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Razos and Troubadour Songs

Volume LXXI

William E. Burgwinkle

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translated by
WILLIAM E. BURGWINKLE

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and

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The General Editors hope that these volumes will bring the general reader a closer awareness of a richly diversified area that has for too long been closed to everyone except those with precise academic training, an area that is well worth study and reflection.

James J. Wilhelm
Rutgers University

Lowry Nelson, Jr.
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Introduction

The usage of the Occitan word *razo* within the body of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century texts collected in this volume reveals how fully medieval authors came to exploit the semantic richness of the word's Latin model, *ratione(m)*. The most generalized and reductive definition, and the one which came in time to define a literary genre, is this: introduction, explanation, reasoned commentary, subject matter, background, gloss. Indeed, we do find that all the short prose texts collected here clearly serve in one way or another an introductory function in relation to the songs with which they are paired. Referring to, and citing, specific lyric texts composed by the troubadours of Southern France, Northern Italy and Spain, the author claims to provide an explanation for why a particular poet composed a particular song or songs at the moment that he or she did. At the same time, he does not treat the song in a vacuum; rather, by adopting a uniform rhetorical practice and vocabulary, he relates the song to a larger social and literary phenomenon: the composition and exchange of vernacular songs of praise in the Southern French courts.

Further subtleties in the meaning of the word 'razo,' as used within the texts that now go by that name, both limit and expand this introductory function. Sometimes the word is used in the sense of 'justice,' as in 'the right thing to do,' or 'rights, rightful claim,' i.e. with the intent of justifying or claiming a right. In other instances, any one of those meanings can be supplemented with an oral component, as in 'speech,' 'argument,' 'defense.' Thus these razos must be seen as simultaneously explaining and supplementing the poetic texts, even to the point of providing them with subject matter that is not necessarily present in the original text. Then, to this supplementary gloss is added the intimation of a specific rhetorical task with a clear ideological bent: to defend the song, justify it, provide it with 'reason,' make it comprehensible and monologic, in the Bakhtinian sense. The potentially aggressive role of this second function should be noted. These texts were

composed so as to ensure the survival of the songs and of the cultural practices they document, even as they deformed them.

Authors and Texts

Many questions regarding the function of these texts in the performance arena and their manuscript tradition remain unanswered. It has generally been assumed that they were first written down, beginning in the early thirteenth century, by poets and *joglars* who had for some time been using the material in oral performance to explain ambiguous and topical references in the songs they were performing. As the need for such explanations became more acute, due to spatial and temporal distance from the original composition, more of the introductory texts were composed by later authors to fill in the gaps (Boutière/Schutz, 1973: viii. Henceforth referred to as B/S). While this may be true, the extant prose texts give no clear indication as to whether they were actually used in performance or whether they were first written to be read rather than heard. Some textual evidence, particularly in the closing sentences of the texts, points to their complicity in systems of both oral and written transmission (see, for example, the common closing: "...which is *written* here, as you shall *hear*" [razo 4]). If they were, in fact, originally composed for oral presentation by traveling poets who had learned their lore and geography first-hand (Schutz, 1937-38, 1939), then these are not the versions that have survived. Most of those reproduced here show signs of having been composed or adapted to manuscript use by one or several scribe/poets who had been trained in practices of textual commentary and who viewed these commentaries as participating in a system subject to rhetorical and ideological constraints.

Within the larger field of 'prose introductions' to the poets, there exist two distinct genres, known today as the *vidas* and the razos, though in the manuscripts both are referred to as razos (see, e.g. razo 64 to the songs of Raimon de Miraval). The vidas are principally biographical texts that present a stylized view of an individual author's career rather than an explanation of any one of his works. The earliest *chansonniers*, the mid-to-late-thirteenth century Italian manuscripts I and K, are also those that contain the largest number of vidas, numbering eighty-five. Both genres probably existed in some oral form well before that time and many critics agree that they may have been gathered and reworked, or even in some cases composed on the spot, as early as the 1220s, in the area around Venice (Meneghetti, 245, note 28). As Margarita Egan (1984)

