Proof

Francesco Robortello (1516–1567)

This book explores the intellectual world of Francesco Robortello, one of the most prominent scholars of the Italian Renaissance. From poetics to rhetoric, philology to history, topics to ethics, Robortello revolutionised the field of humanities through innovative interpretations of ancient texts and with a genius that was architectural in scope. He was highly esteemed by his contemporaries for his acute wit, but also envied and disparaged for his many qualities. In comparison with other humanists of his time such as Carlo Sigonio and Pier Vettori, Robortello had a deeply philosophical vein, one that made him unique not only to Italy, but to Europe more generally. Robortello's role in reforming the humanities makes him a constituent part of the long-fifteenth century. Robortello's thought, however, unlike that of other fifteenth-century humanists, sprung from and was thoroughly imbued with a systematic, Aristotelian spirit without which his philosophy would never have emerged from the tumultuous years of the mid-Cinquecento. Francesco Robortello created a system for the humanities which was unique for his century: a perfect union of humanism and philosophy. This book represents the first fully fledged monograph on this adventurous intellectual life.

Marco Sgarbi is Associate Professor in the History of Philosophy at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice.

Proof

Proof

Routledge Studies in Renaissance and Early Modern Worlds of Knowledge

Series Editor:
Harald E. Braun
University of Liverpool

This series explores Renaissance and Early Modern Worlds of Knowledge (c.1400–c.1700) in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa. The volumes published in this series study the individuals, communities and networks involved in making and communicating knowledge during the first age of globalization. Authors investigate the perceptions, practices and modes of behaviour which shaped Renaissance and Early Modern intellectual endeavour and examine the ways in which they reverberated in the political, cultural, social and economic sphere.

The series is interdisciplinary, comparative and global in its outlook. We welcome submissions from new as well as existing fields of Renaissance Studies, including the history of literature (including neo-Latin, European and non-European languages), science and medicine, religion, architecture, environmental and economic history, the history of the book, art history, intellectual history and the history of music. We are particularly interested in proposals that straddle disciplines and are innovative in terms of approach and methodology.

The series includes monographs, shorter works and edited collections of essays. The Society for Renaissance Studies (www.rensoc.org.uk) provides an expert editorial board, mentoring, extensive editing and support for contributors to the series, ensuring high standards of peer-reviewed scholarship. We welcome proposals from early career researchers as well as more established colleagues.

SRS Board Members: Erik DeBom (KU Leuven, Belgium), Mordechai Feingold (California Institute of Technology, USA), Andrew Hadfield (Sussex), Peter Mack (University of Warwick, UK), Jennifer Richards (University of Newcastle, UK), Stefania Tutino (UCLA, USA), Richard Wistreich (Royal College of Music, UK)

Writing Southern Italy Before the Renaissance
Trecento Historians of the Mezzogiorno
Ronald G. Musto

Francesco Robortello (1516–1567)
Architectural Genius of the Humanities
Marco Sgarbi

For more information about this series, please visit: www.routledge.com/Routledge-Studies-in-Renaissance-and-Early-Modern-Worlds-of-Knowledge/book-series/ASHSER4043

Proof

Proof

Francesco Robortello (1516–1567)

Architectural Genius of the Humanities

Marco Sgarbi

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

Proof

Proof

First published 2020
by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2020 Taylor & Francis

The right of Marco Sgarbi to be identified as author of this work has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Sgarbi, Marco, 1982– author.
Title: Francesco Robortello (1516–1567) : architectural genius of the humanities / Marco Sgarbi.
Description: New York, NY : Routledge, 2020. | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "This book explores the intellectual world of Francesco Robortello, one of the most prominent scholars of the Italian Renaissance. From poetics to rhetoric, philology to history, topics to ethics, Robortello revolutionized the field of humanities through innovative interpretations of ancient texts and with a genius that was architectural in scope. He was highly esteemed by his contemporaries for his acute wit, but also envied and disparaged for his many qualities. In comparison with other humanists of his time such as Carlo Sigonio and Pier Vettori, Robortello had a deeply philosophical vein, one that made him unique not only to Italy, but to Europe more generally. Robortello's role in reforming the humanities makes him a constituent part of the long-fifteenth century. Robortello's thought, however, unlike that of other fifteenth century humanists, sprung from and was thoroughly imbued with a systematic, Aristotelian spirit without which his philosophy would never have emerged from the tumultuous years of the mid-Cinquecento. Francesco Robortello created a system for the humanities which was unique for his century: a perfect union of humanism and philosophy. This book represents the first fully-fledged monograph on this adventurous intellectual life"—Provided by publisher.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019028197 (print) | LCCN 2019028198 (ebook) | ISBN 9780367224875 (hardback) | ISBN 9780429275159 (ebook) | ISBN 9781000692822 (adobe pdf) | ISBN 9781000693188 (epub) | ISBN 9781000693003 (mobi)
Subjects: LCSH: Robortello, Francesco, 1516–1567. | Humanists—Italy—Biography. | Intellectuals—Italy—Biography.
Classification: LCC DG540.8.R63 S43 2020 (print) | LCC DG540.8.R63 (ebook) | DDC 001.3092—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019028197
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019028198

ISBN: 978-0-367-22487-5 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-0-429-27515-9 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

Proof

Proof

To Anna

Proof

Proof

Proof

Proof

Contents

List of Illustrations viii
Acknowledgements ix

1 Introduction 1

2 Life and Works 15

3 Topics 53

4 Rhetoric 77

5 Poetics 103

6 History 139

7 Moral Philosophy 160

8 Conclusion 173

Index 180

Proof

Proof

Illustrations

Figures

2.1 Second Censored Version of Marliani's Book 28
2.2 First Uncensored Version of Marliani's Book 28
2.3 Francesco Segala's Bust of Francesco Robortello 38
3.1 Cicero's Scheme of Topics 68
3.2 Robortello's Scheme of Topics 69
4.1 1549 Scheme on Rhetoric 87
5.1 Manuscript II.IV.192, 245^r, Detail of the First Sheet 107

Table

3.1 Table of Topical Places in Cicero, Boethius and Agricola 58

Proof

Proof

Acknowledgements

This monograph is the result of seven years' research on Francesco Robortello. My interest in Robortello started during my previous investigation into vernacular logical textbooks in Renaissance Italy, where I encountered some very interesting manuscripts on logic, Topics and rhetorics hitherto ignored by Renaissance scholars. I gradually became acquainted with Robortello's thought during my research year as fellow at Villa I Tatti, The Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies. In reading the secondary literature, however, I felt growing dissatisfaction with the way in which Robortello's intellectual character was generally depicted, as an arid humanist, meticulous philologian and exceptional as well as controversial university professor. His philosophical thought was completely neglected, buried under the idea that good humanists cannot be philosophers, only philologians. While engaged in reading and interpreting his manuscripts, some of them seriously damaged, I was struck by his originality as thinker and his genuine contribution to the history of late Renaissance and early modern thought, beyond the traditional field of literary criticism.

Tranquillity for writing this book has been made possible over the last five years thanks to the generous support of the European Research Council's grant, "Aristotle in the Italian Vernacular: Rethinking Renaissance and Early-Modern Intellectual History (c.1400–c.1650)." My special gratitude goes to David A. Lines, who has dexterously managed the project on behalf of the University of Warwick. The idea for a book was first kindled in 2014 at my arrival at the Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Without such a peaceful and conducive environment, it would not have been possible to write a single word.

Some of the results to be found here (particularly in chapters 3 and 4) have been previously published in these articles: Marco Sgarbi, "Francesco Robortello on Topics," *Viator* 47 (2016): 365–88, Brepols Publishers; and Marco Sgarbi, "Francesco Robortello's Rhetoric. On the Orator and his Arguments," *Rhetorica* 34 (2016): 243–67, University of California Press, though in a totally different form. Some errors have been

Proof

Proof

amended and others, I am sure, remain. I have publicly aired my ideas at two international conferences: “Philosophy and Knowledge in the Renaissance: Interpreting Aristotle in the Vernacular,” organized at The Warburg Institute, London, on 21 June 2013 by Jill Kraye, Simon Gilson and David A. Lines; and “Francesco Robortello. Réception des anciens et construction de la modernité,” organized at the Université de Rennes 2, on 6–8 October 2016 by Monique Bouquet, Sergio Cappello and Michel Magnien. My heartful thanks to the organizers and all the people who attended the conferences for their insightful remarks and comments to my papers.

I should thank a long list of scholars and librarians who have helped my research during these years, but my gratitude goes in particular to Alessio Cotugno for our long discussion on Renaissance poetics, to Enrico Garavelli for having shared Robortello’s manuscript correspondence, to Laura Refe for her precious help in deciphering very obscure passages of the texts and to Matteo Venier for his generosity in discussing anecdotes about Robortello’s life. A special mention goes to the community of Villa I Tatti and our daily informal meetings. Although readers will find few references to these conversations below, I am indebted to them in more ways than I can now reconstruct or evaluate.

Since that version was drafted, many friends and external, anonymous reviewers have helped with its reformulation and revision, among whom are Alessio Cotugno, Marco Faini and Teodoro Katinis. I have found all their suggestions, observations and objections extremely helpful, but I have no reason to suppose they will agree with the final result. I am grateful to Harald Ernst Braun for having accepted my book in his prestigious series.

My final acknowledgement goes to my wife, who has supported me over these years of intense peregrination and study throughout Europe and the U.S., and who gave me the special honour of becoming the father of Anna, to whom this book is dedicated.

Proof

Proof

1 Introduction

In *La fine dell'Umanesimo*, Giuseppe Toffanin chooses to remember Francesco Robortello from Udine as the "last genuine humanist."[1] No doubt Robortello may properly be considered a fully rounded "humanist," if we accept Paul Oskar Kristeller's famous characterisation of Humanism. According to this eminent German-born, American-naturalised historian, Humanism "was not as such a philosophical tendency or system, but rather a cultural and educational program which emphasized and developed an important but limited area of studies."[2] This area had as its nucleus "a group of subjects that was concerned essentially neither with classics nor with philosophy," and was thus properly called *studia humanitatis*. The *studia humanitatis* embraced "a clearly defined cycle of scholarly disciplines, namely grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy."[3] The humanists "were active either as teachers of the humanities in secondary schools and universities, or as secretaries to princes or cities."[4]

As we shall see amply evidenced in the biographical section, as well as being a professor of "humanity," or *humaniora*, in numerous Italian schools and universities, throughout his career Robortello also authored important studies on the very disciplines that constituted this field of study. For instance, in the realm of grammar he published *Annotationes tam in Graecis, quam Latinis authoribus* (1543); in rhetoric, the *De rhetorica facultate* (1548) and the *De artificio dicendi* (1560); in poetics, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes* (1548); in history, the *De historica facultate* (1548), and in moral philosophy, the *In libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio* (1552).

In reading Kristeller's definition, one may note the somewhat surprising absence of any interest in Classical culture: the study of Greek and Latin does not appear explicitly in the list of disciplines that make up the *studia humanitatis*. In truth, however, the study of each discipline contained within the humanistic program "was understood to include the reading and interpretation of its standard ancient writers in Latin and, to a lesser extent, in Greek."[5] This was at the core of the study of grammar. In Robortello, too, there is a marked interest in ancient history

Proof

Proof

and literature. This is evidenced in his *Explanationes in primum Aeneid. Vergil. librum collectæ* (1548), his edition of the pseudo-Longinus's *De sublime* (1554), the *Scholia in Aeschyli tragoedias* (1552), and his many studies of Roman history, including the *De nominibus Romanorum* (1548) and the *De vita et victu populi romani* (1559).

The study of Latin and Greek works led, according to Eugenio Garin, to an attitude, or a historical consciousness, that "clearly defines the essence of Humanism," as well as a new philosophy.[6] Robortello was therefore a humanist not only in Kristeller's sense, but also in the sense suggested by Garin. If a historical consciousness was one of the characterising features of the humanist, Robortello was without doubt the humanist *par excellence* who in his *De arte sive ratione corrigendi veteres authores disputatio* (1557) spelt out a critical methodology for understanding ancient authors that went beyond any form of admiration still persisting among the intellectuals of the Quattrocento.

Robortello may thus be considered the "ideal humanist" from the standpoint of both Kristeller and Garin. He was also the philosopher of a new "humanity," not so much because he was a professor of philosophy, but because, unlike the other humanists, whose philosophical insights may justifiably be questioned for their lack of theoretical depth,[7] for Robortello philosophy was above all the spirit of system – namely the attempt to establish a common matrix for all human knowledge, so as to define a new and more complete *humanitas*.

His approach is immediately evident in the fundamental connection he establishes between the various disciplines of the *studia humanitatis*, which in his view revolve around the *sermo* (discourse or language or oration) and may therefore be defined without hesitation as language arts. In *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes* (1548), Robortello states that there are five language arts:

1. *apodictic logic*, that is demonstration, which deals with what is true;
2. *dialectics*, which deals with the probable;
3. *rhetoric*, which deals with the persuasive;
4. *sophistry*, which focuses on the verisimilar;
5. *poetics*, which is concerned with the fictitious or the fabulous.[8]

Robortello excludes grammar from the language arts because it deals with "minor things which say nothing about the soul."[9] At most it may be considered propaedeutic to the various language arts that are concerned with *oratio*. History and philosophy would appear to be missing also, though included in the *studia humanitatis* program, but this is not the case. As we will see at greater length in the following chapters, Robortello considered the study of history to be part of rhetoric, whereas moral education is the goal towards which the teachings and precepts of politics and rhetoric – and therefore indirectly also history – steer.

Proof

Proof

Robortello's classification of language arts had an immediate reception and echo in Benedetto Varchi, one of the most prominent Italian sixteenth-century intellectuals especially active in the Accademia degli Infiammati and in the Accademia fiorentina. In his lecture on the *Della poetica in generale*, given in 1553, he claims that there are five ways of speaking, corresponding to five rational faculties of the mind: 1. demonstrative, which pertains to the apodictic logic; 2. probable, which pertains to dialectic; 3. verisimilar, which pertains to sophistry; 4. persuasive, which concerns rhetoric; 5. fictitious or fabulous which are related to poetry.[10]

What distinguishes Robortello from Varchi and sets him apart also from all the other humanists that preceded him is his grafting of Aristotelianism onto the main stem of the language arts. Robortello is aware of the innovative and revolutionary bent of his thinking, as he himself reveals in the dedicatory letter to Cosimo I in *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*. He compares himself in no uncertain terms to Aristotle who, after occupying himself most profitably with the natural sciences, went on to devote himself to the language arts. Aristotle's great merit was to have brought a coherent order and robust systemisation to all those arts that had previously been dealt with in a haphazard and manifestly confused way.[11] Robortello points in particular to Aristotle's methodological approach in ordering the language arts, which he will seek to transplant into the context of humanism.

Robortello views the condition of the language arts in his own times as not dissimilar to their situation in Aristotle's. Philosophers had neglected Aristotelian texts on the language arts, especially as regards rhetoric and poetics, not because they were too complex (far more complex texts were commonly explained and commented upon), but because they were considered trivial, *de jure et de facto*, and so unable to provide fundamental knowledge of things and good only for decorating discourse in a theatrical or political manner.[12] By contrast, Robortello seeks to rehabilitate the language arts after Aristotle's example. In particular, he wishes to revive the "extremely close connection" (*arctissima connexione*) that exists between the language arts and makes them worthy of being studied and no longer subservient or instrumental to the other sciences.[13] As we shall see, Robortello will ground the language arts in a methodology that makes it possible to discuss anything, and which represents a notable development in humanistic Topics, that particular art of finding argument for any discussion, stemming from Aristotle's natural logic, that is the inborn faculties of the mind. It is precisely in his attempt to find a common basis for all the language arts that Robortello displays his own distinctively philosophical and systematic spirit, absent in many other humanists of his time.

By no means was Robortello a philosopher if by philosophy we refer exclusively to the scholastic conception of metaphysical or natural

Proof

Proof

enquiry.[14] He replaces the great cathedrals of scholastic ideas with concrete and targeted investigations into the language arts that aim to "humanly educate," as Garin terms it, offering a moral and civic education that must be viewed alongside traditional philosophy as a definite new way of doing philosophy. The tabulation at the end of the manuscript Donà dalle Rose 447.29, probably devised during his time in Venice, offers an insight into his idea of philosophy, an idea that differs significantly from that of his contemporaries.[15]

Human knowledge is limited, the light of the reason that shows the truth of things being feeble. This is a typical Aristotelian position after Pietro Pomponazzi's publication of the *Tractatus de immortalitate animae* in 1513, which drastically diminished the speculative power of the mind. Only a few persons can ever attain knowledge of all the primary principles of things and of God; in fact, this is rather to be couched as a state of enlightenment, a variety of intuition or divine inspiration. Human beings know things scientifically and teach methodologically what is closer to and more graspable by the mind; these are divided into two main groups, one concerning words (*verba*), the other concerning things (*res*).

In the first group we find the language arts. Here Robortello provides a more detailed classification than the one mentioned earlier which, as we shall see, was conceived in 1545, a sign that his philosophical system underwent further development during the Venetian period. The first and most important art is logic, or dialectic in a general sense. His explanation fits in with the mid-sixteenth-century methodological debate that centered on Padua and Venice. Logic is the first language art because it is the first tool devised by human beings to fill the gap left by intuitive knowledge, which only very few people can have. It serves speculation and action, or natural and moral philosophy. The second language art is grammar, which supports internal coherence in all the parts of discourse. The list also includes history as a language art that narrates the facts and deeds of illustrious human beings. Then there is rhetoric, which teaches the skill of how to speak on civil matters (*rebus civilibus*) for the purpose of persuasion. The discipline that studies the reasons behind any possible argument, provided it rests with the probable, is properly speaking dialectic. Finally, the discipline that gives pleasure is poetics. Compared to the earlier classification, Robortello leaves out sophistry and demonstration (as a particular kind of apodictic logic), while introducing grammar.

At several points throughout his work, Robortello comes back to the classification of the language arts, but the examination of the disciplines that are concerned with things (*res*) is unique to this manuscript, and seems to be a Stoic blend, at least in the initial distinction. Indeed, according to Robortello there are many kinds of philosophy connected with things, depending on whether they are independent of or dependent upon human beings, or created or manipulated according to our will. The philosophy that looks at things under human control and influence

Proof

Proof

is divided into the two separate categories of active or moral philosophy (*in agendo*) and factive or productive philosophy (*in faciendo*). Moral or active philosophy is further subdivided into ethics, the purpose of which is the good; economics, the purpose of which is the governance of the family; and politics, the purpose of which is to legislate and create the conditions in which human beings can fulfill their basic nature as social beings. Productive or factive philosophy, on the other hand, is concerned with the production of things and its habit is properly called art (*ars*). There are two kinds of art, the principal kind (*princeps*), which governs all the others, and the lowly (*infima*) or mechanical kind, which serves them for instance the art of the tailor (*ars sutoria*). Robortello focuses on the principal kind. In an absolute sense (*simpliciter*) the art that governs all others is medicine, as without such help the human being cannot fulfill the other arts. There are also aspects of this that produce an effect (*effectiva*) resulting in work such as the art of construction (*ars aedificandi*), or in gestures and dispositions, as in the case of the art of greeting (*ars salutandi*). If they do not produce any effect, they provide knowledge, so that they may also be called *ars princeps cognoscitiva*. Of this kind are the art of navigation (*ars nautica*) and military art (*ars militaris*).

Robortello identifies three disciplines in the category of things that are independent of the power and will of the human being. Metaphysics deals with things that are separate from matter. Mathematical science deals with the study of cogitations and abstractions, that are independent of matter, and such abstractions may be continuous or discrete. Continuous abstractions may be mobile or immobile, the former defining the activity of astrology (astronomy), the latter defining the activities that belong to geometry. Discrete abstractions are dealt with by arithmetic, while music has to do with discrete abstractions that are in a relationship with one another. Lastly, there is the type of philosophy that studies corruptible things that are conjoined with matter, and which are called natural, or, as the Greeks say according to Robortello, physiology. Those who wish to be natural philosophers need to know the natural principles, which may be either internal – the material cause or the formal cause – or external – the efficient cause and the final cause. Knowledge of the principles is not sufficient, and it is necessary to know also the attributes of natural things (*passiones rerum naturalium*), which are either for themselves, like motion, time and place, or accidental, such as emptiness and the infinite. Lastly, the natural philosopher must know the characteristics of bodies, which can be simple or composite. Simple bodies are eternal, such as the skies, or not, like the four elements. Composite bodies, on the other hand, can be either animate, like human beings, who have reason, or animals, which are irrational or, again, inanimate, such as metals and stones.

At the end Robortello's conception of knowledge is mainly Aristotelian, as this hierarchy of disciplines shows very clearly. Insofar as he was both Aristotelian and humanist, Robortello represents a synthesis of two

Proof

Proof

worlds, two cultures that all too frequently have been unjustifiably set in opposition to one another as being mutually exclusive. Robortello's desire to integrate the new Aristotelianism within the humanist legacy thus appears highly original.

The innovative nature of his contributions made Robortello famous even in his lifetime. Despite his fame, however, very little has in point of fact been written about him. To date, a monograph on Robortello has still to be written that compares with those on other intellectuals of the time, such as Carlo Sigonio and Ludovico Dolce, both of which I take as reference points in the present work.[16] I have chosen to avoid a lengthy bibliographical discussion of secondary texts by using the "Introduction" to review key research on Robortello without attempting to be exhaustive, and thus to give space for a more detailed discussion of particular themes in the subsequent chapters. For the sake of convenience, the studies are grouped thematically.

The life of Francesco Robortello was described in detail in the eighteenth century by Gian Giuseppe Liruti, and more recently by Sergio Cappello and Matteo Venier. The biographical profile that follows here is a bibliographical update, in the light of new manuscripts and correspondence.[17] Romeo De Maio, additionally, offers an important reconstruction of the discussions surrounding the commission for Pope Paul IV's biography, which should have been Robortello's.[18] Another interesting contribution is Matteo Venier's definitive proof of the attempt on Robortello's life by Giovanni Battista Egnazio, thanks to the discovery of a letter written by Robortello to his father-in-law, Antonio Belloni, in which he mentions the incident.[19] Equally important for an understanding of Robortello's intellectual development, although not directly related to the events of his life, is the article by Sergio Cappello on the rediscovered *editio princeps* of the *De artificio dicendi*, which pushes back the date of composition and first edition of the work from 1567 to 1560.[20]

Scholars in recent years have focused on reconstructing Robortello's philological work. The pioneering research carried out by Antonio Carlini has undeniably had an impact but still amounts to little more than a list of works edited by the Friulan intellectual and an account of the reputation he enjoyed among his peers.[21] A more detailed and well-defined approach is that of Francesco Donadi,[22] who sees in *De arte sive ratione corrigendi* "the first attempt to make philology an exact science, to reduce it to a system, after the golden years of episodic and systematic contributions, the result of an inexhaustible *curiositas*."[23] Donadi's essay has the particular merit of showing how, in his *Explicationes* and his edition of the pseudo-Longinus, Robortello put these methodological precepts to practical use. It is a curious fact that Klara Vanek, while offering the most complete examination of the same text, makes no mention whatsoever of Donadi's work.[24] Matteo Venier has also recently re-examined the same work, both revealing its deep Aristotelian imprint and framing

Proof

Proof

it within Robortello's overall attempt to establish a comprehensive methodology for the language arts.[25] In the field of philology, one of the most prominent themes on which researchers have focused is without doubt Robortello's editorial work on the tragedies of Aeschylus, the subject of studies by Carlini, Robert D. Dawe, Marsh McCall, Matteo Taufer and Elisa Maggioni.[26]

Robortello has attracted most attention for his exegesis of Aristotle's *Poetics*. The originality of his interpretation was immediately apparent to his contemporaries, and in the early 1900s, Giuseppe Toffanin attributed to Robortello's work on this topic a central, if not pivotal, role in the study of Renaissance literature. Not only was Robortello seen as an "interesting figure," he was considered the last great humanist, as well as the "first literary critic of the Counter-Reformation; the last genuine poetry hedonist who by coincidence lays the foundations of moralism."[27] Toffanin's thesis was based primarily on Robortello's interpretation of Aristotelian catharsis, which, as we shall see, must be revised. Between 1951 and 1962, Bernard Weinberg repeatedly revisited Robortello's original contribution,[28] highlighting the crucial role of credibility and verisimilitude in his poetic conception. In contrast to the assertion that poetry is concerned with the fantastical, the invented and sometimes even the false, the Friulan humanist developed a theory according to which poetic composition must have some connection with reality in order to fulfill its function of bringing moral improvement to its audience. Indeed, according to Weinberg's reconstruction, we can say of Robortello that what is not moral is not poetic. The pioneering element here is that moral edification is not sought in the act of catharsis, but may be found in the entire broader concept of poetics as a language art, and coming thus to share important features with rhetoric. Weinberg has also left us with valuable studies on Robortello's minor poetic works – for example his study of comedy, which provided the basis for a voluminous monograph by María José Vega Ramos.[29]

Toffanin's ideas on poetic catharsis were further explored, and at some length, by Carlo Diano,[30] whose work has been ignored by all subsequent researchers.[31] In Diano's view, Robortello possesses a virtue which "is not merely historical, but also scientific [. . .] because of the clarity of his arguments and the acumen and sobriety of his conclusions."[32] While lacking the resources available today, he was able to understand the true function of tragic catharsis, which is "to guard against the blows of suffering and death through the development of necessary habits."[33] Similar conclusions were reached by Déborah Blocker, who made the point that the philosophically problematic nature of Aristotelian catharsis was developed by Robortello in order to justify the importance of poetics in the field of morality, as well as to meet the demand of his patron, Cosimo I.[34] Eugene E. Ryan, on the other hand, adopts a different perspective by focusing primarily on the controversy that arose around the problem of catharsis between Robortello and Vincenzo Maggi.[35]

Proof

Proof

Robortello's conception of history has also been a subject of considerable interest. Since Giorgio Spini's groundbreaking contribution, he has been viewed as one of the very first authors to pay serious attention to the methodology of *ars historica*.[36] In the brief window of time between 1970 and 1971, the works of Francesco Donadi and Girolamo Cotroneo made their appearance. The fact that these two works came out almost simultaneously and were thus unable to influence each other, and thereby to greatly enrich the study of Robortello as a historian, is unfortunate in the extreme. Donadi's are the sharpest insights for understanding the role of history within Robortello's framework of the language arts, as well as its profound connection with poetics. He found in Robortello a "historical catharsis" parallel to the tragic catharsis which was geared to the moral edification of the human being.[37] Cotroneo, on the other hand, offers his own presentation of the *De historica facultate*, but in so doing he makes the mistake of dating Robortello's work after that of Speroni's *Dialogo dell'istoria*.[38] More recently, Robortello's approach was persuasively re-examined within the broader context of the debate surrounding early Pyrrhonism by Carlo Ginzburg.[39]

Other contributions, which cannot be readily classified according to specific areas, are those of Lina Bolzoni on Robortello's significance for introducing tables and diagrams into teaching the language arts,[40] of Barbara Zlobec Del Vecchio on the poem *Talia divino dum fundit Sontius ore*,[41] of Enrico Garavelli on the manuscript *Del traslare d'una lingua in l'altra*,[42] and of Sergio Cappello on the spread of Robortello's ideas in France.[43]

All these investigations have contributed enormously to our knowledge of Robortello, yet still we lack a monograph that systematically and synthetically pieces together all the results achieved thus far. In particular, in my view, these works lack a fundamental awareness that Robortello is in fact performing for the language arts an in-depth philosophical inquiry aimed at uncovering a unitary methodology capable of explaining in a coherent and cohesive manner all discourse-related disciplines. In this sense, Robortello employs Aristotelian philosophy to bring order to all the disciplines which the humanists had conceived in a disorganized manner, deprived of any philosophical underpinning or methodological basis. The key focus of the present work is therefore Robortello's architectural genius. For this reason, the various language arts shall be examined only to the extent that Robortello seeks to bind them together in a systematic and indissoluble philosophical unity.

To clarify, I do not provide here a treatment of Robortello's philological activities because philology, along with grammar, is the preliminary work from which philosophical discourse emerges. Likewise, in the chapter on rhetoric I shall examine not Robortello's oratorical compositions, but his reflections on rhetoric as a language art; in the section on poetics,

Proof

Proof

not the correctness of his exegesis of Aristotle's text, but rather his ideas on poetry; and in the chapter on history, not his work as a historian, but his conception of how history should be written. Hence the perspective explored in this book is strictly philosophical and falls within the framework of the history of ideas, and it makes no attempt to replace the research that has been carried out previously, tending rather to add to its value by inscribing it into a wider philosophical context.

Notes

1. Giuseppe Toffanin, *La fine dell'Umanesimo* (Milano: Brocca, 1920), 45.
2. Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 22.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 23.
5. Ibid., 22.
6. Eugenio Garin, *L'umanesimo italiano* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1994), 21. Against this idea, Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, 252: "even if we were able to construct a coherent philosophy for individual humanists, we cannot discover a common philosophy for all humanists, and hence it is not possible to define their contribution in terms of a specific set of philosophical doctrines." See also Christopher S. Celenza, *The Lost Italian Renaissance: Humanists, Historians, and Latin's Legacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Christopher S. Celenza, *The Intellectual World of the Italian Renaissance: Language, Philosophy, and the Search for Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). For a revision of Kristeller's thesis see Jill Kraye, 'Beyond Moral Philosophy: Renaissance Humanism and the Philosophical Canon', *Rinascimento* 56 (2016): 3–22.
7. Giuseppe Billanovich, *Petrarca letterato. I. Lo scrittorio del Petrarca* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1947), 415; Paul Oskar Kristeller, 'Movimenti filosofici del Rinascimento', *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 4 (1950): 275–88.
8. Francesco Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes: qui ab eodem ex manuscriptis libris, multis in locis emendatus fuit, ut iam difficillimus, ac obscurissimus liber a nullo ante declaratus, facile ab omnibus possit intelligi. Cum Indice rerum et uerborum locupletissimo. Francisci Robortelli Vtinensis Paraphrasis in librum Horatii, qui uulgo De Arte poetica ad Pisones inscribitur. Eiusdem explicationes de satyra, de epigrammata, de comoedia, de salibus, de elegia. Quae omnia addita ab authore fuerunt, ut nihil quod ad poeticam spectaret desiderari posset: Nam in iis scribendis Aristotelis methodum seruauit: et ex ipsius libello de Arte poetica principia sumpsit omnium suarum explicationum* (Firenze: Torrentino, 1548), 1.
9. Ibid.
10. Bendetto Varchi, *Opere* (Trieste: Lint, 1859), 684. See Annalisa Andreoni, *La via della dottrina. Le lezioni accademiche di Benedetto Varchi* (Pisa: ETS, 2012), 291–304.
11. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, ii^{v}.
12. Ibid., ii^{v}.
13. Ibid., iii^{r}.
14. Kraye, 'Beyond Moral Philosophy: Renaissance Humanism and the Philosophical Canon', 3–22.

Proof

Proof

15. Marco Sgarbi, *The Italian Mind: Vernacular Logic in Renaissance Italy (1540–1551)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).
16. William McCuaig, *Carlo Sigonio: The Changing World of the Late Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Ronnie H. Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce, Renaissance Man of Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).
17. Gian Giuseppe Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli* (Venezia: Fenzo, 1762), 413–83; Sergio Cappello, 'Robortello, Francesco', in *Nuovo Liruti. Dizionario biografico dei Friulani, II. L'età veneta* (Udine: Forum Editrice, 2009), 2151–7; Matteo Venier, 'Robortello, Francesco', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Roma: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2016), 827–31.
18. Romeo De Maio, *Riforme e miti nella Chiesa del Cinquecento* (Napoli: Guida, 1992), 121–39.
19. Matteo Venier, 'Belloni, Robortello ed Egnazio: Nuovi e vecchi documenti su una contesa umanistica', *Metodi e Ricerche* 17 (1998): 51–66.
20. Sergio Cappello, 'L'editio princeps ritrovata del De artificio dicendi (1560) di Francesco Robortello', in *Dal Friuli alle Americhe. Studi di amici e allievi udinesi per Silvana Serafin*, edited by Alessandra Ferraro (Udine: Società filologica friulana, 2015), 133–48.
21. Antonio Carlini, 'L'attività filologica di Francesco Robortello', *Atti dell'Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Udine* 7 (1967): 53–84.
22. For Robortello's philological approach to Aristotle's *Poetics*, see Francesco Donadi, 'Nota al cap. VI della *Poetica* di Aristotele: il problema dell' ὄψις', *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Patavina di Scienze Lettere ed arti* 3 (1970–1971): 414–51.
23. Francesco Donadi, 'Francesco Robortello da Udine', *Lexis. Poetica, retorica e comunicazione nella tradizione classica* 19 (2001): 79–91.
24. Klara Vanek, *Ars corrigendi in der frühen Neuzeit. Studien zur Geschichte der Textkritik* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2007), 15–51.
25. Matteo Venier, 'Francesco Robortello: Discorso sull'arte ovvero sul metodo di correggere gli autori antichi', *Ecdotica* 9 (2012): 183–218.
26. Roger D. Dawe, 'The Manuscript Sources of Robortello's Edition of Aeschylus', *Mnemosyne* 14 (1961): 111–18; Marsh McCall, 'The Principal Source of Robortello's Edition of Scholia to Aeschylus' Supplices', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 22 (1975): 125–46; Monique Mund-Dopchie, *La survie d'Eschyle à la Renaissance. Editions, traductions, commentaires et imitations* (Louvain: Peeters, 1984); Antonio Carlini, 'Robortello editore di Eschilo', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia* 19 (1989): 313–22; Matteo Taufer, 'Considerazioni sulle possibili fonti di Robortello e del Bodl. Auct. T.6.5 (Oa) relativamente al Prometheus Vinctus', *Lexis* 32 (2014): 393–7; Elisa Maggioni, 'Francesco Robortello editore dei Persiani di Eschilo', *SemRom. Seminari romani di cultura greca* 4 (2015): 41–70.
27. Toffanin, *La fine dell'umanesimo*, 29–45.
28. Bernard Weinberg, 'Robortello on the Poetics', in *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1952), 319–48; Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961).
29. María José Vega Ramos, *La formación de la teoría de la comedia: Francesco Robortello* (Cáceres: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Extremadura, 1997). See also Marvin T. Herrick, *Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century* (Urbana: The University of Illinois, 1950).

Proof

Proof

30. Carlo Diano, 'Francesco Robortello interprete della catarsi', in *Aristotelismo padovano e filosofia aristotelica* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1960), 71–9, also in Carlo Diano, *Studi e saggi di filosofia antica* (Padova: Antenore, 1973), 321–30 (I quote from this edition); Carlo Diano, 'Euripide auteur de la catharsis tragique', *Numen* 2 (1961): 117–41; Carlo Diano, 'La catarsi tragica', in *Saggezze e poetiche degli antichi* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1968), 215–69.
31. Francesco Donadi is the only exception.
32. Diano, 'Francesco Robortello interprete della catarsi', 321–2.
33. Ibid., 330.
34. Déborah Blocker, 'Élucider et équivoquer: Francesco Robortello (ré)invente la catharsis', *Le Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques* 33 (2004): 2–24; Déborah Blocker, 'Dire l'"art" à Florence sous Cosme I de Médicis: Une Poétique d'Aristote au service du prince', *Aisthe* 2 (2008): 56–101.
35. Eugene E. Ryan, 'Robortello and Maggi on Aristotle's Theory of Catharsis', *Rinascimento* 22 (1982): 263–73.
36. Giorgio Spini, 'I trattatisti dell'arte storica nella Controriforma italiana', *Quaderni di Belfagor* 1 (1948): 109–36. For a similar perspective, see Eckhard Kessler, *Theoretiker humanistischer Geschichtsschreibung* (München: Fink, 1971).
37. Francesco Donadi, 'La catarsi storica secondo Robortello', *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti* 82 (1969–1970): 63–9; Francesco Donadi, 'Un inedito del Robortello: La Praefatio in Tacitum', *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti* 82 (1969–1970): 299–321.
38. Girolamo Cotroneo, *I trattatisti dell'ars historica* (Napoli: Giannini, 1971), 121–68.
39. Carlo Ginzburg, *Il filo e le tracce* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2006), 23–8.
40. Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2001), 24–7.
41. Barbara Zlobec Del Vecchio, 'Talia divino dum fundit Sontius ore. Nota in margine a un carme di Francesco Robortello', *Incontri triestini di filologia classica* 6 (2006–2007): 121–39.
42. Enrico Garavelli, 'Un frammento di Francesco Robortello: Del traslare d'una lingua in l'altra', in *Studi di Italianistica nordica* (Roma: Aracne, 2014), 287–305.
43. Sergio Cappello, 'Francesco Robortello e la sua opera nella cultura francese', in *I rapporti dei friulani con l'Italia e con l'Europa nell'epoca veneta* (Padova: Cleup, 2000), 117–46.

Bibliography

1. Robortello's Works

Robortello, Francesco. *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes: qui ab eodem ex manuscriptis libris, multis in locis emendatus fuit, ut iam difficillimus, ac obscurissimus liber a nullo ante declaratus, facile ab omnibus possit intelligi. Cum Indice rerum et uerborum locupletissimo. Francisci Robortelli Vtinensis Paraphrasis in librum Horatii, qui uulgo De Arte poetica ad Pisones inscribitur. Eiusdem explicationes de satyra, de epigrammata, de comoedia, de salibus, de elegia. Quae omnia addita ab authore fuerunt, ut nihil quod ad poeticam spectaret desiderari posset: Nam in iis scribendis Aristotelis methodum seruauit: et*

Proof

Proof

ex ipsius libello de Arte poetica principia sumpsit omnium suarum explicationum. Firenze: Torrentino, 1548.

2. Primary Sources

Varchi, Benedetto. *Opere*. Trieste: Lint, 1859.

3. Secondary Literature

Andreoni, Annalisa. *La via della dottrina. Le lezioni accademiche di Benedetto Varchi*. Pisa: ETS, 2012.

Billanovich, Giuseppe. *Petrarca letterato. I. Lo scrittorio del Petrarca*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1947.

Blocker, Déborah. 'Élucider et équivoquer: Francesco Robortello (ré)invente la catharsis'. *Le Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques* 33 (2004): 2–24.

———. 'Dire l'"art" à Florence sous Cosme I de Médicis: Une Poétique d'Aristote au service du prince'. *Aisthe* 2 (2008): 56–101.

Bolzoni, Lina. *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2001.

Cappello, Sergio. 'Francesco Robortello e la sua opera nella cultura francese'. In *I rapporti dei friulani con l'Italia e con l'Europa nell'epoca veneta*, 117–46. Padova: Cleup, 2000.

———. 'Robortello, Francesco'. In *Nuovo Liruti. Dizionario biografico dei Friulani, II. L'età veneta*, 2151–7. Udine: Forum Editrice, 2009.

———. 'L'editio princeps ritrovata del De artificio dicendi (1560) di Francesco Robortello'. In *Dal Friuli alle Americhe. Studi di amici e allievi udinesi per Silvana Serafin*, edited by Alessandra Ferraro, 133–48. Udine: Società filologica friulana, 2015.

Carlini, Antonio. 'L'attività filologica di Francesco Robortello'. *Atti dell'Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Udine* 7 (1967): 53–84.

———. 'Robortello editore di Eschilo'. *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia* 19 (1989): 313–22.

Celenza, Christopher S. *The Lost Italian Renaissance: Humanists, Historians, and Latin's Legacy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

———. *The Intellectual World of the Italian Renaissance: Language, Philosophy, and the Search for Meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Cotroneo, Girolamo. *I trattatisti dell'ars historica*. Napoli: Giannini, 1971.

Dawe, Roger D. 'The Manuscript Sources of Robortello's Edition of Aeschylus'. *Mnemosyne* 14 (1961): 111–18.

Diano, Carlo. 'Francesco Robortello interprete della catarsi'. In *Aristotelismo padovano e filosofia aristotelica*, 71–9. Firenze: Sansoni, 1960.

———. 'Euripide auteur de la catharsis tragique'. *Numen* 2 (1961): 117–41.

———. 'La catarsi tragica'. In *Saggezze e poetiche degli antichi*, 215–69. Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1968.

———. *Studi e saggi di filosofia antica*. Padova: Antenore, 1973.

Donadi, Francesco. 'La catarsi storica secondo Robortello'. *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti* 82 (1969–1970): 63–9.

———. 'Un inedito del Robortello: La Praefatio in Tacitum'. *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti* 82 (1969–1970): 299–321.

Proof

Proof

———. 'Nota al cap. VI della *Poetica* di Aristotele: il problema dell' ὄψις'. *Atti e Memorie dell'Accademia Patavina di Scienze Lettere ed arti* 3 (1970–1971): 414–51.

———. 'Francesco Robortello da Udine'. *Lexis. Poetica, retorica e comunicazione nella tradizione classica* 19 (2001): 79–91.

Garavelli, Enrico. 'Un frammento di Francesco Robortello: Del traslare d'una lingua in l'altra'. In *Studi di Italianistica nordica*, 287–305. Roma: Aracne, 2014.

Garin, Eugenio. *L'umanesimo italiano*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1994.

Ginzburg, Carlo. *Il filo e le tracce*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2006.

Herrick, Marvin T. *Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century*. Urbana: The University of Illinois, 1950.

Kessler, Eckhard. *Theoretiker humanistischer Geschichtsschreibung*. München: Fink, 1971.

Kraye, Jill. 'Beyond Moral Philosophy: Renaissance Humanism and the Philosophical Canon'. *Rinascimento* 56 (2016): 3–22.

Kristeller, Paul Oskar. 'Movimenti filosofici del Rinascimento'. *Giornale critico della filosofia italiana* 4 (1950): 275–88.

———. *Renaissance Thought and Its Soruces*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.

Liruti, Gian Giuseppe. *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*. Venezia: Fenzo, 1762.

Maggioni, Elisa. 'Francesco Robortello editore dei Persiani di Eschilo'. *SemRom. Seminari romani di cultura greca* 4 (2015): 41–70.

McCall, Marsh. 'The Principal Source of Robortello's Edition of Scholia to Aeschylus' Supplices'. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 22 (1975): 125–46.

McCuaig, William. *Carlo Sigonio: The Changing World of the Late Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Mund-Dopchie, Monique. *La survie d'Eschyle à la Renaissance. Editions, traductions, commentaires et imitations*. Louvain: Peeters, 1984.

Ryan, Eugene E. 'Robortello and Maggi on Aristotle's Theory of Catharsis'. *Rinascimento* 22 (1982): 263–73.

Sgarbi, Marco. *The Italian Mind: Vernacular Logic in Renaissance Italy (1540–1551)*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Spini, Giorgio. 'I trattatisti dell'arte storica nella Controriforma italiana'. *Quaderni di Belfagor* 1 (1948): 109–36.

Taufer, Matteo. 'Considerazioni sulle possibili fonti di Robortello e del Bodl. Auct. T.6.5 (Oa) relativamente al Prometheus Vinctus'. *Lexis* 32 (2014): 393–7.

Terpening, Ronnie H. *Lodovico Dolce, Renaissance Man of Letters*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

Toffanin, Giuseppe. *La fine dell'Umanesimo*. Milano: Brocca, 1920.

Vanek, Klara. *Ars corrigendi in der frühen Neuzeit. Studien zur Geschichte der Textkritik*. Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 2007.

Vega Ramos, María José. *La formación de la teoría de la comedia: Francesco Robortello*. Cáceres: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Extremadura, 1997.

Venier, Matteo. 'Belloni, Robortello ed Egnazio: Nuovi e vecchi documenti su una contesa umanistica'. *Metodi e Ricerche* 17 (1998): 51–66.

———. 'Francesco Robortello: Discorso sull'arte ovvero sul metodo di correggere gli autori antichi'. *Ecdotica* 9 (2012): 183–218.

Proof

Proof

Weinberg, Bernard. ‘Robortello on the Poetics’. In *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern*, 319–48. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1952.

———. *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961.

Zlobec Del Vecchio, Barbara. ‘Talia divino dum fundit Sontius ore. Nota in margine a un carme di Francesco Robortello’. *Incontri triestini di filologia classica* 6 (2006–2007): 121–39.

Proof

Proof

2 Life and Works

Francesco Robortello was born in Udine on 9 September 1516. His father, Andrea Robortello of Ceneda,[1] was of noble origin and – as well as pursuing a career as a respected notary in the city – he was chancellor of Monte della Pietà. Francesco completed his early studies in public schools in Udine before being sent by his father to the University of Bologna. Most probably, he learnt the first rudiments of Greek and Latin when he was still in Udine, as it was typical for wealthy families at that time to send their children to a school of humanities prior to sending them to university.[2] The University of Bologna was still recovering from the depredations of the plague of 1527, which claimed the lives of numerous lecturers, and the passage of the Landsknechts, who were then poised to conquer Rome. Such was the context in which the teaching of rhetoric and poetry became that of *studia humanitatis*. The teaching was divided into two: morning lessons focused on rhetoric, while afternoon lessons were devoted to reading and interpreting the Classics. It was during these lessons that students took their first steps in the *antiquitates*, namely history, law and the institutions of ancient Greeks and Romans.[3] The chair of *studia humanitatis* in Bologna was occupied by another famous child of Udine and a family friend of the Robortellos, Romolo Quirino Amaseo. Robortello himself wrote a testimonial about him in an elegy published in 1537 by Giovan Battista Goineo in the *Defensio pro Romuli Amasaei auditoribus*.[4]

Under Amaseo's expert guidance, Robortello sharpened his knowledge of rhetoric, politics and the Classical languages. In all likelihood he also followed the lessons of Achille Bocchi, with whom he shared a love of Latin writers. At that time, Amaseo and Bocchi stood at the centre of a large group of young intellectuals and more seasoned professors such as Ludovico Boccadiferro, Alessandro Piccolomini, Gabriele Paleotti and Ulisse Aldrovandi, with whom Robortello would almost certainly have become acquainted.

Robortello began to lay the foundations for a new methodology in the *studia humanitatis* between 1535 and 1536. Liruti mentions the fact but fails to see the extent of its potential, whereas Bolzoni recognises

Proof

Proof

its originality in his later writings, but omits to trace its origins and explore its systematic nature.[5] This new methodology, which was still under development when Robortello was 19 or 20 years old, in his later years became the element that unified all the language arts. The first reference to this new way of working may be found in the dedicatory letter to Giovanni Battista Campeggi in *De vita, et victu populi Romani*, published in Bologna in 1559 by the Benati brothers. After discussing how best to learn and teach the myriad details of ancient history, Robortello writes that for the past 23 years he had had the habit of noting down the main points of ancient Greek history and literature. These were focal points that, once connected, not only helped explain events in a more coherent and articulate manner, but also made it easier to memorise the facts and learn them.[6] Hence in this manner any information concerning public offices, laws, cities, legends, colonies, town halls, families, the nobility, the priesthood and so on was presented in an interwoven order so as to support the learning of ancient matters. Thanks to this innovative method, Robortello soon became one of the leading experts on the humanities in Italy, and was elected at the early age of 23 to his first chair in Lucca.

The period between his university studies in Bologna and his first public teaching assignment remains obscure. Joachim Camerarius claims that Robortello was a tutor to Pietro Carnesecchi.[7] Liruti flatly rejects this possibility, as Robortello would have had to be Carnesecchi's tutor at the tender age of 12, which is clearly not possible since Carnesecchi would have been older than Robortello, and because from 1530 onwards it was generally thought that Carnesecchi never left Rome.[8] This last supposition has now been widely rejected, since we know that he was in Florence between 1536 and 1539, and in the autumn of 1538 had a brief sojourn in Lucca. During this period, as Carnesecchi himself wrote to Cosimo Gheri, Bishop of Fano, he was "more determined than ever before to attend to silence and study."[9] The question now is whether it is possible that Carnesecchi was Robortello's patron during this period of intensive study. A letter from Robortello to his teacher, Romolo Amaseo, dated 31 October 1538, as yet unexamined by scholars, would appear to confirm such a hypothesis.[10] Not only does it originate from Florence, thereby confirming beyond all doubt that Robortello was there at that time, but from the letter itself it appears that the Udine intellectual was a guest of Carnesecchi, perhaps not as tutor, but at least as a scholar of the Classics, and as a further point of detail it mentions also that Carnesecchi was not in residence, but at the "Bagni di Lucca," where, as we know, he met Vittoria Colonna. The letter additionally suggests he debated with Ciriaco Strozzi, according to the wishes of Carnesecchi. Again, it appears also that they were competing for a vacant position ("*officii causa una contendimus*"),[11] which was probably in Lucca. Thus immediately prior to travelling to Lucca, Robortello made a stop in Florence, where he

Proof

Proof

acquired some important connections, most notably Pietro Vettori and Benedetto Varchi. Liruti's theory, according to which Robortello travelled to Lucca between the end of 1537 and the beginning of 1538, is thus disproved by the letter, since, as we have seen, in 1538 at least, he was in Florence.[12]

Robortello was invited to Lucca on 5 January 1539.[13] His chair had previously belonged to Giovan Battista Pio, another student of Romolo Amaseo, who had been offered the post in 1526 but had refused it to stay on in Bologna. In September 1537, Giovan Battista Pio moved to Bologna, and the city's other humanist, Gherardo Sergiusti, went with him – hence a replacement was needed. On 25 January 1538 a salary of 200 *scudi* was offered with the post, an insufficient wage to attract the highest-calibre scholars, and on 14 May the offer was raised to 250 *scudi*. The initial plan had been to invite a renowned Greek scholar from Verona, Bernardino Donato, who had already held teaching positions in Padua, Verona and Parma, but, again, the offer was turned down. The vacant position was taken up by Robortello for an initial period of six months at a monthly salary of only 10 *scudi*, as indicated in his appointment document, where he is addressed as "most excellent professor of human letters."[14] Robortello was entrusted with one of Lucca's two humanities schools, the Scuola de' Guinigi, while the other, the Scuola di San Girolamo, was placed under the directorship of Giovanni Domenico from Pugliano.[15] One month after his arrival, however, Robortello's success was already such that the rooms in his school were no longer able to accommodate the volume of attendees. On 17 July 1539, Giovanni Francesco Leurotto was appointed professor of the Scuola de' Guinigi, and Robortello was transferred to the Scuola di San Girolamo, above the municipal archives. His salary was raised from 120 to 150 *scudi*, with an additional 12 *ducati* to cover rent.[16]

In Lucca, Robortello primarily taught Greek and Latin. His lessons hardly differed from those of a university professor, except that his unprecedented approach to teaching, in which he tended to schematise the contents of the various disciplines, must, as we have seen, have met with considerable success right from the start. Two lessons, one Latin and the other Greek, were normally held in the mornings, while in the afternoons the focus was entirely on the Latin language. During these sessions, a Classical author was read, commented on and explicated in Latin, preceded or followed by an hour of oral tests or drills.[17] It is difficult to determine precisely what the class reading lists were. The 1498–1499 and 1524 chapters stipulated that historical, poetic and oratorical texts typical of the Classical *studia humanitatis* curriculum were to be read. According to Giovanni Battista Busdraghi's testimony,[18] Robortello adopted a similar framework: his key texts were Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, Cicero's *De officiis*, *Tusculanae disputationes*, *Orator* and *Epistulae ad Atticum* and Horace's *Epistula ad Pisones* and *Epistolae*.

Proof

Proof

Rhetoric was therefore the main focus of interest, in particular rhetoric as oratory, as a letter addressed probably to Pietro Vettori and dated 29 January 1539,[19] makes clear. There Robortello writes of his engagement with the oratory of Cicero, whose text was published in several volumes between 1538 and 1540.[20]

The nature of his preoccupations during the Lucca period is evidenced in a subsequent letter to Vettori dated 28 January 1540,[21] as well as in Vettori's reply on 1 February 1540. To start with, Robortello shows his knowledge of Cicero and admires Vettori's *Adnotationes posteriores* to Cicero's *Familiares*, while Vettori then acknowledges that at only 23 years of age Robortello was already exceedingly well versed in the Greek and Latin languages. Vettori considered himself a mediocre intellect in the field of Classical letters, comparing himself with Robortello, and even thanking him for all the invaluable tips and advice he was able to give. It is by virtue of this letter that we know that Robortello's interests at that time centred mainly on Cicero and Quintilian, or the subject of rhetoric. But we also know that Robortello was deeply absorbed in his own research, collecting and studying various manuscripts, some of which (especially that of Athenaeus, apparently at Carnesecchi's behest),[22] as we shall see, would later serve him well in completing his edition of the *Poetics*. At this point, however, his efforts were frustrated by the fact that Vettori informed him that he had seen none of the manuscripts Robortello was looking for when he had passed through Florence. At the end of the letter, Vettori writes that Robortello was also in contact with Francesco de' Vieri the Elder (1464–1541), who followed Robortello's career closely and respected his work.[23]

While he was in Lucca, in 1543 Robortello published *Annotationes tam in Graecis, quam Latinis authoribus*,[24] in which he reveals himself to be the author of a Latin translation of Callimachus's hymn, mentioned by Francesco Florindo in his *In M. Actii Plauti aliorumque Latinæ linguæ scriptorum calumniatores apologia*.[25] *Annotationes* met with some degree of success, and, as the publication of a second edition in Paris shows, also succeeded in reaching the European market. The work is a collection of short texts by Greek and Latin authors emended by Robortello, including Aristotle, Callimachus, Horace, Suetonius, Lucretius, Tibullus, Propertius, Herodian, Philostratus, Catullus and Cicero. It marks the beginning of Robortello's philological career, and it is interesting for two reasons in particular. Firstly, because it attacks the philological interpretations of texts by Diogenes Laertius and Cicero offered respectively by Erasmus and Aldo Manuzio. Secondly, because it reveals a certain sympathy for the *Spirituali* in the publication year of the *Benificio di Christo*, and in particular for Marcantonio Flaminio and Reginald Pole,[26] whose ideas he might have encountered with Pietro Carnesecchi. Robortello's closeness to the *Spirituali* does not necessarily imply that he embraced their ideas, but it does suggest that he may have been less zealously compliant

Proof

Proof

with the ecclesiastical hierarchies than Liruti made out.[27] The suggestion that Robortello played a part in the banishment from Lucca of Celio Secondo Curione for his reformist religious ideas remains, for the moment, unfounded.[28] The accusation is contained in the *Epistola ad iurisconsultos*, published in 1562 by a certain Sebastiano Curione, whom Lucio Biasori identifies as Celio Secondo Curione,[29] allegedly fabricating the story in order to discredit Robortello, who was suspected of Epicureanism after denouncing Curione's son, Agostino Curione.[30] According to Biasori, Robortello had no role in Curione's banishment from Lucca, because throughout the 1550s Curione himself always spoke well of Robortello, and only began to discredit him after his son's denunciation.[31] Further evidence may be found in the letter dated 14 December 1553 from Basilius Amerbach to Father Bonifacius, in which Basilius writes that it was Celio who suggested he attend Robortello's lessons.[32]

Also apparently unfounded was the news circulated by his bitter rival, Carlo Sigonio, that Robortello had poisoned a certain Pietro Vicentino (Piacentino) over a literary dispute, and had himself been banished from Lucca. In 1543 Robortello was still a professor at Lucca, and an accusation of this kind would have barred him from teaching. As we have seen, the Senate in Lucca in fact granted Robortello permission to transfer to the far more prestigious University of Pisa. Moreover, on 26 April 1544, "in light of his erudition and good conduct," an attempt was made to re-elect him for another three-year tenure with an increased salary at the school of San Girolamo,[33] which would have been impossible if he had previously been sentenced for homicide.

As with any good humanist, when he was in Lucca Robortello's rhetorical skills were in high demand for public events. One such case was the death in 1539 of Isabella of Portugal (1503–1539), the wife of Charles V; another was the death in 1541 of Giovanni Guidiccioni, Bishop of Fossombrone, for whom he composed two funeral speeches.[34] None of this would have been possible with a reputation tarnished by a criminal record or the suspicion of some unlawful act hanging over him.

Robortello stayed in Lucca until he was elected to the University of Pisa on 19 September, 1543.[35] He mentions the possibility of a move from Lucca already in a letter to Vettori dated 11 April 1543, with the blessing of the Senate of the city.[36] He was actually appointed to Pisa to teach *studia humanitatis* with the intercession of the then secretary to Cosimo I, Francesco Campana, and probably of Vettori, too, since, in a letter dated 2 October 1543, Robortello writes that "all that I know I will expound and expend in his service and honour."[37] Originally, as may be seen from his letter to Benedetto Varchi of 7 May 1544, the post was to have been for one year only. He writes: "the gentlemen in Lucca, considering that I was transferred [. . .] to Pisa for one year only, have sent me a new agreement with a salary of 200 *ducati*."[38] This piece of evidence is corroborated by the decree of the permit issued by the Senate

Proof

Proof

of Lucca, published by Liruti, clearly granting a special concession for a limited time. Robortello had no intention of accepting the Senate's offer of one year's leave, however, and requested that Varchi intercede on his behalf with Carlo Strozzi, Campana and Luca Martini,[39] a transaction that appears to have been carried out successfully since Robortello was henceforward allowed to continue at Pisa with no further hindrance.

On 1 November 1543, Robortello delivered an inaugural speech for the reopening of the University of Pisa,[40] of which, unfortunately, no trace remains. We do know, however, that the lectureships in humanism, Greek and moral philosophy were vacant, and Robortello thus enjoyed a degree of independence in his teaching which allowed him to pursue his own studies at will.[41] As we shall see, it was during his time at Pisa that he wrote his major works.

