Extracomunitario? Networks and Brunetto Latini

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This essay aims to explore how Bruno Latour's actor-network theory (ANT), and its subsequent development into *An Inquiry into the Modes of Existence* (*AIME*), offers a means for reflection on the works of the medieval Italian politician and intellectual, Brunetto Latini (*c*. 1220–93). It looks at Brunetto's negotiation and amplification of various modes of existence, particularly the political mode [POL], as part of his experience of exile. In his vernacular *Rettorica,* Latini's presentation of his authorship, and of the form of his text, situates Brunetto in Latour's terms as a "diplomat," in the way that he manipulates and inhabits his exile networks. Brunetto's political and authorial practices also suggest that Latourian models of diplomacy and network may cast light on another major literary and political figure of the Italian Middle Ages, Dante Alighieri (1265–1321), particularly on the episode from his *Inferno* XV that showcases a fictionalized encounter between these two Florentines.

Modes of Political Existence: Diplomacy, Rhetoric and *Fortuna*

In the opening pages of *AIME,* Latour invokes the figure of the diplomat, whose successful performance of her role depends on "learn[ing] *to speak well to someone about something that really matters to that person*" (46, emphasis original). Latour's diplomat is tasked with bringing new networks of association into being—be they political, religious, economic, linguistic, technological, or of other kinds—where the values of all participants (what "*really matters*" to them) will be challenged. Indeed, the Latourian diplomat will work just as hard to invite those whom she represents to reformulate their values, as to invite the same flexibility

from her opponents or counterparts. The goal will be to rethink received practices and institutions and to enable new associations to come into being (480–84). The language and means that this putative diplomat employs must "be made capable of absorbing the pluralism of values" of all participants, since otherwise there is "no use for diplomacy, because every representative is convinced that at bottom the arbitration has already occurred, elsewhere" (19–20). Without a collective engagement by all parties to "*speak well about [what] really matters*", oppositions between them will remain entrenched. Latour's diplomat—and likewise Brunetto Latini's exile—therefore seeks to sustain mutual recognition of the cherished "modes of existence" of all their interlocutors, in part through attentiveness to speech: "to borrow the remarkable expression used in chancelleries, it is a matter of making 'diplomatic representations' in order to renegotiate the new frontiers of self and other" (17).

One of Latour's modes of existence encompasses the domains of diplomacy and political negotiation in their more ordinary usage, between states or communities, as his observations on the mode he calls politics [POL] demonstrate (see especially *AIME* chapters 5 and 13). Latour underlines the linguistic monism of philosophers' and politicians' conventional claims to be "talking straight" while their opponents are "talking crooked" (127–35, and 352–55). Both are imaginary standards (and to hypothesize the one virtually necessitates positing the other). But to achieve the pluralism of *speaking well*, Latour invites his diplomats to set aside the straight/crooked dichotomy and replace it by curvilinear, discontinuous encounters, where participants acting [POL]itically recognize that they must "*constantly start over*" (341, emphasis original). Latour notes some historical precedents for his assertion that the very essence of [POL] as a mode of existence is that "something radically *discontinuous* [is] happening, but that the discontinuity [is] entirely *proper* to the political and must not be confused with any other" (346). Thus, the curving flexibility of what Aristotle calls "*rhetoric*" and of what Machiavelli labels "*fortuna*" enables their

protagonists to enact [POL]itical diplomacy, overcoming any overly rigid regulation of speech or action (347). Pluralism and discontinuity are also matters of concern in Brunetto Latini's reflections on rhetoric and on his exile as an aspect of *fortuna*, to reemploy Latour's historicized categories. In his Florentine vernacular *Rettorica*, as well as in sections of his French-language *Tresor*, there is a striking performance of discontinuity and starting over between the two works themselves. The *Rettorica* is an (incomplete) translation into Florentine of Cicero's *De inventione*, with an expansive gloss, dating probably from his first months of exile (*c.* 1260–1261). A second *De inventione* translation reappears as Book III, chapters 1–72, in the three-book *Tresor*, a Picard-French encyclopedia that Brunetto probably worked on during much of his exile in France, *c.* 1260–66.[1] The paragraphs below explore these works' reflections on how politics and the arts of speech operate along the networks of factional politics, patronage, translation, and authorship in which he and his works participate. They seek to investigate how, for Brunetto Latini as well as for Bruno Latour, "political discourse [POL] engages the entire collective . . . : one has to pass from one situation to another and then come back and start everything, *everything*, all over again in a different form" (*AIME* 338).