and Maria Luisa Meneghetti (1984) have shown, both types of texts were composed or adapted by authors familiar with the Latin *Accessus ad auctores*, the introductions to the classical poet's lives, that were composed as part of a student's training in literary commentary in the schools. The razos offer additional evidence that their authors had adapted the *ethologiae* (character sketches) portion of *enarratio poetarum* commentaries to suit the needs of contemporary, vernacular, and secular songs (Murphy, 1974: 25). Neither genre, however, follows the format of its model to the letter. While the *accessi* are fairly rigidly structured, following either an Aristotelian or Boetian model (author's intention or *causa efficiens* / subject matter / form or utility; see Egan, xxvi and Meneghetti, 292), each of these two Occitan genres evolved (or was given, through the collecting and organizing skills of one author) a rhetorical pattern unto itself. In the case of the vidas this pattern involves some, though not necessarily all, of the following information: name of poet / "and he was ("si fo...")"/ place and circumstances of origin / talent/ protectors or love affair/ adventures, success or failure/ death (Egan, xvii; Meneghetti, 308). In addition, the placement of the vida in the manuscript quite logically precedes the poetic texts and is often illustrated with an image representing the poet.

The razos, on the other hand, to the extent that they follow any sort of pattern, tend to incorporate some of the following information and stylistic detail: a reference to a prior vida / a story-line beginning with the words: "And so it happened that one day..."/ a phrase connecting that story with the song that follows, as in: "And for that reason he composed..."/ a citation of between a line and several stanzas from the song / and a closing formula of the type: "And here you will hear (or find written) the song which you will now hear (or read)" (Meneghetti, 308). Some of the texts that are considered vidas by virtue of their adherence to the rhetorical patterns outlined above could, however, be considered razos in that they cite lines from specific poetic compositions. Since these hybrid texts were included in Margarita Egan's 1984 volume on the vidas, they have not been included here (see, for example, in Egan 1984, vidas 14B, 15B, 35, 67). Others consist of one single text which contains elements of one genre within the other. Such cases usually involve a razo that has been included within the frame of a vida and which can easily be excerpted to function as an independent text. The very first razo included in this collection (see Bertran de Ventadorn, razo 1), is an example of this phenomenon. All other known prose introductions to the troubadour songs are included here, including three razos taken from manuscript

fragments found since the 1973 revision of the Boutière/Schutz critical edition (see Crespo, 1983).

In general, in discussing the razo texts, we cannot assume the same degree of uniformity of function and treatment that we find in the vidas. The earliest known razos, from the same thirteenth-century manuscripts I and K in which the earliest vidas are found, are by an Italian hand and were likely composed in the Lombardian/Venetian/Emilian region of Northern Italy. This does not, of course, mean that these are necessarily the earliest composed; simply that they are the first written versions that we know of. Manuscripts I and K are obviously linked, having been copied from the same source or having served one as the model for the other. They are noteworthy both for their treatment of the prose texts and for the early date of their composition, and these two factors may argue for their essential difference from other manuscripts in the razo tradition (i.e. they may have been composed entirely by one author who 'invented' the genre or may respond to the interests of a very specific audience). Each contains nineteen razos: 17 for Bertran de Born, one for his son, Bertran de Born lo fils, and one for Raimon Jordan (see Poe, 1989). The sheer number of texts dedicated to the works of this one poet implies that this project may have been undertaken specifically to explicate his works alone. Bertran's songs are, after all, infamous for their references to the intricacies of regional political alliances under the reign of Henry II of England and his warring sons, Henry, Richard, Geoffrey, and John. All of the songs by Bertran that are explicated are *sirventes*, i.e. topical, political, satirical or critical songs, and it has been suggested that these Italian collections or their source may have served as the impetus and model for the later razo collections that followed in the fourteenth century. This hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that later manuscripts done in Italy, such as manuscript H, also include razos only for *tensos* and *coblas* rather than for more well-known *cansos*. It has further been suggested that these early razos indicate that the entire reason for composing prose commentaries may have been to explicate just such political songs. Such a contention is nonetheless difficult to prove given the variety of manuscripts, their places of origin (from Italy, Languedoc and Catalogne), and the number of texts which have been lost. Manuscript F, a fourteenth-century Italian collection, also includes only the razos for Bertran de Born and his son and presents them in the same order as IK, thus clearly linking this manuscript with the IK tradition. In F, however, the razos precede the songs they explicate and in IK they follow. Such seemingly minor differences in presentation are nonetheless significant, for they emphasize that even nearly contemporary scribes were divided as to how to transmit

the razos textually. Were they to be collected as separate texts, as they would be in the fourteenth-century manuscripts E, P and R? Were they meant to introduce a song before it is heard, or explain it after it has been sung? Are they principally to be read or listened to, as part of a performance or in a private reading?