A reference to his work at the University of Pisa may be found in the dedicatory letter to Duke Cosimo I de' Medici which opens his *Explicationes* on the *Poetics* of Aristotle. In a hitherto overlooked missive, dated 11 June 1545, Robortello states that he was preparing "for a great effort in the coming year, namely to publicly read the poetics of Horace and Aristotle."[42] About Aristotle's work in particular, he points out that he will read the Latin translation with the Greek original for reference. He states also that he has mastered the text, having read it numerous times, but that during his reading he noticed "a number of difficult and incorrect points," for which he will seek the assistance of Vettori, failing which he will avail himself of his own "meagre intellect."[43] An additional piece of evidence relating to these 1545 lessons is the inaugural speech delivered, most probably, before Cosimo I himself, currently held in manuscript II.IV.192, ex Magl. VIII 1400, in the National Library of Florence. And further supporting testimony comes from the letter written by Francesco Spini to Piero Vettori:

> That good man Robortello, as I do not wish to say otherwise, proudly pursues that *Poetics* and without a single scruple tends to push forward, boldly saying the final word on every thing [. . .].[44]

One well-known product of his "meagre intellect," which was published in 1548 and became one of the most significant texts of the Renaissance, was the *In Aristotelis poeticam explicationes*. In 1555 he republished the *Explicationes* with the *Paraphrasis in librum Horatii, qui uulgo De Arte poetica ad Pisones*.[45]

In the same year, 1548, the *De historica facultate disputatio*, the *Laconici, seu sudationis explicatio*, the *De Nominibus Romanorum*, the *De rhetorica facultate* and the l'*Explicatio in Catulli Epithalamium* together came out in a single volume,[46] which shows that in Pisa Robortello lectured extensively on Cicero's *De inventione*,[47] but also that he was in contact with Lelio Torelli, Filippo Migliori, Antonio Migliori, Francesco

Proof

Proof

Ricci, Giovanfrancesco Lottini and Floriano Antonini. At the end of this 1548 collection of short treatises Robortello additionally included his second volume of *Annotationum in varia tam Graecorum, quam Latinorum loca*, in which he attacks Andrea Alciati for having made fraudulent and even erroneous use of the *Annotationes* of 1543.[48]

A letter from Ugolino Martelli to Pier Vettori suggests close ties between Martelli, Cosimo Rucellai and Robortello as early as January 1544.[49] The letter, dated June 1545, further mentions a certain discomfort on Robortello's part – a consciousness of being under attack on various fronts. In one outburst, he writes: "one thing alone bothers me, in that I have continuously to combat malice and gossip."[50] His adversary in this instance is his colleague Chirico (or Ciriaco) Strozzi, professor of Greek Letters at the University of Pisa from 1543 to 1565.[51] The two had already locked horns over a matter of science when Robortello was still in Lucca and Strozzi was in Bologna, as Robortello explains in a letter to Amaseo.[52] It is difficult to determine what the subject of the 1545 controversy was, but it is notable that Robortello should confide in Vettori, given the latter's great friendship with Strozzi. On the basis of the letters which are extant, the correspondence between Strozzi and Vettori reveals nothing about any dispute with Robortello,[53] yet in Robortello's eyes Strozzi "fights with weapons," while he has only the "tolerance and pleasantness" of "*ars oratoria*."[54]

The Pisan period lasted only six years, and by Robortello's own account it was a particularly happy time in his life.[55] It was most certainly a turning-point in his career, a period of intense research that led to him establishing himself as one of the greatest scholars of his day. Robortello next moved to Venice, despite efforts by Cosimo I to keep him in the newly established university, and in 1549 he settled at the Scuola di San Marco, replacing Giovanni Battista Egnazio.[56] He arrived in Venice for the first time in June, and in September preparations began for his marriage to Camilla Belloni, the youngest daughter of the Friulian notary and man of letters, Antonio Belloni, a friend of Robortello's lately deceased father, who had died in January 1548. The correspondence containing the negotiations reveals a certain greed on Robortello's part, in the demand that Belloni pay the vast sum of 650 gold *ducati* as a dowry.[57] He moved definitively to Venice at the beginning of October, and on 1 November he delivered the *Oratio Venetiis habita* before the Senate, published at the end of the year by Andrea Arrivabene.[58]

In this speech, Robortello set out to explain to the senators the importance for the youth of Venice of receiving an education in the *studia humanitatis*, as this would provide them with a moral grounding that would contribute to preserving the Republic and prevent it from falling prey to tyranny. The highlight of his proposal was a new teaching method (*docendi ratio*)[59] to unite all disciplines, from poetry and rhetoric to politics, and thereby offer the Venetian youth[60] an education that

Proof

Proof

would shape them into suitably well-rounded individuals. By this means he planted seeds in the young minds of Venice which would come to fruition in his later years. It transpires from Robortello's words that his teaching in Venice was qualitatively different from his teaching during the period in Pisa. They were two markedly different social and political contexts. The target was different, as were the methods and types of teaching. His audience here was for the most part the scions of the Venetian aristocracy. Their studies were not geared to a humanistic education, since their interests tended more in the direction of commerce and the management of private and public assets. There is no doubt that rhetoric played a prominent role in his educational program, but also arts such as geometry, mathematics and astronomy, which were especially useful for merchants.[61]

Such were Robortello's aspirations as he embarked upon his public lecturing, which focused above all on the rhetoric of Aristotle and Cicero. From a letter penned by Antonio Belloni, however, we learn that he had also convened an academy in his own home, teaching young aristocrats Aristotle's *Ethics* in Greek to educate them in matters of political, military and civilian interest.[62] It was not the first time that Robortello had organized a domestic academy in his own home. From the letter of 21 January 1546 from Spini to Vettori we find that Robortello "reads in his own home the *Rhetoric* [of Aristotle] and to such persons that for myself I am astounded."[63] Robortello kept up the tradition also during his second sojourn in Padua, concentrating this time on teaching Greek literature and philosophy.[64] His Venetian home-taught lessons were so successful among the city's youth that the Senate decreed that Robortello should teach Aristotle's political philosophy publicly, so as to benefit the largest possible number of people. In 1552, Robortello published the results of his studies in the fields of moral and political philosophy with the publication of the five books *De morali disciplina* by Francesco Filelfo, *Paraphrasis in Republica Platonis* by Averroes, as well as his own *In libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio*.[65]

Robortello's success and unorthodox teaching methods, not to mention his complete disregard for authority and for many contemporary intellectuals, did not go unnoticed: it must have triggered in his aged predecessor Giovanni Battista Egnazio a bout of envy that resulted in a bungling attempt on Robortello's life with a knife. Researchers have typically overlooked the event, dismissing it as hearsay, but first Liruti and then Venier have reconstructed the episode on the basis of the correspondence between Robortello and his father-in-law Belloni, who was on friendly terms with Egnazio.[66] Egnazio's enmity towards Robortello appears to have been triggered by the latter's desire to move the chair from Spedale di San Marco, which he deemed inadequate for effective teaching. Hence, in a letter from Belloni to Egnazio dated 21 July 1550, we read: "Lorio, when he came to see me, told me that you were offended for no reason

Proof

Proof

other than this, namely that my son-in-law plans to move the seat that you held for so long elsewhere."[67] In a letter to Belloni dated 2 January 1550, Robortello wrote that during Egnazio's lessons the audience "sat on stumps and girders."[68] Belloni was behind Robortello from the outset,[69] and presented his case to Egnazio in the following terms:

> A person who teaches wishes to be comfortable, and there is nothing that can put the audience off so long as they are not so far away that they are unable comfortably to listen to the one who is doing the speaking and interpreting, and as long as the speaker is well qualified in his subject. [. . .] This is not meant to be disrespectful towards their predecessors, as you so erroneously conclude, thinking that your successor is behaving towards you in a way that might be deemed inappropriate.[70]

Belloni sought to mediate between Robortello and Egnazio, as earlier letters show,[71] but to no avail. In May 1550, Robortello wrote to his father-in-law that Egnazio, "after attacking me with a knife, and fearful that I might accuse him, prostrated himself at the feet of all the Senators and, weeping, begged them for mercy."[72] The letter depicts Egnazio as an impotent old man who has lost his reason, and so "is vanquished, and everyone considers him a ridiculous old fool, because he sleeps with two girls who are old enough to marry, the daughters of a poor woman [. . .] and since he experiences no satisfaction whatsoever, he appeases with the basest of pleasures that sense which nature has given to us [men] in common with beasts."[73]

The clash with Egnazio was not the only controversy that marked Robortello's life during his Venetian period. Another conflict, fortunately this time restricted to literary matters, involved Vincenzo Maggi from Brescia, who in 1550 published *In Aristotelis librum de poetica communes explanationes*, containing an acrimonious critique of Robortello's 1548 work. Maggi explicitly states that Robortello's text contains "unacceptable" ideas which he aims to refute, even while limiting himself to "only that which this famous man has written on the first three or four lines of Aristotle's text."[74] In truth, Maggi's attack is aimed at addressing certain philological *desiderata* which Robortello had omitted from his treatment because his interest was a philosophical understanding of the usefulness of the *Poetics*. In this manner Maggi was able to claim that Robortello had stated a falsehood when he wrote that "Aristotle in his *Poetics* does not use an *exordium*."[75] He also accuses Robortello of offering only a "partial explanation of topics that Aristotle said required treatment,"[76] and making "an irregular division of the book," sometimes replacing poetry with fable, and tragedy with poetry.[77] What is more, Robortello is said to have failed to establish whether the word 'poetic' in this context has the meaning of poetry or poetic technique.[78] He also

Proof

Proof

makes no mention whatsoever of the expression "'in itself', which is found in the Greek text but not in the Latin translation by Pazzi."[79] In addition to this, he either fails to include, or completely misunderstands, the concept of 'faculty.' Lastly, he offers no explanation for the expressions 'in which manner' and 'fable.' Maggi claims not to be driven by a desire to slander, but rather by concern for the truth and love for the innocent young minds who, in good faith "being led into error by their inexperience, were, because of the novelty of the book, about to fill themselves with what Robortello has written."[80]

Robortello was on the verge of responding to Maggi, when his father-in-law, alerted by Jacopo Lorio that a new conflict that might harm his son-in-law was brewing, advised him not respond immediately and in anger.[81] Ludovico Castelvetro tells of a swift reply from Robortello with an accusation of plagiarism directed against Maggi:

> I knew that Robortello had prepared an extremely firm defence against Maggi's remonstrations [. . .] and among other things that he accused him of, there was one stating that the comment printed under his name and addressed to Cardinal Christophano Madruccio was not his, but had been partly lifted from what Robortello wrote in his work [. . .] it was known that the published comment was not his [Maggi's], in either substance or form, but Robortello's [. . .] A defence, with all of Robortello's objections, was not published according to what he said for two reasons. One was that by publishing them he saw that he exposed himself to a manifest danger in which he would easily have fallen at the hands of the friends under obligation to Maggi, by whom others in similar conflicts at other times had been assaulted, and the other was that he saw clearly that if he went ahead with publication, he would lose the favour and support of many scholars, especially the Brescians, no fewer than 100 in number who went to listen to him with great attention and filled his school with no small measure of honour, but would turn against him in view of the injury suffered by Maggi, and out of contempt would abandon him.[82]

Maggi was in fact motivated not only on scientific grounds, but also by a desire to assert his claim that he was the first to rediscover Aristotle's *Poetics*, a primacy taken from him with the publication of the *Explicationes* in 1548. Robortello's revenge came seven long years later when he ridiculed Maggi's work in a somewhat off-hand and irascible manner in his *De arte corrigenda*, accusing him of misreading the Florentine manuscripts on poetics and plundering his own *Explicationes*, introducing mistake upon mistake.[83]

Between the autumn of 1551 and the spring of 1552, Robortello worked assiduously on Greek tragedy. His work focused primarily on

Proof

Proof

the tragedies of Aeschylus with the publication of *Aeschyli tragoediae* and *Scholia in Aeschyli tragoedias*.[84] He made an important philological contribution in being the first to distinguish the *Agamemnon* from the *Libation Bearers* and by establishing beyond doubt the authorship of the *Prometheus Bound*.[85]

The Venetian period was not perhaps as peaceful as his time in Pisa, but it did bring him a great deal of fame, so much so in fact that when Lazzaro Bonamico died in 1552[86] and the chair of *studia humanitatis* at Padua fell vacant, Robortello was immediately the natural choice of successor. In truth, many other names were put forward too, and they included Francesco Porto, who had the backing of Ludovico Castelvetro. But as Castelvetro himself explains, his candidacy was not supported by other Modenese intellectuals such as Benedetto Manzoli, Mario Tassoni, Gabriele Falloppia and Francesco and Giulio Masetti, who all agreed that "Robortello was better suited than anyone else in the world,"[87] thus betraying the aspirations of their compatriots. According to Castelvetro, "Robortello won the post thanks primarily to their support," but it is difficult to believe that a small coterie of Modenese intellectuals could have had such a decisive influence on the nomination of an intellectual from Udine.

Meanwhile, on 10 May 1552, a Senate decree reproduced by Carlo Sigonio at the end of *Patavinarum disputationum adversus Franciscum Robortellum liber secundus* (1562) stated:

> With the death of the Excellent M. Lazaro from Bassano the position of lecturer in Greek and Latin humanities in our institute in Padua has fallen vacant, and as for the good of all the scholars someone must be appointed of whom one can hope to receive the same good benefit as from M. Lazaro; and having had some experience of the teaching of the Excellent M. Francesco Robortello, who has already taught extensively at different times and with great praise attached to his name; there must therefore be no delay in summoning him, as he brings the greatest number of scholars. But it will be good that the aforementioned Excellent M. Francesco be brought to read the Greek and Latin lessons in the place of said M. Lazaro for an agreement of three years [. . .]. And may 300 florins per year be paid to him with effect from next November; but on the condition that he shall continue his lessons here until another is found to take his place.[88]

Clearly it is thanks to his reputation, which was at least equal to that of his predecessor, that Robortello was appointed to teach in Padua with a salary of 300 *fiorini*, starting in November 1552 upon a replacement being found for his classes in Venice. In fact, as soon as Buonamico died (10 February 1552), and before he took up his appointment, Robortello had already designated Carlo Sigonio, later to become a bitter rival, as

Proof

Proof

his successor. In a letter from Castelvetro to Giovanni Battista Ferrari, it says that Robortello "as a person who is grateful to the Modenese" favored Carlo Sigonio "as much as possible, but above all to place someone in Venice in opposition to Paolo Manuzio, so as to oppose him and remove him from the key position he holds purely on the strength of his knowledge of ancient Roman things."[89] Clearly highly dismissive of Robortello, and for the time being at least still an admirer of Sigonio, Castelvetro goes on to say that the teachings in Padua "were sought after by many more than M.r Lazzaro's," and that the position had in fact been snatched away from Sebastiano Corradi. Here, again, we see evidence of Castelvetro's distorted view, but his letter demonstrates Robortello's skill in generating consensus and managing his career.

So it was that in 1552 Robortello began teaching in Padua, primarily on Aristotle, Cicero and Demosthenes. From the letter of Basilius Amerbach to Father Bonifacius, dated 14 December 1553, we know that Robortello was teaching the logical books of Aristotle, most likely the *Posteriora*, Cicero's *De inventione* and the oration *Pro Sestio* and Hermogenes's *De statibus*.[90] In his letter of 27 March 1554, Robortello wrote to Castelvetro that "I have my soul enveloped in letters," and that he has "undertaken to deliver talks on the ideas of Hermogenes, one idea per day with my own personal interpretations."[91] It is difficult to say whether his mind was truly completely absorbed by study, but we do know that after only a few months a new controversy arose to disrupt his peace. Much has been written about this by Liruti and McCuaig, who present two very different perspectives: the former favouring Robortello, not without error; the latter siding with Sigonio.

The first signs of a new controversy have been found in the 1550 publication of *De praenominibus Romanorum causis et usu* by Sigonio, which criticises the homonymous work by Robortello of 1548. The contention hinged on the fact that Sigonio believed that women in Rome had *praenomina*, while Robortello did not. We know now that Robortello was right, but at the time the question was hotly debated. Given that Sigonio secured his tenure in Venice with Robortello's help, it is evident that his criticism did not touch Robortello all that much, especially because it makes no direct mention of him. Liruti's reconstruction of events, in which Sigonio's insults at Robortello's expense are blamed for sparking the conflict, is therefore unconvincing, because in such circumstances Robortello would simply not have backed the Modenese intellectual's nomination. The theory works only if Sigonio's work is post-dated, which is precisely Liruti's error when he writes that *De praenominibus Romanorum* was published in 1553.[92] There is no extant edition of the text from that year, and, as McCuaig demonstrates, Liruti was likely following Muratori, who mentions an edition published by Sigonio in that very year.[93] Be that as it may, the first edition was published in 1550. So what was the actual course of events?

Proof

Proof

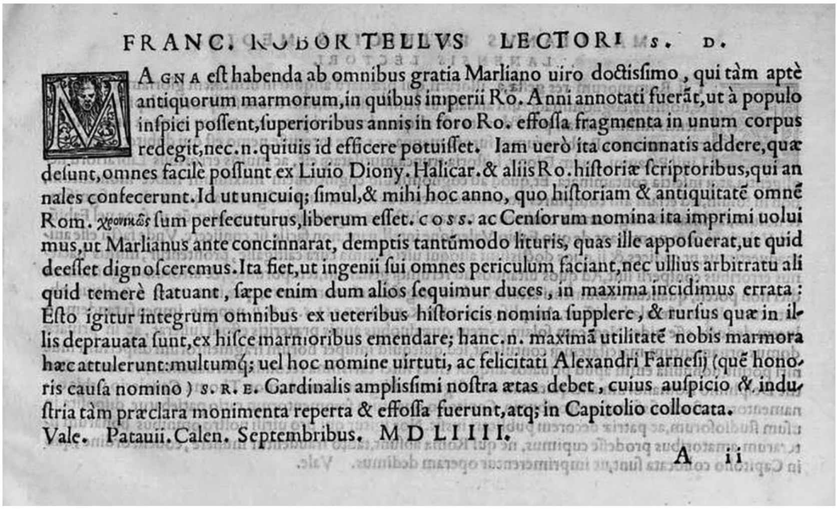
In all probability conflict escalated when the two entered into direct competition, teaching the same subject at only a short distance from one another. As Federico Patetta points out, early signs of a dispute may be discerned in the prefatory letter, dated September 1554, which Robortello included in the 1555 republication of Bartolomeo Marliani's *Consulum, dictatorum, censorumque Romanorum series*.[94] Patetta transcribed the preface in 1910 after gaining possession of the precious 1555 volume which Ludovico Muratori and Gian Giuseppe Liruti had been unable to consult. The find is described as follows: "it has happened by chance that I was able to acquire not a complete manuscript, but the first quire of the hitherto unseen edition containing also Robortello's letter."[95] In a note he adds, "this quire with its pages still joined together was contained in a volume which I purchased in Modena, and was inserted between Sigonio's first and second edition of the *Fasti*, in other words between the extremely rare Modena edition, Gadaldino 1550, and the also somewhat rare Venice edition, Aldo, 1555."[96] The discovery of the volume with this quire is extraordinary. The quire, which contains a part of Marliani's work, includes a version of the letter written by Robortello which is missing from all the printed volumes of the 1555 edition. The existence of two different printed versions of the letter had never before been made public, yet their discrepancy is significant for understanding the controversy with Sigonio. In Robortello's preface, which is presented by Patetta and may be found in the copy held in the Museo Correr,[97] there is indeed a scathing attack on Sigonio absent from the other more widely known printed version.[98] The Latin text expunged from the second version says:

> What is more ridiculous that in interpreting these marbles dated approximately to 354 years from the foundation of Rome, they wrote FAUSTI F. linking wrongly and ineptly syllables, where one should read VETURIUS TI. F. For this reason, nowadays, we are accustomed to say, without any legitimacy, that FAUSTUS would have been among the forenames that Romans used, even if in truth also children know that this is not true.[99]

Sigonio's was indeed a mistake that was corrected in the 1555 edition, but Robortello essentially mocks him, saying that his were mistakes that not even a child would make. In light of the differences between the preface included in the quire unearthed by Patetta and the more widely known printed version, one may infer that the former was the original prefatory letter which, by Robortello's own admission, was censored by Gabriele Falloppia, the renowned Modenese physician who was a professor at Padua and friend of both Robortello and Sigonio. It would seem unreasonable to assume that there was another letter left unedited and unpublished, censored by Falloppia, containing an even harsher

Proof

Proof

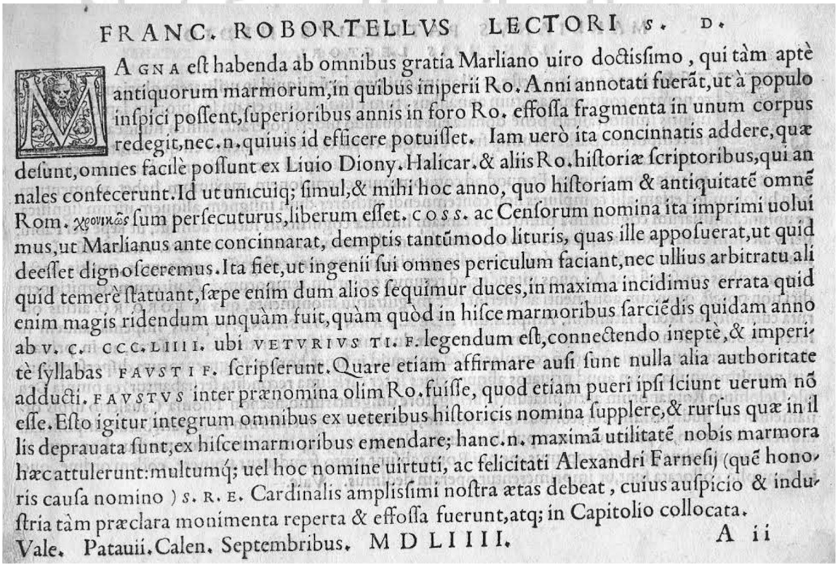


FRANC. ROBORTELLVS LECTORI S. D.

MAGNA eſt habenda ab omnibus gratia Marliano uiro doctiſſimo, qui tàm aptè antiquorum marmorum, in quibus imperii Ro. Anni annotati fuerāt, ut à populo inſpici poſſent, ſuperioribus annis in foro Ro. effoſſa fragmenta in unum corpus redegit, nec.n.quiuis id efficere potuiſſet. Iam uerò ita concinnatis addere, quæ deſunt, omnes facilè poſſunt ex Liuio Diony. Halicar. & aliis Ro. hiſtoriæ ſcriptoribus, qui annales confecerunt. Id ut unicuiq; ſimul, & mihi hoc anno, quo hiſtoriam & antiquitatē omnē Rom. χρονικῶς ſum perſecuturus, liberum eſſet. COSS. ac Cenſorum nomina ita imprimi uoluimus, ut Marlianus ante concinnarat, demptis tantūmodo lituris, quas ille appoſuerat, ut quid deeſſet dignoſceremus. Ita fiet, ut ingenii ſui omnes periculum faciant, nec ullius arbitratu aliquid temerè ſtatuant, ſæpe enim dum alios ſequimur duces, in maxima incidimus errata: Eſto igitur integrum omnibus ex ueteribus hiſtoricis nomina ſupplere, & rurſus quæ in illis deprauata ſunt, ex hiſce marmoribus emendare; hanc.n. maximā utilitatē nobis marmora hæc attulerunt: multumq; uel hoc nomine uirtuti, ac felicitati Alexandri Farneſij (quē honoris cauſa nomino) S. R. E. Cardinalis ampliſſimi noſtra ætas debet, cuius auſpicio & induſtria tàm præclara monimenta reperta & effoſſa fuerunt, atq; in Capitolio collocata. Vale. Pataui. Calen. Septembribus. M D L I I I I.

A ii

Figure 2.1 Second Censored Version of Marliani's Book
Source: Photo by author.



FRANC. ROBORTELLVS LECTORI S. D.

MAGNA eſt habenda ab omnibus gratia Marliano uiro doctiſſimo, qui tàm aptè antiquorum marmorum, in quibus imperii Ro. Anni annotati fuerāt, ut à populo inſpici poſſent, ſuperioribus annis in foro Ro. effoſſa fragmenta in unum corpus redegit, nec.n.quiuis id efficere potuiſſet. Iam uerò ita concinnatis addere, quæ deſunt, omnes facilè poſſunt ex Liuio Diony. Halicar. & aliis Ro. hiſtoriæ ſcriptoribus, qui annales confecerunt. Id ut unicuiq; ſimul, & mihi hoc anno, quo hiſtoriam & antiquitatē omnē Rom. χρονικῶς ſum perſecuturus, liberum eſſet. COSS. ac Cenſorum nomina ita imprimi uoluimus, ut Marlianus ante concinnarat, demptis tantūmodo lituris, quas ille appoſuerat, ut quid deeſſet dignoſceremus. Ita fiet, ut ingenii ſui omnes periculum faciant, nec ullius arbitratu aliquid temerè ſtatuant, ſæpe enim dum alios ſequimur duces, in maxima incidimus errata quid enim magis ridendum unquàm fuit, quàm quòd in hiſce marmoribus farciēdis quidam anno ab V. C. CCC. LIIII. ubi VETVRIVS TI. F. legendum eſt, connectendo ineptè, & imperitè ſyllabas FAVSTI F. ſcripſerunt. Quare etiam affirmare auſi ſunt nulla alia authoritate adducti. FAVSTVS inter prænomina olim Ro. fuiſſe, quod etiam pueri ipſi ſciunt uerum nō eſſe. Eſto igitur integrum omnibus ex ueteribus hiſtoricis nomina ſupplere, & rurſus quæ in illis deprauata ſunt, ex hiſce marmoribus emendare; hanc.n. maximā utilitatē nobis marmora hæc attulerunt: multumq; uel hoc nomine uirtuti, ac felicitati Alexandri Farneſij (quē honoris cauſa nomino) S. R. E. Cardinalis ampliſſimi noſtra ætas debeat, cuius auſpicio & induſtria tàm præclara monimenta reperta & effoſſa fuerunt, atq; in Capitolio collocata. Vale. Pataui. Calen. Septembribus. M D L I I I I.

A ii

Figure 2.2 First Uncensored Version of Marliani's Book
Source: Photo by author.

Proof

Proof

attack on Sigonio, as Patetta believed. The comparison must be drawn between the two printed versions that were circulating at the time, the first and earliest of which, according to the material evidence as well, is probably the one that contains the attack on Sigonio, whereas the second contains the censored version of the preface. The first edition, according to Robortello's statement, was not designed to have a wide circulation, as it was intended originally for his students.[100] It may be supposed that after Falloppia's censorship and Sigonio's easily imaginable and highly predictable reaction, Robortello decided to print a milder version of the preface.

Now it was pure chance that Patetta happened to find this extremely rare first version of the work by Marliani containing the letter. In all likelihood Sigonio got hold of this Robortello first edition because in the *Emandationum libri duo* of 1557 he cites the very lines that caused so much controversy. From what he himself writes in the 1557 work, it is clear that Robortello's prefatory letter riled him deeply. There were two grounds for dispute: firstly, the text by Marliani was published without the corrections he, Sigonio, had made in his 1554 edition of the *Fasti*, which basically nullified all his efforts to amend the ancient texts, as if implying that they were in fact flawed or worthless; secondly, and more importantly, he was considered "ridiculous, childlike, infantile, inept and amateurish,"[101] and none of his emendations was remotely taken seriously by Robortello. What is more, Sigonio claims that the first printed version of this offensive text was free to circulate not only among university students, but was also widely available on the market and therefore to scholars more generally.[102] One may suppose that Giovanni Griffo, Robortello's printer, had already processed a considerable number of copies of the first edition when Robortello decided to interrupt production and expunge the harsher comments from the letter – with a view to substituting a new version, thus signalling a revision of his position. The printed version, which Robortello viewed as the official one, must have been that containing the softened version, but Griffo must still have had copies left over from the first printing, which Robortello had intended for his students, and may therefore have sold anyway to recover a part of the capital invested.

A response to Robortello's preface was not long in coming, and in the 1555 edition of Sigonio's *Regum, consulum, dictatorum, ac censorum Romanorum*, Robortello, without being mentioned directly by name but rather as "my friend" – with considerable irony and sarcasm, as was so rightly pointed out by Liruti[103] – is said to be "ignorant of the ancient sources."[104] To label as "ignorant" the professor of humanities at one of the leading universities of the time, who the previous year had published for the first time the *De sublime* by the pseudo-Longinus,[105] is far-fetched, to say the least. Robortello's edition represents a significant

Proof

Proof

step forward in the discipline of philology and of its methodology, focusing on key notions like the reliability and importance of indirect tradition, structural analysis for the identification of interpolation, and identification of errors in the transition from uppercase to lowercase letters.

Sigonio's insult may best be explained only as a reaction to the insult received. Moreover, at the end of his treatise Sigonio states that this "friend" of his had failed to mention the most important elements of his own 1548 work, and that the things that he did say were lacking in intelligence because they were already known. It is difficult to find in Robortello a prior attack on Sigonio to justify such malicious criticism, if not the prefatory letter to the Marliani edition. Robortello's mood in this quarrel may perhaps be captured in the words he himself wrote to comfort Aurelio Porcelaga, who was embroiled in another dispute. He states that it is necessary to overcome the "envy of malicious people," and one must "find solace in the thought that the whole world shall confirm the opinion of true virtue, conforming with nobility, which cannot but produce thoughts that are honoured and praiseworthy," and it is important to remember that "against virtue maliciousness can do nothing."[106] It is difficult to imagine that Robortello, in writing these words of consolation to Porcelaga, was not also thinking about his own situation.

Robortello replied to Sigonio in the early summer of 1557 – after a lengthy editorial job on Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Demetrius Phalereus[107] – with the publication of three pamphlets bound together: the *De convenientia supputationis Livianae cum marmoribus quae in Capitolio sunt*, the *De arte, sive ratione corrigendi veteres auctores* and the *Emendationum libri duo*.[108] The three works were all written in defence of his historical-philological method and as interpretations against attacks on various fronts following his 1548 publication. The texts highlight a number of errors committed by Sigonio and Paolo Manuzio, but Maggi is targeted too. In September, just one month after the publication of Robortello's text in August 1557, Sigonio replied with his own *Emendationum libri duo*, in which he defends his *Chronologia* (1555) and interpretations of ancient epigraphs. How Sigonio was able to reply with such celerity is described in an extraordinary series of letters between Sigonio himself and Onofrio Panvinio.

In a letter dated 3 May 1557, Sigonio writes:

> Robortello, as far as I can see, has published against me, Sir Paolo and the philosopher Maggi. I wish to reply immediately. I shall send his objections so you can give me your opinion. And perhaps I shall also relate to you some of the replies – actually, no 'perhaps'; such is the high regard that I have for your scholarship and generosity, and deservedly so.[109]

Proof

Proof

In a letter dated 22 July 1557, in a show of anxiety, he writes:

> I thank you for the love you show me, and I beg of you to preserve it. Robortello waited for you in Padua, hoping you would visit him, and was upset that you did not, according to your desire, and so does not hold you in high esteem. Rather it will be his challenge against me and Manuzio that I shall respond to.[110]

In a letter of 28 July 1557 Sigonio even admits that:

> I am writing to request that you send me those three or more stones from Veturia, because Robortello has challenged me by saying that *Veturia, & Galeria, Centuria* may be found in Livy [. . .] The epitaph, which I sent you, relates to the dispute with Robortello, to whom I shall respond as soon as his book comes out, which for the past four months has been in the works for my chastisement, and which I will send you as soon as it is out, so you may help me [. . .] I am sending you some pages from Robortello that were stolen from the press in Padua, and were in excess. From them you will see his lack of modesty, from the rest his monumental ignorance.[111]

In another letter dated 16 August 1557, he writes:

> I remind you of the *fasti* of the Veturian tribe and the interpretation of that epitaph, because it all has to do with Robortello, to whom I wish to respond as soon as his book sees the light of day, which could happen any time now. [. . .] I send you some papers I have, so that you too may be entertained by this madman: I kiss your hand.[112]

And lastly, on 7 September 1557, asking once more for help from his friend, he writes:

> I beg you to send me your opinion of *Equis vectigalibus* and the other matters, which you promised me, but especially the *Equi*. Today I started printing against the friend; I shall send you a copy.[113]

These letters are a clear display of Sigonio's behaviour in this dispute. Firstly, he seeks to create a scientific consensus for himself by discrediting his rival and calling him "mad" and "immodest", and saying that he is resentful towards Panvinio. At the same time, he shows his lack of confidence and his inability to respond to Robortello alone, preferring rather to seek the help of eminent scholars to monitor the correctness of his ideas. Furthermore, from the letter dated 28 July we see that his rancour towards the intellectual from Udine was such that he had even stolen several pages of Robortello's work from the printer, Innocenzo Olmo,

Proof

Proof

in the midst of printing, and that it was only thanks to this decidedly underhand manoeuvre that he was able to reply so swiftly. Moreover, as Liruti rightly observes, Sigonio boasts of this speed to Robortello in pointing to his, Robortello's, ignorance for having waited two long years to reply to him.[114] The correspondence also brings out the differences in attitude of Robortello and Sigonio. Robortello is perhaps to be blamed for triggering the dispute with his rash lines in Marliani's edition, but his replies were always scientific, which is why he waited more than two years to publish the results of his research. Sigonio, on the other hand, was driven more by anger and a desire for revenge. Clearly Robortello's behaviour was not quite so transparent when in 1557 he republished, without the consent of their authors, passages from two letters which had entered his possession, one written by Gabriele Faerno to Paolo Manuzio, the other by Heinrich Loriti Glarean, in which Sigonio's work again comes under attack. In this manner, Robortello sought to build consensus and discredit Sigonio.[115]

The dispute cooled off briefly when Robortello left Padua in 1557 to take up a position in Bologna once held by his teacher, Amaseo, and recently vacated by Sebastiano Corradi. On 16 March 1558, upon his arrival in Bologna, Robortello wrote to Vettori as to how the quarrel with Sigonio had tested him:

> I beg of you [. . .] to write to me sometime and let me know if you have seen the latest dispute that has arisen between myself and those valiant men of Venice [Sigonio above all, and secondly Paolo Manuzio]. Heaven knows how hard it was to write. And even so I was not left in peace. Such is my fate [. . .] I am reminded of the opinion of Socrates at the end of the *Phaedrus*, that one should not write, nor even put pen or ink to paper, while there is so much rage in men [. . .].[116]

As tensions eased, it became possible in 1561 – thanks also to the mediation of Cardinal Girolamo Seripando and the jurist, Giovanni Angelo Papio – to reach a truce.[117] The agreement also required the involvement of Paolo Manuzio, who wrote an undated letter to Robortello stating that he was satisfied with the agreement made with Sigonio, a draft of which he had received from Raffaele Cillenio.[118] It is difficult to say what Robortello's position in Bologna was. From those years we have a transcription of the first course held on Cicero,[119] the edition of *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum* by Martin Cromer,[120] the *De vita et victu populi romani*,[121] the funeral oration for Charles V[122] and the composition of the *De artificio dicendi*.[123] One year after his departure, according to Sigonio writing in a letter to Panvinio, Robortello was then quite ready to return to Padua, but the claim is not backed up with sufficient evidence.[124] We do know, however, that as soon as Robortello left for Bologna, Sigonio sought to oust his rival in Padua by taking over his former chair. On 3

Proof

Proof

October 1558, Sigonio wrote to Panvinio that he was desperate because he did not know whether it would be possible for him to take up the chair in Padua.[125] His desperation then turned to spite when he wrote that, if he was not sent to Padua, he would step down from his chair in Venice. Sigonio writes that the Senators

> do not appear to want to make up their minds to send me to Padua, and just listen to their reasons, so that I do not undermine that institution further because I am friend and compatriot of Falloppia: *Oh rem ridiculam*! To such an extent I am still feared.[126]

He must have been serious about leaving Venice if a few days earlier he had felt compelled to ask Panvinio for information about the chair in *studia humanitatis* in Rome. Sigonio eventually made it to Padua in October 1560, where he took up the very post that had remained vacant for three years following the departure of Robortello.

According to what Robortello writes in *Ephemerides patavinae*,[127] Sigonio's time in Padua was not easy: aggressive by nature, he failed to win the support of his students, and he attracted only small numbers of pupils to his lessons. His account seems to be reliable, since the reputation of the university declined to such a degree that the Venetian Senate had to take the bold and somewhat unprecedented step of recalling Robortello himself:

> Requiring the presence of your excellent person, Francesco Robortello, for our institution in Padua, we agreed with our Senate to appoint you to teach in the said institution with the terms you will find in the contract. Thus we command that, leaving any party, offer, contract, or obligation that you may have with others, you go and teach in the said institution on pain of disgrace with our *Signoria*.[128]

Sigonio's performance must have been exceptionally bad if the Senate felt the need to threaten Robortello with disgrace should he refuse to return. That Robortello was the choice favoured by the Senate goes without saying, since they offered him 100 *fiorini* more (a total of 400) than his rival Sigonio. Robortello thus left Bologna for Padua, much to the chagrin of the Bolognese.[129] The urgency imposed by the Venetian Senate was motivated by the serious harm to the university caused by Sigonio's lessons.

Upon his return in October 1561, according to the *rotuli artistarum* for the years 1561–62, Robortello taught "Greek and Latin humanities" in direct competition with Sigonio.[130] Hardly a wise move on the part of the reformers of the university (*Riformatori dello Studio*), who thus succeeded in exacerbating the conflict by requiring the two acrimonious intellectuals, for the sake of surface dignity, to teach at the same time without making clear who was to be the teacher *in primo loco*, as Giacomo Filippo Tommasini recounts.[131] As things turned out, however,

Proof

Proof

Robortello in later years was assigned the broader brief of moral and political philosophy, and in fact he became the first to hold this chair at the University of Padua. Thus in 1562–63 he taught moral and political philosophy alongside rhetoric; in 1563–64, after Sigonio had moved to Bologna, he taught only humanities; and in 1564–65 he went back to teaching moral philosophy, politics and rhetoric. Jacopo Facciolati suggests that the reformers, noticing their error and seeking to soothe the controversy with Sigonio, requested that Robortello teach moral philosophy, politics and rhetoric, and limit as much as possible his teaching in humanities.[132] In truth, however, the line dividing humanities and moral philosophy was extremely fine, and, as we saw in Pisa, the remit of the chair of humanities consisted primarily in explaining Aristotle's *Ethics*. If there is a distinction, it is more one of form than of substance.

Finding a solution to the controversy became the subject of a three-hour debate in the Venetian Senate. Gabriele Falloppia informs us that Robortello "did not want Sigonio to teach in open competition with him, and he put up a real fight; but to no avail [. . .] In the end, Robortello won no more than 15 ballots against Sigonio's 140."[133] As Sigonio won the first round, one cannot quite agree with Liruti in saying that the reformers' aspirations in recalling Robortello "were focused entirely on restoring the chair of eloquence to the vision it had over time lost touch with". The Senate's decision did not deter Robortello, however, who claimed at least the use of the hall normally assigned to the humanists, which had once been his but was now legitimately Sigonio's. Sigonio, of course, buoyed by the strength of his own position, refused to concede, making teaching impossible and causing lessons to be suspended. Robortello and Sigonio both continued to teach privately in their homes, and the situation unblocked itself only towards the end of the year, when, on 29 December 1561, Ludovico Gambara and Antonio Fortesuedo stepped forward as ambassadors for the university jurists and presented a proposal to Sigonio, according to which he would continue his lessons in the hall of law, where in previous times Romolo Amaseo had taught.[134] Sigonio finally consented to move to the room that was offered to him, but not without first asserting his rights and his pre-eminence over Robortello with an act of "protest":

> It having been established by the most illustrious Consiglio de Pregadi that the excellent Robortello and I, Carlo Sigonio, read in competition the same lesson in humanities, and for this decision the aforementioned Robortello initiated a controversy concerning the school, stating that the lesson belonged to him, when in truth it did not, as it was openly declared by the Pregadi to be equal, and in no way superior: I, seeing that by attending to these controversies it has been impossible to teach for the whole year, as has not been done until now because of other controversies promoted by him, and finally

Proof

Proof

> terminated in his disfavour by the illustrious Pregadi, declare that, having been petitioned by the magnificent Rector and two Counsellors from the University of Jurists, representing the whole University, as is written in the public acts delivered to me by the said Counsellors, Messrs Antonio Fortesuedo and Lodovico Gambara, I content myself for the present time to teach in the school offered to me by your Lordships: in part, so as not to spend so much time in controversies, which are justly displeasing to the most illustrious *Dominio*, partly to please the aforementioned magnificent *Rettor de Leggisti* and all the members of this University, to which I am as always infinitely obliged: and this without any prejudice whatsoever to my honour, and without yielding in any way to the said excellent Robortello, as he, or any others in his name, could claim I had. Protesting that at any time I should wish to forego my place, it will be my freedom to request the said school.[135]

With this document Sigonio seeks to claim the moral high ground over Robortello by accepting the conditions offered to him for the good of the university and its students, while at the same time asserting his right to the use of the hall whenever it pleases him. Refusing to bow to Sigonio's manoeuvrings, on 6 March 1562 Robortello posted a notice outside the hall offering a special course on Cicero's *Topics* to explain the real way of writing dialogues, as opposed to that of others who for too long had been treating the topic in an inept and uneducated manner. The "others" here clearly refers to Sigonio, who just a few weeks beforehand published his *De dialogo liber*. It is not possible in this case to defend Robortello, as Liruti does, by claiming simply that he acted somewhat imprudently. His attack was open and frontal, and Sigonio responded on 9 March with equal vehemence, posting another notice which called upon Robortello to spell out his objections in writing.[136]

Robortello replied the following day with irony, saying that he would not take the dispute any further. Yet on 11 March, Sigonio sought to provoke him by stating that he had never responded to his 1557 criticisms, thus suggesting that they had found their mark and pointed to genuine errors in Robortello's work. Robortello this time made no reply, and Sigonio, driven to even greater heights of acrimony, published on 14 March a list of testimonials discrediting Robortello and casting Sigonio in a positive light. According to Ludovico Antonio Muratori,[137] on the basis of a letter to Sigonio by Antonio Riccoboni,[138] it is around this time that Sigonio suffered a knife-attack by a follower of Robortello's from Rovigo which left him completely disfigured. Liruti claims he was not able to determine whether the episode occurred in Padua prior to Robortello's death, because Riccoboni's letter was dated 1584. However, Liruti failed to notice that Robortello already in the *Ephemerides Patavinae* was making fun of Sigonio's scar, "illa tuae virtutis index."[139] Hence

Proof

Proof

the attack took place before Robortello's death, though it is not possible to establish whether it was carried out by one of his students.

A few weeks after the "battle of the posters," partly also because of the low attendance at his lessons, as against the almost 300 students that attended our Robortello's,[140] Sigonio, by now full of rancour, published the *Disputationum patavinarum adversus Franciscum Robortellum liber primus*, making it clear that he intended to follow up with at least one more blow. As Liruti has pointed out, the work is primarily an attack on the *De vita, & victu populi Romani*, published in 1559, which in his letter to Panvinio he had already dismissed as unimportant. Robortello responded to Sigonio's challenge with the *Ephemerides Patavinae*, authored under a pseudonym, Costanzo Carisio – in all likelihood a student of his, in order, as Liruti explains, "to show even greater contempt for his adversary."[141]

The heart of the dispute for Robortello was clearly philosophical and methodological. Sigonio is accused of teaching chaotically, incoherently and inconsistently, without any clear method or system, both of which were very much central to our Robortello's scientific approach:

> There came to the University of Padua one who teaches the names and surnames of the Romans, who expounds on the Cumaean Sibyl, on how many volumes Numa [Pompilius] wrote, the manner in which he wrote on linen, on whether Tanaquil was first a man or a woman, on how many slaves Tarquinius Priscus had; oh Lazzaro [Bonamico], see how your successor Sigonio acts, oh you fool, who explained the *Topics*, who interpreted the entirety of moral and political philosophy. Now the *Topics* laughs, philosophy laughs, the Greek language laughs, while he spends all day mumbling about public meetings and the names of the *centuriae*. . . .[142]

The passage exhibits the full philosophical significance of the Aristotelian position Robortello espouses and applies to the *studia humanitatis*. Knowledge is not a product of erudite learning for its own sake, but is built up systematically through a formulation of ideas that can go far beyond mere historical and philological data to recreate *humanitas* in its fullest complexity. In this Robortello sets himself apart from the humanists of the fifteenth century while capturing much of the systematic spirit of the following century. Far from being a mere personal diatribe against Sigonio, Robortello's critique is representative of the clash between two different ways of approaching the *studia humanitatis*, the first intended to restore the words that were meant to give rise to the ancient spirit, the second winkling out the "human" but at the same time "eternal" lying behind the words.[143]

The quarrel was spiralling out of control. Sigonio responded swiftly with the publication in September 1562 of the second volume of *Disputationes*

Proof

Proof

Patavinae, replete with insults and highly defamatory poems which were distributed among students and posted around Palazzo del Bo. The text contains not only a reply to Faerno's letter but also accusations of heresy against Robortello for his part in disseminating the ideas of Celio Secondo Curione during his time in Lucca,[144] accusations which, as we have seen, are not so inaccurate since Robortello had had a close association with the *Spirituali*.

The quarrel may well never have been resolved had Sigonio not moved to the University of Bologna in the summer of 1563 to take up what had been Robortello's chair. In the last three years of his life in Padua, Robortello devoted himself to teaching and research. His research did not yield any concrete results, however, and no books were published during this time. There was an opportunity to publish the funeral oration he had written for Marco Antonio Passeri, also known as Genua, but from the letter dated 18 August 1565 we learn that it would never be printed "because he who when alive criticized eloquence and Cicero does not deserve when dead to be honoured by them."[145] In a letter dated 14 May 1563 to Duke Alfonso II of Ferrara, Robortello writes that he was sending four ancient texts written by pen and in Greek: 1. the *Elementa* by Euclid; 2. the *Arithmetica* by Nicomachus of Gerasa, useful for the "intelligence of Plato's physics, as well as the morals of Aristotle";[146] 3. the *De motu circulari corporum caelestium* by Cleomedes; 4. the *Harmonica* of Ptolemy. Whether Alfonso II was aware of the fact or not is difficult to say, but Robortello was sending him the four books that represented the four fundamental disciplines of the *quadrivium*, which shows his interests as a humanist in fields beyond moral philosophy.[147]

In a letter dated 9 November 1564, Flaminio Leonardi testifies to the success of Robortello's lessons when he writes that "he began reading on Friday, explaining that which is appropriate to good history, and a good writer and observer of it, and his lessons were so pleasing that the larger school was barely big enough, and in this way does himself great honour."[148] In a letter to Antonio Carafa dated 17 May 1565, Robortello shows that he alternated public lecturing with private teaching, writing that "we have established a beautiful Greek academy here at the house, where every day we read long passages from the tragedies of Sophocles and Thucydides, so we can learn the way of verse and prose simultaneously."[149] Robortello's home was transformed into a meeting-place for people dedicated to the *studia humanitatis*: a place of literary, historical and philosophical cross-fertilisation.

Liruti writes of these years that they were quiet and uneventful, a happy time free from literary controversies.[150] The surviving letters reveal an ambitious and restless Robortello, however. On 18 August 1565, during the talks surrounding the commission of Paul IV's biography, he wrote to Antonio Carafa that he would like to take over the chair of humanities at the University of Naples: "While thinking with me, our Flaminio has

Proof

Proof

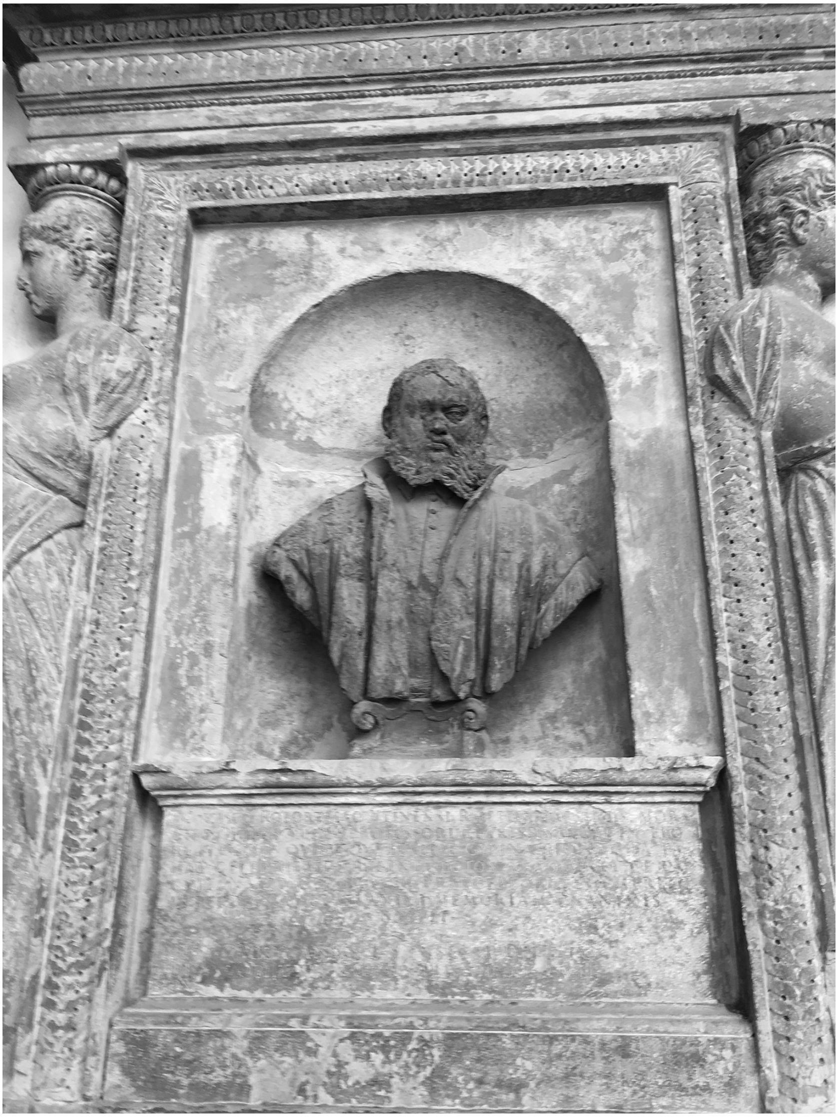


Figure 2.3 Francesco Segala's Bust of Francesco Robortello
Source: Photo by author.

ignited in me a great desire to see if the chair in Naples might be available to me with honourable conditions: where among so much nobility I might live and expend my letters [. . .] may it please you to assist me, as I promise to do you honour."[151] The move to Naples never happened, and

Proof

Proof

Robortello remained in Padua until the end of his life. His last piece of writing was a letter to Karl Truchsess von Waldburg.[152]

He died in Padua at just over 50 years of age on 18 March 1567, probably of pleurisy or pulmonitis. He was buried in the Church of Saint Anthony of Padua, where the *Natio germanica*, which, to judge from the numerous transalpine scholars introduced to Vettori,[153] must have been quite close to him, commissioned Francesco Segala to sculpt a marble bust in his memory bearing the following epitaph:

> To Francesco Robortello di Udine, an exceptionally famous professor of the art of rhetoric of moral philosophy, who for a full 30 years publicly taught in the flourishing universities in Italy with great renown. The Germanic nation has laid this lasting memorial in gratitude to its own teacher. He lived 50 years, 6 months, 9 days. He died on 18 March 1567.

No doubt his loss left a void in the University of Padua if, at the time of his death, many students from Polish and German territories expressed their intention of leaving the university "to study humanities, but without knowing now where to go." Flaminio Filonardi wrote too: "in the humanities and moral philosophy there is only Robortello, a miracle of nature and extremely learned in this profession of his in both the Latin and Greek languages."[154]

Notes

1. *Lettera inedita di Francesco Robortello Udinese intorno al modo di scrivere la storia particolarmente veneziana*, edited by Emmanuele Cicogna (Venezia: Merlo, 1843), 6.
2. Gian Giuseppe Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli* (Venezia: Fenzo, 1762), 350.
3. Emilio Costa, 'La prima cattedra d'umanità nello Studio bolognese durante il secolo XVI', *Studi e memorie per la Storia dell'Università di Bologna* 1 (1909), 25–7.
4. *Defensio pro Romuli Amasaei auditoribus adversus Sebastiani Corradi calumnias* (Bologna: Bonardo, 1537).
5. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 415.
6. Francesco Robortello, *De Vita et uictu populi romani sub impp. Caess. Augg. tomus primus, qui continet libros XV . . . Ejusdem disputationes nouem. Reliqui tomi, qui tres sunt, excudentur deinceps cum suis commentariis* (Bologna: Benati, 1559), 5^{v}: "Ante viginti tres annos, cum meo iam uti iudicio capisse in legendis antiquorum libris, & satis tenerem, quae ad notionem utriusque linguae spectant, animadverti necesse esse, si difficilia, quae asepe occurrunt, loca intelligere vellem, & aliis explicare, quodque summum est, memoria retinere, & in promptu, ut ad ea, quae mihi aliquis proposuisset, respondere possem, habere, rationem aliquam excogitare adnotandi, & conquirendi certo ordine omnia, quo omne genus eruditionis, in quovis authorum genere invenire me posse crederem, & commentarios mihi ad hunc usum conficere, in historicis igiturs praeter rerum gesta rum

Proof

Proof

notiam, quae volgaris est, & facile ab omnibus precipi potest, diligenter observavi, quale esset doctrinae genus, quod colligi posset, cumque viderem senatusconsulta, reip. formam, magistratuum potestatem, iudiciorum rationem, solennes sacrorum pompas, [. . .] et alijs huiusmodi mentionem fieri, neque sine his aut Ciceronis, aut aliorum libros posse intellgii, caepi mecum cogitare, ad quae veluti capita generalia omne genus eruditionis huius, ut ordine disponeretur, possset redigi."

7. *Epistolae aliquot. M. Antonii Flaminii, de veritate doctrinae eruditae et sanctitate religionis*, edited by Joachim Camerarius (Nürnberg: Gerlac, 1571), D3^{r}.
8. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 415.
9. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. It. C 24, cc. 264^{r}–265^{r}.
10. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Carteggio di Lucca, box 4. Q-Z, c1^{r}–c1^{v}.
11. Many thanks to Enrico Garavelli for helping me understand this letter.
12. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 416.
13. Renzo Sabbatini, *Per la storia di Lucca in età moderna* (Lucca: Pacini Fazzi, 2005), 62.
14. Paolo Barsanti, *Il pubblico insegnamento in Lucca dal sec. XIV fino al sec. XVIII* (Lucca: Marchi, 1907), 224: "Spectabile Officium super scolis in sufficienti numero congregatum in palatio residentie Magnificorum Dominorum Antianorum, utens auctoritate sibi concessa et attributa a Magnifico Consilio generali dato 17 octob. preterito, elegit excellentissimum humanarum litterarum professorem Magistrum Franciscum Bertellam de Udine in Magistrum majorem unius ex auditoriis magnifice Lucensis civitatis ad legendum et docendum litteras grecas et latinas pro tempore et termino mensium sex, incipiendorum die prima qua intrabit territorium lucense, cum salario scuto rum decem auri d'Italia singulo mense et cum observantia capitulorum condictorum et condendo rum super scolis etc., cum declaratione quod teneatur et debeat acceptare, et dictum eius officium ad exercendum venire intra totum presentem mensem januarii."
15. Ibid., 128.
16. Ibid., 175.
17. Ibid., 176–7.
18. Francesco Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio, Eiusdem Laconici, seu sudationis explicatio, Eiusdem De Nominibus Romanorum, Eiusdem De rhetorica facultate, Eiusdem explicatio in Catulli Epithalamium, Hic accesserunt eiusdem Annotationum in uaria tam Graecorum quam Latinorum loca Libri II, Ode Graceca quae βιοχρησμωδια inscribitur, Explanationes in primum Aeneid. Vergilii librum eodem Robortello praelegente collectae a Ioanne Baptista Busdrago Lucensi* (Firenze: Torrentino, 1548).
19. München, Staatsbibliothek, Clm 734, n. 5.
20. Cicero, *Petri Victorii codicibus maxima ex parte descripta, viri docti et in recensendis authoris huius scriptis cauti & perdiligentis: quem nos industria, quanta potuimus, consequuti, quasdam orationes redintegratas, tres libros De legibus multo quàm antea meliores, & reliquias de commentariis qui de republica inscripti erant, magno labore collectas vndique, descriptásque libris, vobis exhibemus. Eiusdem Victorii explicationes suarum in Ciceronem castigationum. Index rerum et verborum* (Paris: Stephanus, 1539).
21. München, Staatsbibliothek, Clm 734, n. 6.
22. Ibid.
23. Pietro Vettori, *Epistolae* (Firenze: Giunti, 1586), 14–15. Francesco Verino, in my view, is Verino the Elder rather than Verino the Younger (1524–1591), who at the time of the letter was very young and not yet launched as a man of letters.

Proof

Proof

24. It seems probable that the work came out in early 1543. Robortello appears to mention it in a letter to Vettori dated 11 April 1543 (London, British Library, Add. 10271, 128^{v}–9^{r}), where he refers to the annotations as "fiascherie," or foolishnesses, and the dedication itself is dated January 1543. This letter from April 1543 follows another letter to Vettori dated 27 February 1543, in which Robortello appears to be apologising for some misdemeanour (London, British Library, Add. 10271, 125^{v}–6^{r}). Here he admits to being "too bold," for which reason "he will not be counted among the humble, and the low" (London, British Library, Add. 10271, 125^{v}). According to Carlini, Robortello used lost manuscripts for his edition of Classical texts. See Antonio Carlini, 'L'attività filologica di Francesco Robortello', *Atti dell'Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Udine* 7 (1967): 56.
25. Francesco Florindo, *In M. Actii Plauti aliorumque Latinæ linguæ scriptorum calumniatores apologia* (Basel: Isengrin, 1540), 314.
26. His friendship towards Flaminio finds confirmation in a poetic composition for Benedetto Accolti from the Lucca period, which is now in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, CL. VII, 377, 22$^{r–v}$. The same folder contains compositions for Pier Vettori and Francesco del Garbo, referred to as "good old friends," like the two Luccans Martino Lillio and Giuseppe Giovio. Cf. Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, CL. VII, 377, 23^{r}–4^{r}.
27. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 417.
28. Ibid.
29. Lucio Biasori, *L'eresia di un umanista. Celio Secondo Curione nell'Europa del Cinquecento* (Roma: Carocci, 2015), 59.
30. Sebastiano Curione, *Epistola ad amplissimum Collegium Iurisconsultum Patavinae civitatis. Continens defensionem Augustini Curionis ad versus Franciscum Robertellum, Utinensem* (Padova, 1562), 3, 13: "[. . .] Francisco Robortello, homini furiosissimo & impudentissimo tribuatis, qui illum sua improbitate & factis criminibus discendere coegerunt. [. . .] cuius literae si proderentur Christianusne an Epicureus sit Robert. homo tam vasto corpore, ut duas quanti amplas implere possit fellas agnosceretur."
31. Biasori, *L'eresia di un umanista. Celio Secondo Curione nell'Europa del Cinquecento*, 60.
32. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, G I 8, 25. The letter points to Robortello's close ties with heterodox circles. Basilius and the son of Celio, Agostino, both frequented Lelio Sozzini.
33. Barsanti, *Il pubblico insegnamento in Lucca dal sec. XIV fino al sec. XVIII*, 140.
34. The first oration, which Liruti thought was unpublished, as Emanuele Cicogna has shown in *Lettera inedita di Francesco Robortello intorno al modo di scrivere la storia particolarmente veneziana*, 6, was in fact published in Lucca in 1539 by Fasello, though unfortunately this version has been lost. A last trace may be found in Sotheby's 1825 auction catalogue for the sale of Tomaso De Lucca's library, marked with the number 546. Cf. *A Catalogue of the Very Celebrated Library of Don Tomaso De Lucca* (London: Compton, 1825), 24, but the buyer is not known. The second is in manuscript form in the Museo Correr in Venice, in the Donà dalle Rose Collection, 447, fasc. 25.
35. Angelo Fabroni, *Historia academiae pisanae* (Pisa: Mugnai, 1791), vol. 2, 250–1.
36. London, British Library, Add. 10271, 128^{v}–9^{r}.
37. Ibid., 127$^{r–v}$.
38. Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Carte strozziane, Varchi, II, 76, 1^{r}.