Exile: Finding New Modes of Existence

Brunetto Latini's biography exemplifies various aspects of politics and diplomacy, in both their ordinary and in their Latourian senses. Brunetto was a prominent figure in Florentine public life under the Guelf governments of the 1250s, and again in the 1270s and 80s; but his career was interrupted by six years of political exile (*c.* 1260–66) after Florence was taken

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[1] On dating these works, see Bolton Holloway; and Inglese. On the *Rettorica-Tresor* relationship, see Keen 4–5, 9.

over by the rival Ghibelline faction.[2] This Florentine civil war drove Brunetto's migration into France, there to join a large but informally constituted community, or set of communities, of Florentines and other Italians living outside the peninsula for reasons of trade, study, or political difficulty. Hence, each Italian émigré practiced his or her own "modes of existence" in France, occupying a position, or multiple positions, within intersecting networks—or "worknets," as Latour labels them in order to stress that they are constituted by work, movement, flow, and change, not the more mechanical connection that "network" implies in the age of the World Wide Web (*Reassembling* 131–32, 143). Both the Florentine civil war and his new French environments are Latourian "mediators" in the new worknets enfolding Brunetto after his political displacement: they do not simply describe or prescribe what it means to be in exile, but performatively modify the experience of banishment, revealing its inherent discontinuities ([POL]).[3] The works Brunetto produced in these years, such as the *Rettorica* and *Tresor*, and the different languages that he used to write them, are similarly mediators within worknets, actors in exile's larger "concatenation of actors" (*Reassembling* 106–9). So, too, are the legal structures within which he was able to practice as a notary, and the documents he produced for clients who employed him in France. These find him performing in the Latourian mode of [LAW] as well as [POL], and interacting with Florentine notarial conventions even while displaced from the forum that gave them meaning.[4] The exiled Brunetto faced an intricate series of Latourian diplomatic engagements, vis-à-vis both French and Italian spaces, text forms, and communities, as he inhabited different modes of existence, and moved within networks constituted by language

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[2] For Brunetto's biography, see Bolton Holloway; Inglese. Brunetto's most famous diplomatic experience in the conventional sense was an embassy to Alfonso X of Castile during 1260; he learned of the Ghibelline coup in Florence while returning from this mission.
[3] See Latour, *Reassembling* 37–42 ("Mediators vs. Intermediaries").
[4] On [LAW], see *AIME* 373–74. On Brunetto's notarial activity in exile, see Cella.

practice, professional training, quests for economic and intellectual patronage, according to the shifting demands of civic, regional, and international politics.

To grasp the intricacy of these engagements, it is worth reflecting briefly on the lexis of Brunetto's descriptions of his exile, for what it tells us about his imagined position within the modes of [LAW] and [POL]. The nuanced vocabulary that describes his compromised situation reflects the complexity of medieval Italian communal politics (Milani 39–46; and Borsa, 57–62). Written in his native Florentine dialect, the *Rettorica* makes him *isbandito*, implying that formal charges have been laid against him (*bannum*), and also *cacciato*, indicating that he has been subject to forcible expulsion from home territory though not necessarily legal prosecution:

> La cagione per che questo libro è fatto si è cotale, che questo Brunetto Latino, per cagione della guerra la quale fue tralle parti di Firenze, fue isbandito della terra quando la sua parte guelfa, la quale si tenea col papa e colla chiesa di Roma, fue cacciata e sbandita della terra. (*Rettorica* 1.10)

> The reason why this book has been written is that the said Brunetto Latini, by reason of the war between the parties in Florence, was banished from the city when his Guelf party, allied to the pope and the Roman church, was chased out and banished from the city.[5]

In the *Tresor*'s French, he describes himself as *chaciez*, a calque of *cacciato*, and also uses the term *exil*, from Latin *exilium*:

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[5] All translations into English are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

. . . li florentin sont tozjors en guerre et descordes . . . De ce doit maistre Brunet Latin savoir la verité, car il en est nes, et si estoit en exil, lors que il compila cest livre, por achoison de la guerre as florentins. (*Tresor* I.37.3)

. . . the Florentines are always in war and discord . . . Master Brunetto Latini surely knows the truth of this, for he was born there and was in exile from there when he wrote this book, due to war between the Florentines.

Again:

Avec eaus [*scil*. la guelfe partie de Florence] en fu chaciés maistre Brunet Latin, et si estoit il por cele guerre exiliez en France quant il fist ce livre por amor son ami. (*Tresor* I.93.2)

Together with [the Guelf party of Florence] Master Brunetto Latini was also chased out from there and was exiled in France by reason of this war when he made this book for the love of his friend.

