he was able to read alongside the

²¹ Quoted in Najemy, ‘Brunetto Latini’s “Politica”’, p. 33.

²² Latini, *Li livres dou tresor* [Italian], f. 110v: ‘Una che è in Francia ed in altri paesi che sono sottoposti la signoria di re e delli altri principi perpetuali che vendono le bailie e le concedeno a quelli che più l’accattano (pogo guardano né sua bontade né l’prode dei borghesi); l’altra è in Italia, che li cittadini e li borghesi e le comunitadi de le citadi eleggono lor podestade e lor signorie tale come elli credeno che sia più profettabile al comune prode de la citade e di tutti li suoi subietti.’

²³ The manuscript bearing the date 1288 is Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, MS Magliab. cl. XXX – segn. att. II, IV, 129. It has been edited: Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de’ principi... volgarizzamento trascritto nel MCCLXXXVIII [1288]*, ed. F. Corazzini (Florence, 1858). A new edition of an Italian vernacularization of Giles’ work is currently being prepared: Giles of Rome, *Il Libro del governmento dei rei e dei principi secondo il codice BNCF II.IV.129. Edizione critica e commento linguistico*, ed. F. Papi (forthcoming).

commentaries of Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great and others.²⁴ A product, therefore, of the intensive study of the works of Aristotle undertaken at Paris in the second half of the thirteenth century, *De regimine principum* is an erudite, theoretical and eminently scholastic work of moral and political guidance. Lacking the political immediacy and involvement of Latini's *Trésor*, Giles' treatise is also its ideological opposite: written at Paris under the patronage of the French monarchy and dedicated to the *dauphin*, the future Philip IV, it glorifies and defends the French model of monarchy which Latini vilified.²⁵

Despite its focus on the French model of hereditary monarchy, *De regimine principum* proved enormously popular across Europe as a Latin textbook and enjoyed an extraordinary vernacular dissemination. A French translation was first produced by Henri de Gauchi at the command of the French king, Philip III; but at least three other 'unofficial' French versions were also produced, and the work went on to be translated into languages ranging from Catalan to Hebrew, German and English.²⁶ Gerardo Bruni has identified, in addition to the 1288 Italian translation made from Henri de Gauchi's French text, five further medieval versions of *De regimine principum* in Italian, at least one of which was made from the Latin original.²⁷ This popularity was encouraged by the highly formulaic and didactic nature of the text, influenced by university textbooks and the demands of classroom teaching. The arguments within chapters are organised into clearly listed *viae* or *rationes*,²⁸ gathering together under one heading material taken from diverse places in the *Politics*. This resulted in a simplicity and clarity of structure which provided a much more straightforward introduction to Aristotle's political thought than that obtained through William of Moerbeke's elliptical Latin translation of the *Politics* and which transferred easily into the vernacular.

The scope of Giles' work similarly extended its appeal. It was written with a broad readership in mind – although ostensibly concerned with the conduct of the prince, its

²⁴ R. Lambertini, 'Philosophus videtur tangere tres rationes. Egidio Romano lettore ed interprete della "Politica" nel terzo libro del "De regimine principum"', in *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 1 (1990), pp. 277-325, at p. 287.

²⁵ J. Dunbabin, 'Aristotle in the Schools', in B. Smalley (ed.), *Trends in Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 65-85, at p. 65.

²⁶ G. Bruni, *Le opere di Egidio Romano* (Florence, 1936), p. 75.

²⁷ Bruni, *Le opere di Egidio Romano*, pp. 101-106.

²⁸ Lambertini, 'Philosophus videtur tangere tres rationes', p. 283.

Italian readers learnt that ‘the people can nevertheless take instruction from this book.’²⁹ Despite the ecclesiastical profession of its author, the treatise focuses on natural principles and secular sources, with references to patristic texts few and far between.³⁰ It deals methodically with the whole of Aristotelian practical philosophy, discussing first ethics, then proceeding in the second book to oeconomics and devoting the third book to the study of politics (‘how cities and kingdoms must be governed in times of peace and times of war’).³¹ It was the first text to discuss the regimentation of the household along Aristotelian lines.³² And although it did not advocate the northern Italian model of communal government, the treatise contained a great deal to attract an Italian readership. The concept of the common good, at the heart of much republican discourse, is frequently raised. Furthermore, in addition to the monarchical state of Sicily, there were many *condottieri*, feudal lords and aspiring urban patricians who could easily apply the instructions aimed at the prince to themselves. Finally, the 1288 Italian translation included an addition to Giles’ Latin text designed to give more recognition to the Italian model of government: ‘We see commonly in the Italian cities that all the people are to summon and elect the lord and to punish him when he does evil; and although they summon some lord in order for him to govern them, nevertheless the people are more the lord than he is, for they elect him, and they punish him when he does evil’.³³

What makes the Italian translation of *De regimine principum* relevant for this study, however, is the extent to which Giles relies on Aristotle’s *Politics* as a source of instruction and exemplary material. Although undoubtedly in command of a wide variety of texts, both classical and medieval – the treatise’s final section, on government in times of war, is drawn chiefly from the Roman strategist Vegetius,³⁴ while his reading of Aristotle is influenced and guided by the works of Thomas Aquinas – it is the *Politics*

²⁹ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de’ principi*, I.i.1, p. 4: ‘Nientemeno il popolo può essere insegnato per questo libro.’

³⁰ M. S. Kempshall, *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford, 1999), p. 131.

³¹ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de’ principi*, I.i.2, p. 5: ‘Come, in tempo di pace e ‘n tempo di guerra, debbono essere governate le città e i reami.’

³² C. F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome’s De Regimine Principum: Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, c. 1275-c. 1525* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 12.

³³ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de’ principi*, III.ii.2, p. 237-238: ‘Donde noi vedemo comunemente nelle città d’Italia, che tutto ‘l popolo è a chiamare ed eleggere il signore, ed a punirlo quand’elli fa male, e che tutto chiamin ellino alcuno signore che li governi, niente meno il popolo è piu signore di lui, perciò ch’esso lo elegge, ed esso il punisce quand’elli fa male.’

³⁴ Dunbabin, ‘Aristotle in the Schools’, p. 76.

itself which Giles most often indicates as his source. According to Charles F. Briggs, *De regimine principum* contains approximately 230 direct references to the *Politics*.³⁵ Although in no way a compendium of Aristotelian maxims or a paraphrase of Aristotle's work – Giles is careful to use Aristotle's authority for his own ends, and in its arrangement *De regimine principum* does not follow the structure of the *Politics* – the text contains a vast amount of material drawn from the *Politics*, often explicitly cited, and therefore the Italian translation made a great deal of Aristotle's work accessible to the vernacular reading public. *Del reggimento de' principi* was certainly one of the most comprehensive and widely available sources of material from the *Politics* until Aristotle's treatise was eventually translated into Italian in the sixteenth century. Perhaps even more importantly, despite Giles' selective use of Aristotle to promote hereditary monarchy, his frequent references to the *Politics* meant his treatise was regarded as an authoritative source for Aristotelian political doctrine.³⁶

Aristotelian political concepts which a vernacular readership might have learnt something about from Taddeo Alderotti's translation of the *Ethics* paraphrase or from the *Tesoro volgarizzato* of Brunetto Latini, such as man's social and political nature, are dealt with explicitly in *Del reggimento de' principi*. Indeed, a large number of topics discussed by Aristotle in the *Politics* are encountered throughout the text of Giles' work. In the third part of the first book, for instance, Giles introduces the notion that the community is prior to the individual:

Public utility and the common good are better and more worthy than the individual good and than one's own benefit; true and natural reason teaches that man must love God, the common good and the benefit of the people more than his own good or his own benefit.³⁷

Although Aristotle is not referred to here, the influence of *Politics* Book One is evident, especially as Giles goes on to adapt Aristotle's own corporal metaphor: explaining that

³⁵ Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De regimine principum*, p. 11.

³⁶ Both Dante in the *Convivio* and commentators on the *Commedia* refer their readers to *De regimine principum* for information on Aristotle's political thought. See p. 63 and p. 68 below.

³⁷ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de' principi*, I.iii.3, p. 88: 'L'utilità e 'l bene comune è migliore e più degno che 'l bene particolare, ne che la propria utilità dell'uomo, naturale ragione e vera insegna, che l'uomo die più amare Dio, il bene comune e l'utilità del popolo, che 'l suo proprio bene o la sua propria utilità.'

‘the arm, which is part of the body, when the body might be injured, is naturally raised against the blow, and at times of danger, so that the principal members of the body are not injured, from which the whole body may die’.³⁸

Book Two of *Del reggimento de’ principi* follows *Politics* Book One in discussing wealth acquisition, trade and usury, reproducing Aristotle’s tale of Thalus of Miletus, who became wealthy by means of a monopoly on olive presses.³⁹ Giles’ remarks on the conduct of family life in the second book also take a distinctly Aristotelian approach. He counsels against marrying a woman who is too young, reproducing the arguments set out by Aristotle in *Politics* Seven.⁴⁰ The education of children is divided into seven-year periods; between birth and seven, for example, children should drink milk, become habituated to cold weather, partake in exercise and be allowed to cry, precisely as explained in the *Politics*.⁴¹

The third book of *Del reggimento de’ principi*, ‘del governo civile’, adheres even more closely to the text of the *Politics*. It begins almost exactly as Aristotle’s work does: ‘the Philosopher, in the first book of the *Politics*, proves that all towns and all cities are ordered and established for some good’;⁴² and it continues in this vein, explaining that the city was formed for the sake of self-sufficiency, but also exists for the purpose of living well, and that man is naturally inclined to live within a community. Book Two of

³⁸ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de’ principi*, I.iii.3, p. 88: ‘L braccio, il quale è parte del corpo, quando il corpo vuole essere ferito, naturalmente si mette contra ‘l colpo e nel pericolo, acciò che le membra principali del corpo non sieno ferite, unde tutto il corpo possa morire.’ *Politics*, 1253a19-21: ‘The state is by nature clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part: for example, if the whole body be destroyed, there will be no foot or hand.’ As at this point in time Moerbeke’s translation would have been almost the only source of knowledge of the *Politics*, I have supplied references to this version in addition to those to the modern text. For later works this is not possible or necessary, as sources for the treatise became more varied and Leonardo Bruni’s accurate translation gave readers a truer representation of Aristotle’s text. Aristotle, *Politicorum cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, ed. F. Susemihl (Leipzig, 1872), p. 9: ‘Et prius itaque natura civitas quam domus et unus quisque nostrum est, totum enim prius necessarium esse parte: interempto enim toto non erit pes neque manus.’

³⁹ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de’ principi*, II.i.ii.7-10, pp. 197-203; *Politics*, 1259a6-19; Aristotle, *Politicorum cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, p. 47.

⁴⁰ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de’ principi*, II.i.13, pp. 146-147; *Politics*, 1334b29-1335a35; Aristotle, *Politicorum cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, pp. 315-321.

⁴¹ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de’ principi*, II.ii.15, pp. 178-179; *Politics*, 1336a4-40, and 1336b40-41. Aristotle, *Politicorum cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, pp. 325-327 and p. 331.

⁴² Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de’ principi*, II.i.1, p. 215: ‘Il filòsafo nel primo libro della Politica prova che tutte le ville e tutte le città sono ordinate e stabilite per alcuno bene.’ *Politics*, 1252a1-2; Aristotle, *Politicorum cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, p. 1: ‘Quoniam omnem civitatem videmus communitatem quandam existentem et omnem communitatem boni alicuius gratia institutam.’

the *Politics* forms the main source for the first section of the book, which covers the views concerning government expressed by philosophers such as Plato, Phaleus of Chalcedon and Hippodamus of Miletus. Giles then proceeds to the types of constitution and their deviations, supplementing Aristotle's lengthy discussion of tyranny with his own account.⁴³

Giles' treatise, however, is not a pure reflection of Aristotle's *Politics*, and it is important to place his text firmly in the tradition of scholastic interpretation of Aristotle. In many places, he is dependent on Thomas Aquinas' reading of the *Politics*: Roberto Lambertini has suggested that Thomas' *Sententia libri Politicorum* was a 'desk companion' for Giles during his reading of the *Politics*, and has shown that some arguments put forward by Giles in his defence of monarchy are, in fact, drawn from Thomas' *De regno* rather than the *Politics*, as is implied – enabling him to give far stronger support to monarchy than is found in the Aristotelian corpus.⁴⁴ Furthermore, writing in the kingdom of France and for the son of the king, the realities of Giles' political environment, his readership and his own convictions mean that, just as Taddeo Alderotti altered Aristotle for his own ends, so too some of Aristotle's teachings are subverted in *De regimine principum* and its translations.

In the *Politics*, the focus is on the *polis* as the ideal political unit: in Book Seven Aristotle draws attention to the difficulty of governing an over-populated city-state, and that a nation is composed of too many for an adequate constitution.⁴⁵ In *Del reggimento de' principi*, however, he appears to speak approvingly of the *regnum*: 'The Philosopher says that the kingdom is nothing other than a great multitude and a great gathering of many gentle and noble men, who live according to law and reason, and are ruled by a very good king, whom they obey.'⁴⁶ The structure of Giles' text, centred on the monarch, provides the illusion of a similar weighting of material in the *Politics*. For

⁴³ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de' principi*, III.ii.9-12, pp. 248-253.

⁴⁴ Lambertini, 'Philosophus videtur tangere tres rationes', p. 287.

⁴⁵ *Politics*, 1326a25-27 and 1326b3-7; Aristotle, *Politicorum cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, p. 259: 'Non solum sed et hoc ex operibus manifestum, quia difficile, forte autem impossibile bene legibus regi eam quae valde multorum hominum'; p. 261: '... quam autem ex multis valde in necessariis quidem per se sufficiens sicut gens, sed non civitas: politam enim non facile existere: quis enim dux exercitus erit valde excedentis multitudinis aut quis praeco non magne vocis?'

⁴⁶ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de' principi*, III.ii.29, p. 275: 'Dice il filosofo, che 'l reame non è altro che un gran moltitudine e uno gran raunamento di molti gentili uomini e nobili, che vivono secondo legge e ragione, e sono ordinati a trasbuono re, al quale ellino ubbidiscono.'

instance, in *Politics* Book One Aristotle embarks on a general discussion of wealth acquisition, encompassing revenue, habits and trade.⁴⁷ In *Del reggimento de' principi*, this discussion is altered, regimented into topics and recast in a new light: 'The Philosopher, in the first book of the *Politics* says that kings and princes must principally seek advice on five things, about which their counsellors should be wise and shrewd.'⁴⁸ Aristotle is brought into the service of the prince.

Giles' support for the hereditary French monarchy (in opposition to the elected Holy Roman Emperor, and the city-states of Italy) also leads him to sidestep Aristotle's misgivings, expressed in *Politics* Book Three, concerning absolute monarchy and to emphasise the importance of the education of the prince – rather than any constitutional checks – as a means of preventing tyranny.⁴⁹ His alteration of a historical example given by Aristotle to illustrate the importance of a long-lasting regime is telling. Aristotle describes how Theopompus, king of Sparta, allowed a reduction in his authority by creating the office of the ephors (overseers). When questioned by his wife, he explained that his dominion would last longer as a result.⁵⁰ In *Del reggimento de' principi*, the story is told as follows:

The Philosopher says that there was once a king who lost a large part of his realm, because he had not held it rightly. When, for this reason, his wife severely reproved him, saying to him that it was a great disgrace that he would leave less land to his children than his father had left to him, the king replied that if he left less land in quantity, what he left them would endure longer; and this tyrants never do, for tyrants do the contrary.⁵¹

⁴⁷ *Politics*, 1256a1-1259a36. Aristotle, *Politicorum cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, pp. 27-49.

⁴⁸ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de' principi*, III.ii.17, p. 258: 'Il filosofo, nel primo libro de la Politica, dice che i re e i preni si debbono principalmente consigliare di cinque cose, delle quali ai loro consiglieri conviene esser savi ed avveduti.'

⁴⁹ *Politics*, 1287a1-31. See also Dunbabin, 'Aristotle in the Schools', pp. 67-69.

⁵⁰ *Politics*, 1313a24-33; Aristotle, *Politicorum Libri Octo cum Vetusta Translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, pp. 572-573.

⁵¹ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de' principi*, III.ii.9, p. 249: 'Il filosofo dice, ch'elli fu un re che lassò una gran parte del suo reame, perciò ch'elli la teneva non drittamente. Donde la moglie il riprese molto dicendoli, che ciò gli era grand' ontia, ched elli lassasse men terra ai figliuoli, che 'l padre avea lassato a lui; e quello re rispose che s'elli lassava meno terra in quantità, elli lor lassava terra più lungamente durabile; e questo non fanno ei tiranni, anzi fanno ei tiranni il contrario.'

Giles' monarch certainly does not cede any of his authority; instead, he gives up land which should not necessarily have been his. The example presents the conscience of the monarch as a safeguard against tyranny, quite the opposite of Aristotle's intention of illustrating the value of constitutional restraints.

The production of at least six separate Italian translations of *De regimine principum* attests to the importance of the text as a source (if a biased one) of knowledge about Aristotle's *Politics* in the vernacular. One manuscript identifies the translator as Giovanni di Nichola di Guando, whom Gerardo Bruni considers to have been Tuscan, and also mentions both the scribe, Giovanni da Verona, and the patron, a 'prudentissimo Giovane cittadino Veronese'. This is an indication of the circulation of the text in central and northern Italy, as is the alteration of the ownership of the manuscript, after it changed hands, to mark it, possibly, as the possession of a 'cittadino Senese'.⁵² Francesco Corrazzini, the editor of the manuscript dated 1288, has also tentatively identified its translator as a native of Siena.⁵³ Charles Briggs has drawn attention to a manuscript which in the fourteenth century belonged to a Niccolò Pallavicini;⁵⁴ this was perhaps one of the two *condottieri* who, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, bore that name.⁵⁵ The ownership of the text by urban citizens (both Veronese and Sienese) and possibly by a *condottiere* suggests that the vernacular *Del reggimento de' principi* reached a lay readership, both urban and noble.

As the Aristotelianism of the Paris schools grew in strength and influence, its dissemination in Italy benefited not only from the arrival of manuscripts containing treatises on political theory such as that of Giles of Rome and their translation into the Italian vernacular, but also from the return home of Italians who had journeyed to France to learn from scholars such as Thomas Aquinas. These men – including Remigio de' Girolami (1235–1319), who became the lector of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, and Ptolemy of Lucca (c. 1236–c. 1327), who was prior of the same convent in 1301 – brought with them copies of Aristotelian works and, fundamentally, the ability to expound and relate them to the Italian political environment. Remigio's tracts on the

⁵² Bruni, *Le opere di Egidio Romano*, p. 103.

⁵³ F. Corrazzini, 'Cenni Storico-Critici', in Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de' principi*, pp. i-liv, at p. xlvi.

⁵⁴ Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De Regimine Principum*, p. 17.

⁵⁵ C. Argegni, *Condottieri, capitani, tribuni*, 3 vols (Milan, 1936-1937), II, p. 390.

bene commune and the value of peace, which apply a Thomist Aristotelianism to the problems of the city republic, were written and circulated in Latin, as was Ptolemy's famous continuation of Thomas' *De regno*.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the presence of these scholars and of clerics with similar training in the cities of Italy fostered the growth of an Aristotelian environment within religious houses such as the Dominican convent in Florence, and perhaps extended knowledge of Aristotle further, into the city itself.

The most direct and powerful communication between religious orders and the laity, and therefore an effective way for members of the clergy to communicate Aristotelian concepts to their congregations, was through preaching – a tool which was growing in importance and which constituted a significant element in the religious experience of laymen.⁵⁷ The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw the development of the *ars praedicandi* as the mendicant orders sought to appeal more directly and urgently to their lay audiences, exhorting listeners to live virtuously rather than relying solely on appeals for holy intercession. This focus is reflected in the preaching manuals which mirrored advances in rhetoric during the late medieval period. Humbert of Romans' manual contained two hundred examples, comprising first sermons for one hundred different audiences and then for one hundred different occasions.⁵⁸ The style of delivering sermons moved from the traditional explication of a homily to the highly structured *sermo modernus*, and was increasingly given in the vernacular.⁵⁹ According to Carlo Delcorno, the delivery of a sermon in Latin would have occurred only in very rare circumstances.⁶⁰

The Dominican order was cautious, however, about allowing the laity to gain access to subtle and potentially controversial subjects in the vernacular, placing a ban on the circulation of vernacular sermons in 1242.⁶¹ This attitude, and the practice of 'writing up' Italian sermons in Latin after their delivery, means that few records of vernacular

⁵⁶ C. T. Davis, 'An Early Florentine Political Theorist: Fra Remigio de' Girolami', in his *Dante's Italy and Other Essays* (Philadelphia PA, 1984), pp. 198-223, at pp. 200-202.

⁵⁷ See B. Paton, *Preaching Friars and the Civic Ethos: Siena, 1380-1480* (London, 1992), p. 55.

⁵⁸ D. R. Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence: The Social World of Dominican and Franciscan Spirituality* (Athens GA, 1989), p. 100.

⁵⁹ D. R. Lesnick, 'Dominican Preaching and the Creation of Capitalist Ideology in Late-Medieval Florence', in *Temi medievali e umanistici: cultura e teologica* (Pistoia, 1977) [= *Memorie Domenicane*, 8-9 (1977-1978)], pp. 199-248, at p. 215.

⁶⁰ C. Delcorno, 'Medieval Preaching in Italy (1200-1500)', in B. Mayne Kienzle (ed.), *Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental: The Sermon* (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 449-560, at p. 494.

⁶¹ Lesnick, 'Dominican Preaching', p. 212.

preaching remain. There is no evidence that Remigio de' Girolami preached in Italian, although he did address audiences who would have been unlikely to be able to follow a Latin sermon such as the mercantile Priors of Florence. An exception, however, is the preaching of Remigio's subordinate at the convent of Santa Maria Novella, Giordano da Pisa, who was active in Florence from 1303 to 1309 but also preached in other Italian cities and whose vernacular sermons are recorded in 39 extant manuscripts.⁶²

Giordano had been educated in the university cities of Bologna and Paris,⁶³ and the content of his sermons shows a willingness to incorporate classical learning and the remarks of 'i savii' into his addresses to the laity. He refers to Plato when noting that the city should be ruled by the wise,⁶⁴ and elsewhere remarks in an aside on the value assigned to numbers by ancient philosophers, especially Pythagoras.⁶⁵ It is, however, the influence of Aristotle which can be most clearly recognised in his sermons. For the scholastic Giordano Aristotle is 'il Savio', and 'il grande filosofo'; and aspects of Aristotelian philosophy permeate his perceptions of the world and humanity. He turns to the *Politics*, in particular, as an authority for his greatest preoccupations, the *bene commune* and its effects – peace and civic harmony within the city. Inevitably, Giordano's reading of Aristotle was coloured by the works of Thomas Aquinas, whose assimilation of Christian theology with the Aristotelian theories of man's political nature and of the whole (the community) as prior to the individual, combined with medieval conceptions of civic duty and patriotism, resulted in a powerful vision of the common good.⁶⁶

The extent and frequency of Giordano's preaching activity – in churches across Florence and often several times in a single day – indicates a charismatic and highly popular speaker, as does the fact that his sermons were recorded by members of the audience while he spoke. It has been suggested that his audience included those trained in the notarial arts, who would have possessed the skill to take dictation at speed.⁶⁷ The

⁶² Lesnick, 'Dominican Preaching', p. 212.

⁶³ C. Iannella, 'Introduzione', in Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche inedite (dal ms. Laurenziano, Acquisti e Doni 290)*, ed. C. Iannella (Pisa, 1997), pp. xi-xxv, at p. xxv.

⁶⁴ Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche inedite ... Recitate in Firenze dal 1302 al 1305*, ed. E. Narducci (Bologna, 1867), p. 50.

⁶⁵ Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche inedite*, ed. Narducci, p. 261.

⁶⁶ Paton, *Preaching Friars and the Civic Ethos*, pp. 89-90.

⁶⁷ Delcorno, 'Medieval Preaching in Italy', p. 100.

ability of a vernacular preacher such as Giordano to communicate aspects of Aristotelian political theory to a non-Latinate laity should not be underestimated. His sermons were designed to be understood by, and to hold the attention of, an audience which spanned the social classes of the city; and it is possible that a large proportion of his listeners were women.⁶⁸ The demand for his preaching across Florence shows that he was successful in this aim, while important civic figures such as the prior Lotto Salviati owned copies of his sermons.⁶⁹

Giordano makes few remarks pertaining to contemporary politics, although there are some exceptions: in a sermon of 22 February 1304 he explicitly endorsed Guelfism, detailing the emperor's subordinate position to the pope;⁷⁰ and in August of the same year he attempted to unite the citizenry around the new *podestà*, Ruggiero di Dovadola.⁷¹ In general, however, his use of the *Politics* bypasses issues such as the best form of government and concentrates instead on encouraging his listeners to live virtuously within the city. This insistence on man's place within the social organisation of the city, and his duty to contribute to the common good, forms the context for his explication (on 6 October 1303) of one of Aristotle's key political doctrines:

The philosophers say that likeness induces love; and so we see among the animals that those which are alike and of one nature remain together. They do not stay together on account of the need that one has of another, as we do, but by nature, because they are alike. Among all animals man is called the social and gregarious animal, and this is the first reason which draws us to love our neighbour; the second is the help which one person has from another. Men are not able to remain alone like beasts, who require almost nothing from each other. This is because of the many things which we lack. If I lack one thing and you lack another, you remedy my lack and I yours. Man cannot live alone, because he is not self-sufficient, and he needs the help of others. This was the reason that manors were made, and cities and villages and families: because people cannot live alone. There are many arts within the city: I benefit from the arts of others

⁶⁸ Paton, *Preaching Friars and the Civic Ethos*, p. 57.

⁶⁹ Lesnick, 'Domenican Preaching', p. 217.

⁷⁰ Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche inedite*, ed. Narducci, p. 136.

⁷¹ Lesnick, *Preaching in Medieval Florence*, p. 103.

and others benefit from mine; and in this way men help each other.⁷²

An emphasis on man's social nature was clearly central to Giordano's concept of humanity and the common good. A year later, he repeated this teaching of Aristotle, emphasising man's need to live in a city in order to achieve the sufficiency he would be unable to find on his own.⁷³

That individuals have to belong to a community – a city-state – in order to live and attain virtue is also evident in Giordano's attitude towards solitude, again owing a great deal to Aristotle: 'solitude is forbidden due to the defects of created beings, because they do not have perfection in themselves. So there could be no man in the world who was sufficient in himself.'⁷⁴ Aristotle's contention that men who lead a social existence are the mean between the two extremes who live in solitude, either resembling beasts or becoming god-like in their virtue (this last transformed by Thomas Aquinas into Christian hermit-saints)⁷⁵ is, however, missing; for Giordano, there is no possibility that any individual can live sufficiently in isolation. In his sermons, the theories of community and sociability found in the *Politics* are elevated into a manifesto for the city itself. If man cannot live sufficiently on his own, the city is a requisite stage on the

⁷² Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche inedite*, ed. Narducci, p. 85: 'I savii dicono che la simiglianza induce amore; e però vedete degli animali, che quelli che sono ad una simiglianza e ad una natura, com' egli stanno insieme. None istanno insieme per bisogno che l'uno faccia all'altro, come noi, ma pur per natura, perchè sono d'una simiglianza. Intra tutti gli animali l'uomo è detto animale sociale e congregale, e quest'è la prima, che ci trae ad amare lo prossimo; la seconda è per l'aiuto che l'uno hae dall'altro. Non possono gli uomini istar soli come le bestie, le quali non abbisognano, quasi neente l'una dell'altra; e questo è per gli molti difetti che avemo; che s'i'ho uno difetto e tu n'hai un altro, tu sovieni al mio difetto e io al tuo. Non potrebbe l'uomo vivere solo, perocché non basta a sè stesso, abbisogna dell'aiuto degli altri: e questa fue la cagione perchè si facieno le castella, e le cittadi, e' borghi e le famiglie; perocchè non poteano le genti vivere soli. Nella città sono le molte arti: i'ho bene dell'altrui arte e altri ha bene della mia, e così s'aiutano gli uomini insieme.' *Politics*, 1252b28-1253a9; Aristotle, *Politicorum cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, pp. 7-8.

⁷³ Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche ... recitate in Firenze dal MCCCIII al MCCCVI*, ed. D. Moreni, 2 vols (Florence, 1831), II, pp. 88-89, cited in C. Iannella, *Giordano da Pisa. Etica urbana e forme della società* (Pisa, 1999), p. 86, n. 103: 'Dice il Savio che naturale cosa e propria è all'uomo stare alla cittade, e la ragione sì è questa che, come dice quel grande Savio, l'uomo è animale congregale e sociale, e non sa stare senza compagnia. ... l'uomo ha mistiere di tante cose, che non si potrebbe atare per se solo, tanta è la nostra indigenza; e però stiamo volentieri alle cittade, ove sono le molte cose, ove si trova di ciò che gli abbisogna.'

⁷⁴ Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche*, II, pp. 88-89, cited in Iannella, *Giordano da Pisa. Etica urbana e forme della società*, p. 86, n. 103: 'La solitudine è vietata per lo difecto della creatura, però che non à perfectione in sé. Unde non sarebbe alcuno homo in del mondo che fusse sofficiente a se medesimo.'

⁷⁵ *Politics*, 1253a3-4; Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, *In Octo Libros Politicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, I.i.35: 'Aut est melior quam homo, inquantum scilicet habet naturam perfectiorem aliis hominibus communiter, ita quod per se sibi possit sufficere absque hominum societate; sicut fuit in Ioanne Baptista, et beato Antonio heremita.'

path to salvation. Giordano's conception of the heavenly realm is the city of God, with the saved as citizens: 'la città del cielo è nostro luogo', as he proclaimed on 24 October 1305.⁷⁶

At certain points, Giordano's rhetoric proceeds beyond the general portrayal of the city as a means to virtue and focuses specifically on the Florentine context. An intense patriotism and sense of civic destiny (which would be drawn on so effectively by Savonarola almost two centuries later) is apparent in Giordano's comparison of man's desire to reach the city of God to the yearning of the children of exiled Florentines to return to their *patria*: 'it is a great desire, like that of many born of Florentines outside Florence; these people, who have never seen Florence and were not born there, desire it and desire to return there.'⁷⁷ Although not Florentine himself, Giordano understood his audience. As in Lorenzetti's depiction of Siena in the 'Buon Governo' frescoes in the Sala dei Nove of the Sienese Palazzo Pubblico, the city itself is the key to the common good, radiating light in Lorenzetti's fresco and prefiguring the city of God in Giordano's sermons.

Giordano's most frequent attacks were directed at sins which threatened the common good and the godly nature of the city. In the case of Florence, an expanding mercantile power, one of the greatest ecclesiastical concerns was the practice of usury, and this is a theme to which Giordano returns time and time again, often substantiating his arguments with the authority of Aristotle's statements on the subject in *Politics* Book One:

The Philosopher says that there are two types of riches: one which is natural, and another which is artificial. The natural type are those riches which come from fields, the earth and vineyards, which are all the land that a man and his family need; and these are most definitely the most beautiful riches, and many cities glory in them. Other riches are those which are called artificial, which man gains from the labour of his hand, like those riches which man has from money. This

⁷⁶ Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche inedite*, ed. Narducci, p. 403.

⁷⁷ Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche inedite*, ed. Narducci, p. 403: 'È tanto questo desiderio, siccome di molti nati di fiorentini, fuori di Firenze: questi, che non la videro mai e che non ci naquero, si la desiderano e disideranci di ritornare.'

city is full of these riches and especially of usury. But these are the worst kind of riches; to acquire these riches, men become criminals, malefactors, and traitors and are drawn into every sin.⁷⁸

A sin condemned by clerics for generations was now explained to Giordano's flock in Aristotelian terms. The education of preaching friars in the work of Aristotle brought the doctrines of the *Politics* out of monastic libraries and into the urban environment of Italian city-states. Through Giordano da Pisa, the vernacular diffusion of political Aristotelianism reached a wide audience, including those who were illiterate in Italian but nevertheless capable of listening to and absorbing the sermons of a charismatic preacher. The circulation of copies of the sermons also gave them a more concrete impact and a readership beyond the churches and piazzas of Florence and Pisa.

As access to Aristotelian political philosophy became more widespread in the Italian peninsula, references to the *Politics* began to appear in vernacular texts which were composed by members of the laity and which represent a familiarity with the *Politics* acquired within Italy. Most famous of all are, undoubtedly, the works of Dante Alighieri. Although his particularly political work, the *Monarchia*, was written in Latin (reflecting the continuing pre-eminence of that language for learned works), the vernacular *Commedia* and *Convivio* both offer testimony to the contribution of Aristotelianism to Dante's political beliefs.

Dante's own acquaintance with the text of the *Politics* was cast into doubt by Allan Gilbert's 1929 article 'Had Dante Read the *Politics* of Aristotle?', which suggested that his references to the *Politics* were drawn instead from Thomas Aquinas' exegetical works or from the Italian vernacularisation of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*.⁷⁹ Gilbert pointed to the availability of much of what Dante cites from the *Politics* in the

⁷⁸ MS Gaddiano 102, c. 135v-136r, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, quoted in Iannella, *Giordano da Pisa. Etica urbana e forme della società*, p. 104: 'Il filosofo dice ke sono due modi di riccheçe: l'uno si è naturale et l'altro artificiale. Il natural modo si è di quelle riccheçe che sono di campi et di terre, di vigne, ke à l'uomo tanta terra ke basti ad sé et a la famiglia sua; et sono queste bellissime riccheçe, nettissime, et molte cittadi se ne gloriano di queste riccheçe. Altre riccheçe sono, le quali sono dette artificiali, le quali l'uomo acchatta per lavorio di mano, chome sono le riccheçe che l'homo àe in danari. Di queste riccheçe è piena questa cittade, et specialmente l'usure. Ma queste sono le pessime riccheçe: gli uomini per acquistare queste riccheçe diventano rei, malitiosi, traditori, et in ogni peccato sono tratti però.' *Politics*, 1258a37-1258b7.

⁷⁹ A. H. Gilbert, 'Had Dante Read the *Politics* of Aristotle?', *PMLA*, 4 (1928), pp. 602-613.

works of Thomas Aquinas and to the similarity between Dante's phrasing in the *Convivio* and that of the 1288 version of *Del reggimento de' principi*, both of which, for instance, employ the term 'compagnevole' when discussing man's social nature.⁸⁰ Furthermore, when Dante mentions the *Politics* he does not give precise references, as he often does for other Aristotelian works. Dante certainly seems less familiar with the *Politics* than with the *Ethics* and the *Physics*, referred to in Canto 11 of the *Inferno* as 'la tua etica' and 'la tua fisica'.⁸¹

In more recent years, however, there has been a move to reaffirm Dante's knowledge of the *Politics*. In his entry on 'Politica' in the *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, Enrico Berti concludes that Dante must have known the *Politics* in the translation made by William of Moerbeke, citing passages – particularly in the *Monarchia* – which closely reproduce the wording of Moerbeke's translation, and emphasising Dante's grasp of concepts which suggest a careful reading of Aristotle's text.⁸² The *Politics*, and learned discussion of its contents, would certainly have been available at the 'schools of the religious, and the disputations of the philosophers'⁸³ which Dante claimed to have attended after the death of Beatrice. In Florence, the Franciscan convent of Santa Croce contained a large collection of Aristotelian works, including the *Politics*,⁸⁴ while at Santa Maria Novella the *Politics* was regularly referred to in the lectures and tracts of Remigio de' Girolami, making it highly probable that the Dominican convent also contained a copy of Moerbeke's translation. It is likely that Dante would have studied the text alongside the commentaries of Thomas Aquinas and possibly also Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, in Latin or Italian, so similarities in phraseology are to be expected. Dante knew Giles' treatise, which he refers to as the *Reggimento de' principi* in the fourth treatise of the *Convivio*.⁸⁵

Monarchia, which features Dante's most detailed use of the *Politics*, was not translated

⁸⁰ Dante, *Convivio*, ed. F. Brambilla Ageno, 2 vols (Florence, 1995), II, IV.iv, p. 275: 'E però dice lo Filosofo che l'uomo naturalmente è compagnevole animale'; Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de' principi*, II.i.1, p. 127: 'l'uom die vivere in compagnia naturalmente ed essere compagnevole per natura.' Gilbert, 'Had Dante Read the *Politics* of Aristotle?', pp. 604-605.

⁸¹ L. Minio-Paluello, 'Dante's Reading of Aristotle', in C. Grayson (ed.), *The World of Dante: Essays on Dante and his Times* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 61-80, at p. 67.

⁸² E. Berti, 'Politica', in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, 6 vols (Rome, 1970-1978), IV, pp. 585-587.

⁸³ Dante, *Convivio*, II, II.xii, pp. 118-119: 'Nelle scuole delli religiosi e alle disputazioni delli filosofanti.' Translation from Dante, *The Banquet*, transl. C. Ryan (Saratoga, 1989), p. 66.

⁸⁴ Minio-Paluello, 'Dante's Reading of Aristotle', p. 66.

⁸⁵ Dante, *Convivio*, II, IV.xxiv, p. 417.

into Italian until the fifteenth century. Yet aspects of his political theory, and its Aristotelian cast, also received wide dissemination through some of his vernacular works. The *Commedia* began to circulate almost immediately after its composition, with copies of *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* available in northern Italy at the time of Dante's death in 1321.⁸⁶ A readership for the *Convivio* developed more gradually, perhaps because it was left in an unfinished state.⁸⁷ Commentators in Florence were, however, aware of the text from the mid-Trecento.⁸⁸ The *Convivio* is the vernacular work which best reflects Dante's use of the *Politics*: Treatise Four offers an outline of the political vision he elucidated in the *Monarchia*.

Exiled as a result of factional infighting within Florence, Dante envisioned a peaceful world monarchy, in which a just emperor, having the entire earth under his dominion, would have no need to wage war in order to increase his possessions. Once again, the *Politics*' powerful doctrine of community proved irresistible. Central to Dante's theory was Aristotle's concept of man as a social and political animal and his need to congregate in the *polis* to achieve both sufficiency and his end of worldly happiness. Like Giles of Rome, Dante expands the political community to embrace the kingdom, without indicating his deviation from the Aristotelian line:

The true root and foundation of the honour due to the emperor is the need men have to exist in society, which is directed to one end, a life of happiness. No individual is capable of attaining this by himself, without the help of others, since everyone has many needs that he cannot satisfy on his own. Hence the Philosopher's dictum that man is by nature a social animal. And just as the individual for his fulfilment requires the domestic society of a family, so the household requires for its fulfilment to be part of a neighbourhood: it would otherwise be lacking in many ways, and thus be precluded from attaining happiness. Again, a single neighbourhood cannot satisfy all its own needs; for this the city is required. For the sake of trade and defence, the city in turn needs

⁸⁶ S. Botterill, 'The Trecento Commentaries on Dante's *Commedia*', in A. Minnis and I. Johnson (eds), *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, II: The Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 590-611, at p. 590.

⁸⁷ S. A. Gilson, 'Reading the *Convivio* from Trecento Florence to Dante's Cinquecento Commentators', *Italian Studies*, 64 (2009), pp. 266-295, at p. 268.

⁸⁸ Gilson, 'Reading the *Convivio*', p. 269.

to cooperate with, and have friendly relations with, surrounding cities; and so the kingdom was born. Since the human psyche cannot be content with possessing a limited amount of land, but, as experience tells us, always desires the glory of making further acquisitions, quarrels and wars inevitably spring up between the various kingdoms. These are the scourge of cities, and through cities of neighbourhoods, and through neighbourhoods of households, and through households of the individual. The result is that it is impossible to attain happiness.

To eradicate these wars and their causes, it is, then, absolutely necessary that the entire world, and all that the human race is capable of possessing, should be a monarchy, that is, that it should be under the dominion of one rule and one ruler: the ruler would himself possess everything and have nothing further to desire, and so he would ensure that kings were content to remain within the bounds of their kingdoms, and thereby keep peace among them. As a result, cities would be at peace, neighbourhoods in this peace would live in friendship, and households through this friendship would obtain all that they need, so that, finally, the individual would live happily, which is the end for which he is born.

Confirmation of this line of reasoning can be found in what the Philosopher says in the *Politics*: in a plurality directed to one end, one member must direct and rule, and all the others must be ruled and directed.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Dante, *Convivio* IV.iv, pp. 275-277: 'Lo fondamento radicale della imperiale maiestade, secondo lo vero, è la necessità della umana civiltade, che a uno fine è ordinata, cioè a vita felice; alla quale nullo per sé è sufficiente a venire senza l'aiutorio d'alcuno, con ciò sia cosa che l'uomo abisogna di molte cose, alle quali uno solo soddisfare non può. E però dice lo Filosofo che l'uomo naturalmente è compagnevole animale. E sì come un uomo a sua sufficienza richiede compagnia domestica di famiglia, così una casa a sua sufficienza richiede una vicinanza: altrimenti molti difetti sosterrebbe che sarebbero impedimento di felicitade. E però che una vicinanza [a] sé non può in tutto soddisfare, conviene a satisfacimento di quella essere la cittade. Ancora la cittade richiede alle sue arti e alle sue difensioni vicenda avere e fratellanza colle circavicine cittadi; e però fu fatto lo regno.

Onde, con ciò sia cosa che l'animo umano in terminata possessione di terra non si queti, ma sempre desidera gloria d'aquistare, sì come per esperienza vedemo, discordie e guerre conviene surgere intra regno e regno, le quali sono tribulazioni delle cittadi, e per le cittadi delle vicinanze, e per le vicinanze de le case [e per le case] de l'uomo; e così s'impedisce la felicitade. Il perché, a queste guerre e alle loro cagioni torre via, conviene di necessità tutta la terra, e quanto all'umana generazione a possedere è dato, essere Monarchia, cioè uno solo principato, e uno prencipe avere; lo quale, tutto possedendo e più desiderare non possendo, li regi tegna contenti nelli termini delli regni, sì che pace intra loro sia, nella quale si posino le cittadi, e in questa posa le vicinanze s'amino, [e] in questo amore le case prendano ogni loro bisogno, lo qual preso, l'uomo viva felicemente: che è quella per che esso è nato.

E a queste ragioni si possono reducir parole del Filosofo ch'elli nella *Politica* dice, che quando più cose ad uno fine sono ordinate, una di quelle conviene essere regolante o vero reggente, e tutte l'altre rette e regolate.' Translation from Dante, *The Banquet*, transl. Ryan, pp. 127-128, with slight

The concept of a political community engaged together in the pursuit of the single end of happiness (amplified by Dante to encompass the whole world and thus used to justify a universal monarchy) is the Aristotelian doctrine to which he most frequently has recourse. Also in the *Convivio* he repeats, almost verbatim, Aristotle's metaphor of a ship with all its sailors united in the pursuit of a single end.⁹⁰ And in *Paradiso* 8 of the *Commedia*, Carlo Martello (Charles Martel of Anjou, prince of Hungary), first emphasises the utmost necessity of political association and then explains its nature, explicating such weighty issues as divine providence and order within the universe:

Ond'elli ancora: 'Or dì: sarebbe il peggio
per l'omo in terra, se non fosse cive?'
'Sì', rispuos' io; 'e qui ragion non cheggio.'
'E puot' elli esser, se giù non si vive
diversamente per diversi officii?
Non, se 'l maestro vostro ben vi scrive.'⁹¹

Dante's 'maestro' is, of course, Aristotle. Although Dante makes only limited use of the *Politics*, the extraordinary popularity of his works ensured that the Aristotelian political teachings which were assimilated by him reached a large readership, through the medium of literary works rather than the political or philosophical texts in which they had previously circulated. In the case of the *Commedia*, it contributed to the vernacular dissemination of the *Politics* in the fourteenth century not so much through the poem itself as through the large number of commentaries it inspired, many of which cited and referred to Aristotelian texts, including the *Politics*, to explain concepts contained within Dante's masterpiece.

The first two commentaries on the *Commedia*, by Dante's son Jacopo Alighieri

modifications.

⁹⁰ Dante, *Convivio*, II, IV.iv, pp. 277-278; *Politics*, 1276b20-27; Aristotle, *Politicorum Libri Octo cum Vetusta Translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, pp. 161-162. See Berti, 'Politica', p. 586.

⁹¹ Dante, *Paradiso I: Italian Text and Translation*, transl. C. S. Singleton (London, 1975), pp. 90-91: 'Whereupon he again, "Now say, would it be worse for man on earth if he were not a citizen?" "Yes," I replied, "and here I ask for no proof." "And can that be, unless men below live in diverse ways for diverse duties? Not if your master writes well of this for you."'

(composed in 1322) and by Graziolo Bambaglioli, chancellor of Bologna (written in 1324), both dealt with *Inferno* alone and were mostly concerned with the allegorical content of the text rather than its scholastic learning; neither mentions the *Politics*.⁹² The earliest commentary to do so, and to treat the *Commedia* in its entirety, was composed in the Italian vernacular by Jacopo della Lana, probably in Venice or Bologna, between 1323 and 1328.⁹³ Della Lana was a member of the ‘Scuola bolognese’, and his commentary reflects the infiltration of the scholasticism practised in Paris into the educational institutions of northern Italy by the early decades of the fourteenth century. The entry on della Lana in the *Dizionario dei commentatori danteschi* suggests that he read the *Commedia* as a ‘*summa* enciclopedia’ of scholastic knowledge.⁹⁴ He certainly displays a keen awareness of the works of Aristotle and other classical philosophers, as well as of Thomas Aquinas and the Church Fathers.

It was della Lana who first explicated Dante’s somewhat cryptic conversation with Carlo Martello in *Paradiso* 8. In his ‘proemio’ to the canto, he explains that ‘it is necessary to be a citizen and political, for (as Aristotle says in the *Politics*) man is a social animal, and it is impossible for him to live in a solitary manner ... he therefore needs diverse companions who practise diverse arts and who have diverse duties; and this diversity produces heaven, as they say.’⁹⁵

In many cases, the text of the *Commedia* provided della Lana with a starting-point for the development of philosophical themes. His comments on individual verses are succinct, but each canto is preceded by a long ‘proemio’ or, in some cases, is followed by a conclusion which sets out the main philosophical exposition and which gives della Lana the opportunity to digress. Aristotle’s doctrine on the social nature of man is

⁹² F. Mazzoni, ‘Jacopo della Lana e la crisi nell’interpretazione della *Divina Commedia*’, in *Dante e Bologna nei tempi di Dante* (Bologna, 1967), pp. 265-306, at p. 273.

⁹³ Opinions vary. Botterill, in ‘The Trecento Commentaries on Dante’s *Commedia*’, p. 592, considers that the commentary was written in Venice; S. Bellomo, *Dizionario dei commentatori danteschi: L’esegesi della Commedia da Iacopo Alighieri a Nidobeato* (Florence, 2004), p. 281, suggests it was made in Bologna.

⁹⁴ Bellomo, *Dizionario*, p. 282.

⁹⁵ Jacopo della Lana, *Commento alla ‘Commedia’*, ed. M. Volpi and A. Terzi, 4 vols (Rome, 2009), III, *Paradiso* 8, pp. 1931-1933: ‘È bisogno ad essere cittadinanza e polizie, imperquello che, sí come dice Aristotile nella *Politica*, l’omo si è animale sociabile ed è impossibile ad esso vivere secondo lo mondo solo ... adunqua gli è bisogno compagni diversi di diverse arti e che abbiano diversi officii. E questa tale diversitate produce lo cielo, sí com’ è detto.’ This edition gives both dialect and Tuscan versions of the text; I am using the Tuscan, for ease of understanding.

reiterated in the conclusion to his commentary on *Paradiso* 12, in which the appearance of St Dominic – described by Dante as wedded to the Church – prompts della Lana to consider the relative merits of celibacy and marriage. Expanding Aristotle’s account of man’s need for community in order to survive, della Lana maintains that community is also necessary in order to live well: ‘as the Philosopher says in his *Politics*, man is a sociable animal ... it would be impossible to live alone, and especially in a virtuous manner’.⁹⁶

Dante’s punishment of tyrants in *Inferno* 12 leads della Lana, in his ‘proemio’, to a lengthy discussion of Aristotle’s classification of regimes, ‘so that one may understand the evil of tyranny more clearly’,⁹⁷ indicating the *Politics* and the fifth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* as his sources. The three methods of ruling a city – ‘either by one alone, or by a few, or by all the people’⁹⁸ – along with their deviations and the hallmarks of tyranny (as set out by Aristotle in *Politics* Book Five) are explained. Della Lana continues by ranking the various polities, explaining that ‘of these three forms of rule the best is that of the king’, and that ‘rule by the people with corrupt intention is bad; worse is that of the few with bad intent; the worst form of rule is that of a tyrant.’⁹⁹ This may be intended as support of Dante’s views on world monarchy or may be following Giles of Rome, who della Lana then directs his readers to in order to further their knowledge: ‘We have touched briefly on the methods of government; and therefore those who have a desire to know about these matters more extensively should find the *Ethics* and the *Politics*, in which they are treated fully, and also the book *De regimine principum* of Giles, in the third main part of which this subject is dealt with in a clear manner.’¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Della Lana, *Commento alla ‘Commedia’*, III, *Paradiso* 12, pp. 2083-2085: ‘Sì come dice lo Filosofo nella sua *Politica*, lo uomo si è animale sociabile ... sì che impossibile serebbe a vivere solo e spetialmente vertudiosamente.’

⁹⁷ Della Lana, *Commento alla ‘Commedia’*, I, *Inferno* 12, p. 381: ‘Acciò che piú chiaro si cognosca la malizia de’ tiranni.’

⁹⁸ Della Lana, *Commento alla ‘Commedia’*, I, *Inferno* 12, p. 381: ‘O da un solo, o da pochi, o da tutto lo popolo.’

⁹⁹ Della Lana, *Commento alla ‘Commedia’*, I, *Inferno* 12, p. 385: ‘Delle quali tre signorie la migliore si è del re.’ ‘La mala signoria è del popolo che ha corrotta la intenzione; peggiore è di pochi c’hanno malo intendimento; la pessima signoria è quella del tiranno.’

¹⁰⁰ Della Lana, *Commento alla ‘Commedia’*, I, *Inferno* 12, p. 385: ‘Abbiamo toccato brevemente de’ modi delle polizie e però chi ha diletto di volerne sapere piú diffusamente trovi l’*Ethica* e la *Politica*, là dove apieno si tratta di quelle; ancora lo libro che fé frà Gilio *De regimine principum* in lo quale distintamente nella terza principal parte sí si contene.’

In addition to recommending or citing Latin works such as Giles' *De regimine principum*, della Lana often includes Latin quotations in his commentary. This perhaps lends weight to the theory proposed by Francesco Mazzoni, who – noting the 'professionalism' of his approach – suggested that della Lana's commentary was intended for students.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, in some cases misrepresentation occurs. Della Lana is certainly prepared to alter Aristotle's views in order to bolster Dante's authority:

The third thing to know is that, as Aristotle proves in his *Politics*, it is reasonable that the world should be ruled by one prince, who takes care of and rules over his subjects and is their regulator. It was the opinion of the author [i.e., Dante] that this prince of temporal states was the Emperor of Rome, as he discusses in the first and second parts of his *Monarchia*; and he appoints this empire to have legal jurisdiction over these temporal states.¹⁰²

Here della Lana seems to go even further than Dante, stating that Aristotle explicitly supports the concept of a world monarchy. It is possible, however, that this misunderstanding arose because della Lana was using the *Monarchia* as a source for the *Politics*.

The references to the *Politics* made by della Lana were in turn adopted by later Trecento commentators, who drew on his exposition in composing their own works and so multiplied the vernacular dissemination of these Aristotelian political teachings. The anonymous *Ottimo Commento*, a text composed in Florence in the 1330s and extant in three separate redactions, often reproduces della Lana's mentions of the *Politics* word for word. For instance, in the section on *Paradiso* 7, della Lana's attribution of the concept of a world monarchy to Aristotle is repeated: 'Aristotle, in the *Politics*, proves that the world must be ruled by one prince, who takes care of and rules over his subjects; and he is the regulator.'¹⁰³ In some cases, however, della Lana's interpretation

¹⁰¹ Mazzoni, 'Jacopo della Lana', p. 285.

¹⁰² Della Lana, *Commento alla 'Commedia'*, III, *Paradiso* 7, 'proemio', p. 1905: 'Alla terza cosa si è da sapere che, sí come pruova Aristotile nella sua *Politica*, ragionevilemente lo mondo si dé reggere per uno principio, lo quale hae custodia e reggimento de' suoi sudditi ed è suo regolatore, e fue oppinione de l'autore che tale principio cerca li temporali reggimenti fosse lo imperadore di Roma, sí com' ello tratta nella sua *Monarchia* nella prima e nella seconda parte; e nominato tale imperio avere iurisdizione iudiziaria circa questi temporali.'

¹⁰³ *L'Ottimo Commento della Divina Commedia: Testo inedito d'un contemporaneo di Dante*, ed. A. Torri, 3 vols (Bologna, 1995), III, *Paradiso* 7, 'proemio', pp. 177-178: 'Alla terza parte Aristotile, nella

is expanded. The *Ottimo Commento*'s explanation of Dante's conversation with Carlo Martello in *Paradiso* 8, for instance, is much more verbose and detailed than della Lana's:

And so Carlo proceeds and says: 'Answer me. If man was not a civil animal on earth – that is, reasonable, and a citizen and fit to be upright – would he be worse off?' And the author responds: 'Yes.' And Carlo proceeds and asks the author: 'Could man be civil on earth, if he did not live there diversely and with diverse tasks?' The author responds: 'No, if Aristotle speaks the truth in his *Politics*.' ... Now, he proceeds and says: 'Could it be that man is a citizen on earth, if he did not live by means of diverse offices down here, as happens in the city? Some make bridles, saddles and weapons, some attend to the military arts, some attend to the wool trade, some to the medicinal arts, others to the mason's art; so that these individual artisans constitute a perfect whole, which has no need of extraneous things. And so in their works they are directed to the end of the city, that is, to live virtuously.' And he says: 'No, if your master (that is, Aristotle) wrote correctly in the *Politics*.'¹⁰⁴

The *Ottimo commento* contributes here to the accretion of Aristotelian material in the *Commedia* commentary tradition by including the central purpose of the Aristotelian community, to live well, which della Lana had failed to mention when commenting on *Paradiso* 8.

The commentary of Francesco da Buti, composed between 1385 and 1395, also relies on that of della Lana, but gives hints of a deeper connection to vernacular literary

Politica, pruova che 'l mondo si dee reggere per uno principio, lo quale ha custodia e reggimento de' suoi sudditi; ed esso è regolatore.'

¹⁰⁴ *L'Ottimo Commento, Paradiso* 8, pp. 212-213: 'E però procede Carlo, e dice: Rispondimi; se l'uomo non fosse in terra animale civile, cioè trattavole, ragionevole, e cittadinesco, ed acconcio ad essere retto, sarebbe elli el peggio? E l'Autore risponde: sì; e Carlo procede, e domanda l'Autore: Puote l'uomo essere civile in terra, s'elli non vi si vive diversamente per diversi offizi? L'Autore risponde: 'no; se Aristotile dice il vero nel libro Politicorum.' ... Or procede, e dice: puote elli essere, che l'uomo in terra sia cive, se giù non si vive per diversi offizi diversamente, siccome fa nella cittade, che alcuni tendono ad artistare freni, selle ed armi; alcuni attendono all'arte militare; alcuni attendono all'arte lanifica; alcuni all'arte medicinale; alcuni all'arte fabrile, acciò che questi particolari artefici facciano e costituiscano uno perfetto tutto, il quale di nulla abbisogni di fuori; e che questi per lo dirizzatore della cittade sieno addirizzati nelle loro opere, si ch'elle sieno a vertuoso vivere: e dice, no; se'l maestro vostro, cioè Aristotile, bene scrive nella Politica.'

culture than to that of the universities. A phrase used in his exposition of *Paradiso* 8, ‘perchè l’uomo è compagnevole animale e naturato a vivere accompagnato’, suggests a familiarity with both Dante’s *Convivio* and Giles of Rome’s *Del reggimento de’ principi*.¹⁰⁵

Da Buti forms part of a wave of late Trecento commentaries which appeared after a hiatus of several decades. By this point the practice of commenting on the *Commedia* had undergone various stylistic changes. Da Buti, for example, provided a line-by-line commentary, in contrast to the digressions of della Lana and the *Ottimo Commento*. Giovanni Boccaccio, in the same period, divided each canto into a literal and allegorical interpretation. He also has less recourse to Aristotle than his predecessors. His commentary extends to canto 17 of the *Inferno*, yet there is no discussion of tyranny according to the *Politics* as in della Lana’s comments on *Inferno* 12. Instead, Boccaccio’s only use of the *Politics* is as an antiquarian source, for the story of King Minos.¹⁰⁶

In this chapter, I have traced the development in the use of material from Aristotle’s *Politics* in the vernacular culture of Italy, beginning with the Italian translation of *De regimine principum*, a text from a Parisian and scholastic background, and concluding with the commentary tradition on Dante’s *Commedia*, which was closely connected to the advancement of the Italian language. Although the number of works in Italian containing references to the *Politics* in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is small, the fact that they range across literary genres and were generally popular suggests that the presence of Aristotelian political thought in vernacular culture was not insignificant. The location of the texts – in terms of their production and what little is known of their circulation – is centred on northern Italy, indicating that there was more demand for vernacular political materials in the communal city-states of the north than elsewhere in Italy.