Proof

Proof

39. Relations with Luca Martini deteriorated in 1548 when Martini decided not to publish Robortello's epitaph for Matteo Corti, despite its having been approved. Cf. Archivio di Stato, Mediceo del Principato, 387, 103^{r}.
40. Riguccio Galluzzi, *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana sotto il governo della Casa Medici* (Firenze: Cambiagi, 1781), vol. 1, 169.
41. Danilo Marra, 'L'età medicea (1543–1737)', in *Storia dell'Università di Pisa* (Pisa: Commissione rettorale per la storia dell'Università di Pisa, 1993), 132.
42. London, British Library, Add. 10281, 44v. Initial results of his research on Horace may be found [in] the annotations in *Quin. Horatii Flacci poetae Venusini Omnia poemata, cum ratione carminum et argumentis ubique insertis interpretibus Acrone, Porphirione, Iano Parrhasito, Antonio Mancinello, necnon Iodoco Badio Ascensio viris eruditissimis. Scoliisque d. Erasmi Roterodami, Angeli Politiani, M. Antonii Sabellici, Ludouici Caelii Rodigini, Baptistae Pii, Petri Criniti, Aldi Manutii, Matthei Bonfinis, & Iacobi Bononiensis nuper adiunctis. His nos praeterea annotationes doctissimorum Antonii Thylesii Consentini, Francisci Robortelli Vtinensis, atque Henrici Glareani apprime utiles addidimus. Nicolai Peroti Sipontini libellus de metris odarum. Auctoris Vita ex Petro Crinito Florentino. Quae omnia longe politius, ac diligentius, quam hactenus, excusa in luce prodeunt* (Venezia: Scoto, 1544).
43. London, British Library, Add. 10281, 44^{v}. "Read" must be understood as having the twofold meaning of taught and studied.
44. London, British Library, Add. 10272, $282^{r–v}$.
45. Francesco Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes, qui ab eodem authore, ex manuscriptis libris, multis in locis emendatus fuit, ut iam difficillimus, ac obscurissimus liber a nullo ante declaratus, facile ab omnibus possit intelligi. Cum indice rerum et uerborum locupletissimo – Francisci Robortelli Vtinensis Paraphrasis in librum Horatii, qui uulgo De Arte poetica ad Pisones inscribitur. Eiusdem explicationes de satyra, de epigrammata, de comoedia, de salibus, de elegia. Quae omnia addita ab authore fuerunt, ut nihil quod ad poeticam spectaret, desiderari posset. Nam in iis scribendis Aristotelis methodum seruauit: et ex ipsius libello de Arte poetica principia sumpsit omnium suarum explicationum* (Basel: Hervag, 1555). *Paraphrasis* had the same year a separate edition: *Paraphrasis in librum Horatii, qui uulgo De Arte poetica ad Pisones inscribitur. Eiusdem explicationes de satyra, de epigrammata, de comoedia, de salibus, de elegia. Quae omnia addita ab authore fuerunt, ut nihil quod ad poeticam spectaret, desiderari posset. Nam in iis scribendis Aristotelis methodum seruauit: et ex ipsius libello de Arte poetica principia sumpsit omnium suarum explicationum* (Basel: Hervag, 1555).
46. Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio*.
47. During his stay in Pisa, he published the notes to *Marci Tullii Ciceronis Familiarum Epistolarum Libri XVI.: CVM singulis earum Argumentis, Varietatibus Lectionum, Annotationibus, Scoliis, atque Obseruationibus doctissimorum amplius Decemseptem uirorum, qui docte, ac erudite in eas scripserunt. His LUCII IOAN. SCOPPAE Parthenopei, et FRANCISCI ROBORTELLII Vtinensis in loca quaedam difficiliora Lucrubrationes addidimus. ASCENSII item Familiaris accessit expositio, quam (cum multis in locis mutila et manca esset,) auxilio ueterum codicum adiuti, pristinae integritati restituimus* (Venezia: Scoto, 1544).
48. Francesco Robortello, *Variorum locorum annotationes tam in Graecis quam in Latinis auctoribus* (Paris: Stephanus, 1544), 272–6. Robortello refers to Andrea Alciati, *Parerga iuris* (Lyon: Gryphe, 1544), 98–9.

Proof

Proof

49. *Lettere a Piero Vettori (1536–1577)*, edited by Vanni Bramanti (Roma: Vecchiarelli, 2009), 71.
50. London, British Library, Add. 10281, 44^{v}.
51. Niccolò Zorzi, 'Il grecista Chirico Strozzi (1504–65). Notizie sulla biografia, le lettere, gli scritti', in In partibus Clius. *Scritti in onore di Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli*, edited by Gianfranco Ficcadori (Napoli: Vivarium, 2006), 355–459.
52. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Carteggio di Lucca, box 4. Q-Z, $c1^{r–v}$.
53. London, British Library, Add. 10281.
54. Ibid., 44^{v}.
55. Francesco Robortello, *Oratio Venetiis habita, antequam initium faceret interpretandi pridie calendas nouem* (Venezia: Arrivabene, 1549), $Ci^{r–v}$.
56. James Bruce Ross, 'Venetian Schools and Teachers Fourteenth to Early Sixteenth Century: A Survey and a Study of Giovanni Battista Egnazio', *Renaissance Quarterly* 29 (1976): 121–57.
57. Paolo Tremoli, 'Un epistolario latino inedito del Cinquecento friulano', in *Studi su San Daniele del Friuli* (Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1978), 127–57.
58. Vettori praises Robortello's oration in Vettori, *Epistolae*, 37. See also Robortello's letter to Vettori, 13 April 1550, for more about the oration, cf. Angelo Maria Bandini, *Cl. Italorum et Germanorum Epistolae ad Petrum Victorium* (Firenze: Praesidum Facultate, 1758), 74–7.
59. Robortello, *Oratio Venetiis habita, antequam initium faceret interpretandi pridie calendas nouem*, $Aiii^{r}$.
60. Ibid., Aii^{v}.
61. Jill Kraye, 'Beyond Moral Philosophy: Renaissance Humanism and the Philosophical Canon', *Rinascimento* 56 (2016): 3–22.
62. Interest in these themes may be seen in *Aeliani De militaribus ordinibus instituendis more Graecorum liber, a Francisco Robortello Vtinensi nunc primum Graece editus multisque imaginibus, & picturis ab eodem illustratus* (Venice: Spinelli, 1552).
63. London, British Library, Add. 10272, $282^{r–v}$.
64. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 423.
65. Francesco Robortello, *Francisci Philelphi De morali disciplina libri quinque. Auerrois paraphrasis in libros de republica Platonis. Francisci Robortelli in libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio* (Venezia: Scoto, 1552).
66. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 424; Matteo Venier, 'Belloni, Robortello ed Egnazio: Nuovi e vecchi documenti su una contesa umanistica', *Metodi e Ricerche* 17 (1998): 51–66.
67. Udine, Biblioteca Civica Joppi, folder 565, letter 360, 252^{r}, now in Venier, 'Belloni, Robortello ed Egnazio: Nuovi e vecchi documenti su una contesa umanistica', 62.
68. Udine, Archivio di Stato, folder 5458, $180^{r–v}$, now in Venier, 'Belloni, Robortello ed Egnazio: Nuovi e vecchi documenti su una contesa umanistica', 55.
69. Udine, Biblioteca Civica Joppi, folder 565, letter 328, 221^{r}, now in Venier, 'Belloni, Robortello ed Egnazio: Nuovi e vecchi documenti su una contesa umanistica', 55: "if you prove capable of removing the Muse from the hospice, which you haven't yet, scholars will say you have done something worthwhile."
70. Udine, Biblioteca Civica Joppi, folder 565, letter 360, 252^{v}–3^{r}, now in Venier, 'Belloni, Robortello ed Egnazio: Nuovi e vecchi documenti su una contesa umanistica', 64.
71. Udine, Biblioteca Civica Joppi, folder 565, letter 346, 235^{v}–6^{v}, now in Venier, 'Belloni, Robortello ed Egnazio: Nuovi e vecchi documenti su una contesa umanistica', 55.

Proof

Proof

72. Udine, Biblioteca Civica Joppi, Joppi 697b, now in Venier, 'Belloni, Robortello ed Egnazio: Nuovi e vecchi documenti su una contesa umanistica', 59–60.
73. Ibid.
74. Vincenzo Maggi and Bartolomeo Lombardi, *In Aristotelis librum de poetica communes explanationes* (Venice: Valgrisi, 1550), 16.
75. Ibid., 17.
76. Ibid., 18.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid., 21.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., 25–6.
81. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 425.
82. Ludovico Castelvetro, *Corretione di alcune cose del Dialogo delle lingue del Varchi, e una giunta del primo libro delle prose di M. Pietro Bembo dove si ragiona della volgar lingua* (Basel: Steinhofer, 1572), 39–40. Toffanin felt that this account did not contain "a single word of truth" (Giuseppe Toffanin, *La fine dell'Umanesimo* (Milano: Brocca, 1920), 87), but its truth is borne out by Belloni. See also Valentina Grohovaz's edition of Ludovico Castelvetro, *Correttione d'alcune cose del Dialogo delle lingue di Benedetto Varchi* (Padova: Antenore, 1999).
83. Francesco Robortello, *De convenientia Supputationis Livianae Annales Cum Marmoribus Romae Quae in Capitolio sunt: Eiusdem De Arte, Siue Ratione corrigenda ueteres Authores, disputatio. Eiusdem emendationum libri duo* (Padova: Olmo, 1557), 8^{r}.
84. Francesco Robortello, *Aeschyli Tragoediae septem a Francesco Robortello Vtinensi, nunc primum ex manuscriptis libris ab infinitis erratis expurgatae, ac suis metris restitutae* (Venice: Scoto, 1552); Francesco Robortello, *Scholia in Aeschyli tragoedias omnes ex uetustissimis libris manuscriptis collecta, atque in hoc corpus redacta a Francesco Robortello Vtinensi* (Venezia: Valgrisi, 1552).
85. Elisa Maggioni, 'Francesco Robortello editore dei Persiani di Eschilo', *SemRom. Seminari romani di cultura greca* 4 (2015): 41–70.
86. Francesco Piovan, *Per la biografia di Lazzaro Bonamico. Ricerche sul periodo dell'insegnamento padovano (1530–1552)* (Trieste: Lint, 1988).
87. *Alcune lettere d'illustri italiani* (Modena: Vincenzi, 1827), 13.
88. Carlo Sigonio, *Patavinarum disputationum adversus Franciscum Robortellum liber secundus* (Padova: Percacino, 1562), V2$^{r–v}$. The decree had already been reported by Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 426.
89. *Alcune lettere d'illustri italiani*, 14.
90. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, G I 8, 25.
91. *Alcune lettere d'illustri italiani*, 25.
92. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 427.
93. William McCuaig, *Carlo Sigonio: The Changing World of the Late Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 29.
94. Bartolomeo Marliani, *Consulum, dictatorum, censorumque Romanorum series, una cum ipsorum triumphis: quae marmoribus scalpta in foro reperta est, atque Capitolium translata. Franc. Robortellus Lectori. Marlianus Patricius Mediolanensis Lectori* (Venezia: Grifo, 1555).
95. Federico Patetta, 'Appunti su Carlo Sigonio', *Atti e memorie della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Provincie Modenesi* 6 (1910): 41.
96. Ibid.
97. I have consulted all other copies of Marliani's work from 1555 in Italy, namely in the Biblioteca Universitaria of Bologna, the Biblioteca Universitaria of

Proof

Proof

Naples and the Biblioteca Universitaria Alessandrina in Rome, and, additionally, that in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. The shelfmark for that at the Museo Correr in Venice is OP.PD. *0000 3574.

98. Otherwise, the two versions are identical.
99. "Quid enim magis ridendum unquam fuit, quam quod in hisce marmoribus faciendis quidam anno ab u.c. CCCLIIII, ubi VETURIUS TI. F. legendum est, connectendo inepte et imperite syllabas FAUST F. scripserunt? Quare etiam affirmare ausi sunt, nulla alia authoritate adducti, FAUSTUS inter praenomina olim Romanorum fuisse, quo etiam pueri ipsi sciunt verum non esse." Patetta, 'Appunti su Carlo Sigonio', 43.
100. Robortello, *De convenientia Supputationis Livianae Annales Cum Marmoribus Romae Quae in Capitolio sunt: Eiusdem De Arte, Siue Ratione corrigenda ueteres Authores, disputatio. Eiusdem emendationum libri duo*, *ij: "Leviter ob id non multo post hominem pupugi in epistola, quam praeposui Fastis Rom. a me editis, ut me praelegente a meis auditoribus suppleri in Patavino gymnasio ante tres annos possent, quamquam antequam ederetur, morem ut gererem Gabrieli Falloppiae Mutinensi medico praestantissimo, mihique amicissimo, verba illa omnia sustuleram."
101. Carlo Sigonio, *Emandationum libri duo* (Venezia: Manuzio, 1557), A2^{v}.
102. Patetta, 'Appunti su Carlo Sigonio', 44–5.
103. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 428.
104. Carlo Sigonio, *Regum, consulum, dicatorum, ac censorum Romanorum* (Venezia: Manuzio, 1555), I2.
105. *Dionysii Longini Rhetoris Praestantissimi Liber, De Grandi, Sive sublimi orationis genere, Nunc primum a Francisco Robortello Vtinensi in lucem editus, eiusdemque Annotationibus latinis in margine appositis, quae instar Commentariorum sunt, illustratus. Nam ex iis methodus tota libri, & ordo quaestionum, de quibus agitur, omnisque ratio praeceptionum, et alia multa cognosci possunt* (Basel: Oporino, 1554). From a manuscript letter from Robortello to Vettori of 24 July 1555, one can see that the printed text is based on *Marc.* 522, which contains the *De militaribus* by Aelianus, published in 1552. As he writes to Vettori: "in Basel was printed the ancient rhetorician Dyonisius Longinus, whom I took from the library in Venice, a most elegant and useful writer, as well as concise. I think that you must have seen it; I would have sent it if I did not believe it had not come there." Cf. London, British Library, Add. 10271, 132^{r}. On the text by Aelianus with that of the Pseudo-Longinus, cf. Francesco Donadi, 'Francesco Robortello da Udine', *Lexis. Poetica, retorica e comunicazione nella tradizione classica* 19 (2001): 87–9.
106. Tommaso Porcacchi, *Lettere di XIII. huomini illustri* (Venezia: Cavalli, 1565), 639–40.
107. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Nonnulla opuscula, a Stanislao Ilovio Polono nunc primum latinitate donata, quae quinta pagina recensentur. Eiusdem Ilovii et Robortelli de historica facultate commentatiunculae* (Paris: Stephanus, 1556); Demetrius Phalereus, *de elocutione liber, a Stanislao Ilovio Polono, latinitate donatus et annotationibus illustratus. Item Dionysii Halicarnassei quaedam opuscula, eodem interprete quae uersa pagina recensentur. Adiecimus eadem et graece, ut conferri a studiosis possint. Ejusdem Ilovii et Fr. Robortelli de historica facultate commentatiunculae* (Basel: Oporino, 1557). The editing work was interrupted by the plague, which struck Padua between 1555 and 1556. The letter to Basilius II Amerbach testifies that Robortello had to flee and take refuge with his family, first outside Padua, and then in Venice and in Cividale, cf. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, G I 18, 27–8.
108. Francesco Robortello, *De convenientia Supputationis Livianae Annales Cum Marmoribus Romae Quae in Capitolio sunt: Eiusdem De Arte, Siue*

Proof

Proof

Ratione corrigenda ueteres Authores, disputatio. Eiusdem emendationum libri duo (Padova: Olmo, 1557). Robortello offers some explanation for his corrections to Johannes Herwagen in the letter of 4 June 1557. There is mention also of the edition of the *Explicationes*, published by Herwagen in 1555. Cf. Basel, Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Frey-Gryn Mscr II 2, 138.

109. Carlo Sigonio, *Opera Omnia* (Milano: Palatino, 1737), vol. 6, 993.
110. Ibid., 996.
111. Ibid., 996–7.
112. Ibid., 997.
113. Ibid., 998.
114. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 431.
115. McCuaig, *Carlo Sigonio: The Changing World of the Late Renaissance*, 24–7.
116. Torino, Biblioteche Civiche Torinesi, *Raccolta di autografi Luigi Nomis di Cossilla*, 35, folder 7. A few days later, on 30 March 1558, Robortello writes to Vettori again to recommend students, especially foreigners. Cf. Edinburgh, University Library, Laing Collection, La.II.653, 35^{r}.
117. Carlo Sigonio, *Disputationes patavinae adversus Franciscum Robortellum liber primus* (Padova: Percacino, 1562), 3^{v}–4^{r}; Giulio Pogiani, *Epistolae et orationes* (Roma: Bibliopola, 1756), vol. 2, 317–18.
118. Paolo Manuzio, *Epistolarum libri XII* (Lyon: Pensot, 1582), vol. 5, 215–16.
119. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 6528, 156^{r}–191^{v}.
120. Martin Cromer, *De Origine Et Rebus Gestis Polonorvm Libri XXX: Recogniti ab auctore. Vna cum funebri eiusdem autoris Oratione, Sigismundi Regis uitam compendiose complexa & aliquoties iam prius edita, accessit modo iudicium Francisci Robortelli Vtinensis de authore et libro* (Basel: Oporino, 1558).
121. In a letter dated 7 March 1559, Robortello writes to Vettori: "I have begun to have a great volume printed. *De vita et victu Po. Ro.* from Julius Caes. to Justinian." London, British Library, Add. 10271, 130^{r}. In the same letter he asks Vettori if he could get hold of an edition of Aeschylus printed by Stephanus.
122. Francesco Robortello, *Oratio in funere imperatoris* CAROLI V. AVGVSTI, *in amplissimo Hispanorum collegio Bononiæ habita. Cum indice, et glossulis ordinem totius orationis indicantibus iterum impressa* (Bologna: Benati, 1559). Robortello sends Vettori a copy of this oration on 26 June 1559, announcing that he intended to return to his work on Aeschylus and Cicero as soon as "St. Anthony's fire" would allow him to study in more depth.
123. Francesco Robortello, *De artificio dicendi, Ad illustrem et Reuerendissimum Ioannem Baptistam Campegium Episcopum Maioricensium Liber. Eiusdem Tabulae oratoriae. In or. Cic. Qua gratias agit senatui ost reditum. In or. Pro Milone. In or. Pro Plancio* (Bologna: Benato, 1560).
124. Sigonio, *Opera Omnia*, 1000.
125. Ibid., 998.
126. Ibid., 1006.
127. Francesco Robortello, *Ephemerides Patauinae mensis quintilis. MDLXII. Aduersus Caroli Sigonii triduanas disputationes. A Constantio Charisio Foroiuliensi descriptae, & explicatae fusius. Gabrieli Faerni, epistola qua continetur censura emendationum Sigonii liuianarum* (Padova: Pasquati, 1562), 16^{r}.
128. Ibid., 45^{v}.
129. For the reconstruction of Robortello's departure from Bologna see Carlo Alberto Girotto, 'Francesco Robortello da Bologna a Padova', in *Il dialogo creativo. Studi per Lina Bolzoni* (Pisa: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2017), 209–24.

Proof

Proof

130. Jacopo Facciolati, *Fasti gymnasii Patavinii* (Padova: Seminaro, 1757), vol. 1, LVIIII.
131. Giacomo Filippo Tommasini, *Gymnasium Patavinum libris V comprehensum* (Udine: Schiratti, 1654), 411.
132. Facciolati, *Fasti gymnasii Patavinii*, vol. 2, 315.
133. Giovanni Fantuzzi, *Memorie della vita di Ulisse Aldrovandi* (Bologna: Lelio Dalla Volpe, 1744), 216.
134. Carlo Sigonio, *Disputationes patavinae adversus Franciscum Robortellum liber secundus* (Padova: Percacino, 1562), U3^{v}.
135. Ibid., U3^{v}–V4^{r}.
136. Ibid., T4^{r}.
137. Sigonio, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1, VIII.
138. Antonio Riccoboni, *De gymnasio patavino commentariorum libri VI* (Padova: Bolzeta, 1598), 91^{r}.
139. Robortello, *Ephemerides Patauinae*, 46^{r}.
140. Ibid., 26^{r}.
141. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 440.
142. Robortello, *Ephemerides Patauinae*, D4^{v}.
143. Ibid., 45^{v}.
144. Sigonio, *Disputationes patavinae adversus Franciscum Robortellum liber secundus*, 67$^{r–v}$.
145. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 5728, 124.
146. Modena, Archivio di Stato di Modena, *Cancelleria Ducale. Archivio per materie. Letterati*, folder 58.
147. Kraye, 'Beyond Moral Philosophy: Renaissance Humanism and the Philosophical Canon', 3–22.
148. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 5728, 44.
149. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 5728, 123.
150. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 442.
151. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 5728, 124. See also the letters from Filonardi to Robortello, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 6805, ff. 332^{r}–333^{v}, 334^{r}–335^{v}.
152. Francesco Robortello, *Epistola ad illustrem et generosum Carolum S. Rom. Imperii. Dapiferum Haered. Baronem in Waldpurg, in qua breuis, facilisque ad eloquentiam uia monstratur* (Bologna: Benati, 1567).
153. See also the letter to Padova, Biblioteca del Seminario, 619, vol. 1, 70.
154. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 6805, 312. It was De Maio who unearthed these last two passages, see De Maio, *Riforme e miti nella Chiesa del Cinquecento* (Napoli: Guida, 1992), 123.

Bibliography

1. *Robortello's Works*

Robortello, Francesco. *Explanationes in primum Aeneidos Vergilii librum Collectae a Ioanne Busdrago Lucensi, ex doctissimis interpretationibus Francisci Robortelii Vtinensis praeceptoris sui*. Lyon: Gryphe, 1543.

———. *Marci Tullii Ciceronis Familiarum Epistolarum Libri XVI.: CVM singulis earum Argumentis, Varietatibus Lectionum, Annotationibus, Scoliis, atque Obseruationibus doctissimorum amplius Decemseptem uirorum, qui docte, ac erudite in eas scripserunt. His LUCII IOAN. SCOPPAE Parthenopei, et FRANCISCI ROBORTELLII Vtinensis in loca quaedam difficiliora Lucrubrationes addidimus. ASCENSII item Familiaris accessit expositio, quam (cum multis in locis mutila et*

Proof

Proof

manca esset,) auxilio ueterum codicum adiuti, pristinae integritati restituimus. Venezia: Scoto, 1544.

———. *Quin. Horatii Flacci poetae Venusini Omnia poemata, cum ratione carminum et argumentis ubique insertis interpretibus Acrone, Porphirione, Iano Parrhasito, Antonio Mancinello, necnon Iodoco Badio Ascensio viris eruditissimis. Scoliisque d. Erasmi Roterodami, Angeli Politiani, M. Antonii Sabellici, Ludouici Caelii Rodigini, Baptistae Pii, Petri Criniti, Aldi Manutii, Matthei Bonfinis, & Iacobi Bononiensis nuper adiunctis. His nos praeterea annotationes doctissimorum Antonii Thylesii Consentini, Francisci Robortelli Vtinensis, atque Henrici Glareani apprime utiles addidimus. Nicolai Peroti Sipontini libellus de metris odarum. Auctoris Vita ex Petro Crinito Florentino. Quae omnia longe politius, ac diligentius, quam hactenus, excusa in luce prodeunt*. Venezia: Scoto, 1544.

———. *Variorum locorum annotationes tam in Graecis quam in Latinis auctoribus*. Paris: Stephanus, 1544.

———. *De historica facultate, disputatio, Eiusdem Laconici, seu sudationis explicatio, Eiusdem De Nominibus Romanorum, Eiusdem De rhetorica facultate, Eiusdem explicatio in Catulli Epithalamium, Hic accesserunt eiusdem Annotationum in uaria tam Graecorum quam Latinorum loca Libri II, Ode Graceca quae βιοχρησμωδια inscribitur, Explanationes in primum Aeneid. Vergilii librum eodem Robortello praelegente collectae a Ioanne Baptista Busdrago Lucensi*. Firenze: Torrentino, 1548.

———. *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes: qui ab eodem ex manuscriptis libris, multis in locis emendatus fuit, ut iam difficillimus, ac obscurissimus liber a nullo ante declaratus, facile ab omnibus possit intelligi. Cum Indice rerum et uerborum locupletissimo. Francisci Robortelli Vtinensis Paraphrasis in librum Horatii, qui uulgo De Arte poetica ad Pisones inscribitur. Eiusdem explicationes de satyra, de epigrammata, de comoedia, de salibus, de elegia. Quae omnia addita ab authore fuerunt, ut nihil quod ad poeticam spectaret desiderari posset: Nam in iis scribendis Aristotelis methodum seruauit: et ex ipsius libello de Arte poetica principia sumpsit omnium suarum explicationum*. Firenze: Torrentino, 1548.

———. *Oratio Venetiis habita, antequam initium faceret interpretandi pridie calendas nouem*. Venezia: Arrivabene, 1549.

———. *Aeliani De militaribus ordinibus instituendis more Graecorum liber, a Francisco Robortello Vtinensi nunc primum Graece editus multisque imaginibus, & picturis ab eodem illustratus*. Venezia: Spinelli, 1552.

———. *Aeschyli Tragoediae septem a Francesco Robortello Vtinensi, nunc primum ex manuscriptis libris ab infinitis erratis expurgatae, ac suis metris restitutae*. Venezia: Scoto, 1552.

———. *Francisci Philelphi De morali disciplina libri quinque. Auerrois paraphrasis in libros de republica Platonis. Francisci Robortelli in libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio*. Venezia: Scoto, 1552.

———. *Scholia in Aeschyli tragoedias omnes ex uetustissimis libris manuscriptis collecta, atque in hoc corpus redacta a Francesco Robortello Vtinensi*. Venezia: Valgrisi, 1552.

———. *Dionysii Longini Rhetoris Praestantissimi Liber, De Grandi, Sive sublimi orationis genere, Nunc primum a Francisco Robortello Vtinensi in lucem editus, eiusdemque Annotationibus latinis in margine appositis, quae instar Commentariorum sunt, illustratus. Nam ex iis methodus tota libri, & ordo*

Proof

Proof

quaestionum, de quibus agitur, omnisque ratio praeceptionum, et alia multa cognosci possunt. Basel: Oporino, 1554.

———. *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes, qui ab eodem authore, ex manuscriptis libris, multis in locis emendatus fuit, ut iam difficillimus, ac obscurissimus liber a nullo ante declaratus, facile ab omnibus possit intelligi. Cum indice rerum et uerborum locupletissimo – Francisci Robortelli Vtinensis Paraphrasis in librum Horatii, qui uulgo De Arte poetica ad Pisones inscribitur. Eiusdem explicationes de satyra, de epigrammata, de comoedia, de salibus, de elegia. Quae omnia addita ab authore fuerunt, ut nihil quod ad poeticam spectaret, desiderari posset. Nam in iis scribendis Aristotelis methodum seruauit: et ex ipsius libello de Arte poetica principia sumpsit omnium suarum explicationum*. Basel: Hervag, 1555.

———. *Paraphrasis in librum Horatii, qui uulgo De Arte poetica ad Pisones inscribitur. Eiusdem explicationes de satyra, de epigrammata, de comoedia, de salibus, de elegia. Quae omnia addita ab authore fuerunt, ut nihil quod ad poeticam spectaret, desiderari posset. Nam in iis scribendis Aristotelis methodum seruauit: et ex ipsius libello de Arte poetica principia sumpsit omnium suarum explicationum*. Basel: Hervag, 1555.

———. *De convenientia Supputationis Livianae Annales Cum Marmoribus Romae Quae in Capitolio sunt: Eiusdem De Arte, Siue Ratione corrigenda ueteres Authores, disputatio. Eiusdem emendationum libri duo*. Padova: Olmo, 1557.

———. *De Vita et uictu populi romani sub impp. Caess. Augg. tomus primus, qui continet libros XV . . . Ejusdem disputationes nouem. Reliqui tomi, qui tres sunt, excudentur deinceps cum suis commentariis*. Bologna: Benati, 1559.

———. *Oratio in funere imperatoris* CAROLI V. AVGVSTI, *in amplissimo Hispanorum collegio Bononiæ habita. Cum indice, et glossulis ordinem totius orationis indicantibus iterum impressa*. Bologna: Benati, 1559.

———. *De artificio dicendi, Ad illustrem et Reuerendissimum Ioannem Baptistam Campegium Episcopum Maioricensium Liber. Eiusdem Tabulae oratoriae. In or. Cic. Qua gratias agit senatui ost reditum. In or. Pro Milone. In or. Pro Plancio*. Bologna: Benati, 1560.

———. *Ephemerides Patauinae mensis quintilis. MDLXII. Aduersus Caroli Sigonii triduanas disputationes. A Constantio Charisio Foroiuliensi descriptae, & explicatae fusius. Gabrieli Faerni, epistola qua continetur censura emendationum Sigonii liuianarum*. Padova: Pasquati, 1562.

———. *De artificio dicendi*. Bologna: Benati, 1567.

———. *Epistola ad illustrem et generosum Carolum S. Rom. Imperii. Dapiferum Haered. Baronem in Waldpurg, in qua breuis, facilisque ad eloquentiam uia monstratur*. Bologna: Benati, 1567.

———. *Lettera inedita di Francesco Robortello Udinese intorno al modo di scrivere la storia particolarmente veneziana*, edited by Emmanuele Cicogna. Venezia: Merlo, 1843.

2. *Manuscripts*

Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, G I 8.
Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, G I 18.
Basel, Universitätsbibliothek Basel, Frey-Gryn Mscr II 2.
Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 5728.

Proof

Proof

Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Patetta 971.
Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 6528.
Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 6805.
Edinburgh, University Library, Laing Collection, La.II.653.
Ferrara, Biblioteca Estense, Lat. 88, α.Q.6.14.
Firenze, Archivio di Stato, Mediceo del Principato, 387.
Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Carte strozziane, Varchi, II, 76.
Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, CL. VII, 377.
London, British Library, Add. 10271.
London, British Library, Add. 10272.
London, British Library, Add. Ms. 10281.
Milano, Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 480 inf.
Milano, Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, R 118 sup.
Modena, Archivio di Stato di Modena, *Cancelleria Ducale. Archivio per materie. Letterati*, folder 58.
München, Staatsbibliothek, Clm 734.
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. It. C 24.
Padova, Biblioteca del Seminario, 619, vol. 1, 70.
Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Carteggio di Lucca.
Torino, Biblioteche Civiche Torinesi, *Raccolta di autografi Luigi Nomis di Cossilla*, 35, folder 7.
Udine, Archivio di Stato, folder 5458.
Udine, Bilbioteca Civica Joppi, Joppi 565.
Udine, Bilbioteca Civica Joppi, Joppi 697b.
Venezia, Museo Correr, Donà dalle Rose 447.25.
Venezia, Museo Correr, OP.PD. *0000 3574.

3. Primary Sources

Alcune lettere d'illustri italiani. Modena: Vincenzi, 1827.

Bandini, Angelo Maria. *Cl. Italorum et Germanorum Epistolae ad Petrum Victorium*. Firenze: Praesidum Facultate, 1758.

Cicero. *Petri Victorii codicibus maxima ex parte descripta, viri docti et in recensendis authoris huius scriptis cauti & perdiligentis: quem nos industria, quanta potuimus, consequuti, quasdam orationes redintegratas, tres libros De legibus multo quàm antea meliores, & reliquias de commentariis qui de republica inscripti erant, magno labore collectas vndique, descriptásque libris, vobis exhibemus. Eiusdem Victorii explicationes suarum in Ciceronem castigationum. Index rerum et verborum*. Paris: Stephanus, 1539.

Cromer, Martin. *De Origine Et Rebus Gestis Polonorvm Libri XXX: Recogniti ab auctore. Vna cum funebri eiusdem autoris Oratione, Sigismundi Regis uitam compendiose complexa & aliquoties iam prius edita, accessit modo iudicium Francisci Robortelli Vtinensis de authore et libro*. Basel: Oporino, 1558.

Curione, Sebastiano. *Epistola ad amplissimum Collegium Iurisconsultum Patavinae civitatis. Continens defensionem Augustini Curionis ad versus Franciscum Robertellum, Utinensem*. Padova, 1562.

Defensio pro Romuli Amasaei auditoribus adversus Sebastiani Corradi calumnias. Bologna: Bonardo, 1537.

Proof

Proof

Epistolae aliquot. M. Antonii Flaminii, de veritate doctrinae eruditae et sanctitate religionis, edited by Joachim Camerarius. Nürnberg: Gerlac, 1571.

Fabroni, Angelo. *Historia academiae pisanae*. Pisa: Mugnai, 1791.

Florindo, Francesco. *In M. Actii Plauti aliorumque Latinæ linguæ scriptorum calumniatores apologia*. Basel: Isengrin, 1540.

Maggi, Vincenzo and Lombardi, Bartolomeo. *In Aristotelis librum de poetica communes explanationes*. Venezia: Valgrisi, 1550.

Manuzio, Paolo. *Epistolarum libri XII*. Lyon: Pensot, 1582.

Marliani, Bartolomeo. *Consulum, dictatorum, censorumque Romanorum series, una cum ipsorum triumphis: quae marmoribus scalpta in foro reperta est, atque Capitolium translata. Franc. Robortellus Lectori. Marlianus Patricius Mediolanensis Lectori*. Venezia: Grifo, 1555.

Porcacchi, Tommaso. *Lettere di XIII. huomini illustri*. Venezia: Cavalli, 1565.

Riccoboni, Antonio. *De gymansio patavino commentariorum libri VI*. Padova: Bolzeta, 1598.

Sigonio, Carlo. *Regum, consulum, dicatorum, ac censorum Romanorum*. Venezia: Manuzio, 1555.

———. *Emandationum libri duo*. Venezia: Manuzio, 1557.

———. *Disputationes patavinae adversus Franciscum Robortellum liber primus*. Padova: Percacino, 1562.

———. *Disputationes patavinae adversus Franciscum Robortellum liber secundus*. Padova: Percacino, 1562.

———. *Opera Omnia*. Milano: Palatino, 1737.

Vettori, Pietro. *Epistolae*. Firenze: Giunti, 1586.

4. Secondary Literature

Barsanti, Paolo. *Il pubblico insegnamento in Lucca dal sec. XIV fino al sec. XVIII*. Lucca: Marchi, 1907.

Biasori, Lucio. *L'eresia di un umanista. Celio Secondo Curione nell'Europa del Cinquecento*. Roma: Carocci, 2015.

Carlini, Antonio. 'L'attività filologica di Francesco Robortello'. *Atti dell'Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Udine* 7 (1967): 53–84.

A Catalogue of the Very Celebrated Library of Don Tomaso De Lucca. London: Compton, 1825.

Costa, Emilio. 'La prima cattedra d'umanità nello Studio bolognese durante il secolo XVI'. *Studi e memorie per la Storia dell'Università di Bologna* 1 (1909): 213–52.

De Maio, Romeo. *Riforme e miti nella Chiesa del Cinquecento*. Napoli: Guida, 1992.

Donadi, Francesco. 'Francesco Robortello da Udine'. *Lexis. Poetica, retorica e comunicazione nella tradizione classica* 19 (2001): 79–91.

Facciolati, Jacopo. *Fasti gymnasii Patavinii*. Padova: Seminaro, 1757.

Fantuzzi, Giovanni. *Memorie della vita di Ulisse Aldrovandi*. Bologna: Lelio Dalla Volpe, 1744.

Galluzzi, Riguccio. *Istoria del Granducato di Toscana sotto il governo della Casa Medici*. Firenze: Cambiagi, 1781.

Girotto, Carlo Alberto. 'Francesco Robortello da Bologna a Padova'. In *Il dialogo creativo. Studi per Lina Bolzoni*, 209–24. Pisa: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2017.

Proof

Proof

Kraye, Jill. 'Beyond Moral Philosophy: Renaissance Humanism and the Philosophical Canon'. *Rinascimento* 56 (2016): 3–22.

Lettere a Piero Vettori (1536–1577), edited by Vanni Bramanti. Roma: Vecchiarelli, 2009.

Liruti, Gian Giuseppe. *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*. Venezia: Fenzo, 1762.

Maggioni, Elisa. 'Francesco Robortello editore dei Persiani di Eschilo'. *SemRom. Seminari romani di cultura greca* 4 (2015): 41–70.

Marra, Danilo. 'L'età medicea (1543–1737)'. In *Storia dell'Università di Pisa*, 79–190. Pisa: Commissione rettorale per la storia dell'Università di Pisa, 1993.

McCuaig, William. *Carlo Sigonio: The Changing World of the Late Renaissance*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Patetta, Federico. 'Appunti su Carlo Sigonio'. *Atti e memorie della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per le Provincie Modenesi* 6 (1910): 39–48.

Piovan, Francesco. *Per la biografia di Lazzaro Bonamico. Ricerche sul periodo dell'insegnamento padovano (1530–1552)*. Trieste: Lint, 1988.

Ross, James B. 'Venetian Schools and Teachers Fourteenth to Early Sixteenth Century: A Survey and a Study of Giovanni Battista Egnazio'. *Renaissance Quarterly* 29 (1976): 121–57.

Sabbatini, Renzo. *Per la storia di Lucca in età moderna*. Lucca: Pacini Fazzi, 2005.

Tommasini, Giacomo Filippo. *Gymnasium Patavinum libris V comprehensum*. Udine: Schiratti, 1654.

Tremoli, Paolo. 'Un epistolario latino inedito del Cinquecento friulano'. In *Studi su San Daniele del Friuli*, 127–57. Udine: Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1978.

Venier, Matteo. 'Belloni, Robortello ed Egnazio: Nuovi e vecchi documenti su una contesa umanistica'. *Metodi e Ricerche* 17 (1998): 51–66.

Zorzi, Niccolò. 'Il grecista Chirico Strozzi (1504–65). Notizie sulla biografia, le lettere, gli scritti'. In partibus Clius. *Scritti in onore di Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli*, edited by Gianfranco Ficcadori, 355–459. Napoli: Vivarium, 2006.

Proof

Proof

3 Topics

1. The Forgotten Manuscript

In the “Introduction” it was suggested that Robortello conceived of an underlying structure within the language arts that tied them all together, aside from the fact that they all relate to discourse. This structure, which is central to Robortello’s philosophical and methodological system, is the Topics. The aim of this chapter is to examine Robortello’s conception of Topics in the light of a little known and unedited work written by him in vernacular, the *Discorso dell’origine, numero, ordine et methodo delli luoghi topici*, one of his most original works.[1]

The vernacular started to gain currency as a language of philosophical and scientific culture in Italy in the 1540s, when it became the vehicle for disseminating knowledge to as wide a section as possible of the population outside the universities and religious orders. Its purpose was thus to reach a new kind of audience, while leaving behind the constraints of Latin culture,[2] and in so doing it soon established itself as a fully functional means of expressing even the most complex of philosophical ideas, as in the case of logic. A new conception of knowledge consequently emerged in which it was above all else power – power that had to be available to all.[3] With this new conception of knowledge, logic – and vernacular logic in particular – took on an entirely new role within the encyclopedia of the sciences, becoming a fully rounded methodology for reasoning and inquiring into nature and physical phenomena.[4] As we saw in the last chapter, logic and methodology became instrumental and propaedeutic disciplines in the acquisition of all new knowledge, a point that was corroborated some decades later with the works of the famous Paduan logician, Jacopo Zabarella, who not surprisingly was Robortello’s student. It is within this framework, therefore, that Topics came to play a pivotal role as an instrument of argumentation, which explains the importance of Robortello’s contribution to this field of research.

The *Discorso dell’origine, numero, ordine et methodo delli luoghi topici* is preserved in four manuscript copies: Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Patetta 971, 3^r–4^r; Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca

Proof

Proof

Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 6528, 193ʳ–195ʳ; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 8764, 71ʳ–78ᵛ; Venezia, Museo Correr, Donà dalle Rose 447.22, 1ʳ–4ᵛ.[5] The Vat. Lat. 6528 manuscript is seriously damaged[6] and, if compared with the Venetian manuscript,[7] it presents minor orthographical discrepancies, e.g. "per fino/persino" or "delli/de gli," though it is otherwise identical in content and presentation. The Patetta manuscript is unfortunately incomplete, but differs from the Venetian manuscript, as well as from the other Vatican manuscript, only in the morphology of certain words ("infino" instead of "per fino" or "persino," "hora" instead of "hoggi"). The handwriting of the Parisian manuscript, on the other hand, is datable to the end of the sixteenth century or the beginning of the seventeenth century, making it beyond any doubt the most recent copy. This manuscript differs consistently from the Venetian and Vatican manuscripts on two points. Whereas in the latter the term "dottori" is used when Robortello is criticising intellectuals of his time, in the Parisian manuscript they are referred to as "rhetori," namely rhetoricians, narrowing down the target. Further, the Parisian manuscript provides vernacular translations of all the examples of problems, such as "se si dee far Guerra col Turco" ('whether to make war or not with Turks') or "se il philosopho sia beato o no" ('whether the philosopher is blessed or not'), while the other manuscripts for example keep the Latin. The Parisian text uses Latin and Greek words to characterise what Robortello calls the four circumstances, however, and hence the Parisian manuscript may be said to go one step further in the vernacularisation of the original text compared to the other three copies.

The *Discorso* yields a precious clue for dating the text. Robortello states that he has already addressed the problem of Topics at length in his other "discourses and commentaries to the topics of Cicero himself."[8] Clearly the reference is not to his printed works, *De rhetorica facultate* (1548) and *De artificio dicendi* (1560), where there is no direct treatment of these matters. In fact, in *De artificio dicendi*, which deals with rhetoric in general – as we shall see in the next chapter – Robortello points out that he will discuss the origin and number of the topical places elsewhere, and appears to make a reference to the *Discorso* when he states that "we will explain, showing in another place, the exact number of the places themselves."[9] "Explicabimus" (we will explain) here cannot refer to the *De artificio dicendi* as we know it, since Robortello does not broach the subject of the number of the topical places in this work. In the collection of Robortello's manuscripts in the Biblioteca Nazionale of Naples, folder V D 45, we find an incomplete text entitled *Diversa ratio Ciceronis ab Aristotele in Topicis in ponendo loco a contrario*, which is of the same kind as the treatise included in the *De artificio dicendi* and deals with the issues discussed in the *Discorso*.[10] The "explicabimus" thus most likely refers to this short treatise.

We know nothing concerning Robortello's reasons for not publishing these notes. That his reflections are subsequent to the *De artificio*

Proof

Proof

dicendi, however, is an almost certain fact borne out by other contemporary manuscript fragments that appear to be a perfect follow-on from the *De artificio dicendi*. In another treatise of the *De artificio dicendi* that explains how to make philosophical argumentations less abstruse and more accessible, Robortello writes that he will speak briefly on the manner of deducing philosophical words for oratory.[11] Here, too, Robortello uses the future form "dicam" ('I will say') to state that he is going to say something on the topic. The same collection of manuscript treatises in Naples contains a draft entitled *Regula deducendi sermonem philosophicum ad oratorium*, which deals precisely with what he promised to discuss. One might reasonably conclude that both of these treatises must be understood in the light of the broader project of the *De artificio dicendi*. Be that as it may, the *Diversa ratio* deals only with the difference between Cicero and Aristotle, and very cursorily at that, and thus the reference to the explanation of the origin and number of the topical places must be related to the *Discorso*.

As already noted, the *Discorso* presupposed other "discourses and commentaries" not included in the *De artificio dicendi*, one of them being the *Diversa ratio*. Another could be the manuscript *Explicationes in Topica*,[12] which are notes taken by an anonymous student during a course held in Bologna in 1557. It deals mainly with Cicero's conception of rhetoric and with the various definitions of the topical places, but Robortello often integrates a Ciceronian exposition within Aristotle's logic, thereby elaborating an eclectic Aristotelian-Ciceronian position on Topics which, as we shall see, will come to constitute the mainstay of his later thought. Robortello clearly recognises the distinction between Aristotle's dialectic and Cicero's Topics, but conceives the latter as a continuation and particular interpretation of the former, arguing that it is impossible to understand it without the illumination of its predecessor.[13] Hence it is not viable, as many humanist logicians and rhetoricians did, to deal purely with Cicero's perspective without first examining Aristotle's. In the *Explicationes*, however, we also find frequent references to Hermogenes, Quintilian, Boethius and Agricola. Throughout these lecture notes, personal and original reflections on the Topics are lacking,[14] which makes the *Discorso* even more valuable for the purpose of establishing his opinions. Most likely in the context of a class Robortello kept very strictly to commenting on the text, reining in his customary exuberance.

Similarly to the *Discorso*, the subject-matter of these writings shows Robortello's familiarity with this field of investigation, and provides evidence that he thought deeply about it throughout his life. Indeed, we know that from the time of his stay in Pisa between 1547 and 1549, Robortello was already heavily involved in interpreting Cicero's rhetoric, the *De inventione* and *De oratore* in particular, an activity that would occupy him throughout his stays in Venice (1549–1552), Bologna (1557–1561) and Padua (1552–1557, 1561–1567).[15] It is unlikely, however, that Robortello was referring in the *Discorso* to his treatment of the Topics in the

Proof

Proof

Bolognese lectures, since they were aimed at different target-audiences. The hypothesis that Robortello is in fact referring to the *Diversa ratio* is more plausible, whereas the possibility that he is referring to another piece of writing entitled *Dell'oratore* (contained in the folder Donà dalle Rose 447.28) may also be ruled out, since, as we shall see, its concern was the role of the orator and the nature of rhetorical arguments.[16]

The origin of Robortello's *Discorso* on Topics is uncertain. The language indicates that the work was destined for an audience other than the university, where professors still taught in Latin. Given that it is dated after the *De artificio dicendi*, Robortello might have read this work in one of the academies that he habitually hosted in his own home.[17] He likely taught privately in Italian what he was writing in Latin for the *De artificio dicendi*, a common practice in late sixteenth-century Italian academies, and the latter work contains similar topics to those of the *Dell'oratore*, which is from the same period as the *Discorso* and occupies the same folder. The *Discorso* in the Donà dalle Rose folder is thus in all probability the oldest testimony we have of this work.

2. A New Kind of Topics

Upon closer examination of the content of the *Discorso*, one is forced to acknowledge from the outset that any attempt to trace Robortello's logical ideas back to a specific philosophical tradition, or to specific authors such as Aristotle, Cicero, Boethius or Agricola, is destined to fail. No doubt analogies between Robortello and these philosophers do exist, but his position is highly original and eclectic, as befits a thinker of this period. Eclecticism in both content and form, be it in Latin or the vernacular, is indeed one of the more striking developments in sixteenth-century Renaissance philosophy.[18]

The manuscript of the *Discorso dell'origine, numero, ordine et methodo delli luoghi topici* is of particular interest because it presents an original account of Aristotle's Topics based on a novel association with the inner workings of the human mind, while establishing new grounds for a connection between the two core areas of Renaissance logic, invention and judgement.

In the Renaissance, Topics was normally employed as a method for uncovering the logical grounds for probable reasons in connection with any conceivable argument. In general terms, Topics was identified with invention in contradistinction to judgement, so that, whereas judgement establishes the manner in which the question needing to be solved may be related to the argument, and recognises the truth and falsity of the argument and the conclusion, invention characterises the ways in which the argument proceeds.

The primary reason for investigating Robortello's conception is that he saw a direct correlation between Topics and the other language arts,

Proof

Proof

so much so that it is impossible to understand the language arts without reference to Topics, precisely because Topics was fundamental to every possible mode of reasoning and argument.

In order fully to understand Robortello's attempt to revive Aristotle's Topics and reformulate Cicero's perspective, it is also necessary to review some theoretical assumptions. The τόποι (places) in Aristotle belong to both dialectic and rhetoric, and consist primarily of strategies to enable an arguer to connect premises with conclusions for the purpose of establishing an effective proof. But the nature of argumentation in these two language arts differs in significant ways: the dialectical argument is predicative, in that it shows that a predicate does or does not pertain to a subject, whereas in the rhetorical argument the connections between subject and a possible predicate are mainly relative to the audience, and arise from "social knowledge existing within a community."[19] In essence, this means that topical places for Aristotle are concerned with both material and formal aspects. Whereas in their material elements dialectic and rhetoric are similar, in terms of their formal reasoning they differ markedly.

Many ancient commentators, from Cicero and Boethius onwards, have fastened upon content rather than form, thereby departing from the Aristotelian conception of τόποι as a strategy for arguing[20] – a conception which Robortello aims to revive, as we shall see. As Michael C. Leff has demonstrated Cicero, for instance, clearly distinguishes between his own topical places and Aristotle's "inventional theory," which is a theory of argumentation: while the latter deals with the form and construction of an argument as something which creates belief about a doubtful or probable issue, the topical places provide only the material on which the places actually operate.[21] Thus Cicero, by focusing only on the nature of content, seems to omit the very grounds for the Aristotelian conception of τόποι, as is testified by his identification of Topics with the process of invention in opposition to Aristotle's theory of argumentation, which comprised what the Renaissance logicians, following Cicero, called invention and judgement.[22] In other words, for Cicero invention and Topics are one and the same thing, dealing with material content, while for Aristotle the invention and theory of argumentation deals only with form. This identification by Cicero, however, led to a further conflation between rhetoric and dialectic that was to inspire, as we have seen, generations of Renaissance humanists.[23] In Agricola dialectics coincides with Topics and is the art of discovery of 1. those places necessary for the solution of any given problem and 2. those signs which make possible logical definition. Rhetoric, instead, "arranges, ornates and polishes" discourse, without the action of which dialectics would be ineffective.[24]

As for Cicero, Boethius and Agricola, the topical place was central to Robortello's conception of Topics.

Unlike his predecessors, though, Robortello maintained that topical places are deduced from circumstances. Circumstances are ways of considering

Proof

Proof

Table 3.1 Table of Topical Places in Cicero, Boethius and Agricola

Cicero	*Boethius*	*Agricola*
Definition	Definition	Definition
Enumeration of parts	Description	Genus
Etymology	Etymology	Species
Conjugates	Consequents	Propery
Genus	Genus/whole	Whole
Species	Species/parts	Parts
Similitude	Efficent cause	Conjugates
Difference	Material cause	Adjacents
Contrary	Formal cause	Actions
Adjunct	Final cause	Subjects
Antecedents	Effects	Efficent cause
Consequents	Generations	Final cause
Repugnants	Corruptions	Effects
Efficient cause	Accidents	Destinata
Effects	Judgement	Place
Comparison	Similars	Time
Authority	Greater	Connexa
	Lesser	Contingents
	Proportion	Name of thing
	Opposites	Opinions
	Transumption	Comparisons
	Cases	Similars
	Conjugates	Opposites
	Division	Difference or diversity

and finding what are “in the thing itself” which is under examination, namely what is implicit in the investigated subject. The topical place uncovers in a subject all possible ways of affirming or denying with regard to that subject: it is, in other words, the seat of the argument. Unlike other philosophers such as Cicero and Agricola, for Robortello all topical places are internal to the subject.[25] There are no external topical places, and even those considered by Agricola are, he maintains, traceable back to the essential, internal topical places of the thing: the topical places constitute a universal structure of the sort of particular statements that may be made about each particular thing. Topical places, in other words, are extracted from the subject.[26] This is of the utmost importance for Robortello in identifying the peculiar characteristic of topical places, which draw their arguments from the intrinsic qualities of the things themselves, while the places of the various specific disciplines, called “proper” (for example the rhetorical disciplines), draw their arguments from the qualities attributed to things externally. As Robortello points out, the Topics usually merely illuminate and account for how general places, not proper places, are employed in problems and questions.[27]

In relation to these preliminary concepts, Robortello states in the *Discorso* that he was the first to have identified the number of topical

Proof

Proof

places and their method of discovery by following Aristotle's thought and procedure:

> No one even today has seen which order or method Aristotle employs in presenting the topical places, and how many said places according to him may be assigned, and why. Rudolph Agricola, thinking that Aristotle wrote haphazardly, reprimands him as one who had to declare the aforementioned things prior to making the total places fit in with his own problems. The methods of making for problems and submitting the places to each one is easy, and everyone understands it, but I am referring to the number of said places, and to what their order must be, and to what purpose Aristotle found them and ordered them.[28]

In the *Topics*, Aristotle aims to find a line of inquiry by virtue of which "about any subject presented to us, we shall be able to reason from opinions that are generally accepted."[29] He is particularly concerned with finding a method for proceeding from the problem, or the subject, to the reasoning that will provide a solution. The original task of the *Topics* was to find the topical places from which to draw the various processes of reasoning. This "art" of discovery, or invention, must be considered of the utmost importance and utility for three reasons: the first is that "the possession of a method will enable us more easily to argue about the proposed subject"; the second is that once one is familiar with such an art, one can test the opinions held by most people and respond to them "on the grounds not of other people's convictions, but of one's own"; the third is that this method concerns the "ability to reflect on both sides of a subject," and "will allow us to detect more easily the truth and error about the several points that arise." Aristotle adds that this method has a further use in relation to the general first principles used in the several sciences, because "it is impossible to discuss them at all from the principles proper to the particular science in hand, seeing that the principles are primitive in relation to everything else."[30] It is only through shared, reputable or widely held opinions that these general principles may be read, a task which belongs properly to this process of invention, wherein lies the path to the principles of all inquiries and investigations.

In *Prior Analytics*, meanwhile, Aristotle is more concerned with the construction of a formal system that is abstracted from any content of knowledge whatsoever, and supplies the structure for any form of reasoning. Philosophers in the Middle Ages focused primarily, but not exclusively, on this formal and systematic part of logic known in the Renaissance period as the judicial part, or judgement, while the humanists shifted their attention to the method of invention of topical places. As we shall see, from Robortello's standpoint these two stages are essential in the construction of the system of Topics itself, which Renaissance

Proof

Proof

logicians viewed as being concerned only with invention, thereby misconceiving Aristotle's original intention.

An example is Rudolph Agricola, who, according to Robortello, did not understand Aristotle at all.[31] In Robortello's estimation, Agricola thought that Aristotle had discovered the various topical places accidentally and rhapsodically and made them conform to his four problems. The four problems mentioned by Robortello are 1. whether something exists (*an sit*), 2. what it is (*quid sit*), 3. whether it has this or that property (*quale sit*) and 4. why it is so (*propter quid*). Aristotle thematises these four problems not in the *Topics*, as might be expected, but in *Posterior Analytics* II.2 89b 36–90a 34, in a treatise devoted to scientific reasoning. From Agricola onwards, however, the discussion was of central importance in assessing the nature of the dialectical dispute, especially in opposition to Cicero's perspective.

Agricola discusses the four problems in the eighth chapter of the second book of his *De inventione dialectica*. A problem, or question, is, for Agricola, a proposition formulated as an interrogative. Problems are not all alike, but they can be grouped according to certain general characteristics. According to Cicero, followed on this point by Quintilian and Hermogenes, there are only three basic problems, namely 1. whether something is; 2. what it is; 3. what kind it is. But before them Aristotle had added a fourth, correctly in Agricola's view, namely 4. why it is.[32] Agricola, furthermore, viewed Aristotle's problems not so much as questions in themselves, but as ways or modes of questioning or understanding. Indeed, real questions are in fact not questions at all, but answers to these foundational questions where an argument that is presented is open to discussion, in other words where it is subject to questioning.[33]

Agricola maintained that because of this confusion between "real" or actual questions and modes of questioning, Aristotle had been unable to discover all the possible topical places that ought to be included in the Topics. Aristotle's doctrine of four problems was widely debated in the sixteenth century by Philipp Melanchthon and Johann Caesarius, and was famously attacked by Petrus Ramus.[34] For Robortello, however, the method of elaborating the four problems and subjecting the topical places to them is somewhat simple, and basically has nothing to do with the invention of the places, as Agricola maintained. According to Robortello, a correct reading of Aristotle would have allowed Agricola to see that Aristotle's questions are concerned with demonstration and how to proceed by reasoning from the first necessary principles. Indeed, the fact that Aristotle deals with the four modes of questions in *Posterior Anayltics* makes Robortello's thesis more than probable. In general, we can see Robortello's conception of Topics as closer to Aristotle's project in the *Analytics*, rather than the *Topics*, as the entire humanistic tradition has claimed. In taking this stance, Robortello is clearly dismissing Agricola's

Proof

Proof

position and those of the other Renaissance authors involved in the interpretation of this passage as foundational for language arts.

3. Deduction

Robortello was proposing something new and original for his time, that is what we call nowadays the "deduction" of these places, in particular their number and order. This is a pivotal idea in the history of philosophy and it will come to occupy some of the greatest minds of early modern philosophy, such as René Descartes, Gottfried W. Leibniz and Immanuel Kant, who tried to reveal the primitive structures of thought contained in each act of reasoning, starting with natural logic, that is the very nature of human understanding and its inborn functions and operations.[35]

In jurisprudence, when dealing with rights and claims, it is possible to distinguish the question of right, the so-called *quid juris*, from the question of fact, or the *quid facti*, and both must be subject to a process of proof. Proof of the former kind, which is concerned with establishing the right or legal claim of something – in this case of places – is deduction. Cicero, Boethius and Agricola were more concerned with the *quid facti*, that is in collecting the largest possible variety of places without considering their generation and systematisation, and a large number of early modern philosophers, such as Francis Bacon, John Locke and David Hume, followed suit.[36] This becomes clear, Robortello says in *De artificio dicendi*, if we look at Agricola's treatment of this topic in the last two chapters of the first book of his *De inventione dialectica*.[37] In chapter 28, Agricola tries to discover the "communis ratio locorum," that is the common ground of all places. But the title of the chapter is deceptive, because he does not deal with the common ground of all places at all, rather with his rationale for adding some places and removing others from Cicero's and Boethius's lists.[38]

It is only at the end of the chapter that we find a clue as to the reason behind his selection of places: he handles the places that are strictly conjoined with the thing first, and then those that are removed from the substance in which they originate.[39] Thus, for instance, repugnant places come at the end because they are not related in any way to the substance with which they are opposed. Agricola is not elaborating any real deduction from this argument: he is simply arranging or ordering the topical places. Indeed, he starts from internal places, which are divided into those which can determine the essential characteristics of the subject (e.g. definition, species, genus, etc.) and those which provide the way or disposition of each thing (e.g. adjacents, actions, etc.). Then – in order also to capture external relations – he adds external places, which he groups into those which are always conjoined with the things from which they originate (e.g. efficient cause, final cause, effect, etc.), those that contextualise

Proof

Proof

the subject (e.g. time, space), those that are accidental (e.g. similarity, comparison, etc.) and those that are repugnant (e.g. opposition, difference, etc.). There is however no explanation as to why these places and not others are chosen, and why in that particular order.