Derivatives of Latin *exilium* were seldom used in Italian civic statutes of municipal exclusion (Starn 76–85; Fontes Baratto and Gagliano 16–19; Milani 39–46; and Borsa, 58–59), so Latini's choices suggest he is looking beyond the [POL] and [LAW] conventions of his hometown. His emphasis on geographical displacement between Florence and France recalls Isidore of Seville's etymology of *exilium* :

Exilium dictum quasi extra solum. Nam exul dicitur qui extra solum est. Unde

postliminium redeuntibus, hoc est de exilio reducendis, qui sunt eiecti in iniuria, id est

extra limen patriae. (*Etymolgiae* V.xxvii.28)

Exile (*exilium*) is so called as if it were "outside the country" (*extra solum*), for

someone who is outside the country is called an exile (*exul*). Whence *postliminium*

(i.e. the restoration of rank and privileges) for those who return, that is, those who are

brought back from exile, who were cast out undeservedly, that is, cast out beyond the

borders (*limen*) of their native land. (*Etymologies* 125)

Boundary-crossing—passing "extra limen patriae"—requires the exile to become newly

sensitive to the place(s) he or she occupies within networks constituted by citizens, but also

to the language, calendar, currency, state or religious symbols, and so on, with which he or

she must work, both in the new abode and in the place of origin. To characterize Brunetto and

his Florentine/Italian companions in France as mediators within a worknet, or as diplomats

seeking "to renegotiate the new boundaries of self and other," accords with Latour's

promotion of the potential of Machiavelli's *fortuna* or Aristotle's *rhetoric* in [POL]. The

movement, flow, and change that *fortuna* or *rhetoric* could activate make them as different as

possible from passive intermediaries in a fixed chain.

For the human actants, that is, the thirteenth-century Florentine Guelfs themselves, a

diachronic comparison suggests the "extracomunitario" of modern Italy: a migrant who has

left his or her homeland for a new life in Italy and the European Union, the supranational

institution or "comunità" to which the newcomer is "extra," but seeks to *in*-habit.[6] The value

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[6] Treccani Vocabolario Online offers this definition: "*extracomunitario*, adj. and n.
[composed of 'extra-' plus 'community']—not belonging to the European Union:
extracomunitari countries; as a noun, esp. in masc. pl., *gli extracomunitari*, those who

of *comunità* in the Italian term troubles the implications of homeliness within the vastness of the EU association of (at the time of writing, in 2018) twenty-eight member states, and some 500 million citizens. At the same time, its indication that a proportion of any individual's immediate neighbors are somehow not part of his or her community draws harsh attention to legal and social fault lines within Italy and the EU. The expression recalls Isidore's unsettling "extra solum," for no one can survive beyond territory or community, both have to be remade in exodus. And just as modern exiles and *extracomunitari* may be considered as mediators in networks of displacement that include wars and civil wars, traffickers, dinghies, lifejackets, passports, languages, work permits, and much more, so Brunetto, his patrons, his clients, the Florentine civil war, Picard French, and Ciceronian Latin all fold into intricate, multi-actant networks as they operate movements and changes between them. The thirteenth-century and twenty-first-century states of exile/*extracomunitarietà* coexist in that prefix "extra," which, as will be seen below, turns around its etymological potential if the diplomats of [POL] and [LAW] are willing to transform the same word's lexical value from rejection into collaboration.

Exile and Language: Lutes and Hammers

Chased from Florence into new regions of language, territory, and cultural and political association, Brunetto responds by writing and thereby operating within a range of choices concerning language and its relationship to lay knowledge. He writes in Florentine, French, and Latin, and produces legal documents as well as didactic and literary works in the genres of encyclopedia, translation, allegorical romance, and lyric. These text-mediators connect him both to old pathways reconfigured by new circumstances—his relationships to Guelfs inside and outside Italy, to Florence, to professional activities as notary and author—and to

emigrate from economically disadvantaged countries (esp. regions of Africa and Asia) to EU states in search of work and better living conditions."

new places and companions—in Arras, Bar-sur-Aube, Montpellier, and Paris, and their Florentine, Italian, or French communities (Inglese; Cella; and Bolton Holloway 50–73). In some texts, especially his Florentine vernacular works, Brunetto hints at a Latourian ambition that his texts should realize their mediator status. He hopes they will act independently of the exiled writer and establish themselves in Florence immediately on completion (Keen 7–12); however, the relative brevity of his exile and paucity of early surviving copies have left no hard evidence that this actually occurred. The works certainly made an existence with him in Florence following the end of his exile; in the case of the *Tresor* at least, his work also came to act within multiple other worknets, as the text was copied in numerous European and Mediterranean locales over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and was translated into Castilian, Catalan, Latin, Lombard-Venetian, and Sicilian, as well as into and out of French and Florentine.[7] The texts produced during Latini's exile, as well as the events of his political career, won him recognition as the leading lay intellectual in the Florence of his time.

