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« RAZO » AND « NOVELLA »

A CASE STUDY IN NARRATIVE FORMS

The *Novellino*, or *Le Cento Novelle Antiche*, a collection of stories compiled by an anonymous Tuscan in the thirteenth century, is a little-studied precursor of the Renaissance *novella* [1]. Other narratives of the period, such as the Old Provençal *razos*, tales about the troubadours of Southern France [2], have also received scant

[1] Major editions of the *Novellino* are: C. Segre and M. Marti, eds., *Il Novellino*, in *La Prosa del Duecento*, « La Letteratura Italiana. Storia e Testi » (Naples, 1959), pp. 793-881; G. Favati, ed., *Il Novellino* (Genova, 1970); S. Lo Nigro, ed., *Novellino e Conti del Duecento* (Torino, 1968). For concise bibliographies of *Novellino* scholarship see M. Dardano, *Lingua e tecnica narrativa nel Duecento* (Rome, 1969), pp. 148-150, and C. Segre, *La Prosa del Duecento*, pp. 793-795. Best general studies include A. Monteverdi, *Che cos'è il 'Novellino'*, in *Studi e saggi sulla letteratura italiana dei primi secoli* (Milan-Naples, 1954), pp. 125-165; M. Dardano, *Varianti della tradizione del 'Novellino'*, « Rivista di cultura classica e medievale », VII, 1965, pp. 385-400, and S. Battaglia, *Premesse per una valutazione del 'Novellino'*, in *La Coscienza letteraria del Medioevo* (Naples, 1965), pp. 549-584. Sources and origins of the *Novellino* are discussed in Monteverdi, pp. 141-143, 157-163; A. D'Ancona, *Del Novellino e delle sue fonti*, in *Studj di critica e di storia letteraria* (Bologna, 1912), II, pp. 1-163; and Lo Nigro, pp. 33-93. The manuscript tradition is summarized in Monteverdi, pp. 132-141. The language of the *Novellino* has been analyzed by Dardano, *Lingua e tecnica narrativa*, pp. 148-221, and D. C. Swanson, *A study of the Vocabulary of the 'Novellino'*, in « Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie » 82, 1966, pp. 89-137. A. Haggerty Krappe, *The source of 'Novellino' XXVIII*, in « Neuphilologische Mitteilungen », XXVI, 1925, pp. 13-17, discusses the Irish origin of this story: more recently, C. Segre compares *novella* 82 to its French source in *Decostruzione e ricostruzione di un racconto (dalla Morte le roi Artu al Novellino)* in *Le Strutture e il Tempo. Narrazione, poesia, modelli* (Torino, 1974), pp. 79-86.

[2] The term *razo*, from Latin RATIONEM, could mean 'reason', 'theme', 'ar-

attention. Both prose genres, often ignored in surveys of medieval literature, must be examined, particularly for their formal similarities.

Razos, like *novelle*, were originally collected in larger volumes. Old Provençal *chansonniers* in which *razos* (as well as most extant troubadour lyrics) appear, were complied and circulated in Italy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Provençal was then the literary language: many troubadours lived in the courts of Italy, and even Italian poets sang in the *langue d'oc*. It should not surprise us therefore to find anedoctes from the *razos* in Italian secular narratives of the same period, including the *Novellino*[3] and the *Decameron*[4].

Although the *razos* have previously been seen as sources of the *Novellino*, morphological parallels between the genres have still to be analyzed. Accordingly, close reading of a *razo* and a *Novellino* story will establish the broader contribution of the Old Provençal corpus to medieval and Renaissance narrative traditions[5]. The texts are similar in plot and have a common debt to one troubador poem. However, my analysis will concentrate on form, in particular on the function of the poem within the prose narrative.

gument ', ' gloss ', even ' story '. See J. Boutière and A.H. Schutz, *Biographies des Troubadours*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1964), pp. VII-X. Subsequent references will be to this edition.