Agricola's failure to recognise the need for deduction is a serious omission for Robortello. It is not enough simply to list the topical places in order to establish them: an explanation of the process of their generation is mandatory, and Agricola's failure to supply this represents a severe limitation in his conception of the Topics, as well as among the humanists in general, albeit their elaborations clearly contained the premises for subsequent developments. Their approaches were merely empirical and somewhat arbitrary in collecting topics.

No one showed any interest in the *quid juris*, that is in finding the deduction, because in Robortello's view no one read Aristotle's logic with sufficient care, and in particular the *Posterior Analytics*. Philosophers have the bad habit of reading his texts in haste in order to acquire knowledge quickly, which nevertheless proves useless in the end.[40] Hasty reading gives rise to "every ruin of the beautiful sciences and arts written by the Ancients." For Robortello, therefore, a direct and close reading of the Aristotelian texts is required, as opposed to simply trying to understand the content and rehashing it for personal purposes. Robortello here is not advocating a philological study of Aristotelian writings, but rather a comprehensive and exhaustive knowledge of Aristotle's work, a level of knowledge that appears to be lacking among modern logicians – by which he signified not the *logica modernorum*, but the humanistic logic of thinkers such as Valla and Agricola. More specifically, Robortello asserts that

> in our times the books of the *Prior Analytics* are not read by our celebrated doctors save up to the end of the third figure [of syllogism], which is only the third section of the first book, and no farther does one proceed, as if the rest was useless and superfluous.[41]

Such a strategy is quite harmful in Robortello's view, and in fact the logicians do not realise that in the *Prior Analytics*, especially in those parts they disregard, Aristotle deals with principles also common to other disciplines, such as rhetoric, poetry, sophistic, dialectic and demonstration. Furthermore, Robortello adds that Aristotle frequently avoids repetition in his rhetorical, poetical or logical discussions of the common principles he has already considered as universal in the *Prior Analytics*, and ignorance of these principles by modern logicians is therefore twofold: not only do they not employ them, but they remain unaware that Aristotle had already himself established this kind of principle, and therefore charge him with negligence for no reason at all.[42]

Proof

Proof

It is clear therefore that the study of the deduction of topical places is fundamental not only for logic, but for all the language arts, and its knowledge is essential as a foundation for robust argument and convincing discourse. Deduction thus becomes the general key for every sound form of reasoning in general, be it rhetorical, oratorical, poetical, historical or demonstrative. It is from this conception that Robortello's idea of a Topics as a general system of inventive reasoning valid for both dialectic and rhetoric – in the true spirit of humanism – derives.

Unlike Cicero, and perhaps more in the mould of Boethius, Robortello sees invention as no longer the discovery of a persuasive, concrete argument that convinces on the basis of sceptical arguments or questions: it is in fact the discovery of an argument that can be guaranteed with reference to a topic and can be used with certainty in a discourse. The error of logicians thus consists in not having a full grasp of the universal principles of language arts, and reducing topical places to dialectical or rhetorical places, that is reducing general places to proper places. Robortello's scope is much broader and quintessentially more philosophical.

Robortello supports the idea of an unrhetorical conception of topical invention, which was the standard medieval interpretation "among authors who deal with invention generally, that is as a faculty or discipline within both rhetoric and dialectic," such as Lambert of Auxerre, Peter Abelard or Peter of Spain.[43] Robortello therefore collapses the Ciceronian and Boethian distinction of different systems of invention corresponding to different language arts, such as dialectic and rhetoric, elaborating one single topical system for all disciplines. In addition, contrary to many rhetoricians, Robortello does not extend the domain of the instruments and methods of rhetoric to inquiries in all branches of knowledge as a general system of invention, but aims to find a universal tool based on the forms of reasoning, previous to any rhetoric being established. This means that the basis of the Topics must not be founded on rhetoric, but on something prior to it that concerns the natural workings of the mind, what in the seventeenth century logicians would call natural logic.

Taylor & Francis Not for distribution

According to Robortello, therefore, dialectic must not be confused with the Topics, which is the genuinely inventive process. Following the Aristotelian tradition, dialectic is rather defined in opposition to demonstration, in the sense that the former deals with probable arguments while the latter deals with necessary ones; this constitutes a difference in method, because, as Robortello states, demonstration proceeds by following a unique, continuous and unbroken line of reasoning, whereas dialectic proceeds according to questions and answers.[44] This is a particular conception of dialectic that is very close to the disputative and dialogic process described by Aristotle in the eighth book of the *Topics*. It is undoubtedly different from dialectic as the art of speaking or arguing on probable matters, or as an instrument for distinguishing truth from

Proof

Proof

falsehood, as the majority of humanists such as Valla or Agricola contended. Ever the good Aristotelian, Robortello does not follow Agricola's shift in the conception of dialectic from being a logic of disputation to being a logic of inquiry: dialectic remains a logic of disputation and the more general logic of inquiry and invention becomes, properly speaking, the Topics. This idea represents a quite explicit opposition to the Ramist tradition.

The error of modern logicians is mainly methodological, and is traceable back to Cicero and Boethius, who in Robortello's view followed the opposite order to that of Aristotle.[45] Robortello is particularly critical of this way of proceeding, namely following the same order in the argumentation (or judgement) and in the invention. Judgement and argumentation must proceed from the first universal and necessary principles, while invention must start its inquiry from what is easier for the human mind to know, which is usually what comes from the senses, or what we already know, even if only partially. It is an important position that Robortello defends here, since he is establishing the distinction between the method (of invention) and the order (of exposition); or, to be more precise, between analysis and synthesis, between proceeding from what is more knowable by human beings to what is more knowable by nature, and proceeding from what is more knowable in itself and by nature to what is more knowable by us. It is a classic theme in the logic of the second half of the sixteenth century, which in Robortello receives a highly original formulation.[46]

Why is the approach of Cicero and Boethius incorrect? And more importantly, what is this approach? According to Robortello, Cicero starts from the definition of the thing and moves away from it, following extrinsic or accidental determinations in a concentric order, from inner to outer, as may be seen in scheme 1 (also suggested by Agricola in his *De inventione dialectica*, as we have seen). Aristotle, however, does not proceed in the same manner. "What no one has recognized before me," Robortello claims, "nor declared, to the best of my knowledge, is that the topical places are determined by the invention of the 'medium.'"[47] Although this view is held also by Agricola, in Robortello the medium "is none other than the proposition from which the argument is drawn." It is "a common form, that is to say a maxim,"[48] as in traditional Aristotelian syllogistic theory. The medium itself would be a topical place that generates other topical places within the argumentation.

Robortello seems to offer a very personal interpretation of Boethius's Topics, from which he implicitly draws several ideas. Boethius's Topics tries eclectically to combine the topical doctrines of Aristotle and Cicero, supporting the view that invention is a process of finding a medium to connect two extremes, and that the topical places serve as instruments for achieving this.[49] According to Boethius, the topical place can be understood as 1. a maxim, or topical maxim, which is a proposition that can

Proof

Proof

be used as a premise in a proof or in a syllogism like "where the matter needed for something is absent, that thing is also absent," or 2. a topical difference, which is the topic itself (e.g. 'genus', 'greater', 'definition'). Agricola rejected Boethius's conception because many topical maxims were not inventive at all, but judgemental, while others were too restricted to logical necessity, thus preventing the use of probable arguments, and others again were limited by logical necessity in the possible places to only a few particular uses.[50] Against Agricola, Robortello adopts Boethius's twofold meaning of the topical place as a maxim and middle term in his treatment of the medium, and inserted it within the broader theory of syllogism.

The medium as maxim determines the middle term, which is properly speaking the topical place. This means that Robortello's project is better understood in connection with Renaissance theories of middle term in the Aristotelian doctrine of argumentation. Furthermore, the topical place can be either a place common to all the language arts, themselves encompassing more specific places, also called media, or proper places, that is one peculiar to certain specific sciences. More specifically, according to Robortello, proper places differ from common places only in their matter, which is peculiar to each language art. Since Robortello is interested in what no one else before him has done, that is in identifying in an Aristotelian manner all the common principles and places for all language arts, he focuses on the "deduction" of these common places and neglects to consider proper places. Robortello clearly pays attention to the form of the inference rather than to the matter, and this allows him to conceive a Topics which is prior to any distinction between rhetoric and dialectic.

4. Circumstances and the Workings of the Mind

In order to establish such a Topics, Robortello must first of all place the question needing to be solved in sharp focus and reduce it to two simple terms, the subject and the predicate. Indeed, any matter under investigation can be reduced to a question in which one asks whether a given predicate inheres in its subject. For instance, if we ask "whether the philosopher is blessed," "philosopher" is the subject and "blessed" is the predicate. Following Aristotle, unlike Cicero and Boethius, Robortello identifies what he calls four "circumstances," or means through which it is possible to examine a term of the question. In general, these four circumstances are forms of argumentation that Cicero included in the places, while Agricola rejected them simply on the grounds that they were forms of reasoning, attributing them "to judgment, rather than invention."[51] Robortello considers these circumstances essential to the role of medium that the place plays within the processes of reasoning and syllogism. In fact, the procedure for comparing subject and predicate involves

Proof

Proof

the determination of their points of agreement or disagreement by means of a third element, the medium, which is the argument that makes possible the comparison between the two extremes, the subject and the predicate, as in the syllogism.

It is particularly interesting to note Robortello's choice to proceed from the forms of reasoning to the individuation of topical places. Robortello is maintaining, albeit implicitly, the idea of the priority of the judicial part of logic, that is of judgement – in other words, of the forms of argumentation and the ways of reasoning – over invention. Robortello, here, is in direct opposition to Agricola's well-known position, according to which invention comes first. This allows Robortello to limit drastically the number of topical places: having identified the structures of argumentation, it is indeed not possible to find places other than those that are applicable to these forms. This is the only way of guaranteeing a possible deduction; otherwise, all research relating to topical places would of necessity be casual or infinite, that is a set of headings collected together according to extrinsic principles with only a semblance of completeness. The problem remains, nonetheless, to understand why there are only four forms of reasoning, neither more nor less. The answer is not easy to provide, but in general if every act of reasoning is based on a comparison of subject and predicate by means of a medium, there are only four combinations of terms, that is four circumstances, in which it is possible to establish agreement or disagreement. Thus the possible logical range for the Aristotelian structure, "S is P" is: 1. S is in total agreement with P and, therefore, the two terms are convertible; or 2. P derives from or is contained in S and, therefore, the former follows the latter in determining the relation of consequence of predicate from subject; or 3. P defines and is the cause of S, determining the relation of antecedence; or 4. S is in total disagreement with P and, therefore, the two terms are repugnant.

The first circumstance considers the term replaceable by other terms called convertibles. In the example mentioned above, "philosopher" can be substituted by "knower of causes," "knower of celestial and human things," etc. The second circumstance considers the term in relation to the terms that follow, which are called consequents. From the term "philosopher" follows, for instance, "to not fear death," "to not be ambitious," etc. The third circumstance determines the term in relation to the terms that precede it, which are called precedents. For instance, in the case of a "philosopher," "to be concerned with a difficult question," "to study as a job," "avoid pleasure," etc. The fourth way considers terms that are contrary to the term, which are called repugnants. For instance, "to be ignorant of the cause of things," "fear death," "seeking pleasure" are contrary to being a "philosopher."

These are the four main circumstances, each of them however presenting various modalities of expression. For instance, convertible terms can be derived from definition, or from enumeration of the parts, or from

Proof

Proof

etymology. Conversely, consequents, precedents and repugnants can be either essential or accidental. Essential consequents can be determined by species relationship of parts, or by virtue of effect. Accidental consequents can be true, according to opinion, or according to name. Essential precedents are the kind, the whole or the cause. Accidental precedents can be either true or according to opinion. Essential repugnants are in some relations with the subject, or the two are oppositional, contradictory or privative. Accidental repugnants are true, according to opinion, or according to name. In Robortello's view, these – and only these – are the things that can be said of a term, and they are properly speaking the topical places. Such a structure for the deduction of the topical places reflects the possible connections between the subject and the predicate in the general judgement, "S is P." In this way, the general scheme of the places would offer the totality of options for discussing any possible subject.

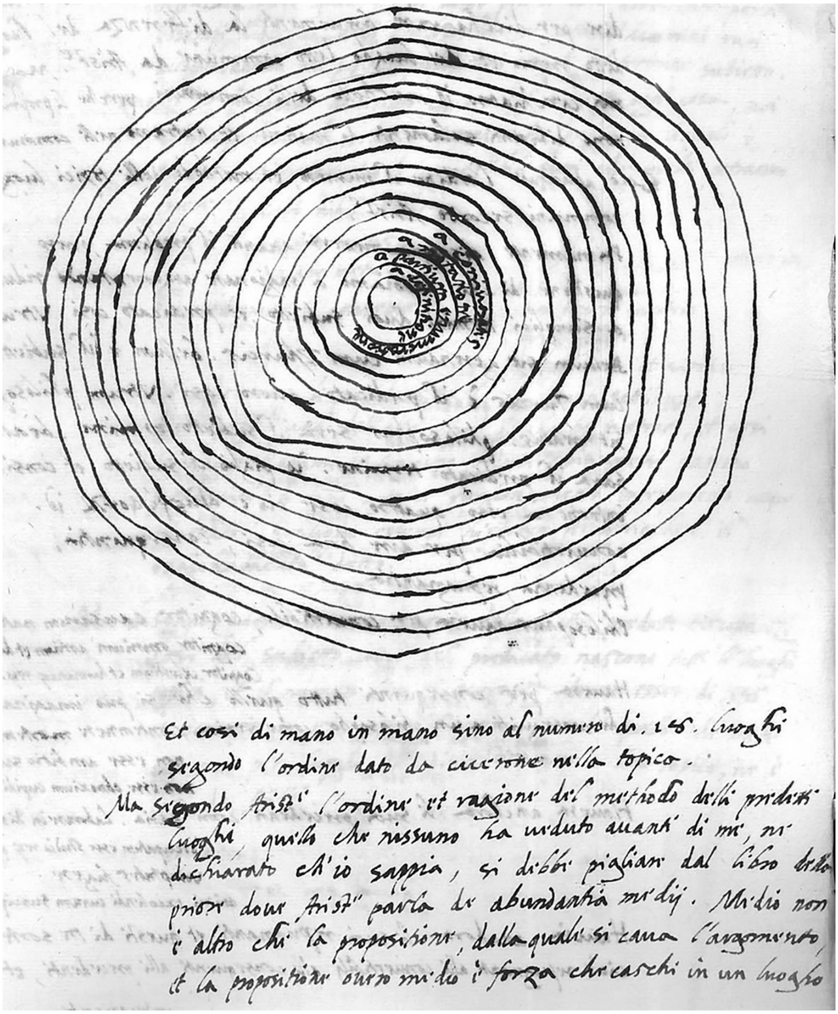
There is a profound difference between Cicero's and Boethius's proposal and that of Robortello, a difference which becomes clear in the comparison between two schemes.

This is no minor point: schemes for Robortello are essential to understanding his theory. What is at stake here is the problem of the method for identifying places. In the former case, attributed to Cicero and Boethius, it is not possible to argue for any deduction, nor to find the connection between the various places: we understand only the order of the places from inner to outer, not how they are in relation to the subject. With Robortello's diagram, on the other hand, at any given moment any person 1. can understand the specific articulations of a given argument; 2. can appreciate the network of connections; 3. can find the specific derivation or deduction of each place.[52] The procedure by which the scheme is constructed reflects the deduction itself and is typical of Robortello's teachings on rhetoric.

Upon examination, and having demonstrated all possible combinations, the diagram of topical places yields no more than 18 places, according to Robortello. But in order to solve the opening question – that is "whether the philosopher is blessed" – it is necessary to repeat the procedure additionally for the second term, in this case "blessed." This does not mean that the places are multiplied, however; it is a way back for verifying the correctness of the reasoning and the co-implication of the two terms.

The last part of the *Discorso* focuses on the defence of the number of the places, and in particular on the fact that, for Aristotle, Cicero's place "ab adiunctis" is not a topical place at all. The so-called topical places known as "adjuncts" are in Robortello's view comparison relations, such as "minor," "major," "equal," "similar," etc. Such topical places are not for Robortello indicative of autonomous places, but are reducible to consequents, because from every single thing there follows another, which can be major, minor or equal. He does, however, support the idea of including

Proof



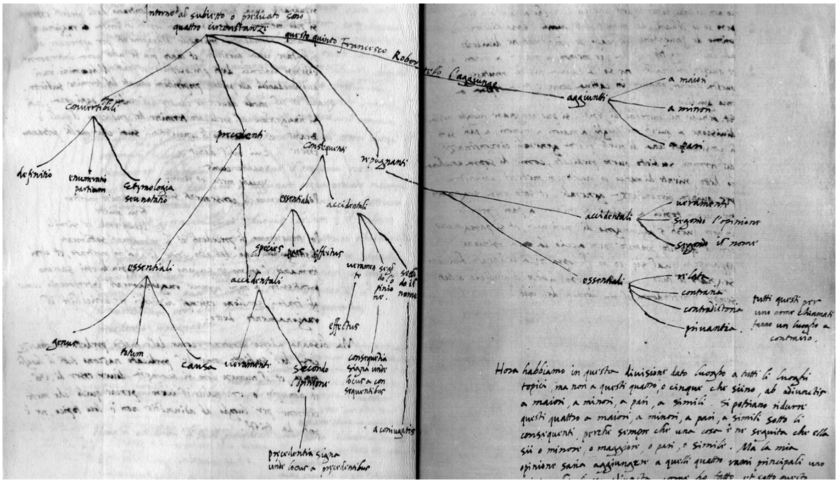
Et così di mano in mano sino al numero di. 15. luoghi
segondo l'ordine dato da cicerone nella topica.
Ma segondo Arist.co l'ordine et ragione del methodo delli predetti
luoghi, quello che nissuno ha veduto auanti di me, ne
dichiarato ch'io sappia, si debbe pigliare dal libro della
priori doue Arist.co parla de abundantia medij. Medio non
è altro che la propositione, dalla quale si caua l'argomento,
et la propositione ouero medio è forza che caschi in un luogho

Figure 3.1 Cicero's Scheme of Topics

Source: 2019 © Biblioteca Correr – Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia

the "adjuncts" as a fifth circumstance alongside convertibles, consequents and precedents, even if these "adjuncts" should not be counted in the list of places because they are reducible to consequents. Robortello points out that this fifth circumstance containing three types of places was already elaborated by Cicero in his *De inventione*, but was withdrawn in the *Topica*, where the circumstance was confined to only one place, called "ab adiunctis," a reduction which could not be correct. The addition of

Proof


Intorno al subietto o predicato sono quattro circonstanzi
questo quinto Francesco Robortello l'aggiunge
convertibili
definitio
enumeratio partium
etymologia seu notatio
precedenti
essentiali
genus
totum
causa
accidentali
veramente
secondo l'opinione
precedentia signa unde locus a precedentibus
consequenti
essentiali
species
pars
effectus
accidentali
veramente
effectus
secondo l'opinione
consequentia signa unde locus a consequentibus
secondo il nome
a coniugatis
repugnanti
aggiunti
a maiori
a minori
a pari
accidentali
veramente
secondo l'opinione
secondo il nome
essentiali
relate
contraria
contradittoria
privantia
tutti questi per uno nome chiamati fanno un luogho a contrario.

Hora habbiamo in questa divisione dato luogho a tutti li luoghi topici, ma non a questi quattro, o cinque che siino, ab adiunctis a maiori, a minori, a pari, a simili. Si potriano ridurre questi quattro a maiori, a minori, a pari, a simili sotto li consequenti, perche sempre che una cosa è ne seguita che ella sii o minore, o maggiore, o pari, o simile. Ma la mia opinione saria aggiungere a quelli quattro rami principali uno

Figure 3.2 Robortello's Scheme of Topics

Source: 2019 © Biblioteca Correr – Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia

this fifth circumstance is a proposal that Robortello simply throws in at the end of his *Discorso* and leaves to the judgement of the most distinguished logicians.

Despite the impromptu nature of the *Discorso* as an academic lecture, in all probability delivered in his own home, Robortello's proposal undoubtedly circulated among late sixteenth-century rhetoricians. Moreover, in the second half of the century a conception of method as an inference that proceeds from one piece of content towards another, and therefore an instance of syllogistic reasoning in its formal sense rather than mere invention, came to prevail. Moreover, Orazio Toscanella makes explicit reference to Robortello's *Discorso* in his *Applicamento dei precetti della inventione, dispositione et elocutione*, a compilation of tables and schemes on topics and rhetoric. Toscanella brings together and presents in the form of diagrams the teachings of the most important rhetoricians and logicians of his time, including Rudolph Agricola, Giulio Camillo Delminio and Francesco Robortello.[53] In this specific case, however, Robortello also seems to be following the content of the *Discorso*, suggesting either the circulation of the text itself as a manuscript or that Toscanella attended Robortello's lectures, which seems quite plausible given his interest in Classical antiquity and philosophy. Toscanella not only employs Robortello's four circumstances and emphasises the importance of common places over proper, but also uses the same example of the war against the Turks, and, like Robortello, shows how to identify all

Proof

Proof

the places and how to construct convincing arguments.[54] He does not, however, follow Robortello in deducing topical places, but refers explicitly to his favourite author, Rudolph Agricola, of whose *De inventione dialectica* he provided the first Italian translation in 1567.

Perhaps the most striking example of Robortello's impact, however, is to be found in Antonio Riccoboni's *Ars rhetorica*, published for the first time in Venice by Meietti in 1579, and running to more than 20 editions in the following century, thus becoming one of the standard textbooks for rhetoric not only in Italy, but also Germany and France. Riccoboni states overtly that his conception of Topics and topical places comes "from the manuscript notes of the most learned and eloquent Robortello."[55] No one before has been able to identify this manuscript as the *Discorso*. Like Robortello, Riccoboni follows Aristotle's *Prior Analytics* in deducing places from the five types of subject-predicate relation. Whereas Robortello in actuality acknowledged only four circumstances rather than five, Riccoboni incorporated his additional "fifth circumstance" into his topical structure. The scheme of the circumstances is in fact almost identical to Robortello's. Riccoboni's use of Robortello's manuscript testifies not only to the reputation the intellectual from Udine enjoyed as a rhetorician, but also to the wide circulation of – and considerable interest in – his vernacular writings, which made him a key point of reference for at least one generation of intellectuals.

Given the fundamental role in determining the completeness of the Topics played by the deduction of topical places – or where the places originate and how to establish their derivation in a comprehensive manner – the lack of interest among Robortello's contemporaries, with the exception of Toscanella and Riccoboni, is striking. This is most certainly due to a concern regarding Robortello's encyclopaedic conception of knowledge and the unity of all the language arts, which, for instance, was not generally shared at the end of the fifteenth century. Another notable element is the strict relationship given to judgement and invention, a relationship which during the Renaissance was far from settled. From the reception of Agricola's Topics among sixteenth-century Italian Aristotelians contemporary to Robortello, like Orazio Toscanella, one can see that his *De inventione dialectica* was conceived primarily as a theory of invention. In point of fact, after translating it into Italian, Toscanella then went on to translate George of Trebizond in order to supply the part on judgement, which in his opinion was lacking in Agricola's logic.[56]

Robortello's combination of judgement and invention, as it is presented, is quite original. Most manuals have both invention and judgement, but not many argue for this intimate connection between them, and the impossibility of conceiving one without the other. Textbooks such as those of Petrus Ramus claim that it is not possible to carry out invention if not by means of judgement, and conversely that it is not possible to arrange the places if they are not previously identified.[57] For Ramus and his Renaissance followers, however, interest in invention and the Topics

Proof

Proof

that favoured the content of knowledge was a reaction to the formality of the Scholastic syllogistic. Invention, in other words, was considered but a methodology for discovering the topical places with which it was possible to fill the empty terms of the formal structure of judgement. For Robortello, on the other hand, invention rests upon the idea of a fixed – one would say innate or natural – structure of reasoning of the mind, which determines the various forms of judgement according to which it is possible to discover all the places. In other words, Robortello grounds his Topics in the natural logic of the workings of the mind following the system of Aristotelian logic, rather than collecting an aggregate of topical places derived from grammatical or rhetorical analysis. His project is closer to Zabarella's theoretical attempts than that of Agricola. Indeed for Robortello Topics is more what Zabarella calls logic, rather than what the humanists believed it to be. In the first book of his *De natura logicae* Zabarella writes that there are two meanings of dialectics, one is general logic, that is topics, and the other is the art of disputing or of probable arguments. This kind of general logic is the basis of what Zabarella calls in the second book the parts of particular logic, among which he lists apodictic logic, dialectic, sophistry, rhetoric and poetics, according to Robortello's scheme.[58] Indeed for Zabarella, drawing on Robortello's teaching, general logic or Topics is a rational discipline based on the workings of the mind, while apodictic logic, rhetoric, poetics and sophistry are language disciplines or arts.[59]

Robortello's perspective on Topics is undoubtedly eclectic and original: according to his interpretation, Topics as an inventive process is not simply a part of dialectics, but rather an instrument for all the various language arts, and thus a tool based on the natural operations of the mind that aims to find, by means of the topical places, all the possible arguments with which to form argumentations in any conceivable discipline. In this sense, his conception is pivotal, and provides a basis for the Renaissance encyclopedia of knowledge, thus shedding light on the general reassessment of the system of disciplines in the second half of the sixteenth century, as well as on the development of a universal and overarching framework of Topics in seventeenth-century philosophy.[60]

Notes

1. We find no trace of Robortello's original ideas in Cesare Vasoli's studies on humanistic logic, nor in Wilhelm Risse's exhaustive history of Renaissance logic, cf. Wilhelm Risse, *Logik der Neuzeit, Bd. 1 1500–1640* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1964); Cesare Vasoli, *La dialettica e la retorica dell'Umanesimo. Invenzione e Metodo nella cultura del XV e XVI secolo* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1968). I have published very preliminary results of this research on the *Discorso* in Marco Sgarbi, 'Francesco Robortello on Topics', *Viator* 47 (2016): 365–88.
2. Cf. Luca Bianchi, 'Volgarizzare Aristotele: per chi?', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 59 (2012): 480–95; Marco Sgarbi, 'Aristotle and the People: Vernacular Philosophy in Renaissance Italy', *Renaissance and*

Proof

Proof

Reformation 39 (2016): 59–109; Marco Sgarbi, 'The Instatement of the Vernacular as Language of Culture: A New Aristotelian Paradigm in Sixteenth-Century Italy', *Intersezioni* 36 (2016): 319–43.

3. Cf. Marco Sgarbi, *The Italian Mind: Vernacular Logic in Renaissance Italy (1540–1551)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 213–28.
4. Cf. Eugenio Refini, 'Logic, Rhetoric and Poetics as Rational Faculties in Alessandro Piccolomini's Map of Knowledge', *Philosophical Readings* 2 (2012): 24–35; Sgarbi, *The Italian Mind: Vernacular Logic in Renaissance Italy (1540–1551)*, 127–212.
5. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Patetta 971, 3^{r}–4^{r}; Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 6528, 193^{r}–195^{r}; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 8764, 71^{r}–78^{v}; Venezia, Museo Correr, Donà dalle Rose 447.22, 1^{r}–4^{v}.
6. Many thanks to Ilaria Ciolli for her support in allowing me to study this manuscript.
7. The folder Donà dalle Rose 447 contains miscellaneous unedited works of Robortello. Cf. Federico Seneca, *Il doge Leonardo Donà. La sua vita e la sua preparazione politica prima del Dogado* (Padua: Antenore, 1959), 33.
8. Cf. Marco Sgarbi, 'Francesco Robortello on Topics', *Viator* 47 (2015): 384.
9. Cf. Francesco Robortello, *De artificio dicendi, Ad illustrem et Reuerendissimum Ioannem Baptistam Campegium Episcopum Maioricensium Liber. Eiusdem Tabulae oratoriae. In or. Cic. Qua gratias agit senatui ost reditum. In or. Pro Milone. In or. Pro Plancio* (Bologna: Benato, 1560), part 1, 14^{v}: "quanto vero artificio id sit a summo viro factum, alio loco nos certum numerum ipsorum locorum demonstrantes explicabimus." Citation from the *De artificio dicendi* are taken from the 1567 edition.
10. Cf. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, V D 45, 69^{r}: "Etsi Cicero Topicam suam ab Aristotelis opera eodem eruerit, tamen in quibusdam diversam rationem sequtus est est, nec vel tamen sine consilio, ut exemplo indicabo. Aristoteles nec posuit locum a contrario primum idcirco quia universalior est, nam per hunc locum omnia facile probari possunt. Marcus vero Cicero extremo loco posuit hunc idem a contrario, quod magis extra rem est hic inter omnes alias."
11. Ibid., 36^{r}: ". . . Est quaedam ars deducendi sermonem philosophorum ad oratorioum usum, de qua breviter dicam . . ."
12. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 6528, 156^{r}–93^{v}. I consulted the microform version.
13. Cf. Ibid., 156r.
14. There are some original thoughts on rhetoric and dialectic, which for the most part became absorbed into *De artificio dicendi*.
15. Cf. Gian Giuseppe Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli* (Venezia: Fenzo, 1762), 421.
16. For a transcription of this manuscript cf. Marco Sgarbi, 'Francesco Robortello's Rhetoric: On the Orator and His Arguments', *Rhetorica* 34 (2016): 243–67.
17. Cf. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 5728, 123^{r-v}, 186^{v}.
18. Cf. Charles B. Schmitt, *Aristotle and the Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 10–13; Luca Bianchi, 'Per una storia dell'aristotelismo volgare nel Rinascimento: problemi e prospettive di ricerca', *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 15 (2009): 367–85.
19. Michael C. Leff, 'The Topics of Argumentative Invention in Latin Rhetorical Theory From Cicero to Boethius', *Rhetorica* 1 (1983): 23–44.
20. Ibid., 26.
21. Ibid., 27.

Proof

Proof

22. On the differences between Aristotle and Cicero's perspective, cf. Donovan J. Ochs, 'Cicero's *Topica*. A Process View of Invention', in *Explorations in Rhetorics*, edited by Ray E. McKerrow (Glenview: Scott, 1983), 107–18.
23. Vasoli, *La dialettica e la retorica dell'Umanesimo. Invenzione e Metodo nella cultura del XV e XVI secolo*, 166–82.
24. Rudolph Agricola, *Lucubrationes aliquot lectu dignissime* (Köln: Gymnich, 1539), 151.
25. Francesco Robortello, *De artificio dicendi* (Bologna: Benati, 1567), part 1, 12^{v}. Cicero's list of topical places came from the subject of the argument: some places were inherent in the subject, some were only related to it, while others were completely extrinsic. Cf. Leff, 'The Topics of Argumentative Invention in Latin Rhetorical Theory From Cicero to Boethius', 43–4.
26. Cf. Sgarbi, 'Francesco Robortello on Topics', 386.
27. Robortello, *De artificio dicendi*, part 1, 12v.
28. Sgarbi, 'Francesco Robortello on Topics', 384.
29. Aristotle, *Topica*, 100 a 18–20.
30. Ibid., 101 a 25–b4.
31. Cf. Sgarbi, 'Francesco Robortello on Topics', 384.
32. Cf. Rudolph Agricola, *De inventione dialectica* (Köln: Gymnich, 1539), 221–4.
33. Cf. Ibid., 226–7: "Quatuor illa quae ab Aristotele numerantur, non esse quaestiones, sed modos quosdam quaerendi, & prolectantia (ut ita dicam) quaestionem . . . Non igitur quaestiones sunt primae interrogationes illae, quando nequit de eis vel in hanc in aliam partem dici; sed responsum adversarii, interrogationi datum, cum in dubium vocatur, sit quaestio."
34. Cf. Philipp Melanchthon, *Erotemata dialectices*, in *Corpus reformatorum, Philippi Melanchthonis opera, quae supersunt omnia* (New York: Johnson, 1963), vol. 13, 574; Johann Caesarius, *Dialectica* (Paris: Vascosan, 1533), 157–8; Petrus Ramus, *Scholae in liberarles artes* (Basel: Episcopius, 1569), 445–6. On this topic, cf. Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 238–40.
35. Ramon Llull attempted this project before them, but he was criticised by humanists, especially by Agricola for his "horror incultus." See Agricola, *De inventione dialecticae*, 189–90.
36. Even recent scholarly research has shown the absence of deduction in Cicero and Boethius. Donovan J. Ochs made it explicit that Cicero neglected this problem, cf. Ochs, "Cicero and Philosophic Invention," (n. 22 above), 221–2. Leff agrees, stating that there is no apparent attempt to systematise the items in Cicero's inventory of topical places into a coherent structure, and that Cicero himself does not explain the rationale of his approach to topical places. Cf. Leff, 'The Topics of Argumentative Invention in Latin Rhetorical Theory From Cicero to Boethius', 27.
37. Cf. Robortello, *De artificio dicendi*, part 1, 14^{v}: "quanto vero artificio id sit a summo viro factum, alio loco nos certum numerum ipsorum locorum demonstrantes explicabimus; quod a nullo adhuc video perspectum; nam unus è recentioribus Agricola Rodolphus cum rationem, & ordinem locorum in Aristotelis Topicis non cognosceret."
38. On the differences between Agricola, Cicero, Themistius and Boethius's lists of places cf. Peter Mack, *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 147.
39. Agricola, *De inventione dialectica*, 172: "Utque paucis rationem ordinis mei reddam, ita iudicavi primum quenque locorum ponendum, ut esset arctissime quisque cum re coniunctus; & proinde ut longius defluxit à substantia rei, posteriorem posui."

Proof

Proof

40. Cf. Robortello, *De artificio dicendi*, part 1, 14v. Robortello states that neither did Aristotle himself elaborate this deduction: “ipsum Aristotelem, quod perturbate locos disposuerit; nec certum numerum demonstrarit, reprehendere ausus est; cum ipse sit maxime reprehendendus, qui id non viderit ab Aristotele diligenter factum.”
41. Cf. Sgarbi, ‘Francesco Robortello on Topics’, 384.
42. The idea that Aristotle was lacking a special treatment of Topics was quite popular. For instance, in his *Instrumento della filosofia* (1551) Alessandro Piccolomini writes that dealing with the Topics is “in truth a very difficult thing, despite there having been great men, as Rudolph Agricola was, who have shown Aristotle’s deficiency on this issue.” Cf. Alessandro Piccolomini, *L’instrumento della filosofia* (Roma: Valgrisi, 1551), 228–9.
43. Marc Cogan, ‘Rodolphus Agricola and the Semantic Revolutions of the History of Invention’, *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 2 (1984): 180.
44. Cf. Robortello, *De artificio dicendi*, part 1, 9v.
45. In Ibid., 13v, he states that “Iureconsultum, si docet, eadem prorsus habere problemata quae Aristoteles Dialectico subiicit in Topicis, & locos adhibere ad probandum, non quidem eo ordine quo Cic. ipsos disposti, sed quo Aristoteles ipse.”
46. On the problem of method in the late sixteenth century, cf. John H. Randall, ‘The Development of Scientific Method in the School of Padua’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1 (1940): 177–206; Neal W. Gilbert, *Renaissance Concepts of Method* (New York-London: New York University Press, 1960); Eugenio Garin, ‘Gli umanisti e la scienza’, *Rivista di filosofia* 52 (1961): 259–78; Angelo Crescini, *Le origini del metodo analitico. Il Cinquecento* (Trieste: Del Bianco, 1965).
47. Sgarbi, ‘Francesco Robortello on Topics’, 2r.
48. Ibid.
49. Cf. Leff, ‘The Topics of Argumentative Invention in Latin Rhetorical Theory From Cicero to Boethius’, 38.
50. Cogan, ‘Rodolphus Agricola and the Semantic Revolutions of the History of Invention’, 185.
51. Cf. Agricola, *De inventione dialectica*, 108–9: “non loci sunt, sed formae argumentandi: cum non rerum invendiendarum ratione, sed certa colligendae argumentationis lege constent [. . .] Et ad iudicandum potius quam inveniendum pertinebunt.” On Cicero, cf. Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 147, while on Agricola cf. Mack, *Renaissance Argument*, 148.
52. Cf. Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2001), 25.
53. Lina Bolzoni’s detailed investigation has shown that in his printed works Toscanella owed much to Robortello’s project to schematise knowledge. Cf. Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 23–82.
54. Cf. Orazio Toscanella, *Applicamento dei precetti della inventione, dispositione et elocutione che propriamente serve allo scrittore di epistole latine et volgari, ritratto in tavole* (Venezia: De Franceschi, 1575), 28–9. Robortello is explicitly mentioned on pages 46–9, in which Toscanella deals with humble, mediocre and vehement styles.
55. Antonio Riccoboni, *Aristotelis rhetoricae libri tres. Antonio Riccobono latine conversi. Eiusdem rhetoricae paraphrasis* (Hanau: Wechel, 1588), 263: “Quod sensisse ante nos Franciscum Robortellum virum doctissimum, & disertissimum vidimus in quibusdam eius manuscriptis annotationibus.” Cf. Lawrence D. Green, ‘Renaissance Views of Aristotelian Topoi’, in *Papers on Rhetoric*, edited by Lucia Calboli Montefusco (Roma: Herder, 2010), 133–5.

Proof

Proof

56. Cf. George of Trebizond, *Dialettica con le interpretationi del Neomago et del Latomo* (Venezia: Bariletto, 1567) dedicatory letter to Ettore Podocatro, 1^r.
57. Cf. Petrus Ramus, *Dialectique* (Geneve: Droz, 1964), 63.
58. Jacopo Zabarella, *Opera logica* (Frankfurt: Zetzner, 1597), 19A–20E.
59. Ibid., 78B-E.
60. Cf. Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, *Topica universalis: Eine Modellgeschichte humanistischer und barocker Wissenschaft* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1983).

Bibliography

1. Robortello's Works

Francesco Robortello. *De artificio dicendi*. Bologna: Benati, 1567.

2. Manuscripts

Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 5728.
Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Patetta 971.
Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 6528.
Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, V D 45.
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Lat. 8764.
Venezia, Museo Correr, Donà dalle Rose 447.22.

3. Primary Sources

Agricola, Rudolph. *De inventione dialectica*. Köln: Gymnich, 1539.
———. *Lucubrationes aliquot lectu dignissime*. Köln: Gymnich, 1539.
Caesarius, Johann. *Dialectica*. Paris: Vascosan, 1533.
Piccolomini, Alessandro. *L'instrumento della filosofia*. Roma: Valgrisi, 1551.
Ramus, Petrus. *Scholae in liberarles artes*. Basel: Episcopius, 1569.
———. *Dialectique*. Geneve: Droz, 1964.
Riccoboni, Antonio. *Aristotelis rhetoricae libri tres. Antonio Riccobono latine conversi. Eiusdem rhetoricae paraphrasis*. Hanau: Wechel, 1588.
Toscanella, Orazio. *Applicamento dei precetti della inventione, dispositione et elocutione che propriamente serve allo scrittore di epistole latine et volgari, ritratto in tavole*. Venezia: De Franceschi, 1575.
Trebizond, George of. *Dialettica con le interpretationi del Neomago et del Latomo*. Venezia: Bariletto, 1567.
Zabarella, Jacopo. *Opera logica*. Frankfurt: Zetzner, 1597.

4. Secondary Literature

Bianchi, Luca. 'Per una storia dell'aristotelismo volgare nel Rinascimento: problemi e prospettive di ricerca'. *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 15 (2009): 367–85.
———. 'Volgarizzare Aristotele: per chi?'. *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 59 (2012): 480–95.
Bolzoni, Lina. *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2001.

Proof

Proof

Cogan, Marc. 'Rodolphus Agricola and the Semantic Revolutions of the History of Invention'. *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 2 (1984): 1963–94.

Garin, Eugenio. 'Gli umanisti e la scienza'. *Rivista di filosofia* 52 (1961): 259–78.

Gilbert, Neal W. *Renaissance Concepts of Method*. New York-London: New York University Press, 1960.

Green, Lawrence D. 'Renaissance Views of Aristotelian Topoi'. In *Papers on Rhetoric*, edited by Lucia Calboli Montefusco, 127–39. Roma: Herder, 2010.

Leff, Michael C. 'The Topics of Argumentative Invention in Latin Rhetorical Theory From Cicero to Boethius'. *Rhetorica* 1 (1983): 23–44.

Liruti, Gian Giuseppe. *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*. Venezia: Fenzo, 1762.

Mack, Peter. *Renaissance Argument: Valla and Agricola in the Traditions of Rhetoric and Dialectic*. Leiden: Brill, 1993.

Melanchthon, Philipp. *Erotemata dialectices. In Corpus reformatorum, Philippi Melanchthonis opera, quae supersunt omnia*. New York: Johnson, 1963.

Ochs, Donovan J. 'Cicero's *Topica*. A Process View of Invention'. In *Explorations in Rhetorics*, edited by Ray E. McKerrow, 107–18. Glenview: Scott, 1983.

Ong, Walter J. *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Randall, John H. 'The Development of Scientific Method in the School of Padua'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1 (1940): 177–206.

Refini, Eugenio. 'Logic, Rhetoric and Poetics as Rational Faculties in Alessandro Piccolomini's Map of Knowledge'. *Philosophical Readings* 2 (2012): 24–35.

Risse, Wilhelm. *Logik der Neuzeit, Bd. 1 1500–1640*. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 1964.

Schmidt-Biggemann, Wilhelm. *Topica universalis: Eine Modellgeschichte humanistischer und barocker Wissenschaft*. Hamburg: Meiner, 1983.

Schmitt, Charles B. *Aristotle and the Renaissance*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983.

Seneca, Federico. *Il doge Leonardo Donà. La sua vita e la sua preparazione politica prima del Dogado*. Padova: Antenore, 1959.

Sgarbi, Marco. *The Italian Mind: Vernacular Logic in Renaissance Italy (1540–1551)*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

———. 'Aristotle and the People: Vernacular Philosophy in Renaissance Italy'. *Renaissance and Reformation* 39 (2016): 59–109.

———. 'Francesco Robortello's Rhetoric. On the Orator and His Arguments'. *Rhetorica* 34 (2016): 243–67.

———. 'The Instatement of the Vernacular as Language of Culture: A New Aristotelian Paradigm in Sixteenth-Century Italy'. *Intersezioni* 36 (2016): 319–43.

———. 'Francesco Robortello on Topics'. *Viator* 47 (2016): 365–88.

Vasoli, Cesare. *La dialettica e la retorica dell'Umanesimo. Invenzione e Metodo nella cultura del XV e XVI secolo*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1968.

Proof

Proof

4 Rhetoric

1. The First Outline of Rhetoric

The most important application of the law of Topics for Robortello is in the field of rhetoric. As we shall see, rhetoric is the first attempt to give concrete shape to the general rules of discourse upon which poetry, history and moral philosophy are founded. Despite the importance of rhetoric within his system of language arts, his idea has passed unnoticed in the scholarship, and this has led to a partial and misleading view of Robortello as a humanist. Hence in this chapter we will focus on this neglected aspect of Robortello's work, paying particular attention to his hitherto unstudied *De rhetorica facultate* (1548), *De artificio dicendi* (1560), his manuscript *Dell'oratore* and a number of schemes in printed and manuscript form.

As Peter Mack has shown, the history of rhetoric in the Renaissance is more fragmented and variegated than might be supposed, straying beyond the rigid confines of Aristotelianism and Ciceronianism within which it has traditionally been constrained.[1] Robortello's evident aim through following in Aristotle and Cicero's footsteps is to seek a third way that is completely novel and can provide a valid alternative to those of his two antecedents, a conception in other words in which rhetoric is viewed as an essential tool in the acquisition of moral knowledge.

If we look closely at manuals on rhetoric produced in Italy, we see that they were mainly conceived within the intellectual context of the newly emerging sixteenth-century academies, where rhetoric was undergoing profound changes and mutations.[2] No longer merely the art of deploying techniques in public speaking with the aim of swaying an audience, rhetoric had come to play an increasingly central role in the construction of the model citizen and courtier that was to give voice to the humanistic ideal. Rhetoric thus became an essential element in civilized conversation, letter writing and other discourses aimed at targeted circles of individuals, such as in the courts or the academies – and hence the proliferation in this period of rhetorical textbooks. Impressive though the number of editions may be, however, these rhetorical guides were generally either

Proof

Proof

adaptations of pre-existing Latin works, or works of little didactic value within the context of the teaching of rhetoric – in most cases, in fact, nothing more than comments or philosophical notes on Cicero's works, in which it was said that *res* and *verba*, knowledge and eloquence, were destined inevitably to co-exist and thus coalesce to deliver a message that was not only profound in terms of content but also elegantly formed.

The 1540s saw the beginning of the dissolution of this Classical stylistic edifice. This is particularly evident in Sperone Speroni's *Dialogo delle lingue* (1542), which was to influence so profoundly later treatises about the vernacular language throughout Europe, and which establishes a sharp distinction between eloquence and wisdom.[3] Rhetoric is simply a tool with which to decorate wisdom, which in itself is sufficient: *res* do not need ornate *verba*, for every language, even the most basic, is sufficient to express the concept. Once freed of its essential link to wisdom, rhetoric must seek a new systematisation, a new purpose.

Speroni makes the point that both wisdom and rhetoric speak the truth, but in different ways and through different languages. Wisdom is sober and unadorned, and what matters are the concepts, not the words. Rhetoric, on the other hand, is interested more in the words and it serves to persuade with regard to concepts that are not immediately graspable. By making such concepts understandable, truth is transformed into verisimilitude. Concealed behind the veil of discourse, the truth of rhetoric is not immediate and direct. The fact that rhetoric is no longer directly conjoined with truth and wisdom must not necessarily be considered a negative fact.

The usefulness of rhetoric is not secondary, since Speroni – good student of Pomponazzi that he is[4] – believes that only a few may gain access to the knowledge of truth revealed by wisdom, and that it is typical of the "human" that access to ultimate truths and full awareness of the self can only ever be partial, knowledge of the truth being only possible in the practical and moral spheres.[5] Furthermore, if it is true that, in the *Dialogo delle lingue*, wisdom appears to acquire space independent of rhetoric and *res* are unhooked from *verba*, the opposite is not true: *verba* must always be conjoined with *res*, otherwise the orator ends up communicating falsehoods rather than things that are concerned with the truth.

Speroni's *Dialogo della retorica* revisits this conception and stages the clash between two different uses of language with regard to the truth. On the one hand, there is truth discovered in a demonstrative and scientific way, whereas, on the other, there is truth disseminated by rhetoric. The first type of truth is not accessible to most people. Only philosophers and scientists can access it. The second type – that which concerns rhetoric and which is properly called verisimilitude – is the typically "human," but it has nothing to do with theoretical knowledge: indeed, it is limited to the contingent and the actions of human beings. Rhetoric, therefore, although no longer strictly associated with wisdom, was viewed as

Proof

Proof

nonetheless essential to moral philosophy, thanks to its capacity to use persuasive devices for educational purposes. Consider the discourse that Speroni has Brocardo pronounce[6] – human understanding is not allowed access to absolute truth, yet – despite that – it is always confronted with "a certain something of the truth":

> It may well be, and often is, that the ignorance of the populace, when listening to the orator, captures instead a depicted effigy, which it believes to be the truth; [. . .] it can also be that if the orator speaks to deceive people, letting them understand that his purpose is the truth rather than verisimilitude. In which case, such an individual, despite his marvellous genius, deserves to be banished from the world. [. . .] teaching, which is the path to the truth, properly speaking is not a matter for an orator, rather it is the work of the speculative doctrines, which are the sciences not of words but of things.[7]

This "certain something of the truth" is the only truth to which a human being can accede precisely because the speculative path is closed to him, it being open only to the philosopher, the angels and God. Rhetoric and poetry may prove superfluous for philosophers, but not for the common people:

> If we are philosophers, rhetoric and poetry are as fruit at the tables of the lords, who after their dinner, when already full, delight the palate by eating many of them out of gentle habit. But to those who are not yet and are about to become philosophers, the two arts mentioned earlier are the flowers that are before the fruit of science; their minds desiring to bear fruit, like plants in the Spring, they desire to flourish. For the common people, because they know nothing and do not think about knowing, yet are still part of the republic, orations and rhymes are the whole feast and the whole fruit of their life. And not having virtue to digest the sciences and transform them for their own benefit, by their own odours and similitudes satisfied when listening to orators, in this way they live and sustain themselves. Therefore I do not see for what reason rhetoric should be banned from the republics, it being the art whose subject is our human operations which gave rise to the republics; it is welcome that the orator with probable reasons and more uncertain than not, by pleasing and persuading, judges and supports civil operations; nonetheless his industry must be recommended and praised. [. . .] I say this on the assumption that you know what everyone knows, that the human being is halfway between the animals and the intelligences, that he knows himself in a way that is halfway between the science he has of beasts and the faith in which he worships God. Which is nothing other than an opinion generated by rhetoric, with which his own will and that of

Proof

Proof

> others, living civilly with relatives and friends in his home country must take care to correct. Indeed, if the same work at different times by the city's laws is banished at one time and praised at the next, it can be both vice and virtue; hence it is read that our republics be prudently governed not by demonstrative sciences that are certain at all times, but by variable and changeable rhetorical opinions, such as our works and laws are.[8]

Rhetoric therefore plays an important role in civil education, a concept wherein anthropological assumptions are by no means marginal, mainly to show the limited speculative capacity of the human being and the mortality of the soul:

> But given the possibility (God forbid) that reason is a human thing, as are we; that it is born, lives and dies with us, then its purpose must be to discourse humanly, and to consider principally what is appropriate to humanity; using the oratorical art with which in this simple life we moderate and support our human operations.[9]

Rhetoric is thus useful for taming the bestial instincts that inhabit man as a natural being, and its purpose is to provide moral instruction and education where a human being cannot attain truth through theorising and speculation. The feeble human intellect is unable to grasp concepts directly, hence the need for discourse and reasoning. If it is therefore true that even if resorting to the word appears to underline a human weakness, it also characterises the properly human possibility of overcoming this weakness. Wisdom being separated from rhetoric does not imply that rhetoric is to be despised, as rhetoric defines the territory that is properly "human." While philosophy, thought and wisdom are in some sense self-supporting, human beings living in society cannot survive without words and discourse, and hence rhetoric is necessary for disclosing the truth which all human beings, not only the philosophers and the wise, can access. Wisdom and rhetoric are two different realities, two different "truths" within two different fields of enquiry, but are nevertheless complementary: the first has to do with the speculative life, the second with the active or civil life.[10]

Along this same line of thinking we find also Speroni's star pupil and a colleague of Robortello's, Bernardino Tomitano. In *Quattro libri della lingua thoscana*, Tomitano argues for the superiority of wisdom and philosophy,[11] adding that "no one may be a perfect orator or poet without philosophy."[12] Philosophy is therefore necessary to rhetoric, as Cicero asserts in *Orator* 14, but not vice versa. The word is an expression of the limits of the human intellect, which is unable immediately to grasp the truth, and therefore must explain it discursively. Yet, precisely because "our humanity does not allow us to manifest to one another our thoughts

Proof

Proof

without this poor bodily instrument of the voice,"[13] rhetoric is vital to human beings and constitutive of his *humanitas*. Not only does he define rhetoric as "almost the offspring of politics," he also states that "from the civil faculty it derives the custom of choosing the subject matter on which it discourses, as the orator is almost a banker of political life, into whose trust both the noble and the common people place the safeguarding of the public and civil estate."[14] The defining characteristic of rhetoric is precisely that it comes close to all human beings, not only to a few, and in fact it is constituted by "words and that human beings as human beings, and not as sages, are used to uttering."[15] In other words, the orator is a populariser of the truth, and in his work of popularising he cannot tell the truth as it is, otherwise it would be inaccessible, but he must necessarily distort it, and in this very distortion we see that his subject is the verisimilar, not the truth. In this vein, Tomitano writes, "the orator teaches by pleasing and moving for the purpose of persuading [. . .] from which we can say that the truth is the object both of the orator and the sage, but in different guises."[16] The truth of the rhetorician "albeit not as certain as the philosopher would wish, is nevertheless such that, by moving the opinion of human beings, [the orator] may by means of it make way for himself among the populace by treating civil operations."[17] Tomitano is clear: rhetoric "regulates the customs of nations, moderates civil life, governs the minds of people."[18] In other words, rhetoric is a moralising and civilising instrument that operates by means of persuasion rather than teaching.

In both Speroni and Tomitano there is a clear attempt to conflate Classical Ciceronian rhetoric with Aristotelian philosophy, an attempt that reflects the general fortunes of rhetoric in northern Italy in the 1540s. This particular trait of rhetoric treatises of the mid-sixteenth century also affects Robortello's conception of rhetoric: Cicero continues to be the model, but he is assessed and discussed according to Aristotelian patterns. These rhetorical works were more concerned with methodological discussions on the nature of rhetoric than with teaching rhetorical precepts, and, as we shall see, Robortello's work on rhetoric reflects some of these ideas in a very original way.

In their attempt to "Aristotelise" humanistic rhetoric, Robortello's two published Latin rhetorical works exemplify this mode of interpretation: *De rhetorica facultate* (1548) and *De artificio dicendi* (1560). *De rhetorica facultate* was published in 1548, along with other treatises concerning the historiographical method, Roman history and poetry. It is mainly a collection of remarks, annotations and comments on Cicero's *De inventione* originating in Robortello's teaching when in Pisa in 1547. It is an interesting work for understanding the evolution of his idea of rhetoric and his understanding of the various conceptions of rhetoric in ancient authors such as Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Cicero, Hermogenes and Alexander of Aphrodisias.

Proof

Proof

The stated purpose of this work, as Robortello writes in his dedicatory letter to Filippo Migliori, is to define the nature of the faculty or art that teaches one to express oneself in an ornate and subtle manner. The general theoretical framework, as we have seen, is Ciceronian, but infused entirely with a concern that is in every respect Aristotelian, namely the method of this art or faculty. Robortello does not seek to explain how rhetoric deals with probable arguments or how it constructs panegyrics or eulogies. Rather it is focused on exploring the nature of the method of this art and how it may be useful in a general sense.[19] This observation may seem somewhat far-fetched, but it could hardly be more crucial. It is in fact central to Robortello's thinking, and, as we shall see, it points to a fanatical obsession with methodology in the language arts that derives from the traces of Aristotelian thought in Classical rhetoric. In contrast with all the works by Robortello which we shall examine later, *De rhetorica facultate* opens with a cursory explanation of the usefulness of this art, and then goes on to describe its nature, its purposes and its means.

Rhetoric is essential and necessary for Robortello, as for Speroni and Tomitano, both in the law courts and at any public event. For this reason, it serves moral philosophy and political science, which, in explicit reference to Aristotle,[20] is the most architectural of all the arts because all of them, in one way or another, are instrumental and subservient to it. Rhetoric is therefore instrumental to politics, in particular because, following Quintilian and Cicero, politics must persuade with regard to the goodness of the laws, it must promote a moral behaviour among human beings and it must justify the punishments inflicted upon those who behave incorrectly.

The great theoretical support given to politics by rhetoric as a language art derives from Aristotle. In the Stagirite's own words in *Rhetorica* 1356 a 25–27, a passage repeatedly cited by Tomitano,[21] rhetoric is a part of politics:

> It thus appears that rhetoric is an offshoot of dialectic and also of ethical studies. Ethical studies may fairly be called political; and for this reason, rhetoric masquerades as political science, and the professors of it as political experts.

If rhetoric is an instrument of politics, Robortello concludes, rhetorical discourse will be – must be – in essence a political discourse.[22] Further evidence is provided by Hermogenes: "politics languishes and is mute without rhetoric."[23] For Robortello, therefore, according to Alexander of Aphrodisias in his *Topics*, rhetoric is distinct from dialectics, which is concerned with περὶ τὰ κοινὰ, or common and general things and which in the *Discorso* is called Topics. This kind of dialectics as Topics, as we have seen, must be distinguished from dialectics as the logic of probable argument. Rhetoric as a specific language art, on the other hand,

Proof

Proof

is not concerned with all things (*de omnibus rebus*, περὶ παντὸς),[24] but with "judiciary and political" matters.[25] For Robortello rhetoric is not an art without a defined object engaged in the merely formal construction of arguments, and for this reason it cannot be – because this art is certainly such, as we have already said – Topics. By unhitching rhetoric from dialectics – the latter understood as Topics, at least from a material standpoint – Robortello follows Aristotle in *Rhetorica* 1356 a 32–35, where he writes that "as a matter of fact, it is a branch of dialectics and similar to it; as we said at the outset, in fact, neither rhetoric nor dialectic is the scientific study of any one separate subject: both are faculties for providing arguments." However, while dialectics as Topics has no specific argument, rhetoric takes its material from civic philosophy, and for this reason can only be considered as a branch of dialectics.[26]

To return to Robortello, in order for rhetorical discourse to be political it must have six key characteristics in being: 1. prolix; 2. moral; 3. ornate; 4. probable; 5. artificial; 6. pathetic. Four of these fundamental characteristics are sufficient for understanding Robortello's entire rhetorical concept. Discourse must be prolix, subtle and ornate because it must be able to explain in many ways, diffusely and pleasantly, the idea it seeks to convey. Discourse must be moral and pathetic because the purpose of rhetoric is to educate, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, education is more effective when it moves the passions, but at the same time it must also be probable because – in order to educate – what is said must also be held to be true.

Among these characteristics, Robortello focuses the most on rhetorical discourse being both probable and moral. Discourse is probable, not necessary, and in this sense rhetoric is distinct from apodictic or necessary logic. It is probable also because its purpose and audience is to educate the uneducated. This Robortello derives from *Rhetorica* 1357 a 1–3, where Aristotle states that:

> The duty of rhetoric is to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon without arts or systems to guide us, in the hearing of persons who cannot take in at a glance a complicated argument, or follow a long chain of reasoning.