Brunetto's return to Florence also brought him into another network by placing him in direct relationship with Dante, who would go on to produce complex and not fully complimentary receptions of and responses to Brunetto's vernacular authorship both within and beyond the *Commedia*. Brunetto was a figure Dante had to engage in tracing his own pathways as a lay intellectual and vernacular writer—and, after 1302, in negotiating a political exile of his own.[8] During his banishment, Dante followed the Brunettian precedent by producing vernacular (and Latin) prose works that discussed, *inter alia*, rhetoric, political institutions, and philosophical divulgation, texts aimed at lay audiences both within and

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[7] On the *Tresor*'s transmission history in different language versions, and between different centers, see Inglese; in greater detail, Bertelli (for Florentine reception), Zinelli (Outremer), and the essays in the segment "Leggere, tradurre e riscrivere il *Tresor* in Francia, in Italia e in Spagna" in Maffia Scariati. Beltrami's edition (xlv–liii) provides lists of manuscripts with dates/periods. Around twelve can be assigned to the Duecento, five more on the cusp with the Trecento (xxii). For the *Rettorica*'s seven extant manuscripts, see Guadagnini.

[8] See Barański's recent contributions illuminating the Brunetto-Dante relationship, "Sulla formazione" and "On Dante's Trail."

outside Florence.[9] The *Convivio* (*c.* 1304–07) in particular shows how language choices and performances of exile become ways of "*speaking well about things that really matter*" in the mode of [POL]. This treatise is explicitly presented as a product of exile (*Convivio* I.iii); in it, Dante—like Brunetto before him—uses Florentine vernacular language, along with a strong defense of vernacular authorship, to demonstrate a desire to "*constantly start over*" and transformatively unblock the connective networks between civic actors that exile aspires to block. With its emphasis on the rebuttal of the injustice of his exile, and on the friendly liberality motivating his vernacular authorship (*Convivio* I.viii–ix), the *Convivio* indeed seeks to "[make] 'diplomatic representations' in order to renegotiate the new frontiers of self and other."

The *Convivio* begins by reflecting on the valuable work performed by vernacular writers, where production of knowledge for the laity functions as a mediator within a network that Dante wishes to identify and constitute. Dante praises the vernacular, and asserts that in this medium, an explicitly heterogeneous and experimental network comes into being—one in which commonality of language and Aristotelian desire for knowledge (*Convivio* I.i.1) become Latourian actants alongside the writer and the men and women he addresses:

> Ché la bontà dell'animo, la quale questo servigio attende, è in coloro che per malvagia disusanza del mondo hanno lasciata la litteratura a coloro che l'hanno fatta di donna meretrice; e questi nobili sono principi, baroni, cavalieri e molt'altra nobile gente, non solamente maschi ma femmine, che sono molti e molte in questa lingua, volgari, e non litterati. (*Convivio* I.ix.5)

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[9] These include the vernacular *Convivio*, and the Latin *De vulgari eloquentia, Monarchia*, and *Questio de aqua et terra*.

For excellence of mind, which is eager to have this service, is found in those who, through the unfortunate neglect entailed by activities in the world, have left education to men who have turned this lady into a prostitute. These noble people are princes, barons, knights and many others of like nobility, women no less than men, a vast number of both sexes, whose language is not that acquired through education, but the vernacular.[10]

The [POL] agency of the language chosen is illuminated by Dante's comments on the exclusionary attitude of those who build barriers around such transmission of knowledge, through analogy with a musical instrument, its owner, and its players:

E a vituperio di loro [*scil*. li litterati della lingua italica] dico che non si deono chiamare litterati, però che non acquistano la lettera per lo suo uso, ma in quanto per quella guadagnano denari o dignitate: sì come non si dee chiamare citarista chi tiene la cetera in casa per prestarla per prezzo, e non per usarla per sonare. (*Convivio* I.ix.3)

[Of the Latin-literate of Italy,] I declare to their shame that they do not deserve to be called educated, since they do not acquire education for its own sake, but only as a means to gain money and status—just as no one deserves to be called a lutanist who keeps a lute in his house to lend it for a fee, and not to use it for making music.

Dante's intent here is pejorative, though in ANT terms he unwittingly traces an alternative network in which the lute-like component—Latin-based knowledge and/or books containing

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[10] English translation of *Convivio* from Ryan. The *donna/meretrice* comparison provocatively reverses the terms of the *Novellino*'s tale of the muses in the brothel, who reproach a philosopher for transferring texts from Latin to vernacular. See Cornish 32–33.

it—becomes equally a mediator in associations constituted for other, valid purposes, such as conferring a baccalaureate, executing a legal contract, or asserting prestige within a particular social or cultural environment (themselves all activities that either Dante or Brunetto pursued energetically at different times).