[3] *Novellino* 11, 19, 20, 33, 42, 49, 60, 64, 76 and 87 (numbers from ms. Vaticano 3214). D'Ancona, *Del Novellino*, p. 45, and A. Thomas, *Richard de Barbezieux et le ' Novellino '*, in « Giornale de Filologia Romanza » III, 1890, 12-17.

[4] Boccaccio begins his tale of the Eaten Heart (IV, 9) with the phrase « raccontano i provenzali » (*Decameron*, V. Branca, ed. [Florence, 1960], p. 549). The relation of this tale to the Old Provençal *vida* of Guillem de Cabestaing is discussed in G. Paris, *Le Roman du Chatelain de Coucy*, in « Romania » VIII, 1879, pp. 342-73, and *La légende du Chatelain de Couci dans l'Inde*, in « Romania », XII, 1883, pp. 359-63; J.E. Matzke, *The Legend of the Eaten Heart*, in « Modern Language Notes », XXVI, 1911, pp. 1-8; H. Hauvette, *La 39eme nouvelle du ' Décaméron ' et la légende du ' Cœur Mangé '*, in « Romania », XLI, 1912, pp. 184-205; A. Langfors, *Les Chansons de Guillem de Cabestaing* (Paris, 1924); and more recently in H. J. Neuschäfer, *Die Herzmäre in der altprovenzalischen vida und in der Novelle Boccaccios*, in « Poetica », 2, 1968, pp. 38-47.

[5] The *razo* text is from Boutière and Schutz, *Biographies*, pp. 153-158; the *novella* from Lo Nigro, pp. 157-162. *Novella* 64 is the only one which contains a lyric. Its comparison to the *razo*, preface to a poem, is thus even more pertinent.

The *razo* glosses « Atressi com l'olifanz »[6] song of the troubadour
Richard de Berbezilh, who lived in the late twelfth century[7]. In the
opening strophe the poet laments his deep unhappiness[8] and asks lovers
from the court of Puy to help overcome his misery. They must ask his
lady mercy, for his own entreaties and reasoning have failed:

> Que denhesson per mi clamar merce
> Lai on prejars ni razos no.m val re   (vv. 10-11)

Since he has fallen from his lady's grace[9] he will become a recluse, un-
less he can go back to her[10] Reason and law are of no avail for he has
loved his lady too much:

> Que locs i a on razos ven merce
> E locs on dreitz ni rasos no val re   (vv. 32-33)

The last strophe sends the song to the lady, whom the poet himself dares
not address. The *canso*, « drogomanz » ('interpreter'), will bear the
lover's message. By his words Richard thus throws himself at the mercy
of his loved one, « Mielhs de Domna » ('Best of Ladies') (vv. 52-54).

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[6] References are to the text of A. Varvaro, *Rigaut de Berbezilh: Liriche* (Bari,
1970), pp. 121-134.

[7] See T.G. Bergin, *Anthology of the Provençal Troubadours*, 2nd ed. (New
Haven-London, 1975), vol. II, pp. 29-31. Details of Richard's life are still being
debated. See R. Bezzola, *Les Origines et le formation de la littérature courtoise
en occident* (Paris, 1944-63), Part 3, vol. 2, pp. 329 ff.; R. Lejeune, *Le Troubadour
Rigaut de Barbezieux*, in *Mélanges de linguistique et de littérature romanes à la
mémoire d'István Frank* (Sarrebruck, 1957), pp. 269-95; *Analyse textuelle et his-
toire littéraire. Rigaut de Barbezieux*, in « Le Moyen Age », 68, 1962, pp. 331-77;
La datation du troubadour R. de Barbezieux, in « Le Moyen Age », 70, 1964,
pp. 397-417; and A. Varvaro, *Encore sur la datation de Rigaut de Barbezieux,* in
« Le Moyen Age », 70, 1964, pp. 377-95.

[8] Richard has a penchant for unusual comparisons; in this poem he compares
himself to a fallen elephant who cannot get up unless he is roused by the cries
of other elephants (vv. 1-4). His *vida* tells us: « el se delectava molt en dire en
sas cansos similitudines de bestias e d'ausels e d'omes e del sol ... per dire plus
novellas rasos qu'autres no agues ditas » (Boutière and Schutz, p. 149). See also
Varvaro, *Rigaut de Berbezilh*, pp. 46-48.