Rhetoric goes where logic cannot, and in this sense rhetoric is more powerful than dialectic. Hence rhetoric has as its object things that are comprehensible to the people, and the orator does not need to act like a sage teaching the uneducated, since according to what Cicero asserts in the *De Oratore*: "the orator does not wish to appear so completely a sage among fools, as to have his hearer either regarding him as inept or ridiculous."[27] Once again Robortello derives his rhetoric from the union of Cicero and Aristotle. Clearly underlying his conception is the idea that the common people cannot have access to the truth directly, or that in any case the

Proof

Proof

truth is too complex and requires the mediation of an orator – an idea that as we have seen derives from a specific anthropological conception shared by many Aristotelians, such as Speroni and Tomitano.

The second crucial aspect of rhetorical discourse – which derives from its being essentially political, as we have seen – is that it is also a moral discourse. This, Robortello writes, "is shared by rhetoric and poetics, and in fact both produce moral discourses."[28] Poetry and rhetoric, as we shall see in more detail in the following chapter, are therefore united by the fact that they have to do with a discourse which is predominantly ethical or moralising. Robortello's theory, both on the ethical discourse of rhetoric and on the close association between rhetoric and poetics, is supported by Horace's *Ars Poetica*, where the Latin orator states that:

> Sometimes a work, that is showy with commonplaces, and where the moral manners are well marked, though of no elegance, without force or art, gives the people much higher delight and more effectually commands their attention, than verse void of matter, and tuneful trifles.[29]

The ornate speech of the orator must not be excessive because what matters to an orator is to educate and delight the people. What distinguishes an orator from the "common and ignorant human beings" is not the subject or topic, but the capacity to explain, interpret and embellish a discourse in order to make it persuasive.[30]

Not all discourses may be moral, Robortello reminds us, as for instance mathematical demonstrations or logical syllogisms do not have such a character. On the other hand, they are also not suitable as subjects to the common people. Robortello's argument is supported by the *Ars Rhetorica* of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, where he states that:

> Discourse has a dual character (ἦθος): universal and proper (κοινόν τε καὶ ἴδιον). How they differ, I shall now explain. Universal, I say, is what derives from philosophy. What is this? That which tends to virtue and banishes vice. Proper is the rhetorical character. What does this consist in? In speaking on any subject in a manner that is worthy of the speaker, the listener, those of whom one speaks, those to whom the discourse is addressed. And this is the special purpose of all writings, including ancient writings. I do not need to speak on this at length. Books are full of the character and customs of men just and unjust, moderate and malicious, strong and cowardly, wise and ignorant, amiable and irascible. We can therefore pass over the names of those specific works and focus on moral behaviour, philosophize on the business of everyday life, and see which are the things to be imitated and which avoided.[31] AuQ1

Proof

Proof

Philosophical discourse is therefore sterile when it comes to moving the passions or inciting virtue, or at any rate it is not understood by the majority of the people, who prefer to hear about things they already know and in ways that are simple and comprehensible for them. However, Robortello adds, rhetoric without philosophy could never promote virtue, and would only incite negative passions. Rhetoric, therefore, has a cathartic effect, as does poetry and history, which as we shall see, are ultimately part of it. This idea also is taken from Dionysius of Halicarnassus:

> In eloquence the big character (μέγα ἦθος) is often missing, which is proper to Philosophy on the principles of which all particular and individual qualities depend. [. . .] however, since reason must command the soul, anger and concupiscence must obey it, so that what we do when we are indignant we do from reasonable indignation, and what we enjoy of pleasure we do not enjoy unreasonably, in the same way eloquence too must deal with that maximum character (μέγιστον) which springs from the womb of philosophy: may eloquence always be subject to this principle. Hence we may infer the other effects of anger, piety, gentleness, acerbity, envy, which are as consequences of it and which in the use of eloquence find themselves mutually conjoined.[32]

Taylor & Francis Not for distribution

In other words, rhetoric is always subservient to moral or civic philosophy, to its potential for promoting virtue and avoiding vice through actions, and is never independent of it, and it is upon this relationship of subordination that Robortello constructs his entire rhetorical edifice in his subsequent writings.

2. Rhetoric and Oratory

Robortello enjoyed considerable popularity as a teacher of rhetoric, as is seen from the success of his lectures, his reputation among his students and the envy he aroused among his colleagues. He taught Greek and Latin rhetoric and eloquence in Lucca (1537/38–1543), Pisa (1543–1549), Venice (1549–1552), Padua (1552–1557), Bologna (1557–1561) and again in Padua (1561–1567).[33] Robortello's innovativeness in teaching rhetoric is evidenced by the scheme of his first Venetian course held in 1549, and now preserved at the Museo Correr in Venice in the folder Donà dalle Rose 447, folder 29.[34]

Unlike many other Renaissance authors such as Peter Ramus,[35] for whom graphs and trees were simply an illustration of the doctrines set out in the body of the text, Robortello, as we have seen, used diagrams to produce new knowledge. The order and arrangement of the diagrams was anything but unsystematic, impressionistic or lacking homogeneity; far from being mere mnemonic devices, their function was to reflect in

Proof

Proof

some way the structure of the mind and the disposition of knowledge, in order for the generation of each cognition to be made absolutely clear. The need for this in Robortello's approach became particularly urgent in the fields of logic, dialectics and rhetoric, where it was customary to proceed by division or the presentation of the various topical places.

Contrary to the numerous and varied experiments in dialectical and rhetorical classification carried out in the sixteenth century by those whose purpose was to reorganise Ciceronian rhetoric, Boethius's Topics and Agricola's dialectics, Robortello's work of schematisation was genuinely philosophical in its aim of ordering knowledge according to how it is produced, hence the importance of seeing how the points of the diagrams are connected and understanding the nature of the connections. The learning of dialectics and rhetoric is thus made simpler, a fact which is made clear in the *Discorso dell'origine, numero, ordine et methodo delli luoghi topici*.[36] As indicated in the previous chapter, Robortello finds fault with Agricola's Topics and rhetoric for providing no real derivation or deduction of topical places capable of producing solid knowledge. All topical places appear to be grouped in a highly heterogeneous and non-systematic fashion, making it impossible to infer correctly from one place to another. For Robortello, this shortcoming in Agricola's method stands in the way of real understanding being achieved through the diagram of the process of knowledge production: in other words, of how one place derives from another – an essential factor, in Robortello's view, which constitutes the very purpose of schematising knowledge. Only by making clear the connections between the various parts of knowledge is it possible to transform a heterogeneous aggregate of ideas into a real system of knowledge.

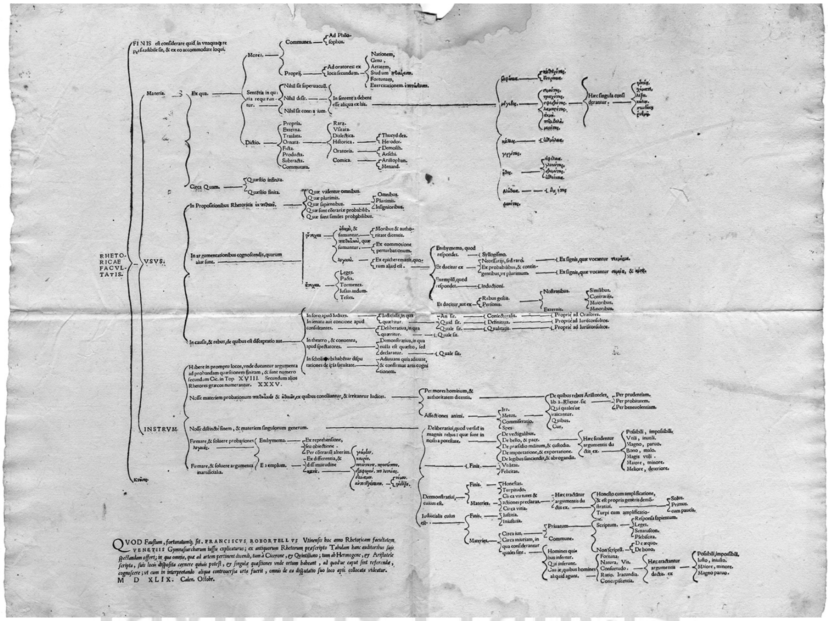
Diagrams, schemes and graphic trees are thus not simply a way of organising knowledge but must also reflect the processes of the mind in subdividing given problems and in generating possible solutions. Following the path outlined in the text, not only does one learn and commit to memory the logical path followed by the author, but one can also understand how knowledge is constructed and what its basic building-blocks are. It is clear that Robortello's concern was not merely the ordering and arrangement of knowledge, but also its method of inquiry and acquisition, two aspects which will come to play a crucial role in philosophical discussions during the second half of the sixteenth century.[37] With these new techniques for visualising knowledge – to be exploited in the following years by many other rhetoricians up to the first decades of the seventeenth century – Robortello opened up new horizons for rhetoric, as well as also for any other kind of discipline.

Robortello's idea of a scheme in connection with rhetoric is made particularly evident in the bottom-left corner of the diagram, where he explicitly states that:

> In hope of a successful result, Francesco Robortello from Udine – who, by order of the scholastic authorities, will teach a course on

Proof

Proof


RHETORICAE FACVLTATIS.
FINIS est conſiderare quid in vnaquaque re perſuaſibile ſit, & ex eo accommodate loqui.
Materia.
VSVS.
INSTRVM.

QVOD Fauſtum, fortunatumq́; ſit. FRANCISCVS ROBORTELLVS Vtinenſis hoc anno Rhetoricam facultatem VENETIIS Gymnaſiarcharum iuſſu explicaturus; ex antiquorum Rhetorum præſcripto Tabulam hanc auditoribus ſuis ſpectandam offert; in qua omnia, quæ ad artem pertinent dicendi, tum à Cicerone, & Quintiliano; tum ab Hermogene, & Ariſtotele ſcripta, ſuis locis diſpoſita cernere quiuis poteſt, & ſingulæ quæſtiones vnde ortum habeant, ad quod'ue caput ſint referendæ, cognoſcere; vt cum in interpretando aliqua controuerſia orta fuerit, omnis de ea diſputatio ſuo loco aptè collocata videatur.
M D XLIX. Calen. Octobr.

Figure 4.1 1549 Scheme on Rhetoric

Source: 2019 © Biblioteca Correr – Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia

> rhetoric in Venice this year based on the ancient rhetoricians – offers this table to his listeners for their perusal of all things that have to do with the art of speech – from Cicero to Quintilian, Hermogenes, or Aristotle – which have been positioned in such a way that *anyone* can consult it, and thus can *know* the origin of every question and the heading to which one must refer. In this way, every time a controversy arises in interpretation, all that can be disputed about it will be readily identifiable in its place.[38]

This tree not only shows *in nuce* Robortello's conception of rhetoric, but also makes two fundamental things clear. Firstly, that *anyone* can consult and understand it; secondly, that this scheme generates knowledge beyond being a valid aid to memorisation.[39] The secret of Robortello's new and efficient method in teaching rhetoric consists in the fact that students were clearly able to see the network of relations, deductions and derivations that unite one particular place with others.

The 1549 scheme in fact follows the structure laid out discursively in the *De rhetorica facultate*. The purpose of rhetoric "is to consider that which is persuasive and how it can be accommodated in discourse." First

Proof

Proof

of all, the subject *ex qua*, according to the division of Dionysius, must be concerned with morality, especially in regard to the particulars, as the common and universal subject is more the remit of philosophers. Customs, habits and behaviour, on the other hand, are subjects typical of the orator, and vary according to nationality, gender, age, fortune and education. The subject *ex qua* concerning diction and language must be above all ornate, and, in particular, it is principally "historical," as in the case of Thucydides and Herodotus, "oratorical," as in the case of Demosthenes and Aeschines, or "comical," as in the case of Aristophanes and Menander.

As for its use, rhetoric must persuade and may do so in respect of things of which everyone has experience, which are held to be true by the majority, which are reputed to be true by the wise (all, some or the best among them) or in respect of those which are similar to probable things. His arguments may be effective in three different ways. They may be effective at an ethical level as an expression of moral principles; or through commotion, namely the disturbance and moderation of the passions; or through arguments such as enthymemes but, above all, examples – examples of people and actions and feats that are known, or actions that are similar, contrary, greater or minor compared to those that are known.

The modalities of moralisation are reflective also of the instruments of rhetoric. The general instrument is Topics, or *loci*, but this is a purely formal instrument that must be filled with content, provided by ethical and pathetic material. On the other hand, the rhetorical instruments that serve to invoke morality are arguments according to prudence, probity and benevolence. As for the passions and affections of the soul, the most effective instruments for moralising are mercy (*commiseratio*) and fear (*metus*), namely the two passions of tragic catharsis, but anger and hope play a central role too. The rhetorical instrument of the enthymeme is useful, but it persuades only by condemning and discarding other arguments. More effective is example by comparison or difference.

The scheme clearly shows that the goal of rhetoric is to consider the persuasive discourse and how to express it in an adequate way for the purpose of moralising. This perspective remains constant throughout Robortello's rhetorical writings. He explicitly shows that rhetoric is useful in knowing things that pertain exclusively to moral or civil philosophy: rhetoric persuades people to follow the ethical precepts and to purge the excesses of the passions.

No original conception of rhetoric is presented, given the concise nature of the diagram, but in all likelihood he is following his 1548 treatise. As we shall see further, however, we can say that for Robortello eloquence is valid only in certain particular cases that concern the investigation of human actions, quite at variance with the humanistic conception of

Proof

Proof

rhetoric according to which eloquence must be applied to all areas of research because wisdom was nothing without eloquence. For Robortello, in contrast, rhetoric is important only if one wants to persuade people to pursue good moral behaviour. In this sense, Robortello appears to follow the line of thinking set out by Speroni and carried forward by Tomitano and he is followed by his pupil Zabarella, who wrote that the end of rhetoric is to persuade for good and right actions in order to avoid evil and unjust consequences.[40]

A more fruitful set of ideas may be found in the *De artificio dicendi*, his summa of more than two decades of teaching in rhetoric.[41] This work, dedicated to Giovan Battista Campeggi, who is known also as the "Christian Cicero,"[42] showcases Robortello's new conception of rhetoric in which the focus is primarily oratory. He is highly critical of the contemporary scene where rhetoricians were trained by erudite and eloquent schoolteachers – for whom it served solely for the embellishment of discourse, for persuasion and delusion – as opposed to a glorious past where they had been taught by philosophers themselves for the express purpose of imparting and disseminating knowledge. This criticism reflects the generally held position on the teaching of rhetoric in the Italian education-system: at school-level, rhetoric was taught mainly through letter-writing and the study of one of the Classical Latin companions to rhetoric, Cicero in particular; indeed, teachers of rhetoric contributed nothing new to the subject, making only oblique reference to ways of approaching and adorning a public discourse, or studying the ancient rhetoricians.[43] This criticism and Robortello's innovative position and method explain his success as a teacher of rhetoric.

Robortello, going against the grain, viewed rhetoric as a useful device for generating the content of knowledge, in particular moral philosophy, and making it more comprehensible and relevant to a wider public. Although comprehensibility may sometimes come at the expense of accuracy in the portrayal of the true state of things, this does not amount to deceiving or peddling erroneous or simplified forms of knowledge: rather it makes available a form of knowledge for the moral edification of all kinds of people, enabling them to acquire a more solid level of understanding. Rhetoric was thus seen to be an essential part of education and teaching as a means of introducing everyone to the knowledge of things, at least with regard to moral precepts. That part of rhetoric which popularises knowledge, especially philosophy, is specifically termed oratory, in Robortello's view. Unlike philosophical and poetical discourse, oratorical discourse must have a certain degree of eloquence, because its task is to clarify knowledge for a wider audience and to provide a means of judging "concretely" the truth or the falsity of what has been said.[44]

In the *De artificio dicendi* and also in the unedited work entitled "Regula deducendi sermonem philosophicum ad oratorium,"[45] Robortello presents

Proof

Proof

four ways of making oratorical discourse philosophical – in other words, of making a difficult philosophical text more accessible to a wider range of listeners and readers:[46] the first is to make an abstract notion more concrete, which is possible by means of the rhetorical inference of the example; the second is to transform a universal concept into a particular concept – for instance, when the orator deals not with happiness according to its definition, but with the happy man;[47] the third is to speak of philosophical concepts by means of metaphors; the fourth is to make a philosophical concept as clear as possible by using an abundance of words and phrases. A philosopher should not overdo the use of words and metaphors, which may further obfuscate the discourse, but the orator can use this technique to explain repeatedly and more effectively notions that are not completely clear to the populace.[48]

Rhetoric for Robortello is thus not a means of embellishing knowledge as with some humanists, but a tool for reaching a wider audience and for making transfer of knowledge more effective. In this way, Robortello elaborates a new conception of rhetoric which does not essentially imply wisdom as the humanists intended, but is necessary when one wishes to educate a wider public, targeting various layers of society. Robortello thus reconciles the anti-rhetorical movement of vernacular Aristotelianism with a humanistic fetishism for eloquence, by according rhetoric an important pedagogical role.

3. The Orator and His Instruments

This conception is further developed in the work entitled *Dell'oratore*, which has so far failed to spark scholarly interest.[49] The manuscript is datable prior to the publication of the *De artificio dicendi*, since Robortello explicitly refers to it as a work in progress: "I will nonetheless be brief, reserving myself to address this dispute more fully in Latin."[50] Like the *Discorso*, *Dell'oratore* is a vernacular lecture probably read in front of a private audience in an academy. Unlike his other works – where he limited himself to setting out in sometimes original ways the positions of Aristotle, Cicero and Boethius – Robortello here presents his own personal conception of rhetoric, positioning himself in one of the hottest debates in sixteenth-century vernacular philosophy and distancing himself from both Aristotle and Cicero. The work is written in the form of a letter to an unknown recipient, and aims to answer two fundamental questions: 1. what is the role of the orator? 2. what are his instruments?

The first question in particular is rephrased by Robortello to ask why oratory employs the imperfect enthymeme rather than the perfect syllogism of the logicians. The enthymeme in the Aristotelian tradition was the rhetorical syllogism *par excellence*, the logical inference, in other words, that deduced "from verisimilitude and signs" (ἐξ εἰκότων καὶ σημείων), building arguments upon premises that were not entirely certain, be it in

Proof

Proof

the data they presented or the logical connections between them, and that were thus of little value in the true apodictic demonstration, while the perfect syllogism arrived at conclusions through apodictic logical inferences. Later, with Cicero and Boethius, the enthymeme came to designate elliptical syllogisms in which one of the two premises was implied, as in "you are a man, therefore you are mortal," where the most important premise of all, "all human beings are mortal," is implicit. Given their pithiness and efficacy, such syllogisms came to play a crucial role in Classical oratory. This form of reasoning, in which, as in "omnes proditores sunt puniendi, ergo Aeschynes est puniendus," one of the two premises is omitted, is precisely what enthymeme meant for Robortello as well. He contended that none of the ancient rhetoricians were able to explain why oratory has always preferred the enthymeme to the perfect syllogism, a fact which only makes finding the answer to the conundrum all the more urgent. The core of Robortello's answer is that the "orator has to deal with rough audiences ignorant of sciences."[51] The concept was already present in the *De rhetorica facultate* and represented, as mentioned earlier, a free interpretation of *Rhetorica* 1357 a 1–3.

Unlike the learned human being who reflects on everything through the intellect by means of universals, ignorant people are short-sighted and capable of understanding only particulars. Universals are certainly hard to understand, while particulars are more comprehensible to the "ignorant, and rough, that is popular man," but since the sciences consist of universal terms, ignorant people who cannot abstract from the particular to the universal cannot acquire scientific knowledge. Thus, according to Robortello, the role of the orator is to provide the ignorant audience with the proper tools for securing as much knowledge as possible through particulars. The task of the orator is consequently to deal with particulars without any consideration of universals, and as a reason for this Robortello states that the orator arranges the matter of his reasoning in the form of "darii" syllogisms, not "barbara" syllogisms, as required by science.

Barbara Syllogism

All heavy things are falling bodies
All rocks are heavy things
All rocks are falling bodies

Darii Syllogism

All dogs have fur
Some pets are dogs
Some pets have fur

The "darii" syllogism proceeds from two premises, one universal, the other particular, arriving at a particular conclusion, while the "barbara"

Proof

Proof

syllogism consists only of universal propositions which are not immediately understandable by the populace. Genuine oratorical and popular reasoning should therefore only be executed in the form of the "darii" syllogism. For instance, everybody has had the experience that dogs are pets or that some pets have fur, while the concept of heaviness in the first case is not so clear and understandable as to be attributable to all rocks. Indeed, experience tells that some rocks are not heavy. In the "darii" form, this kind of knowledge is much more acceptable to common people.

Darii Syllogism

All heavy things are falling bodies
Some rocks are heavy things
Some rocks are falling bodies

The question may be posed as to how the first universal proposition in the "darii" syllogism can be understood by the populace if the populace understands only particulars and concrete terms. Robortello gives two answers. First of all, common people will understand the universal premises in relation to the second particular premises and the particular conclusion. Secondly, Robortello states that universal premises are usually left out of the enthymeme, as in the case of "Aeschines est proditor, ergo est puniendus" ("Aeschines is a traitor, and therefore must be punished") and in this way the reasoning is easily understandable, even if the second premise "all traitors must be punished" is missing. But Robortello also distinguishes between various universals, and states that the oratorical universal is more readily comprehensible than the physical universal, or the universal of other sciences. The reason is quite simple. Oratorical universals deal with the common and ordinary actions of human beings, which are well known and accessible to all. Scientific or physical universals, on the other hand, are for specialists alone, being well beyond the reach of the common people. Once again, Robortello relies for his opinion upon Aristotle, who, in his *Rhetoric*, expressed the "very beautiful" idea that the orator's subject-matter is all that is not concerned with scientific things, or written things, or things that can be the subject of science or written in the future. This idea leads to two very important conclusions.

The activity of an orator is mainly oral in the sense that it concerns the possibility of transmitting knowledge orally and not necessarily by the written word, which on the contrary seems necessary for all the other sciences. The subject-matter of the orator seems to be concerned only with what can be treated in moral philosophy and politics – that is human actions – not with all the other speculative sciences. Consequently, an orator can only popularise philosophical discourses that deal with moral philosophy, politics, law, economics, etc., which explains why Robortello, in the chapter "Quomodo sermo philosophicus ad popularem et

Proof

Proof

oratorium redigi possit," gives examples of how to popularise philosophy only with respect to ethics and civil philosophy, not the other sciences. But this also means that common people can be taught only in practical disciplines dealing with particulars, not in sciences that enquire into universals. There is thus a sharp distinction, inherited from Pomponazzi, for Robortello between moral philosophy for all, and speculative philosophy, or science properly speaking, which is for the elite alone. It is possible to transmit moral precepts by persuasion, whereas it is not possible to do so with another kind of knowledge or science.

Robortello does point out, however, that one can argue that scientists employ enthymemes too, because, being erudite, they do not usually reason by means of complete syllogisms replete with all the premises. This is possible, Robortello states, because it is customary also for scientists to understand universal concepts even when one of the premises is lacking. Not even in his physical or astronomical works, notes Robortello, does Aristotle employ a complete syllogism:

> In the books *de coelo*, of *physica* and others, one almost never finds whole syllogisms ordered according to the rule, because the demonstrative speaker, and like him the orator, imitates the common way of speaking, in which one does not see the whole form, and sometimes one skips the conclusion, sometimes the first proposition, sometimes the second, and sometimes the order is disrupted and harks back to earlier ones, as if one were speaking in doubt.[52]

This amounts to a reduction of the language of science proper to a common or more popular scientific language, but without inhibiting the demonstrative force of the reasoning, since if in science some premise is lacking, this is because the scientist already takes its truth as a given. Moreover, Robortello explains that the oratorical enthymeme is in "darii" form, not "barbara," because it is grounded in the rhetorical inference of the example, which is always particular. Syllogism, on the contrary, is based not on an example, but an induction, which generalises.

The distinction between induction and example gives Robortello the opportunity to tackle the second major question of his writing, in which he develops a novel position that departs from Aristotle's doctrines. Robortello is not openly concerned with past opinions that seek to assess this difference, but rather he prefers to state "briefly what I estimate to be true in this subject . . . without being moved by the authority of any writer."[53] Robortello believes that the various opinions on this distinction were misled by the similarity between the two forms of reasoning. He gives a typically confusing case in which the distinction seems to have been blurred. For instance, the inference "Peisistratus, Timoleon, Euridemus used their guardians to become tyrants, therefore all tyrants used their guardians" seems to be an example taken from history, a list of events

Proof

Proof

that actually happened.[54] But if we consider the same inference more generally in the form "A, B, C used X to obtain Y, therefore every Y is obtained by X," then this seems to be more like an induction. So what is the real difference? This is something that must be explained and that past logicians and rhetoricians have failed to recognise.

In *Dell'oratore* Robortello makes clear that the difference between example and induction relies essentially and exclusively upon subject-matter. Example is constituted only of private and public action collected in the histories, while induction is an inference from natural things. Example and induction therefore do not differ in form. In Aristotle, on the other hand, an example is viewed as a particular considered as a universal by reason of some of its particular characteristics – for instance Ulysses is an example of astuteness – while induction from particulars generates a genuine universal – thus in seeing Thales, Socrates and Plato, the mind generates the universal concept of the human being, and there it rests.

Nothing similar exists in Robortello: he disagrees with Aristotle, outlining three rules for distinguishing examples from induction. The first rule establishes that proceeding from particular to particular is no doubt identifiable with the Aristotelian inference of example. The second rule states that sometimes examples can proceed from some particular to another. The third rule consists in proceeding from some particulars to a universal; this can be induction, as for Aristotle, but only if the particulars are natural or artificial things, otherwise, if they are human actions, the inference will remain an example, because human actions become models to be followed. Therefore, according to Robortello, and unlike Aristotle, an example can be universal if it is derived from many particulars which have to do with human actions. Indeed, actions are those things that the philosopher can popularise through oratorical discourse. Robortello adds that sometimes an example concerns natural and artificial things, but in this case it is more properly called similitude.

So how can Robortello reconcile his view with that of Aristotle, whom he holds in "the greatest reverence"? Robortello explains that Aristotle himself seems to anticipate his interpretation in the second book of the *Rhetoric*, where he groups the "locus ab inductione" with the case "Archilochus, Chios, and Homer were honoured, therefore all wise human beings are honoured" among the oratorical inferences. Aristotle's specific words in *Rhetoric* 1398a3–1398b18 are:

> Another line is based upon induction. Thus from the case of the woman of Peparethus it might be argued that women everywhere can settle the facts about their children correctly. Another example of this occurred in Athens in the case between the orator Mantias and his son, when the boy's mother revealed the true facts: and yet another at Thebes, in the case between Ismenias and Stilbon, when Dodonis proved that it was Ismenias who was the father of her son Thettaliscus, and

Proof

Proof

> he was in consequence always regarded as being so. [. . .] Another instance is the argument of Alcidamas: "Everyone honours the wise." Thus the Parians have honoured Archilochus, in spite of his bitter tongue; the Chians Homer, though he was not their countryman; the Mytilenaeans Sappho, though she was a woman; the Lacedaemonians actually made Chilon a member of their senate, though they are the least literary of men; the inhabitants of Lampsacus gave public burial to Anaxagoras, though he was an alien, and honour him even to this day. The Athenians became prosperous under Solon's laws and the Lacedaemonians under those of Lycurgus, while at Thebes no sooner did the leading men become philosophers than the country began to prosper.

From Robortello's perspective this is not an induction, as Aristotle says, but an example, because it deals with human actions. Yet, he argues, in the second book of the *Rhetoric* Aristotle never mentions the example as inference, but seems rather to support the view that "sometimes the example has the effect of induction," though remains an example nonetheless. Moreover, the fact that he deals with the "locus ab inductione" as an oratorical argument suggests that even induction can be traceable back to the oratorical inference of example. For all these reasons, Robortello concludes that induction and example never differ in form, only in matter, and indeed Aristotle himself appears to make the point that induction occurs whenever there is a universal conclusion. But this is misleading for Robortello, who avoids this ambiguity by distinguishing the two inferences only according to matter. Thus he suggests that every kind of inference that has to do with human actions is an example, even if it has the form of an induction:

> In order to resolve this ambiguity, having as subject an example of things made by human beings, in other words *ex rebus gestis*, no longer considering the form, they call it example, as if it had the form of induction. Nor do I wish to dispute Aristotle, but perhaps I would persuade him with this reason, that since syllogism and induction participate in the universal, whether before or after, it is necessary that the example participate too, because without a universal nothing may be attempted nor gathered.[55]

Yet Robortello has another argument up his sleeve which Aristotle himself would have had a hard time refuting. His aim is clearly to understand Aristotle better than Aristotle understood himself, and he claims that since every proof requires a universal, and since the example proves something, the example somehow must have something in common with the universal – as is precisely the case where what the Stagirite called induction deals with human actions. Moreover, he adds, if induction is

Proof

Proof

the mother of syllogism, collecting the particulars and transforming them into a universal, the example must be the father of the enthymeme.

Thus for Robortello the example has both matter and form. The former comprises human actions, whereas the latter can be twofold, either universal or particular. Induction, on the other hand, has two types of matter, artificial and natural things, and only one general form. This is no doubt an interesting conception of both the example and induction which is completely original and unique, finding no parallel in subsequent rhetorical and logical discussion. The example, in Robortello's view, is the foundational form of every kind of argumentation which leads either directly to the enthymeme, or indirectly to the induction in which syllogism is grounded.

In brief, for Robortello, the orator is faced primarily with common people, and deals with human actions through a style of argument proper to them, namely by means of examples. Rhetoric conceived as oratory has the aim of teaching people, but not every kind of knowledge: rather it teaches only what they can truly understand and use, namely what is helpful in making a right decision and performing an action.[56]

The manuscript Donà dalle Rose 447, folder 28, 6r-v also contains a handwritten scheme in Latin of Robortello's conception of the orator and his requirements.[57] Whereas in the *De rhetorica facultate* Robortello relied mainly on the ancient conceptions of rhetoric, and in the *De artificio dicendi* he distinguished the various kinds of discourse and emphasised the features of rhetorical discourse, and in *Dell'oratore* dealt with the task of the orator and his arguments, in the scheme "Quae potissimum in oratore requirantur" he focused on the particular features of the orator and of their performance. Since the task of the orator is to instruct people, it is first of all necessary to possess the science and knowledge of the subject-matter under discussion, otherwise the oratorical discourse will be empty and useless. Robortello therefore stresses once again – and above everything – the fact that stimulating knowledge and teaching are the primary goals of the orator, not deception like the sophist. In order to achieve these goals, the orator must be able to find the right words and construct sentences effectively. Furthermore, the orator must have a profound knowledge of the inner passions of the soul and be able to charm them in order to arouse the interest of the audience. But since the orator aims to popularise knowledge and educate people, he must also be able to speak of subtleties in a clear and concise but polished manner, in such a way that everyone can understand his discourse. He must possess a vast knowledge of historical examples or legal cases, and perform appropriately, working on gestures, body movements, facial expressions and voice, adapting it to whatever situations may arise. In this way, the orator can speak on any topic, despite the fact that for the ancient Greeks, as Robortello points out, his role was confined mainly to legal disputes.

Taylor & Francis Not for distribution

Proof

Proof

Not everyone can be an orator, however: an orator requires a particular natural wit in order to elaborate convincing arguments, a characteristic which cannot be developed through the teaching of the oratorical art and its precepts, which serve only to sharpen and amend innate powers of the mind.

To conclude this investigation of Robortello's conception of rhetoric based on manuscripts and printed works, we can summarise his innovative perspective as follows. Alongside his historical reassessment and reappropriation of ancient rhetoric, Robortello restricts rhetoric to the domain of oratory. Oratory has the purpose of instructing people – that is to render even complex knowledge more relevant to the ignorant and uneducated populace by means of persuasion. In so doing, the orator must base his arguments on particulars, which are more easily understandable than universals. For this reason, the orator employs the inference of example, which shows the content of knowledge in concrete terms. Persuasion, however, affects only certain branches of the Renaissance system of knowledge, namely those that come under the umbrella of civic philosophy (ethics, politics and economics). Sciences such as physics or metaphysics which are based on universals and employ demonstrative syllogism cannot be persuasive or effective with common people. Eloquence, in this sense, only applies in certain specific cases and to certain particular fields, and appears in fact to be concerned solely with moral philosophy. In order to deliver oratorical discourse, the orator must naturally possess a particular gift which is only partially the result of learning and doctrine. This is the reason why Robortello dislikes the schoolteacher of rhetoric and rhetorical textbooks, since eloquence is not something that can be taught entirely, and at the same time it demands considerable wisdom and erudition. Thus the orator, in Robortello's view, must be above all else a philosopher capable of persuasively disseminating the results of his knowledge even among the common people. This becomes further evident in the emphasis placed upon the matter of knowledge in the distinction between example and induction, rather than on the form of the inference. For all these reasons, oratory is a strategic tool, and Robortello has inaugurated a new era for rhetoric.

Notes

1. Peter Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric, 1380–1620* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). On Aristotle's rhetoric in the Renaissance cf. Lawrence D. Green, 'The Reception of Aristotle's Rhetoric in the Renaissance', in *Peripatetic Rhetoric After Aristotle: Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities* (Oxford and New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 320–48. On rhetorical Ciceronianism cf. Remigio Sabbadini, *Storia del ciceronianismo e di altre questioni letterarie nell'età della rinascenza* (Torino: Loescher, 1885); Jerrold E. Seigel, *Rhetoric and Philosophy*

Proof

Proof

in Renaissance Humanism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); Virginia Cox, 'Ciceronian Rhetorical Theory in the Volgare: A Fourteenth-Century Text and Its Fifteenth-Century Readers', in *Rhetoric and Renewal in the Latin West 1100–1544* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 201–25; Karin M. Fredborg, 'Ciceronian Rhetoric and Dialectic', in *The Rhetoric of Cicero in Its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, edited by Virginia Cox and John O. Ward (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 165–92; John Monfasani, 'The Ciceronian Controversy', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume III. The Renaissance*, edited by Glyn P. Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 395–401.

2. A large number of rhetorical manuals were written in the vernacular and circulated during the Renaissance in a wide range of institutional contexts such as universities, courts, academies, churches, etc. Cf. Stephen 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* 2 (2009): 221–44. Cf. Ian F. McNeely, 'The Renaissance Academies Between Science and the Humanities', *Configurations* 3 (2009): 248, 257.
3. Cf. Valerio Vianello, 'Res e verba nel Dialogo della Retorica di Sperone Speroni', *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 138 (1979–1980): 231–53; Jean Louis Fournel, 'La rhétorique vagabonde et le portrait de la vérité dans trois dialogues de Sperone Speroni', in *Discours littéraires et pratiques politiques* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1987), 11–59; Raffaele Girardi, 'Ercole e il Granchio, figure della retorica speroniana', *Giornale storico della Letteratura Italiana* 167 (1990): 396–411; Alessio Cotugno, *La scienza della parola. Retorica e linguistica di Sperone Speroni* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2018).
4. Marco Sgarbi, *The Italian Mind: Vernacular Logic in Renaissance Italy (1540–1551)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 31–40.
5. Ibid., 45–70.
6. Garin insists on this passage in particular, which we know does not necessarily reflect Speroni's opinion. Eugenio Garin, *Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Roma and Bari: Laterza, 2005), 126–7.
7. Sperone Speroni, *Opere* (Padova: Occhi, 1740), vol. 1, 207.
8. Ibid., 238–9.
9. Ibid., 241.
10. Ibid., 639.
11. Bernardino Tomitano, *Quattro libri della lingua thoscana* (Padua: Olmo, 1570), 212^{v}.
12. Ibid., 15^{r}.
13. Ibid., 15^{v}.
14. Ibid., 170^{r}.
15. Ibid., 27^{r}.
16. Ibid., 33^{r-v}.
17. Ibid., 411^{v}.
18. Ibid., 417^{v}.
19. Francesco Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio, Eiusdem Laconici, seu sudationis explicatio, Eiusdem De Nominibus Romanorum, Eiusdem De rhetorica facultate, Eiusdem explicatio in Catulli Epithalamium, Hic accesserunt eiusdem Annotationum in uaria tam Graecorum quam Latinorum loca Libri II, Ode Graceca quae βιοχρησμωδια inscribitur, Explanationes in primum Aeneid. Vergilii librum eodem Robortello praelegente collectae a Ioanne Baptista Busdrago Lucensi* (Firenze: Torrentino, 1548), 68.
20. Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, 996 b 8–9.

Proof

Proof

21. Tomitano, *Quattro libri della lingua thoscana*, 163^{r}.
22. Robortello, *De rhetorica facultate*, 72.
23. Ibid., 72.
24. Ibid., 73.
25. Ibid., 74.
26. In this context, however, Aristotle uses the term “dialectic,” as does Robortello in other places, in a more general way when compared to other places in the corpus, where dialectic basically refers to the logic of the probable.
27. Cicero, *Rhetorica. Vol. II. Brutus, Orator, de Opt. Gen. Oratorum, Part. Orat., Topica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 221.
28. Robortello, *De rhetorica facultate*, 76.
29. Horace, *Opera* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963) (*Ars poetica*), 319–22. Robortello skips some verses in recalling this passage to make his discourse easier to read: “the work [. . .] where the moral manners are well marked [. . .] gives the people much higher delight.”
30. Robortello, *De rhetorica facultate*, 84.
31. Menander Rhetor. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ars rhetorica* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), ch. XI.
32. Ibid., ch. X.
33. Cf. Gian Giuseppe Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da’ letterati del Friuli* (Venezia: Fenzo, 1762), 424–5, 436.
34. Venezia, Museo Correr, Donà dalle Rose 447, folder 29.
35. Cf. Walter J. Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 279; Lawrence D. Green, ‘Aristotle’s Rhetoric Made Methodical’, in *Autour de Ramus: Texte, théorie, commentaire* (Québec: Nuits Blanches, 1997), 135–73.
36. For a brief discussion of the manuscript cf. Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2001), 24–7.
37. Cf. Neal W. Gilbert, *Renaissance Concepts of Method* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1960).
38. Emphasis mine. Translated by Lina Bolzoni in Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 25–6.
39. Cf. Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 23–34.
40. Jacopo Zabarella, *Opera logica* (Frankfurt: Zetzner, 1597), 83E-F.
41. Cf. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da’ letterati del Friuli*, 421.
42. Cf. Robortello had a long-lasting relationship with Campeggi, and already in 1559 dedicated to him the *De Vita et uictu populi romani sub impp. Caess. Augg. tomus primus, qui continet libros XV . . . Ejusdem disputationes nouem. Reliqui tomi, qui tres sunt, excudentur deinceps cum suis commentariis* (Bologna: Benati, 1559). See Carlo Alberto Girotto, ‘Francesco Robortello da Bologna a Padova’, in *Il dialogo creativo. Studi per Lina Bolzoni* (Pisa: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2017), 209–24.
43. Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric, 1380–1620*, 164.
44. Francesco Robortello, *De artificio dicendi* (Bologna: Benati, 1567), 9$^{r–v}$.
45. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, V D 45. For a description of the manuscript cf. Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Iter Italicum: A Finding List of Uncatalogued or Incompletely Catalogued Humanistic Manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and other Libraries Volume 1. Italy. Agrigento to Novara* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 416.
46. For a wider discussion of the topic see Marco Sgarbi, ‘Francesco Robortello on Popularizing Knowledge’, in *Vernacular Aristotelianism in Italy From the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Warburg Institute, 2016), 75–92.

Proof

Proof

47. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, V D 45, 70^{r}.
48. Ibid., V D 45, 70^{v}.
49. The work was catalogued for the first time in *Catalogo dei codici che componevano l'archivio dei nobili conti Donà dalle Rose, ora presso il Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr*, Venezia, Museo Correr, ms. Donà dalle Rose 7, 433.
50. I have already ventured some of the ideas in this paragraph but in a very different form in Marco Sgarbi, 'Francesco Robortello's Rhetoric: On the Orator and His Arguments', *Rhetorica* 34 (2016): 243–67.
51. Cf. Ibid., 261.
52. Ibid., 262–3.
53. Ibid., 263.
54. On Robortello's use of example cf. Cesare Vasoli, *Francesco Patrizi da Cherso* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1989), 25–90; Cesare Vasoli, 'Il modello teorico', in *La storiografia umanistica* (Messina: Sicania, 1992), 24–31.
55. Sgarbi, 'Francesco Robortello's Rhetoric: On the Orator and His Arguments', 265.
56. Cf. Janet M. Atwill, *Rhetoric Reclaimed: Aristotle and the Liberal Arts Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 196–201.
57. Venice, Museo Correr, Donà dalle Rose 447.28, 6^{r-v}.

Bibliography

1. *Robortello's Works*

Robortello, Francesco. *De historica facultate, disputatio, Eiusdem Laconici, seu sudationis explicatio, Eiusdem De Nominibus Romanorum, Eiusdem De rhetorica facultate, Eiusdem explicatio in Catulli Epithalamium, Hic accesserunt eiusdem Annotationum in uaria tam Graecorum quam Latinorum loca Libri II, Ode Graceca quae βιοχρησμωδια inscribitur, Explanationes in primum Aeneid. Vergilii librum eodem Robortello praelegente collectae a Ioanne Baptista Busdrago Lucensi*. Firenze: Torrentino, 1548.

———. *De Vita et uictu populi romani sub impp. Caess. Augg. tomus primus, qui continet libros XV . . . Ejusdem disputationes nouem. Reliqui tomi, qui tres sunt, excudentur deinceps cum suis commentariis*. Bologna: Benati, 1559.

———. *De artificio dicendi*. Bologna: Benati, 1567.

2. *Manuscripts*

Venezia, Museo Correr, Donà dalle Rose 7.

Venezia, Museo Correr, Donà dalle Rose 447.28.

Venezia, Museo Correr, Donà dalle Rose 447.29.

3. *Primary Sources*

Cicero. *Rhetorica. Vol. II. Brutus, Orator, de Opt. Gen. Oratorum, Part. Orat., Topica*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Horace. *Opera*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Menander Rhetor. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ars rhetorica*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019.

Speroni, Sperone. *Opere*. Padova: Occhi, 1740.

Proof

Proof

Tomitano, Bernardino. *Quattro libri della lingua thoscana*. Padova: Olmo, 1570.
Zabarella, Jacopo. *Opera logica*. Frankfurt: Zetzner, 1597.

4. *Secondary Literature*

Atwill, Janet M. *Rhetoric Reclaimed: Aristotle and the Liberal Arts Tradition*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Bolzoni, Lina. *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press*. Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2001.

Cotugno, Alessio. *La scienza della parola. Retorica e linguistica di Sperone Speroni*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 2018.

Cox, Virginia. 'Ciceronian Rhetorical Theory in the Volgare: A Fourteenth-Century Text and Its Fifteenth-Century Readers'. In *Rhetoric and Renewal in the Latin West 1100–1544*, 201–25. Turnhout: Brepols, 2003.

Fournel, Jean Louis. 'La rhétorique vagabonde et le portrait de la vérité dans trois dialogues de Sperone Speroni'. In *Discours littéraires et pratiques politiques*, 11–59. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1987.

Fredborg, Karin M. 'Ciceronian Rhetoric and Dialectic'. In *The Rhetoric of Cicero in Its Medieval and Early Renaissance Commentary Tradition*, edited by Virginia Cox and John O. Ward, 165–92. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006.

Garin, Eugenio. *Medioevo e Rinascimento*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2005.

Gilbert, Neal W. *Renaissance Concepts of Method*. New York-London: New York University Press, 1960.

Girardi, Raffaele. 'Ercole e il Granchio, figure della retorica speroniana'. *Giornale storico della Letteratura Italiana* 167 (1990): 396–411.

Girotto, Carlo Alberto. 'Francesco Robortello da Bologna a Padova'. In *Il dialogo creativo. Studi per Lina Bolzoni*, 209–24. Pisa: Maria Pacini Fazzi, 2017.

Green, Lawrence D. 'The Reception of Aristotle's Rhetoric in the Renaissance'. In *Peripatetic Rhetoric After Aristotle: Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities*, 320–48. Oxford-New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1994.

———. 'Aristotle's Rhetoric Made Methodical'. In *Autour de Ramus: Texte, théorie, commentaire*, 135–73. Québec: Nuits Blanches, 1997.

Kristeller, Paul Oskar. *Iter Italicum. Iter Italicum: A Finding List of Uncatalogued or Incompletely Catalogued Humanistic Manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and Other Libraries Volume 6. Italy III and alia Itinera IV*. Leiden: Brill, 1991.

Liruti, Gian Giuseppe. *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*. Venezia: Fenzo, 1762.

Mack, Peter. *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric, 1380–1620*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

McNeely, Ian F. 'The Renaissance Academies Between Science and the Humanities'. *Configurations* 3 (2009): 227–58.

Milner, Stephen J. '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* 2 (2009): 221–44.

Monfasani, John. 'The Ciceronian Controversy'. In *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Volume III. The Renaissance*, edited by Glyn P. Norton, 395–401. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Ong, Walter J. *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Proof

Proof

Sabbadini, Remigio. *Storia del ciceronianismo e di altre questioni letterarie nell'età della rinascenza*. Torino: Loescher, 1885.

Seigel, Jerrold E. *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Renaissance Humanism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Sgarbi, Marco. *The Italian Mind: Vernacular Logic in Renaissance Italy (1540–1551)*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

———. 'Francesco Robortello on Popularizing Knowledge'. In *Vernacular Aristotelianism in Italy From the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century*, 75–92. London: The Warburg Institute, 2016.

———. 'Francesco Robortello's Rhetoric. On the Orator and His Arguments'. *Rhetorica* 34 (2016): 243–67.

Vasoli, Cesare. *Francesco Patrizi da Cherso*. Roma: Bulzoni, 1989.

Vianello, Valerio. 'Res e verba nel Dialogo della Retorica di Sperone Speroni'. *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 138 (1979–1980): 231–53.

Proof

Proof

5 Poetics

1. Fewer Distinctions

Robortello's system of rhetoric permeates his poetics to such an extent that rhetoric and poetry "agree in almost all things: they differ in this only, that the latter uses meters, the former prose discourse."[1] Bernard Weinberg makes this the cornerstone of his interpretation of Robortello's poetics, observing that, without recourse to any earlier exegesis on poetics, Robortello "was obliged to turn to other texts," and "the texts to which he turned were largely rhetorical texts."[2] In addition, in Robortello "there is thus, throughout, a desire to equate what is said in the *Poetics* with Horace's *Ars poetica* and with all the principal rhetorical writings of antiquity."[3] Although Weinberg's thesis on the union between poetics and rhetoric is correct in a general sense, the reasons he adduces are entirely extrinsic. The connection between poetry and rhetoric in fact rests upon the essential unity of the language arts outlined in the "Introduction," and which Robortello spells out in the first page of his most influential and widely discussed work, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*. Yet Weinberg's misinterpretation of the underlying causes of the fusion is not as damaging to his argument as his conclusions: if the "poetic system resembles a rhetorical system," and this similarity consists in the "production of a specific effect of persuasion upon a specific audience,"[4] then

> what emerges is a poetic method essentially different from Aristotle's. The fundamental alteration comes in the passage from a poetic to a rhetorical position, from a position in which the essential consideration is the achievement of the internal and structural relationships which will make the poem beautiful to one in which the main problem is the discovery of those devices which will produce a desired effect upon a specific audience [. . .]. But herein lies the basic departure of Robortello: the effect produced is no longer one of artistic pleasure resulting from the formal qualities of the work, but one of the moral persuasion to action or inaction [. . .] the sense of the total poetic structure is lost.[5]

Proof

Proof

Robortello's poetics thus amounts to mere rhetoric, not poetics proper, since, in Weinberg's view, the purpose of Aristotelian poetics is "artistic pleasure." Robortello allegedly departed from the Aristotelian perspective by embracing the notion that the purpose of poetry is primarily didactic and moralising, effectively creating a whole new poetics. This conflation of poetics with rhetoric is viewed as an indication of the inadequacy of Robortello's philological approach, which "lies in its complete disregard of methodological considerations, in its wresting of passages from context, in its destroying of systematic bases for the meaning of any statement or set of statements."[6]

Weinberg's uncompromising view is the direct result of an overzealously classificatory and systematising appraisal of Robortello's thought. Weinberg thinks that all models of poetics in the Cinquecento can be classified according to six distinct, non-overlapping categories: 1. poetry is essentially an art of discourse because it has to do with language; 2. poetry is a faculty of the mind; 3. poetry does not have to do with truth, but with one of the many variations of the probable or the false or the verisimilar; 4. poetry is an instrumental discipline; 5. poetry is the same genre as history; 6. poetry is a device of moral philosophy.[7] Robortello falls into the first group. As we shall see below, for Robortello poetry is a language art, but this does not exclude it from all the other categories. Moreover, Weinberg believes there were two main approaches to poetry, the scholastic approach, which lists the subjects under examination, and the Aristotelian approach, which looks at poetry through the four causes. Weinberg views Robortello as a straightforward scholastic, not an Aristotelian, when he asks "what the poetic faculty is, and what effect it has; what end it proposes for itself; what the subject matter is out of which it makes its product."[8] What Weinberg fails to realise, however, is that these subjects are in fact Aristotle's causes, and that Robortello should therefore by rights be considered both a scholastic and an Aristotelian. Lastly, Weinberg identifies three different types of argument: 1. poetics is viewed by analogy with other literary genres, especially through the concept of imitation; 2. Aristotle's poetics is explained in the light of Horace; 3. poetics is explained through rhetoric. According to Weinberg, Robortello adopts the latter approach alone, the other two being entirely unrelated.[9] It will become clear, however, not only that Robortello fits all three categories, but also that he fails to fall neatly into any one of them in particular. His approach is so profound and singular that it is in truth difficult to place him within a general framework.

Other scholars, too, such as Antonio Carlini and Eugene E. Ryan, have been led into the same trap by the same drive to schematise and simplify. Carlini, for example, expresses the opposite view to Weinberg's when he states that "Robortello saw the purpose of art to be a pleasure that was spiritual in nature," and that in his conception of poetics "concerns of a moral or educational nature appear in the background."[10] Inexplicably,

Proof

Proof

however, this idea is made to co-exist on the same page with its opposite when he writes that "the spectators, when attending a tragedy they see the characters speak and act in ways that are very close to the truth itself, become used to the pain, the fear and the feeling of compassion; hence, when they themselves come to be touched by the suffering that naturally accompanies mankind, they are less affected."[11] What pleasure can come from pain? How can this familiarity with pain and feeling compassion not be a kind of moral education? Ryan, on the other hand, states that catharsis for Robortello serves simply "to get rid of fear and pity in life,"[12] not as a moral education, or to lessen and purge other emotions, thus attacking Robortello on the same grounds as Vincenzo Maggi, as we shall see later.[13] To reduce Robortello's idea of catharsis in this way is both simplistic and misleading. All these interpretations appear to fall short of attempting to properly understand Robortello's poetics within a broader framework of the language arts as they relate to catharsis.

2. The Genesis of the *Explicationes*

In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes, published in Florence by Lorenzo Torrentino in 1548, is Robortello's first major work, and the first ever major commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics* to be printed. With this work Robortello made his name in the *studia humanitatis* and left his mark on the history of the Aristotelian tradition.

The story of the reception of Aristotle's *Poetics* is well known.[14] The work became known through a partial translation of Averroes's *Middle Commentary*.[15] In 1278, the *Poetics* was translated into Latin by William of Moerbeke, but the translation remained lost until 1895 and thus had no bearing on the subsequent Aristotelian tradition. The history of Aristotle's *Poetics* thus begins in 1498 with the Latin translation by Giorgio Valla. Aldo Manuzio's edition of the Greek text was published in 1508, not in the Aldine edition, but in the first volume of the *Rhetores graeci*. The first great impulse in the study of the *Poetics* came with the posthumous 1536 publication of Alessandro de' Pazzi's edition and translation, which made the Aristotelian text more intelligible than the Valla edition. In 1541, Bartolomeo Lombardi gave the first public lecture on the *Poetics* at the Accademia degli Infiammati.

The *Explicationes* thus came at an early stage of interest in Aristotle's work, and the question as to whether Robortello or Bartolomeo Lombardi and Vincenzo Maggi are to be credited with being the first to offer a treatment of it has often been the subject of debate. The origins of the *Explicationes* by Robortello are not clear. The first stirrings of interest came perhaps between 1539 and 1540, when he asked Vettori to obtain certain manuscripts, in particular the one by Athenaeus containing the Timocles fragment on catharsis. This may be more supposition than fact, but what is certain is that the first systematic studies on Aristotle's *Poetics*

Proof

Proof

date back to 1542 during the Lucca period. Hence we might say that Robortello on the one hand, and Maggi–Lombardi on the other, pursued lines of research that were parallel and not in competition, as a number of scholars have suggested.[16] In his *Annotationes*, published in 1543, Robortello takes the liberty of correcting the 1536 translation passage 1447b 25–28 of the *Poetics* by Alessandro de' Pazzi:

> εἰσὶ δέ τινες, αἳ πᾶσι χρῶνται τοῖς εἰρεμένοις, λέγω δὲ οἷον ῥυθμῷ, καὶ μέλει καὶ μέτρῳ, ὥσπερ ἥ τε τῶν διθυραμβικῶν ποίησις καὶ ἡ τῶν νόμων, καὶ ἥ τε τραγῳδία καὶ ἡ κωμῳδία.
>
> Sunt vero qui his omnibus promiscue utantur, numero dico, harmonia, metro, ut Dithyramborum, Mimorumue poësis, Tragoedia insuper, atque Comoedia.[17]

Pazzi translates τῶν νόμων as "mimorumue poesis," or farce. Robortello correctly suggests "poemata," or lyric, as the proper translation, because farce was a particular kind of comedy, and does not fit the subsequent classification of tragedy and comedy.[18]

The study of Aristotle's work must have been intense. In the letter of 11 June 1545, Robortello writes that the following academic year he would be hard pressed to teach Aristotle's *Poetics* because there was no commentary available at the time to clarify the text.[19] The date of 1545 is confirmed also by the dedicatory letter in the *Explicationes* addressed to Cosimo I de' Medici:

> It has been three years since I announced this work to the one who introduced me to you [Francesco Campana] [. . .] and that I have been languishing precariously in the sand with my strength interpreting the *Poetics* of Aristotle [. . .].[20]

This date too shows that Robortello was working independently on his study of Aristotle's *Poetics*, and that there was no plagiarising on his part of the work of Vincenzo Maggi. His interest in the *Poetics* dates back to well before the lessons delivered by Maggi in Ferrara between 1546 and 1547, and transcribed by Alessandro Sardi.[21]

The smoking gun is the Florentine manuscript II.IV.192, cc. 244r–250v, containing the inaugural speech on Aristotle's *Poetics*, which was delivered most probably in the presence of Cosimo I, and certainly of the teaching staff of the University of Pisa. Weinberg and scholars after him have commented erroneously on this autograph manuscript, identifying it as a lesson delivered by Robortello at the Florentine academy in 1548. The origin and reasoning behind this attribution is difficult to determine, in terms of both context and dating. Internal references in the text to a "certain academy" may have prompted the supposition that it was the Florentine academy rather than the University of Pisa, which is referred

Proof

Proof

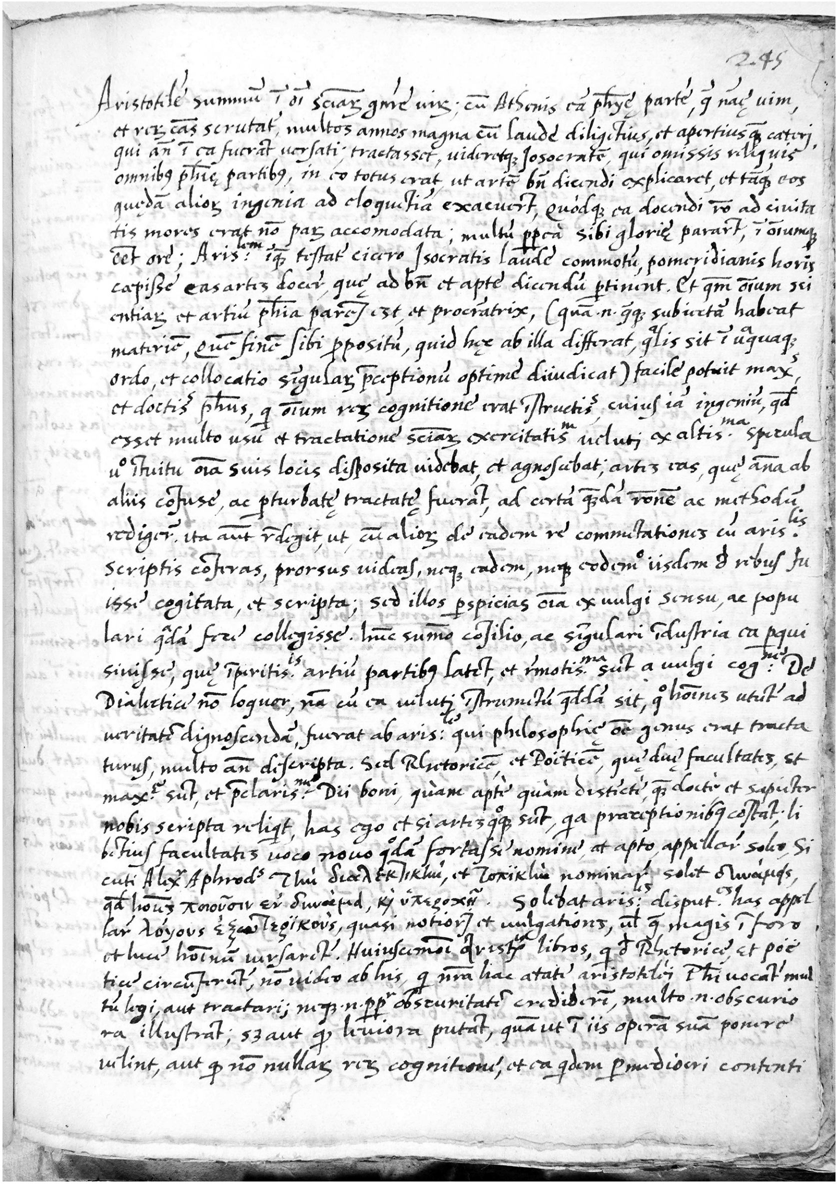


Figure 5.1 Manuscript II.IV.192, 245^{r}, Detail of the First Sheet

Source: © Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze. By permission of the Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali/Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze. Further reproduction or duplication by any means is prohibited.