The analogy of lute and lutanist anticipates a later *novella* by Franco Sacchetti (*c*. 1332–1400),[11] in which Dante himself becomes a fictional protagonist and attacks a blacksmith whose mangled singing transforms the *Commedia* into a popular *cantare*, by casting his tools into the street (Cornish 41–42; Atkinson 53–57, 62–68):

Il fabbro, voltosi con uno atto bestiale, dice: "Che diavol fate voi? Sète voi impazzato?" Dice Dante: "O tu che fai?" "Fo l'arte mia," dice il fabbro, "e voi guastate le mie masserizie, gittandole per la via." Dice Dante: "Se tu non vogli che io guasti le cose tue, non guastare le mie." Disse il fabbro: "O che vi guast'io?" Disse Dante: "Tu canti il libro e non lo di' com'io lo feci; io non ho altr'arte, e tu me la guasti." (*Trecentonovelle* 114.4)

The blacksmith, turning around with a violent gesture, says: "What the devil are you doing? Have you gone crazy?" Dante says: "And you, what are you doing?" "Working at my trade," the smith replies; "and you are ruining my tools, throwing them into the street." Dante says: "If you don't want me to ruin your things, don't you ruin mine." The smith said: "What things of yours am I ruining?" Dante said: "You are singing my book, and not saying it as I made it; I have no other trade, and you are ruining it for me."

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[11] Sacchetti, like Dante and Brunetto, combined literary pursuits and an active political career (but was never exiled), probably working on the *Trecentonovelle c.* 1385–93.

Sacchetti's *novella* draws attention to the precariousness of medieval vernacular textual production, which creates new products, markets, and means of engagement. The words and the hammer in the *novella* are not inert intermediaries to the work of the poet and the blacksmith. They, as much as the human actors, are mediators in literary and technological networks of transformation. Here we may add the domains of [FIC] and [TEC] from Latour's array of modes, to the [POL] that is also in play, given the political dimensions of vernacular literature's problematic status in the Middle Ages. Each of the tale's human protagonists shows a lack of care toward the modes of existence dear to the practice of the other. The blacksmith fails to evaluate the words, cadence, and meanings of a poem, and cuts and changes it inattentively. The Dante-persona is equally, in fact deliberately, indiscriminate in his mishandling of the blacksmith's tools, ignoring their different craft functions . Indeed, in the tale, Dante insists only on the preservation of his own text: the blacksmith resumes singing with a *Tristan* or *Lancelot* presumably just as mangled as his *Commedia* (114.5), while Dante appears content to accept that others' work be accorded the same lack of attention as he paid to the smith's *masserizie*. The tale thus casts both Dante and the blacksmith as failed diplomats, each ignoring the other's mode of existence and neglecting to "*speak well to someone about something that really matters to that person.*"

Speaking Well: Books and Authorship

The *novella*'s appropriation of Dante as a fictional character displays some of the problematizing effects that characterize Dante's own appropriation of Brunetto Latini as a protagonist in *Inferno* (discussed below). As narrators, both Dante and Sacchetti create transformative new worknets by looking beyond the illustrious but monolithic reputation of the bygone author (Brunetto-character, Dante-character) and his works (the *Tresor*, the *Commedia*), and by imagining the more challenging reality of his performance within his

various Florentine modes of existence: [POL], [LAW], [FIC], or [TEC]. Brunetto's own major fictional appropriation of a historical figure involves the Roman author Cicero, and his translation into Florentine of the *De inventione* as the *Rettorica*. This translation, with its extensive dialogic gloss, illustrates Latour's insistence on the coinvolvement of human and nonhuman participants. The actants in Brunetto's Ciceronian translation include the (co-)authors of the text, the text itself, its material supports and visual and physical aspects, and the readers who commission or come to use the translated work. There are also patronage networks at issue in a work dedicated to a wealthy patron, as well as textual networks that emerge as a consequence of the translation between Latin and vernacular, and between the named authors Cicero and Latini. The production of the Florentine *Rettorica* during Brunetto's banishment in France also addresses language choice and the assemblage of connections among a group of fellow-speakers in the region of displacement where another language is dominant (places where Florentines are outsiders, *extracomunitari*), as well as connections between these fellow-speakers and their community of origin in a Florence where the text will be linguistically accessible (and where banished Florentines wish to be classed, again or still, as citizens).