Certain specific aspects of Aristotelian political thought feature repeatedly in these

¹⁰⁵ Francesco da Buti, *Commento... sopra La Divina Commedia di dante Allighieri*, ed. C. Giannini, 3 vols (Pisa, 1858-1862), III.i, *Paradiso* 8, p. 270. See Gilbert, ‘Had Dante Read the *Politics* of Aristotle?’, pp. 604-605.

¹⁰⁶ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il comento... sopra la Divina commedia di Dante Alighieri*, ed. I. Moutier, 3 vols (Florence, 1844), II, *Inferno* V, p. 8.

vernacular texts. The social and political nature of man and the necessity of living in a community, both for sufficiency and to live well, stands out as the doctrine which vernacular authors most often had recourse to. Considerations of different regimes, particularly the evils of tyranny, and the condemnation of usury also proved popular. The predominance of these themes in vernacular texts no doubt reflects the priorities and preoccupations of the fourteenth-century Italian city-states. The Aristotelian notion of community and of man as a political animal helped to further the concept of the common good and the glorification of the city; the demonization of tyranny could be countered with praise of a just king, as by Giles of Rome, or used to promote the freedom enjoyed in a city-state where the lord is elected by the citizenry, as in the alteration of Aristotle's text by Taddeo Alderotti and Brunetto Latini to present communal rule as the best form of government. The mercantile activity of many within the cities explains the preoccupation of preachers such as Giordano da Pisa with the sin of usury. This selective use of the *Politics* indicates not only its presence in late medieval Italian vernacular culture but also a contemporary recognition of how the work could be relevant to the northern Italian political experience.

Chapter Three

The Vernacular Reception and Transmission of Aristotle's *Politics* in Fifteenth-Century Italy

The straightforward approach to political systems in the vernacular literature of the fourteenth century, which saw Aristotle often used as an authority to support either monarchical or republican systems of governance, wavered in the next century as writers confronted ambiguous forms of Renaissance government. Many of Italy's medieval city-republics had seen their ruling councils replaced by *signorie* – single rulers who could hardly, however, be characterised as monarchs.¹ Florence, that centre of republican thought, became a republic in name only in the course of the fifteenth century, as Cosimo de' Medici extended his influence over all aspects of civic government and left the effective rule of the city to his grandson, Lorenzo. In the east, Venice preserved its republican status (although in a form very different from that of the Tuscan city-states; indeed, it was often characterised as an oligarchic, aristocratic, or mixed government) and was mythologised as a city of fixed political systems and unshakable stability, in contrast to the fluctuating Florentine political scene.

Significant changes also took place in the intellectual environment of Italy throughout the fifteenth century. This was the period which witnessed the blossoming of Renaissance humanism, an approach to scholarship rooted in a perception of distance between the present age and that of the revered classical civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome, and a desire to recreate that golden age in Italy by recapturing the purity of classical Latin and rediscovering lost works of erudition. Texts became available in Italy for the first time through the arrival of manuscripts from the Byzantine East and could be newly read as a result of the vogue for learning Greek; these included the philosophical works of Plato and the Neoplatonists, the study of which became an emblematic feature of Medicean Florence in the second half of the fifteenth century.²

Aristotle's *Politics* did not lose its appeal in the face of these developments in Italy's

¹ N. Rubinstein, 'Italian Political Thought, 1450-1530', in J. H. Burns and M. Goldie (eds), *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 30-65, at pp. 30-31.

² A. Brown, 'Platonism in Fifteenth-Century Florence and its Contribution to Early Modern Political Thought', *The Journal of Modern History*, 58 (1986), pp. 383-413, at p. 383.

political situation or intellectual climate. On the contrary, it retained its position as one of the central texts of the classical canon and was approached with increasing subtlety and care by the century's scholars. As seen in Chapter One, the evolution of humanism effected a new approach to language and the writings of the ancients: Greek texts were read in the original language of their composition, and translated with the aim of conveying their deepest meaning in pure classical Latin. As we have seen, Leonardo Bruni produced a new Latin translation of the *Politics* in 1437, replacing William of Moerbeke's rather tortuous word-for-word scholastic version with a text which conformed to the highest humanist expectations of elegance and grace of expression. The king of Naples, Alfonso the Magnanimous, was so eager to possess a copy of the manuscript he sent an envoy the length of Italy to collect it.³ Nor was the humanist appetite satiated by Bruni's translation. John Argyropoulos, the Byzantine emigré, lectured on the *Politics* on Florentine feast days around 1458 and dared to criticise and update Bruni's rendering of Peripatetic texts.⁴ His student, Donato Acciaiuoli, composed a commentary on the *Politics* in 1472.⁵

The humanists of the fifteenth century – like their scholastic predecessors – concentrated the majority of their scholarly activity on study and composition in the Latin tongue, if using a more refined and purely classical language than that of their forebears. Certainly there were some exceptions: for example, Leon Battista Alberti, who went against the norm by choosing to write his *Della famiglia* in Tuscan; but such instances – particularly in the first half of the century – were rare. As in the fourteenth century, therefore, discussion of Aristotle's *Politics* in the Italian vernacular required a particular reason on the part of the author for the employment of that language.

As in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, we find a preponderance of vernacular Aristotelian material in works which were aimed at a non-Latinate audience, for whom use of the vernacular was a necessity. These texts include sermons addressed to the populace at large and political tracts which continued the mirror-for-princes tradition, but were intended for readers more involved in civic duties than in learning and were

³ J. H. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples* (Princeton NJ, 1987), p. 55.

⁴ A. Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy of Florence* (Princeton NJ, 1988), pp. 123-124.

⁵ M. Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics, 1250-1600* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 88.

therefore without competence in Latin. Works of exegesis which attempted to explain the greatest work of Italian literature, Dante's *Commedia*, were also often composed in the vernacular, especially in the second half of the century when the use of Italian – or a more particular regional dialect – became a statement of civic pride.

Italian works written in the previous centuries which had made significant use of the *Politics* continued to enjoy great popularity; and some Latin works, such as Dante's *Monarchia*, became available in translation for the first time. In addition, new vernacular texts reflected a changing approach to Aristotle's treatise, both in the purposes it was put to, the sections on which writers chose to focus, and the other authorities it was used together with or in contrast to. Differences are also evident between the humanist, Latinate treatment of the text and those vernacular works by authors distanced from the humanist circles of the city-states by their status, education or ideology.

One such writer was Giovanni Cavalcanti (1381-c.1451), a minor Florentine nobleman best known for his *Istorie Florentine*⁶ but who also wrote a political treatise, the *Trattato politico-morale* (c. 1449). This work was addressed to Gino, the son of Cavalcanti's contemporary Neri di Gino Capponi, and was intended to educate him on the political and social environment of republican Florence and to instruct him on proper conduct within it. Cavalcanti was, however, isolated from contemporary Florentine fashions and intellectual developments both by his poverty and by his political views. He lived outside the city, supporting an ever-increasing number of dependants on a steadily dwindling estate, and wrote his literary works while imprisoned for debt in the Stinche.⁷ Beyond this, he despised what he saw as the self-serving statecraft of his fellow citizens in general and Cosimo de' Medici in particular,⁸ preferring the morals of the 'buon tempo antico' found in the poetry of Dante and in the examples of virtuous Florentine republicans of the previous centuries.

The *Trattato* is a work, for the most part, untouched by humanism. Cavalcanti's

⁶ Giovanni Cavalcanti, *Istorie fiorentine*, ed. G. di Pino (Milan, 1944).

⁷ M. Grendler, *The Trattato politico-morale of Giovanni Cavalcanti (1381-c.1451): A Critical Edition and Interpretation* (Geneva, 1973), p. 15.

⁸ Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, p. 95.

references to events and notable figures in Florence are restricted to those of the past; and while the classical and medieval sources he employs as authorities remained popular in the fifteenth century, Cavalcanti does not supplement them with any more recent works. As a result, the *Trattato* has been described as ‘overall a scholastic work’ (‘nel complesso un’ opera scolastica’).⁹ Cavalcanti’s knowledge of scholastic sources was, however, wide-ranging, and despite his poverty he clearly had access to a fairly extensive, if a little outdated, library. In addition to the practical philosophy gleaned from the *Ethics* and the *Politics* which forms the basis for the first two books of the *Trattato*, he refers to other Aristotelian works (including the *Metaphysics*, *De anima* and *Rhetoric*) and to authors such as Averroes, Thomas Aquinas, Cicero, the Church Fathers and both Dante and Petrarch.

In contrast to the *Istorie Fiorentine*, the *Trattato* has received very little critical attention. One exception is Marcella Grendler’s 1973 monograph, which offers valuable contextual information on the *Trattato* but concentrates almost entirely on the third and final book, a comparison between exemplary Florentines and their classical counterparts. Grendler produced a critical edition of the final book, but judged that ‘the first two books on the individual and the family... are lengthy, dry, pedantic compilations of definitions of virtues and vices, with only occasional advice appropriate for Florentines. They are reminiscent of the older, late medieval form of vernacular moral treatise, and in no way merit detailed analysis.’¹⁰ Here, however, I shall focus in particular on these two books, since they are underpinned by a thorough knowledge of Aristotle’s *Politics*.

The three books of the *Trattato* – divided according to the Aristotelian system of practical philosophy into ethics, oeconomics and politics – treat each of these human spheres of activity as essentially political: and, as found in medieval political treatises, the central tenet of political activity is devotion to the *bene commune*. Cavalcanti’s first words to Gino de Neri Capponi make this conception of political activity as the most important part of human life abundantly clear:

⁹ C. Mutini, ‘Cavalcanti, Giovanni’, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), XXII, pp. 624-628, at p. 628.

¹⁰ Grendler, *The Trattato politico-morale of Giovanni Cavalcanti*, p. 31. For a general consideration of Cavalcanti’s works, see C. Varese, *Storia e politica nella prosa del Quattrocento* (Turin, 1961), pp. 93-131.

Since, Gino, art is infinite and my life is so brief and craft is necessary, do not therefore be surprised if I do not take everything into consideration; but you must stay attentive to those things which, beyond the others I show to you, pertain to the good political life, in the judgement of political thinkers.¹¹

Cavalcanti's treatment of ethics, the government of the self, in the first book of the *Trattato* is limited to the examination of the individual within the political context of the city. Cavalcanti re-emphasises that his particular concern lies with the active citizen:

Therefore, it has been seen where the hope of finding happiness is vain and imperfect. In my view, it is convenient to draw a line under this and move forward, in order to give instruction as to where one must acquire political happiness and how to attend subsequently to the correct rule and doctrine, which comes from long practice.¹²

The treatise is also aimed at the political education of a particular kind of citizen. A descendant of mirror-for-princes literature such as Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, the *Trattato* has as its model the virtuous republican and defender of the *bene commune*. The dedication of the treatise to Gino, to whom Cavalcanti appeals repeatedly throughout, and his emphasis on the correct behaviour, in particular, of men of standing in the republic ('i più grandi huomini') shows that Cavalcanti intended his work as a guide for those who, unlike himself, possessed the power and influence to contribute to the governance of the republic: citizens like the Capponi, who were respected and actively involved in the political life of the city. When outlining the fallacy that riches lead to happiness, following a discussion of usury made with particular reference to *Politics* Book One,¹³ it is obvious that Cavalcanti regards this sin

¹¹ Giovanni Cavalcanti, *Trattato politico-morale*, Florence Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Ginori Conti, Appendice 3, [f. 3r]: 'Conciosa cosa o gino che larte è infinita et la mia vita è brevissima et il mestiere è bisogno adunque non avere amiratione se da me ongni cosa non è coniderara ma tu debbi stare paziente a quelle cose che oltre a gli altri ti mostro quanto apertiene al ben vivere pulytico per che la sententia di pulithyci.'

¹² Cavalcanti, *Trattato*, [f. 29r-v]: 'Adunque veduto dove la speranza di trovare la felicità è vana et imperfecta. A me è convenevole far coma et passare più avante per dare notitia dove la felicità pulythyca si debba aquistare e di quindi atendella conseguitando la diritta regola e doctrina chessinchiude nella lunga praticha.'

¹³ *Politics*, 1258b2-8.

as of greater magnitude when committed by someone of standing in the republic:

Three great evils would follow from it [i.e., usury], and these would be all the more evil when committed by great men. The first problem is that such a man loses great goods. The second that he becomes a tyrant. The third that he robs the people because he desires riches.¹⁴

As a consequence of their power, ‘i più grandi huomini’ have a heightened responsibility for the welfare of the *bene commune*. While Giles of Rome wrote in order to create a perfect prince, Cavalcanti has as his ideal the virtuous citizen of the republic, devoted to the good of the city.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Aristotelian doctrine referred to most often by Cavalcanti is one which had also resonated powerfully with inhabitants of Italian city-states in the previous century and which acted as a reminder of the citizens’ duty to their community – man’s status as a social and political animal and the ramifications that follow from this assumption. Although this is repeatedly invoked throughout the first two books, it is most comprehensively detailed in a section of the second book in which Cavalcanti summarises Aristotle’s remarks on man’s nature, his capacity for speech and the theory that living outside a community makes a man something other than human, whether beast-like or divine. His conclusion, like that of Aristotle, is that the state is prior to the individual and a necessary tool in the attainment of virtue:

It is a natural thing for man to live in company and to be a sociable animal. So that the Philosopher in the first book of the *Politics*, among other reasons he touches on which prove that man is a sociable animal, puts forward this reason: that speech is for talking by one person to another as a society. For this reason, nature gave speech to man and did not give it to the other animals. And so, therefore, those who do not wish to live in community and do not wish to live as citizens, as one reads in the first book of the *Politics*, are those who choose a

¹⁴ Cavalcanti, *Trattato*, [f. 7r]: ‘Avengadio che tre grandi mali ne seguirebbe e tanto sarebbero più pessimi quanto piu fussino commessi da piu grandi huomini. Lo primo inconveniente è che perde i beni grandi. El sicondo che diventa tiranno. El terço che diventa rubatore del popolo per che desidera le richeçe.’

solitary life, are not part of the city but are beasts or gods who choose not to live with others or to become so because they are too wicked; and because they are not able to tolerate society they are to be called beasts, or because they surpass the habits of the good, wishing to attend to contemplation, they are called divine men.¹⁵

Cavalcanti – the patriotic Florentine – reads ‘state’ as ‘city’, just as Aristotle did. He also emphasises the absolute necessity of the city for human (as opposed to beast-like or god-like) existence and, by extension, for virtuous human existence, and finds support for this political view in the words of Aristotle:

So the Philosopher in the first book of the *Politics* makes a comparison between the city and the district and the household, saying that the first community is the community of the city.¹⁶

Cavalcanti’s use of the *Politics* to support his committed republicanism and his belief in the necessity of the city-state for human life is an important vehicle for his transfer of Aristotelian material into the Italian vernacular. It should be kept in mind, nonetheless, that this theme is already found in many of the texts discussed in the previous chapter: it is essentially a restatement of those passages which Trecento authors regarded as most important, although Cavalcanti does not extend his considerations, as some of them do, to a kingdom; for him the city is enough.

Cavalcanti, however, also makes use of Aristotle’s *Politics* in another significant way – as the main source for many of his discussions in the second book of the *Trattato* on

¹⁵ Cavalcanti, *Trattato*, [ff. 132v-133r]: ‘È naturale cosa alluomo vivere in compagnia et essere animale acompagniaevole. Onde il phylosopho nel primo pulitico [*Politics*, 1253a7-18] laltre ragoni che tocca per le quali pruova chelluomo è animale acompagnevole pone questa ragone che conciosia cosa chella parola sia perdere da uno ad un altro come acompagnia. Perche la natura diede parlare alluomo la qualcosa non diede alli altri animali. Et cosi adunque coloro che non vuolglono vivere in compagnia et non voglono vivere come ciptadini si come si legge nel primo pulytico [*Politics*, 1253a3-6] che quegli che eleggono la vita solitaria che non sono parte della ciptade ma sono bestie overo iddii perche a quelgli che eleggono di non vive ma altrui o egli a diviene perche sono troppo rei et perquesto non possono sostenere la compagnia sono da essere detti bestie overamente perche passono il costume di buoni voglendo attendere a contemplatione sono detti essere huomini divini.’

¹⁶ Cavalcanti, *Trattato*, [f. 136r]: ‘Onde il phylosopho nel primo pulytico [*Politics*, 1252b28-1253a2 and 1253a19-20] fa comperatione della citta alla contrada et alla casa dicendo chella prima comunitade è la comunita della citta.’

oeconomics and the governance of the family. The *Trattato* is one of the most considered examinations of Aristotelian oeconomics as gleaned from the *Politics* at this point in vernacular Aristotelian literature. Only Giles of Rome's *Del reggimento de' principi* covers such an extensive range of material, but his approach is more didactic and straightforward than Cavalcanti's painstaking and thoughtful exposition.¹⁷

Calvalcanti, in true Aristotelian fashion, regards the family as the predecessor of the city and sees skilful and virtuous rule of the household as a necessary preparation for a political role on the larger stage of the republic. So, once again, he emphasises the obligation placed on the most influential members of the city to acquire these abilities:

If man is naturally a civil and sociable animal, it follows that since every community presupposes that the community of the household is a natural thing, noble citizens should know how to govern the domestic and monarchical family, that is, the household.¹⁸

Cavalcanti's examination of the household is meticulous. Using the first book of the *Politics* as his source, he divides familial relationships into separate categories, specifying those between husband and wife, parent and child and master and servant; and he differentiates between the types of rule exhibited in each case.¹⁹ Marriage is explained as the natural result of man's political nature ('man is naturally political and conjugal').²⁰

More specific advice on how to choose a wife and conduct oneself within matrimony is also taken from the *Politics*. Cavalcanti repeats Aristotle's instructions, given in *Politics* Book Seven, on entering into and managing of marital relationships. He cautions that the very young should not marry, and warns that very young women use marriage as an opportunity to lapse into wantonness:

¹⁷ Giles of Rome, *Del reggimento de' principi ... volgarizzamento trascritto nel MCCLXXXVIII*, ed. F. Corazzini (Florence, 1858).

¹⁸ Cavalcanti, *Trattato*, [f. 136v]: 'Onde se lluomo naturalmente è animale civile et compangnevole: conciosia cosa che omni comunita presupponga chella comunita della casa sia alcuna cosa naturale. Adunque alli nobili cittadini sapertiene di sapere governare la dimestica et reale familgla overo la casa.'

¹⁹ *Politics*, 1253b4-11: 'Now we should begin by examining everything in its fewest possible elements; and the first and fewest possible parts of a family are master and slave, husband and wife, father and children. We have therefore to consider what each of these three relations is and ought to be: I mean the relation of master and servant, the marriage relation (the conjunction of man and wife has no name of its own), and thirdly, the procreative relation (this also has no proper name).'

²⁰ Cavalcanti, *Trattato*, [f. 144v]: 'luomo naturalmente è pulythyco et coniugale'.

The Philosopher, in the seventh book of the *Politics*, touches on four reasons which prove that in the time of extreme youth one must not enter into marriage ... In the seventh book of the *Politics* the Philosopher says that those women who enter into marriage when very young seem to become dissolute through luxurious living.²¹

In his lengthy discussion of the government of the family Cavalcanti also allows himself to extrapolate and summarise material from Aristotle and add to it with contemporary practice. When offering Aristotelian support for the commonplace belief that a wife should remain silent, he embellishes on his source by focusing on how this will please her husband:

We read in the first book of the *Politics* that a woman's silence is among her best ornaments; this ornament makes their husbands love them more.²²

Cavalcanti continues by outlining the best ways to raise young children. His advice is almost entirely taken from the *Politics* and illustrates how Aristotelian precepts were regarded as easily transferable to the environment of a fifteenth-century city-state, just as they had been considered suitable by Giles of Rome for the upbringing of the children of the king of France in the thirteenth century. Following the guidelines laid down in the *Politics*, Cavalcanti divides the raising and education of children into blocks of seven years – from birth to seven, from seven to fourteen and fourteen to twenty-one – but characterises this education as a straightforward progression from base to higher matters:

We have said that with regard to children three areas must be considered. Firstly, how to regiment the body. Secondly, how to regulate the appetites. Thirdly, how to illuminate the intellect ... Therefore, in the first seven years one must attend

²¹Cavalcanti, *Trattato*, [f. 157r]: 'Tocca il phylosopho nel septimo della pulithyca [*Politics*, 1335a11-35] quatro ragioni per le quali proua che nella era troppa giovinele non si debba usare opera matrimoniale'; [f. 158r]: 'Nel septimo pulithyco [*Politics*, 1335a24-25] dice il phylosopho chelle femine che infanciullezza usono lo matrimonio pare che pui fussino stemperate diluxuria.'

²² Cavalcanti, *Trattato*, [f. 163r]: 'Leggisi nel primo della pulithyca [*Politics*, 1260a29-30] chel tacere delle femine è tragli optimi ornamenti questo ornamento induce amaggore amore li loro mariti.'

primarily to the good disposition of the body. And in the second seven there are two things one must attend to, that is, the good disposition of the body and the regulation of the appetites. But in the third seven years one must attend to three things: the good disposition of the body and the regulation of the appetites and the illumination of the intellect.²³

That Cavalcanti regards Aristotle's advice as applicable to the context of Renaissance Florence is also evident. He combines his use of Aristotle's doctrines on the raising of children with medieval and Renaissance educational practices such as the programme of the seven liberal arts, which, moreover, he supports with evidence drawn from the *Politics*. For instance, when describing music, he invokes Aristotle to underline the importance of studying this subject:

The fourth liberal art is music, which according to the Philosopher in the eighth book of the *Politics* is required of the young and especially of the children of the governors of the republic.²⁴

Cavalcanti's extensive use of the *Politics* emphasises the continued importance of Aristotle's treatise to readers and authors who were perhaps excluded from the vanguard of intellectual development (a very broad demographic), especially when considering man's place within a community and the best ordering of the household. It is evident that Cavalcanti sees the *Politics* as his most important source for oeconomic knowledge in particular. The third book of the *Trattato* – on politics – focuses on the ideal exercise of *virtù* through the example of historic Florentines and of classical figures (for which his source was the *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri novem* of Valerius Maximus); this is perhaps a moral response to what he perceived as the unscrupulous political practice of his day, and Cavalcanti would not have found any comparable

²³ Cavalcanti, *Trattato*, [f. 195v]: 'Noi abiamo decto che nelli figliuoli si debbono atendere tre cose. La prima come abino bene disposto il corpo. Secondo bene ordinato l'appetito. Terzo bene alluminato l'ontellecto ... Adunque nelli primi septe anni se debbe intendere principalmente alla buono dispositione del corpo. Et nelli secondi septe cose si debbe atendere a due cose cioè alla buona dispositiono del corpo et alla ordinatione dello appetito. Ma nel terzo septimo anno è da intendere a tre cose alla buona dispositione del corpo et alla ordinatione dello appetito et alla alluminatione dello intellecto.' *Politics*, 1336a4-1337a7.

²⁴ Cavalcanti, *Trattato*, [f. 180v]: 'La quarta scientia liberale è la musica la quale secondo il phylosopho nel'ottavo della sua pulythyca [*Politics*, 1340b11-19] si richiede a giovani et maximanente a figliuoli di governatori della republica.'

material in the *Politics*.²⁵

The scope of the *Trattato* is sufficiently wide-ranging to suggest that Cavalcanti may have envisaged a readership beyond the young acquaintance he addresses throughout, Gino di Neri Capponi, but it seems unlikely that it achieved much circulation. Nevertheless, it testifies to the continued relevance of the *Politics* for educated, though not humanist, Florentines of the fifteenth century.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, significant use was made of Aristotelian political doctrines in the vernacular sermons of civic preachers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This was particularly true for the Dominican order, which placed a high value on scholastic learning and played a part in bringing the study of the Philosopher from Paris, the birthplace of Aristotelian scholasticism, to the cities of Italy.²⁶ In assessing whether this particular conduit of Aristotelianism continued into the fifteenth century, the vernacular tracts and sermons – which were taken down and preserved by members of the congregation – of the Dominican Giovanni Dominici (1356–1419) are a valuable source.

Born in Florence, Dominici rose to the position of prior of the convent of Santa Maria Novella but also preached in Lucca and the environs of Bologna and in Venice, from where he was expelled in 1399 for organising a procession of flagellants, the Bianchi.²⁷ He was a popular and well-respected preacher, both eloquent and authoritative. He earned the admiration of the humanist chancellor Coluccio Salutati, who in 1403 requested him to remain in Florence to preach; A Latin work by Dominici, the *Lucula noctis*, was dedicated to Salutati.²⁸ Dominici nurtured a keen interest in the management of the family (on which he wrote a tract, the *Regola del governo di cura familiare*, addressed to the Florentine noblewoman Bartolomea degli Alberti in 1401) and in political government, frequently mentioning the civic duties of his congregation in his sermons and even acting as a Florentine diplomat at the papal curia.²⁹

²⁵ Grendler, *The Trattato politico-morale of Giovanni Cavalcanti*, p. 40.

²⁶ See the previous chapter on Remigio de' Girolami and Giordano da Pisa.

²⁷ N. B-A. Debby, 'Political Views in the Preaching of Giovanni Dominici in Renaissance Florence, 1400-1406', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 55 (2002), pp. 19-48, at p. 21.

²⁸ R. G. Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads: The Life, Works, and Thought of Coluccio Salutati* (Durham NC, 1983), p. 411.

²⁹ N. B-A. Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers: Giovanni Dominici*

Dominici's political thought certainly contains elements reminiscent of Aristotelianism, particularly (echoing his predecessors at Santa Maria Novella, Remigio de' Girolami and Giordano da Pisa) the concept of the *bene commune* and the primacy of the state over the individual. He taught his congregation to declare: 'I do not desire to earn the world or luxury goods, but only to support my family and supply the required demands of the commune',³⁰ and repeated the sentiment in another sermon, stating: 'Whoever wants to govern well in all things must forget about himself and apply all his efforts to the common good.'³¹ This emphasis on civic duty is equally evident in his vernacular writings. In the *Regola del governo di cura familiare*, Dominici explains to Bartolomea degli Alberti that the education of her children should be tailored to their future service to the commune: 'Since your children, especially the boys, are members of the republic, they should be raised for its utility, for as you know it needs many things, such as governors, defenders, and workers.'³²

This is tempered in Dominici, however, by a strongly stated preference for the use of biblical or other Christian sources as opposed to pagan authors such as Aristotle and, furthermore, by a pessimism concerning the role of the state and the capabilities of humankind which runs counter to the Aristotelian belief that political organisation exists as a means to assist man in his achievement of the greatest goods.

Dominici's ambivalence towards classical authorities is, at least in part, a response to the growth of humanism in Florence under Salutati and what he may have considered an excessive devotion to pagan literature among the city's cognoscenti. It seems that Dominici wished to turn his listeners and readers away from such sources of knowledge and back to the teachings of the Church, despite the Dominican order's strongly established connection to ancient learning and his own scholastic education (Dominici had studied in Paris and in his youth wrote a Latin grammar based on Priscian and

(1356-1419) and Bernardino da Siena (1380-1444) (Turnhout, 2001), pp. 23-26.

³⁰ Giovanni Dominici, MS. Ricc. 1301, Predica 22, lines 238-40; cited and translated in Debby, *Renaissance Florence*, p. 59.

³¹ Giovanni Dominici, MS. Ricc. 1301, Predica 30, lines 488-92; cited and translated in Debby, *Renaissance Florence*, pp. 65-66.

³² Giovanni Dominici, *Regola del governo di cura familiare*, ed. D. Salvi (Florence, 1860), p. 177: 'E perchè i tuoi figliuoli, e massimamente maschi, sono membri della reppublica, convengonsi allevare ad utilità di quella, la quale come sai ha bisogno di molte cose; come sono rettori, difenditori e operatori.'

Donatus).³³ This concern formed the inspiration for his Latin *Lucula noctis*, in which he argued against the reading of any pagan literature, except by those particularly secure in their faith.³⁴ He certainly had a deep suspicion of the use of rhetoric – a much prized humanist art modelled on Roman authors such as Cicero – to advance any cause, even a morally suspect one, with subtle persuasion. He ventured so far as to warn Bartolomea degli Alberti that reading the classics might corrupt her sons;³⁵ and he stated in a sermon that ‘when I desire to know and go to the books of philosophers and mundane authors, the more I study, the more I forget and the less I know about the things that I wish to know’.³⁶

Dominici’s advice on education in the *Regola* makes no mention of Aristotle, although he would almost certainly have been aware of the doctrines on child-rearing contained in the *Politics* to which Giles of Rome and, later, Giovanni Cavalcanti paid such detailed attention. Dominici does, in fact, divide of childhood into roughly seven year periods, as does Aristotle in the *Politics*,³⁷ but the context is entirely different. Rather than rehearsing Aristotle’s recommendations, he uses the divisions to explain how children should be raised in Christian penitence:

While they are little children, one will want to teach them, when they have committed errors, to admit their failings, to beat their breast, to say the Ave Maria in penitence, or to be caned or a similar action. And when they are between six years and fourteen years or more, as far as one is able, one will ask them once every day of the sins in which they came to fall, like lies, blasphemies, deceits and similar deeds, so that they learn not to keep their vices hidden and are accustomed to confess them willingly and often.³⁸

³³ Debby, *Renaissance Florence*, pp. 17 and 26.

³⁴ Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads*, p. 411.

³⁵ Debby, *Renaissance Florence*, p. 104.

³⁶ Dominici, MS Ricc. 1301, Predica 39, f. 126v, quoted in Debby, *Renaissance Florence*, pp. 100-101: ‘Quando dicea io vo iscorrendo per sapere per questi libri de’ filosofi, degli autori mondiali. Et quanto più in essi studio, più dimentico et meno so di quello che disidero di sapere’; my translation is informed by that in Debby, *Renaissance Florence*, pp. 100-101.

³⁷ *Politics*, 1336b40-41.

³⁸ Dominici, *Regola*, p. 173: ‘Mentre che sono bambolini, vuolsi insegnare loro, come fallano, dire sua colpa, battere il petto, dire ave maria per penitenzia, o aver la palmata o simile atto. E quando sono d’anni sei infino a quattordici o più, tanto quanto si può, domandagli ogni dì una volta de’ peccati ne’ quali posson cadere, come bugie, bestemmie, ingannerelli e simili atti, acciò imparino non tenere nascosi i vizj loro, e domestichino di confessare volentieri e spesso.’

The focus on human sinfulness betrayed in this passage is also evident in Dominici's attitude to the state. For him, the purpose of civil society was to curb man's evil desires, a position far less reminiscent of Aristotle than of Augustine.³⁹ This pessimism, perhaps the result of a certain pragmatism about the state of his own city, extends to Dominici's estimation of mankind's capacity for wisdom – which he downplayed in favour of the divine origin of all knowledge, stating that 'wisdom is a faithful knowledge of divine things due to revelation'.⁴⁰

The Franciscan vernacular preacher Bernardino da Siena (1380-1444) also combined devotion to the *bene commune* with a pessimistic assessment of human nature.⁴¹ Although he encouraged his listeners to love the common good and look to the benefit of the city above that of the individual,⁴² Bernardino nevertheless lamented the seeming inevitability of deviation from this conduct and of human conflict.⁴³ His preaching style was typically Franciscan, aimed primarily at moving the emotions of the listeners, in contrast to the more cerebral Dominican manner which was more conducive to citing philosophers such as Aristotle.

This style of preaching was combined with Bernardino's belief that Scripture was more eloquent and valuable than the writings of poets and philosophers. In a sermon of 1427 he explicitly compared it to the teachings of Plato, Aristotle and other philosophers, concluding that 'there are some teachings that speak of the health of the soul and those that speak of the health of the body ... here you can see why the *eloquia Domini* are better than any other kind of speech'.⁴⁴

³⁹ P. Weithman, 'Augustine's Political Philosophy', in E. Stump and N. Kretzmann (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 234-252, at p. 240.

⁴⁰ Giovanni Dominici, *Il libro d'amore di carità*, ed. A. Ceruti (Bologna, 1889), p. 343: 'Sapienza è fedele notizie delle divine cose per rivelazione posseduta'; quoted and translated in Debby, *Renaissance Florence*, p. 93.

⁴¹ B. Paton, *Preaching Friars and the Civic Ethos: Siena, 1380-1480* (London, 1992), p. 99: 'Local experience had instilled in preachers the conviction that man's political inclinations in his natural state were detrimental to the pursuit of the *bene commune*.'

⁴² Bernardino da Siena, *Le prediche volgari. Predicazioni a Siena, 1425*, ed. C. Cannarozzi, 2 vols (Florence, 1958), II, p. 219: 'Amate el bene comune ... si vuole parlare a utile de la città, non per bene d'uno.' See Paton, *Preaching Friars and the Civic Ethos*, p. 92.

⁴³ Paton, *Preaching Friars and the Civic Ethos*, p. 97.

⁴⁴ Bernardino da Siena, *Prediche volgari sul Campo di Siena: 1427*, ed. C. Delcorno, 2 vols (Milan, 1989), I, p. 154: 'È altra dottrina quella che parla della salute dell'anima, che non è quella che parla della salute del corpo ... e qui vedi quanto è meglio 'eloquia Domini', che niuno altro parlare.' Translated in F. Mormando, *The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early*

Therefore, although Bernardino did not share Dominici's distrust of the classics, his vision of the *bene commune* was still communicated without explicit recourse to Aristotle. There are certain hints: Bernardino, for example, declares that those who live without wives resemble beasts, suggesting a possible allusion to the Aristotelian maxim that those who live outside society are beast-like; but the link is tenuous, as Bernardino's words may have been aimed instead at appealing to the women who featured so prominently in his audience,⁴⁵ or at making a connection between bachelorhood and sodomy.⁴⁶

Although the evidence is limited, the sermons of these two early fifteenth-century preachers suggest that the previous tendency of vernacular preachers who were versed in Aristotle to include his political doctrines in their sermons had faltered somewhat; but the practice certainly received impetus at the end of the Quattrocento, via the efforts of Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498).

Savonarola was born and educated in Ferrara, where he attended grammar school and then obtained a Master of Arts degree from the university, before entering the Observantist Convent of San Domenico in Bologna in 1475. His youthful programme of study would certainly have included Aristotelian texts. A Latin work composed around 1484, the *Compendium totius philosophiae*, is evidence of his familiarity with Thomist philosophy,⁴⁷ and Savonarola's Aristotelian learning is confirmed by the Borromeo codex, an autograph notebook dating from 1483 which details his reading, among many other authors, of Aristotle, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.⁴⁸ The Borromeo codex also

Renaissance Italy (Chicago IL, 1999), p. 11.

⁴⁵ Debby, *Renaissance Florence*, p. 137. Sano di Pietro's painting of Bernardino preaching in the Campo in Siena shows a large audience of women: *Predica di san Bernardino da Siena in piazza del Campo*, 1445, Siena, Museo dell'Opera della Metropolitana.

⁴⁶ This last seems probable – Bernardino believed that mature unmarried men were likely to be sodomites. See M. Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (Oxford, 1996), p. 40.

⁴⁷ Girolamo Savonarola, *Compendium totius philosophiae* (Venice, 1542). J. Catto, 'The Philosophical Context of the Renaissance Interpretation of the Bible', in M. Saebø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament: The History of its Interpretation II: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Göttingen, 2008), pp. 106-122, at p. 121.

⁴⁸ D. Weinstein, 'Girolamo Savonarola: Piety, Prophecy and Politics in Renaissance Florence', in D. Weinstein and V. R. Hotchkiss (eds), *Girolamo Savonarola: Piety, Prophecy and Politics in Renaissance Florence* (Dallas TX, 1994), pp. 1-16, at p. 1.

shows Savonarola's dedication to preaching,⁴⁹ an art he cultivated without great recognition (including in Florence, between 1482 and 1485) before his transformation – beginning with the Lenten sermons at San Gimignano in 1485 – into a prophetic preacher. When he was once again assigned to the convent of San Marco in Florence in 1490, at the request of Lorenzo de' Medici, huge crowds flocked to hear him speak about the need to renew and cleanse the Church and the scourge which threatened Florence unless the city purified itself.

Savonarola's preaching assumed more political tones as his influence in the city changed, especially following the invasion of Italy by the French king Charles VIII and his entry into Florence in 1494. Savonarola acted as a diplomat and was widely regarded as having saved the city, Piero de' Medici was refused entry to Florence and the Medici regime was overthrown. Savonarola began to describe Florence as God's chosen city and was instrumental in the creation of a new popular government, which he defended in a vernacular political tract, the *Tractato circa il reggimento e governo della città di Firenze*. He wielded huge influence until the intervention of the pope, the departure of Charles from Italy and hunger and civil unrest within Florence led to his downfall and execution in 1498.⁵⁰

Savonarola's sermons combine aspects of Aristotelian political philosophy with prophetic elements and have a very different tone, and purpose, from the *Tractato* which was written at the request of the Florentine Signoria with the intention of clearly describing and substantiating the new *reggimento civile*.⁵¹

Savonarola's sermons occasionally display a certain unease about the use of a secular and pagan source as a preaching tool. When describing the preacher's role in a Lenten sermon he stated that one 'must shed light not on philosophy, but on godly matters'.⁵² However, by the end of 1494 his prophecies on Florence's revival were increasingly specific in terms of politics and contained much Aristotelian political language. In a

⁴⁹ See G. Cattin, *Il primo Savonarola: poesie e prediche autografe dal Codice Borromeo* (Florence, 1973), especially pp. 105-161.

⁵⁰ Weinstein, 'Girolamo Savonarola', pp. 10-15.

⁵¹ Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence: Prophecy and Patriotism in the Renaissance* (Princeton NJ, 1970), p. 295.

⁵² Girolamo Savonarola, *Prediche utilissime... per Quadragesima* (Venice, 1519), f. 121v: 'El predicatore... debbe illuminare non di philosophia: ma delle cose di dio.'

sermon from this period, the fundamental principles of Aristotelian politics were presented, with remarkable clarity, to a vernacular audience of great size and enormous social breadth, certainly including some unable to read even in the vernacular:

Therefore, man being a social animal, who is not able to and cannot live alone, it was necessary for men to assemble themselves and congregate together either in cities or in castles or villas and make a community together, on account of the mutual needs one has of another; and in order that everyone understands each other in this community, nature has created and given them voice and speech, to express the idea of each from one to another, according to the needs of each. Every multitude, therefore, of congregated men is destined to a certain end, which can be reached by different ways and which needs someone who may direct and govern all the others. And every people and place, which aspires to its universal good, needs government; and these governments are distinct and different in many ways. Some are ruled by one ruler alone, some by more people and some are ruled by all the people together. The rule and government of a single ruler, when this ruler is good, is the best or the most perfect government of all... But when this ruler is evil, there could not be a government and rule worse than this, the worst being the opposite of the best.⁵³

To deal with political matters, Savonarola turned to the political vocabulary he was familiar with and, indeed, the only available vocabulary suited for such discussions: that found in the *Politics*. In a bid to engage his Florentine congregation in the *reggimento civile* he was instrumental in creating, he preached Aristotle to them. Savonarola's

⁵³ Girolamo Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, ed. L. Firpo (Rome, 1965), pp. 210-211: 'Pertanto, essendo l'uomo animale sociale, che non sa e non può vivere solitario, è stato necessario che gli uomini si ragunino e congreghinsi insieme o in città o in castelli o ville e facciano congregazione insieme, per li bisogni communi l'uno dell'altro; e per potere in queste congregazioni intendersi insieme, la natura ha trovato e dato loro la loquela ed el parlare, per esprimere el concetto suo l'uno all'altro, secondo el suo bisogno; ogni moltitudine adunque degli uomini congregata è ordinata a qualche fine, al quale ella può pervenire per diverse vie, e ha bisogno che sia chi dirizzi e regoli tutti gli altri. E ogni popolo e luogo, che tenda al suo bene universale, ha bisogno di reggimento, e questi reggimenti sono distinti e diversi in più modi. Alcuni si reggano per uno capo solo, alcuni per più persone, alcuni si reggano da tutto el popolo insieme. El reggimento e governo d'uno capo solo, quando quel capo è bono, è el migliore o più ottimo governo che nessuno altro. ... Ma quando quel uno capo è cattivo, non è el più pessimo governo e reggimento di questo, essendo el pessimo l'opposito dell'ottimo.' *Politics*, 1253a3-18, 1252a1-9; *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1160a32-1160b11.

Prediche sopra Aggeo are calculated to maintain the Florentines' appetite for political change and are peppered with a combination of political dictums and prophecy. 'I say that no one is able to resist the will of God, and I say that the will of God is that the city of Florence is ruled by the people and not by tyrants',⁵⁴ he promised his audience. Furthermore, should the Florentines implement the political reforms he was urging, 'Florence will become richer and more powerful than it ever was and will expand its empire in many places.'⁵⁵

Savonarola's use of the *Politics* in his sermons is striking for its simplicity and ease. Aristotle is, of course, secondary to Savonarola's religious visions of the city of Florence; so basic concepts from the *Politics* are used to provide his prophecy with a technical framework and terminology. Having asserted that monarchy is the best form of rule, Savonarola explains why it is not suitable for Florence, following Ptolemy of Lucca's continuation of Thomas Aquinas' *De regno*:⁵⁶

But in the middle parts [of the world], as Italy is, where intelligence and blood abound together, the people cannot remain tolerant under a single ruler, but every one of them wishes to be that ruler who would govern and rule the others and would be able to command, and not to be commanded.⁵⁷

In addition, Savonarola manages to use the Thomist definition of monarchy as the best form of government without contradiction in another way, by demanding that the Florentines take Christ as their king – so that the city is simultaneously both monarchy and republic.⁵⁸

Savonarola's political tract, the *Tractato circa il reggimento et governo della città di Firenze*, written and printed in 1498 at the request of the last Piagnone (Savonarolan)

⁵⁴ Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, pp. 320-21: 'Dico che alla volontà di Dio nessuno potrà resistere, e dico che la volontà di Dio è che la città di Firenze si regga per el popolo e non per tiranni.'

⁵⁵ Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, p. 213: 'Diventerà Firenze più ricca e più potente che mai si stata e dilaterà lo imperio suo in molti luoghi.'

⁵⁶ See Chapter One, p. 33.

⁵⁷ Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, p. 211: 'Ma nelle parte medie, come è la Italia, dove abbonda sangue e ingegno insieme, non stanno pazienti gli uomini sotto un capo solo, ma ognuno di loro vorrebbe esser quel capo che governasse e reggesse gli altri e potesse comandare e non essere comandato.'

⁵⁸ Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Aggeo*, p. 423: 'Piglia Cristo per tuo re e sta sotto la sua legge e con quella ti governa.'

Signoria of Florence before Savonarola's execution,⁵⁹ is a very different piece of work despite reiterating many of the lines of argument put forward by Savonarola in his sermons of the years previously. In its structure, the *Tractato* recalls the formulaic approach of the 'mirror for princes' literature of the preceding centuries. It is composed of three books, the first of which treats the theory of political organisation (following the *Politics*), while the second discusses tyranny and the third focuses particularly on the government of Florence.

It is a learned, structured work, which contains a great deal of Aristotelian and Thomist political thought and mentions Savonarola's prophetic visions only briefly. It is intended as a reasoned, philosophical defence of the political changes in Florence and, by extension, Savonarola's involvement in such changes; and it is directed against his detractors both within the city and far beyond, who were by this time hostile to, or at least suspicious of, his prophecies. Savonarola alludes to this when explaining his decision to write the tract in the vernacular:

And although it was, and is, my intention to write about this material in the Latin tongue... Nevertheless, you, the Signoria, asking me to write in the vernacular and very succinctly for the greatest common utility, since there are few who understand Latin in comparison to men of letters, I shall not regret, in the first place, issuing this little tract and, then, when I am freer from my present occupations, I shall put my hand to the Latin with that grace which omnipotent God will grant to us.⁶⁰

In the first book, Savonarola demonstrates at length the necessity of government by asserting both man's social nature and his inability to survive on his own ('nearly every man being insufficient for himself, not being able to provide alone all his necessities, corporeal as well as spiritual').⁶¹ This is buttressed by the Aristotelian doctrine that a

⁵⁹ Weinstein, *Savonarola and Florence*, p. 295.

⁶⁰ Girolamo Savonarola, *Tractato circa il reggimento et governo della città di Firenze: Ristampa anastatica dell'edizione Firenze 1498*, ed. P. Pastori (Lecce, 1998), [f. 1v]: 'Et avengha che mia intentione fusse et sia di scrivere di questa materia in lingua latina ... nientedimeno chiedendomi le Signorie vostre che io scriva volgare et brevissimamente per piu commune utilita, essendo pochi quelli che intendono il latino a comparatione degli huomini litterati, non mi rincrescera prima expedire questo tractatello: et dipoi quando potero essere piu libero dalle occupationi presenti metteremo mano al latino con quella gratia che ci concedera lo omnipotente Dio.'

⁶¹ Savonarola, *Tractato*, [f. 2v]: 'Essendo maxime quasi ogni homo particolare insufficiente per se

solitary man is either a beast or a god, which Savonarola supplements with Christian examples:

For this reason, it is well said that he who lives a solitary life is either God or is a beast. That is, either he is such a perfect man that he is almost like a God on earth, because like God he has no need of anything, so he has no need of help from any other man, as St John the Baptist was, and St Paul the first hermit, and many others; or truly he is like a beast, that is, he is totally deprived of reason, and so has no care for clothing or shelter or for cooked and prepared food nor the conversation of men, but goes about following the instincts of the sensitive part [of his soul], removed from all reason.⁶²

Savonarola's caution here – omitting any reference to Aristotle and following Thomas Aquinas in mentioning saints⁶³ – may reflect the precarious nature of his position within Florence and the Church; he had already been excommunicated by the time the *Tractato* was written. This first book also betrays a pessimism (reminiscent of the more Augustinian sentiments of Bernardino of Siena and Giovanni Dominici) which may reflect Savonarola's recent experiences in Florence. He explains that dwelling in a city is fundamental not only for the attainment of the good life but equally in order to combat the more malignant elements of human nature:

Now, given that mankind is greatly inclined to evil, and especially when it is without laws for restraining the audacity of evil men, so that those who wish to live well might be safe, and especially because there is no animal more evil than man, when he is without law ... And given, nevertheless, that it is

medesimo, non potendo provvedere solo a tutti li suoi bisogni cosi corporali come spirituali'; see also [f. 3v]: 'essendo li huomini necessitati a vivere in congregatione delli altri.'

⁶² Savonarola, *Tractato*, [f. 3r]: 'Per la quale cosa bene è decto che chi vive solitario, o che è Dio, o che è una bestia: cioe, o che e tanto perfectio homo che e quasi come uno Dio in terra, perche come Dio non ha bisogno di cosa alcuna, cosi lui non ha bisogno di adiutorio di alcuno homo, come fu Sancto Giovanni Baptista, et Sancto Paulo primo heremita, et molti altri: O vero che è come una bestia: cioe, che è totalmente privato della ragione, pero non si cura di veste ne di case ne di cibi cocti et preparati ne di conversatione di homini: Ma va seguitando lo instincto della parte sensitiva, rimossa da se ogni ragione.'

⁶³ Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, *In Octos Libros Politicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, I.i.35: 'Sed si aliquis homo habeat quod non sit civilis, propter naturam, aut nequam est, utpote cum hoc contingit ex corruptione naturae humanae; aut est melior quam homo, in quantum scilicet habet naturam perfectiorem aliis hominibus communiter, ita quod per se sibi possit sufficere absque hominum societate; sicut fuit in Ioanne Baptista, et beato Antonio heremita.'

necessary for men to live in the company of others, wishing to live in peace, it is necessary to find laws by means of which the evil are punished, and the good rewarded.⁶⁴

In his sermons, Savonarola had stressed the corrupt nature of human society but had offered the Florentines the prospect of a glorious future once they had cleansed themselves; he did not, as here, describe humanity as inherently ‘inclined to evil’.

The safeguarding of the new republic from those who might harm the *bene commune* was therefore of the greatest importance; and Savonarola displays a preoccupation with perversions of government and tyranny in particular (of which he wrote that ‘the tyrant has virtually all the sins of the world.’)⁶⁵ He takes pains to identify and describe the characteristics of this improper regime:

Tyranny is the worst [form] insofar as the government attends principally to three things: first, that the subjects do not understand anything about the government ...; second, setting discord among the citizens ...; third, always reducing the powerful in order to safeguard itself, and so it murders or causes harm to men who excel, whether in goods, nobility, intellectual talent or any other prowess.⁶⁶

Savonarola’s source for his description of the tyrant is clearly the *Politics*. Aristotle devotes chapter 11 of the fifth book to a discussion of the characteristics of tyranny, offering an overview similar in essence to Savonarola’s, although more broadly conceived: ‘Under these three heads the whole policy of a tyrant may be summed up, and to one or other of them all his ideas may be referred: he sows distrust among his

⁶⁴ Savonarola, *Tractato*, [f. 3r-v]: ‘Hora essendo la generatione humana molto prona al male, et maxime quando è senza legge et senza timore, è stato necessario trovare le legge per refrenare l’audacita delli cattivi homini, accioche quelli che vogliono vivere bene siano sicuri: Maxime perche non è animale piu cattivo dell huomo che è senza legge ... Et pero essendo li homini necessitati a vivere in congregatione delli altri, volendo vivere in pace, e bisognato trovare le leggie: per li quali li cattivi siano puniti, et li buoni premiati.’

⁶⁵ Savonarola, *Tractato*, [f. 12r]: ‘[Il] tyranno habia virtualmente tutti li peccati del mondo.’

⁶⁶ Savonarola, *Tractato*, [f. 13r]: ‘Anchora el tyranno è pessimo quanto al governo: circha al quale principalmente attende a tre cose: Prima che li subditi non intendino cosa alcuna del governo ... Secundo cercha di mettere discordia tra li cittadini ... Tertio cercha sempre di abbassare li potenti per assicurarsi, et pero amaza, o fa mal capitare li homini eccellenti o di roba, o di nobilita, o di ingegno, o di altre virtu.’

subjects; he takes away their power; and he humbles them.’⁶⁷

Aristotle also mentions more specific examples of the practices of tyrants, noting that they eliminate high-minded men, prohibit social meetings and educational establishments, retain spies, keep the population impoverished, increase taxes and warmongering, and surround themselves with slaves and flatterers.⁶⁸ Some of these points are included in Savonarola’s outline, quoted above, of the things the tyrant must attend to, but others are mentioned explicitly:

He does not wish to have the citizens as companions, but rather as servants. He prohibits the meeting of groups, so that men are not friendly together, for fear that they will plot against him ... He has his agents in every place.⁶⁹

Savonarola’s ideal government for the city of Florence is set out in the third book of the *Tractato*. The *reggimento civile* is founded on a Great Council which represents the whole population of the city – ‘because it would be too difficult for the whole of the *popolo* to meet together every day, it is necessary to establish a certain number of citizens who have this authority from the whole of the *popolo*’.⁷⁰ Here Savonarola leaves behind the authority of Aristotle and Thomas to dwell briefly on Florence’s prophetic destiny.

Every Florentine citizen who wishes to be a good member of his city and to help it, as everyone must want [to do], needs first of all to believe this council and civil government to have been ordered by God, as it is in truth, not only because every good government proceeds from Him, but also on account of the special providence which God has at present for the city of Florence.⁷¹

⁶⁷ *Politics*, 1314a25-29.

⁶⁸ *Politics*, 1313a34-1314a25.

⁶⁹ Savonarola, *Tractato*, [f. 13r-v]: ‘Non vuole havere per compagni li cittadini, ma per servi. Proibisce le congregazioni et raghunate, accioche li huomini non faccino amicitia insieme, per paura che non faccino amicitia insieme, per paura che non faccino coniuira contra di lui,’ and [f. 15v]: ‘ha gli suoi satelliti in ogni luogho.’

⁷⁰ Savonarola, *Tractato*, [f. 21v]: ‘Perche feria troppo difficile congregare ogni giorno tutto el Popolo, bisogna instituire un certo numero di cittadini, che habbino questa auctorita da tutto el Popolo.’

⁷¹ Savonarola, *Tractato*, [f. 23r]: ‘Ciascun cittadino Fiorentino, che vuole essere buon membro della sua citta et aiuarla, come ognun debbe volere, bisogna prima che creda questo Consiglio, et civile governo essere stato mandato da Dio, come è in verita, non solamente perche ogni bono governo procede da lui, ma etiam per spetiale providentia, che ha Dio al presente della citta di Firenze.’

While Giovanni Dominici had avoided the use of classical sources such as Aristotle's *Politics*, perhaps to counter what he regarded as the excessive devotion to pagan literature on the part of humanists, Savonarola was less dismissive of his scholastic training in Aristotelian philosophy; more importantly, as he moved beyond the remit of these earlier fifteenth-century preachers into the implementation of actual political change, he was compelled by necessity to turn to Aristotelian political language. The *Tractato* was printed immediately, and it can be assumed – given Savonarola's popularity and notoriety – that both this work, and his sermons, enjoyed a large circulation.

The changes to the cultural and literary landscape of Italy (and Florence in particular) which were brought about by the advent of humanism are also apparent in the fifteenth-century reception of the works of Dante, which – in the continuing absence of an Italian translation of Aristotle's *Politics* – remained an important indirect source for the transmission of doctrines contained in the treatise to a vernacular readership. While in the *Trecento* the cult of Dante extended across all cultural levels, with commentaries in Italian translated into Latin and vice versa, the first half of the fifteenth century saw an aversion to Dante develop in certain humanists as a gulf began to emerge between Latinate and classical literature, on the one hand, and more popular, vernacular works, on the other.

In the wake of Petrarch's dismissal of Dante's merits,⁷² unease with his use of the vernacular to express the most exalted celestial and philosophical concepts (the Florentine Chancellor Coluccio Salutati, although a devotee of Dante, attempted to translate parts of the *Commedia* into Latin)⁷³ turned into open rejection in some quarters. Dante was the poet of the common man, whose knowledge of classical sources was shaky and – worst of all – whose command of Latin fell far below humanist standards. Furthermore, Dante's status as a vernacular and popular poet linked him to Florence's republican past, which led him to be shunned by humanists under the

⁷² S. A. Gilson, 'Dante's Reception in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Italy', in Z. G. Barański and M. McLaughlin (eds), *Italy's Three Crowns: Reading Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio*, (Oxford, 2007), pp. 58-72, at p. 59.

⁷³ S. A. Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 60.

patronage of Cosimo de' Medici.⁷⁴ This 'rebellion' against the cult of Dante at the turn of the century⁷⁵ resulted in a decrease in literary production on Dante in scholarly circles and a break in the commentary tradition which had stretched almost continuously from the first circulation of the *Commedia* until the end of the fourteenth century.

Popular enthusiasm for Dante ensured, nevertheless, that exegeses of the poet continued. The tradition, initiated by Boccaccio, of public lectures in the vernacular on the *Commedia* in Florence fostered a sustained familiarity with the poet's work among all levels of Florentine society.⁷⁶ Furthermore, some humanists were stalwart advocates of Dante. Chief among them was Leonardo Bruni, who defended the poet's choice of language with a clear statement that Italian was on a par with Latin. 'To write it [a composition] in the vernacular or in the learned style is of no importance, nor is there any difference except as between writing in Greek and writing in Latin', he explained in his *Vita di Dante*.⁷⁷ Bruni also invoked Aristotelian political principles in the *Vita di Dante* when contradicting the opinion of those – including, he states, Boccaccio – who believed marriage to be a hindrance to study, explaining that 'man is a social animal, according to all philosophers; the first union, through the multiplication of which the city arises, is that of husband and wife'.⁷⁸

From the mid-fifteenth century onwards, however, and especially under the auspices of Lorenzo il Magnifico, the attention of a far greater proportion of Florentine humanists turned once more to the city's rich vernacular heritage, as across Italy debate intensified as to whether the Italian vernacular – and which Italian vernacular – could develop into a literary language.⁷⁹ Such questions spurred a humanist re-appropriation of Dante, with the poet becoming a figurehead for Florentine nationalism and civic endeavour.