[9] The poetic « I » describes himself thus: « mos mesfaitz m'es tan greus e
pesanz » (v. 6); « ma vida m'es trebalhs e afanz » (v. 18); « eu falhi per sobra-
men » (v. 25); « soi tan malananz » (v. 39); « soi conquis e aclus » (v. 48); « do-
loros e ploranz » (v. 51).

[10] The words used to describe the hero's separation from society are of some
philological interest. *Reclus*, from Latin RECLUDERE, RECLAUDERE; « reclusus: soli-
tarius in cella inclusus ut vacet Deo » (Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae
Latinitatis* (Graz, 1883-87). After the eleventh century *reclus* was used to desi-
gnate someone who shut himself off from society, often within the walls of a
monastery or town; hermits, by contrast, retired to a solitary life in the wilderness.

With the poem in mind, let us now turn to its Old Provençal gloss. Not unlike other troubadour « biographies »[11], this *razo* first presents the courtly lovers: a poet and his lady[12].

As the story begins, Richard[13] is persuaded by a neighboring chatelaine to abandon his lady Mielhs de Domna, who has not granted him sufficient amorous favors. The poet leaves his lady only to be in turn rejected by the chatelaine who had promised him « plaser ». Overwhelmed, he becomes a hermit. The lady agrees to pardon Richard if two hundred true lovers beg her forgiveness. Finally, knights and ladies assemble and kneel to ask (successfully) Mielhs de Domna's mercy.

Narration in this story concerns primarily spatial movement and verbal confrontation. The stability of the initial situation is broken when the chatelaine sends for Richard. He goes (« s'en anet »); she talks (« la domna li *comencet a dire* »), and the narrative begins. Similar sequences of motion and dialogue[14] recur throughout the story. Note in the first episode, for example, the

Although Richard de Berbezilh's poem gives *reclus,* the term's meaning is enlarged in the two narratives it inspired. In the *razo* Richard flees to the forest and becomes a *recluse*: « s'en anet en un boscage et fetz se faire una maison et reclus se dinz ». By implication, he becomes a hermit as well. In the *novella* the hero goes to the forest and hides also (« andonne in una foresta e rinchiusesi in uno romitaggio »); here he is explicitly called « il romito » during his seclusion.

[11] *Vidas* and *razos* appear in the same manuscripts and have traditionally been grouped together as « biographies ». See M. Egan, *Lives, Lovers and Lyrics: The Biographies of the Troubadours* (forthcoming), a study of the *vidas* as a literary genre.

[12] Boutière and Schutz, *Biographies*, pp. 153-155. Richard's *vida* also tells of his love for the wife of Jaufre de Taonai, of the poems he dedicated to her with the code name Mielhs de Domna; but it adds about the relationship, « anc non fo cregut qu'ella li fezes amor de la persona » (Boutière and Schutz, p. 150). Regarding the role of consummation (*asag*) see R. Nelli, *L'Erotique des Troubadours* (Toulouse, 1963), pp. 199-209, and M. Lazar, *Amour Courtois et Fin' Amors* (Paris, 1964), pp. 120-134.

[13] The *vida* says that Richard « bons cavalliers fo d'armas e *bels de la persona* » (Boutière and Schutz, p. 149). In the *razo* the seductress' words partly echo that description: « Richard era *tal hom de la soa persona* e si valentz que totas las... dompnas li deurion far plaser » (p. 153).

[14] Each of the five conversations is introduced by the formula: *verba dicendi* + *qe/com*. Dialogues mark the transition from one episode to the next: Richard speaks with the chatelaine; Richard speaks with Mielhs de Domna; la-

following: « la domna li comanda » - « Richard se parti »; « Richard venc se » - « et comenset li a dir »; « Richard respondet » - « et . . . s'en parti »; « Richard venc a la domna » - « dis li ». Physical movement, restricted to coming and going (« anar », « venir », « partir »), alternates with conversations (« pregar », « dir », « reponder »).