Proof

Proof

to also as the "Academia Pisana" in the dedicatory letter of the *Explicationes*. Such a hypothesis has to be ruled out, however. Firstly, there is no evidence of Robortello frequenting the Florentine academy. Secondly, the lesson is in Latin, and, as far as we know, lessons at the Florentine Academy were delivered only in vernacular, never in Latin. Lastly, the style is very definitely that of a university lecture.

The manuscript is not dated, but there is reason to suppose that it was composed in 1545. Firstly, as in the letter of June 1545, Robortello writes that "hoc anno" he taught Aristotle's *Poetics* using "Horatii libello," given the obscurity and difficulty of the text.[22] And 1545 also fits with the "three years" mentioned in the dedicatory letter of 1548. There Robortello asserts that he would attempt to summarise and provide commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*.[23] What is more, there is a reference to Simone Porzio as a recent acquisition by the University, and we know that Porzio arrived in Pisa in 1544.

The manuscript is important in understanding the genesis of his commentary because it is overwhelmingly made up of passages that would be reused by Robortello in 1548, in both the dedication and the letter to the readers, as well as in the opening pages of the *Explicationes*, which are the most theoretical of the entire work. Additions made in the 1548 text are for the most part clarifications aimed at defining the discourse on poetics. For instance, where in the manuscript we read "Aristotelem summum in omni genere scientiarum, cum Athenis eam philosophia partem, quae naturae vim, et rerum causas scrutatur, multos annos magna cum laude diligentius, etc.,"[24] in the 1548 edition we read "Aristotelem summum in omni genere scientiarum *de Poetica quoque arte librum scripsisse*, cum *enim* Athenis eam philosophia partem, quae naturae vim, et rerum causas scrutatur, multos annos magna cum laude diligentius, etc."[25] Or, again, in the manuscript we find "Hinc est ab Aristotele dictum in Top.," with a note in the margin, "similis est locus est T Rhet l^{o} p^{o},"[26] which is taken up again in the 1548 edition: "Hinc est ab Aristotele dictum in Top. [. . .] & in Rhet. ad Theodecten lib. primo."[27] All these elements lead to the conclusion that the manuscript predates 1548 and may be ascribed to the autumn of 1545. The work was most likely finished by the end of 1546, as a letter dated 21 January 1547 from Francesco Spini to Piero Vettori testifies:

> I must not neglect to inform you of how our humanist [Robortello], as it seems to him that the previous year he had given the most exquisite interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics*, wishes now to present it to the whole world, and indeed has already more or less finished commenting on it; I do not say that he has made annotations about particular places, but he has taken on the mantle of a legitimate interpreter and he needs only to take care of the final touches [. . .] about all else he is resolute, and he has had it rewritten, and now as far as I know he is about to have it printed.[28]

Proof

Proof

He had to wait at least a year and a half before sending it to the printers. The reason for the delay is not known, but the reason that led Robortello to write this work is explained in the dedicatory letter and the letter to readers. Those so-called Aristotelian philosophers made in-depth studies of the thought of Aristotle but overlooked the *Poetics*, and had therefore done nothing to shed light on its obscurities.[29] In order to comment on this "extremely difficult and obscure" book, Robortello openly admits that he had to refer constantly to Horace. He is aware of being the first to attempt such a feat, although his rivals (Maggi in particular) would say that that is how he wished to present himself:

> The book [the *Poetics*] has remained unknown until our times, and no one, among either the Latins or the Greeks, has had the strength to clarify it with interpretations. Firstly, Averroes captured some of what he [Aristotle] wrote, but I cannot praise his as a great work, nor can I criticize it, because [the texts] are badly translated into Latin and obscure passages of the original have not been clarified. Secondly, the book was translated into Latin by Giorgio Valla, an erudite man who is well-versed in all things ancient. But, as usually happens to those who walk on ice, he slipped frequently while trying to render even the simplest terms. There was great relief when Alessandro de' Pazzi retranslated the book. [. . .] He too slipped, but he must not only be pardoned but also heaped with praise, because it is always dangerous to attempt to interpret such difficult matters [. . .]. I, too, cannot promise to have avoided making mistakes.[30]

In his own work, however, Robortello promises to correct many mistakes of previous editors, especially with "the lesson on manuscript books and the utterances of the most erudite authors."[31] Robortello's attempt must have been successful if Bernardo Segni in his *Rettorica et poetica d'Aristotele tradotte di greco in lingua vulgare fiorentina* wrote that the intellectual from Udine "made completely comprehensible this work to the point that that no obscurity is left."[32]

The novelty of Robortello's approach is that he made use of hitherto unused manuscripts, for which he provides a comprehensive list and description and for the first time gave theoretical interpretation. He uses four books, three of which are manuscripts. Two of the manuscripts were available in the Biblioteca Medicea. One, *Laurentianus* 60.14, claims to have been described by Angelo Poliziano, whereas the other, an apograph, "multo vetustior," could be the *Laurentianus gr.* 60.21, written by Francesco Filelfo on the basis of the *Parisinus gr.* 1741. Similarly difficult to identify is the third manuscript, which Robortello appears to have obtained with the help of Paolo Bevilacqua, who was summoned to teach Latin in Lucca around 1541 by Peter Martyr Vermigli. Francesco Donadi suggests it might be the *Riccardianus gr.* 46, used once already by Alessandro de' Pazzi.[33] The Greek edition of the printed book, on the

Proof

Proof

other hand, is most certainly by Vittore Trincavelli, and was published along with the Latin translation of Alessandro de' Pazzi.[34] The difference between Robortello and other scholars and humanists before him, who worked on Aristotle's *Poetics*, is that he understood the importance and the theoretical significance of this work, something that Poliziano, for instance, bypassed because he was immersed in a totally different intellectual climate and was moved by needs and questions more related to the humanistic tradition of the fifteenth century.[35] Robortello, on the other hand, interrogated the same documents with completely different questions and a spirit, which emerged that one might say was more scholastic, emerging as it did from the university context and framework.

3. Poetics and History

No one aside from Weinberg, and even he only cursorily, has recognised how Robortello rated the importance and the role of poetics within the broader system of the language arts. Without grasping the place poetics occupy within this encyclopaedic framework, it is not possible to properly understand what its subject, its topic, its form and its purpose are, and one risks lapsing into gross generalisations, creating positions which in turn generate artificial juxtapositions between writers or factions, as has indeed occurred.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Robortello wants to determine what the poetic faculty is, what effect it has, what end it proposes for itself and finally what its subject matter is.[36] Concerning the latter, Robortello is clear that the focus of the poetic faculty is discourse (*oratio*). His subject places it in relationship to all the other language arts, which differ only in their particular aspects. It is worth repeating here the entire passage because it is unchanged compared to the 1545 manuscript, of which it constitutes the most essential part:

> [. . .] demonstrative (for so it is proper to call apodictic discourse), dialectic, rhetoric, sophistic, poetic. [. . .] All these have discourse as their matter; indeed, since discourse assumes a different force and form, both from the kind of things which it treats and from the person who uses it to set forth or prove something, for that reason it is necessary that every discourse be different in some way. The most proper and genuine function of discourse is to express what is true. [. . .] Insofar as discourse of any kind departs from truth, to that same degree it moves nearer to what is false. Between truth and falseness in a kind of interval between the two, are placed τὸ ἔνδοξον, τὸ πιθανὸν, τὸ φαινόμενον which may be expressed in Latin as the probable (*probabile*), the persuasive (*suasorium*) and the apparently true, or that which seems probable (*apperens verum, seu probabile quod videtur*). From among these each separate faculty seizes upon one kind:

Proof

Proof

> demonstration, upon the true; dialectic, upon the probable; rhetoric, upon the persuasive; sophistic, upon that which has the appearance of probability, but in the sense of verisimilitude; poetics, upon the fictitious or the fabulous.[37]

In particular, for Robortello the subject-matter of poetics is fictional and fictitious discourse, which, in being fictional and fictitious, may also be considered mendacious. Poetics has a special relationship with what is false and mendacious, not in itself, but insofar as it is assumed to be true:

> since poetics has as its subject-matter fictitious and fictional discourse, it is clear that poetics can invent in a proper way its fiction and its untruth. In no other language art is it more fitting than with this one to intermingle lies. [. . .] In poetics false principles are taken as true, and from them true conclusions are derived.[38]

In the hierarchy of language arts, poetics occupies the place furthest removed from truth, but this does not mean it has no essential relation with it. There is an extremely close connection between the true and the poetic, for which Robortello gives a three-way description: "poetics speaks only of those actions which exist, or which can exist, or which have existed according to the ancient opinion of the human beings."[39] Poetics thus speaks of what exists, what is possible and what has been, in other words of present, future and past. If these are the objects of poetics, poetics itself must be related to another discipline, i.e. history, because history investigates above all what has been.

So, what is the difference? From the standpoint of the language arts there is nothing of any particular note, and in terms of discourse both may refer to the past. Of course, history is not permitted to speak of the present and future, as can poetry, but in terms of matter relating to the past, poetics and history appear to be on the same level, and history even seems to be a subgroup of poetry – indeed, in part it is. Nonetheless for Robortello there is a distinction that allows for some demarcation between poetry and history. History speaks about the past as it happened, whereas poetry speaks about the past by adding fictional elements. In other words, history is more sober than poetry, but when dealing with a well-structured poem, it nonetheless remains difficult to ascertain whether it is actually what it seems, or is rather to be viewed as history. Clearly Robortello introduces a great number of differences between history and poetry in his *Explicationes*, but since both are concerned with discourse they can be considered similar, or even sisters. Poetry may be considered a close equivalent of history, and vice versa, because it has a capacity to make what is simply fictional and imaginary true, and therefore similar to the truth. A poetic composition, therefore, on the outside, from the standpoint of discourse, appears no different to a historical account. In

Proof

Proof

order to understand this complex relationship, we can refer to a passage highlighted by Weinberg as crucial to an understanding of Robortello's thought:

> The things, actions and persons which a poet imitates are either true or invented. If true, they either exist now or did exist, or they are living or died long ago. If they exist and are living, the poet imitates them in two ways, either as they are commonly said to be or as they seem to be. If they are neither living nor exist, but died long ago, they are still imitated in these two ways, either as general opinion reports them to have been or as they seem to have been. If the persons are invented by the poet himself, he imitates and expresses them as it is fitting and proper that they should be.[40]

Rightly does Weinberg note how in this extremely detailed distinction it is no coincidence that the imitation of things as they are is missing, adding that if the poet "treats things as they are, then he trespasses upon the domain of the historian,"[41] a misleading clarification, however, since the historian deals with things not as they are, but as they have been. According to what has been said, the historian's function is similar to that of the poet if poetry speaks of things that have existed according to ancient opinion.

For Robortello, however, it is necessary to distinguish history from poetry: in history what has been can only have been in that particular way, whereas in poetry what has been said may be said differently by inventing or imitating. This does not mean telling falsehoods, indeed "the poetic faculty rejects those things which are absolutely false."[42] Poetry tells what has been as it swings between truth and falsehood with its fictions, whereas history gives accounts of things that have been necessarily so, and cannot present them in any other way: "the historian can change nothing in the account of the facts."[43]

A more complete distinction between history and poetry may be drawn from the commentary to the famous passage 1451 a 37 b-5 of the *Poetics*:

> From what we have said it will be seen that the poet's function is to describe, not the thing that has happened, but a kind of thing that might happen, i.e. what is possible as being probable or necessary. The distinction between historian and poet is not in the one writing prose and the other verse – you might put the work of Herodotus into verse, and it would still be a species of history; it consists really in this, that the one describes the thing that has been, and the other a kind of thing that might be.

In other words, Aristotle says that the distinguishing, and therefore essential feature of poetry is not the fact that it is written in verse – sure enough

Proof

Proof

Empedocles's poem is also written in verse but it is philosophy, not poetry. The essence of poetry is rather its imitative and mimetic nature: "the title of poet belongs to anyone who can produce mimesis."[44] Herodotus would have been a historian no matter what, even if his texts had been written in verse.

Robortello interprets this idea as Aristotle's rebellion against the popular and superficial notion that the distinction between poetry and history lies in the use of verse. Even someone who does not write in verse may be a poet, and not all who write in verse are poets.[45] Hence, Robortello concludes, for Aristotle "meter is not of the nature, force and essence of poetry."[46] Only imitation truly determines the fact of being poetic. Robortello seems to agree with Aristotle only up to a point, and in fact raises the question whether imitation without meter makes it sufficient to speak of poetry, as for instance in dialogues or epopeia. According to Robortello, only a composition in which "imitation and meter are conjoined"[47] may properly be called poetry.

From this Robortello infers that a poet must narrate the action not as it was, but as it might have been. In order to do this, however, he must pretend "according to the possible or the necessary, or according to the probable and the verisimilar."[48] But here Robortello immediately corrects Aristotle, clarifying that "nothing may be pretended from what is necessary because true actions depend on what is necessary."[49] The truth of past things, from the standpoint of the subject-matter, belongs to history, even though both are narratives. Truth belongs to the historian, imitation to the poet.

In his explanation of the lines that follow, Robortello refers not to the translation by Alessandro de' Pazzi, which he finds to be corrupted, but to the version contained in the oldest of the consulted manuscripts, the one which is current to this day. He explains:

> It is for historians to narrate actions as they happened. It is for poets to narrate things as they should have been, if they do not pretend, and if they do pretend, on the basis of how they can be according to probability or verisimilitude.[50]

We may note how in this second instance he has already expunged the necessary, in direct opposition to the Aristotelian dictate. In the relationship between poetry and history we find the greatest distance between Aristotle and Robortello. For Aristotle, history is concerned with detail, while poetry focuses on the universal, or more specifically the general:

> Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. By a universal statement I mean one as to what such or such a kind of human being will probably

Proof

Proof

> or necessarily say or do – which is the aim of poetry, though it affixes proper names to the characters; by a singular statement, one as to what, say, Alcibiades did or had done to him.[51]

It is well known that for Aristotle it is not possible to have a science of the particular, hence history can in no way be a science and cannot deal with the truth. Poetry, on the other hand, is concerned with the universal, or rather the general (καθόλου), as if it were a logical universal, something necessary which therefore comes close to being a science, even though it remains a productive art. Robortello completely turns Aristotle's discourse on its head and struggles to justify the Aristotelian position. He asks how it can be that poetry is more philosophical than history and be concerned with the universal if it focuses on a single action or a unitary action, as Aristotle himself explains in *Poetics* 1451 a 16–35. For Robortello this is possible because in staging an action it in fact stages a universal example: from a concrete particular we may deduce general conclusions and teachings.[52] Robortello makes clear how a poem like the *Odyssey* can teach through example: if one wants to describe the virtue of prudence, one can refer to Ulysses, removing accidental circumstances and transiting to the universal, depicting him as model of prudent behaviour.[53]

In other words, Robortello sees in poetry a specific application of the rhetorical influence of example, which we looked at in the previous chapter. This supports Weinberg's hypothesis according to which Robortello views poetics as a branch of rhetoric. The question is therefore how the poetic subject can become a universal example, which is tantamount to asking how the process of imitation comes about. It is only by fully understanding the role of imitation that it is possible to grasp the distinction between history and poetry, and how they each relate to rhetoric.

4. Imitation and Catharsis

Robortello's discourse on imitation is complex, and starts by establishing the purpose of poetry: "if we consider carefully, poetics bends all its efforts toward delighting, although it does also profit."[54] The main purpose of poetry is therefore pleasure, while profit is secondary, or at least so it seems according to the Aristotelian text. By pointing to pleasure as the purpose of poetry, Robortello is revisiting the Aristotelian conception laid out in *Metaphysics* I.1 981b 13–25. Here Aristotle clearly explains that the poetic arts are geared to pleasure and well-being (πρὸς ἡδονήν, πρὸς διαγωγήν). They are distinct from those arts which are necessary to life (πρὸς τἀναγκαῖα), as well as from those higher forms that are geared to neither pleasure nor profit. As we shall see, however, throughout his own argument Robortello insists on the usefulness of poetry rather than the pleasure it produces, because pleasure is in fact the outcome of a long process.

Proof

Proof

In order to explain the process, Robortello performs a philosophical and conceptual leap which will condition his entire conception of poetry. He writes that:

> There is, indeed, for the human being no greater pleasure, truly worthy of a liberal human being, than that which is perceived by the mind and by thought; it frequently happens that things which arouse horror and terror in human beings, as long as they are in their own nature, once they are taken out of nature and represented in some form resembling nature, give great pleasure [. . .] what other end, therefore, can we say that the poetic faculty has than to delight through the representation, description, and imitation of every human action, every emotion, every thing animate as well as inanimate.[55]

The passage had already been cited by Weinberg, who stated that two key points need highlighting: "first, that the pleasure is achieved *through* the imitation, which thus becomes an intermediate end; second, that the imitation is not only of human actions and passions (as in Aristotle) but of all kinds of objects as well."[56] Weinberg is no doubt right to underline the fact that for Robortello, unlike Aristotle, the object of imitation is not limited to action, but is open to many other aspects of human experience. What Weinberg fails to note is that Robortello associates the poetic faculty in his idea of mimetic activity with a kind of cognitive activity of the mind. Pleasure that derives from imitation is "perceived by the mind and by thought."[57] In *Poetics* 1448 b 5–9 Aristotle makes clear the nature of this pleasure:

> Imitation is natural to the human being from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation. [. . .] The explanation is to be found in a further fact: to be learning something is the greatest of pleasures not only to the philosopher but also to the rest of mankind, however small their capacity for it; the reason for the delight in seeing a picture is that one is at the same time learning.

Robortello's comment on this passage is extremely interesting because it is in fact a short treatise on psychology that shows, contrary to Weinberg, how in Robortello's thinking imitation may fall into the category of conceptions of poetics as a faculty of the mind.

Innate in all human beings, Robortello states, is a faculty the Greeks called φαντασία, which in Latin is known as "*vis cogitandi*," which is the cogitative faculty or the imagination. Its function is to transform sensations into images and transmit them to the intellect. By means of the imagination, human beings are able to conserve images in the mind and

Proof

Proof

to imitate them. It is thanks to the imagination that children are able to imitate the actions and words of adults. Robortello supports his thesis by citing the *Problemata*, 956 a 11–14, where it is asserted that the human being is the being most capable of imitating (μιμετικώτατον), and thus of learning. All early knowledge is acquired through imitation and, for Robortello, the device that more than any other allows the subject to know things easily is the example. An example "is simply the representation (*similitudine*) of certain things that existed before being perceived by the senses."[58] In *Rhetoric* 1393 a 27–29, Aristotle states that there are two varieties of example: "one consisting in the mention of actual past facts, the other in the invention of facts by the speaker." In regard to their subject, they may be divided into historical example and poetic example. In the historical example, the subject is something that really happened, is true, and in Robortello's view should be expunged from poetry, while for Aristotle, on the basis of what was said earlier, the historical example may be used for both the composing of history and for poetry.

What matters here is that imitation proceeds by means of a device contained in Aristotle's rhetoric. Robortello himself recalls passage 1356 b 22–23 of the *Rhetoric*, where it is stated that discourses may be based upon enthymeme as much as upon example, and that examples are no less persuasive because they "explain things better by placing them before the eyes."[59] From these considerations, Robortello is compelled to admit the primal, almost innate, character of imitation: "for human beings are born with a capacity for imitation, and in all human beings nature implants the ability to derive pleasure from imitation or from things expressed through imitation."[60] Robortello's inference here corresponds to *Rhetoric* 1371 b 4–10:

> Learning things and wondering at things are also pleasant for the most part; wondering implies the desire of learning, so that the object of wonder is an object of desire; while in learning one is brought into one's natural condition. [. . .] since learning and wondering are pleasant, it follows that such things as acts of imitation must be pleasant – for instance, painting, sculpture, poetry – and every product of skilful imitation; this latter, even if the object imitated is not itself pleasant; for it is not the object itself which here gives delight; the spectator draws inferences ('That is a so-and-so') and thus learns something fresh.

In light of the primal nature of learning by imitation, Robortello concludes that "poetry thus sets a twofold end for itself, one of which is prior to the other; the prior end is to imitate, the other to delight."[61] If imitation is prior to the pleasure, and from imitation one acquires first of all knowledge, and only then pleasure, knowing, which is useful, becomes the primary purpose rather than pleasure, in contradiction to what Robortello

Proof

Proof

had said previously in the wake of Aristotle – namely that pleasure came before profit. Any hedonistic interpretation of Robortello's thought, like that of Toffanin, must be excluded.

Robortello is thus interested in understanding what kind of knowledge, what kind of "usefulness," human beings can derive from imitation. If we look at passage 1448 b 5–9 of Aristotle's *Poetics*, quoted earlier, what is useful can only be what is learned by means of example, and which is above all the result of an imitation of actions: children learn from adults how to behave by example, which is therefore above all a moral example, its usefulness being by nature ethical, moral and political. This interpretation gained popularity relatively quickly as we can see in Giovanni Pietro Capriano's treatise on *Della vera poetica* in which he writes that

> the proper subject of poetics are human actions [. . .] because varying and representing human actions in the way that they should have occurred and reasonably happened and reducing them to universal ideas of actions and costumes, poetics instructs and teaches the soul and our life in the true, good and holy life either with such a kind of actions or with others.[62]

Poetics in Robortello is thus considered historically the antechamber to philosophy:

> poetry was formerly a kind of philosophy which, through its fables, gradually suckled and nurtured human beings until the time when they would be more capable of understanding things in philosophy which are most difficult.[63]

The purpose of poetry is therefore didactic-educational, and is aimed at improving behaviour, as Weinberg has already pointed out. Robortello is clear right from the prologue of the *Explicationes*:

> imitations are of various kinds, so they bring to the human being a multiple utility. If, on the one hand, the reading (or performance) and imitation consist in the virtue and the praise of some excellent human being, people are incited to virtue; if, on the other hand, vices are represented, people are strongly deterred from those vices, and they are driven away from them with much greater force than if you were to use any other form of persuasion.[64]

With moral example poetry seems to be more effective and persuasive than any other form of persuasion, including rhetoric. Here too, Robortello overturns the Aristotelian conception, wherein the enthymeme of rhetoric is more effective and persuasive than the example.[65] This reversal

Proof

Proof

is possible for Robortello because at its core there is the primal phenomenon of imitation that arises from the imagination:

> the representation or action on the stage joins together with the mind and the imagination of human beings in, I know not by what way, the image of the things which are represented, and acts upon the senses almost as if it were the thing itself. Furthermore, this representation is very powerful in moving and rousing the souls of human beings to anger and rage, on the one hand, or, on the other, in calling them back to gentleness and in softening them; now exciting them to pity, to sorrow, and tears, now to laughter and joy.[66]

Two points in Robortello's observation deserve comment. Firstly, poetic productions bring about changes in the passions of man, stimulating responses that are sometimes positive, sometimes negative. Further, such actions arise if and only if the represented object imitates things as they really are, or the truth. We shall come back to the latter aspect further on, but for the moment we must focus on the former. It goes without saying that poetic productions generate passions, but we need to understand how these passions can educate a human being. Robortello is quite clear on this point:

> if the imitation and performance on stage is of horrible things and of perils, the temerity and the insane audacity of human beings is diminished; but if things worthy of pity should be represented, the minds of the auditors are bent toward gentleness and pity. What more need I say? Every imitation and every poetic performance accompanied by action pulls, softens, drives, incites, touches, inflames the souls.[67]

The problem is therefore entirely contained in how we direct these passions that are generated by the poetic composition, so that we achieve a genuine moral education. Poetry is not, therefore, as Plato thought, a form of moral corruption which must be expunged from social and political reality because it excites passions; on the contrary, and in line with Aristotle, poetry for Robortello may be considered a positive device in the social education of a rounded individual who will strike the right balance between actions and passions. In *Ethica nicomachea* 1106 a 7–8 and 1106 b 8–23, Aristotle clearly states that

> we are neither called good nor bad, nor praised nor blamed, for the simple capacity of feeling the passions [. . .]. If it is thus, then, that every art does its work well – by looking to the intermediate and judging its works by this standard (so that we often say of good works of art that it is not possible either to take away or to add anything, implying that excess and defect destroy the goodness of works

Proof

Proof

> of art, while the mean preserves it; [. . .]), and if, further, excellence is more exact and better than any art, as nature also is, then it must have the quality of aiming at the intermediate. I mean moral excellence; for it is this that is concerned with passions and actions, and in these there is excess, defect, and the intermediate. For instance, both fear and confidence, and appetite and anger and pity and, in general, pleasure and pain, may be felt both too much and too little, and in all cases not well; but to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is characteristic of excellence.

On this point Robortello understands that Aristotle's concept of imitation is completely the opposite of Plato's because poetic imitation produces passions that serve to mitigate excess: "such passions do not at all corrupt the characters of human beings [. . .] but rather purge them of all kinds of perturbations."[68]

4. Catharsis

A key concept in Aristotle's poetics comes into play here that Robortello will embrace through a particular ethical and religious reading. The concept is catharsis. In the domain of poetry, for Aristotle catharsis concerns only tragedy, which is given a very particular definition: "a tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious [. . .] with incidents arousing pity (ἔλεος) and fear (φόβος), wherewith to accomplish the catharsis of such emotions."[69] The point needed reiterating because when speaking of catharsis in Aristotle the reference is always to tragic catharsis; in other words, not all imitation in poetry leads to catharsis. For instance, comedy does not purify. It is not possible to generalise by saying that poetry "purges" a soul of passions. Only tragedy can do this. It must be borne in mind that catharsis is not the purpose of poetry or tragedy, rather it is an effect of the artistic product that occurs at a psychic level and heightens the role of poetry in the political-social sphere.[70]

Aristotle's passage on catharsis is notoriously difficult to interpret, and has caused the most heated debates among scholars. The reason is simple: it is one of the few places where Aristotle speaks of catharsis. In order to explain the Aristotelian concept of catharsis, therefore, Robortello has to go to other parts of Aristotle and the Classical tradition. The first and most important place is the seventh chapter of the eighth book of the *Politics*, where Aristotle speaks of the cathartic power of music:

> music should be studied, not for the sake of one, but of many benefits, that is to say, with a view to education, or purgation (the word 'purgation' we use at present without explanation, but when hereafter

Proof

Proof

> we speak of poetry, we will treat the subject with more precision); music may also serve for intellectual enjoyment, for relaxation and for recreation after exertion. [. . .] For feelings such as pity and fear, or, again, enthusiasm, exist very strongly in some souls, and have more or less influence over all. Some persons fall into a religious frenzy, and we see them restored as a result of the sacred melodies – when they have used the melodies that excite the soul to mystic frenzy – as though they had found healing and purgation. Those who are influenced by pity or fear, and every emotional nature, must have a like experience, and others in so far as each is susceptible to such emotions, and all are in a manner purged and their souls lightened (κουφίζεισθαι) and delighted.

The reference here to ἔλεος and φόβος corresponds perfectly to the passage in the *Poetics*, thus seeming to expand the concept of catharsis to include tragedy as well as music, and indeed Robortello mentions the fact that every activity connected with the poetic art results in catharsis. In order to properly understand catharsis, Robortello refers to fragment 453 of Timocles, which is contained in the fifth book of the *Deipnosophistae* by Athenaeus of Naucratis. The passage states that the human being finds solace for its suffering in envisioning the suffering of others:

> Listen, my friend, it may be worth your while.
> Man is an animal that is born to toil,
> Whose life brings with it many a pain and grief,
> And these are ways he has found to win relief;
> His mind, beguiled to view another's woes,
> Forgets its own, is cheered, and wiser grows.
> Think first what tragedy can do for us.
> The poor man, once he learns that Telephus
> Was poorer, puts a limit to his carving, [. . .]
> Sum up your miseries, number up your sighs,
> The tragic stage shall give you tear for tear,
> And wash out all afflictions but its own.[71]

From this fragment Robortello takes the understanding that, when absorbed by the woes of others, the mind forgets its own, thus experiencing a kind of pleasure, and misfortune is thereby in some sense known and tamed. The example of Timocles is of particular interest to Robortello as it shows the double functionality of taming and providing pleasure: if one is poor and witnesses Telephos, who was once poorer than him, his poverty will be more easily borne. Examples from tragedy are universal because there is no ill-fortune that others, be they real or fictional, have not suffered to a greater degree than the spectator, and simply to think upon this fact is sufficient for everyone to lament their own woes less. Robortello also finds in the words of Timocles support for his theory

Proof

Proof

of tragedy as a device for moral education by means of catharsis, from which pleasure ensues. Naturally there is no question here of whether Timocles might in fact have been poking fun at the Aristotelian conception of tragedy, because, as Déborah Blocker rightly points out, "without context or commentary, in the eyes of the Italian humanist these verses by Timocles would appear at first blush to sum up the positions attributed to Aristotle."[72]

On the educational value of poetry by means of catharsis Robortello finds confirmation in other authors, but he must first respond to Proclus's objections in the *Commentary on Plato's Republic*, where he tackles the problem of whether "it was irrational to banish tragedy and comedy if in fact it is possible through them to moderately satisfy the emotions and once having satisfied them to create a situation beneficial for education, having treated the irritation they cause."[73] Proclus, here paraphrased by Robortello, makes the point that:

> Every representation of complex and diverse characters, inasmuch as it easily enters the minds of the audience as mimetic and because of its diversity is harmful to them (since whatever the objects of imitation are, that is what the spectator who empathizes with the imitations will become), is utterly alien to the education of the young to virtue. Virtue is something simple and very similar to the divine itself, to which we say that the One especially belongs. He who is going to approach as closely as possible such an entity must see the life that is the opposite of simplicity, and so it will be necessary for him to be pure of all complexity.[74]

Robortello takes Proclus's caution on board, explaining that all poetic works that imitate the behaviour, habits and customs of people cannot but have a powerful impact on the minds of the spectators or listeners, and for this very reason caution must be exercised when selecting behaviour for dramatisation: "we must be mindful of tragedy and comedy, which imitate every kind of habit."[75] Not everything should be imitated, therefore, because not everything generates catharsis. Another passage in Proclus strikes Robortello, namely where he states that in the minds of children tragedy and comedy engender:

> a condition that is wicked and not easily eradicated, destroying that which is one and simple [. . .] the one [comedy] in aiming the love of pleasure and leading to irrational laughter, the other [tragedy] developing the love of pain and inducing unseemly lamentation [. . .] the statesman must contrive some sort of purgation of these emotions [. . .].[76]

Blocker is right in saying that Robortello sees evidence for Proclus's anti-Aristotelian stance in his misuse of the term ἀφοσίωσις, which means

Proof

Proof

"expiation" rather than "purification" or "catharsis." The distinction, but also similarity, between these two procedures is documented in the *Quaestiones graecae* by Plutarch, in particular in 46, where it is written: "What is the reason that the Trallians call the pulse evil (ὄροβος) purifying (καθαρτής), and use it especially in expiations (ἀφοσιώσεις) and purifications (καθαρμούς)." It is interesting to note that in Proclus's text the politician or statesman must purge these emotions, an assumption Robortello makes as well. To purge does not mean to completely eradicate these passions, only their excess: the soul needs cleansing from irrational pleasure and unseemly lamentation. It is by curbing the excesses of the emotions that a human being may be set on the path of virtuous behaviour according to the Aristotelian principle of the golden mean. Through Proclus, Robortello closes the gap between Plato and Aristotle. Plato condemns poetry, as would Aristotle if poetry did indeed lead to excess. But precisely because it cannot lead to excess, Aristotle promotes the kind of poetry that limits the excesses of passions and emotions. Robortello is quite clear on this point:

> There are two reasons why Plato rejected imitations and recitals. One concerns the variety of customs. The other is that they agitate the soul more. Everyone must, as far as possible, contain the affects of the soul. [. . .] Plato does not approve of the variety of customs because in this manner poetry would not be geared to what is useful and to the education of human beings: it is not necessary to imitate anyone other than the good and the wise. [. . .] human beings by nature of note should be imitations [. . .] and the imitation of the variety of customs is extremely pleasant, but it is not useful to the education of human beings.[77]

In line with Sextus Empiricus, Robortello writes that Epicurus himself had remarked on the pedagogical value of poetry,[78] which consists in limiting the intensity of pleasure, understood by the Epicureans as the elimination of all that produces pain.[79] This is not to say that for Robortello catharsis leads to the elimination of pain or the purification of compassion and terror. Some scholars, like Eugene E. Ryan, have reached just such a conclusion following Vincenzo Maggi, who, against Robortello, writes that: AuQ2

> A spectator at a tragedy undergoes feelings of pity and of fear: of pity, due to his recognition that the evil events that have happened to the individuals in the tragedy have come about because of some ignorance or misjudgment on their part, not because of their malevolence; of fear, due to his recognition that the same sort of thing could happen to himself, no matter how good his intentions. The goal of this experience is the purification of emotions; the aim is not that of

Proof

Proof

> liberating the spectator's soul from pity and fear. If the spectators witness tragic actions on stage (which are in fact crimes that originate in ignorance), they will find themselves moved by compassion and fear, the fear that the same could happen to them. [. . .] If tragedy were to free this dictator from fear, the fear of themselves committing the same kind of crime, then tragedy would make human beings all too ready to commit heinous crimes. And this is clearly absurd.[80]

According to Maggi, therefore, Robortello held a position that was contradictory and absurd: fear and compassion were intended to cancel out feelings of fear and compassion, but this is evidently impossible. This is obviously not Robortello's position in regard to catharsis, which is made clear in the contrast between Plato and Aristotle:

> [Aristotle] did not agree with [Plato] in so far as Plato did not wish the passions and perturbations of the soul to abound in poems; for he thought of an imitation of this kind in entirely different terms than did Plato. Such passions do not at all corrupt the characters of human beings or become more abundant in their souls, but rather purge them of all kinds of perturbations.[81]

For Robortello catharsis cleanses not only compassion and terror but all excessive agitations of the soul, by which is meant all the peaks of passion and emotion that are generated.

Robortello's idea of catharsis cannot be reduced to a simplistic formulation, such as is attempted by Stephen Halliwell when he writes that it consists primarily in the "acquisition of emotional fortitude," as opposed to Maggi's moralistic conception of catharsis and the notion of moderation and the golden mean of Vettori and Piccolomini.[82] All three factors converge in Robortello: catharsis has didactic and pedagogical purposes that involve discovering the right balance between the passions through the acquisition of emotional fortitude, safeguarding humans from the excesses of violent passions. Robortello clearly states that "when people see stage productions [. . .] they become accustomed to suffering, being afraid and feeling compassion, and so should it come about that they have the same experience, they would suffer and fear less."[83] This habit mitigates passions which otherwise would prove excessive, and can therefore be said to moralise the behaviour of humans. In this age of Counter-Reformation, Robortello's concept of catharsis is enriched additionally by a pedagogical and religious agenda as if the dominant tone stems from his proximity to the circle of *Spirituali*. In the *Explicationes*, Robortello writes that "the true fear (*metus*) is like nothing other than a frightening religion through which the souls of human beings are repressed; indeed, true religion is what is accompanied by devotion and mercy for the gods in order to obtain the maxim profit."[84]

Proof

Proof

It is possible to fully understand Robortello's complex position only with reference to someone who, in Robortello's view, has best represented the process of tragic catharsis on stage, namely Euripides. Robortello offers a reflection on Euripides in his commentary to *Poetics* 1453 a 29–31, where he states that he "is to the uttermost degree the tragic poet." Robortello mentions a series of texts, focusing in particular on *Helen*, *Alcestis*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Oenomaos*, *Rhesus*, *Hippolitus*, *Ifigenia in Aulis*, *Orestes*, and noting how Euripides's skill may be attributed to his deep knowledge of philosophy, which he acquired from his lessons with Anaxagoras and Socrates.[85] Thanks to Euripides, Robortello is able to consolidate his idea of emotional fortitude obtained through catharsis.[86]

One extremely significant passage is in fragment 573 of the *Oenomaos*, where Euripides states that:

> Yet there is a pleasure that human beings can take in their woes, the pleasure of lamentation and floods of tears. These things lighten (κουφίζει) the pains within their minds and ease (ἔλυσε) the excessive suffering of their hearts.

According to Euripides, from the lamentation and tears of others, human beings may be unburdened and relieved of the excesses of the passions. This process is a form of relief, not the elimination of passions. People are simply better able to tolerate such pain. In this context Euripides uses the verb κουφίζω, which is chosen by Aristotle in the abovementioned passage of the *Politics* to refer to the lightening of the excesses of the passions. Euripides may also have been the source for the confutation of the notion that pity and fear are not the passions one should seek to be freed from by means of compassion and fear themselves, as maintained by Maggi. In *Iphigenias in Tauris* Euripides writes that "not wise I count him, who, when doomed to death, by pity (οἴκτῳ) would its terrors (δεῖμα) quell."[87] Οἶκτος as a definition of pity may be found also in the *Electra*, where "pity dwells, albeit ne'er in churls, yet in the wise."[88] Pity is not for the ignorant but for the wise, and upon the wise, or upon people of a certain cultural level, according to Robortello, tragedy may have a cathartic effect, as we shall see. From Robortello's 1545 letter to Vettori we learn that in his reading of the *Electra* Robortello gained an insight into poetic catharsis:

> Three days ago I received a letter from you along with the tragedy of *Electra* by Euripides. [. . .] the tragedy is ancient, beautiful, sophisticated, erudite, and by Euripides. [. . .] I have read it already three times and I have resolved that for the great amount of knowledge, which may be gleaned from it: for the admirable composition of the poem, for the gravity of its message, for the various affects, which are seen to be constrained in the passions, it is a law worth [. . .] following.[89]

Proof

Proof

The cathartic effect of oppressing, or limiting, without cancelling out the affects by means of the passions is achieved by the style of the text and its content. Euripides had further inspiration for Robortello, for example in fragment 964 of *Theseus*, where it says that:

> I learned . . . from a wise man: I accustomed my mind to turn to anxieties and misfortunes, presenting to myself exile from my fatherland, and untimely death, and other paths of misery, so that, should I suffer any of the things I imagined in my thoughts, nothing might befall me unexpectedly and hurt me the more.

Euripides' position is clear: the wise know that to accustom the mind to pain and to imagine future misfortune can relieve the soul from potential suffering. The fragment is echoed in the *Suppliants*:

> Wisely doth wealth consider poverty
> Wisely to wealth the poor uplifts his eyes
> Aspiring, that desire of good may spur him
> So ought the prosperous to look on woe.
> The tragic poet's self in gladness should bring forth
> His offspring, song; if he attains not this,
> He cannot from a heart distraught with pain
> Gladden his fellow [. . .].[90] AuQ3

Euripides mentions a cathartic process which may essentially be attributed to the tragic poet, which is to be understood as a purification from the excesses of the passions and as the acquisition of a strong mind. In other words, as correctly pointed out by Carlo Diano, Euripides simply puts on stage τέχνη ἀλυπία, which the Sophists already associated with the poetic art. According to the pseudo-Plutarch in the *Vitae Decem Oratorum*, Antiphon, "while he was engaged in writing poetry, invented an art for alleviating sorrow (τέχνην ἀλυπίας), just like the kind of treatment doctors give to patients."[91] This comment is particularly AuQ4 interesting because it shows how the τέχνη ἀλυπία was considered a kind of purge administered to the sick by doctors. The poetic purification of τέχνη ἀλυπία is thus associated with physiological purgation, in precisely the same way as Aristotelian catharsis. Gorgias is even more specific:

> Speech is a great potentate [. . .] for it is able to dispel fear (φόβον), to assuage grief, to inculcate joy, and to evoke pity (ἔλεον). . . . All poetry I judge and define to be speech in verse; when the audience hears it, terrifying horror, tearful pity (ἔλεος), and sorrowful longing enter them, and the soul experiences its own emotion at the actions and feeling of others in their fortunes and misfortunes, produced through words.[92] AuQ5

Proof

Proof

The correspondence between the passage from Gorgias and Aristotle's definition of tragedy, both conceptually and terminologically speaking, is striking. From all these texts Robortello could not but draw the conclusion that by means of φόβος and ἔλεος tragedy produces a cathartic effect on the mind, which grows accustomed to suffering and therefore mitigates the excesses of its passions.

Maggi's criticism that catharsis for Robortello was simply the elimination of pity and fear is effectively debunked by all the authors who after 1548 adopted Robortello's interpretation. See, for instance, the letter dated 25 September 1564 from Sperone Speroni to Alvise Mocenigo:

> It appears strange that tragedy by moving feelings of pain purifies us of them, as it would seem that by being moved they would not be purged, but made even greater. It is not so. It appears therefore that Aristotle wishes for mankind, in order to learn not to be afraid and to have no pity, to become accustomed through tragedies to seeing pitiful and terrifying things [. . .] with a thousand reasons and examples I would prove to you that that movement of painful feelings prepares for purification [. . .] because use makes things familiar to us [. . .] uses tragedy to do that which is not understood by the laws and does not command like a law, but by insinuating itself into our minds teaches us not to fear death, not to feel pity for the horrible deeds of evildoers: and in general it teaches us fortitude and justice. [. . .] because he understands these affects, he is more Stoic than Peripatetic, because Aristotle does not want us to be free from the affects, but that we learn to regulate them so that they do not become bad. Therefore he would not say *ut liberemur ab hujusmodi affectibus*, or *ut purgemur ab his*, but rather *ut eos purgemus*.[93]

He tells his correspondent that it is no strange thing to think that pity and fear can purge the passions because tragedy creates a familiarity with death and suffering which is than transformed into fortitude and justice. To purge the soul's passions, for Speroni, does not mean to eliminate them, because otherwise Aristotle would indeed be more Stoic then Aristotelian. Aristotle's purpose is therefore not to be free of the passions, but to regulate them and limit their excesses – thus the legacy of Robortello's interpretation lived on.

Alessandro Piccolomini finds Maggi's position to be somewhat "sophistical" in its opposition to Robortello and its reduction of his perspective to the mere elimination of passions. So he writes that:

> The philosophers have striven as much to pacify the soul as to seek to purge it of those feelings, like the Stoics who did not think it possible to find lasting peace and happiness, or to instill it in a human being without completely extirpating the feelings at their root. The

Proof

Proof

> Peripatetics, however, who knew that the feelings of mankind, if they stay within their allotted boundaries, are natural to a human being and are therefore necessary to his life, likewise (they) surmised that in order to make human beings peaceful they did not need to remove, to uproot and completely eliminate them, as this did not happen in nature itself; but they needed rather to purge, moderate, and in other words reduce to a certain good temperament, the rule and the measure of which purification and tempering they placed in the hand of reason, each time they conformed to which they would be deemed moderate and purified.[94]

For Piccolomini, too, catharsis does not free an individual temperament from pity and fear, rather it mitigates the passions. Further confirmation of Robortello's position comes from Antonio Riccoboni, who typically makes Robortello's ideas his own, making skilful use additionally – as we have seen – of the manuscripts. In his paraphrase of the *Poetics*, Riccoboni writes that:

> Thanks to their familiarity with beauty and fear the spectators are purged of fear and pity, meaning that they are tempered and moderate. And in this sense, human beings do not become overly merciful and timorous, as Plato believed, but on the contrary more generous and strong.[95]

For all these writers, catharsis, in line with Robortello, has a moral and educational function over and above that of pleasure. Piccolomini says it explicitly: "I have always been of the opinion that the main aim not only of tragedy but of all kinds of poetry, and of poetry in itself, is not pleasure, as some think, but profit and the beneficial."[96] Piccolomini extended Robortello's thought, bringing it to its logical conclusion by saying that the primary purpose not only of tragedy but of all poetry is the useful or the profitable, whereby he meant that which educates. Zabarella incorporates Robortello's idea into his *De natura logicae*, in which he writes the "natural aim of poetics is profit, through the correction of behaviour and the purgation of passions." Pleasure is merely additional. In short, proper to poetics is "profit, while pleasure is secondary."[97]

Catharsis for Robortello may lead to a purification of the passions and moral education, but this is possible only in instances of tragedy of a certain kind.

5. Poetics and Rhetoric

In order for catharsis to be effective, the poetic composition must have a certain kind of connection with the truth. Although a work of fiction, the poetic composition must seem to be true. The connection with truth

Proof

Proof

is so powerful that, as we saw in the initial definition of the poetic discipline, "in poetics false principles are taken as true."[98] The poet's skill therefore lies in making one believe that what is being told is true – in other words, he seeks in one way or another to engage in persuasion. But since persuasion is an aspect of rhetoric, a more subtle and essential relationship between this and poetics must exist. This intimate connection works on two levels, the first of which was established at the beginning of the *Explicationes*: "since this imitation or representation is produced by means of discourse, we may say that the end of poetry is language which imitates, just as that of rhetoric is language which persuades."[99] The connection consists in their both being language arts, insofar as both deal with language, albeit for different purposes. But these two purposes differ only up to a point, and it is here that a second affinity between poetics and rhetoric is found, as Weinberg correctly noted.

The most important and perhaps most interesting connection between these two disciplines is their relationship with truth. In the domain of poetic composition, in Robortello's view, catharsis is effective only when human beings "hear and see people saying and doing things which very closely approach truth itself," and in this manner "they become accustomed to suffering, to fearing, to pitying."[100] The creation of the habit that allows the excesses of the passions to be mitigated and suffering to be assuaged by means of poetic composition is possible only if the imitations are things that come close to the truth.

> If a tragic plot contained an action which did not really take place and was not true, but was represented by the poet himself in accordance with verisimilitude, it would perhaps move the souls of the auditors, but certainly less. For, if verisimilar things give us pleasure, all the pleasure derives from the fact that we know these things to be present in the truth; and, in general, to the extent that the verisimilar partakes of truth it has the power to move and to persuade. . . . If verisimilar things move us, the true will move us much more. Verisimilar things move us because we believe it to have been possible for the event to come about in this way. True things move us because we know that it did come about in this way. Whatever virtue is thus contained in verisimilitude is derived totally from its relationship to truth.[101]

Verisimilar things move the soul less than true things, a fact which Robortello explains in strictly epistemological terms. The passions are purified and pleasure is experienced because there is the knowledge that what is being put on stage and is so tragic is in fact real, or really happened. The power of imitation to purify the passions is based on the proximity of the action that is imitated to what is true. The verisimilar that is imitated is

Proof

Proof

effective if and only if it produces in the soul the conviction that it is not fictional, but something true. In other words, poetics, like rhetoric, aims to produce an effect of persuasion on the spectator. Only when what is seen is believed to be true may the purpose of poetics be fulfilled. For Robortello, as we have seen, the subject of imitation is not only actions, as it was for Aristotle, but also the characters, hence the criterion of verisimilitude in respect of persuasion applies also to them:

> if the persons are true and the actions in themselves and the outcome of the deeds related are true, then the characters of the person must be expressed by the poet according to the necessary, that is (as Averroes correctly explains it) according to the truth. If the persons are new, their characters will have to be expressed according to the verisimilar, that is (as the same Averroes interprets it), according to the opinion of the majority.[102]

In poetics, which is distinct from history precisely because it deals with things that are verisimilar rather than necessary, the character, like the action, of a tragedy will be effective if and only if it is similar to the truth. A system for evaluating imitation comes into play which stems from knowledge. Only he who knows the truth may perceive that what is put on stage is verisimilar. The problem is that most people do not have knowledge of this truth and are unable to identify the relationship with verisimilitude in what is being shown. When confronted with a tragedy, therefore, they are often unable to understand, and are therefore not purified by the actions, being rather perturbed by them, which in effect triggers the opposite of the intended result. In fact, the preference of the masses is for things that are pleasant, namely the type of poetic art provided by comedy. But a comedy, according to Robortello, here following Aristotle, does not offer true pleasure. Indeed, true pleasure comes from tragedy, from imitation that leads to catharsis. The pleasure of comedy "pleases because it imitates in a joyous fashion the ridiculous actions of human beings," whereas the pleasure of tragedy pleases "because it imitates in artistic fashion the sorrow, the lamentation, and the calamity of mortal human beings." A final flourish: "if you should ask which is the greater pleasure of the two, I should dare to affirm that the one deriving from tragedy is much greater."[103]

It is only when all these components – imitation, verisimilitude, catharsis – come together that tragedy may be called ethical and achieves its goal:

> an ethical tragedy is one in which many things are said relevant to the regulation of life and in which the poet undertakes this exceedingly difficult task of expressing the sacredness of moral standards and the

Proof

Proof

> probity of behaviour in individual persons, and sets forth precepts and certain common maxims by which human beings are admonished to follow virtue and to do those things which are honourable.[104]

The close connection between poetics and rhetoric, not to mention the emphasis on persuasion poetics must display in a measure equal to that of rhetoric in order to achieve its aims, reveals, as Weinberg observes correctly, an elitist approach to the poetic art. A correct appreciation of poetry, especially tragedy, is not possible for everyone, according to Robortello, but only for those who have the capacity to recognise verisimilitude: "note his disdain for the demands made upon the poet by the 'rough and ignorant crowd of human beings' and his indication that these demands must be ignored in favour of the requirements of the 'wise'."[105] Moreover, and in full compliance with Aristotle, he who knows what is true is also one who acts according to truth, and is therefore also good: "the whole basis of the sympathy of an audience for character, of purgation and moral effect upon the audience, rest upon the assumption that the audience is so constituted."[106] What Weinberg misses, however, is that poetics seeks by means of rhetoric to facilitate access to a certain type of knowledge and moral behaviour. This approach is particularly evident in the *De artificio dicendi*.

If for humanists rhetoric had as one of its aims the embellishment of discourse, making it sometimes very complicated and artificial, for Robortello rhetoric did not serve such a purpose, nor was it related to persuading and deceiving. Rhetoric was primarily useful for making knowledge more understandable and relevant to a wider public.[107] In the process of making it more comprehensible, however, the discourse would sometimes fail to reflect precisely and without distortion the true state of things. This does not mean for Robortello deceiving or providing knowledge that is erroneous or simplistic, rather that one should offer knowledge that is accessible to all kinds of people whose learning would thereby gain in depth and detail. Thus rhetoric, and poetics via its assistance, is particularly necessary in education and teaching, in other words as a means of introducing everyone to the knowledge of things, and influencing their actions. Indeed, one who is already a philosopher does not require rhetoric or poetics in order to know the truth, being already capable of penetrating the innermost secrets of things: rhetoric accommodates the truth for common people. Rhetorical discourse, this conveyor of truth, is specifically called 'oratorical' and it is articulate in a theatrical way like the poetical. Unlike the discourse of philosophy, which deals with truth in itself by means of strict syllogistic arguments, oratorical discourse and poetry must, for Robortello, command a certain degree of eloquence in order to be persuasive. In fact, oratorical discourse has the task of making knowledge clear to the populace and giving them the opportunity to judge 'concretely' the truth or the falsity of what has been seen.[108]

Proof

Proof

In order to convey truth, science usually employs either the dialectical (also called disputative) or the demonstrative process, neither of which is capable of generating knowledge for the populace.

The dialectical process, which proceeds by answers and questions, has the defect of being fragmented and not continuous, and sometimes it presupposes that the listener knows the topic of discussion, or at the very least is interested in it. The demonstrative method is proper to philosophers and scientists, but proceeds according to continuous and cogent arguments which are sometimes very complicated. Moreover, it starts from necessary propositions that must be known a priori and which the populace cannot know.[109] The oratorical method, on the other hand, which is adequate for popularising knowledge, should be as continuous as the demonstrative one, but should proceed from probable premises, or at least one taken to be true by the populace since the populace itself can start from common and shared knowledge and then refine what it has learned.[110]

Not all knowledge can be popularised, according to Robortello, indeed there are some disciplines such as jurisprudence, mathematics and theology, that in themselves can also be eloquent, but which common people find it hard to access primarily because they employ so many technical and specific terms that resist popularisation. Medicine and architecture, on the other hand, are an exception, because, despite being highly technical, the terms they use are learned for their utility as a matter of necessity, for instance in restoring health or building a house.[111] This observation has given rise to the belief that Robortello maintains the idea of possible popularisation for only certain topics that are of ordinary practical interest for people generally.

Common people can learn only through oratorical discourse, which is limited neither by brevity nor specific technical terms.[112] In general, Robortello states, a scientific or philosophical discourse is that which is constituted of words, such as universal terms, that are little known to the mob. On the contrary, popular discourse is that which refers directly to things whose terms are instantly comprehensible and shared by all, and which are publicly useful. For Robortello the importance of popular discourse, as with oratory and poetry, is primarily practical and moral, in other words it serves to educate and orient actions. This moral discourse is of two kinds, one concerning ethical precepts about how to live well, the other explaining happiness and the nature of the good. The first kind, developed by authors such as Hesiod, Epictetus and Vergil, is for Robortello already sufficiently popular and oratorical. The moral discourse that is yet to be vulgarised and translated is concerned with virtues and vices, good and evil actions, the definitions of happiness and goodness in a general and abstract way beyond what is immediately comprehensible to common people. As we have seen, in the manuscript entitled 'Regula deducendi sermonem philosophicum ad oratorium', Robortello

Proof

Proof

maintains that there are four techniques for making knowledge popular, in other words for transforming an intellectually challenging truth and making it relevant to a broader public. The orator and the poet can use these techniques to explain in more than one way, and thus more effectively, notions that are not completely clear to the populace.[113] They both employ the inference of example.

Rhetoric and poetics therefore share for Robortello the same destination in being a tool for reaching a wider audience in order to educate and to produce moral behaviour. The significance and contribution of Robortello to the history of Aristotelian poetics is not, therefore, limited to the rediscovery of a text, but concerns a more general re-evaluation of artistic production, of the art of poetry as a device not merely for pleasure and entertainment but also for moral edification.

More than one author followed Robortello's lesson. Capriano in his treatise writes that "the true and good poet makes and arranges the thread of imitation of customs of the passions of human beings following that part of philosophy that is called moral."[114] Benedetto Varchi immediately absorbed this conception, and in the lessons on *Della poetica* says that poetics requires ethics and politics and that "who believes himself to be a poet without moral and civil philosophy deceives himself just as he who believes himself to paint without colours and brush."[115] Julius Caesar Scaliger writes that poetics is the doctrine through which "the customs of the souls are conducted to the right way and from which follows the perfect action of the human being, which is called beatitude." Indeed, "poetics is a part of politics."[116] Following his master, Zabarella will reach the conclusion that poetics and rhetorics are instrumental faculties which help civil man to act in a good way.[117] Finally, Giason Denores in his *Discorso intorno a que principii, cause, et accrescimenti, che la comedia, la tragedia, et il poema herioico ricevono dalla philosophia morale, & civile, & da governatori delle republiche* writes that poetics, like rhetoric, "is submitted to moral and civic philosophy."[118] This represents a decisive moral turn in the history of poetics and literary criticism in the age of the Counter-Reformation to which Robortello contributed a highly original interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Notes

1. Bernard Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961), 66.
2. Bernard Weinberg, 'Robortello on the Poetics', in *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1952), 348.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 345.
5. Ibid., 346.
6. Ibid., 348.
7. Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, 6–35.

Proof

Proof

8. Francesco Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes: qui ab eodem ex manuscriptis libris, multis in locis emendatus fuit, ut iam difficillimus, ac obscurissimus liber a nullo ante declaratus, facile ab omnibus possit intelligi. Cum Indice rerum et uerborum locupletissimo. Francisci Robortelli Vtinensis Paraphrasis in librum Horatii, qui uulgo De Arte poetica ad Pisones inscribitur. Eiusdem explicationes de satyra, de epigrammata, de comoedia, de salibus, de elegia. Quae omnia addita ab authore fuerunt, ut nihil quod ad poeticam spectaret desiderari posset: Nam in iis scribendis Aristotelis methodum seruauit: et ex ipsius libello de Arte poetica principia sumpsit omnium suarum explicationum* (Firenze: Torrentino, 1548), 1.
9. Weinberg, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, 66.
10. Antonio Carlini, 'L'attività filologica di Francesco Robortello', *Atti dell'Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Udine* 7 (1967): 54.
11. Ibid.
12. Eugene E. Ryan, 'Robortello and Maggi on Aristotle's Theory of Catharsis', *Rinascimento* 22 (1982): 266.
13. Ibid., 267.
14. Brigitte Kappl, *Die Poetik des Aristoteles in der Dichtungstheorie des Cinquecento* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006).
15. Lorenzo Minio-Paluello, *Aristoteles Latinus XXXIII. De arte poetica cum Averrois Expositione* (Leiden: Brill, 1968); Charles E. Butterworth, *Averroes' Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).
16. For example, Karl-Jürgen Miesen, *Die Frage nach dem Wahren, dem Guten und dem Schönen in der Dichtung in der Kontroverse zwischen Robortello und Lombardi und Maggi um die Poetik des Aristoteles* (Warendorf: J. Schnellsche Buchhandlung, 1967).
17. Alessandro Pazzi, *Aristotelis poetica* (Venezia: Manuzio, 1536), 12. However, in the *Explicationes* Robortello retains Pazzi's translation. See Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 16.
18. Francesco Robortello, *Variorum locorum annotationes tam in Graecis quam in Latinis auctoribus* (Paris: Stephanus, 1544), 23^{v}–24^{v}.
19. London, British Library, Add. 10281, 44^{v}.
20. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, dedicatory letter.
21. Ferrara, Biblioteca Estense, Lat. 88, α.Q.6.14, 1^{r}–69^{v}. This thesis has been advanced by Weinberg, 'Robortello on the Poetics', 373–83; Déborah Blocker, 'Élucider et équivoquer: Francesco Robortello (ré)invente la catharsis', *Le Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques* 33 (2004): 21.
22. Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II.IV.192, 245^{v}.
23. Ibid., 250^{r}.
24. Ibid., 245^{r}.
25. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, aii^{v}. Italics are mine.
26. Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II.IV.192, 247^{r}.
27. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, A.
28. London, British Library, Add. 10272, 295^{r}.
29. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, dedicatory letter.
30. Ibid., letter to readers.
31. Ibid.
32. Bernardo Segni, *Rettorica et poetica d'Aristotele tradotte di greco in lingua vulgare fiorentina* (Firenze: Torrentino, 1549), 286.