⁷⁴ Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence*, pp. 97-98.

⁷⁵ Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence*, p. 60.

⁷⁶ P. Procaccioli, 'Introduzione', in Cristoforo Landino, *Comento sopra la Comedia*, ed. Paolo Procaccioli, 4 vols (Rome, 2001), I, pp. 9-105, at p. 10.

⁷⁷ Leonardo Bruni, 'Vita di Dante', in his *Opere letterarie e politiche*, ed. P. Viti (Turin, 1996), pp. 539-552, at p. 550: 'Lo scrivere in stilo litterato o vulgare non ha a fare al fatto, né altra differenza è se non come scrivere in greco o in latino.'

⁷⁸ Bruni, 'Vita di Dante', p. 542: 'L'huomo è animale civile, secondo piace a tutti i philosophi: la prima congiunzione, dalla quale moltiplicata nasce la città, è marito e moglie.'

⁷⁹ A. Mazzocco, *Linguistic Theories in Dante and the Humanists: Studies of Language and Intellectual History in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Italy* (Leiden, 1993), p. 95.

Of undoubted significance for this movement was the translation of the *Monarchia* – Dante’s most overtly political work – from Latin into the Florentine vernacular, by Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499). A vernacular version circulated before Ficino’s translation and is now extant in three manuscripts;⁸⁰ however, in addition to being marred by a clumsy word-for-word translation technique, it was so error-ridden that Bernardo del Nero, who copied one of these imperfect manuscripts, commissioned Ficino to undertake a new translation in 1486.⁸¹

As a scholar whose life’s work was the recovery of Plato and the Neoplatonists, Ficino’s vernacular transmission of the Aristotelian political material in Dante’s tract to readers such as del Nero, who did not know Latin and had requested the translation for his own benefit, was inevitably filtered through his Platonic interests. In the ‘proemio’, Ficino, after dedicating the work to del Nero and to Antonio di Tuccio Manetti (who it seems may have written the work to Ficino’s dictation),⁸² notes regretfully that Dante had not possessed Greek and therefore had not read Plato, but maintains that nevertheless the *Monarchia* contains Platonic sentiments, transferred to Dante through his poetic guide Virgil:

We find three kingdoms in the writings of our most righteous leader Plato: one of the blessed, another of the abject, a third of the wanderers. He calls blessed those who are of the city of restored life; abject, those who are always deprived of it; wanderers, those who are outside this city, but not cast into eternal exile. He places all the living in this third order, and those among the dead who have been assigned to temporary purgation. This Platonic order was first followed by Virgil; it was then followed by Dante, who drank with Virgil’s cup from the Platonic springs. And so the kingdoms of the blessed and the abject and the wanderers are elegantly treated in his *Commedia*; and the kingdom of the living wanderers in the book called by him *Monarchia*, where he first argues that there must be one just emperor of all men, then adds that this belongs to the Roman people and lastly proves that this empire depends on the supreme God, without

⁸⁰ See P. Shaw, ‘Il volgarizzamento inedito della “Monarchia”’, *Studi danteschi*, 47 (1970), pp. 59-224.

⁸¹ Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence*, p. 143.

⁸² P. O. Kristeller, ‘Marsilio Ficino letterato e le glosse attribuite a lui nel codice Caetani di Dante’, in *Quaderni della Fondazione Camillo Caetani*, 3 (1981), pp. 11-62, at p. 17.

mediation from the pope.⁸³

By providing a Platonic framework for Dante's treatise, Ficino shifts the reader's attention from – and to some extent subverts – the Aristotelian content of the *Monarchia*. Dante's reverence for Aristotle is minimised within the text. Ficino's effort to produce a clear and straightforward rendering – for instance, he reduces Dante's 'domestica comunitas' simply to 'famiglia'⁸⁴ – results in all references to 'the Philosopher' being changed simply to 'Aristotle'.⁸⁵ Dante's laudatory adjectives are also dispensed with: his 'ab autoritate Phylosophi assumatur de suis Politicis. Asserit enim ibi venerabilis eius autoritas quod...' is translated by Ficino as 'si può assumere nella "Politicha" d'Aristotile; hove e' dicie che...'⁸⁶ Although Ficino extends such streamlining to other authorities – Virgil is no longer 'Poeta noster'⁸⁷ – the adjustments nevertheless serve to lessen the sense that the *Monarchia* was a work crucially indebted to, and composed in the light of, Aristotle's writings.

These Ficinian modifications aside, the clarity of the translation meant that it could be read and understood without referring to Dante's Latin text – an impossibility with the previous, anonymous translation.⁸⁸ Therefore, Dante's vision of a world monarchy, and his consistent reference to Aristotle and the *Politics* to underpin this worldview, was now available to a vernacular audience; and the eleven extant manuscripts, including

⁸³ Ficino, 'Proemio', in P. Shaw, 'La versione ficiniana della "Monarchia"', *Studi danteschi*, 51 (1978), pp. 289-408, at pp. 327-328: 'Tre regni troviamo scripti dal nostro rettissimo duce Platone: uno de' beati, l'altro de' miseri, el terzo de' peregrini. Beati chiama quelli che ssono alla ciptà di vita restituti; miseri quelli che per senpre [sic] ne sono privati; peregrini quelli che fuori di detta ciptà sono, ma none iudicati in senpiterno exilio. In questo terzo ordine pone tutti e viventi, et de' morti quella parte che a tenporale purgatione è deputata. Questo hordine platonico prima seguì Virgilio; questo seguì Dante dipoi, col vaso di Vergilio beendo alle platoniche fonti. Et però del regnio de' beati et de' miseri et de' peregrini di questa vita passati nelle sue "Commedie" eleghantemente tractò; et del regnio de' peregrini viventi nel libro da llui chiamato "Monarchia", ove prima disputa dovere essere uno iusto inperadore di tutti gli huomini; di poi ag[i]ugnie questo appartenersi al popolo romano; hultimo pruova che detto inperio dal sommo Iddio senza mezo del papa dipende.'

⁸⁴ Shaw, 'La versione ficiniana della "Monarchia"', p. 319; Dante, *Monarchia*, transl. Marsilio Ficino, in Shaw, 'La versione ficiniana della "Monarchia"', pp. 325-408, at p. 331; Dante, *Monarchia*, ed. and transl. P. Shaw (Cambridge, 1995), p. 6.

⁸⁵ Shaw, 'La versione ficiniana della "Monarchia"', p. 316.

⁸⁶ Shaw, 'La versione ficiniana della "Monarchia"', p. 317; Dante, *Monarchia*, transl. Ficino, p. 334; Dante, *Monarchia*, ed. and transl. Shaw, p. 12.

⁸⁷ Shaw, 'La versione ficiniana della "Monarchia"', p. 317; Dante, *Monarchia*, transl. Ficino, p. 354; Dante, *Monarchia*, ed. and transl. Shaw, p. 54.

⁸⁸ Shaw, 'La versione ficiniana della "Monarchia"', p. 310. The merits of Ficino's translation are, however, challenged by Dino Bigongiari in his *Essays on Dante and Medieval Culture* (Florence, 1964) pp. 26-27.

one copied from Ficino's original, demonstrate that the text had some circulation.⁸⁹

What material from the *Politics*, then, became accessible in the vernacular through Ficino's translation? Whether or not Dante had a close familiarity with the treatise – and recent opinion suggests that he had at least read the work⁹⁰ – certain aspects of Aristotle's political philosophy are fairly accurately represented in the *Monarchia*. In Book Two, Dante states that “nobility is virtue and ancient wealth”, as Aristotle says in the *Politics*, paraphrasing Aristotle's ‘good birth is the result of... ancient wealth and excellence’.⁹¹ In a more wide-ranging sense, Dante's portrayal of human existence as necessarily part of a community and the role of that community, especially in relation to the city, is unequivocally Aristotelian.

‘If we consider a city’, Dante writes, ‘the purpose of which is to be self-sufficient in living the good life, there must be one ruling body, and this is so not only in a just government, but in perverted forms of government as well; if this is not the case, not only is the purpose of social life thwarted, but the city itself ceases to be what it was.’ Here Dante's words reflect the *Politics*: ‘when several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life’.⁹²

Insight into Dante's political philosophy and the ‘Aristotelianism’ he conveyed to his readers is gained not so much from examining his few faithful reproductions of maxims from the *Politics*, but instead from looking at the ways in which the transmission of the text was filtered or blurred when presented in this new context. The Aristotle conveyed

⁸⁹ Shaw, ‘La versione ficiniana della “Monarchia”’, pp. 290-297.

⁹⁰ D. Mancusi-Ungaro, *Dante and the Empire* (New York, 1987), pp. 100-104; E. Berti, ‘Politica’, in *Enciclopedia Dantesca*, 6 vols (Rome, 1970-78), IV, pp. 585-587.

⁹¹ Dante, *Monarchia*, transl. Ficino, p. 354: ‘Perché la nobiltà è virtù con antiche ricchezze, come dice Aristotele nella “Politica”’; Dante, *Monarchia*, ed. and transl. Shaw, pp. 52-53: ‘Est enim nobilitas virtus et divitiae antiquae, iuxta Philosophum in *Politicis*’. *Politics* 1294a21-22. My translations of Ficino's Italian are informed by Prudence Shaw's English version of Dante's Latin text.

⁹² Dante, *Monarchia*, transl. Ficino, p. 334: ‘Similmente in una città, della quale è fine bene et sufficientemente vivere, bisogna che sia uno reggimento, e questo bisogna non solo nel governo diritto, ma etiam nel perverso; et se questo non si fa, non solamente non si conseguita el fine della vita, ma etiam la città non è più quello ch'ell'era’; Dante, *Monarchia*, ed. and transl. Shaw, pp. 14-15: ‘Si vero unam civitatem, cuius finis est bene sufficienterque vivere, unum oportet esse regimen, et hoc non solum in recta politia, sed etiam in obliqua; quod si aliter fiat, non solum finis vite civilis amittitur, sed etiam civitas desinit esse quod erat.’ *Politics*, 1252b28-30.

by the *Monarchia* – just as in all the preceding vernacular texts considered here – was tailored to fit Dante’s purpose. Although, as Prudence Shaw has put it, ‘Dante owes to Aristotle not just his assumptions about the nature of the world and the way it is to be described and understood, but also the methodology of his treatise’,⁹³ the *Monarchia* builds on this Aristotelian foundation to construct a political landscape far from what the philosopher himself ever contemplated.

In order to prove his central thesis – that the world should be ruled by a single monarch, whose authority stems from God alone and is, consequently, not answerable to the papacy – Dante combines the Aristotelian principles of *reductio ad unum* (the idea that all species can be referred to a single entity) and of a *telos*, or end, for each thing:⁹⁴ ‘There is therefore some activity specific to humanity as a whole, for which the whole human race in all its vast number of individual human beings is designed; and no single person, or household, or small community, or city, or individual kingdom can achieve it’, he writes in the first book of the *Monarchia*.⁹⁵ Having invoked Book Two of Aristotle’s *Physics* on the generation of man, Dante concludes that the end, and purpose, of the human race is the ‘actualisation of the potential intellect’, or the acquisition of knowledge, and that the best state for achieving this is one under the rule of a single man. Ficino, interestingly, alters Dante’s original text here to suggest the necessity of restraints on monarchy, adding ‘with the order of law’ to Dante’s assertion that a single ruler is best:

Man is generated by man and the sun, as Aristotle says in the second book of the *Physics*. Therefore, mankind is in its ideal state when, insofar as its nature allows, it follows in the footsteps of heaven. And since the whole sphere of heaven is guided by a single movement of the *Primum Mobile* and by a single source of motion, so mankind is in its ideal state when it is guided by a mover with the order of law. For this reason, monarchy is necessary to the well-being

⁹³ P. Shaw, ‘Introduction’, in Dante, *Monarchia*, ed. and transl. Shaw (Cambridge, 1995), pp. xiii-xli, at p. xviii.

⁹⁴ P. Shaw, ‘Introduction’, in Dante, *Monarchia*, p. xxxi.

⁹⁵ Dante, *Monarchia*, transl. Ficino, p. 331: ‘È adunque alcuna propria hoperatione della humana huniversità, alla quale tutta questa università è in tanta moltitudine hordinata, alla quale hoperatione né uno huomo, né una casa, né una vicinanza, né una ciptà, né uno regnio particolare può pervenire.’ Dante, *Monarchia*, ed. and transl. Shaw, pp. 8-9: ‘Est ergo aliqua propria operatio humane universitatis, ad quam ipsa universitas hominum in tanta multitudine ordinatur; ad quam quidem operationem nec homo unus, nec domus una, nec una vicinia, nec una civitas, nec regnum particulare pertingere potest.’

of the world.⁹⁶

Dante here associates Aristotle with a political philosophy alien to that presented in the *Politics*. He claims in the *Monarchia* that ‘Aristotle ... said: “Things do not wish to be badly ordered; a multitude of reigns is bad; therefore let there be one ruler”’;⁹⁷ yet Aristotle made no such statement.

Tenets from Aristotle’s account of the features and merits of various regimes are appropriated and subverted by Dante in order to provide support for the political worldview he champions. Aristotle’s juxtaposition of forms of government and their corresponding perversions, which are discussed in the *Politics* without emphasis placed on any particular form as the ‘ideal’ regime, is transformed into a system in which monarchy is regarded as the cure for ills caused by the other types of rule and as the only state suitable for humanity:

Mankind exists for its own sake and not for the sake of something else only when it is under the rule of a monarch, for only then are perverted forms of government addressed – such as popular governments, and those in which the few rule, and tyranny – which force the human race into slavery.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Dante, *Monarchia*, transl. Ficino, p. 337: ‘Lo huomo è generato da lo huomo et dal sole, come dice nel secondo della “*Fisicha*” Aristotile. [*Physics*, 194b13-14] Sicché allora hottime vive la generatione humana quando, secondo che permette la propria natura, seguita le vestige del cielo. Et come el cielo tutto è regholato da uno movimento hunicho del primo cielo et dello hunico motore, cosi la generatione humana allora hottime si conduce, quando da uno motore con hordine di legge è regholata. Per questo al bene essere del mondo è necessario la monarchia.’ Dante, *Monarchia*, ed. and transl. Shaw, pp. 18-21: ‘Generat enim homo hominem et sol, iuxta secundum *De naturali auditu*. Ergo optime se habet humanum genus cum vestigia celi, in quantum propria natura permittit, ymitatur. Et cum celum totum unico motu, scilicet Primi Mobilis, et ab unico motore, qui Deus est, reguletur in omnibus suis partibus, motibus et motoribus, ut phylosophando evidentissime humana ratio deprehendit, si vere sillogizatum est, humanum genus tunc optime se habet, quando ab unico principe ... reguletur. Propter quod necessarium apparet ad bene esse mundi Monarchiam esse, sive unicum principatum qui ‘Imperium’ appellatur.’

⁹⁷ Dante, *Monarchia*, transl. Ficino, p. 338: ‘Aristotile ... diceva: “Le cose non vogliono essere male disposte; la moltitudine de’ precipi è male; adunque debbe essere uno principe”’. Dante, *Monarchia*, ed. and transl. Shaw, pp. 22-23: Phylosophus ... dicebat: “Entia nolunt male disponi; malum autem pluralitas principatum: unus ergo princeps”.’

⁹⁸ Dante, *Monarchia*, transl. Ficino, pp. 342-343: ‘La generatione humana, solo signioreg[i]ante el monarcha, è per cagione di sé et non d’altri, perché solamente allora le torte republiche si dirizano – come sono le popolari, et quelle in che pochi reghono, et le tiranide – le quali ssobg[i]ogano la generatione humana in servitù.’ Dante, *Monarchia*, ed. and transl. Shaw, p. 30-32: ‘Genus humanum solum imperante Monarcha sui et non alterius gratia est: tunc enim solum polities diriguntur oblique – democratie scilicet, oligarchie atque tyrampnides – que in servitutem cogunt genus humanum.’

Furthermore, in his examination of the different types of regime, Aristotle presents them all as taking place within the *polis*. Again, like many of the medieval writers who preceded him, Dante scales Aristotle's political insights up to fit them into the fourteenth-century European scene with which he was familiar, made up not only of city-states but also kingdoms – without, of course, noting any differences between his own work and his source material. Having described the Aristotelian city, Dante continues seamlessly to state that the purpose of a kingdom is 'the same as that of a city, but with greater confidence in its tranquillity'.⁹⁹ The intellectual leap which Dante makes by applying principles drawn from the *Politics* to the concept of a universal empire or monarchy entails the combination of Aristotle with Christianity in an entirely new way: the Aristotelian idea of a temporal end for mankind is subsumed into the Church's message of an all-encompassing peace and unity.¹⁰⁰

Although the *Monarchia* is immersed in Peripatetic philosophy, any reader of the treatise, whether in the original Latin or in a vernacular translation, would absorb Dante's own brand of Aristotelianism rather than the doctrine of Aristotle himself.

The second half of the fifteenth century also saw a revitalisation of the commentary tradition on the *Commedia* – another significant conduit for Aristotelian political material – although with some important differences from the interpretations which developed in the Trecento. Scholarly interest in Dante had been rekindled as attention turned to the 'questione della lingua': the debate on the status, form and appropriate use of the vernacular. Leonardo Bruni followed the linguistic theories which Dante had expounded in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, asserting that in ancient Rome a vernacular had existed alongside Latin; he also held up the *Commedia* as an example of both the literary achievement possible in the Florentine vernacular and the treasure that would be lost if writers were only to use Latin instead of the language in which they possessed most fluency.¹⁰¹ In addition, the advent of the printing press in this period enabled Dante's *Commedia*, often with accompanying commentary, to gain unprecedented

⁹⁹ Dante, *Monarchia*, transl. Ficino, p. 334: 'Etiandio el regnio particulare, el fine del quale è tutto huno con quello della ciptà con mag[i]ore fidanza di sua tranquillità.' Dante, *Monarchia*, ed. and transl. Shaw, pp. 14-15: "Si denique unum regnum particulare, cuius finis est is qui civitatis cum maiori fiducia sue tranquillitatis."

¹⁰⁰ Mancusi-Ungaro, *Dante and the Empire*, p. 91.

¹⁰¹ A. Mazzocco, *Linguistic Theories in Dante and the Humanists*, pp. 30-34.

circulation.

These developments, together with the new approaches to scholarship instituted by the humanists of the fifteenth century, precipitated changes within the commentary tradition. As Deborah Parker has noted, while the *proemi* of Trecento commentaries, whether Latin or vernacular, followed the formulaic structure familiar from biblical or classical commentaries, the humanist expositions of the Quattrocento used the *proemio* much more freely to offer a particular reading of the text as a whole or to place their work, and the *Commedia* itself, within the framework of their own intellectual allegiances.¹⁰² This has already been observed in Ficino's translation of the *Monarchia*, in which he attempted to place Dante's work in a Platonic scheme; and it was continued by Martino Paolo Nidobeato and Cristoforo Landino, both of whom also exploited the possibilities of the printing press.

Nidobeato (1432–1483) was secretary to Guglielmo, Marchese of Monferrato, and also held the position of resident ambassador to Milan,¹⁰³ where his edition of the *Commedia* was published by Ludovico and Alberto Piemontesi in 1478.¹⁰⁴ In this work Dante's text was accompanied by the commentary of Jacopo della Lana, which Nidobeato supplemented with material taken from other *chiose* as well as inserting significant additions of his own; enough to earn him the title of commentator in his own right.¹⁰⁵ Nidobeato's Latin dedication (to his employer, the Marchese of Monferrato) explains that he chose to append della Lana's commentary to the *Commedia* as it was the most worthy of all the interpretations of the *Commedia* available to him, and dwells on the beauty of della Lana's Bolognese idiom and the city's place at the 'navel' of Italy.¹⁰⁶ It seems, however, that Nidobeato's choice of della Lana's commentary as the basis for his edition derives more from anti-Florentine than pro-Bolognese spirit; wishing to oppose the growing Florentine or Tuscan hegemony over Italian literature but unable to use the Milanese dialect so neglected by the court he served, Nidobeato turned instead to the

¹⁰² D. Parker, *Commentary and Ideology: Dante in the Renaissance* (Durham NC, 1993), p. 37.

¹⁰³ S. Invernizzi, 'Un lettore quattrocentesco della *Commedia*: Martino Paolo Nibia e il commento al primo canto dell'*Inferno*', in F. Spera (ed.), *Novella Fronda: Studi Danteschi* (Naples, 2008), pp. 237-262, at p. 239.

¹⁰⁴ See C. Dionisotti, 'Dante nel Quattrocento', in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di studi danteschi, 20-27 aprile 1965* (Florence, 1965), pp. 333-378, at pp. 369-70.

¹⁰⁵ Dionisotti, 'Dante nel Quattrocento', p. 370.

¹⁰⁶ Martino Paolo Nidobeato, 'Divo Guglielmo Marchioni Montisferrati...' [Dedication], in Dante, *Commedia*, comm. Martino Paolo Nidobeato (Milan, 1477), f. [1r-v], at f. [1r]: 'In umbilico italie posita'.

most learned non-Tuscan commentator available.¹⁰⁷

Nidobeato's additions to the commentary are focused, for the most part, on updating historical and political detail. This note on *Paradiso* 16 is typical of the information he provides:

Now the Medici are in power, and though they lack a title one can say that they are lords. The founder of such power was Cosimo, father of Piero and grandfather of these two brothers Lorenzo and Giuliano, who now govern Florence as they please.¹⁰⁸

His notes are sometimes supplemented with moral observations on contemporary Italy or apposite classical, biblical or literary quotations. At *Purgatorio* 23, for example, he rails against the luxury and immodesty of women; and at *Inferno* 33, he embarks on a diatribe against the threat posed to Christianity by infidels.¹⁰⁹ Nidobeato's additions do not seem to extend to new material from Aristotle's *Politics*, but his printed edition allowed the political Aristotelianism employed so widely by Jacopo della Lana (as we have seen in the previous chapter) to become accessible to a far wider readership than had been possible by means of the manuscript transmission.

This Milanese (or Bolognese) appropriation of Dante also acted as a spur for the production of a text of great circulation and contemporary significance¹¹⁰ – the commentary and edition of the *Commedia* by Cristoforo Landino (1424-1498), which was printed by Niccolò Tedesco and presented to the Florentine Signoria on 30 August 1481. Landino was born in Florence and dedicated his life to the city in both his intellectual and political endeavours. He taught rhetoric and poetry at the Florentine Studio, contributed (as a former teacher and lifelong friend of Ficino) to the Neoplatonic

¹⁰⁷ L. C. Rossi, 'Per il Commento di Martino Paolo Nibbia alla *Commedia*', in V. Fera and G. Ferrau (eds), *Filologia umanistica per Gianvito Resta*, 3 vols (Padua, 1997), III, pp. 1677-1716, at pp. 1690-1691.

¹⁰⁸ Nidobeato, '*Paradiso* 16.152', in Dante, *Commedia*, comm. Martino Paolo Nidobeato, f. [201v]: 'Hora sonno in stato Medici che dal titolo in fuori si puo dire chelli sonno signori. Fu fondatore di tale potenza Cosmo padre di piero et pauolo [sic] di questi due fratelli cioe lorenzo et giuliano liquali hora governano fiorenza come alloro piace.' (Here 'pauolo' must be a mistake, substituted for 'avolo'.)

¹⁰⁹ Rossi, 'Per il Commento di Martino Paolo Nibbia alla *Commedia*', pp. 1707 and 1703-4.

¹¹⁰ R. Cardini, 'Landino e Dante', *Rinascimento*, 30 (1990), pp. 175-190, at p. 182.

revival, and was elected Chancellor of the Guelf Party in 1467.¹¹¹ The first edition of his commentary was an overtly Florentine production, furnished with copperplate engravings by one of the city's most celebrated artists, Sandro Botticelli, a Latin letter by Marsilio Ficino, as well as, most strikingly, a preface by Landino himself which is, in essence, a treatise on the supremacy of Florence and Florentine culture.¹¹² Landino seems to be responding directly to Nidobeato's provocation when he states that Dante:

Is returned to his homeland after a long exile, and he is recognised to be a pure Florentine, and not to be either from Romagna or Lombardy, nor to belong to the idioms of those who have commented upon him.¹¹³

Landino's *Comento* has been characterised as a reflection of the political and cultural environment of Florence at the time.¹¹⁴ This included a burgeoning patriotism, which arose not merely in opposition to the claims of other Italian cities but specifically as a response to the successful resolution, by Lorenzo il Magnifico, of the crisis occasioned by the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478, which saw Florence threatened by both the papacy and Ferdinand of Aragon, King of Naples.¹¹⁵ Florentine relief and pride manifested itself in a celebration of the city's culture and, in particular, of its own vernacular authors. In addition, Landino's immersion in the humanist and Neoplatonic environment of Florence allowed his *Comento* to emerge not only as a homage, at an apposite moment, to one of Florence's most famous sons, but also as a work which went a significant way towards bridging the gap between vernacular culture, which had unflinchingly embraced the *Commedia* throughout the Quattrocento, and the high culture of the élite which had, to a large extent, turned away from Dante.

Most pertinent for our purposes, however, is the extent to which the Neoplatonic approach taken by Landino in his exegesis of the *Commedia* supplanted or negated Aristotelian interpretations of the political elements in Dante's poem, especially when compared to Nidobeato's edition, which incorporated della Lana's scholastic and

¹¹¹ P. Giannantonio, *Cristoforo Landino e l'umanesimo volgare* (Naples, 1971), p. 88.

¹¹² Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence*, p. 176.

¹¹³ Cristoforo Landino, 'Proemio' to his *Comento alla 'Commedia'*, I, p. 221: 'Sia dopo lungo exilio restituito nella sua patria, et riconosciuto né Romagnuolo essere né Lombardo, né degli idiomi di quegli che l'hanno comentato, ma mero fiorentino'; transl. in Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence*, p. 168.

¹¹⁴ Cardini, 'Landino e Dante', p. 180.

¹¹⁵ Gilson, *Dante and Renaissance Florence*, p. 167.

essentially Aristotelian commentary of the Trecento. This approach also shaped the communication of material from the *Politics* to a readership enlarged by the broadened distribution afforded by the printing press.

In contrast to many previous commentators, who had attempted to reconcile Dante's views with their own, Landino was unafraid to disagree with the poet on the subject of philosophical authority. In his commentary on *Inferno* 4, in which Dante famously introduces Aristotle as 'il maestro di color che sanno', Landino counters with this assertion:

I see that among the Greeks Aristotle is held in the highest admiration in physics, and Plato is judged to be superior in metaphysics and divine matters. So, they call Aristotle *demonio*, and Plato *divino*. And certainly all the ancient Latins, and those who do not separate eloquence from doctrine, think that the prince of philosophers is Plato.¹¹⁶

This does not, of course, necessarily lessen the value of Aristotle's views on politics, which are, after all, part of the earthly philosophy in which he is superior; but it does undermine Aristotle as 'the Philosopher', and Landino does not often interpret the *Commedia* along Aristotelian lines. Discussing *Inferno* 12, Landino focuses on the moral failings of tyrants, instead of the characteristics of their rule as described by Aristotle:

He is not a shepherd, but a wolf. He does not watch the sheep, but kills them. He does not exert himself for those who are ruled by him, but wishes to live from their work – to triumph on their spoils. He wishes to behave as a devil and to be adored as a god. He wants his lust to be held as a divine precept, his avarice as a just law.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Landino, *Comento*, I, p. 435: 'Ma veggo appresso de' Greci Aristotile essere in somma admiratione nelle phisiche doctrine, et Platone essere giudichato superiore nelle metaphisiche et divine. Onde Aristotile chiamono demonio, et Platone divino. Et certo tutti gli antichi Latini, e quali non seperorono la eloquentia dalla doctrina, vogliono che 'l principe de' philosophi sia Platone.'

¹¹⁷ Landino, *Comento*, II, p. 625: 'Non è pastore ma lupo. Non guarda le pecore, ma l'uccide. Non s'affaticha per quegli che gli sono sobtoposti, ma vuole vivere della loro fatica. Triumphare delle loro spoglie. Portarsi con loro chome diavolo, et essere adorato chome dio. Vuole che la sua libidine sia chome un divino precepto. La sua avaritia sia per giusta legge.'

There are, however, particular occasions when Landino does have recourse to the *Politics*. Often, his Aristotelian allusions serve simply to reinforce elements which by this point were integral to the exegesis of the *Commedia*, such as man's social nature. Here, Landino introduces a new element into the vernacular tradition of Aristotle's doctrine on the city-dwelling man as the mean between those who are either beast-like or divine:

And certainly because man, considering this composition of soul and of body, always seeks companionship, one does not find him living alone, unless either melancholic humours have corrupted his imagination and he has become almost a beast; or, through heightened intelligence, despising human things, he transcends through speculation to divine things. So Aristotle rightly said in the *Politics* that he who leaves the sociable and civil life, has become either a beast or more than a man.¹¹⁸

It is likely that the source of Landino's reference to the influence of melancholic humours on the imagination is Marsilio Ficino's *De vita sana*, which stressed the notion of black bile – the melancholic humour – as the source of both folly and the madness of genius.¹¹⁹ This treatise was written and circulated in manuscript in 1480, before its inclusion in Ficino's *De triplici vita* (published in 1489).¹²⁰ This is evidence of an 'eclectic' use of Aristotle on the part of Landino – supplementing the philosopher's teachings with other materials.

In his commentary on *Inferno* 15, in which Dante converses with his former teacher Brunetto Latini, Landino offers the Aristotelian division of the ages of man: a doctrine popular in vernacular works on household management, but lacking from the earlier *Commedia* commentary tradition.

¹¹⁸ Landino, *Comento*, I, p. 334: 'Et certo perché l'huomo, considerato questo composito d'anima et di corpo, cerca sempre compagnia, non si truova chi viva solingho se non o chi per homore melancholico ha corropto la fantasia et è divenuto quasi bestia, o chi per alteza d'ingegno sprezzando le cose humane trascende con la speculatione alle cose divine. Onde rectamente dixè Aristotele nella *Politicha*, che chi lascia la vita sociabile et civile, chostui è diventato o bestia o piú che huomo.'

¹¹⁹ Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, ed. and transl. C. V. Kaske and J. R. Clark (New York NY, 1989), p. 117.

¹²⁰ C. Kaske and J. Clark, 'Introduction', in Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life*, pp. 3-90, at p. 6.

The ages of human life, as we have already said, are divided by the number seven. Infancy ends in the first seven years. In the second [seven years], when they reach fourteen, childhood finishes. The third age, adolescence, goes on until twenty-one. The fourth, youth, contains two lots of seven years, and goes on until thirty-five. Two more lots of seven years, which reach forty-nine, make the fifth, which is the virile age. And Aristotle thinks that this age is suitable for the government of the republic because the powers of the soul and body are good, and it is mature and full and excellent.¹²¹

This addition further reinforces the central position of Aristotle's scheme in the fifteenth century's conception of ageing and human development. Landino's deep interest in Platonic philosophy by no means led him to dismiss Aristotle, who remained of great importance for the understanding and communication of political and economic matters throughout the fifteenth century.

The vernacular use of the *Politics* in the Quattrocento displays many similarities with that of the previous century, underlining the degree of continuity between late medieval 'scholastic' and early Renaissance 'humanist' attitudes towards Aristotle. The most frequently cited passages continued to be those concerned with man's political nature and the different types of political organisation; and Aristotle also provided the vocabulary needed for the discussion of these themes. Despite an intensified focus on the educational material contained in the *Politics*, the medieval 'mirror for princes' genre was still reflected in Giovanni Cavalcanti's *Trattato politico-morale*, even though the political education offered was directed at a Florentine citizen rather than a princeling or *podestà*. Similarly, the tradition of Dante commentary remained a significant conduit for the *Politics* in the vernacular, as medieval or more recent commentaries gained an unprecedented circulation through the new medium of the printed book. The location for the production of these works remained, for the most

¹²¹ Landino, *Comento*, II, p. 689: 'L'età dell'humana vita chome già habbiamo decto si dividono per numero septenario, et ne' primi septe anni finisce la infantia. Ne' secondi che arrivano a quattordici finisce la pueritia. La terza età che è l'adoloscentia va insino a ventuno. La quarta cioè la gioventù contiene due septenarii, et va a trentacinque. Due altri septenarii che pervengono a quarantanove fanno la quinta, la quale è età virile. Et questa vuole Aristotele che sia apta al governo della republica perchè vale di forze d'animo et di corpo, et è matura et piena et perfecta.'

part, Tuscany, as the use of the local vernacular – particularly in Florence – became associated with civic pride.

Developments, however, can be detected, especially those influenced by the rise of humanism and the changing political landscape of the Italian peninsula. There was a greater flexibility in the combination of Aristotle with other sources, particularly evident in the commentary on the *Commedia* of Cristoforo Landino, in which Dante's Aristotelianism was melded with his commentator's studies in Neoplatonism and use of contemporary authors such as Marsilio Ficino. The humanist passion for elegant and erudite prose can also be detected in the less insistent reference to Aristotle as an authority, something only really prevalent in Giovanni Cavalcanti's rather old-fashioned treatise. While the vast majority of philosophical and political discussion of the time still took place in Latin – sometimes to the detriment of vernacular production by the greatest intellectuals, especially in the first half of the century – later, when the vernacular was more frequently employed, it was increasingly recognised as a potent force. A strong desire to communicate with a vernacular readership, and in the process to convey Aristotelian political philosophy, is visible in Savonarola's *Tractato* and in Landino's *Comento*. Not only was the importance of this readership increasingly appreciated, but it was addressed with a greater subtlety of expression and more linguistic care.

Chapter Four

The Sixteenth Century: Antonio Brucioli's *Dialogi* and His Translation of the *Politics*

From the later fifteenth to the sixteenth century, the championing of the vernacular as a medium for serious discourse gained increasing force.¹ The scholarly endeavour to enrich the Italian language was aided by the printing press; and material from Aristotle's *Politics* became available to an ever larger vernacular reading public, especially after the middle of the century when two translations were published. The first was by Antonio Brucioli, which came out in Venice in 1547, and the second by Bernardo Segni, which was issued in Florence in 1549. These versions were followed by paraphrases, summaries and commentaries – all devoted both to making the *Politics* accessible to a vernacular readership and to elevating the Italian language to a level suitable for philosophical discourse.

As the century progressed, the presentation of the *Politics* in Italian was in many ways an act of cultural appropriation; but Aristotle's treatise was also considered of great relevance for understanding the contemporary political scene. I therefore disagree with Marco Toste's statement that 'sixteenth-century authors did not look to the *Politics* as a text likely to be of assistance in understanding contemporary political reality'.² A key counter-example, which will be the focus of the first part of this chapter, is provided by the *Dialogi* on moral philosophy of Antonio Brucioli (c. 1498–1566). Written twenty years before his translation of the *Politics*, but drawing heavily on the treatise, these dialogues are immersed, as was Brucioli himself, in the anxieties, regrets and hopes associated with Italian, and in particular Florentine, political events of the early sixteenth century.

The invasion of Italy by Charles VIII in 1494 – the catalyst for the end of the fifteenth-century dominion of Florence by the Medici – marked the beginning of a series of

¹ For more on this subject, see M. Vitale, *La questione della lingua* (Palermo, 1971), and also A. Calzona et al. (eds), *Il volgare come lingua di cultura dal Trecento al Cinquecento: Atti del Convegno internazionale, Mantova, 18-20 ottobre 2001* (Florence, 2003).

² M. Toste, 'Evolution within Tradition: The Vernacular Works on Aristotle's *Politics* in Sixteenth-Century Italy', in G. Briguglia and T. Ricklin (eds), *Thinking Politics in the Vernacular from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Fribourg, 2011), pp. 189-211, at p. 189.

conflicts which spread throughout the peninsula, as it became the battleground for disputes between competing European powers.³ In 1499 Italy was again invaded, as Louis XII of France and Ferdinand II of Aragon fought over the possession of Milan and Naples. The independent Venetian Republic also suffered, as Pope Julius II, Louis, Ferdinand and the emperor-elect Maximilian came to an agreement – the formation of the League of Cambrai in 1508 – to restrict the Republic’s power.⁴ Elsewhere, the Ottoman Turks in the East remained a constant threat. In addition, the Italian city-states were engaged in warring against each other. Conflict and abrupt changes of rulers and regimes became the order of the day in sixteenth-century Italy.⁵

In Florence, the execution of Savonarola in 1498 did not bring tranquillity. Instead, the city’s subsequent oscillation between republican and Medici-led government threw the political assumptions of the previous century into doubt and forced political thinkers into a reassessment of both the theory of governance and the form which the government of Florence in particular should take. The republicanism instituted under the guidance of Savonarola was reformulated after his death along a more closely ‘Venetian’ model; the stability and perfectly ‘mixed’ constitution of Venice had many admirers in Italy.⁶ The doge, the elected leader of the state, presided over a relatively small Senate, which dealt with financial and foreign affairs, and a much larger *Consiglio Grande* or Great Council, which was responsible for the election of officials. This system of governance had been in place since 1297 and had changed remarkably little since, apart from the introduction in 1335 of the Council of Ten, which dealt with internal insurrection and punishment.⁷ In Florence, a Gonfalonier of Justice for life was created in 1502, in imitation of the Venetian doge. Piero Soderini (1450–1522), who was elected to this post, presided in conjunction with the Senate and the Great Council, which had been set up in Savonarola’s lifetime; in this way, the government combined,

³ For a comprehensive account of the Italian wars, see M. Mallett and C. Shaw, *The Italian Wars 1494–1559: War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Harlow, 2013); see also J. Everson and D. Zancani (eds), *Italy in Crisis, 1494* (Oxford, 2000).

⁴ Mallett and Shaw, *The Italian Wars*, pp. 87-88.

⁵ See F. Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini: Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (Princeton NJ, 1965).

⁶ Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1978), I, p. 140; W. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley CA, 1968), pp. 57-59. For more on the myth of Venice, see D. Raines, *L’invention du mythe aristocratique: l’image de soi du patriciat vénitien au temps de la Sérénissime*, 2 vols (Venice, 2006).

⁷ Skinner, *Foundations*, I, p. 139.

in principle, the one, the few and the many, all working together in harmony.⁸

It is hardly surprising that such harmony failed to materialise in reality. The republican government faced consistent opposition in the first decade of the sixteenth century from those who remained loyal to the Medici such as Bernardo Rucellai (1448–1515)⁹ and his circle, who met in the Orti Oricellari (the gardens of the Rucellai family). They preferred the idea of a Medici government supported by a small circle of *ottimati* and considered the ideal government – and, indeed, the Venetian regime, which they admired – to be far narrower and more restricted than the one put in place in Florence. In Venice, only those aristocratic families listed in the ‘Golden Book’, which had come into force in 1297, were eligible to participate in government; and Rucellai, together with his aristocratic allies, wanted something similar in Florence: a *stretto* (narrow), as opposed to *largo* (broad), republicanism, with power concentrated in the Senate rather than the Great Council.¹⁰ It has also been suggested that the leaders of the most powerful families in Florence, accustomed to striving for political advantage, regretted that by appointing a Gonfalonier for life they had effectively barred themselves from the city’s most prominent office.¹¹

Soon military failures and unpopular proposals for taxation led to dwindling support for Soderini and the new *largo* government beyond the aristocratic circle around Bernardo Rucellai.¹² This is evident in the historical re-evaluation of Lorenzo de’ Medici: as dissatisfaction with the Soderini regime grew, il Magnifico increasingly came to be viewed not as a tyrant but rather as a manifestation of the Platonic philosopher-king, presiding over what had been a ‘golden age’ for Florence.¹³ As Felix Gilbert has shown, this shift is especially marked in the writings of Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540). In his 1409 *Storie fiorentine*, he had described Lorenzo as a ‘pleasant tyrant’; by the 1520s, when he wrote the *Dialogo del Reggimento di Firenze*, his appraisal of Lorenzo

⁸ J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton NJ, 1975), p. 117.

⁹ On Rucellai, see R. M. Comanducci, ‘Politica e storiografia nella visione di un oligarca fiorentino’, *Annali dell’Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici*, 13 (1995-1996), pp. 361-400, and F. Gilbert, ‘Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari: A Study on the Origin of Modern Political Thought’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 12 (1949), pp. 101-131.

¹⁰ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 120.

¹¹ H. C. Butters, *Governors and Government in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence 1502-1519* (Oxford, 1985), p. 61.

¹² Butters, *Governors and Government*, p. 91.

¹³ Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, pp. 112-115.

improved to the extent that he favoured Medici rule to that of the republican regime. In the *Storia d'Italia*, written between 1537 and 1540, Lorenzo 'assumes almost superhuman proportions'.¹⁴

In 1512 Spanish troops attacked Florence and the republican regime collapsed.¹⁵ Almost immediately the Medici were back in power in Florence; the position of Gonfalonier of Justice was reduced to the former tenure of one year. In 1513 the position of the Medici was greatly strengthened by the election of Cardinal Giuliano de' Medici to the papacy as Leo X, an event greeted with celebrations across Florence and, indeed, in the Rucellai household.¹⁶ The restoration of the Medici, however, led to the downfall of others, most notably Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), who had been second chancellor in the Soderini government and who, having been accused of conspiring against the Medici, was imprisoned, tortured and forced into retirement on his release.¹⁷

The political uncertainty of the first decade of the sixteenth century continued after 1512. The Medici no longer retained the aura of invincibility which had characterised Lorenzo's regime, and their expulsion remained in the memory of Florentine citizens. These circumstances inspired works written in the vernacular and intended precisely to address the problem of governing Florence. Guicciardini's *Discorso di Logrogno*, composed at the time of the demise of Soderini's government while its author was ambassador to Spain, discussed the organisation of the republic and criticised its balancing of powers. While recognising the weight of Aristotelian political theory and underpinned by its ideas, the *Discorso* focuses directly on the institutions and practices of contemporary Florence, as he makes clear at the beginning by stating that: 'Liberty is proper and natural to our city. Our past was lived in liberty and we were bred to it.'¹⁸ This is reminiscent of the attitude displayed in Girolamo Savonarola's own treatise on the government of Florence: the belief that the natural liberty of Florentines exempted

¹⁴ Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, pp. 115-121.

¹⁵ J. Coleman, *A History of Political Thought: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Oxford, 2000), p. 243.

¹⁶ Gilbert, 'Bernardo Rucellai', p. 113.

¹⁷ R. Black, *Machiavelli* (Abingdon, 2013), pp. 76-79.

¹⁸ Francesco Guicciardini, *Discorso di Logrogno*, in his *Opere*, ed. E. Lugnani Scarano (Turin, 1970), pp. 257-296, at p. 255: 'La libertà è propria e naturale della città nostra. In quella sono vivuti e' passati nostri, in quella siamo nutriti noi.' Translation taken from Francesco Guicciardini, 'Discorso di Logrogno', transl. A. Moulakis, in A. Moulakis, *Republican Realism in Renaissance Florence: Francesco Guicciardini's Discorso di Logrogno* (Lanham MD, 1998), pp. 117-149, at pp. 121-122.

them from the ‘usual’ deliberations over what was the best form of government. Guicciardini singled out ‘the supremacy of law and public decrees prevailing over the desires of individuals’,¹⁹ which was safeguarded by a mixed and balanced constitution made up of a Gonfalonier of Justice for life, a Senate and a Great Council modelled on the government of Venice. Guicciardini also supported the employment of a citizen militia rather than mercenaries, as did Machiavelli.²⁰

The return of the Medici also provided the occasion for Machiavelli’s most famous literary compositions. His political career over, in 1513 he began composing *The Prince*, a manifesto of political realism, and a few years later wrote the *Discourses on Livy*. Although these works do not contain explicit quotations or paraphrases of Aristotle’s *Politics*,²¹ they occupy such an important place in the vernacular output on politics of the early sixteenth century that they need to be briefly considered here.

The *Prince* and *Discourses on Livy* have caused headaches throughout the centuries for commentators and historians attempting to identify an essential compatibility between a treatise exploring the ways a new prince can impose his will on a populace – and not always by legal or moral means – and another championing republicanism.²² In *The Prince* Machiavelli addressed the foundation and maintenance of a new state by a princely ruler, laying emphasis on the power of his personal *virtù* – an idea which requires martial and virile qualities, and only the appearance of conventional virtue – to overcome the variability of *fortuna*.²³ It grew out of the special circumstances in which Machiavelli found himself in 1513, soon after his dismissal from politics, and was clearly an attempt on his part to win favour with the Medici.²⁴ In the *Discourses*, by contrast, he set about describing the conditions necessary for the establishment of a good republic, one which would continue to function even in the face of the egotistical

¹⁹ Guicciardini, *Discorso di Logrogno*, p. 255: ‘Né è altro la libertà che uno prevalere le legge e ordini pubblici allo appetito delli uomini particolari.’ Translation taken from Guicciardini, ‘Discorso di Logrogno’, transl. A. Moulakis, p. 122.

²⁰ Guicciardini, *Discorso di Logrogno*, p. 252; Niccolò Machiavelli, *L’arte della guerra*, in Machiavelli, *L’arte della guerra e scritti politici minori*, ed. J-J. Marchand, D. Fachard and G. Masi (Rome, 2001), pp. 27-312, at pp. 55-64. See also Skinner, *Foundations* I, pp. 163-164.

²¹ See G. Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli* (Rome, 1965), pp. 45-75, for a discussion of Aristotelian aspects of Machiavelli’s works.

²² G. Lucarelli, *Gli Orti Oricellari: Epilogo della politica fiorentina del Quattrocento e inizio del pensiero politico moderno* (Lucca, 1979), p. 120; Coleman, *A History of Political Thought*, p. 247.

²³ Black, *Machiavelli*, pp. 103-108.

²⁴ Skinner, *Foundations*, pp. 117-118.

nature of individual men, and discusses varying types of regimes.²⁵ What is most relevant in the context of this dissertation is that he placed a fundamental importance on politics – as Martin Fleisher has stated, for Machiavelli life was politics²⁶ – and that he chose to express his views in vernacular works which spoke directly to pressing political concerns (the resurgence of the Medici, the best way of governing and defending Florence) and which he hoped would have some impact on the actual practice of government or – even better – propel him back to a position in which he could exert influence on political events.

Political discussions continued to take place in the Rucellai gardens. Although the meetings presided over by Bernardo Rucellai had ended when he absented himself from Florence between 1506 and 1511, under his nephew Cosimo the Orti Oricellari became an informal meeting place for intellectual conversation. Located between the second and third circles of the Florentine walls on the via della Scala, the gardens were a humanist paradise: beautiful environs, cultured hosts, classical statuary and shady benches for learned discussion.²⁷ Here, a new, younger generation of humanists and idealists congregated together to talk about literature, history, philosophy and politics.²⁸ The Orti Oricellari meetings made a significant contribution to the intellectual development of the young men who attended them and who had the opportunity to debate a range of matters with some of the keenest and most respected minds in Florence at the time such as Niccolò Machiavelli, Giangiorgio Trissino (1478–1550) and Francesco Cattani da Diacceto (1466–1522).²⁹ This was the setting for the philosophical and political education of the young Antonio Brucioli.

Machiavelli's *Arte della guerra* is set in the Rucellai gardens, so it seems likely that he

²⁵ Black, *Machiavelli*, pp. 175-176; Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, pp. 155-157.

²⁶ M. Fleisher, 'A Passion for Politics: The Vital Core of the World of Machiavelli', in M. Fleisher (ed.), *Machiavelli and the Nature of Political Thought* (London, 1973), pp. 114-146, at p. 117. Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, p. 161.

²⁷ Lucarelli, *Gli Orti Oricellari*, p. 101; Gilbert, 'Bernardo Rucellai', p. 114; see also R. M. Comanducci, 'Gli Orti Oricellari', *Interpres*, 15 (1996), pp. 302-358, and Machiavelli, *L'arte della guerra*, p. 34.

²⁸ A. L. De Gaetano, *Giambattista Gelli and the Florentine Academy: The Rebellion against Latin* (Florence, 1976), p. 89.

²⁹ Other young attendees included the cousins Luigi di Piero and Luigi di Tommaso Alamanni, Zanobi Buondelmonte, Filippo de' Nerli, Battista della Palla, Anton Francesco degli Albizzi, Giambattista Gelli, Giovanni Lascaris, Francesco Guidetti and Jacopo Diacceto; see Lucarelli, *Gli Orti Oricellari*, pp. 104-105; H. Hauvette, *Un exilé florentin à la cour de France au XVI^e siècle: Luigi Alamanni (1495-1556), sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris, 1903), p. 16.

spoke about topics associated with it and perhaps also with the *Discourses on Livy*, which are dedicated to Cosimo Rucellai (among others) – Machiavelli expressed his thanks to this young patron, who ‘forced me to write what I should never have written of my own accord’.³⁰ Diacceto, who had studied at the University of Pisa and had been Marsilio Ficino’s favourite pupil, brought both Neoplatonic learning and a synthetic approach to philosophy to the Rucellai gardens. A professor of philosophy at the University of Florence, he taught courses on Aristotle and emphasised the agreement between Plato and his student.³¹ Trissino, who – like Machiavelli – features as an interlocutor in some of Brucioli’s political dialogues, was a celebrated poet and resolute champion of the vernacular, introducing the value of the Italian language as a topic for the group’s discussions when he arrived in Florence in 1513.³²

The younger humanists at the Orti Oricellari had grown up under the Soderini regime and chafed at the restrictions imposed by the Medici. Many of them regarded themselves as republicans and looked to Republican Rome for inspiration. It is likely that the political opinions of Machiavelli had a profound influence on them – the historian Jacopo Nardi, present at the Orti Oricellari, recorded that ‘Niccolò was greatly loved by them’, (‘Niccolò era amato grandemente da loro’).³³ And it was this republican passion which caused the idyll in the Rucellai gardens to come to an abrupt end, when in 1522 several members of the group were implicated in a plot to assassinate Cardinal Giulio de’ Medici and so restore republican liberty to Florence. The principal conspirators were Luigi di Piero Alamanni and his cousin Luigi di Tommaso Alamanni, Zanobi Buondelmonte and Jacopo da Diacceto; but Antonio Brucioli was certainly involved as well – he left the city with Luigi di Piero Alamanni and Buondelmonte when the plot was uncovered following the arrest of a messenger from France. Jacopo

³⁰ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, ed. F. Bausi, 2 vols (Rome, 2001), II, p. 790: ‘Che mi avete forzato a scrivere quello che io mai per me medesimo non arei scritto’. Transl. Skinner, *Foundations*, I, p. 154.

³¹ P. O. Kristeller, ‘Francesco da Diacceto and Florentine Platonism in the Sixteenth Century’, in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, IV: *Letteratura classica e umanistica* (Vatican City, 1946), pp. 260-304, at pp. 270-275 and 299.

³² D. Cantimori and F. A. Yates, ‘Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1 (1937), pp. 83–102, at p. 88; G. Spini, *Tra Rinascimento e Riforma: Antonio Brucioli* (Florence, 1940), p. 24. On Trissino and his contribution to Italian literature and the *questione della lingua*, see N. Pozza (ed.), *Convegno di studi su Giangiorgio Trissino* (Vicenza, 1980).

³³ Jacopo Nardi, *Istorie della Città di Firenze*, ed. L. Arbib, 2 vols (Florence, 1842), II, p. 86. See Lucarelli, *Gli Orti Oricellari*, p. 117; Black, *Machiavelli*, p. 136.

da Diacceto and Luigi di Tommaso Alamanni were executed.³⁴

Brucioli's exile from Florence saw him travel through north Italy and across the Alps: to Urbino and Venice, Lyon and Paris, and Spruch in Germany, encountering and absorbing Protestant beliefs along the way (something which would shape and direct much of his life, as we shall see). Returning to Italy, he seems to have taken up residence in Venice, where the first edition of his moral *Dialogi*, titled *Dialogi di Antonio Brucioli*, was published in 1526 by the press of Gregorio de' Gregori. The dialogues on moral philosophy are part of a series of humanistic works composed by Brucioli in his youth, and which are the first of his works to have been published when he arrived in Venice in the late 1520s. All vernacular dialogues, they include discussions of natural philosophy and metaphysics.³⁵

The first edition of Brucioli's moral dialogues was dedicated to Massimiliano Sforza, who was exiled in France after the dukedom of Milan was usurped from him.³⁶ The work was then published twice more in Venice under the title *Dialogi della morale filosofia*: first, by Bartolomeo Zanetti in 1538, and then by Brucioli's brothers, Francesco and Alessandro, in 1544.³⁷ In the first edition of the *Dialogi*, published four years after the meetings ended, the interlocutors bore fictional classical names. In the second edition, however, Brucioli replaced these almost entirely with the names of his contemporaries: Machiavelli appears frequently, as do references to his works; and Trissino, Buondelmonte and Cosimo Rucellai are also present. Brucioli's use of the vernacular and his views on the power of language suggest the influence of Trissino, while the scope of the dialogues attests to Brucioli's wide reading, with both classical and humanist authorities cited throughout.

There are some variations between the editions. Reinier Leushuis has noted a lessening

³⁴ On the conspiracy, see L. Passerini, *Degli Orti Oricellari* (Florence, 1854), pp. 27–28; Hauvette, *Luigi Alamanni*, pp. 33–40; Spini, *Antonio Brucioli*, pp. 37–38; C. Guasti, 'Documenti sulla congiura contro Giulio de' Medici', *Giornale storico degli archivi toscani*, 3 (1859), pp. 121–150, 185–232, 239–267.

³⁵ These other dialogues are: Antonio Brucioli, *Dialogi della naturale filosofia umana* (Venice, 1528), also published 1537, 1544; *Dialogi della naturale filosofia* (Venice, 1529), also published 1537, 1545; *Dialogi della metafisica filosofia* (Venice, 1529), also published 1538, 1545. Another work, titled *Dialogi faceti*, was published in Venice in 1538.

³⁶ A. Landi, 'Nota critica', in Antonio Brucioli, *Dialogi*, ed. A. Landi (Naples and Chicago, 1982), pp. 551–588, at p. 553.

³⁷ Landi, 'Nota critica', pp. 571–577.

in Florentine focus between the second and third editions – certain Florentine characters introduced as interlocutors in the second edition were, in four dialogues, replaced by figures drawn from elsewhere in Italy for the third edition.³⁸ With regard to the political dialogues considered here, the most pertinent change is a slight moderation of the overtly republican tone found in the first edition, issued when Brucioli still had hopes for the restoration of a republic in Florence, and replaced in later years by disillusioned realism. For example, in the 1537 edition he adds a passage which dwells upon the inevitable corruption of republics.³⁹

Brucioli's moral dialogues have been described as a mirror of humanist thought in the early sixteenth century.⁴⁰ If so, they testify to the continuing relevance of Aristotle's *Politics* to the political theory of the time. They certainly reflect both the intellectual influences which the young Brucioli had absorbed from discussions in the Orti Oricellari and his own political experiences, evident in his preoccupation with republics and the question of the best form of government. These matters are aired in dialogues on the republic, the laws of the republic and on tyranny, while oeconomics is the subject of dialogues on the government of the family, on the way to teach children, on marriage and on the office of the wife. The moral virtues are covered at length, along with other topics related to ethics, in dialogues on the condition of mankind, human happiness and unhappiness, exile and the fear of death.

Among the varied and formative influences which can easily be detected in the dialogues, it is Aristotle who casts the longest shadow. Brucioli's conception of politics is essentially Aristotelian in nature. He was clearly familiar with the Aristotelian corpus and, with regard to the *Politics*, would have read Leonardo Bruni's Latin translation and – possibly – also the Greek text.⁴¹ The themes covered by Brucioli in his political dialogues are not, in truth, fundamentally different from those incorporated in vernacular discussions of politics in previous centuries. Yet in his writings we can

³⁸ R. Leushuis, 'Dialogical Strategies, *Volgarizzamento*, and Ciceronian *Ethos* in Antonio Brucioli's *Dialogi della Morale Filosofia*', *Quaderni d'Italianistica*, 30 (2009), pp. 39-66, at pp. 50-51.