Whether actions precede or follow acts of speech, a causal link is implicit. Richard's actions hinge on his conversations with others: the chatelaine's eloquent promises seduce him into abandoning the faithful Mielhs de Domna. In turn, after the chatelaine's reprimand, he goes back to his lady, only to be rebuffed. Because he fell victim to a woman's flattery, Richard must remedy his mistake by making linguistic amends. Secluded in the forest, he composes a courtly love poem which pleads for his lady's mercy. In the following episode the poet and Mielhs de Domna, silent since Richard's departure, are forced to speak to the courtiers who beg them to return to court. In response to their appeals (« pregero lo », « pregero la ») each of the estranged lovers states his position: Richard will not return until his lady pardons him; she will not do so unless he arranges for a public act of supplication. The impasse is clearly enunciated by the principal protagonists. Only an extraordinary intervention can unravel the plot and bring about the conclusion.

Although everyone in the *razo* speaks, only twice do protagonists « listen ». Richard becomes a hermit when he is reminded of his falsity by the chatelaine's words: « et si com era partitz d'ella [Mielhs de Domna] si se partiria d'autra . . . *quant* [Richard] *auzi* so qu'ella disia si fo lo plus trist hom del mon . . . et parti se . . . ». Secondly, the courtiers realize that they can help Richard when Mielhs de Domna tells them: « . . . ella li perdonaria, se il aquest faisian ». The narrative continues, « *quant auziren* qe podia trovar

dies and knights speak with Richard; ladies and knights speak with Mielhs de Domna.

The distribution of *verba dicendi* is as follows: *dire* occurs 16 times; *perdonar*, 7; *clamar*, 5; *responder*, 4; *pregar*, 3; *comandar* and *auzir*, 2; *entendre*, *appellar*, *far promessas* and *far cansos*, 1.

The distribution of verbs of motion is as follows: *partir* occurs 14 times; *venir*, 6; *anar*, *s'en anar*, 4.

merce », the knights and ladies act. They go (« aneron ») to the
lady and cry out. Thus they effect the final reconciliation. It follows
from these passages that protagonists who hear (thus comprehend),
take action. At these moments of audition the narrative moves
forward. Richard flees to the forest (bringing about the climax
of the story); the courtiers cry out to the lady (bringing about its
dénouement).

Clearly « Atressi com l'olifanz » is an entreaty. The notion of
supplication informs poem as well as gloss: *Clamar* ' to cry out '
appears with the refrain word *merce* in the poem's first strophe;
both terms recur throughout the *razo* story[15]. The poetic language
of supplication is made concrete as the *razo* describes verbal ex-
changes between the poet, his lady and members of court, trans-
forming the lyric's metaphors of alienation and rejection into
narrative episodes. Where the lyric « I », for example, speaks of
having erred in talking too much (« sui clamanz de trop parlar »,
v. 35; « mos fals digz messongiers », v. 40), the story invents
an erotic triangle which functions through conversations[16]. The
lyric speaks of seclusion (« vivrai com lo reclus », v. 16) and
escape (« Mielhs de Domna don sui fugitz doz anz », v. 50) — the
author of the *razo* says Richard was a hermit for two years.

The longest story in the *Novellino* (*novella* 64) echoes this
Old Provençal text[17]. Here the protagonist performs a misdeed, is

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[15] *Merce* appears 6 times in the poem (5 times as a rhyme word) and 5 times
in the *razo* (4 times with the verb *clamar*).

[16] Mielhs de Domna is mentioned twice in the prose text (pp. 153, 154) —
once in the citation of verse 50 and once in Richard's poem (v. 50). The chate-
laine, however, does not appear in the poem and is not named in the *razo*.