Aside from the IKF affinity, there is little evidence to establish any clear patterns of transmission or to formulate any textual solutions to these questions. One thing seems certain: in the fourteenth century the razo texts were not considered subject to the rules of any one strict rhetorical classification. Rather, throughout the century, the manuscripts show that these prose texts were constantly evolving in one of two directions. In manuscripts P and R, the texts grow longer and more independent of their source poem and the percentage of razos to vidas increases (Poe, 1984: 110, note 1). Other manuscripts show signs of having been composed for a particular patron and tailored to the taste of that collector. Manuscript H, for example, of late-fourteenth-century Italian production, is characterized by very short texts that do extensive citations, and by a marked interest in the production of the women troubadours, the *trobairitz* (in fact, the only illuminations of troubadours in this manuscript are of trobairitz). The texts of manuscript H also stand out from among those of other manuscripts in that two-thirds of them (numbering 14) are found only in that one manuscript. As for the Italian manuscript P, dated 1310, and the sixteenth-century paper copy of an earlier manuscript, also done in Italy and known as N^2, they tend to include longer and more elaborate versions of the razo tales. These texts have rightly been linked with the emergence of independent prose tales in Italy during the fourteenth century (the *Novellino*) and with Dante's project of framing the poetry of his youth within a unified prose narrative in the *Vita Nuova* (Poe, 1984: 83-97).

The fourteenth-century manuscript R, produced in Languedoc, shares P's tendency to elaborate upon incidents but does so in such a way that even when recounting a tale found in other manuscripts, its version is sometimes so idiosyncratic that its full text is reproduced as a separate and independent version of a tale in Boutière/Schutz rather than as a set of variations on an original that can be cited in footnotes. One explanation for some of the variety found in the razo texts may lie in the question of patronage. Laura Kendrick and Maria Luisa Meneghetti have recently looked into the correlation between the treatment of certain themes in the biographical texts and the site of their production. In the case of manuscripts I, K, and F, there reigns a uniformity of treatment, both

pictorial and textual, which suggests that these manuscripts were created for a patron whose interests in Occitan literary production dictated a carefully stylized portrait of this literary phenomenon. The preponderance of vida texts in I and K, with their uniform use of the historical past and firm grounding in geography, creates a static view of production that celebrates decidedly past achievements. At the same time that it glorifies the localities and social system that allowed for this extraordinary outpouring of poetry, it captures it and limits it, creating a sort of textual museum to a dead art. And that is, to some extent, an accurate assessment of the situation. The Albigensian Crusade had decimated many of the courts at which these songs were produced and sung and had upset the political balance that had kept the South of France an entity quite separate from, and resistant to, the royalist pretensions of the Ile de France. There were, nonetheless, poets still composing and courts still offering patronage even up to and beyond the period during which these manuscripts were compiled. Along the same lines, Meneghetti notes that the slant of the Venetian manuscripts D, I, and K occasionally extends even to customized versions of the songs. Bernart de Ventadorn's song: "La dousa votz ai auzida" (70, 23), for example, is presented in a version which eliminates references that seem out of line with a rather narrowly conceived idea of *fin'amors* as a secular system of ethics and ideals (Meneghetti, 1984: 51-52). Meneghetti then links this phenomenon with the idea of medieval 'mouvance', i.e. fluidity, susceptibility to change and adaptation through transmission (Zumthor, 1972: 66), thus suggesting that songs may have been deliberately adapted to suit the styles and tastes of particular court patrons.

Manuscript R is anomalous in one other regard. In it can be found a razo (#46 in this collection) for Savaric de Malleo's song: "Savaric, ie·us deman..." (432, 3) in which there is made the following statement:

> E sapias per ver que ieu, Uc de San Sirc, que ay escrichas estas razos, fuy lo mesatge que lay aniey e.l portey totz los mans e·ls escrisz.
>
> (And let it be known for a fact that I, Uc de Saint Circ, who have written these razos, was the courier who went there and delivered these messages and letters to him.)