³⁹ Antonio Brucioli, 'Dialogo VI della Repubblica', in his *Dialogi*, ed. A. Landi (Naples and Chicago, 1982), p. 100: 'Ma che bisogna di ciò maravigliarsi, sempre è accaduto che le republike, o per essere male di prima institute, o per essersi col tempo, per la malvagità de' loro cittadini, corrotte, sieno mancate d'essere republike...'; Landi, 'Nota critica', p. 575.

⁴⁰ Landi, 'Nota critica', p. 559.

⁴¹ See pp. 140-142 below.

perceive a significant new emphasis: for the first time, the methods and priorities of humanism were brought to bear on a vernacular treatise based overwhelmingly on Aristotle. In fifteenth-century works in Italian by authors such as Leon Battista Alberti and Matteo Palmieri, Aristotelian influence was present but unobtrusive; in Brucioli's dialogues, it took centre stage, acknowledged and interacting with other elements drawn from his broad humanist education and presented in the favoured humanist format of the dialogue. For all that he might represent 'standard' humanist thought in the early sixteenth century, Brucioli was an innovator; it was not for at least two decades after his *Dialogi* that other humanist authors presented philosophy in vernacular Ciceronian dialogues.⁴²

In the mid-1980s Charles Schmitt convincingly argued that Renaissance Aristotelianism was varied, changing and able to absorb elements from outside the tradition. In discussing 'Eclectic Aristotelianism' – the extent to which Aristotelianism 'was capable of appropriating other philosophical and scientific doctrines for its own purposes'⁴³ – he identified two different types: the adoption by Aristotelians of doctrines from other philosophical schools, and the acceptance of novel developments which were superior to those contained in the Aristotelian corpus.⁴⁴

Schmitt's notion of eclectic Aristotelianism is useful in evaluating both Brucioli's continuities with the works discussed in the previous two chapters and his departures into new epistemological territory. Brucioli's vision of politics is characterised by a skilful and highly selective blend of Aristotelianism with contemporary thought. He is an 'eclectic Aristotelian' in the first manner: he prefers Aristotle to Machiavelli, for instance, on the issue of whether a prince should be feared or loved, but is nevertheless an admirer of Machiavelli and well acquainted with his works. Among Brucioli's wide-ranging moral dialogues, I shall focus on those which are primarily concerned with political themes and which draw on Aristotle's *Politics*, that is, the *dialogi: Della repubblica, Delle leggi della repubblica, Della tirannide, and Del modo dello instruire i figliuoli*.

⁴² Leushuis, 'Dialogical Strategies', p. 41.

⁴³ C. B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge MA, 1983), p. 89.

⁴⁴ Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance*, p. 92.

Brucioli's use of the names of his friends and teachers in the second edition of his dialogues conferred a humanist validation on his Aristotelianism, which often consisted of rehearsing Aristotelian doctrines which had been found, frequently in near-paraphrase, in the essentially scholastic tradition of medieval and early Renaissance vernacular political literature. These popular notions included: Aristotle's conception of the republic and his classification of the different political regimes; his definition of usury; his account of the characteristics of the tyrant; and his views on the generation and education of children. Brucioli repeated the same Aristotelian maxims and doctrines which had figured in the writings of vernacular authors of the previous two centuries and, like them, treated Aristotle as the main point of reference for the philosophical questions he wanted to address. When using Aristotle's words to define the 'republic', he puts them in the mouth of Giangiorgio Trissino:

I say therefore the republic is nothing other than a society and company made of many families, living in many houses, in one place, which has in itself the aim of being entirely sufficient, constituted for the sake of living well and rightly. Now such a society, or company as I say, pertains more properly to man than to any other animal, being by nature more sociable than all the others; only man, among all living things, having the use of speech, because the voice is certainly an external sign of what is pleasant and what is annoying.⁴⁵

A short while later, Brucioli has another of his interlocutors, Bernardo Salviati,⁴⁶ ask Trissino what kind of regime is best for the city: a popular government, an oligarchy, an aristocracy, a monarchy or a tyranny.⁴⁷

Brucioli's understanding of a republic as a place in which people congregate because they need each other in order to live well, and his acceptance of the classification of

⁴⁵ Antonio Brucioli, 'Dialogo VI: Della republica', p. 102: 'Dico adunque la republica niente altro essere che una società e compagnia la quale di più famiglie in uno medesimo luogo, in più case abitanti, è fatta, la quale ha in sè il fine di tutta la sufficienza, costituita per causa di vivere bene e rettamente. Ora questa tale società, o compagnia che io dica, più conviene allo uomo che a nessuno altro animale, essendo per natura più sociabile che tutti gli altri, avendo solamente l'uomo, fra tutte le cose mortali, l'uso di parlare, perché la voce è certamente uno significamento di quello che è giocondo e di quello che è molesto.' *Politics*, 1252b28-1253a18.

⁴⁶ Salviati (1495-1568), the son of Jacopo and Lucrezia de' Medici, was a military leader and knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem (Knights of Malta). Brucioli describes him as the 'Prior of Rome', a high-ranking office of the Order. See Brucioli, 'Dialogo VI: Della republica', p. 95, n. 1.

⁴⁷ Brucioli, 'Dialogo VI: Della republica', pp. 109-110; *Politics*, 1278b23-1279b10.

regimes set out in the *Politics*, are signifiers of his allegiance to Aristotle at a time when other authors almost certainly known to him were treating these matters differently. In the *Discorso di Logrognò* of 1512, for instance, Guicciardini explicitly bypassed the traditional Aristotelian method of establishing the purpose of the state and describing the different types of regime: ‘there is no point in discussing whether the best rule is that of one or of a few or of many, for liberty is proper and natural to our city’.⁴⁸ Brucioli was, of course, a less original thinker than Guicciardini, and his approach was no doubt more typical of the times.

Familiar elements of Aristotelianism are also found elsewhere in the *Dialogi*. When debating, in the dialogue on the laws of the republic, about the correct age to marry and the necessity of legislating on this matter, Brucioli’s interlocutors – ‘Gianiacopo Leonardi da Pesaro’⁴⁹ and ‘Bernardo Salviati’ – take their cue directly from the *Politics*:

Gianiacopo: ... The legislator must pay attention to the good disposition of children and order the laws and institutions around the marriage alliances of the citizens, taking into consideration the time when the male and the female are most fit to produce strong and healthy offspring, so that the one can generate and the other conceive, not differing between them in fertility and infertility, because if they are married at an age when the man can reproduce and not the woman, or the woman can and not the man, no small discord and quarrels will arise between them.⁵⁰

Salviati: And what, in your view, would be this appropriate time, suitable for generation as much for the male as for the female, and which would be fitting for the legislator to assign to them?

⁴⁸ Guicciardini, *Discorso di Logrognò*, p. 255: ‘Né accade disputare quale sia migliore amministrazione o di uno o di pochi o di molti, perché la libertà è propria e naturale della città nostra.’ Translation from Guicciardini, ‘Discorso di Logrognò’, transl. A. Moulakis, p. 122.

⁴⁹ Giangiacomo Leonardi (1498–1562/1572) was a military engineer, and author of many works on fortification and strategy. See C. Promis, *Biografie di ingegneri militari italiani dal secolo XVI alla metà del XVIII* (Turin, 1874), pp. 140–185.

⁵⁰ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VII: Delle leggi della republica’, p. 168: ‘M. Gianiacopo. ... Il datore della legge debbe risguardare alla buona disposizione de’ fanciugli e ordinare le leggi e gli istituti circa alla comunicazione nuziale de’ cittadini, considerando al tempo del maschio e della femina che sia più atto a creare forte e sana prole, di modo che l’uno possa generare e l’altra concepere, non discrepando fra loro per potenza e impotenza, perché se si maritano d’età che vegna che l’uomo possa ancora generare e non la donna, o che la donna possa e non l’uomo, nasceranno fra loro discordie e lite non picciole.’

Gianiacopo: Firstly, the young women, according to the laws of the Spartans, must be ordered to marry between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four years, and the men from thirty to forty, because at this time they will join together with strong bodies; and the legislator must pay attention to this and dispose his decrees in this way, since men are stronger of body and of mind at this age than before.⁵¹

These Aristotelian doctrines – used a century before in the *Trattato politico-morale* of Giovanni Cavalcanti⁵² – are given a new lease of life when endorsed by Brucioli’s urbane, intellectual and influential interlocutors; they are represented as fundamental to the political knowledge of a group of politically active sixteenth-century Florentines.

Throughout Brucioli’s political dialogues, there are similar passages in which he has his friends and teachers express doctrines which come from the *Politics* and which reaffirm the political Aristotelianism of the previous centuries. To cite another revealing instance, the description of the characteristics of a tyrant, in his dialogue on tyranny, is taken straight from Book Five of the *Politics* and resembles Savonarola’s treatment of the same material in his *Trattato circa il reggimento et governo della città di Firenze*. Brucioli first has the interlocutor ‘Ieronimo Quirino’,⁵³ give some examples taken from Aristotle of the actions of a tyrant – targeting the rich, restricting education, relying on spies and associating with foreigners⁵⁴ – and then has him summarise the typical behaviour of a tyrant, still following the lines of *Politics* Five:

All these [actions] can be reduced to three, because they all tend towards these three. The first of these is that the tyrant diminishes the spirit of the citizens,

⁵¹ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VII: Delle leggi della republica’, pp. 169-170: ‘Priore. E quale pensereste voi che fosse questo conveniente tempo, tanto del maschio quanto della femina, atto alla generazione, e che si convenissi assegnare loro dal datore della legge?’

M. Gianiacopo. Le giovani in prima, secondo le leggi de’ Lacedemoni, dalla età di diciotto a ventiquattro anni si dovia ordinare che fossero maritate, e i maschi da i trenta a quaranta, perché in questo tempo co’ i corpi validi si congiungeranno, e a questo debbe riguardare l’ordinatore delle leggi e così per suoi decreti ordinare, essendo gli uomini in questa età e di corpo e di mente più forti che per l’adrieto.’ *Politics*, 1335a5-30.

⁵² Cavalcanti, *Trattato*, [f. 159r].

⁵³ Girolamo Quirini (1469-1554) was a Dominican prior. Brucioli, ‘Dialogo X: Della tirannide’, p. 261, n. 2.

⁵⁴ *Politics*, 1313a34-1314a32.

humiliating them and striving so that they are ignorant and abject, because no one of small and submissive spirit will rise up against a tyrant. The second is acting in a way which renders citizens suspicious of each other, because getting rid of a tyrant is never attempted unless some of the citizens have faith in each other ... The third is reducing the powerful by making them poor, knowing that no one sets about doing things which he thinks are impossible and that a tyranny cannot be dissolved without powerful subjects.⁵⁵

The content of Savonarola's account is similar, even though the phrasing is different:

Tyranny is the worst [form] insofar as the government attends principally to three things: first, that the subjects do not understand anything about the government ...; second, setting discord among the citizens ...; third, always reducing the powerful in order to safeguard itself, and so it murders or causes harm to men who excel, whether in goods, nobility, intellectual talent or any other prowess.⁵⁶

It is likely that Brucioli was familiar with the *Trattato* of Savonarola, some of whose sermons he edited later in his career.⁵⁷ It may also be significant that he assigns these words to Quirini, who, like Savonarola, was a Dominican prior,⁵⁸ although, elsewhere, he warns against the emergence in the republic of a 'false prophet', who holds the people to his own laws.⁵⁹ In any case, the passage provides evidence of the continuity

⁵⁵ Brucioli, 'Dialogo X: Della tirannide', p. 270: 'Ma tutti in tre si possono ridurre, perché tutti tendono a questi tre, l'uno de' quali è che il tiranno diminuisca gli animi de' cittadini avvilandogli e sforzandosi che sieno ignoranti e abietti, perché nessuno di picciolo e rimesso animo si leva contra il tiranno. Il secondo è di fare in modo che renda i cittadini fra sé diffidenti, perché non si tenta mai di levare via il tiranno se alcuni de' cittadini non si hanno fede tra loro ... Il terzo è che rende quegli potenti col fargli divenire poveri, sapendo che nessuno si mette a fare quelle cose che pensa che gli sieno impossibili, e che non si dissolverà la tirannide mancando i sudditi di potenza.' *Politics*, 1314a14-29.

⁵⁶ Girolamo Savonarola, *Tractato circa il reggimento et governo della città di Firenze. Ristampa anastatica dell'edizione Firenze 1498*, ed. P. Pastori (Lecce, 1998), [f. 13r]: 'Ancora el tiranno è pessimo quanto al governo: circha al quale principalmente attende a tre cose: Prima che li subditi non intendino cosa alcuna del governo... secundo cercha di mettere discordia tra li cittadini ... Tertio cercha sempre di abbassare li potenti per assicurarsi, et pero amaza, o fa mal capitare li homini eccellenti o di roba, o di nobilita, o di ingegno, o di altre virtu.'

⁵⁷ These works are: Girolamo Savonarola, *Prediche del reverendo padre... sopra il Salmo 'Quam bonus'* (Venice, 1539); *Prediche quadragesimale* (Venice, 1539), *Prediche... per tutto l'anno nuovamente con somma diligenza ricoretto* (Venice, 1539). See Landi, 'Nota critica', p. 580.

⁵⁸ See note 53 above.

⁵⁹ Brucioli, Dialogo VII: Delli leggi della republica', p. 179. The passage reads: 'E se per sorte surge nella republica uno falso profeta che predica alcuno segno futuro o gran portento, e che egli avvenga secondo che disse, e poi voglia ritrarre i popoli dal vero divino culto, tirandogli a nuove o a altre vecchie leggi o

between Brucioli's thought and that of the scholastically educated Savonarola. It highlights as well the continuing relevance of the *Politics* to discussions of the right way to rule, an issue which remained as crucial in the sixteenth century as it had been in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Even though Brucioli drew on well-worn passages from the *Politics*, he deployed them in dialogues which emphasised a new and more eclectic approach to vernacular Aristotelianism. The dialogue on tyranny, for example, is firmly rooted in Aristotle, but also incorporates ideas from other thinkers, most notably Plato. Instead of relying solely on the named authority of Aristotle, and silently inserting other material – as Dante had done – Brucioli, while making scarcely any references to the name Aristotle, puts forward a philosophy which is markedly Aristotelian, but open throughout to other influences.

In addition to echoing familiar passages from Aristotle, Brucioli's dialogue on tyranny broadly follows the structure of the fifth book of the *Politics*. Early on, he has 'Ieronimo' (Quirini) explain that 'many become tyrants by making themselves leaders of the people';⁶⁰ this statement derives from the fifth chapter of *Politics* Five, in which Aristotle maintains that tyrants frequently begin as demagogues.⁶¹

Further along in the dialogue, Brucioli reprises arguments from chapters ten and eleven of *Politics* Book Five. Discussing the difference between a tyrant and a king, 'Ieronimo' says that 'the reward of the tyrant is the riches of the citizens, and [that] of the king, the honour of celebrated virtue', paraphrasing Aristotle's statement that 'the tyrant accumulates riches, the king seeks what brings honour'.⁶² 'Ieronimo' then recounts an episode which comes directly afterwards in the *Politics*, in which Periander advises Thrasybulus to cut off the tops of the tallest ears of corn, 'meaning that he must always put out of the way the citizens who overtop the rest'.⁶³ This is followed by an account of

culti divini persuadendo il servire a quello, si debbe per leggi ordinare che non si odino le parole di quel profeta o sognatore.'

⁶⁰ Brucioli, 'Dialogo X: Della tirannide', p. 264: 'Molti diventarono tiranni per farsi duci del popolo.'

⁶¹ *Politics*, 1304b 21–1305a9 and 1310b15–16.

⁶² Brucioli, 'Dialogo X: Della tirannide', p. 266: 'Il premio del tiranno sono le ricchezze de' cittadini, e del re l'onore della laudata virtù.' *Politics*, 1311a5–6.

⁶³ Brucioli, 'Dialogo X: Della tirannide', p. 268: 'Denotando per quel suo dire che egli erano da levare via i più stimati cittadini.' *Politics*, 1311a 20–22.

the methods employed by a tyrant to maintain his rule (discussed above), from chapter 11 of Book Five of the *Politics*.⁶⁴

Beyond this reliance on Aristotle, Brucioli displays a knowledge of Plato, whom he refers to as ‘il nostro familiare Platone’ (‘our friend Plato’),⁶⁵ and a willingness to combine the thought of these two philosophers to create a unified political stance (except on issues where it was almost impossible to agree with Plato, such as his espousal of the communal ownership of goods).⁶⁶ This may well be a legacy of the presence of the syncretist thinker Francesco Cattani da Diacceto in the Orti Oricellari (although he does not appear as an interlocutor in the *Dialogues*) and, more generally, probably reflects the influence of Marsilio Ficino on Florentine intellectual life.

The way in which Brucioli combined Aristotle and Plato can be observed in the dialogue on tyranny. He first introduces a topic and an illustrative example taken from chapter four of *Politics* Book Five, concerning the transformation of a popular leader into a tyrant:

And these are always one of the most iniquitous sorts of tyranny which one finds and which do the worst to their people and citizens, and it happens that such tyrannies take their origins from the people, as was the case with Peisistratus in Athens and with many others, who by the same method engaged in tyranny, having been created by the foolish favour of the people.⁶⁷

Moving on to an examination of the causes of this phenomenon, Brucioli turns to Book Eight of Plato’s *Republic*, with his interlocutors ‘Domenico Morosini’⁶⁸ and ‘Ieronimo’ (Girolamo Quirino) taking the parts of Adeimantus and Socrates:

⁶⁴ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo X: Della tirannide’, pp. 268–269. *Politics*, 1313a34-1314a29.

⁶⁵ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VII: Delle leggi della repubblica’, p. 176.

⁶⁶ Brucioli devotes significant space in the dialogue on the Republic to following *Politics* Book Two, in which Aristotle refutes Plato’s assertions on communal goods. Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VI: Della Repubblica’, pp. 103-108; *Politics*, 1260b36-1264b25.

⁶⁷ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo X: Della tirannide’, p. 264: ‘E questi sempre sono una delle più inique sorti di tiranni che si trovi e che peggio a’ suoi popoli e cittadini faccia, avvegna che da quegli abbiano avuta l’origine loro, come avvenne a Pisistrato in Atene e a molti altri, i quali pel medesimo modo presero la tirannide, essendo dallo stolto favore popolare creati.’

⁶⁸ Landi believes this could be Domenico Morosini (1417-1509), author of the *De bene instituta repubblica*, or the Domenico Morosino who was ambassador to Charles V in the sixteenth century. Both were Venetian. Brucioli, ‘Dialogo X: della tirannide,’ pp. 261-262, n. 3.

Domenico: And what therefore is the cause of this transformation, that from a guardian he becomes a tyrant?

Ieronimo: Because what the story tells about what occurred inside the temple of Lycaean Zeus happens to those who dominate over others in this fashion.

Domenico: And what is that?

Ieronimo: That someone who by chance tastes the human entrails mixed together with the other [sacrificial] victims is destined to become a wolf afterwards. Have you never heard this story?

Domenico: I certainly have.

Ieronimo: Consider that it happens in the same way to someone whose rule is readily obeyed by the uncouth, since after this he does not restrain himself from the bloodshed of citizens, but by the false accusations of the people (as they are accustomed to make) he brings them to be judged by those whom each and everyone fears and unjustly stains himself with their blood, extinguishing men's lives, and so he banishes some and kills others, impelled by desire for their riches, which are shared with the people or with those of his party, but of which the tyrant nonetheless gets his part; and thus it is necessary that such a man is either killed by his enemies and by those who have received injury or that he exercises tyranny and, from a man, becomes a wolf.⁶⁹

For Aristotle, simple ambition was the reason why a man wielding great power becomes a tyrant;⁷⁰ Plato's explanation, while compatible with this view, provided much more detail. This made it unproblematic for Brucioli to blend material from the *Politics* and the *Republic*; and the fact that he chose to do so shows that he recognized the two philosophers were in agreement on this issue. Moreover, by presenting Aristotelian

⁶⁹ Brucioli, 'Dialogo X: Della tirannide', p. 265: 'Domenico. E che è adunque causa della sua mutazione, che di tutore diventa tiranno? Ieronimo. Perché a questi che dominano agli altri per questo modo tale interviene quello che intorno al tempio di Giove Liceo referisce ancora la favola. Domenico. E che cosa? Ieronimo. Che qualunque l'umane viscere tagliate insieme con l'altre vittime a caso gusta, è costretto a divinire poi lupo; non avete voi mai udita questa favola? Domenico. Ho certo. Ieronimo. Pensate che pel medesimo modo interviene a quello allo imperio del quale il vulgo molto obedisce, perché dopo questo non si astiene dal civile sangue, ma per false accuse del popolo (come sogliono simili) tira quegli in giudizio da' quali tanto o quanto si teme, e di loro ingiustamente si insanguina estinguendo la vita degli uomini, e così alcuni scaccia, alcuni uccide tirato dall'amore delle ricchezze loro col popolo o con quegli della sua parte insieme a' quali esse sono divise, venendone nondimeno anche al tiranno la sua parte, e così é necessario o che simile uomo sia morto da' suoi nimici e da quegli che hanno ricevuta l'ingiuria, o ch'egli esserciti la tirannide, e lupo diventi d'uomo.'

⁷⁰ *Politics*, 1310b24-26.

doctrine in a dialogue format modelled on Plato, Brucioli not only applied a newly recovered literary genre to vernacular Aristotelianism for the first time, but also endorsed the view that essentially, Aristotle and his teacher were in harmony.

Brucioli was also willing to use Plato to fill out subjects on which Aristotle was silent, reticent or – most importantly – held unsuitable opinions, especially with regard to religion. The efforts of Ficino in the previous century had emphasised the compatibility of Plato with Christianity, convincing many Renaissance thinkers that he was preferable to Aristotle in questions related to faith.⁷¹ For instance, in his dialogue on the laws of the republic, Brucioli took a great deal from the *Politics* – Aristotle’s position on the correct ages for men and women to marry and procreate, as we have seen, and the need to protect children by not allowing them access to immoral pictures;⁷² he looked to Plato, however, for advice to the lawmaker on religion, such as the necessity for the lawmaker to be like a philosopher in loving the wisdom of God,⁷³ and the religious respect which children should bear towards their parents.⁷⁴ It is perhaps worth noting that the interlocutors in this dialogue include Trissino and Machiavelli, which may suggest a possible link to discussions on these matters in the Orti Oricellari.

The way that Brucioli fleshed out an essentially Aristotelian framework with material drawn from other classical authorities and from contemporary writers is well illustrated by his treatment of the education of children, a topic which was as important to him as it had been to fifteenth-century humanists.⁷⁵ He addressed this subject at length in his dialogues on the laws of the republic, the education of children and the governance of the family. A deep faith in the transformative power of education and the study of languages, in particular, was a defining feature of the young republicans who frequented the Orti Oricellari; and it is telling that all three interlocutors in the dialogue on the education of children were members of the group – Giangiorgio Trissino, Francesco Giudetti and Cosimo Rucellai.⁷⁶ Brucioli attributed great political significance to the

⁷¹ On Ficino’s combination of Plato and Christianity, see J. Lauster, ‘Marsilio Ficino as a Christian Thinker: Theological Aspects of his Platonism’, in M. J. B. Allen, V. Rees and M. Davies (eds), *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy* (Leiden, 2002), pp. 45-69.

⁷² Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VII: Delle leggi della republica’, pp. 168 and 171; *Politics* 1334b29-1335a35, and 1336b11-14.

⁷³ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VII: Delle leggi della republica’, p. 159; Plato, *Republic*, V.473.

⁷⁴ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VII: Delle leggi della republica’, pp. 182-183; Plato, *Laws*, IV.717-718.

⁷⁵ Cantimori and Yates, ‘Rhetoric and Politics’, p. 97.

⁷⁶ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo V: Del modo dello instruire i figliuoli’, p. 71.

correct instruction of youth, claiming that it was the foundation of ‘a happy republic’;⁷⁷ and his dialogues treat a range of matters related to the raising of children, from birth to adulthood. Brucioli’s understanding of child-rearing was basically Aristotelian – the maxim from the *Politics* that young children should become accustomed to the cold, so that they do not suffer from it as adults in the time of war, is repeated.⁷⁸ Yet, in learned humanist fashion, he supplemented Aristotle with other sources, both ancient and modern. The dialogue on the instruction of children, for example, begins with a paraphrase from *Politics* Book Eight concerning the importance of mother’s milk for the welfare of a newborn:

It appears that for other animals and for other nations, who pay assiduous attention to the military art, for which they strive to have the strongest bodies, the nourishment of their own milk is very suitable for bodies, milk being extremely similar to the menstrual blood from which man was first generated.⁷⁹

He supports and elaborates this view, firstly, by drawing on *The Education of Children*, believed at the time to be a genuine work of Plutarch:⁸⁰

Every effort should be made that mothers are the ones who breastfeed [children], their milk being the most natural, and then because they feed them with the greatest kindness and diligence, as they love their children naturally, and wet nurses according to a certain accidental benevolence, as those who love them on account of a reward.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VII: Delle leggi della republica’, p. 167: ‘la buona educazione della gioventù è il principio della beata republica’.

⁷⁸ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VII: Delle leggi della republica’, p. 170; *Politics*, 1336a11-15.

⁷⁹ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo V: Del modo del instruire i figliuoli’, p. 75: ‘Egli appare per gli altri animali e per l’altre nazioni, alle quali è l’assidua cura de l’arte militare, per la quale cercano d’avere corpi fortissimi, essere il nutrimento del proprio latte molto proprio a’ corpi, avendo il latte gran convenienza col menstruo di che fu in prima generato l’uomo.’

⁸⁰ It is now considered spurious; see [Plutarch], ‘The Education of Children’, in *Plutarch’s Moralia*, 16 vols (London, 1927–2004), I, pp. 3-69, at p. 3.

⁸¹ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo V: Del modo del instruire i figliuoli’, p. 75: ‘Si dovrebbe fare ogni sforzo che le madri fossero quelle che gli allattassero, per essere il latte di quelle più loro naturale, e a presso perché con maggiore carità e diligenza gli nutriranno, come quelle che amano i loro figliuoli naturalmente, e le nutrici secondo una certa benivolenza accidentale, come quelle che per cagione del premio gli amano.’ See [Plutarch], ‘The Education of Children’, pp. 14–15. Wetnursing was common in Renaissance Florence, but many humanists expressed doubts about the practice: see L. Haas, *The Renaissance Man and his Children: Childbirth and Early Childhood in Florence 1300-1600* (New York NY, 1998), p. 91.

Brucioli then expands on this theme with material taken from the fifteenth-century humanist Matteo Palmieri. In his *Vita civile*, Palmieri discussed the question of who should nurse a child if the mother cannot – an eventuality Aristotle did not provide for.⁸² Brucioli follows Palmieri – one must find a wet nurse who is not of low birth, but who, as far as possible, can educate the child in the good customs of the *patria*.⁸³ Here we see Brucioli's vernacular Aristotelian eclecticism in action: by borrowing from (pseudo-) Plutarch and Palmieri, he was able to offer a more rounded and complete account of the subject than Aristotle had provided.

Brucioli's conviction that education formed a vital part of political policy testifies both to his intense interest in the realities of political life, and to his perception that Aristotle's *Politics* was not merely relevant but central to the discussion of political practice in the early sixteenth century and, moreover, was compatible with the thought of contemporary political theorists. This can be seen in his use of the *Politics* when commenting on the role of play in childhood. In the dialogue on the education of children, the subject first arises when Trissino states that all the movements, practices, games, pranks and exercises of young children should be observed, in line with the Aristotelian judgement that children should be allowed to play in order to exercise and grow strong, but only in the correct manner.⁸⁴ At the end of the dialogue, the Aristotelian belief in the value of play is underlined with borrowings from other authors, most notably Brucioli's former Orti Oricellari colleague Machiavelli, which elevate play into a preparation for a role governing the republic. It is again 'Trissino' (described by 'Cosimo Rucellai' at the beginning of the dialogue as 'a noi caro come venerando padre')⁸⁵ who acts as Brucioli's mouthpiece, endorsing play as a civic responsibility:

They should exercise themselves in make-believe military fights – in public venues or at least inside paternal houses – in handling small pikes, drawing bows, explosions, running and leaping, in the gymnasium, in hunting, in taking

⁸² Matteo Palmieri, *Vita civile*, ed. G. Belloni (Florence, 1982), p. 18.

⁸³ Brucioli, 'Dialogo V: Del modo del instruire i figliuoli', p. 75: 'Debbonsi prendere nutrici non vili, ma quanto è possibile ne' buoni costumi della patria ammastrate.'

⁸⁴ Brucioli, 'Dialogo V: Del modo del instruire i figliuoli', p. 78. *Politics*, 1336a25–29: 'There should be sufficient motion to prevent the limbs from being inactive. This can be secured, among other ways, by play, but the play should not be vulgar or tiring or effeminate.'

⁸⁵ Brucioli, 'Dialogo V: Del modo del instruire i figliuoli', p. 73.

or storming and holding some secure place.⁸⁶

The idea of preparing for war with mock battles is found in Machiavelli's *Arte della guerra*, written and possibly discussed, as we have seen, during his time at the Orti Oricellari. He writes of youths, however, not children;⁸⁷ and Brucioli extends the notion even further, to playing at aspects of civic duty:

They should again have among them ... certain childish judges, where justice might begin to shine and where they might become accustomed to one person accusing another, to defending themselves, to punishing; and, in the end, all these exercises may take hold, so that when they reach a mature age, they are then compelled to use them severely.⁸⁸

Throughout Brucioli's treatment of the upbringing of children, this same pattern is discernible – an Aristotelian starting-point, which is then supplemented and expanded using material taken from his reading and from his own experiences.

The dialogues on the republic and on the laws of the republic follow one another in the edition and have the same interlocutors – 'Machiavelli', 'Gianiacopo', 'Trissino' and 'Salviati' – who continue their conversation on successive days. The republic they have in mind throughout their discussions is clearly Florence. Meeting in a garden in the 'bellissima' city of Pesaro, they sit in a shady grotto; prompted by the beautiful surroundings, 'Machiavelli' wistfully comments: 'Attracted by the pleasantness and loveliness of this place, I have been thinking of the villas and of the beautiful gardens of our republic.' To which 'Salviati' replies: 'it would be better for you to say that it used to be a republic'.⁸⁹ This comment provokes the group to consider what constitutes a

⁸⁶ Brucioli, 'Dialogo V: Del modo del instruire i figliuoli', p. 90: 'Che si essercitino nelle finte pugne militari, in luoghi pubblicamente costituiti, o dentro alle paterne case almeno, nel maneggiare le piccole picche, nel trarre gl'archi, gli scoppi, nel correr, nel saltare, nella palestra, nelle caccie, nel fare o nell'espugnare e tenere qualche luogo forte.'

⁸⁷ Machiavelli, *L'Arte della guerra*, p. 67.

⁸⁸ Brucioli, 'Dialogo V: Del modo del instruire i figliuoli', p. 90: 'Doverieno ancora ... avere fra loro certi puerili magistrati, dove la giustizia cominciassi a risplendere, e quivi si assuefacessero a accusare l'un l'altro, a difendersi, a punire, e finalmente tutti quegli essercizii pigliassino, che essendo venuti di matura età, son poi constretti a usare severamente.'

⁸⁹ Brucioli, 'Dialogo VI: Della republica', p. 99: 'Niccolò. Io, tirato dalla amenità e vaghezza di questo luogo, pensavo alle ville e ai bei giardini della nostra republica, i quali così male possiamo godere. Priore. Meglio potevi dire che fu già republica.'

republic; and ‘Trissino’ is implored to share his wisdom on how to bring about and institute ‘those cities which could truly be called republics, according to those, I mean, which have been or which could be, and not according to those impossible ones which were imagined by someone, closer to the stories of poets, taking into consideration a certain rigidity of [human] nature rather than the variety of men’s minds.’⁹⁰ This comment signals an allegiance to Aristotle, who discussed historical republics, over Plato’s idealised *Republic*.

Brucioli’s opinions on the best structure for a successful republican government feature in these dialogues. His interlocutors discuss the different types of government, which are outlined by ‘Salviati’: ‘since you need some type of men who govern, either you will be governed by the multitude, as with the popular and worst regime, or by the rich, as in the regime of the few, or by the virtuous, as in the regime of the most excellent men [‘ottimati’], or by one excellent man, like a king, or by one evil man, like a tyrant.’⁹¹ ‘Trissino’ then develops this scheme, making clear that the multitude should be comprised of the middle class, since they are the ideal mean between the rich, who are unwilling to obey and are excessively devoted to pleasure, and the poor, whom he condemns in forthright terms: they are ‘weak, base and abject, often lack reason and become miserly and vicious and wicked in relation to petty matters’.⁹²

Very unusually, Aristotle is invoked by name to add weight to this preference for ‘i mediocri’, with Trissino noting that ‘when Aristotle defines the good life, it is according to virtue without impediments, and this virtue is a certain praiseworthy mediocrity, which flees extreme vices.’⁹³ Brucioli is the first vernacular author writing on the *Politics* to display a preference for the ‘mediocri’ in this way (as Ptolemy of Lucca had

⁹⁰ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VI: Della republica’, p. 101: ‘Come doverieno essere fatte e instituite quelle città che veramente si potessino chiamare repubbliche, secondo quelle dico che sono state o che possano essere, e non secondo quelle impossibili che d’alcuno sono state immaginate, più presto secondo le favole de’ poeti, a uno certo rigore della natura riguardando che alla varietà de gli animi.’

⁹¹ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VI: Della republica’, pp. 109-110: ‘E perché vi fa di bisogno d’alcuna specie di uomini che regga, o vi dominerà la moltitudine, come nello stato popolare e infimo, o ricchi, come lo stato de’ pochi, o virtuosi, come nello stato degli ottimati, o uno ottimo, come nel regno, o uno pessimo, come il tiranno.’

⁹² Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VI: Della republica’, p. 113: ‘Debili, vili e abietti, mancano sovente della ragione, e diventano avari e nelle piccole cose maligni e cattivi.’

⁹³ Brucioli, ‘Dialogo VI: Della republica’, pp. 111-112: ‘Quando Aristotile diffinisce la vita beata, quella essere secondo la virtù non impedita, e essa virtù una certa laudabile mediocrità, che i viziosi estremi fugga.’ *Politics*, 1295b2-36.

done), rather than a prince or a simply defined republic; he finds Aristotelian support for the statement in Aristotle's doctrine of the mean, rather than the *Politics*' ambiguous statements on the best kind of government.

The political dialogues can also help us to reconstruct Brucioli's intellectual relationship to Machiavelli. As an interlocutor, 'Machiavelli' is given ample space to express his own views, in particular the vital necessity of a civilian militia⁹⁴ – a view which was compatible with the *Politics*, in which Aristotle states that 'the guards of a king are citizens, but of a tyrant mercenaries', though Brucioli does not refer to this passage.⁹⁵ Notably, while in the dialogue in which 'Machiavelli' is an interlocutor he offers recognisably Machiavellian opinions, other interlocutors – including the venerated 'Trissino' – also profess material drawn from Machiavelli's works, suggesting Brucioli wished to convey a rounded sense of approval for these ideas. It is, however, the most relatively uncontroversial opinions which are taken from Machiavelli, deriving especially from the *Arte della Guerra* and the *Discourses on Livy*, with only one passage (spoken by 'Trissino') coming from the *Prince*.⁹⁶

It seems Brucioli was uncomfortable with Machiavelli's more pragmatic pronouncements: in the dialogue on tyranny, 'Ieronimo Quirino' says that 'the tyrant seeks to be feared, and the king to be loved',⁹⁷ ignoring the doubts Machiavelli had raised over this conventional belief, and the traditional line between a king and a tyrant, when he maintained in the *Prince* that it was preferable for a ruler to be feared rather than loved.⁹⁸ The philosophically conservative Brucioli also prioritises Aristotle over Machiavelli, repeating (as we have seen) the Spartan idea that young children should become accustomed to the cold, although Machiavelli had poured scorn on this practice in the *Arte della Guerra*:

⁹⁴ Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli*, p. 33; Machiavelli, *L'Arte della Guerra*, pp. 55-64.

⁹⁵ *Politics*, 1311a6-7.

⁹⁶ Brucioli, 'Dialogo VI: Della republica', p. 124: 'Bene spesso i piccioli esserciti hanno superati i grandissimi, perché i militi de gli esserciti mercenari non mai, se non con timore e contro al loro volere, vengono al fatto d'arme, non facendo stare fermi questi tali militi altro che uno poco di stipendio che si dà loro, la quale causa certamente non può essere bastante a fartegli fedeli, non che tanto amici tuoi che non si curino di morire per te.' See Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, ed. M. Martelli (Rome, 2006), p. 184. Sydney Anglo notes Brucioli's 'lacklustre' use of Machiavelli, and that his borrowings are often material from classical sources used by Machiavelli rather than Machiavelli's own ideas. S. Anglo, *Machiavelli – The First Century: Studies in Enthusiasm, Hostility, and Irrelevance* (Oxford, 2005), p. 33.

⁹⁷ Brucioli, 'Dialogo X: Della tirannide', p. 267: 'Il tiranno cerca d'essere temuto, e il re amato.'

⁹⁸ See Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, pp. 226-234.

If, like the Spartans, an individual were to raise his children in the country, make them sleep in the open, go with head and feet naked, and wash in cold water so as to harden them to be able to withstand evil and so as to make them love life less and fear death less, he would be jeered and held to be a beast rather than a man.⁹⁹

In 1526, the first edition of Brucioli's *Dialogi* was published in Venice, the city where he would spend most of the remaining years of his life – he did return to Florence in the spring of 1527, when the republic was reinstated for the last time, but was arrested and exiled once again for espousing Lutheran views.¹⁰⁰ In Venice Brucioli became part of the thriving printing industry. He wrote and translated for the press, and even owned a publishing house with his brothers Francesco and Alessandro.¹⁰¹

Brucioli's first publications after his youthful dialogues are witness to the focus on religion he developed during his itinerant years, especially his commitment to the Lutheran approach to the Bible which encouraged a personal relationship with the text, and therefore demanded that the Scriptures be available in the European vernaculars. Brucioli devoted himself, primarily, to the translation of the Bible into Italian. In 1530, his version of the New Testament was first published in Venice by the Giunti press,¹⁰² and two years later the Giunti put out Brucioli's translation of both the Old and New Testaments together.¹⁰³ There was certainly demand for his work. Six more editions of the Old and New Testaments together in the same work were published.¹⁰⁴ It was the New Testament alone, however, that was the most in demand, published fourteen times

⁹⁹ Machiavelli, *L'Arte della guerra*, p. 37: 'Se uno (come gli Spartani) nutrisse i suoi figliuoli in villa, facessegli dormire al sereno, andare col capo e co' piedi ignudi, lavare nell'acqua fredda per indurgli a poter sopportare il male e per fare loro amare meno la vita e temere meno la morte, sarebbe schernito e tenuto più tosto una fiera che uno uomo.' Translation from Machiavelli, *Art of War*, ed. and transl. C. Lynch (Chicago, 2003), p. 11.

¹⁰⁰ Landi, 'Nota critica', p. 553.

¹⁰¹ On the Brucioli press, see E. Barbieri, 'La tipografia dei fratelli Brucioli, l'attività editoriale di Antonio e il Cabasilas di Gentien Hervet', in E. Boillet (ed.), *Antonio Brucioli: Humanisme et Évangélisme entre Réforme et Contre-Réforme: Actes du Colloque de Tours, 20-21 Mai 2005* (Paris, 2008), pp. 53-76.

¹⁰² *Il Nuovo Testamento, di greco nuouamente tradotto in lingua toscana*, transl. Antonio Brucioli (Venice, 1530).

¹⁰³ *La Biblia quale contiene i sacri libri del Vecchio Testamento ... Co diuini libri del Nuouo Testamento*, transl. Antonio Brucioli (Venice, 1532).

¹⁰⁴ In Venice, in 1538, 1539, 1540-44, 1541 and 1546, and in Lyon in 1546.

between 1530 and 1555.¹⁰⁵ In addition to these translations, Brucioli produced commentaries on the Bible and several books of the Old Testament;¹⁰⁶ and he worked on other religious literature beyond the Bible. He was involved in the editing of certain editions of Savonarola's sermons, translated devotional material into Italian and composed religious works of his own.¹⁰⁷

Venice's liberal and independent environment in the 1530s, when the city was determined to preserve its own autonomy and resist orders on religion from Rome, allowed Brucioli to undertake this work. Yet even here the pressure of the Inquisition was growing and tolerance of works which echoed the Lutheran and Calvinist sentiments from beyond the Alps began to diminish. Brucioli was denounced in 1544 by Frate Ambrogio Catarino for his alleged use of the Reformer Martin Bucer in his commentary on the New Testament,¹⁰⁸ and although he escaped unscathed this time, a second denunciation in 1548 for the possession of prohibited books led to a fine of 50 ducats and banishment from Venice for two years.¹⁰⁹

The increasingly stern atmosphere in Venice towards heretical activity in the mid-sixteenth century must have led to the abrupt change in Brucioli's literary activity. Christopher Cairns, in his study of Pietro Aretino's 1542 play *L'Ipocrito*, has suggested that the two main protagonists are based on Brucioli and the papal agent Gian Pietro Carafa,¹¹⁰ and that the play draws on an historical event: a warning by Carafa to Brucioli to steer clear of potentially dangerous works of a religious nature. He believes this convinced Brucioli – described by Theodor Elwert as 'in the first place a humanist,

¹⁰⁵ Published in Venice in 1530, 1539, 1540, 1541, 1544, 1547, 1548, 1551, 1553; in Lyon, 1547, 1549 or 1550, 1552; in Antwerp, 1538; and in Genoa [?] in 1555. See Landi, 'Nota critica', p. 578.

¹⁰⁶ Brucioli's translations of individual books of the Old Testament, all with accompanying commentaries except the first edition of the *Psalms*, were: *I Psalmi di David* (Venice, 1431), also 1534, 1544; *I Proverbi di Salomo* (Venice, 1533); *Il libro di Job* (Venice, 1534); *La cantica di Salomo* (Venice, 1536); *L'Ecclesiasto di Salomo* (Venice, 1536); *Libro di Iesaia* (Venice, 1537). Commentaries on the Bible accompanied the 1540 edition of the Old Testament, and the 1546 edition of the whole Bible.

¹⁰⁷ *Epistole, lettioni et euangeli*, transl. Antonio Brucioli (Venice, 1532); Brucioli, *Pia esposizione ne dieci precetti, nel simbolo apostolico, et nella oratione domenica* (Venice, 1542). On Savonarola, see n. 57 above.

¹⁰⁸ Ambrogio Caterino Politi, *Compendio d'errori e inganni Luterani* (1544), in Benedetto da Mantova, *Il Beneficio di Cristo: con le versioni del secolo XVI: documenti e testimonianze*, ed. S. Caponetto (Florence, 1972), pp. 343-422, at pp. 371-372; see also M. Ventura Avanzinelli, 'Il "luterano" Brucioli e il suo commento al libro della Genesi', *Bollettino della Società di Studi Valdesi*, 159 (1986), pp. 19-33, at p. 21.

¹⁰⁹ Spini, *Antonio Brucioli*, pp. 98-104; P. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605* (Princeton NJ, 1977), pp. 81-82.

¹¹⁰ The future pope Paul IV.

not a reformer of the church¹¹¹ – to devote himself to less controversial topics.¹¹²

The late 1530s and 1540s, therefore, see Brucioli turning to the editing of works such as Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the Italian works of Petrarch, and Pliny's *Natural History*.¹¹³ It is only at the end of the 1540s that he embarked on his programme of translating Aristotle, starting with the 1547 *Politics*,¹¹⁴ and progressing on to the *Physics*, the *Generation and Corruption*, the *De caelo et mundo*, and the *De anima*.¹¹⁵

Such prudence, however, was not enough to protect Brucioli from the Inquisition, especially as his biblical works continued to be published. While his first condemnation had been merely for the printing of a heretical book, in 1555 he was forced to write a retraction and confess his unorthodoxy publicly by the Venetian version of the Inquisition – three Venetian *Savi* aided by an inquisitor.¹¹⁶ Another tribunal in 1558 saw him imprisoned,¹¹⁷ and the 1559 *Index librorum prohibitorum* features Brucioli as an author whose entire oeuvre was condemned.¹¹⁸ His sentence was reduced to house arrest – his wife Lucia wrote to the Venetian authorities to beg that he might be able to leave the house to fetch food – but beyond this the details of his last years are unknown; he died in 1566.¹¹⁹ Perhaps it was this desperate state of affairs that led Brucioli to seek employment with Cosimo I de' Medici, acting as an informant on anti-Medicean activity in Venice; a striking reversal of his youthful republicanism.¹²⁰ After 1559

¹¹¹ W. T. Elwert, 'Un umanista dimenticato: Antonio Brucioli, veneziano d'elezione', in V. Branca (ed.), *Rinascimento europeo e Rinascimento veneziano* (Florence, 1967), pp. 75–96, at p. 89: 'In primo luogo un umanista e non un riformatore della chiesa.'

¹¹² C. Cairns, *Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice: Researches in Aretino and his Circle in Venice 1527–1556* (Florence, 1985), p. 195.

¹¹³ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il Decamerone*, ed. Antonio Brucioli (Venice, 1538); Petrarch, *Sonetti, canzoni, et triumpho*, comm. Antonio Brucioli (Venice, 1548); Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturale*, transl. Cristoforo Landino, comm. Antonio Brucioli (Venice, 1543).

¹¹⁴ A bibliographic mistake has ascribed a 1545 translation of the *Rhetoric* to Brucioli; this error is perpetuated in Spini's biography of Brucioli (p. 96) and Landi's critical edition of the dialogues (p. 579). No such text exists. See G. Allen and E. Del Soldato, 'A Ghost Translation by Antonio Brucioli: the 1545 Edition of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*', *Notes and Queries*, 61 (2014), pp. 353–355.

¹¹⁵ Aristotle, *Gli otto libri della repubblica*, transl. Antonio Brucioli (Venice, 1547); *La fisica*, transl. Antonio Brucioli (Venice, 1551); *Della generazione e corruzione*, transl. Antonio Brucioli (Venice, 1552); *Del cielo et mondo*, transl. Antonio Brucioli (Venice, 1552); *De anima*, transl. Antonio Brucioli, (Venice, 1557).

¹¹⁶ Spini, *Antonio Brucioli*, p. 127; A. Del Col, 'Il controllo della stampa a Venezia e i processi di Antonio Brucioli (1548–1559)', *Critica Storica*, 17 (1980), pp. 457–510, at p. 476.

¹¹⁷ Spini, *Antonio Brucioli*, p. 130.

¹¹⁸ *Index auctorum, et librorum* (Rome, 1559), [f. 3v].

¹¹⁹ Spini, *Antonio Brucioli*, p. 131.

¹²⁰ Spini, *Antonio Brucioli*, p. 115.

Brucioli's works were no longer published, and his status as a heretical author can be seen in the obliteration of his name on certain sixteenth-century editions of his works (Fig. 1).

Brucioli's translation of the *Politics* was printed at the press of his brothers, Francesco and Alessandro, in 1547. This octavo edition bears the Brucioli insignia, a vine, and is printed in italic font with decorated capitals at the beginning of each chapter (Fig. 2), a feature found in other works printed at the Brucioli press.¹²¹ The *Politics* is the only one of Brucioli's Aristotelian translations to be printed by his brothers; the others were all published by Bartolomeo and Francesco Imperatore, who issued a series of Italian translations of Aristotle, including Bernardo Segni's versions of the *Ethics*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics*.¹²²

Brucioli dedicated his translation of the *Politics* to Piero Strozzi (1510–1558), a member of one of Florence's wealthiest and most prominent families, a military leader and, like Brucioli, an anti-Medicean exile from his homeland. He must therefore have seemed a very suitable patron to Brucioli, who spent much of the dedication praising Strozzi and his forebears, even including a sonnet and lamenting that no biography of Piero's father, Filippo Strozzi, had ever been written. These tactics do not appear to have worked, though, since he did not dedicate any other works to the Strozzi family. This may, however, be connected with Brucioli's desperate attempts to earn money by supplying information to Cosimo I, Grand Duke of Florence and scion of Strozzi's political opponents, the Medici family. In 1554, when Cosimo was seeking to conquer Siena, which was defended by its civilian army who were fighting alongside French troops under the command of Piero Strozzi, Brucioli informed the duke about the exiled Florentines who were funding Strozzi.

¹²¹ See the example in Barbieri, 'La tipografia dei fratelli Brucioli', p. 74.

¹²² Aristotle, *L'Éthica*, transl. and comm. Bernardo Segni (Venice, 1551); Aristotle, *Rettorica et Poetica*, transl. Bernardo Segni (Venice, 1551).

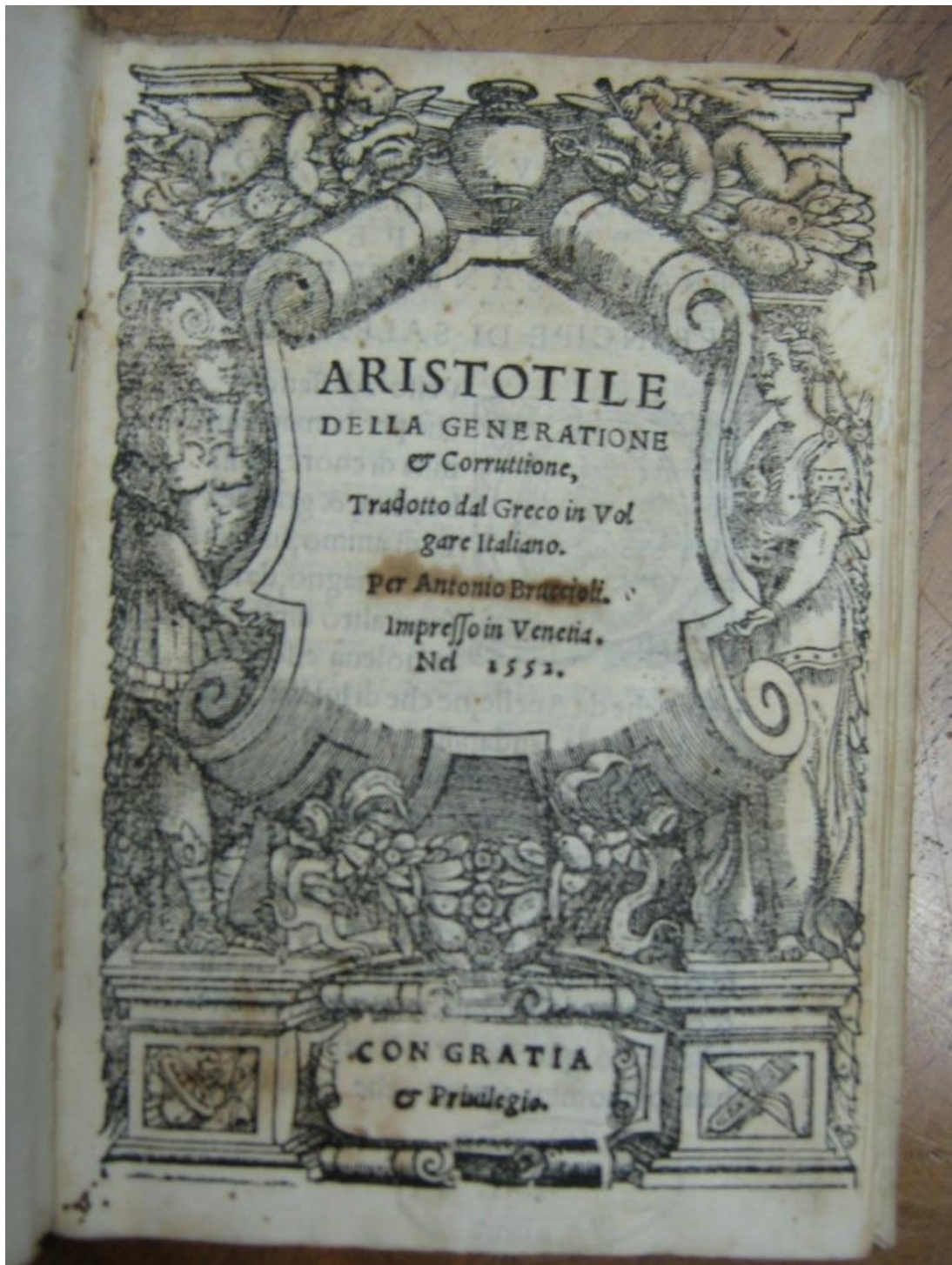


Fig 1: The copy of Brucioli's translation of the *On Generation and Corruption* (Venice, 1552), held in the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice (shelfmark 32D 235) which shows the deletion of Brucioli's name.

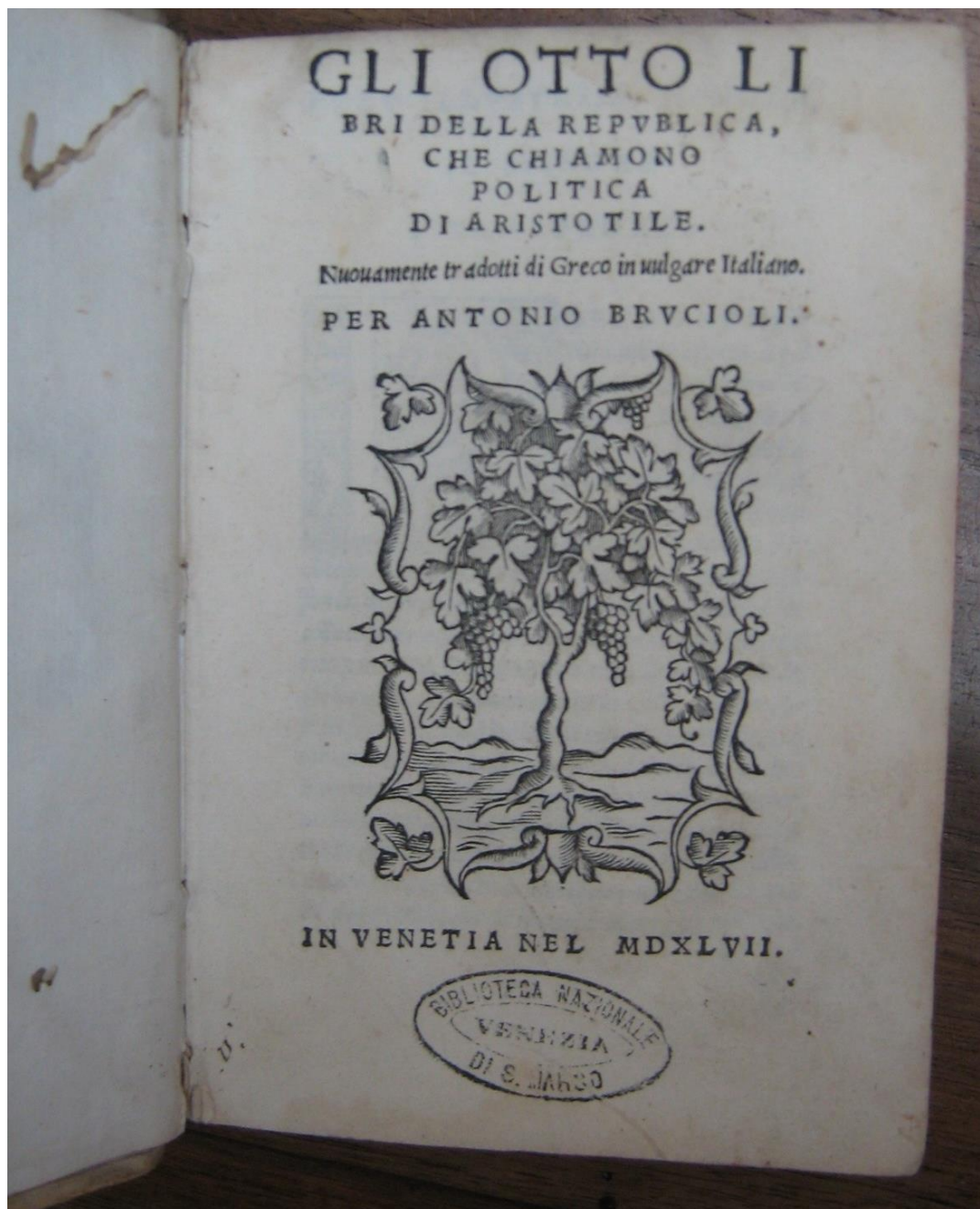


Fig. 2: Title-page of Aristotle, *Gli otto libri della repubblica*, transl. Antonio Brucioli (Venice, 1547), published at the Brucioli brothers' press.