The *Rettorica* provides several passages where we can recognize these assemblages. Latini's glosses to Cicero engage directly with the mobility of texts and their itinerary independent of their authors or scribes:[12]

> . . . lla pistola, cioè la lettera dettata, spessamente . . . è uno presente che uno manda
> ad un altro, nel quale la mente favella et è udito colui che tace e di lontana terra
> dimanda et acquista la grazia, la grazia ne 'nforza e l'amore ne fiorisce, e molte cose

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[12] See also Desmond's essay in this volume.

mette inn iscritta le quali si temerebbe e non saprebbe dire a lingua in presenzia. (*Rettorica* 76.19)

. . . the epistle, that is the formally-composed letter, . . . is often a gift that one person sends to another, in which the mind speaks freely and a mute person is heard from a distant place, as she or he requests and receives favor, that favor is reinforced and flowers into love, and many things are put into writing that one would fear to say or not know how to express aloud in the other's presence.

Other comments note how the pairings of speech/text and response come to constitute a new mediator within a network, when two compositions become a single "tencione":

tuttodie ragionano le genti insieme di diverse materie, nelle quali adiviene sovente che ll'uno ne dice il suo parere e dicelo in un suo modo e l'altro dice il contrario, sì che sono in tencione (*Rettorica* 76.5)

every day people speak together on different subjects, about which it often happens that one person expresses his or her own opinion and gives it in her or his own way, and the other says the contrary, so that they are in *tencione* [contention, exchange].

The two verbal structures work mutually on each other so as to become a singular *tencione*, a unit composed of two originally opposing utterances:

Cosìe usatamente adviene che due persone si tramettono lettere l'uno all'altro o in latino o in proxa o in rima o in volgare o inn altro, nelle quali contendono d'alcuna cosa, e così fanno tencione. (*Rettorica* 76.14)

And so it often happens that two people send each other letters in Latin or in prose or in rhyme or in vernacular or in another [form], in which they debate over some matter, and so they create a *tencione*.

The resulting textual unit becomes a mediator within a network of formalized exchange, working diplomatically between the actants of sender and receiver. This interactive confluence of texts, acquiring agency as a nonhuman circuit of multiple parts, recalls the fused two-in-one authorial persona that Brunetto creates out of himself and Cicero at the start of the *Rettorica* where the transtemporal coming together of *Tullio* and his translator-cum-glossator, the *Sponitore*, bring a new textual persona into being, the singular *autore doppio* who produces the *Rettorica*'s material form (Keen 2–8):

Omai vuole dicere chi è l'autore, cioè il trovatore di questo libro . . . L'autore di questa opera è doppio: uno che di tutti i detti de' filosofi che fuoro davanti lui e dalla viva fonte del suo ingegno fece suo libro di rettorica, ciò fue Marco Tulio Cicero, il più sapientissimo de' Romani. Il secondo è Brunetto Latino cittadino di Firenze, il quale mise tutto suo studio e suo intendimento ad isponere e chiarire ciò che Tulio avea detto; et esso è quella persona cui questo libro appella sponitore. (*Rettorica* 1. 6-7)

Now we come to who is the author, that is the maker, of this book . . . The author of this book is double: one, who from all the wisdom of the philosophers who came before him, and from the living waters of his own genius, made his own book of rhetoric, and that was Marcus Tullius Cicero, the very wisest of all the Romans. The second is Brunetto Latini, Florentine citizen, who placed all his energies and his understanding in revealing and clarifying what *Tullio* had said; and this is the person whom this book calls *sponitore* [glossator].

Brunetto's sketches of these two-part mediators (*autore-doppio* and *tencione*) recall Latour's "sociology of translation," a transfer characterized by drift, invention, and the creation of new links that modify the two entities so connected (*Reassembling* 106–9). Brunetto points toward these sorts of effects in the *Rettorica* when he invokes his new forms of authority and textuality. In creating the hybrid *autore-doppio*, Brunetto makes it problematic thereafter to separate the work of authorship between the Latin *auctor* "Tullio" and the translator-glossator "Sponitore": through an effortful connection, the two voices act as a single mediator in new networks forming around the book that they cowrite (*Reassembling* 129–32). Their conjoined, dialogic authorship becomes legible in physical *mise en page* and rubrication within manuscript copies of the *Rettorica*, where in two surviving examples even the size of script is cited as a marker of this unified duality.[13] The *Rettorica* aims to be more than an intermediary providing information transfer. It constantly invokes the need for *Tullio* and *Sponitore* to engage mutually with each other, and also with the work's patron, the *Porto* whose *senhal* appears on the page at several points (and whose concealment behind the

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[13] See title pages in MS II.iv.127, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence; and MS I. ix. 21, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Siena: "Là dove è la lettera grossa si è il testo di Tullio, e la lettera sottile sono le parole de lo sponitore" (In the places where the script is large is the text of *Tullio*, and in small script are the words of the *Sponitore*). Otherwise all copies at least use rubrics to consistently distinguish the alternating "voices" of *Tullio* and *Sponitore*, except MS II.ii.91, BNCF (see Guadagnini 357, 361–63).

literary name points to another set of networks).] Besides these inscribed readers, the book also addresses an ideal audience that shares the *Porto*'s and *autore-doppio*'s desire to produce particular types of verbal performance in the vernacular, a community that may in turn bring more *tencioni* into being whenever they find willingness for another mediation or translation opportunity.