[17] This story is believed by some not to belong to the original collection (see
A. Aruch, rev. of E. Sicardi, *Le cento novelle antiche. Il Novellino* [Strasbourg,
no date], in « Rassegna Bibliografica della letteratura italiana », 18, 1910, pp. 35-51).
The relation between *novella* 64 and the *razo* for Richard de Berbezilh has been
explored only in terms of sources and manuscript traditions. Some argue that the
Novellino story is derived from the *razo*: A. Thomas, *Richard de Barbezieux et
le ' Novellino '*, in « Giornale di filologia romanza », III, 1890, pp. 12-17; R.
Besthorn, *Ursprung und Eigenart der älteren italienischen Novelle* (Halle, 1935),
pp. 143 ff.; and B. Panvini, *Le biografie provenzali: Valore e attendibilità* (Flo-
rence, 1952), pp. 76-77. Others maintain that both texts derive from the poem,
and that divergences exclude a common source: G. Favati, *La novella LXIV del*

rejected by his lady, and becomes a hermit. Lovers are reconciled when others appeal to the offended donna's charity.

Formally and thematically, however, the *novella* transforms the *razo* story. From the outset the *novella* meticulously defines the locus of action, announcing in its rubric « Qui conta d'una novella che avenne in Proenza a la corte del Poe » [18]. Thus the story's ambiance is established: place names (« Proenza », « Po di Nostra Dama ») [19] and proper names (« conte Ramondo ») [20] in the initial paragraph evoke the « nobile corte » of Provence and its traditional pastimes — jousting, tournaments, the giving of the sparrowhawk [21] and a poetry contest. Not only is the text's setting French; its vocabulary is as well. Semantic echoes of the Old Provençal *vidas* and *razos* abound in this *novella*: The « buona gente » in the court hearken back to the « bona gen », every troubadour's audience; like their Provençal counterparts, they are « gai », « ben costumati ». Even the songs they compose are beautiful « e'l suono e'l motto » [22].

'Novellino' e Uc de Saint Circ, in « Lettere italiane », XI, 1959, pp. 154-73, and *Il Novellino*, pp. 269-275; A. Varvaro, *Rigaut de Berbezilh*, pp. 25 ff.; A. Monteverdi, pp. 158-162. C. Segre, *Volgarizzamenti del Due e Trecento* (Torino, 1953), pp. 49-57, claims that *Novella* 64 is of Provençal origin.

[18] Lo Nigro, pp. 157-158. *Novelle* 3, 9, and 85 also begin with descriptive paragraphs.

[19] In *Podium Aniciense* (Puy) the Virgin of Mont Anis was venerated during the Middle Ages. Kings and popes made pilgrimages to the cathedral of Notre Dame, where the Black Virgin donated by Saint Louis was kept. See Bergin, II, p. 47, and Boutière and Schultz, p. 300.

[20] Perhaps Raimond Berengier III. See Lo Nigro, p. 157, note 4.

[21] A short-lived poetic society which flourished at Puy during the late twelfth century granted a sparrowhawk as a prize, ceremony mentioned in the Monk of Montaudon's *vida*: « fo faichs seigner del Puoi Sainta Maria e de dar l'esparvier » (Boutière and Schutz, p. 307, p. 310). The same contest is evoked in the *Chanson de la Croisade* (vv. 7954-7955) and in Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide* (vv. 563 ff.). See C. Chabaneau and J. Anglade, *Les Chansons du troubadour Rigaut de Berbezieux* (Montpellier, 1919), pp. 36-39; Bergin, II, pp. 29-31; Varvaro, *Rigaut de Berbezilh*, p. 50; Favati, *Il Novellino*, p. 270.

[22] The phrase « sons e motz » (melodies and text/rhyme words) appears in the *vidas* to describe a poet's works: « fez vers ab bons sons ab paubres mots » (Boutière and Schutz, p. 16). The formula occurs specifically in Richard de Berbezilh's *vida*: « trobava avinenmen *motz e sons* » (Boutière and Schutz, p. 149).

The formulaic « or avenne che » signals the beginning of the narrative. Alamanno[23], a knight in the court of Puy, is tricked and made to boast of his lady love, Madonna Grigia. The outraged lady dismisses her indiscreet lover, who in despair flees to the forest. He eventually returns to court but his lady will not pardon him unless other lovers ask her mercy. (Here the Italian narrative breaks with its Old Provençal model.) Alamanno sings his plea to a gathering of courtiers who then cry out to Madonna Grigia in his behalf.