Brucioli's dedication offers some indication of how he wanted his translation to be used. As we have seen, in his *Dialogi* he expressed a deep belief in the power and worth of education; and here, too, he stresses the value of learning, stating that he has made the translation

because it seems true to me that those who dedicate similar philosophical books to lords and outstanding men, and who have no small understanding of this science and are great admirers of it, illustrate the majesty of the science in no small measure. Since the doctrine of the best governments is a light necessary to all mortals, it must be placed in bright lanterns which are marvellously resplendent to all.¹²³

The stress which he lays on the need to convey political learning 'to all mortals' suggests that he saw his translation primarily as a work of popularisation, which would spread the 'light' of learning. Nevertheless, although he dwells on the importance of political knowledge and the greatness of Aristotle, he makes little attempt to explain the content of the treatise to his readers beyond a brief mention of the classification of regimes:

Above all, in this [work] he considers six forms and constitutions of living: the monarchy, the tyranny, the [government] by the best men, the rule of the few, the republic and the licentious [rule] of the people. And in this way he demonstrates that monarchical government and the republic are acceptable to him.¹²⁴

Beyond this scanty explanation offered in the dedication, and a few words of description at the beginning of each chapter, Brucioli's translation offers little to help his readers – it is simple and, in the style of Aldine vernacular editions, contains simply the text with no

¹²³ Aristotle, *Gli otto libri della repubblica*, transl. Antonio Brucioli, [sig. *2v]: 'Et questo perche coloro, che dedicano simili libri philosophici à Signori, et huomini egregii, et che di tale scientia hanno non picciola cognitione, et grandemente ne sono amatori, mi pare pel vero, che non poco illustrino la maiesta della scientia. Perche come la dottrina de gli ottimi gouerni, è una lucerna necessaria à tutti i mortali, cosi anchora collocare si debbe in candelliere tanto eminente, che à tutti maravigliosamente risplenda.'

¹²⁴ Aristotle, *Gli otto libri della repubblica*, transl. Brucioli [sig. *2r]: 'Et primieramente in quella considerasse sei forme et constitutioni de vivere. La Regia, La tyrannica, quella degli ottimati, La potentia de pochi, La repubblica. Et la licentia popolare. Et cosi il gouerno Regio, et la Republica dimostrasse essergli accetti.'

commentary. The difference is that Aldus Manutius printed Italian works which already had a long publishing history and for which there was a great wealth of explanatory material. The absence of any aids in understanding this unfamiliar work may have been the reason why Brucioli's translation of the *Politics* was only published once and was joined, two years later, by Bernardo Segni's translation and accompanying commentary. This lack of success did not, however, discourage Brucioli from undertaking further Aristotelian translations.

The title-page of Brucioli's translation states that it was made from the Greek, a claim which would have helped to market it. However, it does not seem that he was using the most notable Greek editions of the *Politics*. In Book One, the Aldine Aristotle describes Homer's 'tribeless, lawless, hearthless one',¹²⁵ as 'ἄμα γὰρ φύσει τοιοῦτος καὶ πολέμου ἐπιθυμητής, ἄτε περ ἄζυξ ὧν ὥσπερ ἐν πεττοῖς',¹²⁶ the same phrase which is found in modern editions of the *Politics* – 'the natural outcast is forthwith a lover of war; he may be compared to an unyoked piece in draughts.'¹²⁷ The Greek *opera omnia* of Aristotle first published in Basel in 1531 with a preface by Erasmus,¹²⁸ has 'ἄνευ ζεύγους' ('without a yoke') for 'ἄζυξ' ('unyoked'), but is otherwise the same. In incunabula editions of Bruni's Latin translation, the part of the phrase concerning draughts-pieces is absent.¹²⁹ However, in Moerbeke's Latin translation,¹³⁰ sixteenth-century editions of Bruni's version,¹³¹ as well as sixteenth-century Latin versions by other translators,¹³² a

¹²⁵ *Politics*, 1253a4.

¹²⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, in his *Opera omnia*, 5 vols (Venice, 1495-1498), V, f. 96r.

¹²⁷ *Politics*, 1253a5-6. I have adjusted the translation to make it closer to the Greek.

¹²⁸ Aristotle, *Opera... omnia*, 2 vols (Basel, 1531), II, f. 74v. See J. Krayer, 'Erasmus and the Canonization of Aristotle: The Letter to John More', in E. Chaney and P. Mack (eds), *England and the Continental Renaissance: Essays in Honour of J. B. Trapp* (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 37-49, at p. 37.

¹²⁹ Aristotle, [*Ethica, Politica and Oeconomica*], transl. Leonardo Bruni (Strasbourg, 1469[?]), f. 90v: 'Nam simul talis est et belli cupidus'; Aristotle, [*Ethica, Politica and Oeconomica*], transl. Leonardo Bruni (Barcelona, 1473 or 1474), f. 126r: 'Nam simul talis est et belli cupidus'; Aristotle, [*Politica*], transl. Leonardo Bruni, in Thomas Aquinas, *In octo Politicorum Aristotelis libros cum textu eiusdem* (Venice, 1500), f. 5r: 'Nam simul talis est et belli cupidus.'

¹³⁰ Aristotle, *Politicorum libri octo cum vetusta translatione Guilelmi de Moerbeka*, ed. F. Susemihl (Leipzig, 1872), p. 8: 'Simul enim natura talis et belli affectator, veluti sine iugo existens sicut in volatilibus.'

¹³¹ Aristotle, *Politicorum libri octo...*, transl. Leonardo Bruni, ed. Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Paris, 1506), f. 9v: 'Nam simul natura talis est et belli cupidus: veluti qui nullo retinetur iugo, ut neque volatilia'; Aristotle, *In hoc libro contenta. Politicorum libri octo...*, transl. Leonardo Bruni, comm. Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Paris, 1526), f. 9v: 'Nam simul natura talis est, et belli cupidus: veluti qui nullo retinetur iugo, ut neque volatilia'; Aristotle, *Politicorum ad Nicomachum lib[er] primus*, transl. Leonardo Bruni (Venice, 1542), f. 6r: 'Nam simul natura talis, et belli cupidus est, veluti qui nullo retinetur iugo, ut neque volatilia.'

¹³² Aristotle, *Aristotelis De republica, qui politicorum dicuntur, libri VIII*, transl. J. Péron (Basel, 1544), p. 6: 'Simul enim ut ortus est, belli cupiditate inflammatur, quia nullo iugo, tanque aves, coercetur';

variation is found: the solitary man is compared to a winged creature (a bird), not to a draughts-piece.

Following this variant, Brucioli's translation reads:

Et quello che sta fuori della citta per sua natura, et non per causa della fortuna, ò è huomo cattivo, ò piu che huomo, come fu quello, il quale riprende Homero con vituperio. Senza tribu, senza ragione, et senza casa, perche subito che uno è tale per natura, diviene cupido della guerra, non essendo ritenuto da alcuno giogo, come ne anchora gli uccegli.¹³³

Of the Latin editions, Brucioli's rendering of the phrase is closest to that in the sixteenth-century editions of Bruni's translation. In fact, an examination of the sentence structure and vocabulary of Brucioli's translation of the *Politics* as a whole has shown that it is very similar to Bruni's version.¹³⁴

This can be seen by comparing the opening of the *Politics* in each version. Bruni's text reads:

Quoniam videmus omnem civitatem esse societatem quandam, et omnem societatem boni alicuius gratia constitutam (nam eius gratia quod bonum videtur, omnia omnes agunt) patet quod bonum aliquod omnes contendunt: maxime vero principalissimum omnium, que est principalissima, et caeteras omnes complectitur. Est autem haec illa quae civitas appellatur, et civilis societas.¹³⁵

Not only does the vocabulary used by Brucioli often follow that of Bruni (such as

Aristotle, *Politica*, transl. Jacobus Strebæus (Paris, 1542), p. 4: 'Eiusmodi naturae coniuncta belli cupiditas, quippe quae communionis iugo non aliter atque quarundam volucrum, soluta est.'

¹³³ Aristotle, *Gli otto libri della repubblica*, transl. Brucioli, f. 3r: 'And he who remains outside the city because of his nature, and not for reasons of fortune, is either an evil man or more than a man, as was the person whom Homer rebukes with vituperation: without tribe, without reason and without home; because someone who is like this by nature soon becomes desirous of war, not being restrained by any yoke, as the birds still are.'

¹³⁴ In comparing Brucioli's translation with that of Leonardo Bruni I have used the 1542 Venice edition of Bruni's version, as it was the edition of Bruni's translation closest in date (and location of publication) to that of Brucioli's translation.

¹³⁵ Aristotle, *Aristotelis Stagiritae Politicorum*, f. 4r. *Politics*, 1252a1-6: Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for everyone always acts in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good.'

‘civile societa’ for ‘civilis societas’), but his sentence structure and rhythm are frequently the same as Bruni’s:

Avegna che noi veggiamo, ogni citta essere una certa societa, et che ogni societa è costituita per causa di qualche bene (per che tutti gli huomini indirizzano le loro attioni a qualche cosa, che appare buona) è manifesto che tutte si prepongono qualche bene, Et massimamente il principalissimo di tutti, quella che la principalissima, et che tutte le altre contiene, et questa è quella, che si chiama citta, et civile societa.¹³⁶

A passage at the end of chapter three of Book One provides another example of the resemblance between the two versions, especially in terms of vocabulary:

Et usus variat parumper: necessariorum enim corpori auxilium fit ab utrisque, a servis videlicet et mansuetis animalibus. Vult autem natura, et differentia facit corpora liberorum et servorum: alia quidem robusta ad necessarios usus, alia vero recta et inutilia ad tales operationes, verum utilia ad civilem vitam. Haec autem divisa est in belli oportunitates et pacis. Accidit vero saepe et contra, hos quidem corpora habere liberorum, illos vero animas. Nam id quidem patet: quod si tantum praecellant corpore solum, quantum Deorum imagines, reliqui omnes digni apparerent illis servire.¹³⁷

Et l’uso varia alquanto, perche di tutte quelle cose che sono necessarie al culto del corpo si piglia l’aiuto da ambedue, cio è da servi, et dagli animali mansueti domestici. Vuole adunque la natura, et fa differenti i corpi de liberi, et di servi. Di questi gli fece fermi, et robusti à i necessarij usi della vita, di quegli retti, et inutili à simili uficii, et operationi, ma utili alla vita civile. Et questa è divisa nella oportunita della guerra, et della pace. Ma accade spesso il contrario, che in questi, veggiamo essere i corpi de liberi, et in quegli gli animi, perche, et questo è manifesto, che se tanto avanzino solamente pel corpo, quanto le imagini degli Iddii, tutti gli altri,

¹³⁶ Aristotle, *Gli otto libri della repubblica*, transl. Brucioli, f. 1r.

¹³⁷ Aristotle, *Politicorum ad Nicomachum lib[er] primus*, f. 9r-v.

apparieno degni di servire loro.¹³⁸

The closeness between the two texts is immediately obvious. Brucioli has made a direct, and very faithful, translation from Bruni's Latin, generally using the Italian word closest to his Latin – 'robusti' for 'robusta', 'apparieno' for 'apparent' – and, as before, following his sentence structure. Brucioli's translation is groundbreaking in that it offered vernacular readers the complete text of the *Politics* for the first time; but it was a work written for the press, and probably done quite quickly. Brucioli may have consulted a Greek edition of the *Politics*, but there is no evidence of this, apart from the claim on the title-page that the translation was made from the Greek.

Nevertheless, Brucioli does accurately convey Bruni's learning and skill in presenting the words of Aristotle, giving vernacular readers full access to Aristotle's political thought. A Latin-literate reader might have chosen it for ease of comprehension, but would find nothing in it not already available in the scholarly tradition. However, Brucioli's work made available, for the first time, a text which was key to understanding not only political literature written in Italian but also the very language and vocabulary with which political discussions were framed. The translation of the *Politics* is a landmark moment in the advancement of the vernacular, enhancing the extent to which political discussion could take place in Italian and by those who did not understand Latin.

Brucioli's moral dialogues are not the typical product of a *poligrafo* and are therefore more useful for understanding sixteenth-century Aristotelian political thought. Here, material from the *Politics* is presented in a favourite humanist genre, the dialogue, a practice which would continue throughout the sixteenth century. Other notable features of the work are Brucioli's liberal, but often unsignalled, borrowing from both classical and contemporary Florentine authors, and his preoccupation with education. The dialogues also serve as vehicles for Brucioli's views on sixteenth-century politics, especially the governance of Florence: he dwells on the characteristics of the tyrant (the greatest threat to

¹³⁸ *Gli otto libri della repubblica*, f. 6r-v.

republican freedom), discusses the best way to order the republic and mourns Florence's lost liberty. The dialogues reveal his familiarity with vernacular humanist authors such as Palmieri and more contemporary writers like Machiavelli; but, above all, they show an understanding of politics based firmly on Aristotle.

Chapter Five

The Sixteenth Century: Bernardo Segni's Translation of and Commentary on the *Politics*

The second of the two complete Italian translations of the *Politics* produced in the mid-sixteenth century was published two years after that of Antonio Brucioli and by an author who was also engaged in the movement to vernacularise Aristotle's works. Bernardo Segni (1504–1558) is best remembered, and most frequently cited in modern scholarship, as a historian: he was the author of the *Istorie fiorentine*, composed of fifteen books which spanned the years from 1527 to 1555,¹ but which did not appear in print until 1723.² He also, however, produced vernacular translations, published in his lifetime, of Aristotle's *De anima*, *Rhetoric*, *Poetics*, *Ethics* and *Politics*, the last two of which were accompanied by his commentaries. Segni's translation of and commentary on the *Politics*, after the 1549 *editio princeps*, was printed twice more within a ten year period.³

Segni's translation of the *Politics* differed in important respects from that of Brucioli, and his inclusion of a commentary in his edition, the first on the *Politics* in the Italian vernacular, was of particular significance. Segni's learned notes, which drew on previous Latin studies on the work, combined classical references and explanations of their meaning with allusions to contemporary events, persons and literature; it offered the sixteenth-century vernacular reader not only the text but also the means to understand it. As I shall show in this chapter, the composition and style of the commentary make it clear that Segni's translation of Aristotle's *Politics* into Italian was part of a contemporary cultural programme to widen the scope of knowledge available in Italian, as well as a useful practical tool. He clearly perceived that there was a potential readership for a (new) vernacular version of the treatise but that exposition, as well as translation, of Aristotle's text was essential.⁴

¹ Bernardo Segni, *Istorie fiorentine*, ed. G. Gargani (Florence, 1857).

² Bernardo Segni, *Storie fiorentine ... dall'anno VII al MDLV. Colla Vita di Niccolò Capponi, Gonfalonier della Repubblica di Firenze...* (Augsburg, 1723).

³ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Bernardo Segni (Florence, 1549). First published by Torrentino in Florence in 1549, and afterwards by Bartolomeo and Francesco Imperatore, Venice, 1551; Torrentino, Florence, 1559.

⁴ See, however, M. Toste, 'Evolution within Tradition: The Vernacular Works on Aristotle's *Politics* in Sixteenth-Century Italy', in G. Briguglia and T. Ricklin (eds.), *Thinking Politics in the Vernacular: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Fribourg, 2011), pp. 189-211, at pp. 189-190, who claims that the

As with the political writings of Brucioli, it is relevant to examine Segni's treatment of Aristotle's *Politics* in relation to the contemporary cultural and political situation in Italy, especially in his native city of Florence. As with Brucioli, whose political career moved from youthful republicanism to seeking employment from the Medici in later years, Segni's life and his scholarly output, including the *Politics* translation and commentary, were played out against the Medicean and republican struggles of sixteenth-century Florence.

Segni was eighteen years old when the fate of the Orti Oricellari (so formative for the thought of Brucioli) was sealed by the discovery of republican conspirators in its midst. It is unlikely, however, that the discussions in the Rucellai gardens or their abrupt end had a direct impact on him. In his adolescence, Segni studied at the University of Padua, where he received a grounding in the classical languages. It is recorded in the *Notizie letterarie, ed istoriche intorno agli uomini illustri dell'Accademia Fiorentina* that he wished to pursue a career in law but was forbidden to do so by his father, who sent him instead to manage one of the family businesses – possibly a bank – in L'Aquila.⁵ Segni did not return to Florence until 1528.⁶

Five years after the failed insurrection which had condemned Brucioli to exile, the Medici were ousted – though only temporarily – from Florence. The Sack of Rome by imperial troops in 1527 sparked unrest across Italy and especially in Medici Florence, which relied on the favour of Pope Clement VII, the former Giulio de' Medici, who, after Charles V's conquest of the city, was holed up in the fortress of Castel Sant'Angelo. This dramatic change in the balance of power in Italy, along with unrest caused by a shortage of grain, sparked a revolt in Florence on 26 April, known as the 'tumulto del venerdì', which was quickly put down by the Medici.⁷ Three weeks later, however, on 16 May, the arrival in the city of the Medici's rival Filippo Strozzi – husband of Clarice de' Medici, who was aggrieved at the marginalisation of her branch

vernacularisation of the *Politics* was essentially a cultural exercise.

⁵ Accademia Fiorentina, *Notizie letterarie, ed istoriche intorno agli uomini illustri dell'Accademia Fiorentina. Parte Prima* (Florence, 1700), p. 32.

⁶ A. Cavalcanti, 'Notizie intorno alla vita di Bernardo Segni', in Segni, *Istorie Fiorentine*, pp. xv-xx, at p. xvi.

⁷ J. N. Stephens, *The Fall of the Florentine Republic, 1512-1530* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 197-199.

of the Medici family – and his appropriation of the city’s treasury led to the fall of the Medici government of Florence. Unable to pay the troops intended to keep the city under their control, Cardinal Silvio Passerini da Cortona (who had been governing Florence on the orders of Clement VII) and younger members of the Medici family were forced to negotiate terms with Strozzi, which included the handover of Pisa and Livorno, and then to leave the city.⁸

Niccolò Capponi (1472–1529), who had led the ‘tumulto del venerdì’ and had also hosted Filippo Strozzi in his house in the *campagna* the night before he entered Florence and expelled the Medici, was instituted as the Gonfalonier of Justice; and the government of the city was returned to the broad-based and mixed constitution first laid out by Girolamo Savonarola over thirty years before.⁹ Members of the citizenry rushed to destroy the partitions set up by the Medici in the Sala dei Cinquecento in order to hold meetings of the Great Council there once again.¹⁰

This ‘Last Republic’ of Florence was, however, short-lived. From its inception, the regime suffered from internal divisions, as political (and personal) revenge was taken against those families still in Florence who had been loyal to the Medici.¹¹ Once Clement VII began to negotiate with Charles V, he (unsurprisingly) petitioned for the restoration of Medici rule in Florence. Charles’s political dominance in Italy was assured in the Treaty of Barcelona of 1529, and in return Clement’s nephew Alessandro – who was also to marry the emperor’s illegitimate daughter Margaret – was given ducal power in Florence in 1530. The figure at the centre of the Last Republic, Niccolò Capponi, had died in 1529, and the emperor’s support for Alessandro de’ Medici ended Florence’s centuries-long republican history for good.

Political stability took some time to re-establish. Alessandro was assassinated in 1537, extinguishing the direct line of Medici descent from Cosimo il Vecchio. The Medici-loyal government, including Francesco Guicciardini, were left to search in desperation

⁸ C. Roth, *The Last Florentine Republic* (New York, 1968), pp. 44–45.

⁹ Roth, *The Last Florentine Republic*, p. 46. Niccolò Capponi was the grandson of Gino di Nero Capponi, the dedicatee of Giovanni Cavalcanti’s *Trattato politico-morale* (discussed in Chapter Three above). See F. W. Kent, *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence: The Family Life of the Capponi, Ginori, and Rucellai* (Princeton NJ, 1977), pp. 85–86 and 306.

¹⁰ Roth, *The Last Florentine Republic*, p. 49.

¹¹ See Stephens, *The Fall of the Florentine Republic*, pp. 220–240.

for a suitable replacement as the head of state and settled on the scion of an obscure branch of the family, Cosimo di Giovanni delle Bande Nere: Cosimo I, who would become Bernardo Segni's patron and the dedicatee of his writings.¹²

Although Segni did not have any direct political involvement in the government before the return of the Medici in 1530, he was by no means a neutral bystander, for he had powerful ties with Florence's last republican incarnation. He was the maternal nephew of the head of the republican government, Niccolò Capponi. Segni's father was a close friend of Capponi and became involved in the city's politics for the first time (after a life spent in business) when the Last Republic was formed.¹³ The most important ties in Renaissance Italy were those of blood;¹⁴ but Segni's kinship to Capponi did not prevent him from entering the circle of Cosimo I, which included many others with links to Florence's republican past. At least in private, however, Segni did not reject his anti-Medicean heritage. He wrote, though did not publish, a *Vita di Niccolò Capponi*, in which he underlined the central role his uncle played in the downfall of the Medici in 1527 and the revolution in government: 'Niccolò', he stated, 'was, above all others, the author of this change.'¹⁵

In the *Vita* Segni was at pains to emphasise the virtue of his uncle, the love the Florentine *popolo* had for him and the severe morality he instituted in the Last Republic.¹⁶ The return of the Medici is described as 'the ruin of liberty'.¹⁷ Small wonder, then, that the *Vita di Niccolò Capponi*, together with Segni's *Istorie fiorentine*, did not appear in print until 1723.¹⁸ The *Istorie fiorentine* also reflected Segni's unease with the Medici government, offering a fluctuating judgement of Cosimo, who was praised for his distribution of justice, but criticised for his profligacy with money.¹⁹ In this work, furthermore, Segni hints that he regarded Cosimo's dukedom as tyrannical,

¹² R. Cantagalli, *Cosimo I de' Medici Granduca di Toscana* (Milan, 1985), pp. 44-45; G. Spini, *Cosimo I e l'indipendenza del Principato Mediceo* (Florence, 1980) pp. 29-31.

¹³ M. L. Gentile, *Studi sulla storiografia fiorentina alla corte di Cosimo I de' Medici* (Pisa, 1905), p. 13.

¹⁴ J. N. Stephens says that 'in the end, Florentine history is family history.' Stephens, *Fall of the Florentine Republic*, p. 220. See also Kent, *Household and Lineage*, p. 3.

¹⁵ Bernardo Segni, *Vita di Niccolò Capponi* (Augsburg, 1723), p. 15: 'Della cui mutazione Niccolò sopra di tutti gli altri fu autore.'

¹⁶ Segni, *Vita di Niccolò Capponi*, pp. 3, 17 and 19.

¹⁷ Segni, *Vita di Niccolò Capponi*, p. 26: 'La rovina della libertà'.

¹⁸ See E. Rossi, 'La pubblicazione delle storie del Varchi e del Segni', in *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 117 (1941), pp. 43-54.

¹⁹ Segni, *Istorie fiorentine*, p. 373.

suggesting that his rule did not have the support of the people.²⁰

Despite these views – which were private opinions not aired in public during Segni's lifetime – he enjoyed high office in the service of Cosimo I after he inherited the dukedom in January 1537. Under Cosimo, Segni became a prior and in 1541 was sent as an ambassador to Ferdinand I, the Holy Roman Emperor.²¹ For our purposes, however, Segni's most important role in Medici Florence was as a member of Accademia Fiorentina, which Cosimo used as a means of controlling and directing the cultural life of Florence.²²

The origins of the Accademia Fiorentina were similar to those of the Orti Oricellari: a group of like-minded men began meeting in the house of one of their number in late 1540 in order to read Petrarch's poetry and compose vernacular verse themselves.²³ Elsewhere in Italy more formal learned academies were becoming established, and the decision by this group of Florentines to give themselves a name – the Accademia degli Umidi – suggests that they considered themselves on a par with organisations such as the Paduan Accademia degli Infiammati, which was formed nine months earlier and which had a membership including respected scholars such as Alessandro Piccolomini, Sperone Speroni and the Florentine Benedetto Varchi.²⁴

²⁰ Segni, *Istorie fiorentine*, p. 373: 'Nel spese era bene troppo largo, perché oltre allo stare sontuoso, ed al dare molte provisioni disutili, si dilettaua assai di muraglie, di condotti d'acqua, di gioie, e soprattutto del giuoco, ne' quali modi di vivere consumava infinita roba, ed era forzato sovente oltre all'entrate ordinarie, che arrivavano a grossa somma, metter gravezze straordinarie alla città ed al dominio, che agravavano pur troppo li sudditi, esclamando quei primi cittadini savì, e per dolore e per mala contentezza essendo fra gli altri tutti morti in pochi anni; io dico Francesco Vettori il primo, che, morto Filippo Strozzi, non uscì mai più di casa vivo, e dipoi messer Francesco Guicciardini, che, ingannatosi di aver fatto un principe civile, per disperato finì la vita.' See also D. A. Lines, 'Ethics, Politics and History in Bernardo Segni (1504–1558): Machiavellianism and Anti-Medicean Sentiment' (forthcoming), pp. 1-25, at p. 14; Gentile, *Studi sulla storiografia fiorentina*, p. 82. For Segni, public acclaim was an important indicator of lawful rule: see, e.g., Segni, *Vita di Niccolò Capponi*, p. 17, where he maintains that his uncle 'vi fu eletto per Gonfaloniere con immenso favore de tutto quel popolo'.

²¹ D. A. Lines, 'Rethinking Renaissance Aristotelianism: Bernardo Segni's *Ethica*, the Florentine Academy, and the Vernacular in Sixteenth-Century Italy', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 66 (2013), pp. 824-865, at p. 828.

²² Gentile, *Studi sulla storiografia fiorentina*, p. 30.

²³ Several participants in the Orti Oricellari went on to become members of the Umidi and Accademia Fiorentina, establishing a line of continuity between the two enterprises. See D. Zanré, *Cultural Non-Conformity in Early Modern Florence* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 16-19; A. L. De Gaetano, *Giambattista Gelli and the Florentine Academy: The Rebellion against Latin* (Florence, 1976) p. 88. Those present at both the Orti Oricellari and the Umidi/Fiorentina included Giambattista Gelli, Luigi Alamanni, Francesco Giudetti, and Palla and Cosimo Rucellai.

²⁴ Zanré, *Cultural Non-Conformity*, p. 19. See also R. S. Samuels, 'Benedetto Varchi, the Accademia degli Infiammati, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 29 (1976), pp. 599-634.

What provoked the nascent Florentine academy to name themselves the Umidi has divided scholars. De Gaetano has suggested a link with fertility; but Michael Sherberg maintains that the name Umidi was chosen to announce their intention of dampening the fervour of their rivals, the northern *Infiammati* ('the flaming ones').²⁵ In particular, the Umidi challenged the *Infiammati*'s support of the linguistic theories of Pietro Bembo, who held that the vernacular should be based on the Trecento Tuscan of Boccaccio and Petrarch.²⁶ They preferred instead the idea of an Italian tongue based on contemporary Florentine literature. The Umidi's emphasis on Petrarch as a literary rather than a linguistic model may have been an attempt to reclaim this Florentine poet from the clutches of northern theorists.²⁷

The Accademia degli Umidi did not last for long in its original form. After assuming the dukedom, Cosimo I set about securing his position by attempting to entwine the Medici family so tightly with Florentine identity that no insurrection against them could ever be contemplated again. An important part of this strategy was to control the intellectual life of the city, and a society such as the Umidi offered the perfect opportunity to exert Medici influence and put the city's scholars in the service of the state.²⁸ Soon after its inception, the Accademia degli Umidi welcomed a large influx of new members, loyal to or clients of Cosimo; and before long the academy had assumed a more organised and official air. Four men were appointed to establish the new rules of the academy and, with the original members marginalised and unhappy, they renamed it the Accademia Fiorentina.²⁹ After this, the Fiorentina became a Medici organisation by degrees: Cosimo provided the venue for its meetings and lectures, first in the Medici palace and the Studio Fiorentino, and then gave the academy a permanent home at the centre of Florentine public life in the Sala dei Dugento of the Palazzo della Signoria,³⁰ where the

²⁵ De Gaetano, *Giambattista Gelli and the Florentine Academy*, p. 101; M. Sherberg, 'The Accademia Fiorentina and the Question of the Language: The Politics of Theory in Ducal Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 56 (2003), pp. 26-55, at p. 27.

²⁶ On Bembo, see C. Dionisotti, 'Bembo, Pietro', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), VIII, pp. 133-151.

²⁷ Sherberg, 'The Accademia Fiorentina and the Question of the Language', p. 27.

²⁸ R. Cantagalli, *Cosimo I de' Medici Granduca di Toscana* (Milan, 1985), p. 126.

²⁹ Zanré, *Cultural Non-Conformity*, p. 18; D. Zanré, "'Che K.^{zo} vuol dire?" A Re-reading of Mid-Sixteenth-Century Linguistic Debates in the Accademia Fiorentina', *Italian Studies*, 53 (1998) pp. 20-37, at p. 30.

³⁰ Sherberg, 'The Accademia Fiorentina and the Question of the Language', p. 28.

Accademia's lectures on Dante drew large audiences.³¹

The services of a ducal printer, Lorenzo Torrentino, were secured for the publication of works by members of the academy (all works first had to be submitted for censorship).³² The academicians were now more obliged to produce literary works of sufficient quality and quantity, many of which were dedicated to Cosimo, projecting his desired image as a learned and munificent prince. Finally, in 1547, the Accademia Fiorentina was dissolved and, a week later, reformed: a process which allowed it to be reborn as a fully-fledged Medici organisation, with a ruling hierarchy filled with the duke's men.³³

This aspect of the cultural programme of the Accademia Fiorentina – essentially, Medici propaganda – is amply represented in Segni's translation of and commentary on the *Politics*, entitled *Trattato dei governi*. The work is dedicated to the 'Illustrissimo ed Eccellentissimo Padron mio il Signor Cosimo de Medici Duca di Firenze', and lavishes praise on the Medici dynasty. Segni indulges in popular word-play,³⁴ punning on 'Medici' and 'medici' (doctors):

I wish to say that this matter will be much better dealt with by someone who, as well as the practical experience he may have, will also have added universal science, not unlike what happens with doctors, among whom those who are always held in higher repute are those who have practised the art of medicine and who, in addition, have been able to explain their treatments, rather than those who have received one disparate fact after another.³⁵

The implication is that, having both experience in ruling and a theoretical grounding in

³¹ J. Bryce, 'The Oral World of the Early Accademia Fiorentina', *Renaissance Studies*, 9 (1995), pp. 77-103, at pp. 80-81.

³² See A. Ricci, 'Lorenzo Torrentino and the Cultural Programme of Cosimo I de' Medici', in K. Eisenbichler (ed.), *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 103-119.

³³ Zanré, *Cultural Non-Conformity*, pp. 20-21.

³⁴ A. W. B. Randolph, *Engaging Symbols: Gender, Politics and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (New Haven CT, 2002), p. 109; Sherberg, 'The Accademia Fiorentina and the Question of the Language', p. 33.

³⁵ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 5: 'Io vo dire, Che molto meglio saprà trattare di questa materia chiunque oltra alla prattica, che egli n'habbia, di piu v'harà aggiunta l'universale scienza; non altrimenti che si intervenga nei medici, infra i quali sempre migliori sono stati tenuti quegli, che hanno sperimentato l'arte del medicare, et che di piu hanno dei lor' medicamenti saputo render' ragione, che non sono stati tenuti gli altri, che hanno havuto disperse l'una notitia dall'altra.'

practical philosophy, the Medici are the best equipped to undertake the government of Florence.

The *Trattato* provides an interesting contrast to the republican slant of Segni's *Vita di Niccolò Capponi* and his *Istorie fiorentine*. The Aristotelian classification of governments – by the many, the few, and the one – is briefly mentioned in the preface only as pretext to counter those (supporters of the Last Republic) who foolishly hold the opinion that 'liberty cannot exist, if the people do not have control of the government'.³⁶ In fact, he argues, the liberty of the people is better protected under the rule of a few, and the 'most free of all of these is that which is governed by a good prince, and one who governs to the end of the common good'.³⁷ This is, obviously, represented in the person of Cosimo himself: 'the method of government which our *patria* has is by means of your illustrious person, which was spontaneously elected by the citizens to this most high and excellent position'.³⁸ The striking contrast between Segni's view, expressed in the unpublished *Istorie fiorentine*, that Cosimo's ascent to the dukedom was not supported by the people, seems as though it might be deliberate.³⁹

In his commentary on Book Five of the *Politics*, in which Aristotle discusses the characteristics of the tyrant, Segni writes:

One could say that, with two of the properties assigned by the Philosopher to the tyrant, all princes are tyrants; and it is ridiculous to admit what these are: they are a bodyguard composed of foreigners and the forbidding of arms to subjects. One can respond to this that the Philosopher wants to describe a tyrant who is absolutely a tyrant, so he assigns all the properties which a tyranny has, considered in of itself, even if it may be that he does not do so by chance. But, in fact, the true properties of the tyrant are ... the rule by force of those who do not want to be subjected and the rule for personal advantage. So whoever rules for

³⁶ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 7: 'Che e' si stimano la liberta non potere essere, se non dove i Popoli hanno in mano il governo.'

³⁷ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 8: 'Liberissimo sopra di tutti gli altri esser' quello, che sia governato da un' Principe buono, et che governi per fin' di ben' Publico.'

³⁸ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 8: 'Il qual' modo di governo havendo preso la Patria nostra mediante la persona vostra Illustriss[ima] la quale e' stata eletta spontaneamente dai Cittadini a questo sommo, et eccelso grado.'

³⁹ Segni's use of this rhetorical tool – antiphrasis – is highlighted by Lines, 'Ethics, Politics and History in Bernardo Segni', p. 18.

the end of the public good and is elected to the principedom can never be called a tyrant, even if he goes out with a foreign bodyguard and disarms his citizens.⁴⁰

The two aspects of a tyrant's rule which Segni calls ridiculous were common practice and were employed by Cosimo, who kept a personal German guard and forbade Florentine citizens to carry arms.⁴¹ There is a hint of subversion here, even though the criticism of Cosimo comes from Aristotle rather than Segni himself. Furthermore, the defining features of a true tyrant, the rule for private gain and rule over unwilling subjects, were, as we have seen, attributed to Cosimo by Segni in the *Istorie fiorentine*.⁴²

Beyond the aggrandisement of the Medici dynasty, the aim of the Accademia Fiorentina was the consolidation of the Italian language by creating an Italian literary corpus through translating, commenting on and composing works in all spheres of knowledge. Like the Accademia degli Infiammati, they attempted to codify the vernacular.⁴³ In 1550 Cosimo instructed five members of the academy to draw up the grammatical rules for the Florentine language.⁴⁴ The Accademia Fiorentina's stance on this matter was in large part determined by three of its most influential members: Giambattista Gelli, Pierfrancesco Giambullari, and Carlo Lenzone.⁴⁵ They not only rejected the linguistic theories of Bembo but also of Giangiorgio Trissino, a non-Tuscan member of the Orti Oricellari who held that the Italian vernacular, although predominately Tuscan, should be made up of a combination of dialects. The Florentine academicians insisted that the

⁴⁰ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 300: 'Ma è potrebbe dir' uno, che con due proprietà date dal Filosofo alli Tiranni, che tutti li Principi fussino Tiranni; et quegli, che invero sarebbe cosa ridicola à confessare, che fussin' tali. Et queste sono la guardia del corpo composta di forestieri, et il tor' l'arme ai sudditi. Al che si risponde, che il Filosofo volendo dimonstrare un' Tiranno, che assolutamente fusse tale; perciò e' li dette tutte le proprietà, che hanno del Tirannico, considerate per se: sebene è puo essere, che elle non sieno accidentalmente. Ma infatto le proprietà vere sono ... il regnar' per forza à chi non vuole star' sottoposto; et il regnar' per commodo proprio. Onde chiunque regnasse per fine di ben' Publico, et fusse eletto al Principato, non si potrebbe dir' mai Tiranno; sebene egli andasse con la guardia de' forestieri, et disamasse i suoi Cittadini.' See *Politics*, 1311a6-13.

⁴¹ Lines, 'Ethics, Politics and History in Bernardo Segni', p. 16.

⁴² Segni, *Istorie fiorentine*, p. 373.

⁴³ Bernardino Tomitano, a member of the Infiammati, attempted to do this in his *Ragionamenti della lingua toscana* (Venice, 1546).

⁴⁴ M. Plaisance, *L'Accademia e il suo principe: cultura e politica a Firenze al tempo di Cosimo I e di Francesco de' Medici* (Rome, 2004), pp. 325-327.

⁴⁵ Sherberg, 'The Accademia Fiorentina and the Question of the Language', p. 30. See A. Piscini, 'Gelli, Giovan Battista', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), LIII, pp. 12-18; F. Pignatti, 'Giambullari, Pierfrancesco', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), LIV, pp. 308-312; S. Mammana, 'Lenzone, Carlo', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), LXIV, pp. 395-397.

vernacular should instead be ‘Florentine’ and adopt the contemporary use of language in the city. To avoid confusion between what was Florentine and what was Tuscan, they supported the idea of political and cultural dominance over Tuscany by Florence, so that Tuscan essentially became Florentine (even if it would always be at its purest in the city itself).⁴⁶

Florentine authors were re-appropriated by the academy: from the 1550s public lectures were given on Petrarch by Varchi and on Dante by Gelli.⁴⁷ It was in this atmosphere of *campanilismo*, Medici control and linguistic debate that Segni’s Aristotelian translations were published, having been submitted for censorship and printed by Lorenzo Torrentino.⁴⁸ The layers of meaning inherent in the vernacular production of the Accademia Fiorentina give added significance to Segni’s authorial decisions in the construction of his translation of the *Politics*. This work was part of the cultural programme to enhance and promote the Florentine language and – intimately connected with this – the glorification of the rule of Cosimo I.

The printer’s manuscript proof copy of Segni’s *Trattato*, copied by his secretary, Giovanni Cervoni da Colle, and corrected and annotated by Segni himself, survives in the Archivio di Stato in Florence;⁴⁹ and it provides valuable insights into the linguistic debates and civic patriotism which characterised the Accademia Fiorentina. On the title-page, we can see that the copyist began to inscribe the language of the translation as ‘Toscano’ before changing his mind, after four letters, and writing ‘Lingua Fiorentina’ instead; and the description of Segni as a Florentine ‘gentil’huomo’ is replaced by ‘Accademico Fiorentino’ – his membership of this group taking precedence over his individual status.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Sherberg, ‘The Accademia Fiorentina and the Question of the Language’, p. 41.

⁴⁷ Plaisance, *L’Accademia e il suo principe*, p. 273.

⁴⁸ The correspondence of the academy censors, showing their approval of Segni’s *Rhetorica* and *Poetica* translations and that they were awaiting a copy of the *Trattato dei Governi*, survives: MS Mediceo 390a, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, f. 919v. See M. Plaisance, ‘Les dédicaces à Côme I^{er}’, in C. A. Fiorato and J.-C. Margolin (eds.), *L’écrivain face à son public en France et en Italie à la Renaissance. Actes du Colloque International de Tours* (Paris, 1989), pp. 173-187, at p. 178; and S. Bionda, ‘La copia di tipografia del *Trattato dei governi* di Bernardo Segni: breve incursione nel laboratorio del volgarizzatore di Aristotle’, *Rinascimento*, 42 (2002), pp. 409-442, at pp. 414-415.

⁴⁹ Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS Cerchi 838. See Bionda, ‘La copia di tipografia del *Trattato dei governi* di Bernardo Segni’, p. 416.

⁵⁰ MS Cerchi 838, [f. 1r]. On the title-page of the printed edition, both descriptions of Segni appear – see Fig. 3.

Changes throughout the corrected proof manuscript of Segni's translation give clues as to his vacillations and decisions regarding the correct form of written Italian. Although the corrections are not systematic, abbreviations are often expanded: ampersands become 'et' and contractions are eliminated and replaced with the entire word.⁵¹ Other alterations also bring Latinate spelling into line with what we would now recognise as Italian such as the correction of 'differentia' to 'differenza'.⁵²

One of the most prominent features of Segni's prose is his liberal approach to the shortening of words by leaving off the last letter, particularly infinitives and words which end with a vowel when followed by another vowel: these omissions are always signalled with an apostrophe. It may be that he was attempting to portray the Florentine tongue as it was actually and ordinarily spoken, rather than drawing only on contemporary literature.⁵³ Alternatively, he may have been trying to give his vernacular writing a free and poetic style.⁵⁴

When translating passages from ancient Greek poetry quoted by Aristotle to support his arguments, Segni transformed them into verses redolent of Italian vernacular lyricism. For instance, Aristotle's quotation from Hesiod, in Book One of the *Politics* – 'first house and wife and an ox for the plough',⁵⁵ – is rendered by Bruni as 'domum in primis mulieremque et bovem aratorem'.⁵⁶ This is translated literally by Brucioli: 'Procacciati primieramente la casa, et la moglie, et il bue aratore'.⁵⁷ In Segni's version, however, the quotation appears as:

La casa imprima, et poi la dolce moglie
Haver coviensi, E'l bue che solchi i campi.⁵⁸

⁵¹ This happens throughout MS Cerchi 838: see, e.g., [f. 12r].

⁵² See Bionda, 'La copia di tipografia del *Trattato dei governi* di Bernardo Segni', p. 419.

⁵³ Such attempts were rare in the Renaissance, but not unheard of; see M. T. Ward, 'Benedetto Varchi and the Social Dimensions of Language', *Italica*, 68 (1991), pp. 176-194.

⁵⁴ These shortenings are also reminiscent of Petrarch's poetry; and Segni, like other members of the Accademia Fiorentina, took an interest in Petrarch, giving readings from the poet in 1542. This might be an avenue for future study.

⁵⁵ See Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b12. Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 405.

⁵⁶ Aristotle, *In hoc libro contenta. Politicorum libri octo ...*, transl. Leonardo Bruni and comm. Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Paris, 1526), f. 2r.

⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Gli otto libri della repubblica*, transl. Brucioli, f. 2r.

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 13.

The manuscript corrected by him for the press contains alterations and refinements made to these lines;⁵⁹ and I believe that in other cases as well he made his own translations of such poetic quotations.

The purpose of Segni's translation and commentary was to introduce the entire text of Aristotle's *Politics* to an audience literate only in Italian and with a limited comprehension of classical philosophy. The format of the printed book is one indication of this: the edition published by Torrentino is a compact and neat quarto, with a plain text title-page (see Fig. 3); the translation is in a clear and legible roman script, with the commentary, in italics, following each chapter. A Venetian octavo edition was issued two years later by Bartolomeo and Francesco Imperatore (Fig. 4) as part of a series of vernacular Aristotelian translations, including ones by Brucioli (although not his version of the *Politics*).

Segni's translation of the *Politics* incorporates many paratextual elements, all intended to make the text more accessible to readers. First and foremost is his chapter-by-chapter commentary, in which he frequently addresses the reader. In addition, there are tables and diagrams, offering schematic and pictorial representations of Aristotle's political doctrines. And at the end of the work, Segni gives a summary of the contents of each book:

We recapitulate briefly all the discourse of the Philosopher in these books. In the first he begins from the simple parts of the compound, with the intention of showing how a good government must be made.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ MS Cerchi 838, [f. 10r].

⁶⁰ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 417-418: 'Ma recapituliamo brevemente tutto il discorso del Filosofo in questi libri. Nel primo si comincia egli dalle semplice parti del composto, havenda per fine di mostrare qualmente debba esser fatto un' governo buono.'

TRATTATO
DEI GOVERNI
DI ARISTOTILE

Tradotto di Greco

in lingua uulgare Fiorentina da
Bernardo Segni Gentil'huo
mo & Accademico

Fiorentino .

IN FIRENZE

APPRESSO LORENZO TORRENTINO
Stampator Ducale. MDXLIX.

Con Privilegio di Papa Pagolo III. & Carlo V. Imp. & di
COSIMO Duca II. di Firenze .

Fig. 3: Title-page of Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Bernardo Segni (Florence, 1549).



Fig. 4: Title-page of Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Bernardo Segni (Venice, 1551).

The dedication, which has already been discussed above with regard to Segni's treatment of Cosimo I, provides clues as to the work's purpose and intended readership:

It was my intention, most Illustrious Prince, after I had rendered the *Ethics* of Aristotle in our vernacular language, with a commentary of sorts, to render in the same way the treatise by him on the consideration of governments generally called the *Politics*, for the reason that this treatise follows that of the *Ethics*, and they are, to tell the truth, both joined together under the general study of civil authority.⁶¹

Segni, therefore, regarded his translation of the *Politics* as complementing his earlier version of the *Ethics*, in which he had made his popularising aims clear in the introduction, stating that he would provide in one place all the material found in previous Latin commentaries.⁶² Segni evidently saw his *Ethics* translation and commentary as a means of making the Greek and Latin tradition available to vernacular readers:

The final intention which I have had in this translation was to be of use to those who, not knowing the Greek language or the Latin language, are not otherwise able to draw fruit from this doctrine.⁶³

In contrast to his treatment of the *Ethics*, however, in which he made use of syllogisms, Segni explicitly states that he will avoid these logical tools in dealing with the *Politics*. Moreover, he refers very infrequently to the opinions of Latin commentators on the *Politics*:

⁶¹ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 3: 'Egli è stata mia intenzione Illustriss. Princ. dappoiche io haveva messo in questa nostra lingua vulgare l'Ethica d'Aristot[ele] con alquanto di commentatione, di metterci medesimamente il trattato fatto da lui sopra la consideratione dei governi chiamato generalmente la Politica, per la ragione, che questo trattato conseguita à quello della Ethica, et sono, à dire il vero, amendue congiunti sotto l'universal' consideratione della civil' facultà.'

⁶² See Segni's preface to Aristotle, *L'Ethica*, transl. and comm. Bernardo Segni (Florence, 1550), pp. 14-15, where he mentions the commentaries of Eustratius, Thomas Aquinas and Donato Acciaiuoli.

⁶³ Aristotle, *L'Ethica*, transl. and comm. Segni, pp. 15-16: 'L'intentione finalmente, che io ho' havuta in questa traduttione, è stata l'utilità di coloro, che per non sapere la lingua greca, né la lingua latina non potevono altrimenti di questa dottrina trarre frutto.'

I say, first of all, that the method which I adopt in expounding this text will be to do so briefly and to depart, as much as possible, from the scientific route normally used by interpreters of Aristotle. The reason for this is that I judge that these writings should be read more by men who are not well versed in philosophy than by others. I have tried, therefore, not to cloud over their intellects with subtleties nor to reduce propositions to syllogisms.⁶⁴

As David Lines has shown, Segni's commentary on the *Ethics* is significantly more detailed and philosophically rich than that on the *Politics*.⁶⁵ It seems that Segni anticipated a different audience for the two works, with the *Politics* directed towards men of action, involved in civic government, who, unlike potential readers of the *Ethics*, were not schooled in Aristotelian philosophy and had little time for the contemplative life.⁶⁶

Turning to the translation, Segni's work is far freer than that of Brucioli and does not stick very closely – as Brucioli's did – to Bruni's Latin translation, the most readily available Latin version of the text. The first paragraph of Bruni's version of the *Politics*, as it appeared in the 1526 Paris edition with commentary by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples,⁶⁷ read:

Quoniam videmus omnem civitatem esse societatem quandam, et omnem societatem boni alicuius gratia constitutam (nam eius gratia quod bonum videtur: omnia omnes agunt) patet qui bonum aliquod omnes coniectant. maxime vero principalissimum omnium que est principalissima, et caeteras omnes

⁶⁴ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 14: 'Dico innanzi, che il modo, che io terro nella dichiarazione di questo testo, sarà fatto brevemente, col lasciare ire il piu che si puo la via scientifica, che s'usa ordinariamente dagli espositori d'Arist[otele] per la cagione, che stimandomi tali scritti dovere esser' letti piu da huomini, che non sieno introdotti in Filosofia, che dagli altri. mi sono ingegnato però di non oscurar' loro l'intelletto con le sottigliezze, et col ridurre nel Silogismo le propositioni.'

⁶⁵ Lines, 'Ethics, Politics and History in Bernardo Segni', pp. 5-6.

⁶⁶ Luca Bianchi draws attention to the nobleman Giulio Landi, who turned to Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples' Latin introduction to the *Nicomachean Ethics* in order to better understand Segni's learned vernacular translation and commentary. L. Bianchi, 'Volgarizzare Aristotele: per chi?' *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 59 (2012), pp. 480-495, at pp. 484.

⁶⁷ In contrast to the previous chapter, where Brucioli's translation was compared to a 1543 Venice edition of Bruni's version, in this chapter I have compared Segni to this 1526 Paris edition as it seems he used Lefèvre d'Étaples' commentary. See pp. 162-163 below.

complectitur. est autem haec illa quae civitas appellatur, et civilis societas.⁶⁸

Brucioli, as we have seen in Chapter Four, adhered carefully to the Latin:

Avegna che noi veggiamo, ogni citta essere una certa societa, et che ogni societa è costituita per causa di qualche bene (per che tutti gli huomini indirizzano le loro attioni a qualche cosa, che appare buona) è manifesto che tutte si prepongono qualche bene, Et massimamente il principalissimo di tutti, quella che la principalissima, et che tutte le altre contiene, et questa è quella, che si chiama citta, et civile societa.⁶⁹

Segni's version, by contrast, is less literal:

Perché e' si vede, che ogni città è una certa compagnia; et perche ogni compagnia è costituita per fine di conseguir' qualche bene; che in vero ogni cosa, che s'opera, è operata per cagione di quello, che par' bene, è però manifesto, che ogni compagnia ha in considerazione, et in fine qualche bene: Et che quella, che infra tutte l'altre è la principalissima, et che tutte l'altre contiene, ha per fine il bene, che è principalissimo; et tale non è altra, che la Città, e la compagnia civile.⁷⁰

Despite a few similarities between the two Italian versions, it is obvious that Segni was more willing than Brucioli to depart from Bruni's Latin. The flow of Segni's sentences and his vocabulary differ sufficiently from Brucioli's to indicate that his translation was made more independently. It is possible that Segni was unaware of Brucioli's translation, which he does not make any mention of. Segni's version is described on the title-page as 'tradotto di Greco', and his occasional use of Greek words and discussion of their translation show that he was at least consulting a Greek text of the *Politics*.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Aristotle, *In hoc libro contenta. Politicorum libri octo...*, transl. Bruni and comm. Lefèvre d'Étaples, f. 2r. See *Politics*, 1252a1-6: 'Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for everyone always acts in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good.'

⁶⁹ Aristotle, *Gli otto libri della repubblica*, transl. Brucioli, f. 1r.

⁷⁰ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 11.

⁷¹ See, e.g., Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 168: 'Ma dove è tratta della autorità data a' quei Re negli eserciti, la quale apparisce nel testo, ho lasciato di tradurre una parola detta

As with his *Ethics* translation and commentary, Segni drew on a variety of sources: perhaps more than one Latin translation of the text, a Greek version and also Latin commentaries. A note in the margin of the printer's proof manuscript (which did not make it into the final printed text), discusses the ancient belief that the gods lived under the rule of a king:

In that place as well I have been in opposition to all of the texts which I have read, apart from an old translation; in everything I have followed the old translation, seeming to me that it leads to the true sense which one can easily judge was intended on the part of Aristotle.⁷²

In his study of MS Cerchi 838, the printer's proof manuscript, Simone Bionda makes the plausible suggestion that Segni was referring here to the thirteenth-century Latin version of William of Moerbeke;⁷³ Bruni's translation, though made a century earlier, is unlikely to be described as 'old'.

Bionda also shows that Segni very probably consulted the Latin commentary on the *Politics* begun by Thomas Aquinas and completed by Peter of Auvergne (although Segni and his contemporaries regarded Thomas as the sole author of the text),⁷⁴ especially as it often appeared in print together with Bruni's translation: firstly, in a Roman edition of 1492 and in five subsequent sixteenth-century editions.⁷⁵ Segni seems to have had access as well to the commentary by Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, as his tables providing schematic arrangements of Aristotelian thought are apparently taken from Lefèvre: for instance, at the end of Book Four, a 'figura' illustrating various simple and complex forms of government, and indicating whether they take their authority

χειρὸς, la quale significa della mano, che vorrebbe dire una autorità data loro per la legge della mano. Et io ho solamente tradotto Per legge: non havendo potuto ritrovare, che cosa fusse la legge della mano: posto che il testo sia corretto.' *Politics*, 1285a26-27: 'For kings rule according to law over voluntary subjects.'

⁷² MS Cerchi 838, [f. 14r]: 'Nel qual luogo anchora ch'io habbia havuto in contrario tutti i testi ch'io ho letti, infuor ch'una tradottione anticha, con tutto cio' ho io seguitato l'anticha tradottione, parendomi ch'esca 'l vero senso, sì come potrà farne agevolmente giudicio ch'intende in parte Arist[otele].' See Bionda, 'La copia di tipografia del *Trattato dei governi* di Bernardo Segni', p. 424. See *Politics*, 1252b24-27.

⁷³ Bionda, 'La copia di tipografia del *Trattato dei governi* di Bernardo Segni', p. 426.

⁷⁴ Bionda, 'La copia di tipografia del *Trattato dei governi* di Bernardo Segni', p. 432.

⁷⁵ All these works were published in Venice, in 1500, 1514, 1558, 1568 and 1595.

from election or by lot, is found, with a somewhat different layout but the same content, in both works (Figs. 5 and 6).⁷⁶

It is in theory possible that Segni knew the Latin commentary of Donato Acciaiuoli, composed between 1472 and 1474 but not published until 1566 in Venice. Given that he had relied heavily on Acciaiuoli's published commentary on the *Ethics* and had referred to it explicitly,⁷⁷ he may have sought out a manuscript of his *Politics* commentary, though the fact that he does not mention it makes this hypothesis unlikely.

In his commentary on the *Politics*, Segni was clearly trying to make the treatise as readily comprehensible as possible to his vernacular readers. The quantity of information presented, both from the Latin commentary tradition on the *Politics*, newer vernacular materials and contemporary observation, meant that despite his deliberate avoidance of technical philosophical arguments, it was still the most comprehensive and useful text on the *Politics* available in Italian.

By incorporating material from older Latin commentaries, Segni ensured that the view of medieval scholars were not lost. In the commentary on the *Politics* by Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, the potentially unorthodox Aristotelian suggestion that the man who lives outside human society is, if not like a beast, then a god,⁷⁸ is defused by a comparison with Christian saints:

They are superior to other human beings, in that they have a nature more perfect than other human beings in general, so that they can be self-sufficient without human company. Such was the case with John the Baptist and St Anthony the Hermit.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Aristotle, *In hoc libro contenta. Politicorum libri octo...*, transl. Bruni and comm. Lefèvre d'Étaples, f. 74v; Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 242. See Figs. 5 and 6. For the other tables taken over by Segni, see Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, pp. 238 and 313, and Lefèvre's commentary at ff. 74r and 98v.

⁷⁷ Lines, 'Rethinking Renaissance Aristotelianism', pp. 833-834.

⁷⁸ *Politics*, 1253a2-4.

⁷⁹ Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, *In Octo Libros Politicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, I.i.35: 'Aut est melior quam homo, in quantum scilicet habet naturam perfectiorem aliis hominibus communiter, ita quod per se sibi possit sufficere absque hominum societate; sicut fuit in Ioanne Baptista, et beato Antonio heremita.' Translation from Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Politics*, transl. R. J. Reagan (Indianapolis IN, 2007), p. 16.

eiusdē iudiciij essent alij ex omnib⁹, alij ex quibusdā, vel per sortē, vel per electionē, vel ex ambob⁹. quot igitur modi iudiciorū esse possunt: dictū est. Horū autē prima: popularia sunt, quæcūq; ex omnib⁹ vel de omnib⁹. Secūda vero: paucorū potentij quæcūq; ex quibusdā de omnibus. Tertia optimatū & ciuilia, quæcūq; partim ex omnibus partim ex quibusdam.

SEXTIDECIMI CAP. COMMENTARIVS.