The *Rettorica*'s explicit dialogism, its seeking out audiences (both inscribed and implied) for its Florentine-oriented communication, makes the translated book itself a *tencione*. In Brunetto's theoretical development of the category, he proposes that the element of persuasive confrontation may be either overt (*tencione espressa*) or indirect (*tencione tacita*), performed in different styles or registers:

Ma chi volesse bene considerare la propietà d'una lettera o d'una canzone, ben potrebbe apertamente vedere che colui che lla fa o che lla manda intende ad alcuna cosa che vuole che sia fatta per colui a cui e' la manda. Et questo puote essere o pregando o domandando o comandando o minacciando o confortando o consigliando; e in ciascuno di questi modi puote quelli a cui vae la lettera o la canzone o negare o difendersi per alcuna scusa. Ma quelli che manda la sua lettera guernisce di parole ornate e piene di sentenzia e di fermi argomenti, sì come crede poter muovere l'animo di colui a non negare, e, s'elli avesse alcuna scusa, come la possa indebolire o instornare in tutto. Dunque è una tencione tacita intra loro, e così sono quasi tutte le lettere e canzoni d'amore in modo di tencione o tacita o espressa . (*Rettorica* 76.16)

But whoever reflects carefully on the properties of a letter or a lyric, may clearly see that the person who makes it or who sends it is intending for a particular outcome to occur on the part of the person to whom it is sent. And this may be by means of

pleading or requesting or commanding or threatening or consoling or advising; and so also in each of these modes the person to whom the letter or the lyric is sent may either reject it or defend against it by means of some justification. But the person sending the letter will embellish it with elegant words and wise sayings and convincing arguments with the aim of convincing the recipient against rejection, or where there is a justification [for refusal], of weakening or overturning it. And so there is a tacit *tencione* between them, and so almost all letters and love lyrics take the form of a *tencione*, either tacit or explicit.

If these *tencioni* can be conceived as actants within a network, it is in the encounter between two verbal constructions that the *tencione* comes into being as a new unit. By extrapolation, the *Rettorica* in turn becomes a *tencione-tacita* mediator within different worknets, engaging multiple clusters of Florentines in its work of change and negotiation. And because the *tencione* is inherently dialogic, it should fit the requirements of Latourian diplomacy in the [POL]itical mode, making it possible to "*constantly start over*" as the exchanges draw a diversity of actors into proliferating worknets.

Bridging the Hiatus: Supplement over Lack

Having established that *tencione* is itself predicated upon negotiation and transformation—the two verbal performances must be open mediators and not closed intermediaries for a true *tencione* to come into being—we may now return to the notions of exile, *extra solum*, and *extracomunitario*, and to the agency of war and political exclusion in Brunetto's authorship. The "extra" prefix in the Isidorean type of definition ("ex-sul," "extra solum") should signify displacement and binary difference. But in ANT, "extra" could also give a sense of supplement, addition, extension, translation, and connection, indicating a protagonist who is

linked to the institutions both of origin and arrival, and whose personal mobility, verbal constructions, chattels, and facticity must be reckoned into networks with Latourian diplomatic attentiveness.

The *autore-doppio* and the *Rettorica*-as-*tencione* are actively transforming not only their destinations but also their origins. Brunetto, the *Porto*, and the Florentine Guelf exile community in France all speak a different tongue and express visible, audible cultural and material difference from the host community in France, where they are *extracomunitari*. Brunetto's choice to translate a source-text from Latin into Tuscan in the *Rettorica* reemphasizes this difference compared to the commonality expressed linguistically in the French *Tresor*, or over the Ciceronian or notarial Latinity that would assert his internationalism as a *litterato*. His choice of target-language in the *Rettorica*, however, also makes legible the networks that linked Brunetto and his fellow exiles back to Florence, overriding the exclusionary *extra* of banishment by asserting the supplementary *extra* of ties whose claims cannot be undone.

The text of the *Rettorica* simultaneously creates a worknet of Florentine-Guelfs-in-France, and another of vernacular-Florentine-rhetoricians (who may be resident inside or outside the city), with membership of each open to negotiation via the *Rettorica* itself as a material and textual mediator. The book's physical presence enables the assemblage of reciprocal ties between these apparently separated or only partially intersecting parties or institutions, as we imagine its presence and effects among different groups of readers: in France, as a work in a minority language; in Florence, as a work accessible to all; in France, as a work seeking Guelf patronage; in Florence, as a would-be-*tencione* seeking Ghibelline engagement; in vernacular circles, as a work linking the Latin and vulgar worlds and antiquity and duecento modernity; or in Latin-literate circles, as a work that shares or debases their specialist knowledge (à la *Convivio*).