Concealment and secrecy are pivotal motifs in this *novella*; revelation its guiding theme. Alamanno becomes a hermit « sì *cela-tamente* che *neuno* il *sapea* »; the squires who tricked him later meet Alamanno in he woods and do not recognize him for « *neuno no sapea* che ne fosse adivenuto »; a letter to a ' secret ' friend prepares the knight's return to court. To restore the initial stability Alamanno must conceal what he foolishly revealed earlier: his lady's identity and his love. His indiscretion violated the courtly code of secrecy and thus invited the intervention of others. Alamanno sings his despair in the language of metaphor. The codename (*senhal*) by which he addresses his lady masks her person and reestablishes the initial sanctity of their relationship. Others are excluded once more from knowing it. The four hundred ' true ' lovers moved by the plea do not know to whom the cry out: « che *non sappiano* a cui la si chiedere ».

As in the Old Provençal *razo*, the act of speech plays a crucial narrative role. Protagonists reveal their actions in their words. In each instance of direct discourse protagonists express their thoughts and intended actions in present and future tenses (« pensiamo », « si vanteranno », « avremo ordinato », « non perdonerò »). After

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Seemingly unaware of this, Lo Nigro refers to « motto » as a « gallicismo » but not as a direct borrowing from Old Provençal (Lo Nigro, p. 158, note 11). Swanson, *A Study of the Vocabulary of the ' Novellino '*, also fails to mention either word among Old Provençal borrowings.

[23] The *Novellino* text first introduced the poet as « uno di que' cavalieri » and then adds parenthetically, « pognalli nome messer Alamanno » (p. 158) ' let's call him Alamanno '. The squires plotting their joke refer to him as « Messer cotale », ' Mister So and So ' (p. 159). The confusion of proper names — Bertran d'Alamanon was a poet who lived at the same time as Richard de Berbezilh — is discussed in Lo Nigro, p. 158, note 16, and Favati, *Il Novellino*, p. 271, note 20.

each speech the prefigured events are narrated in the historical
past [24]. Each account literally echoes the protagonist's earlier words.

In this story the only difference between projected (intended)
and performed actions is merely one of time. Protagonists ac-
cordingly utter statements (or think out loud) when their words
or thoughts are of narrative importance. The « donzelli », agents
of two key actions, speak only twice: First they plan their trick
on Alamanno (« dissero così » . . . « pensaro così »); later they plot
his return to court (« noi pensiamo che . . . »). The lovers, victims
of circumstance, speak only once (Alamanno's indiscretion, we
must note, is told through indirect discourse). After Alamanno's
returns from the forest — when a reconciliation is possible — he
and Madonna Grigia must respond to the courtier's requests. Ala-
manno answers: « Io non canteroe mai s'io non ho pace da mia
donna » [25]. Madonna Grigia, in turn, offers her own conditions:

> Diteli così, ch'io non li perdonerò giamai se non mi fae gridar merzé
> a cento baroni e a cento cavalieri e a cento donne e a cento donzelle,
> che tutte gridino a una boce merzé, e non sappiano a cui la si chiedere.

As Alamanno hears this, he devises a plan to sing in church. The
exordium to his *canso* soliciting the court's aid echoes the trouba-
dour *vidas* and *razos* [26]:

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[24] After the dialogues, the narrative usually resumes with the conjunction
« allora »: « Allora il romito scrisse... » (p. 159), « Allora il cavaliere ... pensò »
(p. 160), « Allora trovoe una molto bella canzonetta » (p. 160), « Allora tutta la
gente ... gridaron merzé ». An exception occurs in the initial episode of the story.
After the squires discuss their plan to make Alamanno boast, the narration resumes
with a formula, which like « allora » indicates the causal relation between speech
and action in the story: « Così ordinato, così fatto » (p. 159) ' said and done '.

[25] The poet/lover abandoning the world (becoming a monk) and abandoning
trobar (song) as a result of lost love is a standard topos in the *vidas* and *razos*.
See, for example, *vidas* X, XVI, XXI, XXIV, XXXII, XL, XLVII.