Vnro ꝑ tres partes rerū publicarū posuit: cōsultationē, magistrat⁹ iudicia, exacta duarū primarū determinatione, primæ quidē numero ꝑ secūde 64: hic de tertia agit, ponēs tres terminos, ex quib⁹, de quib⁹, & quomodo, ad cōprehēdēdos eodē artificio iudiciorū modos, quo & deprehēsi sunt magistratū modi. termin⁹ ex quib⁹: respicit an ex omnibus ciuib⁹ sumātur iudicia, an ex quibusdā, de quib⁹: respicit ea circa quæ versantur iudicia, quæ pfecto tot sunt, quot iudiciorū species. quomodo vero: vt in magistratib⁹, sortēne an electione iudicia fiāt. ¶ Octo iudiciorū species. Prima est: de repetūdis rerū publicarū administrationibus. Secūda de publicis iniurijs. Tertia: de ijs quæ ad rem publicā pertinet. Quarta: de cōtrouersijs ratione dāni & magistratū & priuatorū. Quinta: de priuatis cōtractib⁹, magnitudinē quidem habētibus. Sexta: de homicidijs. Septima: de peregrinis. Octaua: de prauis dragmalib⁹; cōtractib⁹: vt qui quinq; dragmas, aut paulo amplius nō excedāt. in quib⁹ quidē: nō opus est iudiciū multitudinē. Species iudicij de homicidijs: rursum diuiditur. nā vna species est: cū iudicatur de homicidijs puidētia, electione spontēq; perpetratis. Alia: de homicidijs, quæ quis fecerit inuitus. Tertia: de homicidijs quæ facta cōsistentur: iure tamen, an iniuria id factū sit, in cōtrouersiam venit. Quarta: de profugis & exulibus ob perpetratū homicidium, cum reuersi deprehenduntur. Species iudicij de peregrinis in duas secatur. Prima est: cū peregrinus agit in peregrinū. Secūda: cū peregrinus in ciuē. sed nunc missum faciamus dicere de homicidijs, & de peregrinis: & de illis præcipue intendamus, quæ rem publicam concernūt, & quibus nō rite dispositis seditiones oriuntur, & rerū publicarū motus. ¶ Ponit octo modos iudiciorū. quatuor vniuersales, quādo omnes iudicāt: & quatuor particulares, quādo quidā iudicāt. quatuor vniuersales sūt. nā aut omnes de omnib⁹ supradictis iudicāt electione. aut omnes de omnib⁹ sorte. aut omnes de omnib⁹ parti electione parti sorte. aut omnes de quibusdam, hi quidē electione illi sorte. Quatuor particulares. aut enī quidā de omnib⁹ iudicāt electione. aut quidā de omnibus sorte. aut quidā de omnib⁹ partim electione partim sorte; aut quidam de quibusdā, aut hoc aut illo modo. ¶ Dat modos cōplicationes ex præcedentibus. vt cū quidā in eodē iudicio sunt ex omnib⁹ sorte, & quidā ex quibusdā electione, aut cōtrā, aut vtroq; modo permixtū. & hi, totq; sūt modi: qui sumi possūt circa iudicia. ¶ Vult primos modos, id est vniuersales esse iudiciorū popularis gubernatiōis: secūdos autē & particulares paucorū potentij, & tertios qui dicti sunt cōplicationes, q; & vniuersales & particulares claudāt, misceantq; & cōtemperēt: reipublicæ esse, & optimatis. Litera peruia satis.

ANNOTATIONES AD CAP. SEXTVM DECIMVM.
Necessē est enim vel omnes. Modos iudiciorum: ex subiecta descriptione deprehendere, haudquaquam difficile fuerit.

SIMPLICIORES MODI		
1	Omnes de omnibus iudicare electione	populare.
2	Omnes de omnibus sorte	populare
3	Omnes de omnibus partim electione partim sorte	reipublicæ opti.
4	Omnes de quibusdam, hi electione hi sorte	reipublicæ opti.
5	Quidā de omnibus electione	paucorum
6	Quidā de omnibus sorte	paucorum.
7	Quidā de omnibus partim electione partim sorte	paucor.
8	Quidā de quibusdam, hi electione illi sorte	paucor.
COMPLICATIORES MODI.		
9	Quidam ex omnibus electione & quidā ex omnib⁹ sorte	reipublicæ & optimatis.
10	Quidā ex omnib⁹ sorte & quidā ex aliquib⁹ electione	reipub. opti.
11	Quidā ex oibus & ex quibusdā parti electione parti sorte	reipu. opti.

QVINTI POLITICORVM ARISTOTELIS FINIS.

Fig. 5: Aristotle, *In hoc libro contenta. Politicorum libri octo...*, transl. Leonardo Bruni and comm. Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples (Paris, 1526), f. 74v.

FIGURA.

Modi più scempi.

Da Popolare.

1 Che tutti d'ogni cosa giudichino per electione.

Da Popolare.

2 Che tutti d'ogni cosa giudichino per sorte.

Da Republica Ottimate.

3 Che tutti d'ogni cosa giudichino per electione, & per sorte.

Da Republica Ottimate.

4 Che tutti di certe cose giudichino questi per electione, & quegli per sorte.

Da Stato di Pochi.

5 Che certi d'ogni cosa giudichino per electione.

Da Stato di Pochi.

6 Che certi d'ogni cosa giudichino per sorte.

Da Stato di Pochi.

7 Che certi d'ogni cosa giudichino parte cō electione, et parte con sorte.

Da Stato di Pochi.

8 Che certi di certe cose giudichino questi con electione, & quegli con sorte.

Modi più doppi.

Da Republica, & Ottimate.

1 Che certi di tutti sien' cauati con l'electione, & certi di tutti con la sorte.

Da Republica Ottimate.

2 Che certi di tutti sien' cauati a sorte, & certi con electione.

Da Republica Ottimate.

3 Che certi sien' cauati di tutti, & di certi parte con l'electione, & parte con la sorte.

Fig. 6: Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Bernardo Segni (Florence, 1549), p 242.

Very likely drawing inspiration from this commentary, Segni writes:

And the other, that is, the one who is like God, is left aside as something perhaps unsuitable, unless we want to maintain that he approved the opinion Christians had of those who retreat in religions, in silence and in the desert to better contemplate.⁸⁰

Segni also introduces a good deal of material of his own, relying on his humanist education. In the commentary of Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, and that of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, no additional information is given about Aristotle's quotation from Homer on the solitary man – 'tribeless, lawless, hearthless one'⁸¹ – while Acciaiuoli, in his commentary, identifies the speaker as Nestor.⁸² It is Segni, however, who provides a full reference.

Man is always a social animal if he has not previously been obstructed by fate, because he who is made by nature to be an enemy of civil companionship is either like a beast or he is like a god, as is shown in the example of Homer, in an extract from Book Nine of the *Iliad* in the person of Nestor, who affirms that one such man, who is wandering to war, has the qualities expressed in the verse.⁸³

Throughout the commentary, Segni takes every opportunity to supplement Aristotle's text by bringing in such classical material. So, for example, at the beginning of his appraisal of Book Five of the *Politics*, he notes: 'And so this book is like a history of all of Greece, which he who wishes to know about it will extract from the *History* of

⁸⁰ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 20: 'Et l'altro, Ch'è sia, cioè Dio, lascia egli andare, come cosa forse disconvenevole, se già noi non volessimo, che egli approvasse l'opinione de' Christiani, havuta di quegli, che si ritiran' nelle religioni, ne' silentii, et ne' deserti per mè contemplare.'

⁸¹ Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, *In Octo Libros Politicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, I.i.35; Aristotle, *In hoc libro contenta. Politicorum libri octo...*, transl. Bruni and comm. Lefèvre d'Étaples, f. 4r. See *Politics*, 1253a4-5; Homer, *Iliad*, IX.63.

⁸² Donato Acciaiuoli, *In Aristotelis libros octos Politicorum commentarii* (Venice, 1566), f. 16r.

⁸³ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 20: 'L'huomo è sempre animal' sociale, se già per fortuna ei non è impedito, perche chi è per natura si fatto, ch'e' sia nimico della civil' compagnia, ò egli è simile à una bestia, ò egli è simile a' Dio, sicome è indotto lo esempio di Homero, nell'uno cavato del libro IX. della Iliade in persona di Nestore, che afferma un' tale huomo, che sia vago di guerra, havere le qualità dette nel verso.'

Segni also attempts to place the themes and topics of Aristotle's *Politics* in a contemporary context familiar to his readers, continuing the tradition we have seen in both Latin and vernacular texts on the *Politics*. In a particularly striking example, he offers Renaissance parallels to Aristotle's account of the different types of kingship in Book Three:

In this chapter the Philosopher comes to speak particularly on the proposed types of governance, beginning with monarchy, because monarchy is the first and the best of all the other three good types of government; and he lays out four kinds in this chapter. The first is that of the Spartans, which perhaps has similarity to the Doge of Venice. The second is that which is found among the barbarians and in Asia; it is like the Great Turk today. The third is the *aesymnetes* [i.e., an elected tyrant], who is almost like the dictator used in Rome; and it is said of it that it is (in a manner of speaking) like a tyranny, that is to say, that it is not truly a tyranny, because the true tyranny is not elected but seized by force, so one who is elected by a council cannot rightly be called a tyrant. The fourth kind is that which is perhaps similar to the king of France, or of Spain, where such [hereditary] kings are antiquated and have their rule either for the good of the people or for some other honest reason.⁸⁵

As well as providing up-to-date examples, Segni makes Aristotelian notions accessible by referring to familiar places or names. In explaining the difference between a city and its inhabitants, he writes:

⁸⁴ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 248: 'Et però questo libro è come una historia di tutta la Grecia; la quale cauerà chi desidera di me' saperla della historia di Tucidide: et delle vite di Plutarcho.'

⁸⁵ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 167: 'In questo capitolo viene il Filosofo à dir' particulamente della spetie proposta de' governi, cominciandosi dal Regno: imperochè il Regno è il primo, et l'ottimo governo di tutte gli altri tre buoni: del quale ne mette ei quattro sorti in questo Capitolo. Il primo è quello degli Spartani, che forse ha similitudine col Doge di Vinegia. Il secondo quello, che è appresso ai Barbari, et nella Asia: sicome è hoggi il gran' Turcho. Il terzo è l'Esinnete, che è quasi il Dittatore, che s'usava in Roma: et dice di tale ch' egli è (per dir' cosi) come una Tirannide: che vuol' dire, ch'e' non è Tirannide veramente. Perché la Tirannide vera non è eletta, ma è usurpata per forza: onde chi è eletto alla Signoria, giustamente non si puo dir' Tiranno. La quarta specie è quella, che forse è simile al Re di Francia, ò di Spagna: dove tai Re sono antiquati, et hannovi havuto principio ò per i benefitii fatti à quei Popoli: ò per qual che altra honesta cagione.' See *Politics*, 1285b20-29.

For example, the Sienese being accustomed to live in Lucca, one could say, with reference to the people, that Lucca is Siena, and, with reference to the place, that Lucca is a different city from Siena.⁸⁶

As these passages suggest, Segni adopted a conversational style, which gave his commentary an informal tone, designed to put vernacular readers unfamiliar with the topic at their ease. His relaxed approach to the text can also be observed in the structure of each commentary section. Unlike the line-by-line commentary of Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne or Acciaiuoli's commentary, which explains one paragraph at a time, Segni treats the entire chapter at once. This method gives him the freedom to develop and explain the subjects in the chapter in as much or as little detail as he pleases, and also allows him the opportunity for digressions, in which he can develop further themes and ideas mentioned by Aristotle and make them relevant to contemporary readers.

An example of this can be seen in his commentary on Aristotle's discussion of slavery. Having reached the conclusion (as translated by Segni) 'that there are by nature some who are free and some who are slaves',⁸⁷ Aristotle goes on to discuss the matter further, covering a large amount of territory in a short space, including whether the victors in a conflict have virtue on their side, thus rendering the slavery of their captives just. Aristotle also raises the possibility that certain people might be slaves everywhere, and others slaves nowhere.⁸⁸ This, however, depends on the belief that slavery and freedom are equivalent to vice and virtue, and that the offspring of good people are always good people: 'that just as men are born of men, and beasts of beasts, so equally from good seed is born good fruit. And nature intends to do this well, but often errs in reaching this end.'⁸⁹ There are cases, however, when slavery is just and natural and where there is mutual benefit and friendship between master and servant. The end of the chapter

⁸⁶ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 126: 'Verbigratia i Sanesi essendo iti ad habitare in Lucca: si potrà dire (risguardando agli huomini) che Lucca sia Siena: et risguardando al luogo, che Lucca sia Città diversa da Siena.' See *Politics*, 1275a5-10.

⁸⁷ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 26. 'Che certi sieno da natura liberi, et certi servi, ai quali sia utile, et giusto l'esser suggiatti.'

⁸⁸ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 29.

⁸⁹ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 30: 'Che cosi come degli huomini nascono huomini, et di bestie, bestie, parimente che di buon' seme nasca buon' frutto. Et ben la natura vuol' questo fare, ma spessevolve erra da questo fine.'

focuses on the nature of the rule of a master. Finally, Aristotle points out that although no man is a master through the acquisition of a branch of knowledge, there is nevertheless a branch of knowledge concerned with the management of slaves.⁹⁰

In his commentary, Segni first outlines, in a very cursory fashion, the subjects raised in this section of text, skipping over the qualifications and complexities in Aristotle's discussion:

And it is true, the Philosopher says, having given the meaning of the slave and of servitude, that there are two types: that is, the type of the slave by nature and the type of the slave by law. Leaving aside, then, the part of the slave by nature, the Philosopher says that those who deny that slavery by law is just do not speak badly, as it seems in the text; although also in part, for other reasons, he asserts there that one can take it as given that the slave by law is justly a slave. And the resolution is that in such servitude by law one cannot say absolutely that servitude there is just, although in certain cases there is merit in admitting the opposite. Where he says 'that the only just thing is that which is done for love', he means that certain people do not want justice to be where one commands by force, but only where one commands someone who wants to remain subordinate. He concludes, finally, that natural servitude is given there, and that between the master and the slave there is friendship by nature; and the reason is that such dominance is of use to the one and to the other. And from here one can also find the distinction of rules proposed in the first chapter [of Book One] and the solution to the doubt as to whether rule – that is, the lordship – is formed from a branch of knowledge, [and the solution is] that it is not formed from a branch of knowledge, but that it is made from nature.⁹¹

⁹⁰ *Politics*, 1255a3-1255b24.

⁹¹ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 32: 'Et tali son' vere dice il Filosofo, data la distintione del servo, et del servire. che è in due modi, cioè, nel modo del servo per natura, et nel modo del servo per legge. Lasciato adunque il membro del servo per natura, dice il Filosofo, che chi niega, che 'l servir' per legge sia giusto, non dice male, sicome apparisce nel testo, se bene anchora in parte per altre ragioni allegate quivi si puo tener' in certi, che 'l servo per legge sia giustamente servo. Et la resolution' è, che in tal servitu per legge non si puo dir' assolutamente, che il servire vi sia giusto, se bene in certi, che 'l meritino, è si puo confessare in contrario. Ove è dice [Che giusto sia quel' solo, che si fa per amore,] Vuol'dire, che certi non vogliono, ch'e' sia giustitia dove si comanda per forza, ma solamente dove si comanda a chi vuole star' sottoposto. Conchiude finalmente, ch'e' si dà la servitu naturale, et che intra'l Padrone et il Servo per natura è amicitia: et la ragion è, perche tale imperio giova all'uno et all'altro. Et di qui si cava anchora la differenza degli imperii proposta nel primo Cap. [*Politics*, 1255b16-24] et la

After dealing as succinctly as possible with the main content of the chapter, Segni goes into a digression about a topic which seems to have been of particular interest to him.

But an uncertainty occurs in this chapter, where it says that nature wants to make good children to be born from good parents, but that it does not always make it be so; it seems indecorous that nature strays from her end, which is to make things in the best way that she can.⁹²

Aristotle had merely stated that ‘nature wishes to do this well, but often errs in this aim’;⁹³ however, Segni goes further, considering the problem of whether nature – and therefore God – could make mistakes. He begins by explaining that nature intends all men to be good and beautiful, but that the bad habits of the parents may affect the children. ‘But what’, he asks, ‘of parents with good temperaments who do not always make good children?’⁹⁴ One reason Segni offers is that although well disposed in general, they may not have been so at the moment of the child’s conception.⁹⁵ The importance of the moral conduct of a couple during sex was a popular subject of discussion in the Renaissance. The purpose of conjugal relations was always supposed to be the procreation of children within a marriage; but even within these parameters a couple could sin by having sex in the wrong position or on the wrong day.⁹⁶

So, in Segni’s view, it was not nature which was at fault when children did not measure up to their parents, but instead the instruments employed by nature in the generation of children, that is, the parents:

solutione del dubbio, se l’imperio cioè signorile era compreso da scienza, cioè, che e’ non è compreso da scienza, ma che egli è dalla natura si fatto.’

⁹² Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 32: ‘Ma un’ dubbio occorre in questo Cap. ove e’ dice, [che la natura vuol’ far’ nascere dei buon’ padri buoni figliuoli, ma che non sempre interviene, che è par’ di sconvenevole, che la natura erri dal suo fine, che è il far’ la cosa nel miglior’ modo che si puo].’

⁹³ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 30: ‘ben la natura vuol’ questo fare, ma spessevolve erra da questo fine’. See *Politics*, 1255b1-3.

⁹⁴ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 32: ‘Ma posto che li generanti fussino ben’ complessionati, come non sempre faranno eglino buoni figliuoli?’

⁹⁵ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 32: ‘O perche nel tempo delle concettioni e’ non fussin’ ben’ disposti, et cio serve ai costumi.’

⁹⁶ S. F. Matthews Grico, ‘The Body, Appearance, and Sexuality’, in N. Zemon Davis and A. Farge (eds), *A History of Women in the West, III: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes* (Cambridge MA, 1993), pp. 46-84, at p. 70.

And so, in one way, we can say that nature erred, not in itself, but through the instruments where are necessary to her in generation. And, in another way, we can resolve that she did not err in herself, but that men born of good fathers and mothers do not always turn out well because, with regard to being good, nature is not enough – on the contrary, morals and habits are also needed there; if these two things are bad, this will make the children bad.⁹⁷

Segni says that he will now deal with the opposition to this point of view on the part of ‘the most excellent poet Dante’ and cites a passage in canto VII of *Purgatorio* in which Dante laments that the sons of Peter III of Aragon had inherited only the wealth, and not the nobility, of their father:

Radevolte risurge per gli rami
L’humana probitate, et queste volve
Il gran’ fattor’, perche da lui si chiami.⁹⁸

Segni’s quotation of Dante provides something which Aristotle cannot: it brings into the equation the overwhelming influence of a divine creator who alone is the source of virtue, rather than the parents of a child. Overall, the two sides do not truly contradict each other – a devout and pious attitude towards the acquisition of virtue is of the utmost importance in passing merit from parents to a child through generation.⁹⁹

Another vernacular author who his readership would no doubt have been familiar with –

⁹⁷ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, pp. 32-33: ‘Et cosi in un modo si dice, che la natura erra non inquanto à se, ma inquanto agli instrumenti, di che ella si serve nella generatione. Et in un’altro modo si solve, ch’ella non erra inquanto à se, ma che gli huomini nati di buon’ Padri, et Madri non rieschin’ buoni sempre: perche all’ esser’ buono non basta la natura, anzi vi bisogna dipiu il costume, et la consuetudine. Le quai due cose potendo esser’ cattive, faranno, che i figliuoli sien’ cattivi.’

⁹⁸ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 33. See Dante, *Purgatorio*, transl. C. S. Singleton (Princeton NJ, 1973), II, VII.121-123, pp. 74-75: ‘Rarely does human worth rise through the branches, and this He wills who gives it, in order that it may be asked from Him.’

⁹⁹ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 33. ‘Che in contrario si vede esserci l’esperienza, et dipiu le ragioni, cioè, che dai buon’ padri naschino buoni figliuoli per lo piu. Primieramente mediante la complessione dei generanti, che se e’ son’ ben’ complessionati, doverrà esser’ ben’ complessionata la generatione dei figliuoli, alla quale, sicome io ho detto, conseguitano i costumi buoni. Et dipoi piu veramente per il mezo della consuetudine, et dello avvezargli. La qual’ cosa per lo piu sarà ottima, quando gli generanti saranno virtuosi. Senza che in questa oppinione concorre anchora il detto divino affermante: che’l buono albero produce buon’ frutti.’

by name, if nothing else – was Florence’s most famous political writer, Niccolò Machiavelli. Although Segni probably intended his translation to be read throughout Italy, the *campanilismo* of the Accademia Fiorentina is evident in his reference to the author of the *Prince* and the *Discourses* (both of which he cites) as ‘our Machiavelli’.¹⁰⁰ Segni makes links between Aristotle’s treatment of tyranny and Machiavelli’s discussion of absolute rule in the *Prince*, suggesting, in his commentary on Book Five, that the *Politics* is a source for Machiavelli’s work and suggesting the *Prince* as ‘further reading’:

After the Philosopher has treated the corruption and salvation of all states, he deals in this chapter with the corruptions of monarchies, showing first the birth of tyranny and of kingship, and the difference between their aims, and the causes which ruin both these principalities, affirming it to be the same as in other states. And the reason is that kingship and tyranny are generated from other states. After this he deals with plots and by what methods they are made, and for what reasons, against princes; and he says many things which are worth their while to take note of and to be warned by; a good part of these have been taken from here by Machiavelli in his book of the *Prince*.¹⁰¹

Segni’s commentary, therefore, provides his readers with a summary of the text designed to minimise any confusion arising from Aristotle’s laconic and at times enigmatic prose but also to place subjects which were of particular interest in the foreground and to explore them with the interpretative tools available to sixteenth-century scholars. His use of Dante underlines the poet’s enduring status as a point of reference in almost all fields of learned endeavour and also shows that Segni was looking to find common ground with his vernacular readers by citing a work of

¹⁰⁰ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 260: ‘Et di qui forse ha tratto il nostro Machiavello ne’ suoi Discorsi quello universale, cioè, che chi è stato cagione di fare un’ grande, è forza che rovini; benchè e’ non n’adduca à punto le ragioni dette qui.’

¹⁰¹ Aristotle, *Trattato dei governi*, transl. and comm. Segni, p. 290: ‘Doppo che’l Filosofo ha trattato delle corruptioni, et salvationi di tutti gli Stati, tratta egli in questo Cap. delle corruptioni delle Monarchie; mostrando inprima il nascimento della Tirannide, et del Regno, et la diversità de’ lor’ fini, et delle cagioni, che rovinano amendue questi Principati: affermando essere le medesime, che negli altri Stati. Et la ragione è, perchè il Regno, et la Tirannide son’ generati dagli altri Stati. Doppo questo tratta della congiure in quanti modi elle si fanno, et per quante cagioni contra i Principi; et dice molte cose degne da esser notate, et avvertite da loro: delle quali buono parte n’ha tolto di qui il Machiavello nel suo lib[ro] del Principe.’ See Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Q. Skinner and transl. R. Price (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 64-65.

particular Florentine resonance and popularity.

While Brucioli's version of the *Politics* was produced by a scholar exiled from his Florentine homeland, Segni's translation and commentary is steeped in the intellectual culture of sixteenth-century Medici Florence and the Accademia Fiorentina, reflecting both the political and cultural aspirations of Cosimo I. Segni made use of learned sources for his work, taking tables from Lefèvre d'Étaples's Latin commentary and displaying his cognizance of Greek. The tone of his commentary, intentionally less technical and philosophical than the one which Segni wrote to accompany his translation of the *Ethics*, indicates his recognition that by making the wisdom contained in this treatise of Aristotle available in the vernacular he would benefit, above all, those engaged, not in contemplative study, but in the active life of civic participation and government.

Chapter Six

Vernacular Works on the *Politics*, 1560-1600

After the publication of the two Italian language translations of the *Politics*, and the other pioneering works by the two translators – Brucioli's *Dialogi*, and Segni's commentary – the centuries-long tradition of vernacular Aristotelian political literature in Italy began to reach its zenith. The second half of the sixteenth century saw a proliferation of works in Italian which drew heavily on Aristotle's *Politics*. These works originated across Italy and even beyond its borders, showing once again that the treatise lent itself to interpretations which rendered it relevant to differing contexts and authorial intentions.¹ This adaptability allowed the *Politics* to retain its central position in the field of political literature when Italy and the rest of Europe were experiencing significant political, cultural and religious upheaval.

The political landscape of Italy was changing: by the mid-point of the century, the peninsula was firmly in the grip of Spanish power, achieved through the military and diplomatic victories of Charles V, both Holy Roman Emperor and king of Spain. The political claims of the French monarchy in Italy were damaged by their defeat at the hands of Charles in the Battle of Pavia in 1525 and were finally abandoned with the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis in 1559. With the Kingdom of Naples and Sardinia already established as Spanish territories, the sack of Rome in 1527 left the papal states at Charles's mercy, and in 1535 he appropriated the duchy of Milan.² The marriage of Cosimo I de' Medici to Eleonora of Toledo in 1539 bolstered the Medici dynasty in Tuscany but also cemented their dependence on Spanish power. Spain also enjoyed informal rule over Genoa, Savoy and other minor Italian states. By the time of the publication of the two Italian translations of the *Politics*, Charles held sway over the length and breadth of Italy, with only Venice clinging to its independence.³ This Spanish hold on Italy gave rise to the *leyenda negra*, or Black Legend: the belief that Spain was

¹ R. de Mattei, *Il pensiero politico Italiano nell'età della Controriforma*, 2 vols (Milan, 1982-1984), I, p. 114.

² M. Mallett and C. Shaw, *The Italian Wars, 1494-1559: War, State and Society in Early Modern Europe* (Harlow, 2012), pp. 229-230.

³ T. J. Dandeleet and J. A. Marino, 'Introduction', in T. J. Dandeleet and J. A. Marino (eds), *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society and Religion 1500-1700* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 1-22, at p. 4.

responsible for an economic and cultural downturn in Italy after the glories of the fifteenth-century Renaissance.⁴ As the northern Italian city-states lost the autonomy and the European influence which they had enjoyed since the Middle Ages, the production of republican literature in the vernacular, which had once been a Tuscan and particularly Florentine staple, shifted to Venice.⁵

The political structure which singled Venice out in the sixteenth century bolstered an idea that had been long in the making: that of the ‘myth of Venice’, which was founded on the unique nature of the city. In political terms, it idealised Venice as the manifestation of perfect government in which, through the offices of the Doge, the Senate and the Great Council, the Aristotelian concepts of monarchy, aristocracy and polity were equally combined, each balancing the other.⁶ This was, in turn, seen as responsible for the tranquillity of the city, never ruffled by dissent, and the stability of the government – unchanged since the thirteenth century, when the Golden Book determined which aristocratic families could participate in the Senate.⁷ Although certain authors, such as Francesco Guicciardini, attempted to look past the myth to historical reality,⁸ it was a potent force in perceptions of Venice at the time, and is evident in some of the works under consideration here.

These developments in Italy and in the broader European context occurred at a time when cultural changes already observable in the first half of the sixteenth century gained momentum and exerted more influence on Italian life. The ‘questione della lingua’, the argument over the proper form and use of the Italian language, remained a locus of passionate debate; and by the mid-point of the century literature in the now widely accepted Tuscan dialect had come to dominate written production.⁹ This process

⁴ J. J. Martin, ‘The Venetian Territorial State: Constructing Boundaries in the Shadow of Spain’, in T. J. Dandeleit and J. A. Marino (eds), *Spain in Italy: Politics, Society and Religion 1500-1700* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 227-250, at p. 230.

⁵ See F. Gilbert, ‘The Date of the Composition of Contarini’s and Giannotti’s Books on Venice’, *Studies in the Renaissance*, 14 (1967), pp. 172-184, at p. 172.

⁶ W. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter-Reformation* (Berkeley CA, 1968), p. 64.

⁷ On the myth of Venice, see R. Finlay, ‘The Immortal Republic: The Myth of Venice during the Italian Wars (1494- 1530)’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 30:4 (1999), pp. 931-944; D. Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State* (Chapel Hill NC, 2001).

⁸ See R. Finlay, ‘The Myth of Venice in Guicciardini’s *History of Italy: Senate Orations on Princes and the Republic*’, in E. F. Kittell and T. F. Madden (eds), *Medieval and Renaissance Venice* (Urbana IL, 1999), pp. 294-326.

⁹ On the ‘questione della lingua’, see A. L. De Gaetano, ‘G. B. Gelli and the *Questione della lingua*’,

was aided by the emergence, throughout Italy and beyond, of academies in the mould of the Accademia Fiorentina, discussed in Chapter Five. Often with outlandish insignia and titles, they differed in specific aims but generally focused on the composition of vernacular works and were made up of a broad range of social groups. Frequently, their scholarship had a decidedly Aristotelian bent – the Accademia degli Infiammati in Padua devoted much effort to the popularisation and dissemination, often in the vernacular, of Aristotle’s writings: Benedetto Varchi, a prominent member of the academy, for example, lectured in Italian on the *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹⁰

The membership and interests of the new academies often overlapped with the established intellectual environment of the universities, in which reliance on Aristotle as the mainstay of the curriculum continued and even increased.¹¹ In Padua, for instance, Sperone Speroni was ‘Prince’ of the Accademia degli Infiammati in 1541-1542 and also held appointments at the University of Padua.¹²

Scholars, either individually or under the auspices of an academy, often cultivated close links with the press. The success and rapid growth in popularity of printing across Italy – Venice, in particular, became the printing capital of Europe – meant that ever more books could be disseminated to a previously inconceivable readership. Moreover, the printing press fostered a new kind of scholar, the *poligrafo*, who worked in conjunction with publishing houses to write, anthologise, edit and translate texts which catered to the appetite of the reading public.¹³ As the political situation in Italy demanded reflection and analysis, numerous opportunities opened up to write and publish works addressing the pressing issues of the day. Political literature had never been so popular.

In this chapter I shall, in first place, discuss six works of vernacular Italian political

Italica, 44 (1967), pp. 263-281, and M. Sherberg, ‘The Accademia Fiorentina and the Question of the Language: The Politics of Theory in Ducal Florence’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 56 (2003), pp. 26-55.

¹⁰ R. S. Samuels, ‘Benedetto Varchi, the Accademia degli Infiammati, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 29 (1976), pp. 599-634, at p. 616.

¹¹ See C. B. Schmitt, *The Aristotelian Tradition and Renaissance Universities* (Cambridge MA, 1984).

¹² Samuels, ‘Benedetto Varchi’, p. 605.

¹³ P. Burke, ‘Early Modern Venice as a Center of Information and Communication’, in J. Martin and D. Romano (eds), *Venice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797* (Baltimore MD, 2000), pp. 389-419, at p. 398. Also on the culture of information and communication in sixteenth-century Venice, see F. de Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford, 2007). For more on literary and commercial activity in Venice, see C. Bareggi, *Il mestiere di scrivere: lavoro intellettuale e mercato librario a Venezia nel Cinquecento* (Rome, 1988).

literature with a large and obvious debt to Aristotle's *Politics*, which was cited on the title-page of most of them. Rather than attempting to cover the entirety of its influence on political texts written in the later sixteenth century, I have selected these examples from a very large field because they make use of the *Politics* in new and significant ways. Their differences in time, place and motive for composition, and the varying backgrounds and occupations of their authors, attest to the broad and eclectic nature of the sixteenth-century Aristotelian tradition, as well as the range of political and cultural changes taking place in Italy; but there are also connections between them. I have chosen to examine them in the chronological order of their publication in order to make it easier to trace the development of vernacular uses of Aristotle's *Politics* from the middle to the end of the sixteenth century.¹⁴

Following this, I will turn to certain vernacular texts which used the *Politics* in a less overt manner than the six works mentioned above. The development of two areas which, in previous centuries, proved especially important in the dissemination of material from Aristotle's *Politics* in the Italian vernacular – religious works, and commentaries on Dante's *Commedia* – will be followed into the sixteenth century, with attention paid to one key example from each genre. In order to understand the sixteenth-century reception and use of Aristotle's *Politics*, it is important not only to consider works which make direct reference to the *Politics* as the starting-point for their composition – as the six works to be considered first do – but also texts which do not address Aristotle's work in a systematic manner yet disseminate material from it, and are of interest on account of their popularity and circulation. As the roles of these two genres in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries has been discussed, it is fitting to examine their place in vernacular political Aristotelianism up to the end of the sixteenth century.

The six works to be examined first represent an advance in the vernacular Aristotelian tradition and, despite their differences, display shared features which it will be

¹⁴ Little scholarly work has been done on the vernacular Aristotelian political literature of the sixteenth century. See, however, M. Toste, 'Evolution within Tradition: The Vernacular Works on Aristotle's *Politics* in Sixteenth-Century Italy,' in G. Briguglia and T. Ricklin (eds), *Thinking Politics in the Vernacular: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Fribourg, 2011), pp. 189-211, which gives an overview of some of the texts discussed in this chapter and provides helpful information about their medieval sources.

instructive to consider throughout this chapter. It is significant that, after the versions of Antonio Brucioli and Bernardo Segni, there were no further attempts in the sixteenth century to translate the *Politics* into Italian. Instead, authors sought to produce different methods of presenting the treatise, in order to explain Aristotle's political doctrines with the greatest clarity. This follows the trend in the mid-sixteenth century – across many disciplines – to find new ways to represent information; attempting, with tables, columns, and other visual elements, to break down complex subjects into understandable units.¹⁵ This is related to another feature common to these works: the employment of extensive paratextual material designed to aid the reader, ranging from glossaries and marginal notes to the provision of essays and discourses on the *Politics*.

Beyond these literary devices, a preoccupation which surfaces over and again in the vernacular literature on the *Politics* in the later half of the sixteenth century concerns the contemporary usefulness of the treatise. Some authors tackled this issue head-on, either defending the utility of the *Politics* for dealing with current circumstances in paratextual discourses or promising to provide modern examples to supplement it. Others addressed it more circumspectly, supplying additional material without drawing attention to it. This recurring theme is clearly related to the tension between the continuing focus of European scholarship on Aristotelian philosophy and a Europe in which parallels with the world of Aristotle were no longer so easy to draw. So, while some thinkers still regarded Aristotelian philosophy as uniquely valuable for understanding their own political circumstances – Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, for instance, who will be discussed below – questions concerning the relevance of the *Politics* were, nevertheless, in the air. In the tradition of commentary on Dante's *Commedia* the usefulness of the *Politics* was assessed in a different way; as a tool for discovering the meaning within a work composed now three centuries previously.

The shifting balance of power in Europe necessitated a change in the conception of political entities. While Venetians could still idealise the city-republic, Europe was increasingly a continent of states rather than city-states, of princes in control of large territories, and therefore contemporary political literature needed to address topics and

¹⁵ See S. Kusukawa and I. Maclean (eds), *Transmitting Knowledge: Words, Images, and Instruments in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford, 2006); C. Schmitt, 'The Rise of the Philosophical Textbook', in C. B. Schmitt et al. (eds), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 792-804.

concerns not found in the *Politics*. Political vocabulary was changing, too – the focus of works of governance was moving from the prince or ruling government to the state itself, an entity beyond and above those who controlled it. A key example is Giovanni Botero's *Ragion di stato*, which focused on issues such as the compatibility of Christianity with statecraft and which assumed the existence of both large states and governing princes.¹⁶

The attention paid by Botero to how religion and politics align is also found in vernacular treatments of the *Politics*. After the religious uncertainty of the early and mid-sixteenth centuries, when Antonio Brucioli was first able to produce Protestant-leaning works and then began to be persecuted for them, by the later half of the century Protestantism was firmly established and the Council of Trent laid down new standards for the Catholic Church. Works on religious matters began to dominate publishing lists, and an impulse to display piety can also be found in the works of vernacular Aristotelianism studied here; the place of Aristotle in works of a specifically religious nature, however, was in doubt, as shall be discussed at the end of the chapter.

The first work under examination is the *Abbreviatione della moral filosofia di Aristotele, cioè Ethica, Politica, et Economica*, which was part of a larger treatise, the *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele, e prima della dialettica*, written by Lodovico Dolce (1508-1568) and published in Venice in 1565, by the press of Giovanni Battista and Marchiò Sessa. Publishing with this press was a departure from Dolce's usual practice: for most of his career he was linked to the printing house of Gabriele Giolito, Venice's most successful vernacular press, for which he produced a large number of works.¹⁷

Born in Venice, Dolce spent his entire life in close association with the cultural life of his native city. He studied at the University of Padua, which served the higher educational needs of Venice, before returning to the city itself to take up employment in the flourishing publishing industry. A close associate of Pietro Aretino,¹⁸ he was also a

¹⁶ E. Baldini, 'Il dibattito politico nell'Italia della Contrariforma: Ragion di Stato, Tacitismo, Machiavellismo, Utopia', *Il pensiero politico*, 30 (1997), pp. 393-439, at p. 399.

¹⁷ R. H. Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce: Renaissance Man of Letters* (Toronto, 1997), p. 13. A. Pallotta, 'Venetian Printers and Spanish Literature in Sixteenth-Century Italy', *Comparative Literature*, 43 (1991), pp. 20-42, at p. 27.

¹⁸ Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce*, p. 16.

member of various academies, including the Veneziana, which boasted some of the most high-profile literary figures in Venice.¹⁹ He participated in the debate over the ‘questione della lingua’, issuing his *Osservationi sulla volgar lingua* in 1550, and belonged to the intellectual circles which had grown up in Venice as it became the most important centre in Europe for the production of printed books – a new kind of scholar whose main efforts were directed towards the popularisation of knowledge brought about by the printing press.

Dolce edited the most popular vernacular works of his day, including Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*, Bembo’s *Rime*, Castiglione’s *Cortegiano* and Boccaccio’s *Decameron*;²⁰ he translated the writings of classical authors such as Cicero and Galen; and he wrote books under his own name, borrowing, paraphrasing and inventing to compose literary criticism, history, comedy, tragedy and more.²¹ He was the most prolific *poligrafo* of the sixteenth century; and other *poligrafi* complained that his working arrangement with the Giolito press left them without opportunities for work.²² Even so, he also found time to prepare texts, including the *Somma della filosofia d’Aristotele*, for other presses. As Dolce wrote in order to earn a living, his composition of this Aristotelian treatise suggests that a market existed – or was thought to exist – for such a work and that there was some enthusiasm for Aristotelian philosophy among vernacular readers. It is clear that Aristotle’s name was invoked in the title to add prestige to the treatise; how much Aristotelian philosophy was actually in the text is another matter.

In the dedication to the *Somma della filosofia d’Aristotele*, addressed to the Venetian nobleman Sebastiano Erizzo, Dolce explains that:

I have always judged it to be a thing of great profit that the teaching of Aristotle, (to say nothing of his other parts), the mirror and rule of civil life, and equally the order and government of public affairs, can be seen in our vernacular

¹⁹ L. Bolzoni, “‘Rendere visibile il sapere’: l’Accademia Veneziana fra modernità e utopia”, in D. S. Chambers and F. Quiviger (eds), *Italian Academies of the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1995), pp. 61-78, at p. 63.

²⁰ For a detailed examination of Dolce’s editorial activity, see B. Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600* (Cambridge, 1994).

²¹ Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce*, p. 5; G. Romei, ‘Lodovico Dolce’, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), XL, pp. 399-405, at p. 400.

²² A. Nuovo and C. Coppens, *I Giolito e la stampa nell’Italia del XVI secolo* (Geneva, 2005), p. 101.

language and reduced to a convenient brevity, in such a way that it can be easily apprehended by everyone.²³

His purpose, therefore, is to present an Aristotle who is comprehensible to the largest possible readership. This general aim is a distinguishing feature of all Dolce's work.²⁴ The presses of Venice were catering to a new reading public – one with a lower level of literacy than had been presumed before and with little leisure time to spend on reading; and Dolce's popularity with presses such as the commercially minded Giolito seems to stem from his ability to write for this audience. The title of the work reflects a desire to market it to this readership: it promises all of Aristotle, in a reassuringly small and cheap format – a lot for your money and not too taxing to read. As Dolce himself states, he is writing for the benefit of those who are either not able to read Aristotle himself or lack the time to devote to reading long texts.²⁵

Evidence of this desire to provide a reader-friendly text can be found throughout the *Abbreviatione della moral filosofia*. It contains a glossary, offering an alphabetical list of words associated with political discourse and short, plain definitions, often adhering closely to traditional Aristotelianism. For instance, 'Politica', is 'the science of governing the city',²⁶ and 'Cittadini' are 'the company of a city; and we see every city to be a certain companionship, and every company is gathered together by reason of some good'.²⁷

Other devices to aid the reader in understanding the text include diagrams and lists. Tables with three columns lists the moral and intellectual virtues: the Aristotelian mean in the central column, flanked by its excess or deficiency. With 'Fortezza', for example,

²³ Lodovico Dolce, 'Dedicazione', in his *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele, e prima della dialettica* (Venice, 1565), [sigs. *2r-*4r], at [sig. *2r]: 'La dottrina di Aristotele (per tacer le altre sue parti) specchio e regola del viver Civile, e parimente ordine e governo de le cose publiche, ho giudicato sempre cosa di grandissimo profitto, che ella si potesse vedere nella nostra volgar lingua, e ridotta in una convenevole brevità, accio che la medesima fosse agevole ad essere appresa da tutti.'

²⁴ Nuovo and Coppens, *I Giolito*, p. 102.

²⁵ Lodovico Dolce, *Abbreviatione della moral filosofia di Aristotele, cioè Ethica, Politica, et Economica*, in his *Somma della filosofia d'Aristotele, e prima della dialettica*, ff. 62r-132r, at f. 63v: 'Delle quai tutte parti ho meco proposto di brevemente discorrere a beneficio di coloro, che o vedere il proprio Autore non possono, o non hanno tempo di attendere alle lunghe Lettioni.'

²⁶ Dolce, *Abbreviatione*, f. 76r: 'È scienza di governar la città.'

²⁷ Dolce, *Abbreviatione*, f. 70r: 'Compagni d'una città. Et ogni città noi veggiamo essere una certa compagnia; et ogni compagnia è raunata insieme per cagione di qualche bene.' *Politics*, 1252a1-2.

in the central column, the table shows Audacia and Timidità as its corrupted states.²⁸

The bulk of Dolce's work comes in the form of short discussions, each heralded by a short title: 'We are bound to parents, wet-nurses and friends',²⁹ or 'How, when made a citizen, to administer the republic'.³⁰ The discussion under the latter title, however, begins 'Scrivendo Cicerone....' Dolce's *Abbreviatione* draws, in fact, on the concepts and teachings of many different philosophers and philosophical approaches. The overall impression is of a rather loosely organised compendium of practical philosophy, which in some cases places Aristotle alongside other authorities and in others bears no relation at all to the *Politics* (or *Ethics* or *Economics*). So, when Dolce raises the subject of money, he presents the views of Aristotle and Demosthenes together, saying that money is:

Either the sinews of the republic, as pleases Demosthenes, or, according to Aristotle, so vital and such a necessity that the state of the republic is deficient if the city does not have its income and tax revenue.³¹

Elsewhere, Dolce offers a selection of maxims from Seneca, a discussion of duty to the republic with reference to Cicero and Cato the Elder and – perhaps most surprisingly – a description of tyranny in which he does not refer to Aristotle but mentions Petrarch's words that bad plants which cannot flower (i.e., tyrants) must be uprooted.³²

Where Aristotle's *Politics* is used at length, Dolce has often taken liberties with the text. For instance, in outlining to his readers one of the pillars of Aristotelian politics, man's nature as a social animal, he rejects the second part of Aristotle's dictum that an

²⁸ Dolce, 'Abbreviatione', f. 64r.

²⁹ Dolce, 'Abbreviatione', f. 94r: 'Siamo tenuti a i genitori, a i nutritori, et a gli amici.'

³⁰ Dolce, 'Abbreviatione', f. 97r: 'Quel, che dee fare un Cittadino, che amministra la Republica.'

³¹ Dolce, 'Abbreviatione', f. 93v: 'Come piace a Demosthene, sono i nervi della Republica: o, come ad Aristotele, tanto necessari, che è uopo, che manchi lo stato della Republica, si la città non havrà le sue rendite e le sue entrate.' These words are ascribed to Demosthenes by Aeschines. Aeschines, *The Speeches ... with an English Translation*, ed. and transl. C. D. Adams (London and New York, 1919), section 166, pp. 438-439. *Politics*, 1328b10-11.

³² Dolce, 'Abbreviatione', f. 92v: 'Non fia male, come dice il Petrarca, ad istirpar le male piante, che fiorir non sanno.' Petrarch, 'Canzone 53', in *Le Rime Sparse e i Trionfi*, ed. E. Chiorboli (Bari, 1930), pp. 46-49, at p. 48, ln. 71-76: 'Orsi, lupi, leoni, aquile e serpi/ ad una gran marmorea colonna/ fanno noia sovente, et a sé danno./ Di costor piange quella gentil donna,/ che t'ha chiamato, a ciò che di lei stirpi/ le male piante, che fiorir non sanno.'

individual who has withdrawn from human society is either a beast or a god:³³

It is not good for man to be alone; because man, ordained by God for natural partnership, is a civil and political animal. One sees this clearly with respect to speech, which, as a bond of human partnership, was given by God to man alone, so that one person may understand another, in order that one may serve and assist, in like manner, the needs of another; this power of speech was not given to the other animals. The reason is that the solitary man is either a beast or God. He cannot be God, apart from any other reason, because only God has no need of anything else, since he is the giver of all things; but man needs other men. Therefore, it is to be concluded that the solitary man is a beast.³⁴

While other commentators, most notably Thomas Aquinas, had offered the example of hermit-saints as a way round this difficult concept,³⁵ Dolce avoids it completely. His insistence on man's sociability as God-given and his emphasis on the word 'Dio' perhaps reflects the sensitivity to religious unorthodoxy of the age. Certainly, Dolce is very clear on the necessity of religion to the state, insisting that 'religion is the only foundation on which to organise the republic'.³⁶

When discussing the best form of government, after presenting the case for monarchical rule, Dolce states his strong preference for republics; an opinion to be expected from a Venetian author.

If above I have put forward those reasons in favour of a principate which seemed

³³ *Politics*, 1253a3-4.

³⁴ Dolce, 'Abbreviazione', f. 89r: 'Non è buono, che l'huomo sia solo: percioche l'huomo di ordine di DIO per natural compagnia è animal civile e politico. Ilche si vede manifestamente per rispetto del parlare, che come legame della compagna humana, è stato dato da esso DIO al solo huomo, affine, che l'un con l'altro si possa scambievolmente intendere, per servire e giovare l'uno parimente a bisogni dell'altro: laqual favella a gli altri animali non è conceduta. Il perche è da dire, che l'huomo soletario sia o bestia, o DIO. DIO non puo essere oltre ogni altra ragione, per cagione che solo DIO non ha bisogno di cosa alcuna; come quello ch'è datore di tutte le cose: ma si ben l'huomo ha bisogno dell'altro huomo. Onde è da conchiudere, che 'l soletario sia bestia.'

³⁵ Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, *In Octos Libros Politicorum Aristotelis Expositio*, I.i.35: 'Sed si aliquis homo habeat quod non sit civilis, propter naturam, aut nequam est, utpote cum hoc contingit ex corruptione naturae humanae; aut est melior quam homo, in quantum scilicet habet naturam perfectiorem aliis hominibus communiter, ita quod per se sibi possit sufficere absque hominum societate; sicut fuit in Ioanne Baptista, et beato Antonio heremita.'

³⁶ Dolce, 'Abbreviazione', f. 90r: 'La religione è solo fondamento a ordinar la Republica.'

to me the most efficient and probable, I myself am of the contrary opinion and hold the administration of many to be better than that of one alone, because it is very much easier for one person to deceive himself than many.³⁷

However, his reasons for this preference take little from Aristotle:

In the beginning when the world was created, the land and the things which it produced were common to all; it was nothing other than avarice which divided it up between boundaries and made what was public private. So, guile and violence were the reasons why one man seized the *signoria* from other men. Nature abhors nothing more than servitude, which is in monarchies and does not have a place in republics, because it is one thing to serve the laws, and another [to serve] one who has the title of king or *signore*. . . . Republics are also more inclined to favour letters and the fine arts, which does not happen under a king; since it is known that they [i.e., republics] do not have any place for magistrates unless they are good and virtuous. And so, while the Roman Republic lasted, eloquence flourished, and there were some rare and excellent orators.³⁸

This mention of republics fostering literature and the arts may be a pointed reference to the perceived maleficent influence of Spanish domination on the culture of the Italian peninsula³⁹ – and a statement of Venice’s superiority in this area, as she remained a republic.

This is not a work, therefore, of deep consideration and careful composition, but rather one which offered a combination of political and classical knowledge in a format designed to appeal to a broad Italian-reading public. Aristotle was present in the work,

³⁷ Dolce, ‘Abbreviation’, f. 121v: ‘Se bene ho addotto si sopra in favor del Prencipato quelle ragioni, che mi parvero più efficaci e verisimili; io sono di contraria opinione, e tengo l’amministrazione di molti migliore, che quella d’un solo: percioche è piu agevole assai, che uno s’inganni, che molti.’

³⁸ Dolce, ‘Abbreviation’, ff. 121v-122r: ‘La terra nel principio, che fu creato il mondo, e le cose, che ella produceva, erano comuni a tutti: ne fu altro, che dividesse i confini, e facesse il publico particolare, che l’avaritia. Così l’astutia e la violenza fu cagione, che l’huomo si usurpasse fra gli altri huomini Signoria. Ne è cosa, che piu aborrisca la natura, che la servitù: la quale è ne’ Regni, e non ha luogo nelle Republiche; percioche altra cosa è servire alle leggi, altra a uno, che habbia titolo di Re, o di Signore.’ f. 123r: ‘Nelle Republiche ancora si favoriscono piu le lettere e le buone arti, che non si fa sotto un Re: quando si conosce, che non hanno luogo ne magistrati, senon i buoni e virtuosi. Ecco, che mentre durò la Repub[lica] Romana, fiorì la eloquenza, e furono quegli rari & eccellenti Oratori.’

³⁹ Jeffries Martin, ‘The Venetian Territorial State’, p. 230.

but certainly not in the manner promised by the title. This was a commercial enterprise, enticing buyers by claiming to provide them with a comprehensive guide to Aristotle in Italian, but failing to deliver this. In fact, Dolce's work is both less and more than announced on the title-page: less Aristotle, certainly, but, on the plus side, a wide variety of material from other sources, along with guidelines for life in the Renaissance city – Dolce supplies information on which citizens are suitable to govern the Republic, what the duties of a magistrate are and the necessity of keeping a watchful eye on priests, tax-collectors and usurers in the city. Despite the apparent concern for producing a marketable book, the *Somma* did not achieve any notable success and was not printed again after 1565.

In 1570, another vernacular book on Aristotle's *Politics* was printed in Venice; but this was a very different piece of work. The Florentine Bartolomeo Cavalcanti (1503-1562) had intended to write a commentary in Italian on the *Politics*, but died before its completion. The unfinished text was edited and published as a series of discourses, entitled *Trattati overo discorsi sopra gli ottimi reggimenti delle repubbliche antiche e moderne*, by Francesco Sansovino (1521–1586), a *poligrafo* and contemporary of Lodovico Dolce, who moved in the same circles and belonged to the same academies. As Dolce had done, Sansovino spotted an opportunity to cater to the growing interest in vernacular philosophy; his enterprise, however, achieved far greater success. Cavalcanti's *Trattati* were republished in 1571, 1574 and 1591, and reprints of the 1591 edition continued to be issued in the seventeenth century: in 1630, 1650, and 1678.⁴⁰

Cavalcanti was the scion of a noble and distinguished Florentine family,⁴¹ and his education reflected his high status – his tutor was the First Chancellor of Florence, Marcello Virgilio Adriani,⁴² and it is likely that he attended the lectures of the Platonist Francesco Cattani da Diacceto.⁴³ This is borne out in the *Trattati*: along with a thorough

⁴⁰ E. Fabbri, 'Introduzione', in Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, *Trattati overo discorsi sopra gli ottimi reggimenti delle repubbliche antiche e moderne*, ed. E. Fabbri (Milan, 2007) pp. 13-96, at p. 81; Bozza, *Scrittori politici Italiani*, p. 44.

⁴¹ See C. Mutini, 'Bartolomeo Cavalcanti', in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), XXII, pp. 611-617.

⁴² For a study of Adriani's life and scholarship, see P. Godman, *From Poliziano to Machiavelli: Florentine Humanism in the High Renaissance* (Princeton NJ, 1998), from p. 27. See also G. Miccoli, 'Adriani, Marcello Virgilio', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), I, pp. 310-311.

⁴³ See P. O. Kristeller, 'Francesco da Diacceto and Florentine Platonism in the Sixteenth Century', in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati*, IV: *Letteratura classica e umanistica* (Vatican City, 1946), pp. 260-304.

knowledge of the Aristotelian corpus, Cavalcanti displays his familiarity with Homer, Plato, Polybius and later interpreters of classical philosophy including Thomas Aquinas, Averroes and Marsilio Ficino. In addition to the *Trattati* and his many letters, Cavalcanti composed other works of literature, usually with a focus on the political. These included a translation of some fragments of Polybius and a vernacular work based heavily on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.⁴⁴

Cavalcanti's education may also have been influenced by the more politically subversive side of Florentine intellectual society. He can be linked to the republican thinkers of the Orti Oricellari: although he was only nineteen when the meetings in the Rucellai gardens ended, it is possible that he attended some of them. It seems he knew certain participants of the meetings: Enrica Fabbri suggests that he met Jacopo da Diacceto and Luigi Alamanni at Adriani's lessons,⁴⁵ and Cavalcanti certainly corresponded with another, more famous member of the Orti Oricellari, Machiavelli (although this acquaintance may have begun after the meetings ended).⁴⁶

Cavalcanti without doubt shared the fervent republicanism and opposition to the rule of the Medici in Florence which characterised the Orti Oricellari and, indeed, these attitudes can be considered the defining feature of his life and work. He took an active role in the founding of the last Florentine republic (1527-30), as a soldier and as an orator charged with keeping morale high; and during the short-lived republic itself, he acted as its ambassador to the papacy and to France.⁴⁷ In 1530, when the republic crumbled and the Medici returned to power, Cavalcanti remained in Florence until the assassination of Duke Alessandro in 1537, when he went into voluntary exile.

Cavalcanti spent the rest of his life in political and diplomatic service. He served at the court of Ercole II in Ferrara and worked for Pope Paul III and the Farnese family in Rome. He remained staunchly anti-Medicean, often acting for France against the Medici's Imperial and Spanish allies. With Cardinal Ippolito d'Este,⁴⁸ another political

⁴⁴ Polybius, *Del modo dell'accampare*, transl. Bartolomeo Cavalcanti (Florence, 1552); Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, *La retorica di m. Bartolomeo Cavalcanti* (Venice, 1559).

⁴⁵ Fabbri, 'Introduzione', p. 15.

⁴⁶ Fabbri, 'Introduzione', p. 17. Two letters from Cavalcanti to Machiavelli are found in Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, *Lettere edite e inedite*, ed. C. Roaf (Bologna, 1967), pp. 3-5.

⁴⁷ Bozzi, *Scrittori politici Italiani*, p. 45; Fabbri, 'Introduzione', p. 22.

⁴⁸ See L. Byatt, 'Este, Ippolito d'', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), XLIII, pp.

exile whom Cavalcanti had befriended in France, he delivered an oration in Venice on behalf of the king of France against the Empire, and he acted as an agent of France in Siena from 1552 until 1555. Printed together with the *Trattati* in 1570 were three letters which provide an insight into Cavalcanti's work in Siena: written in 1552 to the cardinals S. Croce⁴⁹ and François de Tournon,⁵⁰ they reveal his deeply held allegiance to republican government and, most importantly, his attempts to reform the city of Siena into a model of the *bene commune*, a mixed constitution founded along Aristotelian lines.

Cavalcanti's role in Siena in 1552-55 involved assisting Ippolito d'Este in his attempts to reform the ruling government on behalf of the French interest – a scheme doomed to failure.⁵¹ It is unsurprising, given his personal preferences and Siena's long republican history, that the intention was the creation of a broad-based government. Like Antonio Brucioli, Cavalcanti focused on the 'mediocri' as the ideal holders of power. In the first of the letters printed with the *Trattati*, penned on 28 December 1552, he wrote:

Since the cardinal wanted to make a start on the reform of the government, I was of the opinion that, in order to find some forms of government appropriate for this city, it was first necessary to consider diligently the nature and the terms of this subject, and the form of government that this city had had in the past and that it had created; and, seeing as I had considered all these things, it seemed to me that I knew this city was composed for the most part of citizens who were neither excessively wealthy nor excessively poor, which generally makes men insolent and, moreover, prey to envy, and that they were ill-suited to obey, being neither abject through extreme poverty, nor base and offensive through the desire of other people's riches, but I saw in this city a certain mean, which the wise judge to be a fit subject for that kind of government which is called by a common name and by Aristotle in particular: a republic.⁵²

369-374.

⁴⁹ Marcello Cervini, later pope Marcello II. See G. Brunelli, 'Marcello II, papa', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), LXIX, pp. 502-510.