Finally, the materiality of the surviving copies of the *Rettorica* reveals another aspect of the networks formed in the transmission of the text. The extant manuscripts are all written by Florentine/Tuscan scribes and dated to the fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries, the majority on paper support, with the sole parchment copy as the only surviving exemplar with any ambitious decorative scheme (MS II.iv.127, BNCF).[14] They attest to the reintegration of Brunetto's translation and its author back into the Florentine mainstream: there is little evidence of the text's circulation outside Tuscany. The work produced by the self-declaredly *extracomunitario* Brunetto finds an afterlife among communitarian language speakers, realizing one of the ambitions of a politician desirous of returning from exile. Yet the text's treatment by later copyists in some ways reduces it to an intermediary rather than a mediator: these copyists mostly "double-click" it inertly into the category of rhetorical miscellany (double-click being Latour's term for accessing information without any sort of reciprocal transformation , *AIME* 93–95), thereby overlooking and negating Brunetto's ambitions for its diplomatic role as mediator operating transformations between the different groups it engages.[15]

Paradoxically, the *Rettorica* receives what is probably its strongest, most *tencione*-creating contemporary engagement from Dante. In *Inferno* XV, Dante-persona meets the shade of Brunetto Latini alongside those of other lay and clerical intellectuals and Florentine politicians, whose presences in hell represent failures of [POL] and [LAW] (and, in Dante-author's soteriological perspective, of [REL]). As Allegretti (10–11) notes, Brunetto-persona's speech ostentatiously draws on the linguistic arts codified in the *Rettorica*,

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[14] See Guadagnini 356–57. Six of the seven copies are thus fairly modest in material quality of support and script (mercantile and notarial scripts, aside from the *littera textualis* of MS II.iv.127, BNCF).

[15] Guadagnini (357–61) records three stand-alone copies (one bound into a later composite), four where it accompanies the *Fiore di rettorica* and/or other rhetorical-didactic material. In the Sienese manuscript, the *Rettorica* is accompanied by Aristotelian material also closely associated with Brunetto (through *Tresor* book II) and another Florentine translator, Taddeo Alderotti.

suggesting that it is the episode's principal mediator text, despite a teasing citation of the *Tresor*: "Sieti raccomandato il mio Tesoro, / nel qual io vivo ancora" (*Inf.* XV 119–20: "Let my *Tresor*, where I am still alive, commend itself to you"). In prose meanwhile, Dante's own network-forming propositions in *Convivio* pursued rather different pathways to the *Rettorica*'s *tencione*-like book format and hybrid authoriality, in rising to the challenge of *speaking well* from exile. The conundrums of *Inferno* XV show us that Brunetto, and his coactants the *Tresor* and *Rettorica*, actively worked on Dante, as Dante likewise did on them. They exert a mutual transformation of which one moment is crystallized in the infernal sequence, where two *extracomunitari* meet to consider exile and authorship. The episode proposes further networks of text and gloss that will extend across and even beyond time and space, taking *extra* in every sense. The horizons expand: the persons involved are the fictionalized figures of Dante and Brunetto (plus Virgil, Priscian, Francesco d'Accursio, and others); the landscapes are those of the infernal desert and the Flemish- or Paduan-style dyke above it (and those of Florence, Fiesole, and Verona, which are mentioned in the dialogue); and the temporalities are those of Roman antiquity, the Florentine Duecento, the *Commedia*'s three-day journey, and the eternity of the afterworld. Dante-persona tells Brunetto-persona that he will retain the elliptical comments on exile from their dialogue for clarification in paradise by Beatrice: "Ciò che narrate di mio corso scrivo, / e serbolo a chiosar con altro testo / a donna che saprà, s'a lei arrivo" (*Inferno* XV 88–90: What you tell me of my course I'm writing down, and keeping to gloss with another text, by a wise lady, if I ever reach her). Additional *tencioni* come into being here; actants multiply since, in the end, it is not Beatrice but Cacciaguida who provides the gloss to Brunetto's words in *Paradiso* XVII. The worknets that run within the poem between Dante, Virgil, and Brunetto in hell, and Dante, Beatrice, and Cacciaguida in paradise, offer a multitude of passes and discontinuities. Both within the text of the *Commedia*, as well as externally in the encounters between historical authors,

books, and modes of vernacular authorship, the networks linking Brunetto Latini and Dante Alighieri produce abundant material for transformative, Latourian reflection on what it really means to "learn to *speak well to someone of something that really matters to that person*."

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