Proof

Proof

33. Francesco Donadi suggested this attribution at the Colloque International "Francesco Robortello. Réception des Anciens & Construction de la Modernité," Université Rennes 2, 6–8 October 2016. Unfortunately, I was unable to consult the proceedings of this conference before the publication of this book and therefore to read the final version of his paper.
34. It is a curious story that links Robortello to Trincavelli. In the letter of 27 March 1554 to Ludovico Castelvetro he says that he is concerned because his "nephew struck a few blows to the natural son of Trincavelli, even though his motives were entirely just." Robortello goes on to say that "it appears that Trincavelli no longer wishes to resort to the law for this case." Even more maliciously he adds, "oh this blessed study, and oh fortunate slaps, if they should be the cause for so much good!" cf. Ludovico Castelvetro, *Lettere Rime Carmina*, edited by Enrico Garavelli (Pisa: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2015), 213–14. This is probably the same nephew to whom a letter was addressed on 19 April 1565, or perhaps 1563, in which Robortello assigns him the theologian, Salvatore d'Assisi. Cf. Udine, Biblioteca Arcivescovile, Ms. 151, 273^{r}.
35. On Poliziano's humanistic approach and its impact see Anthony Grafton, *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 9–70; Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 47–75. On Poliziano's understanding of Aristotle's poetics see James K. Coleman, 'Furor and Philology in the Poetics of Angelo Poliziano', in *New Worlds and the Italian Reniassance: Contributions to the History of European Intellectual Culture*, edited by Andrea Moudarres and Christiana Thérèse Purdy Moudarres (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 251–90.
36. Cf. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 1.
37. Ibid., translation by Weinberg.
38. Ibid., 2, translation by Weinberg, slightly modified.
39. Ibid., translation by Weinberg.
40. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 290, translation by Weinberg.
41. Weinberg, 'Robortello on the Poetics', 326.
42. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 284, translation by Weinberg.
43. Ibid., 90.
44. Aristotle, *Poetica*, 1447 b 20–1.
45. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 90.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., 86–7.
49. Ibid., 87.
50. Ibid., 89.
51. Aristotle, *Poetica*, 1451 b 6–14.
52. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 91.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., 2.
55. Ibid., translation by Weinberg, slightly modified.
56. Weinberg, 'Robortello on the Poetics', 321.
57. Cf. Leon Golden, 'Mimesis and Katharsis', *Classical Philology* 64 (1969): 145–53.
58. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 30.
59. Ibid.

Proof

Proof

60. Ibid., translation by Weinberg.
61. Ibid., 30.
62. Giovanni Pietro Capriano, *Della vera poetica* (Venezia: Zaltieri, 1555), 14, 3.
63. Ibid., 4, translation by Weinberg, slightly modified.
64. Ibid., 3, translation by Weinberg, slightly modified.
65. Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, 1356 b 25.
66. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 3, translation by Weinberg.
67. Ibid.
68. Ibid., 166.
69. Aristotle, *Poetica*, 1449 b 24–8.
70. Carlo Gallavotti, 'Il piacere della mimesi catartica', in *Dell'arte poetica*, edited by Aristotele (Mondadori: Milano, 1974), 237.
71. CAF II 453 = Athenaeus 223b.
72. Blocker, 'Élucider et équivoquer: Francesco Robortello (ré)invente la catharsis', 10.
73. *Proclus the Successor on Poetics and the Homeric Poems: Essays 5 and 6 of His Commentary on the Republic of Plato*, translated with an Introduction and Notes by Robert Lamberton (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 17.
74. Ibid., 17; cf. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 54.
75. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 54.
76. *Proclus the Successor on Poetics and the Homeric Poems: Essays 5 and 6 of His Commentary on the Republic of Plato*, 19.
77. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 54.
78. Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* (Cambridge, MA: Havard University Press, 1971), I, 271.
79. Ibid., 273.
80. Vincenzo Maggi and Bartolomeo Lombardi, *In Aristotelis librum de poetica communes explanationes* (Venice: Valgrisi, 1550), 97.
81. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 166, translated by Weinberg.
82. Stephen Halliwell, *Aristotle's Poetics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 350–3.
83. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 53.
84. Ibid., 128.
85. Ibid.
86. See Carlo Diano, 'Euripide auteur de la catharsis tragique', *Numen* 2 (1961): 117–41.
87. Euripides, *Fabulae Vol. II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) (*Iphigenias in Tauris*), v. 484–5.
88. Euripides, *Fabulae Vol. II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) (*Electra*), v. 294–5.
89. London, British Library, Add. 10281, 44^{r}.
90. Euripides, *Fabulae Vol. II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981) (*Supplices*), v. 1.
91. Pseudo-Plutarch, *Vitae decem oratorum* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1971), 833c (A6).
92. Gorgias, *De Helena Encomium* in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Zürich: Weidmann, 1951–1952), B11, §§8–9.
93. Sperone Speroni, *Opere* (Venezia: Occhi, 1740), vol. 5, 175–8.
94. Alessandro Piccolomini, *Annotationi nel libro della Poetica d'Aristotele* (Venice: Guarisco, 1575), 101–2.
95. Antonio Riccoboni, *Poetica Aristotelis* (Vicenza: Perini, 1585), 5.

Proof

Proof

96. Piccolomini, *Annotationi nel libro della Poetica d'Aristotele*, 101.
97. Jacopo Zabarella, *Opera logica* (Frankfurt: Zetzner, 1597), 84B-C.
98. Robortello, *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes*, 2.
99. Ibid., translation by Weinberg.
100. Ibid., 53, translation by Weinberg.
101. Ibid., 93, translation by Weinberg.
102. Ibid., 175, translation by Weinberg.
103. Ibid., 146, translation by Weinberg.
104. Ibid., 211, translation by Weinberg.
105. Weinberg, 'Robortello on the Poetics', 344.
106. Ibid.
107. For a detailed discussion on the topic see Marco Sgarbi, 'Francesco Robortello on Popularizing Knowledge', in *Vernacular Aristotelianism in Italy From the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Warburg Institute, 2016), 75–92.
108. Francesco Robortello, *De artificio dicendi* (Bologna: Benati, 1567), 9^r–v^.
109. Ibid., 10^r^.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid., 13^r^.
112. Ibid., 15^v^.
113. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, V D 45, 70^v^.
114. Capriano, *Della vera poetica*, 13.
115. Bendetto Varchi, *Opere* (Trieste: Lint, 1859), 685.
116. Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetices libri septem* (Lyon: Vincent, 1561), 347.
117. Zabarella, *Opera logica*, 82F.
118. Giason Denores, *Discorso intorno a que principii, cause, et accrescimenti, che la comedia, la tragedia, et il poema herioico ricevono dalla philosophia morale, & civile, & da governatori delle republiche* (Venezia: Maietti, 1587), 2.

Bibliography

1. *Robortello's Works*

Robortello, Francesco. *Variorum locorum annotationes tam in Graecis quam in Latinis auctoribus*. Paris: Stephanus, 1544.

———. *In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explicationes: qui ab eodem ex manuscriptis libris, multis in locis emendatus fuit, ut iam difficillimus, ac obscurissimus liber a nullo ante declaratus, facile ab omnibus possit intelligi. Cum Indice rerum et uerborum locupletissimo. Francisci Robortelli Vtinensis Paraphrasis in librum Horatii, qui uulgo De Arte poetica ad Pisones inscribitur. Eiusdem explicationes de satyra, de epigrammata, de comoedia, de salibus, de elegia. Quae omnia addita ab authore fuerunt, ut nihil quod ad poeticam spectaret desiderari posset: Nam in iis scribendis Aristotelis methodum seruauit: et ex ipsius libello de Arte poetica principia sumpsit omnium suarum explicationum*. Firenze: Torrentino, 1548.

2. *Manuscripts*

Ferrara, Biblioteca Estense, Lat. 88, α.Q.6.14.
Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II.IV.192.
London, British Library, Add. 10272.
London, British Library, Add. 10281.

Proof

Proof

Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale, V D 45.
Udine, Biblioteca Arcivescovile, Ms. 151.

3. Primary Sources

Capriano, Giovanni Pietro. *Della vera poetica*. Venezia: Zaltieri, 1555.

Castelvetro, Ludovico. *Lettere Rime Carmina*, edited by Enrico Garavelli. Pisa: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2015.

Denores, Giason. *Discorso intorno a que principii, cause, et accrescimenti, che la comedia, la tragedia, et il poema herioico ricevono dalla philosophia morale, & civile, & da governatori delle republiche*. Venezia: Maietti, 1587.

Euripides. *Fabulae Vol. II*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981.

Gorgias. De Helena Economium in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, B11, Zürich: Weidmann, 1951–1952.

Maggi, Vincenzo and Lombardi, Bartolomeo. *In Aristotelis librum de poetica communes explanationes*. Venezia: Valgrisi, 1550.

Pazzi, Alessandro. *Aristotelis poetica*. Venezia: Manuzio, 1536.

Piccolomini, Alessandro. *Annotationi nel libro della Poetica d'Aristotele*. Venezia: Guarisco, 1575.

Pseudo-Plutarch, *Vitae decem oratorum*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1971.

Riccoboni, Antonio. *Poetica Aristotelis*. Vicenza: Perini, 1585.

Scaliger, Julius Caesar. *Poetices libri septem*. Lyon: Vincent, 1561.

Segni, Bernardo. *Rettorica et poetica d'Aristotele tradotte di greco in lingua vulgare fiorentina*. Firenze: Torrentino, 1549.

Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*. Cambridge, MA: Havard University Press, 1971.

Varchi, Benedetto. *Opere*. Trieste: Lint, 1859.

Zabarella, Jacopo. *Opera logica*. Frankfurt: Zetzner, 1597.

4. Secondary Literature

Blocker, Déborah. 'Élucider et équivoquer: Francesco Robortello (ré)invente la catharsis'. *Le Cahiers du Centre de Recherches Historiques* 33 (2004): 2–24.

Butterworth, Charles E. *Averroes' Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Carlini, Antonio. 'L'attività filologica di Francesco Robortello'. *Atti dell'Accademia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti di Udine* 7 (1967): 53–84.

Coleman, James K. 'Furor and Philology in the Poetics of Angelo Poliziano'. In *New Worlds and the Italian Reniassance: Contributions to the History of European Intellectual Culture*, edited by Andrea Moudarres and Christiana Thérèse Purdy Moudarres, 251–90. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Diano, Carlo. 'Euripide auteur de la catharsis tragique'. *Numen* 2 (1961): 117–41.

Gallavotti, Carlo. 'Il piacere della mimesi catartica'. In *Dell'arte poetica*, edited by Aristotele, 227–40. Mondadori: Milano, 1974.

Golden, Leon. 'Mimesis and Katharsis'. *Classical Philology* 64 (1969): 145–53.

Grafton, Anthony. *Joseph Scaliger: A Study in the History of Classical Scholarship*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983.

———. *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450–1800*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Proof

Proof

Halliwell, Stephen. *Aristotle's Poetics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Kappl, Brigitte. *Die Poetik des Aristoteles in der Dichtungstheorie des Cinquecento*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006.

Miesen, Karl-Jürgen. *Die Frage nach dem Wahren, dem Guten und dem Schönen in der Dichtung in der Kontroverse zwischen Robortello und Lombardi und Maggi um die Poetik des Aristoteles*. Warendorf: J. Schnellsche Buchhandlung, 1967.

Minio-Paluello, Lorenzo. *Aristoteles Latinus XXXIII. De arte poetica cum Averrois Expositione*. Leiden: Brill, 1968.

Proclus the Successor on Poetics and the Homeric Poems: Essays 5 and 6 of His Commentary on the Republic of Plato, translated with an Introduction and Notes by Robert Lamberton. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012.

Ryan, Eugene E. 'Robortello and Maggi on Aristotle's Theory of Catharsis'. *Rinascimento* 22 (1982): 263–73.

Sgarbi, Marco. 'Francesco Robortello on Popularizing Knowledge'. In *Vernacular Aristotelianism in Italy From the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century*, 75–92. London: The Warburg Institute, 2016.

Weinberg, Bernard. 'Robortello on the Poetics'. In *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern*, 319–48. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1952.

———. *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961.

Proof

Proof

6 History

1. The Sense of History

If we were to look for a demarcation-line between the Middle Ages and Humanism, one textbook example of their dissimilarity would be their distinct, virtually oppositional conceptions of history. In fact, Humanism is frequently associated with the emergence of a sense of history. The relationship between the Middle Ages and history is at once complex and simple. Complex, because it is difficult to define in any specific sense the developments in a conception of history taking place; simple, because it is possible to determine what conceptions of history are not. History, on the threshold of the Renaissance, was not a philosophical problem in that it was not yet the subject of speculative research. In the Middle Ages, history was for the most part viewed as the "story of the Kingdom of God seen as a project of salvation implemented by Divine Providence," within the framework of a "universal vision directed towards transcendence,"[1] the "unfolding of the divine plan."[2] The problem of history was thus resolved in theological terms, which is to say in terms of the relationship between the human being and God; it therefore served the absolute, extra-temporal truth and life everlasting. What appeared to be missing in the Middle Ages was precisely that autonomous conception of a sense of history that constituted the greatest conquest of Humanism. Humanism was characterised by the "awareness of the past as such," by a "mundane vision of reality" and by "a human explanation of the history of man."[3] Therefore, "that punctilious, and sometimes pedantic, defining of the ancient, that wanting to know in its proper sense every ancient word, to distinguish it, and not confuse it with itself, and then perhaps to imitate it, but in the awareness that it is something other than itself: this is the sense of history that in humanism was so rich and so alive."[4] Yet Ferdinando Vegas has pointed out that "the humanists may have the sense of history, but this by no means entails [. . .] that history for them constitutes a problematic."[5]

Humanism marks the beginning of the secularisation of history, but still the separation between historiographical practice and reflection upon history itself, or the sense of history, remains deep. Despite

Proof

Proof

numerous historical-philological works, there is nothing that offers any insight into the sense of history and the historical method, or historiography. The general theory can be summed up by Cicero's maxim according to which history is *opus oratorium maxime*,[6] and Quintilian's, according to which history is *proxima poesis et quodammodo carmen solutum*. The proximity of history to poetry and rhetoric, as exemplified in particular by Giovanni Pontano in his *Actius*, and the desire of historians to compete with poets and rhetoricians resulted in themes being chosen that were "aesthetically pleasing,"[7] as Eduard Fueter remarks, and their introduction into "the narration of fictional discourse,"[8] as pointed out by Vegas, which is to say an approach to history that was extremely selective and artistic. Nonetheless, we must not lose sight of the fact that history for the humanists served to profess and illustrate the truth, but that it did so always by providing some form of usefulness in the form of education, entertainment or poignancy, in the best tradition of Ciceronian rhetoric and Horatian poetics. The letter written by Guarino Veronese to Tobia Dal Borgo in 1446 bears witness to this attitude:

AuQ6

> The historian must be firm in his mind, consistent in his speech and coherent in his behaviour and, because the first rule of history is to not be committed to speaking falsehood, to not give space to the suspicion of bias or hostility when necessary, as Cicero enjoins. [. . .] Indeed, history's primary purpose and only aim is usefulness, by which I mean what is derived from professing the truth and by means of which the soul, with knowledge of things past, is enriched by cognitions that serve in actions, and with imitation aspires to possessing great virtue [. . .] and it is not excluded that [. . .] it may be accompanied by the entertainment of the reader.[9]

History must speak of the truth, according to Cicero, in order to educate and entertain. It is interesting to see how for Guarino this process passes through imitation without actually explaining the nature of the phenomenon.

Yet despite these insightful reflections, it would perhaps be far-fetched to say that the humanists actually reflected on what history and historiography were.[10] Rather their thoughts, as revealed for the most part in letters and poems, are confined to focusing on the usefulness of history. Hence, as rightly noted by Giorgio Spini, the problem of history does not properly arise during Humanism, but later, during the Cinquecento, at the time of the Counter-Reformation. It was Francesco Robortello himself who gave a decisive impulse to this form of reflection.

The humanists certainly had no shortage of documents to work on. This is not the reason why they failed to develop a theory of history. The

Proof

Proof

reason is to be sought rather in the lack of a framework within which to bring together ideas on the usefulness of history, on imitation and on rhetoric, along with the practice of writing history. Such a framework was offered for the first time with the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Poetics*, and it is no coincidence that in the same year in which Robortello published his *Explicationes* and *De rhetorica facultate disputatio*, 1548, he delivered also to the printer his *De historica facultate disputatio*, which is in every respect one of the very first treatises devoted to the methodology of historiography.[11] Sure enough, Enrico Maffei asserts that 1548 is the year in which "discussions on the art of history reach the form of the treatise."[12] Vegas, on the other hand, is confident in asserting that, for good or for ill, Robortello's *disputatio* came to provide the blueprint for the historiographical conception of Renaissance treatise writers.[13] Certainly the *de historica facultate* was to be included already as a primary work in 1579 in the *Artis historicae penus* by Johann Wolf, the anthology of the most important Renaissance works on *ars historica*.

Given the scholarly confusion surrounding the genesis of Robortello's *disputatio*, a modicum of clarity is needed. For a start, it was conceived during Robortello's Pisan period, and predates any other substantial work on the subject. More specifically, it came out before Sperone Speroni's *Dialogo della istoria*, dated inexplicably to 1542 by Spini, Vegas, Cotroneo and Kelley.[14] Speroni's dialogue is incomplete and posthumous and is probably one of the last things he wrote before his death (1588).[15] It cannot therefore be dated to 1542. Neither is it possible, as has happened in the past, to infer that it was influential in the generation of Robortello's work. Aside from everything else, Speroni held a position that was diametrically opposed to Robortello's.

The *de historica facultate disputatio* is not Robortello's only consideration of the theory of historiography, but it is certainly the most complete, as well as the only one printed. Obviously not to be overlooked in this connection is his commentary on chapter nine of the *Poetics*, contained in the *Explicationes* and which was explored earlier. In 1552, he wrote a letter on the *Del modo di scrivere l'historia*, published by Emmanuele Cicogna in 1843.[16] From November 1566 we have also the Latin manuscript of the academic prolusion, *Praefatio in Cornelium Tacitum*,[17] published by Francesco Donadi in 1970. Various manuscript notes filed under the titles *Animadversiones in Tacitum*[18] and *Annotazioni sopra Tucidide*[19] also survive. Of additional interest is Francesco Robortello's assessment, published posthumously in 1568, of the *De origine et rebus gestis polonorum libri XXX* by Marcin Kromer. As we saw in chapter 2, his theoretical activity was accompanied by a long period of practical historiographical and antiquarian study, which afforded a high degree of awareness of the subject-matter as well as a solid method.

Proof

Proof

2. The Method of History

Absence of method is what distinguishes works written before 1548 from Robortello's. Robortello had a bold plan for his enquiry into historiographical method, which involved adopting an Aristotelian approach that would lend the whole historiographical debate "a philosophical vigor never seen before."[20] As Cotroneo rightly points out, it was "thanks to the introduction of Aristotelianism" that "an awareness of a philosophical problem of history" began to emerge.[21] This new philosophical outlook formed a clear break with earlier treatise writers, and was based, as we have seen, on a shift in the balance between poetry and history resulting from a new reading of Aristotle's *Poetics* in the light of rhetoric. It is thanks solely to his exegesis of Aristotle that Robortello was able to define the question of history, which up to that point no one had confronted, not even those like Guarino from Verona and Giovanni Pontano who had understood the crucial connection between poetics and history.

In his quest for a historiographical method through Aristotelian poetics, Robortello knowingly betrayed Aristotle, or rather offered an interpretation of his thought that differed substantially from the commonly accepted reading, in order to respond to the sceptical views about historiography put forward by Sextus Empiricus:

> The Greek writer, Sextus Empiricus, who wrote a compendium of Pyrrhonian philosophy, asserts that historiography (*historicae facultatis*) has no certain method (μέθοδον), and seeks to confute all the ancients on this point.[22]

That Robortello set out to confute the arguments of scepticism concerning history is made explicit in the prefatory letter written to Lelio Torelli, where he asserts that the aim is to find a "method" – the word he uses is "μέθοδον," which he also used in the passage where Sextus Empiricus is mentioned – for this new literary genre, which was to be called the "historical faculty or art."[23] Carlo Ginzburg has brilliantly highlighted Robortello's historiographical anti-scepticism as a novelty within the panorama of the problem of history. Robortello was indeed the first to single out this passage from Sextus Empiricus, most likely basing himself on the Greek text contained in Ms. Laur. 85, II, which is datable to 1465. It being a novelty for the reader, Robortello lays out almost in its entirety the sceptical argument, interpolating the Greek text in the Latin:

> Tauriscus, the disciple of Crates, like the other critics, subordinates history to critique, that is the faculty of judging, which they called grammar. Critique has three parts: *one part is literary, another practical, and another historical; that which deals with language and the grammatical tropes is literary, that concerned with dialects and the*

Proof

Proof

> *distinctions of formations and characters is practical, and that which treats of readiness in handling unarranged material is historical*. For this reason, Tauriscus conceives of history as a part of grammar, an opinion shared by Asclepiades and Dyonisius of Halicarnassus, who held *the "historical" to be a part of the art of grammar*. On the other hand, so argues Sextus Empiricus, if grammar is an art, since the parts of an art must certainly be technical, and it is agreed that the historical part is *without method* (ἀμέθοδον), the historical cannot be a part of the art of grammar. [. . .] *arguing from a general method and a technical faculty*, the physician pronounces *that this particular thing is healthy, this other diseased*, and the musician *that this is in harmony and that out of harmony, in harmony because of this note, out of harmony because of that note*, it is not so with the grammarian: *he cannot declare, on the ground of any scientific and general consideration*. If to do history means *to repeat all the particular events by meeting the particular historians then it is not a technical method* (*artificiosa methodo*). [. . .] History deals *with places, another with times, another with persons* and another with *actions*. It is plain that if the exposition of places and times is not methodical (μεθοδικῶ), nor will that of persons and actions be methodical. [. . .] Neither, then, will the making of announcements about persons and actions be technical, as for instance that [. . .] Plato the philosopher was first called Aristocles and that, when a youth, he had an ear pierced and wore an earring, and that Pythias, the daughter of Aristotle, was married to free men, first to Nicanor of Stageira, a connexion of Aristotle, secondly to Procleus, a descendant of Damaratus the Lacedaemonians' king (who had by her two sons, the Procleus and Damaratus who studied philosophy with Theophrastus), and thirdly to Metrodorus the physician, a disciple of Chrysippus of Cnidos and teacher of Erasistratus, whose son was Aristotle. These stories and those like them have not *method*, nor *technical faculty*, so that history too is void of art. Furthermore, there is no technical knowledge either of things infinite or of things which vary. History is both infinite, because of their great number, and without fixity, because the same facts are narrated in many ways.[24]

Robortello wishes to address all arguments according to which history is not an art and, therefore, has no method. Were it not an art, it would indeed make no sense even to enquire into whether it has a method. According to Sextus Empiricus, most grammarians agree that history is part of grammar, albeit a non-technical part because the material is obtained without order. But this would mean that also grammar is not an art and has no method, because if it were, every one of its parts would necessarily be technical and methodical. Therefore, either the grammarians enter into contradiction or they accept that grammar and history

Proof

Proof

are methodical. In this, according to Sextus Empiricus, lies the difference between the physician or the musician, who can make general inferences from particular cases, and the historian who cannot. The historian would have to deal directly with everything that is told – to have personal experience, therefore – but this is impossible because for the most part they are past events. Moreover, it is rash to assert that repeating things said by others is an art. Hence history cannot be an art. Lastly, history is occupied with infinite places, times, figures and actions, and there can be no art or science of the infinite.

Robortello outlines his response to these sceptical arguments, and this was interpreted from the beginning of the seventeenth century by Gerardus Vossius as an endorsement of the idea that history was a part of grammar. In his *Ars critica*, Vossius writes that "that most learned man, Francesco Robortello, [. . .] in his *de facultate historica disputatio*, maintained that the historical faculty was a part of grammar [. . .]. For my part, I was really not persuaded by his opinion."[25] Yet Vossius is not sufficiently attentive to what Robortello says, and fails to acknowledge the text's multiple levels and interpolations. Robortello never says that history is a part of grammar, and it is only the critics who say so on the basis of the passage he quotes from Sextus Empiricus. It is worthwhile noting that the criticism of Sextus Empiricus drew upon a long tradition in which historiography was not considered an art, and a part of this tradition had been bolstered by Aristotle himself. In *Poetics* 1451 b 6–7, Aristotle clearly states that "poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular (τὸ καθ᾽ ἕκαστον)," and in *Rhetoric* 1356 b 30–34 that "none of the arts theorize about the particular (τὸ καθ᾽ἕκαστον) [. . .] particulars are so infinitely various that no knowledge of them is possible." For these reasons, according to Aristotle, there are no grounds on which historiography can be considered an art. Still in 1566, in the *Methodus ad facile historiarum cognitionem* by Jean Bodin, which was deeply inspired by Robortello's work, it was difficult to make a science out of history because "the history of human beings derives from their will, which is always different and unpredictable; and sure enough new laws are born everyday, new customs, institutions, and rituals."[26] How is it possible, therefore, and with what justification does Robortello believe it possible to make a science out of this undefined mass of facts?

Robortello clearly acts on a new awareness, an awareness derived from a sense of the intrinsic weakness of humans in knowledge and intellection. If wisdom, or the knowledge of first causes and principles, is closed to the common human being, then all that a human being can know is what he does, and what he is the cause of, the world of practical things and actions of which he is aware of being the first principle. Inasmuch as they are produced by a human being, actions may be narrated and known by means of art and method, or understood methodologically, precisely because it is possible to have knowledge of their cause.

Proof

Proof

Robortello's attempt to cast historiography as an art is therefore openly anti-Aristotelian. It is all the more interesting because Robortello wanted to accomplish everything within a strictly Aristotelian conceptual framework by means of his interpretation of Aristotle's poetics, which, as we have seen, is imbued with rhetoric. Robortello is thus forced to concede that "if one is to write history as the ancient state at the beginning, there is no method (μέθοδον)."[27] Sure enough, referring to the opinion Cicero expresses in the second book of the *De oratore*, history at the time was no more than a compilation of annals (*annalium confectio*), and therefore entirely useless to the general populace. Robortello, however, adds:

> But if one writes extensively, and with clarity and taste, if one presents another's discourse and his moral representation (*mores*) (which is the case of reported discourses, and was first adopted by Thucydides on the basis of verisimilitude and formal elegance; for which reason Lucan was right to say that the historian may ῥητορῦσαι in the discourses he reports, meaning that he may make them comply with the rhetorical canon), then one can most certainly say that historiography originates in rhetoric. Rhetoric generates historiography and nurtures it like a mother.[28]

History may therefore be an art if it is considered a part of rhetoric. On the other hand, according to Robortello, Sextus Empiricus himself was forced to admit that "in historiography only this may be said to be methodical (μεθοδικὸν) and technical (*artificiosum*), namely the rules of good writing, and in this historiography is a tributary of rhetoric."[29] Most likely, as Beatrice Reynolds suggests,[30] Robortello refers here to passage 268 of the *Adversus mathematicos*, where Sextus asserts that explaining "how history should rightly be written [. . .] is the task of the rhetoricians." From all these considerations, Robortello can say that "historiography is closely linked to rhetoric: it is a part, a small part, of it."[31] Robortello's intent is clear: he wants to supersede medieval historiography,[32] which consists for the most part of annals and chronicles, to offer a narrative structure capable of being more useful to the people, a usefulness which, as we shall see, it will share with rhetoric and poetics.

An extrinsic element linking historiography and rhetoric may be found in the fact that according to Robortello historiography "changes the affect of rhetoric [. . .] because it provides the examples on the basis of which rhetoric builds up its arguments."[33] History therefore offers examples to rhetoric in a manner that is more convincing than poetry because the examples are truer. A capacity to persuade comes into play here which seems to forge a closer bond between history and rhetoric:

> A discourse that persuades may work in two ways: either with the formulation of examples or through the development of

Proof

Proof

> enthymeme. [. . .] the oration that persuades by means of example is much more relaxed and expansive, it flows pleasantly and penetrates the deeper recesses of the mind.[34]

Robortello backs his observation with a passage from Aristotle's *Problemata*, mistaking them for an authentic rather than spurious work, as it was later found to be. The Stagirite here asserts that an example is superior to an enthymeme because it is more easily understood and may more easily be known. The passage in question is probably *Problemata* 916 b 25–34:

> Why is it that in rhetorical displays men prefer examples and fables to enthymemes? Is it because they like to learn and to learn quickly, and this end is achieved more easily by examples and fables, since these are familiar to them and are of the nature of particulars, whereas enthymemes are proofs based on generalities, with which we are less familiar than with the particular? Furthermore, we attach more credence to any evidence which is supported by several witnesses, and examples and fables resemble evidence, and proof supported by witnesses is easily obtained. Further, men like to hear of similarities, and examples and fables display similarities.

From a cognitive standpoint, Aristotle had upheld the same opinion in *Rhetoric* 1356 b 23–25: "speeches that rely on examples are as persuasive as the other kind, but those which rely on enthymemes excite the louder applause." In terms of persuasiveness, there is no difference between enthymeme and example. Indeed, on the strength of the passage from the *Problemata*, Robortello can claim the superiority of the example in epistemological terms: the example explains more than any other argument, especially to common people. Moreover, the subsequent reflection fits neatly into the methodological discussion typical of logicians in the mid-Cinquencento, and indeed Cotroneo could refer to Robortello as "an orthodox Aristotelian."[35]

Robortello makes a simple logical, or methodological distinction between philosopher and historian. The philosopher perceives first the universals that the historian finds in the particulars. This is the first type of apprehension (*primus discendi modus*), from the universal to the particular, but only a few are given to this, namely those who already possess wisdom. The second type, available to all, is typical of historians, who from the particular reach the universals of the philosophers.

It is clear that Robortello uses a concept of history, understood as *historia*, employed at that time for natural histories and which will have a considerable impact on his pupil Zabarella.[36] History is a collection of particulars that makes subsequent generalisations and universalisations possible. This is because – as we saw in chapter 4 – unlike Aristotle,

Proof

Proof

Robortello views the use of examples as a form of induction, namely a process of generalisation. The distinction between exemplification and induction is not one of form, but one of subject-matter; both universalise in the same way. Robortello's contribution to the history of Renaissance thought is therefore significant not only from a historiographical point of view but also from the standpoint of science, as it tends to bring rhetorical inferences closer to epistemological and cognitive inferences.[37] Such influences in the Renaissance Aristotelian tradition were used to characterise non-deductive and syllogistic processes typical of medicine and ethics,[38] which existed beyond science and the direct knowledge of universals and causes. The proximity of philosopher and historian on this common rhetorical ground arises from the fact that both are characterised by the acquisition of a habit of prudence, or practical wisdom, which in very specific terms is concerned with the knowledge of particulars: "the philosopher and the historian are excellent masters of the virtue of prudence." During the Renaissance, prudence is a characteristic of the habits of both the moral philosopher and the physician, or he who devotes his time to studying books and he who garners extensive experience:[39]

> He whose mind has been educated with excellent teachings, he who has read a lot, he who has listened a lot, becomes wise by default. Likewise, he who has had a lot of experience, like a second Ulysses: because in that manner too, not only on the strength of studying letters and, you might say, of induction, may one become prudent.[40]

Robortello here is clearly presenting a reassessment of the empirical, experiential and "historical" moment of knowledge, on the back of his reading of *Nicomachean Ethics* 1141 b 14–21, where prudence is said to have as its object universals as much as particulars, but if it is to direct actions, then it must prefer the latter, and "for this certain people who have no knowledge of the universals, including people with experience, are more able to act than other people who have such knowledge." These words, in which the empirical, experiential and "historical" dimensions of knowledge are re-evaluated, are then followed by a logical leap which is not immediately graspable without first having clear in one's mind all that is written in the *Explicationes*, which we examined earlier:

> Since the *peripeteia* of the tragic poets carries such a powerful emotional charge that it can bend peoples' souls to pity, fear, religious sentiment, compliance, and stimulate every virtue, we can see what power is contained in history. Because these reversals owe their power of suggestion to history (*historia*): and indeed, when human beings know true facts, they more easily believe that which is verisimilar. Lastly, we may consider the usefulness of history in which we find examples of human events, the vagaries of fortune, the upheavals of

Proof

Proof

> kingdoms, the devastations of cities, the massacres of human beings, as well as examples of their ambition, lust, greed for money, liberality, strength, intelligence, prudence, shrewdness.[41]

A superficial reading of this passage may lead to two conclusions: on the one hand, that the topic tackled by Robortello is concerned not with history, but with narration; on the other, that the discussion hinges more on themes of moral philosophy. Yet Robortello here, unlike elsewhere, speaks not of *narratio*, but of *historia*, and he speaks of it in the very terms he had previously used in the *Explicationes*. The interesting aspect of this passage is that it ties history to the passions of the soul typical of tragic catharsis: upheaval, devastation, massacre and misfortune affect the mind, accustoming it to, and preparing it for, the sorrows of life. It is by no means a coincidence, given the affinity between poetry and history. But there is more.

Francesco Donadi has grasped fully that in Robortello's conception of history the same model of catharsis typical of tragedy is at work, and that he has even taken the step of speaking of a "historical catharsis." Robortello's reasoning is simple and was previously laid out in the *Explicationes*: if poetry affects the soul when its subject is fictional, how much more powerful will be history, which deals with what has happened and that which is true. Similarly, therefore, one may conclude that the catharsis of history will have a more powerful effect than that of poetry, but, Donadi remarks, there is a difference:

> Tragic catharsis operates on two levels, the affective and the rational, hence we fear and feel pity for what happens on stage, and come away effectively sedated by the physical release of weeping, and rationality is assuaged as a result of having become aware of the misfortunes that are part of our human condition. On the other hand, historical catharsis operates exclusively on a rational level, and does not result in the resolutive release of tears. Rather its aim, by placing before our eyes a series of tragic situations, such as the plague and other calamities, is to provide us with a thick skin, a *habitus*, without exposing us to the risk of what's real through reading.[42]

This concept of historical catharsis is a fixture in Robortello's thought which Donadi traces also in the later works, such as the *Praefatio in Cornelium Tacitum*. Just as tragic catharsis presupposes that the spectator identify with the actor and that living the tragic events leads to moderation of emotional excesses, so too does historical catharsis set out to make the human being more virtuous, as if he were actually performing the actions himself:

> The narrative genre of things – that is, of the actions of human beings – is history, which makes human beings prudent through

Proof

Proof

> reading, by considering events as if the people themselves were acting them out. This forms the habit of mind that strengthens action.[43]

For Robortello, this habit is prudence. It cannot be anything else because it is the habit that takes care of contingent things which are not immediately comprehensible in terms of a universal. In this context, Robortello deliberately includes a long philosophical discourse on prudence that shall be examined in the next chapter.[44] What matters in this context is that, for Robortello, history has to do with contingent events, and is therefore an object of prudence and not science. History may therefore only ever be an art, and never a science. If the latter, its subject would perforce be something necessary, but this necessity would stand in the way of the freedom of human beings and their actions. For this reason, Robortello outlines his conception of history in this academic prolusion.

His reflection begins with two questions: 1. have the things that have happened since the creation of the world happened in the best possible way? 2. could they have happened differently? And the answers to these questions have strong philosophical implications especially during the time of the Counter-Reformation. It is difficult, Robortello states, to come to agreement on the fact that the things that happened in the past happened in the best possible way, because in such circumstances we would have to justify evil. On the other hand, were we to concede that things have not gone well, we would also risk diminishing the value of divine providence. If, once more, we were to say that things could not have happened differently, then history would have to be construed as a type of fate where everything is determined. If things could have happened differently, however, then divine providence could not be said to govern the workings of the world.

Writing as he was at the time of strict religious control, Robortello finds the solution to these thorny questions in divine omniscience. God knows everything, but He knows everything in a necessary way, including that which is contingent. Things could in fact happen differently for human beings, but God does not know all these things insofar as they are contingent. Knowing everything, including the future, He knows them from the standpoint of necessity. Robortello goes on to say that everything that happens in the celestial and material worlds is already known as necessary, while that which is contingent is what occurs in the sub-lunar world and concerns matter and the actions of human beings. Human beings are free to act, to want and to choose, but their actions, their choices and their desires are known to God as necessary.[45] Since history narrates the feats of human beings, and it is written and read by human beings, it cannot be anything but contingent, and the habit this induces in the mind can only be a habit of prudence.

Robortello's emphasis on the rhetorical and pedagogical aspects of history, as well as the reference to a historical catharsis, and also the focus on the role of prudence, suggests that between history and poetics there

Proof

Proof

is far more than the straightforward bond that exists between the various language arts: rather they appear to meet not only on the grounds of their method, but also in terms of their purpose.

3. The Purpose of History

From the opening page of the *De historica facultate disputatio*, Robortello makes it clear that:

> The purpose of historiography is to narrate, and the historian is he who narrates and presents. And since it is natural facts, those artificially produced and human actions, that are narrated and revealed, a historian is one who narrates and reveals the latter and not those I mentioned first and second. [. . .] it is clear also that the task of the historian is to narrate facts that really happened because he is not an inventor of facts, but someone who reveals them.[46]

The historian narrates and reveals while the poet invents. Rather than being its purpose, however, this is the means by which historiography achieves its purpose, namely through a narration that explains facts and does not invent them. In his letter *Del modo di scrivere l'historia*, Robortello states that "the historian has nothing to do other than to narrate."[47] The passage in the *disputatio* also clarifies the fact that historiography is not to be confused with *historia naturalis*, or the history of products and inventions; rather it is concerned with the history of human actions, and is therefore concerned with human beings as human beings, and the results of their actions.

The model Robortello uses is Lucian of Samosata's *Quonmodo historia conscribendi sit*. The purpose of history for Lucian is "the useful that derives only from the true, and if we add the pleasurable, so much the better."[48] Robortello interprets this conception by saying that "it is therefore clear that the purpose of history is to narrate the facts just as they happened for the purpose of doing good."[49] History is beneficial because it tells the facts as they occurred. In other words, it tells the truth, and in this it stands apart from poetry, even though, as Robortello notes, few historians are aware of the fact:

> Many historians are completely unaware of what the difference between history and poetry consists in. In poetry one considers only that which is the fruit of imagination and what Aristotle calls εἰκος, or the verisimilar. If, therefore, one should set out to give praise to someone, he can, because it is his right to say that he has the looks of Jove, his shoulders are like Mars', his speed like Mercury's. If we apply this to history, which offers what is true and is concerned with what has really happened, the outcome will not be history at all, but

Proof

Proof

> a pedestrian kind of poetry. To put it briefly, the lies of historians are invented either on the basis of verisimilitude, but history has no margin even for what is verisimilar, as in the case of someone who says that 50,000 enemies were killed, whereas only two of ours were killed and three were wounded, or the case of someone who says that the shout of his commander was so powerful that eight soldiers, stricken by his voice, died on the spot: behaviour which has no other origin than the ignorance of the uneducated and the adulation of the dishonest.[50]

The source of inspiration here is without doubt Lucian:

> Another thing these gentlemen seem not to know is that poetry and history offer different wares, and have their separate rules. Poetry enjoys unrestricted freedom; it has but one law – the poet's imagination. He is inspired and possessed by the Muses; [. . .] In a complimentary picture of Agamemnon, there is nothing against his having Zeus's head and eyes, his brother Posidon's chest, Ares's belt [. . .]. But, if history adopts such servile arts, it is nothing but poetry without the wings; the exalted tones are missing; and imposition of other kinds without the assistance of meter is only the more easily detected. It is surely a great, a superlative weakness, this inability to distinguish history from poetry; what, bedizen history, like her sister, with tale and eulogy and their attendant exaggerations? [. . .] I would not be understood to exclude eulogy from history altogether; it is to be kept in its place and used with moderation, so as not to tax the reader's patience; I shall presently show, indeed, that in all such matters an eye is to be had to posterity. It is true, there is a school which makes a pretty division of history into the agreeable and the useful, and defends the introduction of panegyric on the ground that it is agreeable, and pleases the general reader. But nothing could be further from the truth. In the first place the division is quite a false one; history has only one concern and aim, and that is the useful; which again has one single source, and that is truth. The agreeable is no doubt an addition, if it is present [. . .]. History too, if it can deal incidentally in the agreeable, will attract a multitude of lovers; but so long as it does its proper business efficiently – and that is the establishment of truth, – it may be indifferent to beauty.[51]

Like Lucian, Robortello believes that a clear distinction between history and poetry, between the true and the verisimilar, has to be drawn. This does not rule out that, for both, fiction may be employed to make the purpose of historical discourse more effective, but such fictions must be verisimilar, must strengthen the truth and avoid lies as far as possible. What matters to Robortello is that the historian carry out his task, which

Proof

Proof

is to narrate in a manner that must "be honest, not sentimental, or as Aristotle put it, well mannered":[52]

> The historian is the narrator and illustrator of the things that have happened, and therefore to him must be assigned first of all the task of pursuing the truth in all his narrations and to avoid lies.[53]

If such is the task of the historian, the purpose of history is to convey benefit. The usefulness of history consists in the fact that it "preserves the memory of facts."[54] In order to explain the usefulness of history, as in the case of poetry, Robortello begins by explaining human psychology with reference in part to Plato and in part to Aristotle. Robortello is convinced that:

> It is in the nature of humans to be able to remember and reconnect facts that are past and not present, even when they are in the very distant past. If one does not cultivate this capacity, does not improve it, does not exercise it, then I fear he does not deserve to be called a human being, because he neglects that part that is characteristic of human beings and absent in brutes.[55]

In direct reference to Plato, Robortello believes that the condition in which human beings are ignorant of history is the same as that of children, and in fact:

> As children do not distinguish man from man (and so call everyone daddy), nor one fact from another fact; they move upon the impulse of sensations and are completely unable to understand what happens far from them; they are unable to look at the past or to foresee the future.[56]

Whoever does not know history and ancient matters for Robortello is unable to understand not only the past, but also the present and the future, and above all cannot have sufficient knowledge to act. For this reason, one who is ignorant of history should "without question be labelled inexpert, imbecile, childlike, even unweaned."[57] History thus proffers benefit because it makes human beings prudent (*prudentes facit historia*). History, therefore, has a moral purpose like moral philosophy and poetry. Robortello's words are particularly eloquent for understanding the interplay between poetry, history and moral philosophy, an interplay without parallel in the Renaissance:

> All those who are well versed in letters, whether philosophers who study morals or poets or historians, have as their only purpose to benefit. [. . .] but in different ways. The philosopher, by setting happiness as the purpose of the human being and describing what it is,

Proof

Proof

> shows the way to achieving it; he shows also that virtue results from being between two vices (as Horace says), that one must avoid the passions, and, showing what kind of life we must adopt, gradually recalls human beings from vice to virtue, presenting it in such a way that they deem worthy of praise only that which is closely associated with virtue and honesty. The poet seeks to do the same with his imitations in comedies and tragedies. Of how this comes about I have given sufficient demonstration in the treatise on the poetic art. Also the historian has this single aim, perhaps far better and with greater wealth of detail than the philosophers, offering sufficient examples to human beings and persuading them about that which is honest and useful, dishonest and useless.[58]

The historian in Robortello's eyes is more persuasive than the philosopher, who deals with universal and abstract concepts that, as we have seen in the previous chapters, are difficult for the majority of people to understand. The historian is more persuasive also than the poet, because he deals with the truth and not the verisimilar. In another passage of the *disputatio*, he goes further, defining the activity of the historian as describing natural phenomena, which is better even than that of natural philosophers and physicians: the extremely prudent Thucydides would have given a more erudite and convincing description of the plague that afflicted Greece than Hippocrates.

The historian thus represents the ultimate in terms of knowledge production accompanied by educational and pedagogical purposes. For this, however, the historian must also be in part a moral philosopher – in other words, he must be capable of identifying the most appropriate subject matter in order to educate. As for the subject matter of historiography, Robortello asserts that these comprise:

> human beings, not, however, considered as beings that move, breathe and think: this is the domain of philosophers; but as beings that act and speak of – and about – public affairs. I say public because the historian overlooks private matters, mainly those that are too unimportant and that are relevant to daily administration. If he considers private matters, he does so only in the more exceptional cases, and considers only those that have a direct link with public affairs.[59]

The historian deals with public events of some importance, starting from that which has been done "in the current moment and moving back through almost countless centuries,"[60] according to what "the Greeks call τὸ ἐφεξῆς, namely ordered succession."[61] If the knowledge of the historian must be so very extensive in terms of subject and chronology, then "his competence must embrace all of antiquity: all that which concerns customs, the means of supporting oneself, the foundation of cities, the

Proof

Proof

migrations of people."[62] For this reason, Ginzburg believes that history for Robortello is "synonymous with antiquarianism."[63] But with its pedagogical significance, history is far more than that, and for this reason, too, it deals exclusively with public events and affairs. In the seventh observation in *Del modo di scrivere l'historia*, Robortello writes, "neither private actions nor private human beings should be narrated." The reason is that the historian:

> is a narrator only of public things that are useful for future generations; but these things [private ones] are narrated only out of adulation for this or that person, the result being that today everyone seeks the favour of historians to have a mention in their writings for every negative occasion. Our historian must therefore be correct, just and severe, and must have his eye fixed on the public to ensure that the private serve the public and not the public the private.[64]

Public interest is first of all a moral interest, and it is for this reason that histories must not intentionally flatter their protagonists to gain some benefit. Adulation is possible only if it does not mask the truth of the facts that happened, which is the first purpose of history. Nor may the historian allow himself to pronounce judgement on the cause, manner and outcome of public events, but must simply give the facts in the awareness that the facts as told shall be examples serving moral edification. In this sense, Robortello concedes that the best way for history to pursue its purpose is to tell the stories that evolve over time in a comparative manner, namely by comparing the different ages – for instance, by comparing one principality with another, one kingdom with another, with a view to seeing the positive and negative aspects of both and thereby learning the lesson that history teaches.

The interplay between history and public, political, ethical and rhetorical interest is explicitly dealt with by Robortello in the final pages of the *disputatio*. His reasoning is syllogistic. If history is a part of rhetoric, then all the attributes associated with rhetoric characterise history. The teachings of rhetoric, as Robortello had Aristotle say in an unspecified location in the first book of the *Rhetorica ad Theodecten*, are useful for the ethics and administration of cities, which is to say politics. Hence history is also concerned with the explanation "of the customs of human beings, political institutions, types of magistrates."[65] To conclude, Robortello states, the historian must have two characteristics, "political insight (σύνεσις πολιτική) and faculty of expression (δύναμις ἑρμηνευτική)":[66] political insight because he must explain the most morally edifying facts, faculty of expression because they must be explained in a manner appropriate to the truth. Here, too, Robortello bases his whole notion of the historian on Lucian, who writes that "my perfect historian must start with two indispensable qualifications; the one is political insight, the other the faculty of

Proof

Proof

expression; the first is a gift of nature, which can never be learnt; the second should have been acquired by long practice, unremitting toil, and loving study of the Classics."[67] Thus it was for good reason that Cotroneo observed that when Robortello moves from general philosophical problems to the more particular problems of historiography, attention shifts from the Aristotelian system to the work of Lucian, whose influence is felt throughout Robortello's text.

Thanks to Aristotle's poetics and the work of historians such as Thucydides and Lucian, Robortello was able to develop an original conception of history, the purpose of which was moral education by means of the blueprint provided by Thucydides and politics in the mould of Lucian, with "historical catharsis" modelled on Aristotle's tragic catharsis as the main device. The purpose of history, or historiography, is to narrate the facts because from the knowledge of the facts one can learn virtuous behaviour. History, like poetics – and not unlike rhetoric, of which both are part – does not produce knowledge for its own sake, but always geared to action and the formation of moral virtues.

Notes

1. Cornelio Fabro, 'La storiografia nel pensiero cristiano', in *Grande Antologia filosofica* (Milan: Marzorati, 1953), vol. 5, 341.
2. Silvio Vismara, *Il concetto della storia nel pensiero scolastico* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1924), 71.
3. Ibid.
4. Eugenio Garin, *Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Roma and Bari: Laterza, 2005), 189.
5. Ferdinando Vegas, 'La concezione della storia dall'Umanesimo alla Controriforma', in *Grande Antologia filosofica* (Milan: Marzorati, 1964), vol. 10, 14.
6. Edmund B. Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (London: Bloomsbury, 1983), 33–54.
7. Eduard Fueter, *Geschichte der neuren Historiographie* (München and Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1911), 10.
8. Vegas, 'La concezione della storia dall'Umanesimo alla Controriforma', 26–7.
9. Guarino Veronese, *Epistolario* (Venice: A spese della Società, 1920), vol. 2, letter n. 796. Cf. Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography*, 55–82.
10. For an overview of the topic, see Anthony Grafton, *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
11. In the following pages "historica facultate" is translated variously as historical faculty or historiography in specific contexts. In line with Robortello's style, when speaking of historiography the term "history" is also used. The expression "historica facultas," as Robortello himself seems to admit, appears to be new. Cf. Francesco Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio, Eiusdem Laconici, seu sudationis explicatio, Eiusdem De Nominibus Romanorum, Eiusdem De rhetorica facultate, Eiusdem explicatio in Catulli Epithalamium, Hic accesserunt eiusdem Annotationum in uaria tam Graecorum quam Latinorum loca Libri II, Ode Graceca quae βιοχρησμωδια inscribitur, Explanationes in primum Aeneid. Vergilii librum eodem Robortello praelegente collectae a Ioanne Baptista Busdrago Lucensi* (Firenze: Torrentino, 1548), 7.
12. Enrico Maffei, *I trattati dell'arte storica dal Rinascimento fino al secolo XVII. Contributo alla storia della letteratura italiana* (Napoli: Pierro, 1897), 32.

Proof

Proof

13. Vegas, ‘La concezione della storia dall’Umanesimo alla Controriforma’, 49–50.
14. Giorgio Spini, ‘I trattatisti dell’arte storica nella Controriforma italiana’, *Quaderni di Belfagor* 1 (1948): 109–36; Vegas, ‘La concezione della storia dall’Umanesimo alla Controriforma’, 49; Girolamo Cotroneo, *I trattatisti dell’ars historica* (Napoli: Giannini, 1971), 127; Donald R. Kelley, ‘The Theory of History’, in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, edited by Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 754; Cesare Vasoli, ‘Il modello teorico’, in *La storiografia umanistica* (Messina: Sicania, 1992), 24–31.
15. Mario Pozzi, ed., *Trattatisti del Cinquecento* (Milano: Ricciardi, 1978), 1189–92; Carlo Ginzburg, *Il filo e le tracce* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2006), 15; Marco Sgarbi, ‘Che cosa è la storia? Il modello teorico di Sperone Speroni’, in *Modernità e progresso. Due idee guida nella storia del pensiero*, edited by Gregorio Piaia and Iva Manova (Padova: Cleup, 2014), 43–71.
16. Venezia, Museo Correr, Ms. Donà dalle Rose 447.28.
17. Padova, Biblioteca del Seminario, 416, 76^{v}–93^{r}.
18. Milano, Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 480 inf., 2^{r}–29^{r}.
19. Ibid., R 118 sup., 224^{r}–225^{v}.
20. Cotroneo, *I trattatisti dell’ars historica*, 123.
21. Ibid., 123.
22. Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio*, 18.
23. Ibid., Aij^{v}.
24. Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio*, 18–20. Emphasis is Greek text in the original text.
25. Gerhard Johann Vossius, *Ars historica sive de historiae et historices natura* (Leiden: Maire, 1623), 10–11.
26. Jean Bodin, *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitonem* (Paris: PUF, 1951), 115.
27. Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio*, 20–1.
28. Ibid., 21.
29. Ibid., 20.
30. Beatrice Reynolds, ‘Shifting Currents in Historical Criticism’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14 (1953): 471–92.
31. Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio*, 18.
32. Cotroneo, *I trattatisti dell’ars historica*, 149.
33. Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio*, 15.
34. Ibid., 15–16.
35. Cotroneo, *I trattatisti dell’ars historica*, 153.
36. See the paper presented by Per Landgren at the Moore Institute on 21 April 2015 with the title ‘A Forgotten Key Concept in Early Modern Science: The Aristotelian Concept of historia’.
37. Stephen Pender, ‘Between Medicine and Rhetoric’, *Early Science and Medicine* 10 (2005): 36–64.
38. Werner Jaeger, ‘Aristotle’s Use of Medicine as Model of Method in His Ethics’, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77 (1957): 54–61.
39. David E.J. Linden, ‘Gabriele Zerbi’s *De cautelis medicorum* and the Tradition of Medical Prudence’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 73 (1999): 19–37.
40. Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio*, 16.
41. Ibid., 16–17.
42. Francesco Donadi, ‘La catarsi storica secondo Robortello’, *Atti e memorie dell’Accademia patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti* 82 (1969–1970): 69. Cf. Padova, Biblioteca del Seminario, 416, $89^{r–v}$.

Proof

Proof

43. Padova, Biblioteca del Seminario, 416, 87^{v}.
44. Ibid., 88^{r}.
45. Ibid., 82^{r}–83^{r}.
46. Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio*, 7–8.
47. *Lettera inedita di Francesco Robortello Udinese intorno al modo di scrivere la storia particolarmente veneziana*, edited by Emmanuele Cicogna (Venezia: Merlo, 1843), 18.
48. Lucian of Samosata, *The Works of Lucian of Samosata* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), vol. 2, 114.
49. Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio*, 8.
50. Ibid., 10.
51. Lucian of Samosata, *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, 114.
52. Cicogna, *Lettera inedita di Francesco Robortello intorno al modo di scrivere la storia particolarmente veneziana*, 18.
53. Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio*, 14.
54. Ibid., 13.
55. Ibid., 14.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., 15.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., 24.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., 25.
63. Ginzburg, *Il filo e le tracce*, 15.
64. Cicogna, *Lettera inedita di Francesco Robortello intorno al modo di scrivere la storia particolarmente veneziana*, 18.
65. Robortello, *De historica facultate, disputatio*, 27.
66. Ibid., 30.
67. Lucian of Samosata, *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*, 126.

Bibliography

1. Robortello's Works

Robortello, Francesco. *De historica facultate, disputatio, Eiusdem Laconici, seu sudationis explicatio, Eiusdem De Nominibus Romanorum, Eiusdem De rhetorica facultate, Eiusdem explicatio in Catulli Epithalamium, Hic accesserunt eiusdem Annotationum in uaria tam Graecorum quam Latinorum loca Libri II, Ode Graceca quae βιοχρησμωδια inscribitur*, *Explanationes in primum Aeneid. Vergilii librum eodem Robortello praelegente collectae a Ioanne Baptista Busdrago Lucensi*. Firenze: Torrentino, 1548.

———. *Lettera inedita di Francesco Robortello Udinese intorno al modo di scrivere la storia particolarmente veneziana*, edited by Emmanuele Cicogna. Venezia: Merlo, 1843.

2. Manuscripts

Milano, Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, D 480 inf.
Milano, Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, R 118 sup.

Proof

Proof

Padova, Biblioteca del Seminario, 416.
Venezia, Museo Correr, Donà dalle Rose 447.28.

3. *Primary Sources*

Bodin, Jean. *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitonem*. Paris: PUF, 1951.

Halicarnassus, Dionysius of. *Nonnulla opuscula, a Stanislao Ilovio Polono nunc primum latinitate donata, quae quinta pagina recensentur. Eiusdem Ilovii et Robortelli de historica facultate commentatiunculae*. Parigi: Stephanus, 1556.

Lucian of Samosata. *The Works of Lucian of Samosata*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905.

Vossius, Gerhard Johann. *Ars historica sive de historiae et historices natura*. Leiden: Maire, 1623.

4. *Secondary Literature*

Cotroneo, Girolamo. *I trattatisti dell'ars historica*. Napoli: Giannini, 1971.

Donadi, Francesco. 'La catarsi storica secondo Robortello'. *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti* 82 (1969–1970): 63–9.

Fabro, Cornelio. 'La storiografia nel pensiero cristiano'. In *Grande Antologia filosofica*, vol. 5, 311–503. Milano: Marzorati, 1953.

Fryde, Edmund B. *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography*. London: Bloomsbury, 1983.

Fueter, Eduard. *Geschichte der neuren Historiographie*. München-Berlin: Oldenbourg, 1911.

Garin, Eugenio. *Medioevo e Rinascimento*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2005.

Ginzburg, Carlo. *Il filo e le tracce*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2006.

Grafton, Anthony. *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Jaeger, Werner. 'Aristotle's Use of Medicine as Model of Method in His Ethics'. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 77 (1957): 54–61.

Kelley, Donald R. 'The Theory of History'. In *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, edited by Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner, 746–61. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Linden, David E.J. 'Gabriele Zerbi's *De cautelis medicorum* and the Tradition of Medical Prudence'. *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 73 (1999): 19–37.

Maffei, Enrico. *I trattati dell'arte storica dal Rinascimento fino al secolo XVII. Contributo alla storia della letteratura italiana*. Napoli: Pierro, 1897.

Pender, Stephen. 'Between Medicine and Rhetoric'. *Early Science and Medicine* 10 (2005): 36–64.

Pozzi, Mario. *Trattatisti del Cinquecento*. Milano: Ricciardi, 1978.

Reynolds, Beatrice. 'Shifting Currents in Historical Criticism'. *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14 (1953): 471–92.

Sgarbi, Marco. 'Che cosa è la storia? Il modello teorico di Sperone Speroni'. In *Modernità e progresso. Due idee guida nella storia del pensiero*, edited by Gregorio Piaia and Iva Manova, 43–71. Padova: Cleup, 2014.

Spini, Giorgio. 'I trattatisti dell'arte storica nella Controriforma italiana'. *Quaderni di Belfagor* 1 (1948): 109–36.

Proof

Proof

Vasoli, Cesare. 'Il modello teorico'. In *La storiografia umanistica*, 24–31. Messina: Sicania, 1992.

Vegas, Ferdinando. 'La concezione della storia dall'Umanesimo alla Controriforma'. In *Grande Antologia filosofica*, Vol. 10, 1–33. Milano: Marzorati, 1964.

Veronese, Guarino. *Epistolario*. Venezia: A spese della Società, 1920.

Vismara, Silvio. *Il concetto della storia nel pensiero scolastico*. Milano: Vita e pensiero, 1924.

Proof

Proof

7 Moral Philosophy

1. The Concept of Prudence

For Robortello all the language arts are instrumental to the one true philosophy capable of appealing not only to the chosen few, as was speculative philosophy, but to the entire population. This philosophy is moral philosophy. As we have seen in the previous three chapters, the acquisition of moral behaviour and virtue is the purpose of rhetoric, poetry and history. Robortello himself had taught this overarching discipline almost uninterruptedly throughout his entire university career, especially in Pisa, Venice and Padua.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Robortello returns frequently and with insistence throughout his philosophical writings to the moral concept of prudence, central to the Aristotelian ethics. In the *Nicomachean ethics* 1106 b 14–23, Aristotle implicitly relates prudence to catharsis. He writes that moral excellence is concerned with passions and actions, and in these there are excess, lack and the intermediate:

> For instance, both fear and confidence and appetite and anger and pity and in general pleasure and pain may be felt both too much and too little, and in both cases not well; but to feel them at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is characteristic of excellence.