[26] The concluding formulae of *razos* bridge the gap between the prose gloss
and the poem by introducing the lyric and concluding the story at the same time.
They usually make specific reference to the act of ' invention ' and to the process
of recitation (« E Bernart vi tot [...]. E per aquesta razo fes adonc la canso que
dis: ' Quan vei l'alauzeta mover ' », Boutière and Schutz, p. 29). These references
to recitation are the most telling signs of orality in the *razos*. Many texts, for
example, begin and end by addressing their listeners: « si com vos avez maintas
vetz auzit » (Bertran de Born, in Boutière and Schutz, p. 89) or: « La qal ausiretz

Allora trovoe una molto bella canzonetta... E quelli cominciò questa sua canzonetta tanto soavemente quanto seppe il meglio, ché molto il sapea ben fare. E la canzonetta dicea in cotal maniera: « Altressi come il leofante ».

As the lyric emerges, narration ceases. Alamanno sweetly sings Richard de Berbezilh's song. The assembled courtiers cry for mercy and the lady pardons her lover.

Despite close affinities between the above passages, the *novella* differs considerably from the *razo*. Dissimilarities stem from each text's function. As introduction, as commentary, the *razo*'s point of reference is another text and the reality it evokes. The *novella*, by contrast, is a self-contained story with no referent but itself. It was not so much composed to explain as to entertain and amuse.

Razos invent stories to present the subtle poetic language of troubadours *cansos* in concrete terms. Though prose and poem often mirror one another in language and theme, they are distinct units of one text (one part was recited, the other perhaps sung). Originally *razo* and lyric were inseparable [27]: explanation anticipated recitation. Since the *razo* directs the reader to another text, it should not surprise us to find in it sketchily traced, one-dimensionaly protagonists and repeated narrative motifs.

A *novella* has no pre-text to gloss, its narration has no specific point of departure. Of necessity it must establish a particular time

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en aqesta chanson qe diz... » (Guiraut de Borneill, in Boutière and Schutz, p. 51). In the Old Provençal preface signs of the texts' oral nature are separate from the story, for the anecdotes about the troubadours are framed between these formulae. (See M. Egan, *Lives, Lovers and Lyrics: The Biographies of the Troubadours*, Chapter 2 [forthcoming].) By contrast, in these earliest of *novelle* — which were probably also recited — one can already see the telling of the tale becoming part of the plot. With the advent of print perhaps, recitation — no longer a functional necessity of the text — is represented within it. Thus the recounting of a story is a key thematic and structural element in all Renaissance *novelle*. Il may in fact be the remnant of an earlier, primarily oral, genre: the *razos*.

[27] Richard's *razo*, found in MS *P* (Florence, Laurentian, Plut. XLI, cod. 42; from Italy, dated 1310) is followed by the lyric. However, manuscript evidence shows that at the end of the fourteenth century *razos* and *vidas* were collected together, separate from poems. Often the stories became more complex, and more versions appeared in writing. See Boutière and Schutz, pp. xvii, xix-xx.

and place for the action. The Provençal setting of Alamanno's story, inspired by the troubadour tradition, unifies the narrative and gives it coherence. The theme is echoed in every episode: Alamanno's initial misdeed, his return to court, and his recitation of the poem, all take place in courtly gatherings (tournaments, a hunt, a religious festival). The *novella*'s protagonists live in a society. The « don-zelli » and the « buone genti » appear in the beginning of the story. While they trick Alamanno and thus set the narrative on its course, they also welcome his return to court and acclaim his knightly talents, making the lovers' reconciliation possible. In church their cry delivers Alamanno from his misery[28]. More than in the *razo*, the *novella* protagonists occupy diverse roles. They are spurred to action by explicit desires and motives: they think, trick one another, devise plans and write letters. They indulge in courtly activities, jousting and hunting.