⁵⁰ On Cardinal François de Tournon, see C. Michon and F. Nawrocki, 'François de Tournon (1489-1562)', in C. Michon (ed.), *Les Conseillers de François I^{er}* (Rennes, 2011), pp. 507-525.

⁵¹ See C. Roaf, 'Introduzione', in Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, *Lettere edite e inedite*, ed. C. Roaf (Bologna, 1967), pp. xii-lxxxvii, at pp. lii-lxi.

⁵² Cavalcanti, *Trattati*, p. 219: 'Volendo il cardinal dar principio alla riforma del governo, io fui d'opinione, che per trovar qualche forma di reggimento convenisse a questa città, fusse necessario prima

The disparity between vernacular works on the *Politics* produced in the second half of the sixteenth century becomes apparent when we place Dolce's *Abbreviazione*, in essence, a commercial enterprise, next to Cavalcanti's *Trattati*, the result of a lifetime's obsession.

Cavalcanti also offered something new to vernacular readers of political philosophy in that he takes a comparative approach, analysing various political themes as dealt with by Aristotle, Plato and Polybius. In editing the work Sansovino recognised its novelty, stating in his introduction that Calvacanti

wrote the present *Trattati delle repubbliche*, in which, ordering the opinions of Aristotle and of Plato towards the same end, he harmonises them together with more ease than ever before, and, interspersing between them what Polybius said on the topic, he shows, in the end, what the best government of republics is.⁵³

Cavalcanti looks for the agreements and disagreement between Aristotle, Plato and Polybius on subjects ranging from the types of government and the differences between them, as well as their possible mutations, to the origins and principles of civil government.⁵⁴ He begins by establishing the basic similarities in the political outlooks of these three Greek authors in terms of their division of governments into different types of regime. Aristotle and Plato resemble each other, as Cavalcanti explains, because they identify the same six forms of government or, to use his term, republic:

considerare diligentemente la natura et le condizioni di questo soggetto, et la forma de' governi che questa città avea avuti per il passato et quello che aveano partorito; et poiché io ebbi considerato tutte queste cose, mi parve di conoscere che questa città era composta per la maggior parte de' cittadini che non eccedevano né in ricchezze, né in povertà, i quali sogliono far gli uomini insolenti, et oltre a questo soggetti all'invidia, fussino poco atti ad ubbedire, né per la troppo povertà abietti et iniuriosi per il desiderio dell'altrui ricchezze, ma vedere in questa città una certa mediocrità, la quale è giudicata dalli savi accomodato soggetto di quella spetie di governi, il qual è chiamato da Aristotele specialmente et col nome commune: republica.'

⁵³ Francesco Sansovino, 'Introduzione', in Cavalcanti, *Trattati*, pp. 103-104, at p. 103: 'Scrisse ... i presenti *Trattati delle repubbliche*, ne' quali disponendo l'opinioni di Aristotele et di Platone ad un medesimo fine, gli accorda insieme, con tanta agevolezza che nulla più, et interponendo tra loro quel che ne dice Polibio, mostra finalmente qual sia l'ottimo governo delle repubbliche.'

⁵⁴ Cavalcanti, *Trattati*, p. 106: 'I gradi, la contrarietà ch'è tra quelle, la trasmutazione, l'origine et principio delle civiltà et governi civili, et come i detti autori paiano che convenghino o no circa questa materia.'

I want now to consider how these three authors agree and disagree, but principally Plato and Aristotle. I say that both concur in this: that they have set forth these same types of republic – monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy, tyranny, popular government, mixed republic – using different names only in that Aristotle calls the mixed republic by the general name of republic.⁵⁵

As Lidia Lanza has noted, in this way Cavalcanti manages to reduce the differences between Aristotle and Plato on this point to a small variation in terminology.⁵⁶ He reports that Polybius, too, had a similar scheme, but had seven types of rule – three good (monarchy, oligarchy, popular rule), three bad (tyranny, aristocracy, mob rule) and mixed government as the seventh and best type. As we shall see, Cavalcanti himself had a clear preference for mixed government.

Throughout the *Trattati* Cavalcanti follows this pattern, comparing the opinions of the three authors, noting where they contradict or complement each other and making his own judgement as to which is correct. For instance, he highlights Aristotle's failure to indicate which specific kind of monarchy he had intended as the correct form of government, and then attempts to resolve this oversight.

If Aristotle has placed monarchy among the types of correct government, he has either intended absolute monarchy or that which is circumscribed by laws; but it does not seem that he had intended absolute monarchy, because he has said that correct governments have just laws, and absolute monarchy does not have laws. ... Now, to resolve this entire difficulty, I say that Aristotle does not approve nor allow the absolute government of one alone.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Cavalcanti, *Trattati*, p. 115: 'Ora volend'io considerare come convenghino et disconvenghino questi tre autori, ma principalmente Platone et Aristotele, dico che ambidue convengono in questo: ch'egli hanno poste queste medesime spetie di republica, regno, ottimati, Stato di pochi, tirannide, governo popolare, republica mista, non variando nei nomi di esse, se non in quanto la mista di Aristotele è chiamata da lui col nome generale: republica.' Here 'republica' corresponds to 'polity'. What Aristotle meant by 'polity' – essentially rule by the many for the common benefit – is open to interpretation. Cavalcanti chose to equate it with mixed government.

⁵⁶ L. Lanza, 'Firenze e la lezione degli antichi: i *Trattati* di Bartolomeo Cavalcanti', in G. Briguglia and T. Ricklin (eds), *Thinking Politics in the Vernacular: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Fribourg, 2011), pp. 167-188, at p. 177.

⁵⁷ Cavalcanti, *Trattati*, p. 130: 'Se Aristotele ha posto tra le spetie de' governi retti il regno, o egli ha inteso del regno assoluto, o di quello che è circoscritto dalle leggi, ma è non par ch'egli abbia inteso del

Elsewhere, Plato is rebuked for not providing information on the preservation of states as Aristotle had done, and Polybius for limiting himself to generalisations:

[Aristotle] also treats the method of conserving states very diligently and exquisitely, something we can desire from Plato ... Polybius discourses very generally, and he considered few things concerning this subject.⁵⁸

In Cavalcanti, we see an eclectic Aristotelian, as defined by Charles Schmitt.⁵⁹ He is willing not only to use other thinkers to supplement Aristotle but also gently criticise elements of Aristotle's thought while, nevertheless, remaining loyal to Aristotelianism in general. Cavalcanti is an Aristotelian searching for a syncretic political philosophy which brings his other authorities – Plato and Polybius – in league with Aristotle to provide support for his vision of the ideal government.

This ideal is, undoubtedly, the mixed constitution he had wanted to establish in both Florence and Siena. Cavalcanti's respect for Aristotle's thought is perhaps most apparent when he discusses this perfect republic in the *Trattato*. The model he holds up is the Roman republic, but he is keen to show Aristotle's support for the government of Sparta, which Cavalcanti considered to be a similar scheme:

[Aristotle] says that many say that the best government has to be mixed and composed of all the republics [i.e., states]. ... And so they praise the republic of the Spartans, some saying that it is composed of oligarchy, monarchy and democracy, and that the king is the monarch, the senate the oligarchy and the magistrate of the ephors the democracy, since the ephors were elected by the people.⁶⁰

regno assoluto, perch'egli ha detto, che i governi retti hanno le leggi giuste, et l'assoluto non ha legge... . Ora per risolvere tutta questa difficoltà io dico ch'Aristotele non approva, ne' ammette il governo assoluto d'un solo, se non dove sia tanta disugualità et disproporzione, quant'egli ha dichiarato.'

⁵⁸ Cavalcanti, *Trattati*, p. 160: 'Tratta anche del modo del conservare gli Stati molto diligentemente et esquisitamente, la qual cosa possiamo desiderare da Platone... Polibio discorse molto generalmente, et considerò poche cose d'intorno a questa materia.'

⁵⁹ C. B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge MA, 1983), chap. IV: 'Eclectic Aristotelianism'.

⁶⁰ Cavalcanti, *Trattati*, p. 192: 'Là dove dice che molti dicono che bisogna che l'ottima republica sia mescolata et composta di tutte le republiche. ... Et perciò lodano la republica de' Lacedemonii, dicendo alcuni ch'ella è composta di oligarchia, di monarchia et di democratia. Et che il regno è la monarchia, il

Typically, Plato and Polybius are also enlisted to praise the merits of this type of constitution.⁶¹

Cavalcanti's intention in the chapter on the mixed constitution is to bring all three political authorities together in support of his ideal government. He is at heart an eclectic thinker, and his work attempts to create a unified political philosophy composed of the best parts of Aristotle, Plato and Polybius. Furthermore, the letters published with the *Trattati* show that this was not merely an intellectual exercise: Cavalcanti believed that these classical philosophers, and especially Aristotle, had insights which could be valuable for the contemporary Italian political situation. In a letter of 1560 he wrote of his project to translate the *Politics*, saying that Aristotle's treatise was 'such a useful work and so necessary to the good governance of Republics'.⁶²

The next work I wish to discuss – the *Breve institutione dell'ottima republica* of Giasone Denores (1530-1590), first issued in 1578 – illustrates again the differences between the approaches taken by authors of vernacular Aristotelian political works in this period. It also shows the close connections forged in the publishing capital of Venice. Denores has been linked to both Lodovico Dolce and Francesco Sansovino, the editor of Cavalcanti's *Trattati*, as in the 1540s and 1550s all were, supposedly, members of Anton Francesco Doni's (1513-1574) Accademia Pellegrina.⁶³ The Accademia may have been a product of Doni's volatile imagination – he is the only 'Accademico' to mention it in print, usually referring to the other members by nicknames which hid their identity.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, it seems plausible that Dolce, Sansovino and Denores would

senato la oligarchia, et il magistrato degli efori la democrazia, perciò che gli efori si eleggevano dal popolo.' *Politics*, 1265b34-38.

⁶¹ Cavalcanti, *Trattati*, p. 193: 'Di questa parlò Platone in pochi luoghi, et molto generalmente e brevissimamente, come nell'ottavo libro della Republica quando disse, che la republica cretense et la lacedemonia erano lodate da molti.' Plato, *Republic*, VII, X 555b. Cavalcanti, *Trattati*, p. 195: 'Seguirò ora di mostrare qual sia l'opinione di Polibio circa l'ottima republica, et quel che delle dette republiche abbia lasciato scritto. Quest'autore adunque nell'epitome del sesto libro dell'*Istorie* fa un lungo et prudente discorso delle republiche... soggiugne che gli è cosa manifesta, che si debba giudicare quella esser ottima republica, che è composta di tutte quelle spetie e proprietà, et che noi n'abbiamo l'esperienza in fatto, per avere Licurgo ordinato prima la republica de' Lacedemonii in questa maniera.' Polybius, *The Histories*, VI.10.

⁶² Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, 'Lettera 296', in Cavalcanti, *Lettere edite e inedite*, ed. C. Roaf (Bologna, 1967), pp. 311-313, at p. 313: 'Così utile opera e tanto necessaria al buon governo delle Republiche.'

⁶³ P. F. Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World 1530-1560: Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco and Ortensio Lando* (Madison WI, 1969) p. 58.

⁶⁴ On doubts about the academy's existence, see G. Masi, 'Coreografie doniane: L'Accademia Pellegrina',

have encountered each other on the Venetian literary scene; Doni was certainly acquainted with all of them, corresponding with Dolce and Sansovino and dedicating a volume of his letters to the ‘generoso’ Denores.⁶⁵

Denores was not Italian, but a member of a noble and influential family in Cyprus of Norman descent with links by marriage to the Venetian aristocracy.⁶⁶ He journeyed to Italy in the 1540s to study at the University of Padua, where he was taught by Trifone Gabriele, the centre of an intellectual circle devoted to the ‘three crowns’ of Italian vernacular literature – Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio – as well as to the ancient classics.⁶⁷ Gabriele was clearly a formative influence on Denores, who stated on the title-page of his first published work, a Latin commentary on Horace, that his interpretation was based on daily conversations with his teacher.⁶⁸

Gabriele’s circle at the time Denores was at Padua included Sperone Speroni, who was (as we have seen) a professor at the university. While Gabriele’s scholarly interests were wide-ranging, the environment at the University of Padua was strongly Aristotelian, and Speroni was no exception.⁶⁹ He was a leading member of the Accademia degli Infiammati, which, as mentioned earlier, was dedicated to making knowledge, and Aristotle’s philosophy in particular, available in the vernacular. Both the formal instruction Denores received at Padua through university classes, and the informal intellectual development deriving from his participation in Gabriele’s circle would have had a bias towards Aristotle, and he would also have been introduced to the popularising

in P. Procaccioli and A. Romano (eds), *Cinquecento capriccioso e irregolare. Eresie letterarie nell’Italia del classicismo* (Rome, 1999), pp. 45-86.

⁶⁵ Doni’s work, *Tre Libri di Lettere...* (Florence, 1552), contains letters to Dolce and Sansovino, while the third of the three books is dedicated to Denores. See C. Ricottini Marsili-Libelli, *Anton Francesco Doni: scrittore e stampatore* (Florence, 1960), pp. 84-85.

⁶⁶ F. E. Budd, ‘A Minor Italian Critic of the Sixteenth Century: Jason Denores’, *The Modern Language Review*, 22 (1927), pp. 421-434, at p. 422; G. Patrizi, ‘Denores, Giasone’, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), XXXVIII, pp. 768-773.

⁶⁷ Donato Giannotti dwelt on Gabriele’s learning in his *Libro de la Republica de Vinitiani* (Rome, 1540), f. 5v: ‘Ne mai è che egli non sia in compagnia d’alcuno di quegli antichi et nobili spiriti, così Toscani, come Latini, si com’è Cicerone, Virgilio, Horatio, Dante, il Petrarca, il Boccaccio, co’ quali egli continuamente i loro volumi leggendo ragiona.’

⁶⁸ Giasone Denores, *In epistolam Q. Horatij Flacci De arte poetica ... ex quotidianis Tryphonis Cabriellii sermonibus interpretatio* (Venice, 1553).

⁶⁹ On Speroni’s Aristotelianism, see M. Sgarbi, *The Italian Mind: Vernacular Logic in Renaissance Italy (1540-1551)* (Leiden, 2013), chap. III: Sperone Speroni: Between Language and Logic. For Paduan Aristotelianism generally, see A. Poppi, *Introduzione all’aristotelismo padovano* (Padua, 1991), and G. Piaia (ed.), *La Presenza dell’Aristotelismo padovano nella filosofia della prima modernità* (Rome and Padua, 2002).

movement arising from the ‘questione della lingua’.⁷⁰

After his Paduan education, Denores returned at the end of the 1540s to Cyprus, where he remained for twenty years until the conquest of the island by the Ottoman Empire sent Cypriot refugees, including Denores, fleeing to Venice. His status and circumstances suffered greatly: from an aristocratic existence in Cyprus, Denores was reduced to tutoring students to alleviate his poverty. He was, however, elected a reader in rhetoric (although not made a member) at the Accademia dei Rinascanti,⁷¹ and composed a work, the *Breve trattato dell’ oratore*, dedicated to the academy.⁷² In 1574 he delivered an oration to the doge requesting support for his impoverished compatriots stranded in Venice. The address was successful – the Cypriots were granted the right to live on the island of Pola, and Denores himself was appointed to the chair of moral philosophy at the University of Padua.⁷³ The following years, until his death in 1590, were his most prolific, and included a number of works of vernacular Aristotelianism. In addition to the *Breve institutione*, which covered Aristotle’s practical philosophy, his compositions included a treatise on *Poetics* which cited Aristotle as an influence and a work composed of ‘tavole’ which summarised *De caelo*, the *Meteorology* and the treatises on animals.⁷⁴

Two themes run throughout Denores’s Italian compositions: a commitment to the popularisation of Aristotle and a deep loyalty towards his adopted state, Venice. Both have a significant impact on the presentation of Aristotle’s *Politics* in the *Breve institutione*. Like Cavalcanti, Denores was convinced of the superiority of the mixed government; but whereas Cavalcanti’s standpoint was a reaction to the political situation in Florence, Denores’s position was more closely related to his admiration for the Venetian republic. While Cavalcanti had offered the Roman republic as the ideal example of the mixed constitution, for Denores the paradigm was unequivocally Venice. As we have seen, as Spanish dominance made itself felt across Italy, Venice alone had preserved some kind of independence, which contributed to popular myth-making

⁷⁰ R. S. Samuels, ‘Benedetto Varchi, the Accademia degli Infiammati, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 29 (1976), pp. 599-634, at p. 610.

⁷¹ Budd, ‘A Minor Italian Critic’, pp. 423-424.

⁷² Giasone Denores, *Breve trattato dell’ oratore* (Venice, 1574).

⁷³ Budd, ‘A Minor Italian Critic’, p. 424.

⁷⁴ Giasone Denores, *Poetica ...* (Padua, 1588); *Tavole ... del mondo, et della sphaera, le quali saranno, come introduttione a’ libri di Aristotile Del cielo, Delle meteore, et De gli animali* (Padua, 1582).

concerning Venice's harmonious and stable mixed republic. According to Denores:

Only the Duchy of Venice, among all others, is free and legitimate: where in place of a crown, there is the *pileus*, invested with the ancient and clear sign of liberty.⁷⁵ Who does not see, then, true aristocracy shine, whether in the Senate, or the College, or the Council of Ten... . Who does not glimpse, finally, the moderate and temperate multitude of what is commonly called a republic in the Great Council, in the assembly of the nobility, and especially in the creation of magistrates.⁷⁶

The 'ottima repubblica' referenced in the title of Denores' work is, of course, Venice, and his treatment of the subject shows an interesting combination of the presentation of material from Aristotle's *Politics* and an idealised portrayal of Venice. Within the text of the *Breve institutione* itself, rather than following all the subjects covered in the *Politics*, Denores has selected only those elements in the treatise which he considered most useful for his own times, drawing, in particular, on Books Five, Seven and Eight.⁷⁷ He presents the different types of government and the differences between them, ways of preserving these regimes, information on the mixed government, the roles of magistrates and state officials and social laws concerning marriage and the education of children – in short, the parts of the *Politics* most relevant for a citizen concerned with understanding the preservation and management of a republic (the Venetian republic) and the role of the citizen within it. The omission of material from other books shows that Denores was making decisions, as vernacular writers had done in previous centuries, as to what was most necessary for their target readership to know.

It is interesting that Denores' work does not show any anxiety over the relevance of the

⁷⁵ The 'pileus', or 'Phrygian cap', was worn by freed Roman slaves; it later became a symbol of liberty. See C. Daremberg and E. Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*, 5 vols (Paris, 1875-1917) IV.1, pp. 479-481; L. Freedman, *Titian's Portraits through Aretino's Lens* (University Park PA, 1995), pp. 140-141.

⁷⁶ Giasone Denores, *Breve institutione dell'ottima repubblica: ... raccolta in gran parte da tutta la philosophia humana di Aristotile, quasi come una certa introduzione dell'Ethica, Politica, et Economica* (Venice, 1578), f. 46v: 'Solo il Ducato di Venetia essere libero et legitimo tra tutti gli altri; onde in luogo di Corona, è anco investito del Pileo anticha, et chiara insegna della libertà. Chi non vede poi risplender la vera Aristocratia, ò nel Senato, ò nel Collegio, ò nel Consiglio di Diece ... Chi non scorge finalmente la moltitudine moderata, et temperata della comunemente detta repubblica nel gran consiglio, nella raunanza della Nobiltà, et massimamente nella creazione de' magistrati.'

⁷⁷ Toste, 'Evolution within Tradition', p. 201.

Politics to contemporary political concerns, as will be seen in later works, or even much impulse to supplement Aristotle with other authorities. As Venice, at its most ‘mythical’, was deemed to be the manifestation of the ideal Aristotelian mixed government, such concern was irrelevant – if that Venice existed, in itself it justified the study, and continued pertinence, of Aristotle’s *Politics*.

Unlike the works of Dolce and Cavalcanti, Denores’s clear intention is the instruction of the reader in the basics of Aristotelian political philosophy as far as they pertain to the ‘ideal’ republic. This pedagogical purpose is evident in the tables contained within the *Breve institutione*. Denores transforms the ambiguity and fluidity of the text of the *Politics* into starkly defined diagrams easily understood and absorbed by the vernacular reader. This approach shows, once again, the transferral of the new visual techniques for presenting knowledge, utilised in the Latin *Politics* tradition by Lefèvre d’Étaples and Theodor Zwinger, into vernacular treatments of the text.

This is in evidence at the end of the treatise, where Denores provides tables which lay out the central elements of Aristotelian practical philosophy in a diagrammatical form. Here, and – as far as I am aware – for the first time in vernacular Aristotelian literature, Aristotle’s division of the human being into body and irrational and rational soul⁷⁸ is imposed on the *Politics*:

The first part concerns the matter of the city, as the body of the republic, which we can call, conveniently, the politics of the city [and] which is contained in the first book of the *Politics*, where it is discussed as a place in which happiness and the highest good are introduced. ...

The second part concerns the magistrates of the republic, as the appetitive power of the soul, obedient to the mind and to the intellect, which can be conveniently called the politics of the republic. And this is contained in the subsequent books up to the thirteenth chapter of the seventh book of the *Politics*. ...

The third part concerns the matter of the laws, as the mind and the intellect,

⁷⁸ *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1102a16-32.

without appetite, ruling the republic and of the city ... which can conveniently be called the discipline of the city and the politics of the laws. And this is contained in the last five chapters of the seventh book of the *Politics*, in all of the eighth and in the two books of the *Economics*.⁷⁹

Denores probably assumed that the likely reader of this work would be a novice in practical philosophy, though one keen to learn the basics of Aristotelian political thought in order to understand the government of the republic. It lacks, on the one hand, the subtlety and erudition of Cavalcanti's approach and, on the other, the variety of Dolce's, but does show a commitment to the clear presentation of Aristotelian political material.

The prevailing trend discernible to facilitate the apprehension of the *Politics* by the reader, often through the deployment of paratextual material, is particularly visible in *La Politica di Aristotile ridotta in modo di parafrasi*, written by Antonio Scaino (1524–1612) and published in Rome by the printing house Popolo Romano in 1578.⁸⁰

Scaino is best known today for his youthful work *Trattato del Giuoco della Palla*, the first written source for the rules and etiquette of tennis.⁸¹ His later works, by contrast, are more scholarly affairs. Born in Salò to a family of high rank, Scaino was very well educated: he learned Greek and studied philosophy and theology at the University of Ferrara under the renowned teacher Vincenzo Maggi, who wrote a Latin commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*.⁸² After taking holy orders, Scaino spent much of his life in the

⁷⁹ Denores, *Breve institutione*, f. 54v: 'La prima parte è intorno al trattato della città, come di corpo della republica, la quale commodamente potremo chiamare Politica della città, che è contenuta nel primo libro della Politica, ove si ragiona di essa, come di luogo, in cui si habbia ad introdur la felicità, et il sommo bene. ...

La seconda parte è intorno al trattato de' magistrati, et della republica, come di potenza appetitiva dell'anima della città, ubidente alla mente, et all'intelletto, la qual commodamente potremo chiamar Politica della republica. Et questa è contenuta ne gli altri sequenti fino al decimo terzo capo del settimo libro della Politica. ...

La terza parte è intorno al trattato delle leggi, come di mente, et d'intelletto senza appetito, signoreggiante alla republica, et alla città parti a lei naturalmente soggette, la quale commodamente potremo chiamar disciplina della città, et Politica delle leggi. Et questa è contenuta ne' cinque ultimi capi del settimo libro della Politica, in tutto l'ottavo, et ne' due libri dell'Economica.'

⁸⁰ C. H. Lohr, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries, II: Renaissance Authors*, rev. C. B. Schmitt (Florence, 1988), pp. 406-407.

⁸¹ Antonio Scaino, *Trattato del Giuoco della Palla* (Venice, 1555). There is a modern edition: Scaino, *Trattato del giuoco della palla*, ed. G. Nonni (Urbino, 2000).

⁸² D. Aguzzi-Barbagli, 'Vincenzo Maggi', in P. G. Bietenholz and T. B. Deutscher (eds), *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, 3 vols (Toronto, 1985-1987),

household of the Boncompagni family in Rome, where he published a series of learned works of Aristotelian philosophy: in Latin, on the *Politics*, *Organon*, *Metaphysics*, *De Anima* (together with spurious works), and *Physics*;⁸³ and in Italian, paraphrases on the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*.⁸⁴ He also composed a miscellany on Aristotelian logic, and a paraphrase of the letters of St Paul.⁸⁵

The Latin *In octo Arist[otelis] libros qui extant de repu[blica] quaestiones*, published in Rome in 1577 and also dedicated to Boncompagni, is very different to the comprehensive nature of Scaino's vernacular work on the *Politics*. It is aimed at an audience with a pre-existing knowledge not only of the *Politics*, but also of philology and Aristotelian philosophy more generally: it was most likely written in a university context. The treatise contains five *quaestiones*. The first is longest and addresses whether the order of the books of the *Politics* has been changed, while the four following are shorter; one deals with the subject of whether material is missing from the *Politics*, another with whether Aristotle's doctrines could be used to administer a republic.⁸⁶ It is certain that the reader of this work would be learned: the text frequently includes quotations in Greek.

By contrast, Scaino's vernacular paraphrase of the *Ethics* is extremely similar in structure to that which he wrote on the *Politics*. Both are dedicated to his patron, Giacomo Boncompagni, each book begins with an introduction, after which the paraphrase is divided into *capitoli*, and the prefatory material in both paraphrases includes a lengthy general introduction and a table which outlines the contents of each book, and a series of 'annotationi e dubbi' which further clarify points in the text at the

II, pp. 367-368, at p. 367. Vincenzo Maggi and Bartolomeo Lombardo, *In Aristotelis librum De poetica communes explanationes* (Venice, 1550). On Maggi, see E. Bisanti, *Vincenzo Maggi: Interprete "Tridentino" della Poetica di Aristotele* (Brescia, 1991).

⁸³ Antonio Scaino, *In octo Arist[otelis] libros qui extant de repu[ublica] quaestiones* (Rome, 1577); *Paraphrasis in uniuersum Aristotelis Organum* (Bergamo, 1599); *Paraphrasis in XIII. Aristotelis libros de prima philosophia cum adnotationibus et quaestionibus* (Rome, 1587); *Paraphrasis ... cum adnotationibus in lib[ros] Arist[otelis] de anima* (Venice, 1599); *In octo Aristotelis libros de physica auscultatione, accuratissima expositio* (Frankfurt, 1607). On Scaino's Latin paraphrase of the *Metaphysics*, see J. Krayer, 'Alexander of Aphrodisias, Gianfrancesco Beati and the Problem of *Metaphysics* α', in J. Monfasani and R. Musto (eds), *Renaissance Society and Culture: Essays in Honor of Eugene F. Rice, jr.* (New York NY, 1991) pp. 137-60, at pp. 155-7.

⁸⁴ Scaino, *L'Ethica di Aristotile a Nicomacho ridotta in modo di parafrasi* (Rome, 1574); *La Politica di Aristotile ridotta in modo di parafrasi* (Rome, 1578).

⁸⁵ Scaino, *Miscellanea nonnullarum et quaestionum in Logica et in Philosophia Aristotelis* (Venice, 1599); *Paraphrasis in omnes S. Pauli Epistolas, cum adnotationibus* (Venice, 1589).

⁸⁶ Scaino, *In octo Arist[otelis] libros qui extant de repu[ublica] quaestiones* (Rome, 1577), [sig. *2].

end of the work. In addition, the paraphrase of the *Politics* contains six discourses on political subjects. Scaino drew attention to this paratextual material in his general introduction to the *Politics* paraphrase:

In line with what I did for the *Ethics*, I have arranged all eight books of the *Politics* in the form of paraphrases, with a general introduction for all of them and with particular arguments on certain books, along with the addition of various annotations and very apposite dubious points, collected together by myself for the greater understanding of the whole work, which I am also quite pleased to have brought to this end, having clearly understood the great use these civil discourses composed by Aristotle can bring to men who are the manual operators of governments, for instructing them, affecting them and conserving them.⁸⁷

These additions, and the fact that the *Politics* was the only Aristotelian work on which Scaino wrote in both Latin and Italian, indicates that this was a subject he took a particular interest in. Furthermore, this passage indicates the audience Scaino had in mind – one very different to the probable university-educated readers of his Latin political work. This work is for the ‘manual operators of governments’, the middling and mercantile classes involved in the vernacular and active administration of government rather than in classical study. Scaino’s Latin work considers the *Politics* as a historical document; in his vernacular paraphrase he hoped to use it to instruct and influence men who had a direct involvement in civic affairs.

Scaino’s general introduction also gives an indication of his own interpretation of the text. Unlike Denores and Cavalcanti, who found support for the mixed republic in Aristotle’s work, Scaino claims that Aristotle’s preference was for an ideal monarchy or aristocracy:

⁸⁷ Scaino, *La Politica*, [sig. *3r-v]: ‘Havend’io, conforme alla fatica dell’Ethica, ridotto sotto forma di Parafrafi tutti gli otto libri della politica, con una introduzione generale per tutti loro, et con particolari argomenti sopra ciascun libro, et con l’aggiunta insieme di varie annotationi, et dubbi molto opportuni, da me posti insieme per maggiore intelligenza di tutta l’opra: la quale mi sono ancho compiaciuto pur assai d’haver condotta a questo fine, per havere manifestamente conosciuto, quanto grande utile possono arrecare a gli huomini, che sono manuali operatori de governi, et per instituirgli, et per affettargli, et per conservargli, questi civili discorsi composti da Aristotile.’

Since the ideal republic is of two sorts, regal monarchy, and the aristocratic state of the best people (*ottimati*), and both the one and the other governments depend on the same conditions and on the same discipline and education common to the royal man and to the best citizen, such that little variety can occur in these ... Aristotle very prudently joined together these two best forms of republic in a common treatise on the best government.⁸⁸

Scaino's purpose in composing *La Politica di Aristotile* is to provide a text of far greater clarity and ease of comprehension for the vernacular reader than Aristotle's *Politics* itself. His attempt to make the treatise more accessible by expanding Aristotle's often terse and laconic prose into readily comprehensible and fluent Italian, rather than just by adding notes or commentary, means that his paraphrase is far longer than the *Politics*. Moreover, despite what would appear to be an especially faithful way of presenting Aristotle's text, Scaino's paraphrase often adds new material, which goes beyond the passage in question while nevertheless remaining within the framework of the philosopher's thought. Here, for instance, are Aristotle's words on the natural impulse to procreate:

He who thus considers things in their first growth or origin, whether a state or anything else, will obtain the clearest view of them. In the first place there must be a union of those who cannot exist without each other; namely, of male and female, that the race may continue (and this is a union which is formed, not of choice, but because, in common with other animals and with plants, mankind have a natural desire to leave behind them an image of themselves).⁸⁹

In Scaino's paraphrase, this becomes:

But before we explain that association which is sought to form the city, an effort must first be made to know which elements do not stand alone, but have need of

⁸⁸ Scaino, *La Politica*, [sig. *15r]: 'Dipoi essendo l'ottima republica di due sorti, la monarchia regale, et l'aristocratia stato degli ottimatti, et dipendendo l'uno et l'altro reggimento dalle medesime conditioni, et da una medesima disciplina, et educatione commune all'huomo regio, et all'ottimo cittadino, tal che in essi puo cadere poca varieta ... pero non senza prudentissimo consiglio Aristotile congionse insieme questi duo ottimi stati di republica sotto un commune trattato dell'ottima politia.'

⁸⁹ *Politics*, 1252a24-30.

another as a support, either to give being to another, or to preserve life in themselves. Because it is known that the male, to complete the generation of children, must join together with the female, since one without the other is not enough to produce this effect. Men are inclined and induced to this by the same most natural stimulus which is equally present in all other animals, and also in plants, in order to leave behind another similar to themselves in order to preserve their species; this is not by choice, which, as is indicated in the third book of the *Ethics*,⁹⁰ never interferes in those matters which are proper to nature. Yet, for all that, beyond the natural appetite for progeny, it is also possible to place a man in matrimony with a woman with the design of living a better and happier life together by means of the mutual comfort and help which one can derive from the other, as in the arguments made concerning friendship laid out in the eighth book of the *Ethics*,⁹¹ something which is not permitted to the other animals who are incapable of reason.⁹²

Scaino has added to Aristotle's simple declaration of the natural desire for procreation, common to all living things, a digression on the benefits of marriage and how this is peculiar to mankind. A passage which, in the *Politics*, underlined the impulses common to men, animals and plants, is enlarged to emphasise instead the unique rationality of

⁹⁰ *Ethics*, 1112a31-33. Scaino dwells on this point in his paraphrase of the *Ethics*. *L'Ethica di Aristotile a Nicomacho ridutta in modo di parafrasi*, p. 39: 'Nell'elettione, per consiglio fatto, l'huomo, per conseguire i suoi fini, scegli piu una cosa, che un'altra. Però quivi fa mestiero di consulta; laqual dev'essere non di quelle cose, delle quali consigliarebbe un pazzo; ma di quelle dellequali un'huomo ragionevole pigliarebbe consiglio: Non delle cose eterne, come sarebbe consigliar de cieli; non delle necessarie, come se il triangolo habbia gli angoli suoi equali a due retti; non delle naturali, come del corso de pianeti, de venti, o delle piogge; perche in queste cose noi non possiamo, con il nostro consiglio, metter mano, et fare, che non avengano, et stiano in quel modo, nelquale sono ordinate da Dio, et dalla natura.'

⁹¹ *Ethics* VIII, particularly 1162a15-20; see also Scaino, *L'Ethica di Aristotile a Nicomacho ridutta in modo di parafrasi*, p. 167.

⁹² Scaino, *La Politica*, ff. 1v-2r: 'Ma prima ch'esplichiamo quella societa, che si ricercano per costituire la citta, fa di mestieri dar prima a conoscere quali sieno quelle parti, lequali non stanno da se sole, ma una ha bisogno dell'altra come di puntello; o sia per dar l'essere ad altri, o sia per mantener in loro medesime la vita. Perche è da sapere, che il maschio per condur a fine la generatione de figlioli, è necessitato a congiungersi con la femina, non bastando a quest'effetto l'uno senza l'altra; a che poi gli huomini inclinati, et indotti vengono da quell'istesso naturalissimo stimolo, ch'è parimente inserto in tutti gli altri animali, et infino nelle piante, di lasciar dopo se un'altro a lor simile per lo mantenimento della spetie, et non gia da elettione; la quale, come si è dichiarato nel terzo libro dell'ethica, non s'intromette gia mai in quelli affari, che sono propri della natura; tutto che poi, oltre il natural appetito della prole, si possa ancho collocare l'huomo in matrimonio con la donna, a disegno di vivere insieme una vita tanto piu buona, et piu felice, mediante li scambievoli commodi et aiuti communi, che da una parte verso l'altra possono derivare; si come ne ragionamenti fatti intorno l'amicitia si risolve nell'ottavo libro dell'ethica; il che non è gia permesso a gli altri animali, i quali sono incapace dell'uso di ragione.'

mankind. He has also provided his own cross-references to discussions in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, a work with which he was very familiar, having previously produced (as we have seen) an Italian paraphrase of the treatise. In another characteristic addition, where Aristotle states merely that ‘the poets’ say that Greeks should rule non-Greeks when introducing the idea of natural ruler and subject in *Politics* Book One, Scaino supplies a more precise reference: ‘as Euripides insinuates in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, introducing Iphigenia to say that the Greeks had to command the barbarians, almost as if the barbarian and the slave were the same by nature.’⁹³

The reference to marriage is part of an effort made by Scaino, throughout the paraphrase and its accompanying paratextual material, to make the *Politics* theologically acceptable to a contemporary Christian readership. His addition in the paraphrase above gives the reader no indication that this is not present in Aristotle’s text; and he reinforces the point in the ‘annotationi e dubbi’ included after the paraphrase, where the natural desire to procreate is dealt with at greater length.⁹⁴ Another addition in the ‘annotationi e dubbi’, on the subject of voices,⁹⁵ stresses that the use of reason which distinguishes humans from animals is a gift from God: ‘So men, through the divine gift of reason that they possess, are able by their nature to understand intellectually the reason why something is useful, or damaging.’⁹⁶

Within the paraphrase itself, as well as making additions, Scaino also omits material which alludes to unorthodox religious beliefs. Having discussed the ‘kingly’ rule of the first villages – family colonies – by the eldest member, Aristotle’s text reads ‘That is why men say that the Gods have a king, because they themselves either are or were in ancient times under the rule of a king. For they imagine not only the forms of the Gods but their ways of life to be like their own’.⁹⁷ Scaino leaves this out of his paraphrase entirely, developing instead Aristotle’s leap from village life to kingship: ‘as everyone

⁹³ Scaino, *La Politica*, f. 2v: ‘Si come ci insinuo Euripide nell’Aulide introducendo Iphigenia a dire, che i Greci havrebbero dovuto comandare a barbari; quasi come una cosa istessa fosse per natura il barbaro et il servo.’ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1252b7-8. Euripides, *Bacchae, Iphigenia at Aulis, Rhesus*, ed. and transl. D. Kovacs (Cambridge MA, 2002), pp. 318-319, ln. 1400-1402.

⁹⁴ Scaino, *La Politica*, f. 183r-v.

⁹⁵ Scaino, *La Politica*, f. 188v: ‘Della differenza ch’è tra la voce sola commune a gli animali, et il parlare, che è proprio dell’huomo.’

⁹⁶ Scaino, *La Politica*, f. 189r: ‘La onde gli huomini per il divin dono della ragione che posseggono, atta per sua natura a comprendere intellettualmente la cagione perche una cosa sia utile, o dannosa.’

⁹⁷ *Politics*, 1252b24-27.

had been used to the rule of the head of the household, together they could then very well accept the rule of a lord over all of them; from which kingship takes its origin'.⁹⁸

In the religiously fearful and volatile atmosphere of the second half of the sixteenth century, this 'censuring' approach to Aristotle seems reasonable; added to this is Scaino's status as a priest.

Scaino ends his comprehensive treatment of the *Politics* with six *discorsi*, which are separated from the rest of the text by a new title-page and a new sequence of page numbers. These are on laws, the usefulness of the *Politics*, the identification of different types of regime, and studies on the Roman Republic, the Ottoman Empire and what he terms the 'Christian Republic' – amounting to an updating of the *Politics*.

In the dedication to the work as a whole, Scaino drew particular attention to the second of these *discorsi*:

I will not extend myself further in praise of these most elegant and most useful civil discourses of Aristotle, since – together with some other discourses on various civil matters which are published together with this work done on the *Politics* – I have composed a particular and separate discourse on the utility which one can take, and in what manner, from the political books of Aristotle.⁹⁹

In this discourse, Scaino addresses those critics who suggest that 'the discourses of Aristotle on the city are not put together with great skill and are accompanied by a doctrine which is difficult and very vague.'¹⁰⁰ He points to the great value to contemporary readers of understanding the construction of different types of government and of knowing how a city is formed. He dwells more insistently on the

⁹⁸ Scaino, *La Politica*, f. 3v: 'Come avezze gia ciascuna d'esse al reggimento d'un lor capo, molto bene potettero dipoi tutte insieme accettare il reggimento d'un signore a tutto lor commune; da che hebbe origine il regno.'

⁹⁹ Scaino, *La Politica*, [sig. *3v]: 'Onde io non mi stendero piu oltre in commendatione di questi leggiadrissimi, et utilissimi discorsi civili d'Aristotile, per haver insieme con alcuni altri discorsi di varie materie civili, li quali escono in luce in compagnia di questa fatica fatta sopra la politica, composto un particolare et appartato discorso sopra l'utilita, che si puo prendere, et in qual modo, da detti libri politici d'Aristotile.'

¹⁰⁰ Scaino, 'Discorsi', in *La Politica*, f. 15v: 'Li discorsi d'Aristotile circa la citta non sieno tessuti con grande artificio, et accompagnati insieme da un genere di dottrina grave et molto vaga.'

insight provided by the *Politics* into the causes of sedition in a city and the factors which might cause a change in the government of the state, which he evidently regards as particularly pertinent to the political uncertainty of the sixteenth century:

But, finally, we will say of what great importance it is that men intended for the government of people and of kingdoms are fully instructed, in general and in detail, on the reasons and the original circumstances from which sedition and civil discord and the collapse and mutation of cities arise.¹⁰¹

He also attempts to engage further with critics of the *Politics* by defending Aristotle's omissions: writing, for instance, that it does not matter that Aristotle did not address the laws of every kind of government, because the information he does provide is enough to open the way for comprehension of the subject,¹⁰² and explaining that no treatment of warfare – fortifications, munitions, military formation – is found in the *Politics*:

Partly to not confuse one subject with another; and also partly because one is not able, with general discussion, to arrive at that proof, or that exact discourse, that one searches for in the specific implementation of all these things: as, equally, earlier it was not possible to comprehend fully certain communications and certain points of interest that pass between different states, through abstract and general discussion.¹⁰³

It is difficult to say whether Scaino's essay on the usefulness of the *Politics* shows the existence of critics who questioned the relevance of Aristotle's views to contemporary political life in Italy. The accusations that Scaino seems to be defending Aristotle from

¹⁰¹ Scaino, 'Discorsi', f.17r: 'Ma finalmente di quanta grande importanza diremo noi che sia, che gli huomini proposti al governo de popoli et de regni, sieno pienamente instrutti in generale et in particolare, cosi delle cagioni, et de casi originali, da quali derivano le seditioni, et le discordie civili, et le rovine, et le mutationi delle citta.'

¹⁰² Scaino, 'Discorsi', f. 17r: 'Ne importa che Aristotile non habbia trattato delle leggi, appropriandole in particolare a ciascuna spetie di republica; tutto che pur egli n'habbi ancho tocco alcune, si come nel trattato del republica popolare composta d'huomini agricoltori, et di pastori, et altrove anchora: perche diciamo, essere stato a bastanza, ch'egli habbia aperta la strada al conoscimento di tutte le varie spetie di republica.'

¹⁰³ Scaino, 'Discorsi', f. 20r: 'Parte per non confondere un facolta con l'altra; et parte anchora, per non potersi con generali discorsi giungere a quel segno, et a quella essatta trattatione, che si ricerca nella particolare essecutione di tutte queste cose: si come parimente non è gia possibile afferar a pieno con generali et astratti discorsi certe corrispondenze, et certi punti d'interessi, che passano tra diversi stati.'

are that, far from being irrelevant, the *Politics* could provide more: that Aristotle should have written on warfare, or that the text is difficult to understand, rather than that it cannot be applied to situations in Renaissance Italy. Instead, this *discorso* – and his vernacular treatment of the *Politics* as a whole – suggests that Scaino believed in the useful application of the *Politics* to governance, and wrote to elucidate the work to an audience he felt could accomplish this.

The expansive approach to the *Politics* taken by Antonio Scaino can also be found in the *De la politica, ovvero scienza civile secondo la dottrina d'Aristotile* by Felice Figliucci (1518-1595), a paraphrase written in the form of a dialogue between two interlocutors. Printed in Venice by Giovanni Battista Somascho in 1583, the work was conceived and composed much earlier in Figliucci's life. Born in Siena to a noble family and well educated – he studied under the accomplished humanist Claudio Tolomei¹⁰⁴ – Figliucci's first philosophical interest was in Platonism and its dissemination: he made translations into Italian of the *Phaedrus* and of Marsilio Ficino's letters, which he dedicated to Cosimo I de' Medici.¹⁰⁵ He also belonged to the rich tradition of Italian thought which sought to align the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato;¹⁰⁶ and, after attending the Council of Trent in 1545, Figliucci travelled to Padua with the express intention of studying Aristotle.¹⁰⁷

Figliucci spent two years in Padua. His work there resulted in the first Italian translation of the *Rhetoric*, published in 1548 in Padua by Giacomo Fabriano,¹⁰⁸ a paraphrase in dialogue form of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (published in Rome in 1551, and again in Venice in 1552) and the *De la politica, ovvero scienza civile secondo la dottrina d'Aristotile*, another paraphrase written in the form of a dialogue. This last work, however, remained unpublished for unknown reasons. By 1556, Figliucci had left behind classical philosophy and embarked on a religious life, entering the Dominican

¹⁰⁴ F. Lenzi, 'Felice Figliucci, Ficino e l'Etica Nicomachea di Aristotele', *Annali dell'Istituto di filosofia: Università di Firenze*, 1 (1979), pp. 131-164, at p. 133.

¹⁰⁵ Plato, *Il Fedro, o vero il Dialogo del bello*, transl. Felice Figliucci (Rome, 1544); Marsilio Ficino, *Tomo primo [-secondo] delle divine lettere ...* transl. Felice Figliucci (Venice, 1546).

¹⁰⁶ See J. Kraye, 'La filosofia nelle università italiane del XVI secolo', in C. Vasoli, *Le filosofie del Rinascimento*, ed. P. C. Pissavino (Milan, 2002), pp. 350-373, at pp. 365-368.

¹⁰⁷ Lenzi, 'Felice Figliucci', p. 148.

¹⁰⁸ The first translation of the *Rhetoric* has, for many years, been mistakenly attributed to Antonio Brucioli. See G. Allen and E. Del Soldato, 'A Ghost Translation by Antonio Brucioli: The 1545 Edition of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*', *Notes and Queries*, 61 (2014), pp. 353-355.

convent of San Marco in Florence as Fra Alessio. He continued to translate, but only in the service of the Church: his Italian version of the catechism of the Council of Trent was his most diffused work.¹⁰⁹ The publication of the *Politics* paraphrase in 1583 nevertheless indicates that he did not entirely reject the work of his youth, since he agreed to its publication and wrote the dedication.

In his dedication to Conte Mario Bevilacqua, Figliucci explains the circumstances in which his dialogue-paraphrase was finally printed, some thirty years after its composition:

Having in my youth, when I returned to the famous studio of Padua, put on paper certain expositions and annotations on the moral and natural philosophy of Aristotle, and no longer turning my soul nor thought to these matters, I made a gift of them to my dear nephew Flavio Figliucci, a youth very desirous of having knowledge and well trained in those studies which are required of a gentleman, asking that they should not come into other hands. But (as he affirms) he has been implored and encouraged many times to publish the interpretation which I made of Aristotle's *Politics*, to accompany the one of the *Ethics* by the same philosopher which I had composed at the same time.¹¹⁰

Figliucci's nephew, Flavio, was clearly the driving force behind the publication of the work and wrote the 'address to readers' which follows the dedication. Flavio, presenting himself as a reader who has pored over his uncle's text, praises it and makes claims for its utility. He explains that, since it was written by the young Felice Figliucci rather than the present Fra Alessio, he has published it under his former name; and he is quick to point out that there is no incompatibility between this juvenile work and his uncle's religious calling. Instead, the usefulness of the text to a morally responsible citizenry is

¹⁰⁹ *Catechismo, cioè Istruzione secondo il decreto del Concilio di Trento a' parochi*, transl. Felice Figliucci (Venice, not before 1564). Later editions were published in 1566, 1568, 1574, 1576, 1579, 1580, 1582, and 1595.

¹¹⁰ Felice Figliucci, *De la politica, ouero scienza ciuile secondo la dottrina d'Aristotile* (Venice, 1583), [sig. *2r-v]: 'Il perche havendo ne la mia gioventù, quando mi ritrovava ne lo studio celebre di Padova, messe in carta alcune espositioni, et annotazioni sopra la Filosofia morale, et naturale d'Aristotile; per non ci haver più a rivolger l'animo ne il pensiero, ne feci dono à Flavio Figliucci mio caro nipote, giovane assai desideroso di sapere, et non mediocrementemente essercitato in quelli studii, che ad un Gentiluomo son richiesti; acciò che no' venessero in altre mani. Ma egli essendo stato (come afferma) pregato, et stimolato piu volte da molti à mandar fuori la interpretazione, che io feci sopra la Politica d'Aristotile; per accompagnar quella, che nel medesimo tempo composi sopra l'Ethica del medesimo Filosofo.'

stressed: ‘This doctrine is not alien to his profession of aiding souls, because it is very useful to human life, adorning it with virtue and teaching civil life, and finally forming, and informing, a good citizen.’¹¹¹

Figliucci himself addresses his readers in the ‘Proemio’ which begins his youthful work, stating that, because his work is in Italian, it is more accessible, and also emphasises its value to a Christian society: ‘I judged that it would be of no little use if I explained in our Tuscan tongue all the moral sciences, treated profoundly and with great wisdom by Aristotle, in order to return in this way the world corrupted by dissolute life to virtuous and Christian habits.’¹¹²

Figliucci’s ‘Proemio’ then becomes an introduction, explaining the format of the works, as a paraphrase which expands the ‘difficult and concise passages’ (‘passi difficili, et concisi’) employed by Aristotle, and the division of the dialogue, due to its length, into eight ‘days’ (‘giorni’) over which the eight books of the *Politics* are discussed.¹¹³ The two interlocutors are Lelio Torello, one of the most learned men of Florence, and his son Francesco, who showed much promise as a scholar.¹¹⁴ Figliucci gives the role of Socratic teacher to Lelio, who lays out the topics of the *Politics* with little mention of Aristotle as the author.

Figliucci’s interest in both Aristotle and Plato and his sympathetic view of the two philosophers is apparent in the dialogue – an outlook he had already made clear in the ‘proemio’ to his paraphrase of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹¹⁵ In the ‘proemio’ to the *Politics* paraphrase, Figliucci mentions on several occasions that in using the dialogue

¹¹¹ Flavio Figliucci, ‘Flavio Figliucci a benigni lettori’, in F. Figliucci, *De la politica*, [sig. *4r-v], at [sig. *4r]: ‘Questa dottrina non è aliena da la sua professione di aiutare l’anime; poi che è molto giovevole all’humana vita, ornandola di virtù, et insegnando il viver civile, et finalmente formando, et informando un buon Cittadino.’

¹¹² Figliucci, *De la politica*, [sig. *7r]: ‘Ho per tanto giudicato, dever fare cosa non poco giovevole, se io esplicasse ne la nostra lingua Toscana, tutta la scienza morale da Aristotile altamente, et con incredibil sapienza trattata, per ritirare per cotal maniera il mondo scorretto da la vita dissoluta a i virtuosi costumi, et Christiani.’

¹¹³ Figliucci, *De la politica*, [sig. *8r].

¹¹⁴ Figliucci, *De la politica*, [sig. *8r-v]. Lelio Torello was part of Piero Vettori’s circle in Florence (Figliucci also discusses Vettori, and his work on the *Politics*, in his ‘proemio’). On Lelio and Francesco, see A. Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1983), I, pp. 63-65.

¹¹⁵ Felice Figliucci, *Di Felice Figliucci senese, De la filosofia morale libri dieci. Sopra li dieci libri de l’Ethica d’Aristotile* (Venice, 1552), f. 6v. (The first edition of this work was published in Rome in 1551).

format he is emulating ‘il gran Platone’,¹¹⁶ and he endorses the dialogue as an ideal way of fostering understanding of a topic: ‘This method (as you know) was greatly approved and used by Plato, as such arguments were very delightful and facilitated the understanding of difficult and obscure things.’¹¹⁷

Figliucci occasionally uses the presentation of his paraphrase as a Platonic dialogue in order to clarify certain difficult issues, with Francesco voicing the concerns of a reader struggling to understand the concepts under discussion. One of particular complexity is the idea of the city as prior, in importance rather than construction, to the individual:

M[esser] Fr[ancesco]: This seems hard to me: since man is part of the city which is put together by him, it is appropriate to say that man is prior to the city, as the stones with which the house is built are prior to the house.

M[esser] Lel[io]. You speak the truth that, in terms of generation, man comes before the city, as the stones come before the house; but I said that the city is prior by nature, and not because it was made first. In fact, what is first by generation is last by nature; and what is first by nature is last by generation. Because the first house which the craftsman proposes is the entire composition, which comes to him first in his mind, just as what by nature is prior to its parts, which by nature follow the whole. Since the composition is more perfect than the parts, and what is more perfect is by nature prior to what is imperfect, so the city is by its nature prior to all of us.¹¹⁸

Although there are parallels between Figliucci’s paraphrase and that of Scaino, in that

¹¹⁶ Figliucci, *De la politica*, [sig. *8v].

¹¹⁷ Figliucci, *De la politica*, [sig. *7r]: ‘Questo modo, (come voi sapete) fu molto approvato, et usato da Platone, come che cotali ragionamenti fussero molto dilettevoli, et arreccassero facilità a intendere le cose difficili et oscure.’

¹¹⁸ Figliucci, *De la politica*, f. 9r: ‘M. Fr[ancesco]. Questo a me par duro, percioche essendo l’huomo una parte de la Città, de la quale ella si compone, convenevol cosa mi pare, che sia debbia dir l’huomo esser prima de la Città, si come ancora le pietre de le quali si mura la casa, sono prima de la casa. M. Lel[io]. Tu dice il vero, che per via di generazione prima è l’huomo, che la città, si come prima è la pietra che la casa; ma io dissi che la Città era prima per natura, et non perche prima fusse stata fatta. Imperoche quello, che è primo per generazione è ultimo per natura. Et quello, che è primo per natura, è ultimo per generazione. Percioche la prima casa, che l’artefice si proponga è tutto il composto insieme, il quale gli viene prima ne la mente, come quello che per natura è prima, che le sue parti, le quali per natura sono dopo il tutto. Conciosia che il composto sia il più perfetto, che le parti, et quello che è più perfetto, è per natura prima al imperfetto, et però la città è per natura sua, prima a ciascun di noi.’

both follow the text of the *Politics* and expand on it, the omissions or changes made by Scaino seem insignificant when compared to those of Figliucci. His paraphrase is organised according to the chapters within each book of the *Politics*, but there is no strict fidelity to the progression of arguments as laid out by Aristotle. He begins by describing the contents of the first chapter of Book I of the *Politics*: ‘Of the city, of its government, and of its parts of the household, and the neighbourhood’ (‘De la città, del governatore d’essa, et de le parti sue de la casa, e del Borgo’); but his own discussion centres on the value of politics and the way in which art imitates nature, comparing it to a student studying a work by Michelangelo.¹¹⁹ Material from the *Politics* does not appear until late in the chapter (with no indication to the reader of where it starts); moreover, Figliucci omits large sections, dwells at length on others and rearranges the order of the topics.

This is particularly noticeable in the first book, which, since it provides the foundation of Aristotelian political philosophy, was presented with considerable accuracy by previous authors. Figliucci moves Aristotle’s discussion of man as either a beast or a god, so that it precedes the outline of man’s nature as a social animal. He leaves out the illustrative examples given by Aristotle such as the contrast between the Delphic knife – a poor instrument because it is made for many tasks – and nature, which makes each thing perfectly equipped for one task.¹²⁰ He then supplies additional material on the voice, transforming what in Aristotle’s text is:

Man is the only animal who has the gift of speech. And whereas mere voice is but an indication of pleasure or pain, and is therefore found in other animals (for their nature attains to the perception of pleasure and pain and the intimation of them to one another, and no further), the power of speech is intended to set forth the expedient and inexpedient, and therefore likewise the just and unjust. And it is a characteristic of man that he alone has any sense of good and evil, of

¹¹⁹ Figliucci, *De la politica*, f. 1v: ‘Per questo è adunque necessario, che le operazioni de l’arte imitino quelle de la natura, et tutte le cose, che da l’arte son fatte à quelle si rassimigliano, che sono da la natura prodotte. La onde si fusse un’ Maestro, che facesse un’opera secondo l’arte, come, Se Michel’ Angelo dipingesse, ò sculpisse un’ Appollo; sarebbe necessario, che quel discepolo, che da lui tal’ arte volesse apprendere, et fare poi una figura, ò una statua à quella somigliante; ben attendesse, et havesse l’occhio all’ opera fatta da Michel’ Angelo, accioche egli ancora potesse à somiglianza di quella operare.’

¹²⁰ *Politics*, 1252b1-5.

just and unjust, and the like.¹²¹

Into:

In this, therefore, men are more excellent than the other animals, since they have the expression of speech, and the other animals have only a voice, which is what shows and signals the sadness and happiness experienced by animals: like the roar of lions, with which they demonstrate the sadness they feel; the bark of dogs, by which they show their anger, and so on. And the difference between voices and words is that the voice is only a confused sound and inarticulate and an expression of sadness or joy, while speech is distinct and articulate, showing the concepts which we have in our soul; and because in brute animals there is only an appetitive soul, by which they feel pain and gladness, but not a discursive part, since speech, through which they can form concepts, is not necessary to them, as it is to mankind, but it is enough for them to have only a voice, which they make use of to show the sadness and joy and pleasure they experience. So nature does not go further with them than to give them the sentiment of joy and of annoyance, and this they signify and demonstrate between each other with a voice. Speech, however, is given to man to show what is useful and harmful and consequently what is just.¹²²

Figliucci adds vivid description to the passage with his illustrative examples of lions and dogs; he also draws on another aspect of Aristotelian philosophy, the composition of the soul, to add another level of meaning to the difference between animals and mankind on the issue of speech. He uses Aristotle to explain Aristotle, just as Giasone

¹²¹ *Politics*, 1253a9-17.