As we have seen in the previous chapter these are all passions that poetics, and in particular tragedy, moves and which catharsis should moderate. To be morally excellent means to achieve the intermediate stage, that is to moderate these passions. Catharsis, therefore, is a means of acquiring this moderation, a means of being virtuous. Moral excellence, specifically, is a state concerned with the exercise of human choice, lying as a mean between excess and defect. He who practices this moderation can be said to be prudent. Prudence, therefore, for Aristotle is a state of

Proof

Proof

capacity, or an intellectual habit, for acting with regard to the things that are good or bad.[1]

An interesting examination of prudence may be found in particular in the *Praefatio in Tacitum*, where the approach and argument are entirely in line with the Aristotelian canon. In the manuscript Robortello states that he agrees with Aristotle in defining prudence as an intellectual habit (*speculativos*), referring to it as τεορικός (instead of θεωρεητικούς), which has to do with the actions of human beings (πρακτά, *agibilia*). This kind of action has a purpose that is internal to it, and is distinct from action whose purpose is external, namely to do or construct something. Prudence, in other words, is not concerned with artificial things, *factibilia*. It is an intellectual habit because the intellect is what distinguishes human being from beast, and it is the prerogative of the human being to keep the passions under the control and dominion of reason. If the passions were not under control, the human being would transform into a beast – thus perpetuating a commonplace of the Aristotelian tradition – thereby giving himself over to rape, adultery, robbery, parricide and every other imaginable kind of crime. The moderation of the passions and their control presupposes constant exercise, and exercise that produces in the mind a habit that promotes virtue and dismisses vice. Once this habit has formed in the soul, "it is always active (*actuosus*), and cannot rest, if it is given the possibility to act."[2] For this reason, habits that are concerned with action are known as active (*activi*), and among these the speculative habit of prudence is the principal (*dux*).[3]

The aim of these habits is τὸ εὖ, that which is best: that which, in Robortello's formulation, is just in the constant pursuit of justice. The virtue is in the pursuit, hence virtue cannot be viewed in respect of an action alone, but in relation to a behaviour that is acquired in a sustained manner over time, as Aristotle asserts in *Ethica Eudemia* 1104 a 18–23. Likewise, happiness itself cannot be considered in relation to a single action or activity, but within the context of a whole life. Robortello shows us that virtue for Aristotle consists in a kind of justice that is capable of moderating excesses – hence his definition of prudence: "prudence is the inventor (*inventrix*) and demonstrator (*demonstratix*) of the golden mean in which virtue consists and prescribes right action and how to maintain the middle way (*mediocritas*)."[4]

Robortello then goes on to qualify prudence, in particular in relation to the habit of science. He maintains that its concern is single human actions, but that at the same time, being a habit that persists through time, it has the capacity to group singulars under universals. Thus from first contingent things (*primae contingentes*) that are concerned with the actions of human beings, by means of a process that may be defined as inductive (*per inductionem*), it is possible to create fixed norms and rules that function as universals. These rules and norms are rooted in the

Proof

Proof

first contingencies, and these first contingencies for Robortello are to be sought in history. In history it is possible to observe the honest or dishonest actions of human beings, and it is possible to see whether human beings have acted according to the just mean or abandoned themselves to excess. Hence from the study of history the habit of prudence is born.

As mentioned earlier, a strong influence here is the Platonic rather than the Aristotelian paradigm. In an explicit reference to *Timaeus* 22 B, Robortello reiterates that he who has no memory of history is like a child without experience who acts according to the passions. History generates prudence: *historia magistra vitae*, in other words. This is not to say that it is possible to determine in a necessary sense the future, however, because such knowledge is available only to God. History engenders prudence of action always in relation to particulars from which generalisations can arise, although these remain inevitably provisional and prone to error, and apt to diverge from the rule that originates in the contingent. History generates prudence, as we saw earlier, if and only if it deals with public actions of a certain moral substance. By the very fact of dealing with public actions, however, moral philosophy is transformed into political philosophy; or rather they are two sides of the same knowledge.

In *In libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio* Robortello offers a practical example of how history, rhetoric, moral philosophy and political philosophy are intimately linked. In order to understand this text, we need to take a step back to the *Oratio Venetiis habita* (1549), an oration in which Robortello showcases his rhetorical skills. He states overtly that he is delivering his teaching not for money, but for the good of the Venetian youth, so that they might acquire glory and virtue.[5] Because of this insistence on virtue and glory, Robortello continuously makes allusions to topics that are important to those who will be called upon to exercise political power, in particular in the administration of the Republic of Venice.

Robortello denies that the rhetorician and the orator are a species of sophist, and also that the education required by the youth of the Venetian Republic is that of philosophers and jurists. None of these individuals is trained to uphold and administer a political institution. In order to govern it is necessary to possess virtue and live honestly, as this is the only way a positive verdict on what is achieved will be delivered by the people and adverse fortune will be overcome. The acquisition of virtue is vitally important because only political virtue and glory can overcome fate and make human beings immortal. Glory and victory against adverse fortune are guaranteed by the special relationship that ties the governors to God. Indeed, those who govern the city are as God in their administration of people, because God is the ultimate ruler and governor of the world, as well as the creator of all mortal beings. A mortal who governs other mortals can only do so by "following" and "knowing" the will of God. Acquiring this political virtue corresponds to the formation of the habit

Proof

Proof

of prudence in state administration, defence of the city, the preservation of traditions and laws and the safeguarding of public health.[6] Insofar as they represent such virtue, politicians are in Robortello's view like actors in a theatre that must educate the spectators to acquire virtuous attitudes. Once again, in the political sphere too, Robortello links the action of governors to the educational process of imitation and catharsis offered by Aristotle in the *Poetics*. Unlike actors who imitate reality by constructing fanciful scenes, governors are the real protagonists of actions, the ones who act. Their spectators, on the other hand, their judges, are people from different countries with different customs. For this reason, political education and the acquisition of virtue are more important than any other type of knowledge.

Further evidence of Robortello's political teaching can be found in the manuscript diagrams contained in the same collection, Donà dalle Rose 447.29. These diagrams appear to faithfully replicate the contents of the course of which the *In libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio* seems to be the prolusion. Robortello proceeds by commenting on Aristotle's *Politics*, especially the first book dealing with economics. That he should resort to diagrams to explain this discipline should come as no surprise, given the nature of his audience.

The fundamental building block of politics is the dual relationship between husband and wife and between master and servant. The former relationship exists to satisfy the human being's need to be with his similars, because a human being is a civil, or social, animal. The latter relationship exists when there is a difference of mental capacity, in which the master is stronger than the servant – even though the servant might have greater physical strength. These two types of relationship constitute the family and the home, which are the basis of natural society. A union of a number of families forms the hamlet (*vicus*), a collection of hamlets forms a city – the perfect society where each pursues his own end. This end is αὐτάρκεια, autarchy, self-sufficiency and independent living. The means by which this end is achieved within the community is the voice, and it is thanks to the voice that the human being can call himself a civil and social animal.

Once the general scheme of politics and its foundation is in place, Robortello goes on to examine economic relationships. The economic foundations of society reflect the political ones, therefore to speak of the home on a small scale is equivalent to speaking of the political institution on a larger scale. The home is constituted of two main relationships and one secondary one, according to the model set out by Aristotle. The first is between servant and master, where the servant differs from the master, Robortello writes, in the same way as the body differs from the soul. The master partakes more of the rational soul than the body, and has no need of the latter because for all those activities in which a body is needed he can make use of the servant, and in every respect the servant is considered

Proof

Proof

the tool and possession of the master. This topic should arouse considerable interest in young Venetians, who learnt that culture and education were the means of imposing their own superiority on land and sea.

Robortello focuses also on the condition of the servant, in particular whether the servant is such by nature or for other reasons. His answer is no different from Aristotle's, and originates in the distinction between servant and master. Servants are such because they are inferior by nature, because their intellective capacities are inferior. For this reason slavery is not only sociologically and culturally acceptable, but also morally just. Robortello is, however, careful to distinguish slavery from domination. There are two levels of domination, civil (or domestic) and regal. Civil domination is when a person dominates in a relationship between equals. Domestic domination is represented by the father of the family who dominates the servants. Regal domination is the domination of any single person over other free people. Servitude becomes manifest in these last two cases. But we must avoid confusing the servitude of the servants in respect of their master with the servitude of work, for which a person offers their service in exchange for money, and therefore as a free person and not a slave.

The other two types of relationship are between husband and wife, and the father of the family with the children. The relationship of superiority of husband over wife is justified by nature, like that of master and servant. The relationship between the father and children is based on benevolence and is similar to that between a king and his subjects.

One aspect of domestic administration is chrematistics, which is the acquisition of wealth necessary for life. Here, too, Robortello is simply schematising the first book of Aristotle's *Politics*. Chrematistics would appear for Robortello to be the class in which all other ways of acquiring wealth are included.

The first and most natural way of acquiring wealth is called the economic and it serves to procure the food that is necessary to life. There are different ways of acquiring such wealth: breeding, cultivating, pillaging, fishing or hunting. All animals and plants in nature must in this sense be considered a form of the wealth nature has provided to allow human beings to satisfy their needs. The need to procure these resources – survival – has led human beings to fight tooth and nail to have a share in the bounty. It is a natural instinct that leads to wars, hence we can see that war or conflict is just. And, indeed, war is considered by Robortello to be the third way of acquiring resources that does not draw upon any civic faculty.

The second way is not natural but positive and artificial, and it is called pecuniary. It consists in satisfying needs by means of exchange. It arose because not all human beings are capable of producing or procuring what they need, and therefore instead of using goods, they use money, which

Proof

Proof

is easier to transport. The process starts with barter and it is a simple exchange, but with experience it becomes increasingly artificial. There are three ways of acquiring wealth artificially: through trade (*mercatura*), usury (*foneratio*) and services (*mercenaria*). This way of acquiring wealth is not natural for Robortello, as for Aristotle, because the purpose over time ceases to be the satisfaction of mere needs and becomes an endless accumulation of wealth, which can lead to political disruption.

Perhaps the most interesting scheme, however, is the one that deals with the division of political institutions "*ex Hippomachi libris, quos citat Stobaeus*." The Hyppomachus cited by Johannes Stobaeus, and mentioned also in *In libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio* as Hippomachus Pythagoreus,[7] is in fact none other than Hippodamus, the author of a treatise on politics, of which two fragments remain. Robortello probably knows Hippodamus's work from the *editio princeps* of the *Florilegium* by Stobaeus, published in 1536 in Venice by Vittore Trincavelli, who also published the Greek text of Aristotle's *Poetics*.[8] Most likely Robortello refers to Hippodamus thinking he was the same Hippodamus of Miletus that Aristotle refers to in his *Politics*, when he speaks of the first non-professional politician to write on the best form of government. At that time, Robortello could not have known that Hippodamus's fragment had been reconstructed in the Hellenistic or proto-imperial period, possibly under the influence of Aristotle himself,[9] and therefore that Hippodamus of Stobaeus was in fact a pseudo-Hippodamus. The pseudo-Hippodamus in Robortello's mind appeared to be in the archetype, and therefore the first point of reference in constructing an ideal model of government. Nevertheless, Robortello might well have noted a discrepancy between the Stobaeus fragment and the doctrines presented by Aristotle. As Armand Delatte has rightly pointed out, there is no correspondence between the two political views other than an obsessive insistence on the number three.[10] It is probable that Robortello either did not read – or read only cursorily – the second book of Aristotle's *Politics*.[11]

Yet what matters here is the wholesale importation of the pseudo-Hippodamus's political thought into Robortello. All governments are made up of three classes. The first is the class of governors, which Robortello refers to in Greek as τὸ βοθλεθτικόν, following the pseudo-Hippodamus's text. They administer institutional affairs and resolve political problems according to the dictates of virtue. The second class – which the pseudo-Hippodamus referred to as τὸ ἐπίκοθρον, and Robortello as *milities* – are the protectors, those who take care of public administration and order by means of force. The third class is referred to by Robortello as τὸ βάναυσον, again like the pseudo-Hippodamus, and is the class of workers, those who prepare and provide that which is necessary for survival. The first two classes are free, whereas the latter lives on the fruits of its own labours. Obviously, the first class is the most noble (*optimum genus*), the second is

Proof

Proof

middling (*medium genus*) and the third is the lowest or least noble (*infimum genus*). The first class commands, while the third only serves. The second class sometimes commands the third, and sometimes obeys the orders of the first. Again following the pseudo-Hippodamus, Robortello then goes on to distinguish the functions within each class.

Generally speaking, the first class decides upon the measures to be carried out by the other two, and is further subdivided into other subclasses. The first of these is that of presidents: pseudo-Hippodamus uses the Greek term τὸ πρόεδρον, which Robortello translates as *supremus magistratus*. Their role is to deliberate on public affairs and to refer the decisions of the council to the second subclass, that of the governors – in the pseudo-Hippodamus τὸ ἀρχοντικόν and for Robortello the *minores* – to be understood as the minor magistrates. This second subclass is represented by those in command, or those who were elected to command. Lastly, the third subclass, the senators – or τὸ κοινοβουλευτικόν for the pseudo-Hippodamus and *concionarium genus* for Robortello – have the responsibility of deliberating collegially, listening to projects developed previously by the presidents, and voting for them. The second class, the class of the protectors, also has three functions. Generally speaking, they serve the decisions of the first class, but they are autonomous in deciding how to conduct war. The first function is overall command (τὸ ἀρχοντικόν), the second function is to guide troops in battle (τὸ προμαχατικόν); the third, war, is carried out by the rest of the army and the troops (τὸ ἀγελαῖον καὶ στρατικωτικόν). Those who fight in the front line are the boldest and bravest, and Robortello speaks of *selecti milites*, whereas the remaining multitude is made up of subservient combatants. The third class, the workers, or those who live from their own labour, is made up of farmers, workers, those who make the tools that are required to meet vital needs, and, lastly, the merchants, whom Robortello calls *nautas et mercatores* (navigators and merchants) and who export surplus merchandise and import what is lacking.

The pseudo-Hippodamus provided not only the division into classes of government, but also the way in which the civil community (*communio civilis*) is instituted. There are three core elements, λόγοι or *sermones*, customs (ἐπιτηδεύματα ἐθῶν) and laws. Teachings or discourses, as Robortello pointed out in the *Explicationes*, produce knowledge and culture, and encourage virtuous sentiments. The laws, however, invite avoidance of evil through the fear they instil, and encourage good behaviour with rewards.[12] Traditions and customs, on the other hand, are what shape long-lasting conduct. These three elements must have as their purpose honesty, justice and usefulness, and if they are unable to have all three, at least they should seek to have one or two in the prescribed order.

The pseudo-Hippodamus's vision proves useful for Robortello in the educational context in which he taught politics, namely among the children of rich merchants and Venetian noblemen. The fragment cited by

Proof

Proof

Stobaeus ends with an admonition which is useful to Robortello, even though he makes no immediate reference to it in the scheme:

> It is necessary to make every effort to ensure that the constitution, according to these purposes and as far as possible, is homogenous and consistent and therefore not prey to disruption and sedition. This will be possible if the young learn to moderate their passions and measure both pleasure and suffering, if restraint is exercised in regard to wealth and yields are sought in working the land, if the good will take up the magistracies that require virtue, the rich functions that involve expenses, and if all those who have honourably fulfilled their duties are awarded just recompense.[13] AuQ7

This passage from the pseudo-Hippodamus must have resonated particularly well with Robortello's own political vision, which in all his other works highlighted the central role of the moderation of passions in the attainment of virtue by means of catharsis. In addition, and predictably enough, the conclusion of the pseudo-Hippodamus's discourse is entirely aligned with Robortello's thought, which may be evinced from another scheme contained in Donà delle Rose 447.29 on the causes of virtue. There are three causes of virtue in the pseudo-Hippodamus, and these are fear, modesty (αἰδώς) and desire, translated by Robortello as *metus*, *vercundia* and *cupiditas/ardor*.

There are also three ways of achieving virtue, and these reflect the constitutive elements of civil society examined earlier. Fear that generates virtue is instilled through the law, if such behaviour is not inherent in the customs of human beings. The governor, accordingly, has the responsibility of promoting education that leads to virtue. Anyone who governs must ensure that all customs are practised and wealth maintained, as continual variation in customs and levels of wealth might lead to instability, which in turn would inhibit the development of virtue. Desire that generates virtue comes from teaching. The government must therefore monitor the sophists and check that they impart notions useful for maintaining the laws and customs, because their discourses demonstrate their sense of morality which could lead human beings to embrace the right or wrong behaviour. Modesty that leads to virtue is the daughter of customs and morals, and so anyone who has been virtuously educated is ashamed of committing evil actions. Customs may be corrupted in two ways, either because the community of human beings itself changes its values, or because another community introduces other customs. The same community corrupts customs either because it wishes to escape suffering, or because it wishes to accumulate pleasures. Those who are fleeing suffering have no desire to undergo hardship, whereas those who pursue pleasure throw themselves at wealth. In both Robortello and the pseudo-Hippodamus, there is the pervasive idea that effort leads to

Proof

Proof

wealth whereas pleasures are a source of evil. An external community, however, may corrupt the customs of another more modest society by disseminating values geared to limitless gratification, and all that follows.

All these ideas transposed into schemes are reflected by Robortello in his *In libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio*. It is worth noting that the internal title of *De fine, et materie politicae scientiae seu artis disputatio* differs from the one on the front cover, and gives an immediate description of the purpose of the work. Generally speaking, the subject-matter of politics for Robortello is always a great number of particular or singular human actions from which, by means of reason, it is possible to infer universal precepts.[14] The manner by means of which this political art or science is constituted is similar in every respect to medicine, which from concrete and particular cases tends to infer general conclusions. Obviously Robortello favours the epistemological process of induction far more than Aristotle himself, thus guaranteeing the status of true science for both medicine and politics. Indeed, medicine and politics are concerned with similar types of prudence.

Robortello's interest in moral philosophy and politics therefore manifestly derives from his general humanistic approach to the language arts grafted onto an Aristotelian stock. This is not an interest born out of external factors to meet the needs of his clients, be they Cosimo I or the senators of the Republic of Venice, as we see from the prefatory letter in the 1552 work to Giovanni,[15] the son of Bernardino Donato.[16] Indeed, rather, it may appear that his focus is a science for describing the "excellent prince,"[17] and one that deals with both moral philosophy and the administration of the Republic. In fact, Robortello is more interested in the notion of good moral education in a general sense, and his work cannot be included in the literary genre of precepts for princes that became fashionable especially in the second half of the Cinquecento.[18]

While he admits that it is difficult to interpret Aristotelian politics, nevertheless his aim in the brief *disputatio* is to determine the purpose and nature of political science, how it differs from other sciences and what its subject matter is. The purpose of political science is to determine how citizens of a city or of a state may live a blessed life. Robortello acknowledges that this purpose seems different from that set out by Aristotle in his *Politica*, where it is stated that the purpose of politics is to make good human beings but, in fact, the objective is identical. So, just as the purpose of the physician is to heal the patient with reference to his overall health, the purpose of the politician is to make human beings virtuous so that they may live a blessed life.[19] The politician is therefore a person who works towards establishing the conditions for everyone to live a blessed life.

This kind of life which leads to happiness is only possible thanks to a philosophical education (*educatio ex philosophia*)[20] that teaches the right

Proof

Proof

sort of behaviour for moderating the passions and protecting the soul from emotional upheavals that obfuscate rational activity. If moderation is to be taught, then according to Robortello tyranny must be ruled out as a form of government because it is generally motivated by excessive violence, and unrestrained passion leads to the destruction of the political system.[21]

As always, Robortello's discourse points towards the subject of moral education. There are three ways in which Robortello writes that human beings can be said to be "good": "by nature, custom or teaching."[22] Nature, however, depends not on human beings, but God. If nature is opposed to morals, there is little that education can do to change the outcome, and, following Galenus,[23] Robortello states: "the behaviour of the soul follows the habits of the body."[24] But if nature is favourable, then virtue may be acquired either by habit or through teaching. In such a case, Robortello rules out the law as a means of instilling virtue. Whatever the circumstances, he asserts that it is easier to require virtue through customs and habits because not everyone is predisposed to learning and embracing knowledge. Such customs are ethical, not intellectual, and consequently this is not a form of prudence. Such habits engender ethical virtue through the eyes, for example, by means of poetry and theatrical works that accustom the soul to moderate the passions without the need for any particular teaching. Of course, prudence may also derive from this kind of habit, but not necessarily and not consequentially, as it belongs to the sphere of the intellect. Robortello bases his theory on his reading of the final chapter of the tenth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which deals with the transition from moral philosophy to politics – especially 1179 b 20–34, which it seems to summarise and paraphrase.

> Now some think that we are made good by nature, others by habituation, others by teaching. Nature's part evidently does not depend on us, but as a result of some divine causes is present in those who are truly fortunate; while argument and teaching, we may suspect, are not powerful with all men, but the soul of the student must first have been cultivated by means of habits for noble joy and noble hatred, like earth which is to nourish the seed. For he who lives as passion directs will not hear an argument that dissuades him, nor understand it if he does; and how can we persuade one in such a state to change his ways? And in general passion seems to yield not to argument but to force. The character, then, must somehow be there already with a kinship to excellence, loving what is noble and hating what is base. But it is difficult to get from youth upwards a right training for excellence if one has not been brought up under the right laws; for to live temperately and hardily is not pleasant to most people, especially when they are young.[25]

Proof

Proof

Without wishing to downplay the influence of the pseudo-Hippodamus, we see that in deriving virtue from habit and teaching Robortello is making a clear reference to passage 1103 a 4–18 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*:

> some virtues are intellectual and others moral, philosophic wisdom and understanding and prudence (φρόνησις) being intellectual, liberality and temperance (σωφροσύνη) moral. For in speaking about a man's character we do not say that he is wise or has understanding but that he is good-tempered or temperate; yet we praise the wise man also with respect to his state; and of states we call those which merit praise excellences. Virtue, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word for 'habit.'[26]

The conceptual structure of Robortello's political discourse is therefore predominantly Aristotelian rather than Platonic; even more Aristotelian is his analysis of the method for teaching virtue. A first method goes from universals to particulars, and a second from particulars to universals. If politics is a science or an art, then it must have to do with universals. If the method of teaching proceeds from universals, then tradition appoints philosophers and sophists the task of transmitting precepts and doctrines. Generally speaking, Robortello would say that sophists could teach politics, were it not for the fact that their commitment and purpose is to construct artificial discourses and not to teach doctrines. The only real guardians of political knowledge are the philosophers, because they alone know universal precepts. To be a philosopher, however, is a necessary but not sufficient condition, because to be a good politician one must also acquire experience through practice. Robortello here is referring explicitly to the oration to Nicocles, where it is said: "whenever you desire to gain a thorough understanding of such things as it is fitting that kings should know, pursue them by experience (ἐμπειρία) as well as by philosophy (φιλοσοφία); for philosophizing (φιλοσοφεῖν) will show you the way but training (γυμνάζεσθαι) yourself in the actual doing of things will give you power to deal with affairs."[27] The dimension of experience AuQ8 thus becomes crucial for Robortello.

It is for this reason a basic tenet that the sophists who are concerned merely with outward forms of discourse cannot be counted among teachers of politics, but this does not mean that Robortello also excludes rhetoricians and orators. Not only do they have a particular relationship with the truth, they also have a different purpose, namely to persuade people to act morally. For this reason, rhetoric – especially oratory which is concerned with promoting virtuous habits – may be considered a part of

Proof

Proof

politics. Hence, he concludes, "this is the ultimate purpose of science, namely to teach how to make a community (*civitas*) blessed,"[28] or at least to find out how the political human being can persuade his subjects to act morally in the public interest.

Notes

1. Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*, 1140b 4–6.
2. Francesco Donadi, 'Un inedito del Robortello: La Praefatio in Tacitum', *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti* 82 (1969–1970): 318.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 318–19.
5. Francesco Robortello, *Oratio Venetiis habita, antequam initium faceret interpretandi pridie calendas nouem* (Venezia: Arrivabene, 1549), Aii$^{\text{v}}$.
6. Ibid., Aiiii$^{\text{v}}$.
7. Francesco Robortello, *Francisci Philelphi De morali disciplina libri quinque. Auerrois paraphrasis in libros de republica Platonis. Francisci Robortelli in libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio* (Venezia: Scoto, 1552), 177.
8. Michele Curnis, *L'Antologia di Giovanni Stobeo: una biblioteca antica dai manoscritti alle stampe* (Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2008), 11–44.
9. Italo Lana, *Studi sul pensiero politico classico* (Napoli: Guida, 1973), 139–44.
10. Armand Delatte, *Essai sur la politique pythagoricienne* (Liège: Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège, 1922), 126.
11. See the paper "Il percorso di Robortello tra *politiké* e Aristotelis libri politici" delivered by Michele Curnis at the "Francesco Robortello. Réception des Anciens et Construction de la Modernité" congress, Rennes, 6–8 October 2016.
12. This is particularly true also in the political system of Hippodamus of Miletus, according to Aristotle's account in *Politics* 1268 a 5–10, where it is established that anyone who proposes reforms that are useful to the constitution of the city should be rewarded appropriately.
13. Johannes Stobaeus, *Florilegium* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1856), IV, 1.93, 28.
14. Robortello, *Francisci Philelphi De morali disciplina libri quinque. Auerrois paraphrasis in libros de republica Platonis. Francisci Robortelli in libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio*, 178.
15. Giovanni Donato himself, known as "dalle Renghe," was a capable rheotrician, orator and writer of epigrams, see Luigi Contarini, *Aggiunta al vago & dilettevole giardino* (Vicenza: Contarini, 1608), 209.
16. Bernardino Donato was translator and interpreter of Aristotle's *Oeconomicorum seu de re familiari libri duo*, editor of books of the Giuntina editions of Aristotelian moral philosophy and editor of the *Liber oeconomicus* by Xenophon.
17. Robortello, *Francisci Philelphi De morali disciplina libri quinque. Auerrois paraphrasis in libros de republica Platonis. Francisci Robortelli in libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio*, a2.
18. Valentina Lepri, *Layered Wisdom: Early Modern Collections of Political Precepts* (Padova: Cleup, 2015).
19. Robortello, *Francisci Philelphi De morali disciplina libri quinque. Auerrois paraphrasis in libros de republica Platonis. Francisci Robortelli in libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio*, 171.
20. Ibid., 173.
21. Ibid., 172.

Proof

Proof

22. Ibid., 175.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, 1179 b 20–34.
26. Ibid., 1103 a 4–18.
27. Isocrates, *Isocrates, Vol. I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), *Ad Nic*. 35.
28. Robortello, *Francisci Philelphi De morali disciplina libri quinque. Auerrois paraphrasis in libros de republica Platonis. Francisci Robortelli in libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio*, 173.

Bibliography

1. *Robortello's Works*

Robortello, Francesco. *Oratio Venetiis habita, antequam initium faceret interpretandi pridie calendas nouem*. Venezia: Arrivabene, 1549.

———. *Francisci Philelphi De morali disciplina libri quinque. Auerrois paraphrasis in libros de republica Platonis. Francisci Robortelli in libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio*. Venezia: Scoto, 1552.

2. *Primary Sources*

Contarini, Luigi. *Aggiunta al vago & dilettevole giardino*. Vicenza: Contarini, 1608.

Isocrates. *Isocrates, Vol. I*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928.

Stobaeus, Johannes. *Florilegium*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1856.

3. *Secondary Literature*

Curnis, Michele. *L'Antologia di Giovanni Stobeo: una biblioteca antica dai manoscritti alle stampe*. Alessandria: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2008.

Delatte, Armand. *Essai sur la politique pythagoricienne*. Liège: Bibliothèque de la Faculté de philosophie et lettres de l'Université de Liège, 1922.

Donadi, Francesco. 'Un inedito del Robortello: La Praefatio in Tacitum'. *Atti e memorie dell'Accademia patavina di Scienze Lettere ed Arti* 82 (1969–1970): 299–321.

Lana, Italo. *Studi sul pensiero politico classico*. Napoli: Guida, 1973.

Lepri, Valentina. *Layered Wisdom: Early Modern Collections of Political Precepts*. Padova: Cleup, 2015.

Proof

Proof

8 Conclusion

Francesco Robortello from Udine was without doubt one of the most important intellectuals of the sixteenth century. The earliest testimony of his greatness is dated 1548, and comes from Pieter Nannick, who recounts that Robortello had a "generous nature" and "great erudition."[1] Even his rival Maggi epitomised him as a "learned man of Greek and Latin letters."[2] His compatriot Francesco Luigini speaks of him as a "superior mind," a "highly learned and erudite" man.[3] The philosopher Francesco Patrizi considers him his teacher, a man of "excellent doctrine," for whom he feels "great love" and "much reverence."[4] Antonio Riccoboni, too, refers to him as "extremely learned,"[5] whereas Antonio Tritonio recalls that he was "extremely able in every kind of science."[6] Francesco Sansovino speaks of him as "an excellent man in our times,"[7] whereas Flaminio Filonardi defines him as a "miracle of nature," a great expert of the Latin and Greek languages.[8] Orazio Toscanella speaks of the "most excellent Robortello,"[9] and goes on to add that "not only Bologna, but also Ferrara, Milan, Rome, Venice, Padua, Italy, France, Spain, and the whole of Germany all sing the praises of the extremely learned Robortello."[10] Alessandro Piccolomini speaks of a "man of great reading,"[11] while Antonio Maria Spelta refers to him as "famous for his beautiful and ornate letters."[12]

Robortello's fame spread quickly across the Alps. Peter Lotz wrote to Joachim Camerarius that Robortello was an extremely learned scholar of history and interpreter of Aristotle,[13] and Giuseppe Castiglione called him a "supremely learned man."[14] Bernardino Partenio defined him as an erudite and industrious writer.[15] Justus Lipsius wrote of Robortello that he was a light not only for Italy, but also for the whole of Europe.[16] Lucas Fruterius stated that he was a man gifted with a febrile erudition.[17] Caspar Schoppe said of him that he was "extremely learned and ingenious."[18]

Yet his fame on account of the innovative nature of his ideas also earned him a certain notoriety. As we have seen, throughout his scholarly career Robortello was involved in numerous acrimonious controversies that might easily have cost him not only his reputation, but also his life.

Proof

Proof

From Giovanni Battista Egnazio to Paolo Manuzio, from Andrea Alciati to Vincenzo Maggi and – last but not least – Carlo Sigonio, Robortello was attacked both personally and scientifically. These attacks, which were occasioned by a combination of jealousy and Robortello's own firebrand personality, are interesting as a demonstration of how prominent a figure he became in the intellectual landscape of his times, and the extent to which the innovative nature of his methodology and the originality of his investigations challenged his contemporaries.

What he in fact did was to change the way that the humanistic disciplines were conceived and to offer an original and fundamental contribution for their redefinition and transformation, often suggesting new directions for research, which would come to form the base of the modern approach, which many scholars would pursue in the following decades and for centuries to come.

Robortello's role in the reformation of the humanities makes of him a constituent part of what Christopher S. Celenza has brilliantly characterised as a long-fifteenth century.[19] However, in Robortello we find a new spirit, probably influenced by his strong philosophical interests and by his long peregrinations in Lucca, Firenze, Pisa, Venezia, Padova and Bologna. Highly esteemed as a man of acute wit by his contemporaries, but also envied and even attacked for qualities which led him into arrogance, Robortello has, in comparison to other humanists of the time, such as Sigonio and Vettori, a philosophical vein, which makes him unique not only in Italy, but in Europe more generally.

Robortello is an all-around philosopher – with all that the term implies – as much as he is a humanist: his world is "made by words,"[20] but full of concepts. The philosophical character of his reflections originates in his careful and cool-headed reading of Aristotle, who constitutes the reference and the general framework for the foundation of systematic thought, with the potential to embrace all human knowledge. This does not mean, however, that Robortello slavishly followed Aristotle's words and steps. Robortello's Aristotelianism is more systematic and methodological than doctrinal. In Robortello, Aristotelianism abounds in Platonism, Stoicism and Ciceronianism. Often, both in fundamental aspects and in the content of the thinking, Robortello advocates philosophical doctrines contrary to the Aristotelian tradition, and this break from within led him to conceive of the language arts in an innovative manner.

The strong philosophical, almost ideological, imprint of his ideas in the field of the humanities led Robortello into confrontations and clashes with his colleagues. The excuses for his controversies were almost always historical and philological details, as in the cases of Maggi and Sigonio, but behind superficial quibbles there were new worlds and ways of conceiving the system of humanities – a speculative approach absent among colleagues and fellows, but which Robortello learned to use and value highly, as we have seen, from early in his career in Tuscany. The

Proof

Proof

controversies with other intellectuals were always raised to the same level, that is the existence or non-existence of a global and comprehensive system of humanities in which all the pertinent disciplines of humanities could or should be understood. The lack of systematicity was in Robortello's eyes a clear indication of weakness, undermining the fundamental and strategic importance of the humanities to education. This lack of systematicity and absence of speculation was also the greatest failing of humanists such as Agricola, and represented a form of treason in relation to Classic thought.

The theoretical framework according to Robortello was grounded in a strict relationship among the language arts, a bond innate to humankind. As human beings are by nature social and political beings, they develop innate linguistic and cognitive capacities, peculiar to their species. Among these faculties, there is without doubt the faculty of speaking, which is based on a logical structure at the mental level, and identifiable for Robortello with the Topics. Unfortunately, the depth of Robortello's philosophical reflections has been for far too long neglected because the *Discorso dell'origine, numero, ordine et methodo delli luoghi topici* remained in manuscript form and was thus not sufficiently appreciated. However, the intellectuals of his day – like Toscanella and Riccoboni – who were able to read Robortello's manuscript praised its value and originality, using and incorporating its ideas into their writings.

Robortello distinguishes himself neatly from fellow humanists, for whom Topics was mainly a rhetorical device for determining all the things that could be said on a topic. Robortello's conception of Topics is unrhetorical, because it reflects the structure of thought, the way in which the mind makes explicit its ideas, and this conception derives from his studies on Aristotelian psychology. Topics is the basis for all the other language arts, without exception. Everything that can be said is said by means of structures that correspond to the workings of the mind, and the language art which deals with the expressions of thought *par excellence* is – according to Robortello – rhetoric.

In *De rhetorica facultate*, Robortello emphasises that rhetoric has the capacity to convey the content of knowledge, while in *De artificio dicendi* he shows how it is able to express different content to different audiences, as well as the same content to diverse audiences. Most importantly of all, in the latter case rhetoric becomes oratory. If its main aim is to express thoughts, its main utility is to make thoughts more germane in such a way that their tenor can be understood and known by others. This is the goal of the orator in Robortello's homonymous manuscript. What rhetoric does is to express the human soul: it is the art of the expression of sentiments and feelings. By such means, according to Robortello, the truth is revealed. Rhetoric therefore is not to be understood as an embellishment of discourse, but rather as the art that affords the best and most adequate means of speaking the truth. In Robortello's eyes, delivering

Proof

Proof

the truth is an absolute moral act of the highest order, to the extent that knowledge of the truth can lead to the perfect life – a life which is not achieved by speculation, but rather, and above all, by action. It is towards the practical life that the entirety of Robortello's philosophical thought is oriented. Insofar, however, as rhetoric deals with expression, and therefore with public expression of the truth, then the impact that it has is not only confined to the behaviour and practical life of individuals, but also extends to the community. Rhetoric impacts directly on politics. Every discourse in Robortello's view – since it is a public discourse – is essentially political, and it is political because its aim is to reveal the truth, which is essential for moral education and for ethical conduct. Rhetoric teaches the truth through example. According to Robortello, an example is no longer simply an instrument for listing or explaining a particular, but with its capacity to generalise it can lead to the universals, and for this reason it can reveal the truth.

It is not enough, though, that the truth be merely expressed or made manifest. The truth should be accommodated, and this is precisely the role of rhetoric, that of bringing the greatest number of people to the vicinity of the truth. The educational aim of rhetoric is thus persuasion regarding good actions, and such persuasion is necessary purely because the majority of the people cannot know the truth directly. For this reason, Robortello explains at length how to transform or convert complex discourses, such as philosophical ones, into others that are more accessible, and he identifies as the orator's task the job of explaining the truth, and instilling it into other people insofar as they might be able to act in the correct moral way. With a view to performing accordingly, the orator should know the truth and must essentially himself be a philosopher. As an orator, however, he does not teach the truth, which is, as we have just said, inaccessible, except by arousing the passions of human beings. The truth is not taught: what is taught by means of persuasion is the practice of the truth – that is, good moral conduct.

The complement of rhetoric is poetics. Poetics deals with fictitious things, which concern the past, the present and the future, and it deals with them by means of verisimilitude. Insofar as it deals with the past, it is close to history. However, while history deals with what has been shaped by necessity, and in a particular, predetermined way, poetics deals with things by means of invention, imagination and imitation. This does not mean that poetics aims to convey falsehood or to deceive. With rhetoric, poetics has a strong relationship with the truth, and this also has an educational purpose. In the *Explicationes*, Robortello makes clear that poetics pursues this aim from one side through imitation and from the other through catharsis. Imitation is important because it proposes a positive model to which one might aspire, and by means of imitation, as Aristotle states in the *Poetica*, human beings acquire early knowledge. Catharsis, conversely, is a process by means of which excesses are moderated in the

Proof

Proof

soul, and habits in relation to the sorrows and misfortunes of life are generated, leading human beings to superior awareness and readiness for what might happen and lending them strength in the face of tragic events. What is on display in poetics is an example which rhetorically persuades – not by means of words, but by means of representation – the worth of good moral behaviour.

The example is also the cornerstone of historiography, which with Robortello becomes a genuine art with its own specific method. The supersession of a chronicalistic and annalistic conception of history is based on a new conception of the example, by means of which it is possible, according to Robortello – and contrary to what Aristotle writes – to generate not only particular, but also universal teachings. Historiography can have a method simply because it is a language art based on the rhetorical device of example. As in rhetoric, the content of the example becomes the model for good behaviour to follow or bad behaviour to avoid. Like poetics, as Robortello emphasises in his manuscripts, history teaches by means of catharsis. Historical catharsis is, however, more efficient than tragic or poetic catharsis because the example is true and real and not imagined or invented, and truth – by default – is more persuasive than fiction. For this reason, history is at the base of Robortello's educational system.

All language arts share the aim of educating human beings, to direct their behaviour: in other words, to develop the habit of ethics, that is prudence, which allows the human being to take correct decisions and to act according to moral precepts. Robortello returns continuously and insistently in his historical and political writings – in particular in the manuscripts – to the importance of the intellectual virtue of prudence. It is by prudence that the human being can act effectively in society. *In libros politicos Aristotelis disputatio*, Robortello points out that there is a public function for all the language arts, which has to do directly with the constitution of the political order legitimated not by force or wealth, but by the good that comes from knowledge. As Aristotle had suggested, distinctions among social classes and the entire hierarchy of power were based on intellectual capacities for Robortello. The intellectual contexts in which he operated immediately understood his ideas and way of thinking. Robortello was anything but an intellectual closed in his ivory tower, rather he found consensus among all the patrons of his career regarding the strongly moral and yet political vein of his philosophy.

To conclude this examination of Robortello's thought, we can say that the other purpose of all the language arts is the education of the citizen, in perfect accord with the humanists of the Quattrocento. Unlike the fifteenth-century humanists, however, Robortello's own notion springs from, and is thoroughly imbued with, an Aristotelian spirit of system, without which his own philosophy would never have emerged from the tumultuous years of the mid-Cinquecento, a time of profound religious

Proof

Proof

crisis. What he in fact created was a system for the humanities, unique for his century and a perfect union of humanism and philosophy.

Notes

1. Pieter Nannick, *Miscellaneorum decas una* (Lyon: Bering, 1548), 179.
2. Vincenzo Maggi and Bartolomeo Lombardi, *In Aristotelis librum de poetica communes explanationes* (Venice: Valgrisi, 1550), 16.
3. Gian Giuseppe Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli* (Venezia: Fenzo, 1762), vol. 2, 447.
4. Francesco Patrizi, *Della historia diece dialoghi* (Venezia: Arrivabene, 1560), 6^{r}.
5. Antonio Riccoboni, *Aristotelis ars rhetorica* (Venezia: Meietti, 1579), 330.
6. Antonio Tritonio, *Mythologia* (Bologna: Benati, 1560), letter to Emilio Malvezzi.
7. Francesco Sansovino, *Orationi volgarmente scritte da molti huomini illustri de tempi nostri* (Venezia: Sansovino, 1561), 77.
8. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 6805, 312.
9. Orazio Toscanella, *Bellezze del furioso di M. Lodovico Ariosto* (Venezia: De Franceschi, 1574), 234.
10. Orazio Toscanella, *Precetti necessarie et altre cose utilissime ridotti in capi* (Venezia: Avanzi, 1562), 160^{v}. Liruti writes that this statement can be found in *La retorica di M. Tullio Cicerone a Gaio Herennio* (Venezia: Avanzi, 1566), 154, but I did not find it in the edition I consulted, cf. Liruti, *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*, 449.
11. Alessandro Piccolomini, *Della institutione morale* (Venezia: Ziletti, 1560), 141.
12. Antonio Maria Spelta, *Historia* (Pavia: Bartoli, 1603), 520.
13. Peter Lotz, *Opera Omnia* (Leipzig: Steinman, 1586), 266–7.
14. Giuseppe Castiglione, *De antiquis puerorum praenominibus* (Roma: Bonfadini, 1594), 1.
15. Bernardino Partenio, *In Horatii Flacci carmina atque epodos commentarii* (Venezia: Nicoli, 1584), A2.
16. Justus Lipsius, *Epistularum selectarum centuria singularis ad Italos & Hispanos, quive in iis locis* (Antwerp: Moret, 1604), 13.
17. Janus Gruter, *Lampas, sive fax artium liberalium hoc est thesaurus criticus* (Frankfurt: Palthen, 1604), vol. 2, 875.
18. Caspar Schoppe, *De arte critica* (Nürnberg: Fuhrmann, 1597), B2^{v}.
19. Christopher S. Celenza, *The Lost Italian Renaissance: Humanists, Historians, and Latin's Legacy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 134–50.
20. I take this effective expression from Anthony Grafton, *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

Bibliography

1. Manuscripts

Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 6805.

2. Primary Sources

Castiglione, Giuseppe. *De antiquis puerorum praenominibus*. Roma: Bonfadini, 1594.

Proof

Proof

Gruter, Janus. *Lampas, sive fax artium liberalium hoc est thesaurus criticus*. Frankfurt: Palthen, 1604.

Halicarnassus, Dionysius of. *Nonnulla opuscula, a Stanislao Ilovio Polono nunc primum latinitate donata, quae quinta pagina recensentur. Eiusdem Ilovii et Robortelli de historica facultate commentatiunculae*. Parigi: Stephanus, 1556.

La retorica di M. Tullio Cicerone a Gaio Herennio. Venezia: Avanzi, 1566.

Lipsius, Justus. *Epistularum selectarum centuria singularis ad Italos & Hispanos, quive in iis locis*. Antwerp: Moret, 1604.

Lotz, Peter. *Opera Omnia*. Leipzig: Steinman, 1586.

Maggi, Vincenzo and Lombardi, Bartolomeo. *In Aristotelis librum de poetica communes explanationes*. Venezia: Valgrisi, 1550.

Nannick, Pieter. *Miscellaneorum decas una*. Lyon: Bering, 1548.

Partenio, Bernardino. *In Horatii Flacci carmina atque epodos commentarii*. Venezia: Nicoli, 1584.

Patrizi, Francesco. *Della historia diece dialoghi*. Venezia: Arrivabene, 1560.

Piccolomini, Alessandro. *Della institutione morale*. Venezia: Ziletti, 1560.

Riccoboni, Antonio. *Aristotelis ars rhetorica*. Venezia: Meietti, 1579.

Sansovino, Francesco. *Orationi volgarmente scritte da molti huomini illustri de tempi nostri*. Venezia: Sansovino, 1561.

Schoppe, Caspar. *De arte critica*. Nürnberg: Fuhrmann, 1597.

Spelta, Antonio Maria. *Historia*. Pavia: Bartoli, 1603.

Toscanella, Orazio. *Precetti necessarie et altre cose utilissime ridotti in capi*. Venezia: Avanzi, 1562.

———. *Bellezze del furioso di M. Lodovico Ariosto*. Venezia: Franceschi, 1574.

Tritonio, Antonio. *Mythologia*. Bologna: Benati, 1560.

3. *Secondary Literature*

Celenza, Christopher S. *The Lost Italian Renaissance: Humanists, Historians, and Latin's Legacy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

Grafton, Anthony. *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Liruti, Gian Giuseppe. *Notizie delle vite ed opere scritte da' letterati del Friuli*. Venezia: Fenzo, 1762.

Proof

Proof

Index

Aelianus 45
Aeschines 88, 92
Aeschylus 7, 25, 46
Alciati, A. 21, 42, 174
Alcidamas 95
Aldrovandi, A. 15
Alessandro de' Pazzi 24, 105–6, 109–10, 113, 133, 137
Alexander of Aphrodisias 81–2
Alfonso II of Ferrara 37
Amaseo, R. Q. 15–17, 21, 32, 34
Amerbach, B. 19, 26
Amerbach, B. II 45
Anaxagoras 95, 124
Andreoni, A. 9, 12
Antonini, F. 21
Archilochus 94–5
Aristotle 3, 7, 9–11, 13, 18, 20, 22–4, 26, 34, 37, 56–7, 59–60, 62–5, 67, 70, 73–4, 77, 81–3, 90, 92–5, 97–9, 103–6, 108–10, 112–19, 121–4, 126, 129, 130, 132, 134–5, 141–6, 150, 152, 154, 155, 160–1, 163–5, 168, 171–4, 176–7
Arrivabene, A. 21
Athenaeus 18, 105, 120, 135
Atwill, J. M. 10~~0~~
Averroes 22, 105, 109, 129

Bacon, F. 61
Bandini, A. M. 43, 50
Barsanti, P. 40–1, 51
Belloni, A. 6, 21, 23
Belloni, C. 21
Bianchi, L. 71–2, 75
Biasori, L. 19, 41, 51
Billanovich, G. 9, 12
Blocker, D. 7, 11–12, 121, 133, 135, 137
Bodin, J. 144, 156, 158
Boethius 55–8, 61, 63–5, 67, 86, 90–1
Bolzoni, L. 8, 11–12, 15, 74–5, 99, 101
Bonamico, L. 25, 36, 44
Bonifacius 19, 26
Bramanti, V. 43, 52
Busdraghi, G. B. 17
Butterworth, C. E. 133, 137

Caesarius, J. 60, 73, 75
Callimachus 18
Camerarius, J. 16, 40, 51, 173
Campana, F. 19–20, 72, 106
Campeggi, G. B. 16, 89, 99
Cappello, S. 6, 8, 10–12
Capriano, G. P. 117, 132, 134, 13~~6~~
Carafa, A. 37
Carisio, C. 36
Carlini, A. 7, 10, 12, 41, 51, 104, 133, 137
Carnesecchi, P. 16, 18
Castelvetro, L. 24–6, 44, 134, 13~~6~~
Castiglione, G. 173, 178
Catullus 18
Celenza, C. S. 9, 12, 174, 178, 179
Chios 94
Cicero 17–18, 20, 22, 26, 32, 35, 37, 40, 42, 46–7, 50, 54–8, 60–1, 63–5, 67–8, 72–4, 76–8, 80–3, 86–7, 89–91, 97–9, 101, 140, 145
Cicogna, E. 39, 41, 49, 141, 157
Cillenio, R. 32
Cleomedes 37
Cogan, M. 74, 76
Coleman, J. K. 134, 137
Colonna, V. 16
Contarini, L. 171–2
Corradi, S. 26, 32, 39, 50

Proof

Proof

Corti, M. 42
Cosimo I de' Medici 3, 19–21, 106, 168
Costa, E. 39, 51
Cotroneo, G. 8, 11–12, 141–2, 146, 155–6, 158
Cotugno, A. 98, 101
Cox, V. 98, 101
Cromer, M. 32, 46, 50
Curione, C. S. 19, 37
Curione, S. 41, 50–1
Curnis, M. 171–2

Dal Borgo, T. 140
Dawe, Roger D. 7, 10, 12
Delatte, A. 165, 171–2
Delminio, G. C. 69
De Maio, R. 6, 10, 47, 51
Demosthenes 26, 81
Denores, G. 132, 136–7
Descartes, R. 61
Diano, C. 7, 11–12, 125, 135, 137
Diogenes Laertius 18
Dionysius of Halicarnassus 30, 45, 84–5, 99, 143, 158, 179
Dodonis 94
Dolce, L. 6, 10, 13
Donadi, F. 6, 8, 10–12, 45, 51, 109, 133, 141, 148, 156, 158, 171–2
Donato, B. 17, 168
Donato, G. 171

Egnazio, G. B. 6, 21–3, 174
Empedocles 113
Epictetus 131
Euridemus 93
Euripides 124–5, 135

Fabro, C. 155, 158
Fabroni, A. 41, 51
Facciolati, J. 34, 47, 51
Faerno, G. 32, 37
Falloppia, G. 25, 27, 29, 33–4, 45
Fantuzzi, G. 47, 51
Ferrari, G. B. 26
Ferraro, A. 10, 12
Ficcadori, G. 43, 52
Filelfo, F. 22, 109
Flaminio, M. 18, 37, 39, 41, 173
Florindo, F. 18, 41, 51
Fortesuedo, A. 34–5
Fournel, J. L. 98, 101
Fredborg, K. M. 98, 101
Fruterius, L. 175
Fryde, E. B. 155, 158
Fueter, E. 140, 155, 158

Gallavotti, C. 135, 137
Galluzzi, R. 42, 51
Gambara, L. 34–5
Garavelli, E. 8, 11, 13, 40, 134, 136
Garbo, F. del 41
Garin, E. 2, 4, 9, 13, 74, 76, 98, 101, 155, 158
George of Trebizond 70, 75
Gheri, C. 16
Gilbert, N. W. 74, 76, 99, 101
Ginzburg, C. 8, 11, 13, 142, 154, 156–8
Girardi, R. 98, 101
Girotto, C. A. 46, 51, 99, 101
Glarean, H. L. 32, 42, 48
Goineo, G. B. 15
Golden, L. 134, 137
Gorgias 125–6, 135
Grafton, A. 134, 137, 155, 158, 178–9
Green, L. D. 74, 76, 97, 99, 101
Griffo, G. 29
Grohovaz, V. 44
Gruter, J. 178–9
Guidiccioni, G. 19

Halliwell, S. 123, 135, 137
Hermogenes 26, 55, 60, 81–2, 87
Herodian 18
Herodotus 88, 112–13
Herrick, M. T. 10, 13
Herwagen, J. 46
Hesiod 131
Hippodamus 165–7, 170–1
Homer 94–5, 135, 137
Horace 17–18, 20, 42, 84, 99, 103–4, 109, 153
Hume, D. 61
Hyppomachus 156

Isabella of Portugal 19
Ismenias 94
Isocrates 172

Jaeger, W. 156, 158

Kant, I. 61
Kappl, B. 133, 137
Kelley, D. R. 141, 156, 158
Kessler, E. 11, 13

Proof

Proof

Kraye, J. 9, 13, 43, 47, 52
Kristeller, P. O. 1–2, 9, 13, 99, 101
Kromer, M. 141

Lamberton, R. 135, 13~~7~~
Lana, I. 171–2
Leff, M. C. 57, 72–4, 76
Leibniz, G. W. 61
Lepri, V. 171–2
Leurotto, G. F. 17
Linden, D. E. J. 156, 158
Lipsius, J. 173, 178–9
Liruti, G. G. 6, 10, 12–13, 15–17, 19–20, 22, 26–7, 29, 32, 34–7, 39–41, 43–7, 52, 72, 76, 99, 101, 178–9
Locke, J. 61
Lombardi, B. 44, 51, 105–6, 133, 135, 137, 178–9
Lorio, J. 22, 24, 89
Lottini, G. 21
Lotz, P. 173, 178–9
Lucian of Samosata 150–1, 154–5, 157–8
Lucretius 18
Lycurgus 98

Mack, P. 73–4, 76–7, 97, 99, 101
Madruccio, C. 24
Maffei, E. 141, 155, 158
Maggi, V. 23–4, 44, 51, 105–6, 109, 122–4, 126, 135, 137, 173–4, 178–9
Maggioni, E. 10, 13, 44, 52
Mantias 94
Manuzio, A. 18, 105
Manuzio, P. 26, 30–2, 46, 51, 174
Manzoli, B. 25
Marliani, B. 27–30, 32, 44, 51
Marra, D. 42, 52
Martelli, U. 21
Martini, L. 20, 42
Masetti, G. 25
McCall, M. 7, 10, 13
McCuaig, W. 10, 13, 26, 44, 46, 52
McNeely, I. F. 98, 101
Meietti, R. 70, 178–9
Melanchthon, P. 60, 73, 76
Miesen, K.-J. 133, 13~~7~~
Migliori, A. 20
Migliori, F. 20, 82
Milner, S. J. 98, 101
Minio-Paluello, L. 133, 13~~7~~
Mocenigo, A. 126
Monfasani, J. 98, 101
Moudarres, A. 134, 137
Mund-Dopchie, M. 10, 13
Muratori, L. 26–7, 35

Nannick, P. 173, 178–9
Nicomachus of Gerasa 37
Numa Pompilus 36

Ochs, D. J. 73, 76
Olmo, I. 31
Ong, W. J. 73, 76, 99, 101

Paleotti, G. 15
Panvinio, O. 30–3, 36
Papio, G. A. 32
Partenio, B. 173, 178–9
Passeri, M. A. 37
Patetta, F. 29, 44–5, 52
Patrizi, F. 100, 102, 173, 178–9
Paul IV 6, 37
Pazzi, A. 24, 105–6, 109, 113, 133, 137
Peisistratus 93
Pender, S. 156, 158
Phalereus, D. 30, 45
Philostratus 18
Piccolomini, A. 15, 72, 74–6, 123, 126–7, 135, 137, 173, 178–9
Pio, G. B. 17
Piovan, F. 44, 52
Plato 37, 81, 94, 118–19, 121–3, 127, 13~~5~~, 137, 143, 152
Pogiani, G. 64
Pole, R. 18
Poliziano, A. 109–10, 134
Pomponazzi, P. 4, 78, 93
Pontano, G. 140, 142
Porcacchi, T. 45, 51
Porzio S. 108
Posidon 151
Pozzi, M. 156, 158
Proclus 121–2, 135, 137
Propertius 18
Pseudo-Longinus 2, 6, 29, 45
Pseudo-Plutarch 125, 135
Ptolemy 37
Pugliano, G. B. 17
Purdy Moudarres, C. T. 134, 137

Quintilian 17–18, 60, 82, 87

Ramus, P. 70, 73, 75–6, 99, 101
Randall, J. H. 74, 76
Refini, E. 72, 76
Reynolds, B. 146, 156, 158

Proof

Proof

Ricci, F. 21
Riccoboni, A. 35, 47, 51, 70, 74–5, 127, 135, 137, 173, 175, 178–9
Risse, W. 71, 76
Robortello, A. 15
Ross, J. B. 37, 43, 52, 110, 173
Ryan, E. E. 7, 11, 13, 104–5, 122, 133, 13~~7~~

Sabbadini, R. 97, 10~~1~~
Sabbatini, R. 40, 52
Sansovino, F. 173, 178–9
Sappho 95
Sardi, A. 106
Scaliger, J. C. 134, 136–7
Schmidt-Biggemann, W. 75–6
Schmitt, C. B. 72, 76, 156, 158
Schoppe, C. 173, 178–9
Segala, F. 38–9
Segni, B. 109, 133, 137
Seigel, J. E. 97, 10~~1~~
Seneca, F. 72, 76
Sergiusti, G. 17
Sgarbi, M. 10, 13, 71–4, 76, 98–10~~1~~, 136, 138, 156, 158
Sigonio, C. 6, 19, 25–7, 29–37, 44–7, 51, 174
Skinner, Q. 156, 158
Sophocles 37
Spelta, A. M. 173, 178–9
Speroni, S. 8, 78–82, 84, 89, 98, 100–2, 126, 135, 141
Spini, F. 20, 22, 108
Spini, G. 8, 11, 13, 140–1, 156, 158
Stilbon 94
Stobaeus 165, 167, 17~~1~~
Strozzi, C. 16, 20–1, 41
Suetonius 18

Tassoni, M. 25
Taufer, M. 7, 10, 13
Terpening, R. H. 10, 13
Themistius 73
Thucydides 37, 88, 145, 153, 155
Tibullus 18
Timocles 105, 120–1
Timoleon 93
Toffanin, G. 1, 7, 9–10, 13, 44, 117
Tomitano, B. 80–2, 84, 89, 98~~–100~~
Tommasini, G. F. 33, 47, 52
Torelli, L. 20, 142
Torrentino, L. 105
Toscanella, O. 69–70, 74–5, 173, 175, 178–9
Tremoli, P. 43, 52
Trincavelli, V. 110, 134, 165
Tritonio, A. 173, 178–9
Truchsess von Waldburg, K. 39

Ulysses 94, 113, 147

Valla, G. 62, 64, 73, 76, 105, 109
Vanek, K. 6, 10, 13
Varchi, B. 3, 9, 12, 17, 19–20, 41, 44, 50, 132, 136–7
Vasoli, C. 71, 73, 76, 100, 102, 156, 159
Vega Ramos, M. J. 7, 10, 13
Vegas, F. 139–41, 155–6, 159
Venier, M. 6, 10, 13, 22, 43–4, 52
Vergil 131
Verino, F. (the Elder) 18, 40
Verino, F. (the Younger) 40
Vermigli, P. M. 109
Veronese, G. 140, 155, 159
Vettori, P. 17–22, 32, 39–41, 43, 45–6, 51–2, 105, 108, 123–4, 174
Vianello, V. 98, 102
Vicentino, P. 19
Vismara, S. 155, 159
Vossius, G. J. 144, 156, 158

Ward, J. O. 98, 101
Weinberg, B. 7, 10, 14, 103–4, 106, 110, 112, 114–15, 117, 128, 130, 132–~~5~~, 138
William of Moerbeke 105

Zabarella, J. 53, 71, 75, 89, ~~99–100~~, 127, 132, 135–7, 146
Zlobec Del Vecchio, B. 8, 11, 14
Zorzi, N. 43, 52

Proof

Proof

Proof