It seems clear that the Italian text grasped the essential structure of the *razo* and imitated it with linguistic and narrative sophistication. Nowhere is this cleverness more evident than in the *novella*'s use of Richard de Berbezilh's poem. Thematically, the lyric's imprint is found in both texts. The supplication motif which governs the canso is echoed in Richard's pleadings with his lady, in the courtiers' requests of the poets and their ladies, in Mielhs de Domna and Madonna Grigia's demands, in Alamanno's moving plea from the pulpit. The refrain words of « Atressi com l'olifanz », like a litany, reappear in the *razo* (« clamar merce ») and in the *novella* (« gridar merzé »)[29].

In each tale, nevertheless, the function of the poem varies. The *razo* explains the lyric without incorporating it into the narrative. Prose and poem bear no causal relation[30]. Richard hears that his lady will pardon him under certain conditions; then he composes a poem. In Alamanno's tale, by contrast, the composition

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[28] These members of the court number 400, including a wider representation of social classes (« baroni » and « donzelle ») than the *razo*.

[29] *Merzé* appears 4 times in the *Novellino* prose (3 times with *gridar*) and 4 times in the portion of Richard's poem included in the *novella* (cf. note 15).

[30] Their relation is temporal or spatial. Although the verse « Mielhs de Domna don sui fugitz doz anz » is cited in the *razo* (p. 154) to authenticate the seclusion episode, it has no narrative function.

and recitation of the lyric plays a crucial narrative role. In *Novellino* 64, the only *novella* in the collection which contains a poem, the language of courtly love governs all actions, particularly in the initial and final episodes. The courtly *canso* code is violated when Alamanno brags, when others « know » of his love. Through a series of concealments Alamanno finally attains « grande savere » (knowledge that others lack) and is able to devise a solution to his lady's request. The key lies in Alamanno learning the uses of metaphoric language.

Two hundred ladies and knights had come to Mielhs de Domna, joined hands and kneeled to ask her forgiveness for Richard the troubadour. Here the *novella* exploits the religious aspects of the Provençal poet's adoration of his lady. The scene of reconciliation unfolds in church during the Candellara [31], commemorating the Virgin's Purification. With Madonna Grigia present but out of sight, the lover's plea in the *langue d'oc* [32] moves the « buona gente » to cry mercy in unison. A holy occasion of Christian celebration is thus transformed into an apotheosis of courtly love, where the love lyric intercedes to restore the poet to his former state of grace (« ritornoe in . . . grazia com'era di prima »). The purity of the love relation is again assured.

Thus the Old Provençal *razo* contains the kernels of a Renaissance *novella*: a sequence of actions moving towards a culmination. The *razo* plot is resolved in the mass plea to the *domna*. But the *razo*, like traditional prefaces, primarily introduced another text; its performance preceded the singing of the poem.

Adapting the narrative model of the *razo* to its own function, the *novella* converts a gloss into a self-contained story. It establishes a specific courtly setting for protagonists and actions; it transforms indirect discourse into dialogues and monologues; it incorpo-

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[31] Candlemas was commemorated since the early centuries of the Christian era. It was observed with a procession and the blessing of candles. The feast, held on February 2, celebrates the Presentation of Christ and the Purification of the Virgin.

[32] The text of the troubadour poem is corrupt in the *Novellino* manuscripts. Provençal and Italian are mixed, stanza III (lines 23-33) and the *tornadas* (lines 56-59) are missing.

rates the text of the poem into the telling of the tale. Conscious of its structure, the *novella*, like the *razo*, insures that every action proceeds to its logical conclusion: the lyric plea to the lady. But the episode leading to this point is given special attention, as the narrative focuses on Alamanno singing Richard's *canso*. His courtly eloquence signals a new sense of the power of language. It is indeed one of the « fiori di parlare » promised in the rubric of the *Novellino* [33].

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[33] « Questo libro tratta d'alquanti fiori di parlare, di belle cortesie, e di be' riposi e di belle valentie e doni, secondo che per lo tempo passato hanno fatti molti valenti uomini ». This rubric dates from the mid XIVth century, postdating the shorter rubrics which introduce each tale (Lo Nigro, p. 60).