¹²² Figliucci, *De la politica*, ff. 8v-9r: ‘Sono adunque gl’huomini in questo de gl’altri animali piu eccellenti, percioche essi hanno la espressione de le parole, et gl’altri animali la voce sola, la quale è quella, che manifesta, et fa segno de la tristizia, è del piacere, che ricevono gl’animali; come il rugito ne Leoni, co’l quale dimostrano il dolore che sentono; il latrato ne cavi, per il quale manifestano la loro ira, et cosi andate discorrendo. Et questa differenza è tra le voci, et le parole, che la voce è solo un suono confuso, et inarticulato, et espresso dal dolore, ò da la giocondità. la parola poi è distinta, et articulata, la quale manifesta i concetti che habbiamo nell’animo; et perche ne gl’animali brutti è solo l’anima sensitiva, per la quale si dogliono, et si rallegrano, ne hanno la parte discorsiva, per la quale i concetti possano formare, però non fu necessaria a loro la parola, che i concetti esprimesse, come a gl’huomini, ma solo bastò loro la voce, de la quale si servissero a manifestare il dolore, et la giocondità, e’l piacere che provassero. Imperoche più oltre la Natura con loro non procede, che nel dargli sentimento del giocondo, et del molesto, et questo tra di loro con la voce significano, et dimostrano. Ma la parola a l’huomo è data per manifestare l’utile, e’l nocevole, et consequentemente il giusto.’

Denores had done by providing a schema of the *Politics* based on the division of the soul.

This approach is also evident in his provision of modern examples, presumably with the aim of drawing the distant world of Aristotle's *Politics* closer to that of contemporary Europe. Figliucci does this throughout the work; when discussing wealth creation (the topic taken from *Politics* Book One)¹²³ he lists Rome, Venice and Florence as locations in which usury flourishes, and on the subject of trade, refers to the discovery of Peru.¹²⁴

In common with Scaino and Denores, Figliucci also takes care over Aristotle's position as a pagan authority in a Christian society. This comes across most strikingly when he compares ancient Greek religion with Christianity, encouraging his audience to see the parallels between the religion of Homer and of the Catholic Church.

The great poet Homer said that Jove was father and king of men and of the gods, from the similarity which the governance of a father has to that of a king ... Homer, however, spoke according to the opinion of the common people, who believe God to have the same appearance as men and to be the same sort of being. Other than this, one can say, speaking as a Christian that God, through the great and infinite love which he bears for human beings, is made similar to them by love and so one can say he is their king and their father.¹²⁵

Rather than omitting this passage as Scaino does, Figliucci aligns it with Christianity; Homer's God is father and king, and the same can be said of the Christian God. He writes forgivingly of the 'opinion of the common people' – the tendency to anthropomorphise God being equally tempting to his own contemporaries.

¹²³ *Politics*, 1256a1-1259a36.

¹²⁴ Figliucci, *De la politica*, f. 23v: 'Si come non è troppi anni, quando prima fù scoperto il Perù, et altre Isole nuovamente ritrovate, avveniva, che se uno quivi avesse portato alcune cose artificiose, che qua facilmente si lavorano; come dire chi, specchi, coltelli, et simili istrumenti, ne harebbe importato in quel cambio, oro, et gemme, de la quali cose è quel paese abundantissimo.'

¹²⁵ Figliucci, *De la politica*, f. 32r: 'Il gran poeta Homero disse, che Giove era padre, et Re de gl'huomini, et de gli Iddii, per la somiglianza, che hà il governo del padre a quello del Re ... Homero allhora parlò secondo l'opinione del vulgo, che crede Iddio havere la medesima figura de gl'huomini, et esser d'una medesima sorte. Oltra di questo si può dire, parlando come Christiano, che Iddio per sommo, et infinito amore, che a gl'huomini porta, s'è fatto a loro per amor simile, et cosi si può dire lor Re, et lor padre.'

Figliucci's treatment of the text in some ways resembles that of Denores. Both pick and choose the parts of Aristotelian political philosophy they wish to offer their readers. The idea behind the work is not primarily to help a vernacular reader understand the *Politics*, obscurities and all (as Scaino's text is, even with its omissions): it is to make the *Politics* useful and pleasing to the vernacular reader.

The last of the six works to be examined here is *Dello stato delle repubbliche secondo la mente di Aristotele con essempli moderni giornate otto* (1591) by Nikola Vitov Gučetić, better known as Niccolò Vito di Gozze (1549–1610). Like Figliucci's *La Politica*, di Gozze's work is a dialogue which takes place over eight days, with each day dedicated to a book of the *Politics*, and conducted between the author himself and the Dalmatian poet Domenico Ragnina.¹²⁶ The use of the dialogue form was a common humanist trope, but in Figliucci's work the presentation of Aristotelian content in a Platonic format could also be linked to his regard for Aristotle and Plato as equally respected authorities and the same can be said of di Gozze.¹²⁷ His published writings, other than a Latin treatise on Averroes' *De substantia orbis* and a discourse on the Psalms of David,¹²⁸ are focused on Aristotle and Plato: the *Dialogo d'amore* and the *Dialogo della bellezza*, both written 'according to the mind of Plato', ('secondo la mente di Platone'),¹²⁹ and a discourse on *Meteorology*, in addition to that on the *Politics*.¹³⁰ He also wrote a work on oeconomics which draws heavily from both philosophers.¹³¹ All his works, except that on Averroes, are written in the Italian vernacular; and his concordist approach can be discerned in the dialogue on the *Politics*, in which Plato is consistently invoked.

As with Giasone Denores, di Gozze illustrates the spread of Italian culture within the Venetian maritime empire. He was born and spent his entire life in Ragusa (present-day

¹²⁶ Ragnina (1536-1607) was a Croatian poet, born in Ragusa (Dubrovnik), who lived in Florence and wrote Italian verse. See Š. Ljubić, *Dizionario biografico degli uomini illustri della Dalmazia* (Vienna, 1836), pp. 264-265.

¹²⁷ M. Jurić, 'Paideia and the Neo-Platonic Ideas on Music Education and Culture in Renaissance Dubrovnik in the Works by Niccolò Vito di Gozze (Nikola Vitov Gučetić, 1549-1610)', *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*, 44 (2013), pp. 3-17, at p. 5.

¹²⁸ Niccolò Vito di Gozze, *Commentaria in sermonem Auer[rois] De substantia orbis, et in propositiones de causis* (Venice, 1580); *Discorsi della penitenza, sopra i Sette Salmi Penitentiali di David* (Venice, 1589).

¹²⁹ Niccolò Vito di Gozze, *Dialogo d'amore* (Venice, 1581); *Dialogo della bellezza* (Venice, 1581).

¹³⁰ Niccolò Vito di Gozze, *Discorsi ... sopra le Metheore d'Aristotile* (Venice, 1584).

¹³¹ Niccolò Vito di Gozze, *Governo della famiglia* (Venice, 1589).

Dubrovnik), which had been under Venetian control in the medieval period and still maintained close, if wary, trade and cultural links with the republic.¹³² The legacy of Venetian domination is apparent in di Gozze's published works in Italian, which was the *lingua franca* of the well-born in the city's former colonies.

Di Gozze occupied a position at the centre of cultural and civic life in Ragusa. He was a philosopher, a theologian and a politician, as well as a leading member of the Academy dei Concordi, to which the most notable figures of the city belonged.¹³³ As a man of letters, he was in correspondence with, and was valued highly by, some of the most prestigious figures in Italy, including Paolo and Aldo the Younger Manuzio, who published his dialogue on the *Politics*, and Pope Clement VII, who granted him degrees in philosophy and theology.¹³⁴

Despite his learning and eminent supporters, however, di Gozze's relationship with the tradition of Italian scholarship of which he was part betrays some feelings of colonial inferiority:

Excellent readers, if in these thoughts on the state of republics the author does not by chance reach the heights your lofty intellects desire, excuse him, bearing this in mind: that, located on another seashore and under rugged Monte di Vargato, he never saw the walls of Padua or of Bologna, nor of any other university famous beyond your country; so that, more worthy of wonder than of reproof, he will always deserve praise, having acquired this understanding more at home, by his own industry, without a teacher, than from outside with the help of others, which he has also marvellously demonstrated up to now in the many works which he has published.¹³⁵

¹³² F. W. Carter, *Dubrovnik (Ragusa): A Classic City-State* (London, 1972), p. 192.

¹³³ Jurić, 'Paideia', p. 4.

¹³⁴ Bozzi, *Scrittori politici Italiani*, p. 76.

¹³⁵ Niccolò Vito di Gozze, *Dello stato delle repubbliche secondo la mente di Aristotele con esempi moderni giornate otto* (Venice, 1591), p. 447: 'Benignissimi Lettori, se in questi Ragionamenti dello stato delle Rep[ubliche] non arriverà l'autore per avventura ove desiderano gli elevati ingegni vostri, l'iscusarete, havendo questa considerazione; che egli non mai vide le mura di Padova, ne di Bologna, ne d'alcun'altro studio famoso fuori della sua patria, fondata sopra un'altro lido del mare, et sotto l'aspro Monte di Vargato; perche più di meraviglia, che di riprensione degno doverà sempre essere stimato, havendo egli acquistato questa cognitione più in casa, con la propria industria, senza precettore, che fuori con l'aiuto altrui: la qual anco maravigliosamente hà dimostrato fin'hora in più sue opere, che hà dato in luce.'

Di Gozze's work is, however, extremely learned and demands a greater degree of knowledge than any previous work of vernacular Aristotelianism – an indication that such works were becoming increasingly popular with a more educated readership. The text is strewn with Latin quotations, with references given in the margins. For instance, when discussing whether the nobility of the soul can be judged from the appearance of the body,¹³⁶ di Gozze writes:

‘The good appearance of the body follows the nobility of the soul, because every form is proportional to its substance’, said St. Thomas, and, elsewhere, ‘the body and its perfected parts are owed to the soul’; and Albert the Great, ‘the creation of the body is owed to the soul, and its workings’.¹³⁷

In the margin the references for these quotations are given in highly abbreviated form, expecting the reader's knowledge of the works they allude to: D. Tho. In 2. de Ani. et 2. Poli. Lib. 10. Alber. de ani. li. II. tractat. 2. cap. 3.¹³⁸

This is the first vernacular treatment of the *Politics* to supply precise citations. Direct quotations from Latin sources, given in Latin, are referenced in the margin, as with Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great above. This is not consistent, however. Di Gozze also paraphrases his authorities in Italian within the text, generally giving the name of the author and sometimes a citation – this is the case, for example, for certain uses of Plato, Livy, and Marsilio Ficino¹³⁹ – but often no reference is provided. The latter is most commonly the case for his (obviously extremely frequent) uses of Aristotle's *Politics*, but also for passing mentions of other figures, such as Thomas More.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ This follows on from a discussion of *Politics* 1254b24-33.

¹³⁷ Di Gozze, *Dello stato*, p. 28: ‘Corporis bonam complexionem sequitur nobilitas animae, quia omnis forma est proportionata sua materiae’, disse San Tomaso, et altrove ‘corpus, et ipsius perfectiones sunt propter animam,’ et Alberto Magno, ‘corporis creatio est propter animam, et eius operationes’.

¹³⁸ Di Gozze, *Dello stato*, p. 28. Thomas Aquinas, *In Aristotelis librum de anima commentarium*, II.xix.485; Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Auvergne, *In octos libros politicorum Aristotelis expositio*, VII.xi.1203; Albert the Great, *De animalibus*, II.ii.3.

¹³⁹ Di Gozze, *Dello stato*, p. 5 (Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, ed. J. Hankins and transl. M. J. B. Allen, 3 vols (Cambridge MA, 2003), pp. 128-129); p. 211 (Livy, *The History of Rome*, XXI.3.4-6); p. 14 (Plato, *Laws* VII.805.D-E).

¹⁴⁰ Di Gozze, *Dello stato*, pp. 87-88 (Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed. G. M. Logan, R. M. Adams and C. H. Miller (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 134-5).

In addition to di Gozze's knowledge of sixteenth-century high intellectual culture, the application of the *Politics* to contemporary Europe seems to have been particularly carefully considered in the composition of this dialogue than in earlier works: it is specifically stated on the title-page that the work is written 'with modern examples' ('con essemi moderni'). Di Gozze's examples, in fact, draw from both contemporary and classical history. For instance, with regard to the notion that war should be avoided if the cause is not just:

When reason and the sacred custom of gentlemen are removed from the enemy, when faith is broken and conventions violated, God often gives the victory to the party which has acted with reason. Hanno made this prediction to the Carthaginians, dissuading them in the senate from war against the Romans, the former having broken the confederation which they made in the first Carthaginian war, with Hannibal's conquest of Saguntum; and since all reason were on the side of the Romans, they remained victorious in the end and destroyed the city of Carthage down to its foundations. Franceschino Gambacorti, a Pisan gentleman, employed similar tactics in persuading the senate to remain at peace with the Florentines and not to make war.¹⁴¹

As in Figliucci's work, the dialogue format allows di Gozze to provide clarifications in the guise of questions asked by one interlocutor and answered by another. Sometimes, these involve placing the *Politics* in its historical context. 'Ragnina', for instance, says to 'di Gozze':

Kindly stop, because I would like to ask you something: I see that our Philosopher in this argument of his has mentioned the most worthy republics which existed in those times, both in Greece and outside of it, but does not make any mention of the Roman Republic, so celebrated by writers, and its laws,

¹⁴¹ Di Gozze, *Dello stato*, p. 211: 'Ove sono tolte al nimico le ragioni, et il santo costume delle genti, quando gli è rotta la fede, e violate le conventioni, spesso Iddio dà la vittoria a quella parte, che ha feco la ragione; questo indovino fece a' Cartaginesi Hannone dissuadendogli nel senato dalla guerra contra Romani, havendo quelli rotto la confederatione fatta nella prima guerra Cartagine se con la presa, che Annibale di Sagunto fece; et essendo dal canto de' Romani tutte le ragioni; alla fine restando vittoriosi, distrussero la città di Cartagine sino da' fondamenti: simile mezi usò Franceschino Gambacorti gentil' huomo Pisano persuadendo il senato a star in pace con Fiorentini, e non romper lor guerra.' Di Gozze's sources are Livy and Leonardo Bruni: Livy, *The History of Rome*, XXI.iii.4-6; Leonardo Bruni, *History of the Florentine People*, ed. J. Hankins, 2 vols (Cambridge MA, 2004), II, pp. 337-353.

knowing that he could conveniently have done it when the occasion was presented to him of discussing the Carthaginian republic, which was at war for a long time with the Romans.¹⁴²

‘di Gozze’s’ reply, of course, explains that the Roman republic did not exist in Aristotle’s time: ‘Ragnina’s’ question offers the opportunity to clarify a point di Gozze thought his readers might need assistance with.

As with the previous works of vernacular Aristotelianism discussed above, di Gozze includes paratextual material to offer his readers political learning in a different format. Here, this is in a series of ‘Avertimenti civili’, maxims on civil government which convey political wisdom in simple phrases, although often including Latin quotations:

For the health of the Republic, the management of women and children is very important: ‘it matters greatly for the good arrangement of the Republic for women and children to be well ordered: certainly, it matters to be necessary; for women are one half of the free people, and from children will be drawn those who govern the republic’, says the Philosopher.¹⁴³

They are not always taken from the *Politics*, and shed light on some of the more prosaic concerns of Renaissance politics:

I am not displeased by the opinions of those who, in the election of magistrates or of other high officials, shun people who are uncouth, hunchbacked and deformed in not having a nose, although they are excellent in spirit; for this ugly deformity does not have the grandeur and the noble aspect which naturally must be in every magistrate and prince; and they would be of more use to me in

¹⁴² Di Gozze, *Dello stato*, p. 129: ‘Fermatevi per cortesia, perche voglio domandarvi una cosa: io veggo, che il nostro Filosofo in questo suo ragionamento hà fatto mentione delle piu degne Republiche, che sono state in quei tempi, cosi in Grecia, come fuori di quella, e della Republica Romana tanto celebrata dalli scrittori, e delle sue leggi non ne fa mentione alcuna conciosia che commodamente lo poteva fare, quando si gli presentò la occasione di ragionar della Republica Cartaginense, che longamente guerreggiò co’ Romani.’

¹⁴³ Di Gozze, *Dello stato*, p. 411: Per la salute della Repub[lica] importa assai l’ammaestrar le donne, et i figliuoli, ‘multum refert ad rectam institutionem Reip. pueros, et mulieres esse bene institutos, enimvero referat esse necessarium; nam Mulieres media pars sunt hominum liberorum ex pueris autem sumuntur qui Remp. gubernant,’ Dice il Filosofo.’

private than in their public appearance.¹⁴⁴

Di Gozze's extremely learned work, full Latin quotations and references to philosophical texts, represents the scholarly heights to which the vernacular reached by the end of the sixteenth century. This is a text written not to educate a vernacular audience but is aimed at educated and Latin-literate readers, with the expectation that they will not question the merits of a scholarly work written in Italian.

The contrasts between Gozze's work and all the other five texts discussed above show, first of all, the diversification in the tradition of vernacular political Aristotelianism. Whereas at the mid-point of the sixteenth century Antonio Brucioli and Bernardo Segni provided works essentially aimed at vernacular-only readers as a complete body – producing the first Italian *Politics*, and its first Italian commentary – the works of Dolce, Cavalcanti, Denores, Scaino, Figliucci and di Gozze are intended for specific and often completely different vernacular audiences, demonstrating the immense growth of Italian as a language that was read, debated in, and studied in. This included Latin-literate readers; di Gozze's audience presumably read learned works in both Latin and the vernacular, while Cavalcanti's *Trattato* could be read by both humanist readers interested in the correlation between Plato, Polybius and Aristotle on political matters and a purely vernacular audience interested in civil matters. Scaino and Figliucci's works are intended for readers requiring a complete introduction to the *Politics*, but who are nevertheless prepared to devote considerable energy to studying a long and detailed vernacular work – the 'operators of government', mentioned by Scaino. Dolce and Denores treat the *Politics* in a different way – rather than introducing readers to Aristotle's work, they use selected parts of it to give information on the civil government.

Attention now turns away from works such as those discussed above which made definite promises to address Aristotelian politics, and towards texts in which use of the *Politics* is often fragmentary and sometimes unexpected. With regard to the place of

¹⁴⁴ Di Gozze, *Dello stato*, p. 411: 'Non mi dispiace l'opinione di coloro, i quali nell'electioni de' magistrati, ò d'altri degni officii schifano le persone zotte, gobbe, e diformi senza naso, ancorche eccellenti d'animo sieno, imperoche la maestà, e l'aspetto signorile, qual deve esser naturalmente in ogni Magistrato, e Principato, questa brutta diformità non comporta; et di costoro io piu me ne valerei in privato, che in apparenza publica.'

Aristotelian politics in vernacular religious works of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, a strong link between scholastic philosophy and preaching or devotional writing in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries – when religious figures incorporated an Aristotelianism learnt in Paris into their sermons – dwindled in the fifteenth century. The sermons and writings of Girolamo Savonarola at the end of the century seem to be somewhat of an exception, composed by a Dominican (the order most associated with scholastic learning) and one with a uniquely direct involvement in politics and government. It remains to assess, briefly, whether the general turn away from Aristotelian philosophy seen in the Quattrocento continued into the sixteenth century, or whether the Counter-Reformation's forced alliance of religion and politics inspired a turn back to the Philosopher.

The task of determining the continuation of Aristotelian political themes in the vernacular sermons of the sixteenth century is not easy. Although much scholarly attention has been paid to medieval and fifteenth-century sermons, the vast array of material available from the sixteenth century has not fared so well. Certainly, the influence of vernacular preaching was as strong, if not stronger, than before: the printing press meant that sermons both old – such as those of Savonarola¹⁴⁵ – and new could be disseminated ever more widely, while the proliferation of printing handbooks, the recommendations laid down at the Council of Trent and the popularity of mendicant religious houses show that preaching had retained its importance.¹⁴⁶ In the later sixteenth century vernacular preaching was employed above all to fight heresy: the vernacular was necessary to reach the large audience that vernacular heretical works did.¹⁴⁷

Recognising the power of the printing press, preachers now began to take control of the editing and publication of their sermons, rather than leaving it to those followers who wrote them down, in 'reportationi', and circulated them in manuscript. This was certainly the case for Cornelio Musso (1511–1574), Bishop of Bitonto, one of the most popular Franciscan preachers of his day and whose output, therefore, can serve as an

¹⁴⁵ E. Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press in Reformation Italy* (Cambridge MA, 2013), pp. 28-29.

¹⁴⁶ C. E. Norman, 'The Social History of Preaching: Italy', in L. Taylor (ed.), *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Period* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 125-192, at pp. 125-129.

¹⁴⁷ Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press*, p. 60.

exemplary case study of sixteenth century vernacular sermons.¹⁴⁸ It is impossible to determine the relationship between Musso's printed sermons and what he preached (although he claimed they were not much changed),¹⁴⁹ and therefore to know whether the frequent Latin quotations included in the published versions were in that language when he spoke, or whether the Aristotelian doctrines found in his published sermons were included in the versions he delivered to a presumably broad audience. Most likely, however, these features were increased when the spoken sermon was transformed into a written text.¹⁵⁰

Political preaching and the use of Aristotle's politics in sermons in Italy reached its zenith with Savonarola; and in the immediate aftermath of his fate preachers backed away from making overt political statements. During the Counter-Reformation, however, statecraft and religion became so tightly connected that it was no longer possible to ignore political issues. This is evident in a sermon first delivered by Musso in Trent, in which he praised the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, at that time the lynch-pin in the military defence of the Catholic faith:

But you see Charles V... who at just eighteen years (did you ever hear the like?) was elected emperor and monarch of the world. Immortal God, what a rare man, what a most rare prince is this Charles, whose name alone makes the Turks, the Moors, the heretics, and all the common enemies of the Christian name turn pale.¹⁵¹

Musso uses certain Aristotelian political elements in his sermons, suggesting a continuity with the preaching of previous centuries. He links, as Aristotle had, the human capacity for speech with a natural bent for political association, saying that 'this brought republics together'.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ C. E. Norman, *Humanist Taste and Franciscan Virtues: Cornelio Musso and Catholic Preaching in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (New York NY, 1998), pp. 5-6. See P. Foresta, 'Musso, Cornelio', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), LXXVII, pp. 540-544.

¹⁴⁹ Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press*, p. 33.

¹⁵⁰ Norman, 'The Social History of Preaching: Italy', p. 137.

¹⁵¹ Cornelio Musso, 'Predica delle gratie, et delli doni di Dio, et della nobiltà et dignità dell'huomo', in his *Prediche... Fatte in diversi tempi, et in diversi luogi* (Venice, 1558), pp. 247-279, at p. 264: 'Ma vedete Carlo Quinto... che di diciotto anni soli (udite mai cosa si grande?) fu eletto Imperadore, et Monarca del mondo. Dio immortale, che huomo raro, che rarissimo Principe è questo Carlo, il cui nome solo fa impallidire i Turchi, i Mori, gli Heretici, et tutti i communi nemici del nome Christiano.'

¹⁵² Musso, 'Predica delle gratie', p. 248: 'Questo ha congregato le Republiche'.

Musso, nonetheless, had a decidedly anti-Aristotelian horror of city life. His treatment of the topic shows the pervasiveness of Aristotelian concepts and vocabulary on mankind's sociability, but his conclusions are diametrically opposed to those of Aristotle, who saw the city as the ideal location for the pursuit of the good life:

The first cause and the first origin of kings was through the election of the people: when from unsettled and woodland dwellings, for the greater convenience of everyone, as well as for universal necessity, knowing that no-one is self-sufficient, but all have need of another like the limbs of the same body, they came to build cities, castles and towns for living together. Seeing that in cities everyone cares more for their own good than for the commune, from which were born harm, injuries, dishonours and scandals, because those who had more power oppressed those who had less, which was an open road to universal destruction, they were compelled to look for someone of virtue, morals, valour and authority, superior to all the others, who would be like a shepherd to the communal throng of people, who would govern all, keep watch over all and would attend to the common good of the people, to their benefit, to peace and to tranquillity, which is the true and natural end of the king.¹⁵³

Musso's account of the formation of government – a scattered people coming together for sufficiency – is indebted to Book One of the *Politics*.¹⁵⁴ Yet his words on the king are above all reminiscent of the 'bestial multitude' and the idealised king of Peter of Auvergne, and show the persistence in the sixteenth century of the medieval Augustinian idea of a sinful humanity which needs government as a form of restraint.

The content of Musso's works show that he at least had Aristotelian philosophy in mind

¹⁵³ Musso, 'Predica delle gratie', p. 261: 'Il primo principio, et la prima origine de' Regi, fu per elettione de' popoli, quando dalle vaghe, et boscareccie habitationi, per commodità maggior di ciascuno, anzi per necessità universale conoscendo, che niun bastava a se solo, ma tutti havean bisogno uno dell'altro, come le membra d'un medesimo corpo, si ridussero a fabricar città, castella, ville per habitar insieme, perche vedendo, che nelle città ogn'uno havea piu cura del proprio ben, che del commune, onde nascevan de danni, dell'ingiurie, de' dishonori, de gli scandali, cagion che chi piu poteva, opprimea chi potea meno: il che era strada aperta alla destruttion universale, furon sforzati a pensar di provvedere, che vi fusse uno di virtù, di costumi, di valore, et d'authorità, superiore a tutti gli altri, il quale fusse quai pastore del commune gregge de gli huomini, che governasse tutti vegliasse per tutti, et attendesse al commune beneficio del popolo, d'utilità, di pace, et di quiete; che questo è il vero et natural fine del Re.'

¹⁵⁴ *Politics*, 1252b24-30.

– even if he did not agree with it – when composing his works. In studying other sixteenth-century vernacular religious works, however, I have found little evidence of the use of Aristotle’s work. There are some instances of a vaguely Aristotelian political vocabulary: the Venetian Alberto da Castello,¹⁵⁵ resident in that city’s convent of Giovanni and Paolo in the first half of the sixteenth century, refers to the ‘glorious citizens of the celestial court’,¹⁵⁶ in his popular rosary manual,¹⁵⁷ repeating the idea of the heavenly community as a politically understood concept and echoing Giordano da Pisa, who had pronounced that ‘la città del cielo è nostro luogo’.¹⁵⁸

Later, the use of political vocabulary was forced by the pressures of the Catholic Church’s campaign against Lutheranism. Antonio Pagani’s *Discorso della salutifera, et fruttuosa penitenza*, published in 1570,¹⁵⁹ discusses at length the errors of Protestant theology and veers into historical accounts which blend politics and religion, such as the heresy of John Huss in the time of the Emperor Honorius.¹⁶⁰ Once again, however, there is no clear use of Aristotle. It seems that the decline in the use of Aristotelian philosophy in the religious works of the fifteenth century continues into the sixteenth, pagan learning shunned in an age guarded against any religious unorthodoxy; and even preachers who employed Aristotelian vocabulary, such as Musso, reached conclusions opposed to those of Aristotle.

The picture is very different in the commentary tradition on Dante’s *Commedia*. In contrast to the fifteenth century’s heightened interest in classical languages and literature, which saw Dante largely ignored by intellectuals until towards the end of the century when the *Commedia* could be enlisted in civic and linguistic battles, appreciation for and production of Italian vernacular literature gathered pace – as we have seen – throughout the sixteenth century. This resulted, especially from the middle of the century onwards, in a proliferation of works written in Italian on Dante’s

¹⁵⁵ See M. Palma, ‘Castellano (da Castello), Alberto’, *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), XXI, pp. 642-644.

¹⁵⁶ Alberto da Castello, *Rosario della gloriosa vergine maria* (Venice, 1522), f. 15r: ‘Li gloriosi cittadini della corte celestiale.’

¹⁵⁷ A. Winston-Allen, *Stories of the Rose: The Making of the Rosary in the Middle Ages* (University Park PA, 2010), p. 60.

¹⁵⁸ Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche inedite ... Recitate in Firenze dal 1302 al 1305*, ed. E. Narducci (Bologna, 1867), p. 403.

¹⁵⁹ On Pagani, see R. Bacchiddu, ‘Pagani, Marco (in religione Antonio)’, *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), LXXX, pp. 235-238.

¹⁶⁰ Antonio Pagani, *Discorso della salutifera, et fruttuosa penitenza* (Venice, 1570), p. 74.

Commedia, often by the most renowned scholars of the age. These included Trifon Gabriele (the tutor of Giasone Denores), Alessandro Vellutello, Bernardino Daniello, Lodovico Castelvetro and Torquato Tasso.¹⁶¹ All of these texts reference Aristotle, with some making particular reference to the *Politics*: Vellutello and Daniello note, for instance, Dante's reliance on the *Politics* for his conversation with Carlo Martello in *Paradiso* 8, with Vellutello repeating the familiar Aristotelian concept that 'man being a naturally sociable animal, he does not know how to live well other than in companionship.'¹⁶²

The most significant use of the *Politics*, however, was made in the public readings of Giambattista Gelli (1498–1563),¹⁶³ a key member of the Accademia Fiorentina and, from 1553 until his death ten years later, the academy's official lecturer on the *Commedia*. These lectures took place in public on Sundays and in private on Thursdays, and were always given in Italian;¹⁶⁴ most were later published by the Academy's printer, Lorenzo Torrentino.¹⁶⁵ In line with the aims of the Accademia Fiorentina, Gelli believed that the function of poetry was to convey knowledge in a pleasant way. He was mainly concerned with what could be learned by reading the *Commedia*, which he considered the supreme example of the didactic poem – more successful in teaching than even the

¹⁶¹ Trifon Gabriele, *Annotationi nel Dante fatte... in Bassano*, ed. L. Pertile (Bologna, 1993); Alessandro Vellutello, *La 'Comedia' di Dante Alighieri con la nova esposizione*, ed. D. Pirovano, 3 vols (Rome, 2006); Bernadino Daniello, *L'Esposizione ... sopra la Comedia di Dante*, ed. R. Hollander et al. (Hanover, 1989); Lodovico Castelvetro, *Sposizione ... a XXIX Canti dell'Inferno dantesco* (Modena, 1886); Torquato Tasso, *La Divina Commedia di Dante Alighieri postillata*, ed. G. Rosini and L. M. Rezzi, 3 vols (Pisa, 1830). For a study of the use of Aristotle by Gabriele, Vellutello, Daniello and Castelvetro, see S. A. Gilson, "'Aristotele fatto volgare'" and Dante as "peripatetico" in Sixteenth-Century Dante Commentary', *L'Alighieri*, 39 (2012), pp. 31-64.

¹⁶² Vellutello, *La 'Comedia' di Dante Alighieri con la nova esposizione*, III, p. 1386: 'Essendo l'huomo naturalmente animale sociabile, non saprebbe mai ben viver altramente che in compagnia.' Daniello, *L'Esposizione ... sopra la Comedia di Dante*, p. 360.

¹⁶³ On Gelli, see A. L. De Gaetano, *Giambattista Gelli and the Florentine Academy: The Rebellion Against Latin* (Florence, 1976), and A. Piscini, 'Gelli, Giovan Battista', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome, 1960-2014), LIII, pp. 12-18. See also Gilson, "'Aristotele fatto volgare'", p. 63.

¹⁶⁴ A. L. De Gaetano, 'Dante and the Florentine Academy: The Commentary of Giambattista Gelli as a Work of Popularization and Textual Criticism', *Italica*, 45 (1968), pp. 146-170, at p. 146.

¹⁶⁵ One was published at the press of Bartolomeo Martelli: Giambattista Gelli, *Lettura ... sopra lo Inferno di Dante* (Florence, 1554). The other lectures, published by Torrentino, are: *Lettioni fatte... sopra varii luoghi di Dante et del Petrarca* (Florence, 1555); *Lettura seconda sopra lo Inferno di Dante* (Florence, 1555); *Lettura terza... sopra lo Inferno di Dante* (Florence, 1556); *Lettura quarta sopra l'Inferno di Dante* (Florence, 1558); *La quinta lettura... sopra lo Inferno di Dante* (Florence, 1558); *La sesta lettura... sopra lo Inferno di Dante* (Florence, 1561); *Lettura prima... sopra l'Inferno di Dante* (Florence, 1562). Two earlier publications by Torrentino show that Gelli was speaking on Dante in the Accademia before he became their official Dante lecturer: *Il Gello Accademico Fiorentino sopra un luogo di Dante, nel XVI canto di Purgatorio* (Florence, 1548); *La prima lettione sopra un luogo di Dante nel XXVI capitol del Paradiso* (Florence, 1549).

works of Aristotle.¹⁶⁶ With this in mind, Gelli's lectures on the *Commedia* pay attention not only to Dante's philosophical sources but also attempt to provide the correct interpretation of difficult passages by examining Dante's own works: when determining what age Dante meant by 'Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita', in his third lecture, Gelli dismissed Cristoforo Landino's extensive astrological discussions of the ages of man,¹⁶⁷ stating that: 'In this he would not have worn out so much effort in resolving it, if he had seen the *Convivio* of our poet, or considered better the words of the text.'¹⁶⁸

Gelli often considers the interpretations of other commentators. For example, when Dante discusses violence against the self in *Inferno* 11, he writes:

The text follows after this: 'and weeps there where he should be joyous'.¹⁶⁹ This verse, in my opinion, is very difficult to understand. And all of those who have explained it, who are the old commentators (since Landino does not speak of it, and Vellutello says the same as Boccaccio)¹⁷⁰ refer with this 'and weeps' to those who gamble and lose their own badly; I do not approve of that, and it does not seem to me that that was the thought of the Poet.¹⁷¹

This passage shows Gelli consulting commentaries from the fourteenth century as well as the fifteenth and his own, before deciding on his own reading of the text: that Dante was referring to those who suffer melancholia or depression.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁶ De Gaetano, 'Dante and the Florentine Academy', p. 159.

¹⁶⁷ Cristoforo Landino, *Comento sopra la Comedia*, ed. P. Procaccioli, I, pp. 282-286.

¹⁶⁸ Giambattista Gelli, *Commento edito e inedito sopra la Divina Commedia*, ed. C. Negrone, 2 vols (Florence, 1887), I, p. 55: 'Nella qual cosa non arebbe egli durato tanta fatica a risolversi, se egli avessi veduto il *Convivio* d'esso nostro Poeta, o considerato meglio le parole del testo.' In *Convivio* IV Dante states that the ideal halfway point of life is the thirty-fifth year. Dante, *Convivio*, ed. F. Brambilla Agneo, 2 vols (Florence, 1995), II, IV.xxiii.9, p. 409.

¹⁶⁹ *Inferno* 11.45: '...e piange là dov'esser de' giocondo.' Italian text and translation from Dante, *Inferno* I, transl. C. S. Singleton, pp. 110-111.

¹⁷⁰ Vellutello, *La 'Comedia' di Dante Alighieri con la nova esposizione*, I, p. 385; Giovanni Boccaccio, *Il comento... sopra la Divina commedia di Dante Alighieri*, ed. I. Moutier, 3 vols (Florence, 1844), III, p. 43.

¹⁷¹ Gelli, *Commento*, I, pp. 652-653: 'Seguita dopo questo il testo: E piange là dove esser dee giocondo. Questo verso, secondo me, è molto difficile a intendere. E tutti quei che lo espongono, che sono gli antichi (perciò che il Landino non ne parla, e il Vellutello dice quel medesimo che il Boccaccio) riferiscono questo *e piange* a colui che biscazza e manda male il suo; il che io non approvo, e non mi par che sia la mente del Poeta.'

¹⁷² Gelli, *Commento*, I, p. 654: 'E io tengo ch'ei si abbia a riferire a un'altra sorte di violenti contra a sè stesso; perchè a me pare che l'uomo possa usar violenza contro a sè stesso; perchè a me pare che l'uomo possa usar violenza contro a sè stesso, e in quanto al corpo, togliendosi la vita, e in quanto all'anima, affliggendosi o dandosi maninconia di molte cose ch'ei non dovrebbe, e più ch'ei non dovrebbe; il che

His wide use of sources also extends to translations of Aristotle. When discussing *Inferno* II, lines 76-84, he cites the description of the vice of bestiality found in the *Ethics* translations of Grosseteste ('l'antica'), Leonardo Bruni and Argyropoulos,¹⁷³ and he also makes clear that he had read, and agreed with, Bernardo Segni's vernacular *Politics* translation:

And these are the correct words of the Philosopher in this place, according to the translation of our Bernardo Segni.¹⁷⁴

In contrast to the great fifteenth-century Florentine commentator Cristoforo Landino, whose commentary is decidedly Platonic, Gelli's reading of the *Commedia* is informed, for the most part, by his belief that Dante was an Aristotelian; a conclusion shared by other sixteenth-century commentators.¹⁷⁵ Although he does display some of the mid-sixteenth century's desire to create a synthesis of Aristotle and Plato, often presenting them as in agreement,¹⁷⁶ Gelli gives priority to Dante's Aristotelianism.¹⁷⁷ He places the poet and philosopher together, stating in the opening oration to his lectures:

In the manner of that most ingenious Arab 'Averroes, who made the great commentary',¹⁷⁸ seeing the knowledge and the order in this work of Dante, as he saw it in those of Aristotle, he would also say without any doubt of Dante what he said of Aristotle: that he was more divine than human, that so much knowledge and so much virtue is found in one individual and in one man alone.¹⁷⁹

guasta la complessione, accorcia la vita e genera ne l'uomo infiniti altri mali.'

¹⁷³ Gelli, *Commento*, I, p. 669.

¹⁷⁴ Gelli, *Commento*, I, p. 681: 'E queste son le parole proprie del Filosofo in quel luogo, secondo la traduzione del nostro Bernardo Segni.'

¹⁷⁵ Dante's Aristotelianism is also asserted by Trifon Gabriele. See Gilson, "'Aristotele fatto volgare'", p. 48.

¹⁷⁶ For example, when discussing man's sociable nature in *Inferno* 11: Gelli, *Commento*, I, p. 661: 'Per il che egli fu fatto, dice il Filosofo nel primo della *Politica*, da la natura animal gregario e sociabile, cioè inclinato a vivere in compagnia e in schiera, come fanno i gru, e non solivago e che si diletta di viver da se stesso, come fanno le passere solitarie. E per questa cagione disse Platone che l'uomo era nato per l'altro uomo.'

¹⁷⁷ De Gaetano, 'Dante and the Florentine Academy', p. 152; A. Vallone, *L'Interpretazione di Dante nel Cinquecento* (Florence, 1969), p. 176.

¹⁷⁸ Transl. from Dante, *Inferno*, I, transl. Singleton, IV.143, pp. 44-45: 'Averois che 'l gran comento feo'.

¹⁷⁹ Gelli, *Commento*, I, p. 18: 'Di maniera che se quello ingegnossissimo Arabo *Averois*, che il gran comento feo, vedesse la dottrina e l'ordine di questa opera di Dante, come egli vide quella di quelle di

Although Gelli has frequent recourse to Aristotle in order to explain Dante, this return to an Aristotelian approach does not, however, mean that Gelli simply rehashes the material borrowed from Aristotle and repeated by previous commentators. His use of Aristotle's work is rather different. While earlier interpreters often treated Aristotle as an authority for something they believed to be true (such as della Lana stating that 'as Aristotle shows in his *Politics*, reasonably the world should be ruled by one prince'),¹⁸⁰ Gelli shows an interest in teasing out the implications of, for instance, human nature. This is especially apparent in his commentary on *Inferno* 11, where he links the whole of the canto, which outlines the geography of the lower reaches of Hell and the particularly sinful nature of fraud, to Aristotle's pronouncements in Book One of the *Politics* on the unique qualities of man: his sociability and his capacity for malice.

And this natural love is given by him [God] much more to the human species, than to any other... man has much more need of other men than any of the other animals has of their species. This is why, says the Philosopher in the first book of the *Politics*, he was made by nature a gregarious and sociable animal, that is, inclined to live in company and in a multitude... Therefore, someone who, in return for the assistance and help of other men, harms them and deceives them, kills, says the poet, this bond and this tie of *natural love*, that is, which nature has ordained, and which holds men together in union and in peace, each assisting and helping the other.¹⁸¹

Gelli draws on Aristotle's *Politics* to offer a 'natural' answer to the question of why fraud is worse than other sins: human beings are sociable through natural love for their

Aristotile, egli direbbe senza alcun dubbio ancor di Dante come egli disse d'Aristotile, che e' fusse più tosto cosa divina che umana, che si ritrovasse tanta dottrina e tanta virtù in uno individuo e in un uomo solo.'

¹⁸⁰ Jacopo della Lana, *Commento alla 'Commedia'*, ed. M. Volpi and A. Terzi (Rome, 2009), III, *Paradiso* 7, 'proemio', p. 1905: 'sì come prova Aristotile nella sua *Politica*, ragionevilmente lo mondo si dee reggere per uno principio'.

¹⁸¹ Gelli, *Commento*, I, p. 661: 'E questo amor naturale è stato dato da lei ancor più a la specie umana, che ad alcuna altra... ha molto più bisogno de l'altro uomo, che animale alcuno altro degli altri animali della sua specie. Per il che egli fu fatto, dice il Filosofo nel primo della *Politica*, da la natura animal gregario e sociabile, cioè inclinato a vivere in compagnia e in schiera... Chi adunque, in cambio di giovare e aiutar gli altri uomini, nuoce loro e gl'inganna, uccide, dice il Poeta, questo vincolo e questo legame d'amor *naturale*, cioè che ha ordinato la natura, ch'è tenga gli uomini insieme in unione e in pace, aiutandosi e giovando l'uno a l'altro.' My italics.

fellow men; fraud is particularly despicable both because it contravenes this natural love (and even the more developed love for friends) and because, through reason, man is aware of his actions:

Greater evils and more harm can be made with reason and with speech than without them; so the Philosopher says in the first book of the *Politics* that, just as man in his perfection is the best of all the animals, so equally the man who is devoid of justice is the worst of all.¹⁸²

The role of reason is especially important here as throughout the commentary Gelli sought to emphasise the value of mankind's two routes to knowledge: divine revelation and natural reason.

While religious figures backed away from Aristotelian philosophy, the sixteenth-century's desire to ennoble the vernacular and make its secular literature a vessel for the highest philosophical concepts shows both a renewed appreciation for Dante's *Commedia* and the urge to interpret its Aristotelian influences with more subtlety; correspondingly, the vernacular literature explaining the politics discussed above approached the text in increasingly diverse ways and with an increasing level of sophistication.

Gelli's lectures represent a point of continuity, as such lectures, containing Aristotelian aspects, had been given on Dante since their instigation by Boccaccio; the use of Aristotle shows a recognition of his vital place at the centre of Dante's world-view. The texts which address the *Politics* directly, however, show developments in the vernacular text. It is presented in an ever-expanding series of structures, from dialogues to discourses, tables and lists. And, especially prominently, the application of the *Politics* to the sixteenth century is addressed, far more explicitly than in previous centuries. The caution which is perhaps responsible for the lack of Aristotelianism in religious works is present in care is taken over the possible religious unorthodoxy of Aristotle's work; the

¹⁸² Gelli, *Commento*, I, p. 670: 'Ch'ei son maggiori mali e più nocivi quei che si fanno con ragione e con discorso, che quei che si fanno senza; onde disse il Filosofo nel primo della *Politica*, che così come l'uomo ch'è nella sua perfezione è il migliore di tutti gli animali, così parimente l'uomo che è privo di giustizia è di tutti gli altri il peggiore.'

writings and insights of other philosophers and authors are brought in, and critics of the *Politics* are addressed directly. The production and content of these works shows, however, that its place in sixteenth-century culture was not doubted.

Conclusion

This dissertation illustrates the great variety of ways in which material from Aristotle's *Politics* could be encountered in the vernacular in Italy in the years from 1260 and 1600, and the changing patterns of these encounters. From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, there was a continual increase in both the number of works drawing on the *Politics* and, consequently, in the amount of material from the *Politics* available in Italian, as political Aristotelianism achieved an ever more secure place in the vernacular literature and culture of medieval and Renaissance Italy.

Certain genres of vernacular literature which incorporated doctrines and ideas from the *Politics* were produced throughout the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, although their use of Aristotle varied according to the cultural environment. As Dante had relied so heavily on Aristotle as a philosophical authority, fourteenth-century vernacular commentators on the *Commedia* frequently looked to the *Politics* in order to explain the poet's views on government. The emphasis on classical Latin literature by early fifteenth-century humanists resulted in a decline in interpretations of the *Commedia*; and later in the century Florentine enthusiasm for Neoplatonism meant that, even as scholars returned to the study of the *Commedia*, Dante's Aristotelianism was marginalised, for instance, in Cristoforo Landino's commentary and Marsilio Ficino's translation of Dante's *Monarchia*. The presence of political Aristotelianism in Dante once again became a topic of discussion in the sixteenth century, as I showed in my brief examination of the commentary on the *Commedia* by Giambattista Gelli.

Urban preaching was central to the Church's relationship with the Italian people throughout the period, and sermons concerned with civic life often employed vocabulary borrowed from the *Politics*; but again, the extent to which Aristotle was used depended on the context. Aristotle featured prominently in vernacular sermons in the fourteenth century, when preachers such as Giordano da Pisa turned to the *Politics*, which they had studied at university, to explain the importance of community to the Italian city-states. At the end of the fifteenth century, Savonarola drew heavily on Aristotle's treatise to support the constitutional changes he instigated in Florence.

In the Middle Ages, Aristotelian political thought was quickly adopted into the ‘mirror for princes’ literature written to educate rulers on how to rule, as is evident in the works of Brunetto Latini and Giles of Rome; and the rapid translation of Giles’s *De regimine principum* into Italian shows that this genre was popular in both the Latin and the vernacular tradition. The fifteenth century, however, witnessed the waning of this kind of ‘advice-literature’. The conservative scholastic Giovanni Cavalcanti still employed the ‘mirror for princes’ model in his attempt to instruct virtuous citizens on the best way to govern and included liberal quantities of Aristotelian material. However, vernacular authors in the vanguard of Quattrocento humanism increasingly turned to dialogues in the Socratic or Ciceronian style to discuss the government of Florence. The first examples of political Aristotelianism in the form of vernacular dialogues were the moral *Dialogi* of Antonio Brucioli, composed in the early sixteenth century.

In the mid-sixteenth century, the complete text of the *Politics* became available to vernacular readers in the Italian translations by Antonio Brucioli and by Bernardo Segni. Segni also provided annotations, following the traditional pattern found in Latin commentaries on the *Politics*, with explanatory prose following sections of the text. Later, Felice Figliucci and Nicolo Vito di Gozze composed paraphrases in dialogue form – the whole of the *Politics* discussed in humanist conversation taking place over eight days, one for each book. Another genre of sixteenth-century Italian literature which incorporated material from the *Politics* was the political treatise, from works of ‘popular philosophy’, composed by *poligrafi* like Lodovico Dolce, to more thoughtful treatments engaging with classical political thought like Bartolomeo Cavalcanti’s comparison of Aristotle, Plato and Polybius.

The aims of authors who produced Aristotelian political literature in the vernacular shifted over the period covered in this dissertation. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the primary intention was to use Aristotle’s discussion of the *polis* to educate readers on the right way to conduct themselves in their political environment, to explain to them what the ideal government was and to instruct them on how to work for the good of the community – either as a citizen or as a ruler. This was the motivation behind Girolamo da Pisa’s sermons and the *Tractato* of Savonarola. The *Reggimento de’ principi* (the translation of Giles’s *De regimine principum*) sought to teach a prince how to behave, while Giovanni Cavalcanti hoped to educate a politically active Florentine

citizenry in his *Trattato politico-morale*. In the sixteenth century, authorial purposes became more complex and ambitious, although the impulse to educate readers on the workings of government and its best form remained and can be observed, for example, in Giason Denores's *Breve institutione dell'ottima repubblica*, in which he presents Venice as the ideal Aristotelian government.

As the cultural movement which championed Italian as equal in expressive power to Latin gathered steam, works appeared which were designed both to enrich Italian by bringing classical philosophy into the vernacular and to encourage philosophising in the vernacular. This was a trend which continued throughout the sixteenth century: while most late medieval and fifteenth-century authors employed the *Politics* mainly to explain the political landscape they inhabited, in the sixteenth century this goal was combined with the didactic aim of explicating the contents and doctrines of the *Politics* itself and educating a vernacular readership on what it contained, through commentaries and paraphrases. The sixteenth-century linguistic *campanilismo* of the Accademia Fiorentina and of other academies promoted the production of philosophical texts for those literate in Italian.

In later treatises, too, information on to how to govern was merged with the desire to create a philosophically literate vernacular citizenry. Antonio Scaino hoped that a people educated in political philosophy would govern better, although he also addressed concerns about the practical value of the *Politics* in an age when political systems no longer resembled the world of the Greek *polis*. Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, on the other hand, believed that Aristotle's teachings were the fundamental basis for establishing a good government, as is apparent in his letters on the constitution of Siena.

Vernacular preachers delivering sermons in a piazza or cathedral (such as Girolamo da Pisa, Bernardino of Siena or Savonarola) addressed the entire citizenry, from the illiterate to those schooled in Latin. Written works were obviously intended for those able to read at least their native tongue such as governmental officials, citizens involved in civic affairs or rulers. The target readership for the Italian translation of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, Brunetto Latini's *Tesoro volgarizzato*, Savonarola's treatise on government and Giovanni Cavalcanti's *Trattato politico-morale* was probably urban dwellers who required vernacular literacy for their everyday lives, but

had no need for Latin. The case of Dante commentaries was somewhat different: as he himself had written in the vernacular and was highly regarded across the educational spectrum, authors and readers might choose to compose or read vernacular interpretations of the *Commedia* even if they were literate in Latin.

The status of the vernacular changed as debates growing out of the *questione della lingua* considered its purpose and dignity, while the printing press ensured that works in Italian were more readily available. By the sixteenth century, there was more likely to be an overlap in the literacy levels of readers, some of whom would be at ease in Latin as well as Italian. At the very end of the period under examination, for example, di Gozze included Latin quotations and references in his Italian treatise. Philosophical works produced by *poligrafi* to supply the commercial demands of the printing press were aimed not only at those literate only in Italian but also at those able to read both Latin and the vernacular.

The material from the *Politics* selected for inclusion in vernacular works, both before and after the entire treatise was available in Italian translation, is an indication of the relationship between the *Politics* and the contemporary political and cultural climate. Certain aspects from Aristotle's work fundamentally shaped how politics was understood and therefore retained their significance throughout the centuries considered here, despite the changing readerships and political contexts. The idea of man as a 'political animal' who gravitates towards life in a community by his very nature and who requires this community in order to live well, contrasted with the medieval Augustinian view of political government as a necessary restraint on man's baser instincts, but was in line with the ideology of communes in north and central Italy, even after the end of independent republicanism everywhere but Venice. Aristotle's doctrine of the city as prior to, or more important than, the individual was also easily understood and accepted by citizens imbued with pride in their native towns.

The Aristotelian classification of regimes according to those in power – kingship, aristocracy, polity, tyranny, oligarchy and democracy – and the information given in the *Politics* on the characteristics of each type of government was useful both for categorising the different forms of political organisation found in medieval and Renaissance Italy and for determining which was best. Depending on their own

preferences and backgrounds, many authors claimed that Aristotle had favoured one or another of these regimes or the mixed government he praised when discussing the Spartan and Carthaginian constitutions in Book Two of the *Politics*. Readers of the Italian translations of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum* and of Dante's *Monarchia* (by Ficino) would discover that Aristotle believed monarchy to be the best form of government, while Brunetto Latini, Bartolomeo Cavalcanti and Giasone Denores were among those vernacular authors who maintained that the philosopher had given his seal of approval to the mixed constitution.

The ways in which other Aristotelian political doctrines were employed in vernacular works reflected the environment in which they were produced. For example, in the late Middle Ages, concern over the sinful practice of usury in Italy's commercial centres meant that Aristotle's condemnation of the practice in Book One of the *Politics* appeared in the sermons of Girolamo di Pisa. Savonarola, railing against the Medici government, repeatedly referred to Aristotle's discussion of tyranny. Brucioli's use of Books Seven and Eight of the *Politics* in his dialogue on the education of children was a manifestation of his keen humanist interest in this subject. Scaino's paraphrase, written in an age when a close watch was kept on religious orthodoxy, significantly failed to mention that Aristotle refers to multiple gods in Book One of the *Politics*.

Furthermore, the sixteenth century saw an increase in the 'eclectic Aristotelianism' described by Charles Schmitt. While discernible in earlier works, particularly Cristoforo Landino's commentary on the *Commedia*, it is with Antonio Brucioli that this approach to the philosopher's authority truly comes to the fore, as Aristotle is combined with both other classical authors and contemporary writers such as Machiavelli to create an Aristotelianism fit for sixteenth-century concerns.

As we have seen, vernacular Aristotelian works were often reliant on the Latin tradition. The most comprehensive account of doctrines in the *Politics* available in medieval Italy was the translation of Giles of Rome's *De regimine principum*, while Brucioli's Italian version of the *Politics* was based on Leonardo Bruni's Latin translation. The authors of the vernacular writings studied here often knew Latin and were familiar with Latin commentaries on the *Politics* such as those of Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great, and political treatises like *De regno* by Thomas Aquinas and Ptolemy of Lucca and the

works of Marsilius of Padua and Peter of Auvergne. Vernacular interpretations of the *Politics* were sometimes taken over from these Latin works: Thomas Aquinas's reference to Christian saints when discussing Aristotle's statement that a man without a community is either beast-like or almost a god, for instance, is found both in Savonarola's *Tractato* and Segni's commentary on the *Politics*. Segni's use of tables, moreover, was borrowed from the Latin commentary of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, with the availability of complete Italian translations, along with commentaries and paraphrases, vernacular treatments of the *Politics* drew closer to the Latin tradition in terms of the quantity of material conveyed and explained; and some sixteenth-century authors such as di Gozze apparently expected their readers to have a knowledge of Latin, suggesting that the market for Latin and vernacular works may have been converging. Important differences, nevertheless, remained. The primary aim of sixteenth-century vernacular works on the *Politics* remained the instruction of a readership presumed to be unfamiliar with the treatise. By contrast, Latin was the language in which scholarly debates were conducted, especially philological or historical discussions of the text. This difference is clearly illustrated by Scaino's two works on the *Politics*: one in Italian and the other, addressed to a more learned readership, in Latin.

This dissertation contributes to research on vernacular Aristotelianism in late medieval and Renaissance Italy by providing the first study of the *fortuna* of an individual Aristotelian treatise, charting the ways in which Italian interpretations of the *Politics* interacted with cultural and political changes over more than three hundred years. The scope of study of vernacular Aristotelianism has been widened by exploring its relationship to developing attitudes towards the Italian language and to the Latin scholarly tradition. The *Politics*, as I have shown, appeared in a multitude of different vernacular forms and formats, which had an impact on the way readers understood their own political communities and systems, on the vocabulary they used to describe them and even on the practical workings of government. It is now clear that the *Politics* was relevant far beyond the scholarly and Latinate context with which it has previously been associated.

In addition, new avenues for research are now open for exploration. In this dissertation,

I have examined writings by lesser-known figures who, in the past, have been ignored; but many more works by such writers remain unedited, unstudied and in need of examination. This is particularly true of the sixteenth century: I have only considered a fraction of the vernacular political literature published in Italy at that time and intend to pursue this further. My future research will focus on sixteenth-century Venetian political thought and the relationship between religion and politics in vernacular publications.

Vernacular encounters with Aristotle's *Politics* in Italy, in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, were varied, nuanced and addressed a broad range of readers. These encounters show that popular works were sometimes linked to more learned Latin ones, but also that Aristotelian political philosophy could be discussed in ways specific to the vernacular tradition and was often closely tied to the civic experience of medieval and Renaissance Italians. Above all, they demonstrate that vernacular works on the *Politics* need to be taken into consideration if we are to gain an accurate understanding of both Italian political thought and the Aristotelian tradition.

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