Uc de Saint Circ is, of course, himself a poet for whom we have a vida and three razos. Does this admission mean that Uc "wrote" the razos as in "composed" them, or as in "acted as scribe"? Does it mean that he

"wrote" only those razos (conspicuously plural) that pertain to Savaric or does he mean, in the broader sense, that he "wrote" all of the razos contained in manuscript R? The fact that this particular razo exists only in this one manuscript and that in manuscript R all razos and vidas are clumped together at the beginning of the collection (folios 1-3v) at least allows us to conjecture that Uc did, in fact, compose all of these razo texts (eighteen in all) and perhaps many others.

He did sign one other text, the vida to Bernart de Ventadorn that appears in manuscripts A, B, E, I, K, R and Sg. There are also indications within his own biographical account (or autobiographical, as some would maintain [Meneghetti, 269; Panvini, 89; Folena, 518]) that Uc was considered somewhat exceptional. His vida tells us that he was the youngest son of a poor vavassor (one ranking just below a baron or peer) from Quercy. He was sent to school in Montpellier to become a cleric but while his family thought he was studying 'letras,' i.e. biblical and rhetorical studies in Latin, he was, in fact, learning "...love songs, verses, sirventes, tensos, couplets, and the facts and deeds of the valiant men and ladies who were then, or had ever been, in the world; and with this knowledge he became a joglar (B/S, 239)." Such a description, with its emphasis on the various genres of the troubadour tradition and Uc's interest in literary/historical data, strongly suggests that the author believes Uc to have been instrumental in preserving this cultural heritage. The vida goes on to chronicle Uc's patrons the count of Rodez (coms de Rodes), the viscount of Turenne (Torena), the Dauphin of Auvergne (Dalfi d'Alvernhe), the countess of Benauges (Benaujas), Savaric de Malleo, King Alphonse of Aragon (Amfos), King Alphonse of Léon (Lion), King Peter of Aragon (Peire), i.e. among the most influential and supportive of the troubadour patrons, several of whom were themselves poets. His travels took him from Gascony to the Poitou, through Catalogne and into Spain, "...then into Provence, with all the barons, and then into Lombardy and La Marche" (B/S, 240). Uc, in other words, had a full and varied career which took him throughout the entire area of Occitan production (thus allowing him to acquaint himself with the geography, folklore and courtly protocol). It is also significant that during this time he was forced to earn his own living through the practice of his poetic and musical skills. The vida author says that Uc spent a long time in Gascony as a poor singer and that he owed all he had to the generosity of his patrons. He also says that Uc did not write many love songs (adding, however, that the ones he wrote were excellent) because he was not ever in love, but that with his fine rhetorical skills he was quite capable of feigning love. The essential facts of the vida establish that its author

(once again, perhaps Uc himself) chose to emphasize factors in Uc's career that would explain his ability to assess others' biographies, production, and especially their successes and failures in attracting and retaining loyal patrons.

In the Italian manuscripts A and B, the version of Uc's vida is even clearer on one important point. After chronicling his travels and patrons, as in the passage cited above, the quotation ends: "...then into Lombardy and the *marca Trevisana*. He took a wife and had children" (B/S, 240). This more specific citation establishes even more clearly that Uc ended his career in Italy, where he settled in as court poet to the Da Romano family at Treviso. As noted above, most scholars agree that there are numerous signs within the vidas and razos that point to their having been composed for the most part in the Venetian area. Uc's documented presence in that area during a considerable portion of his mature life adds credence to that hypothesis (Meneghetti, 243). Meneghetti has asserted that one of the motivations for composing these prose introductions may have been the need to transform the ideals and aspirations of the lower Occitan nobility into terms that could be understood in a very different courtly setting in Northern Italy. The transplantation of troubadour poetry from its original setting in Southwestern France, and the loss of its frame of reference following the Albigensian Crusade, may have incited Uc to compose a series of biographical sketches which would memorialize the region's poetic production through a close identification of the poetry with the land. Much of the information for these vidas could have been gleaned from public performances and regional compilations gathered throughout his extensive travels. At the same time, or perhaps shortly thereafter, Uc may have found it necessary (or been commissioned) to compose explanatory texts to accompany the individual songs. Where in the past these texts would have been required only to explicate the politically involved sirventes of Bertran de Born, the new conditions and audience for Troubadour song now required that the allusive and ambiguous referents that played such a role in the elaboration of the lyric be grounded in an apparent historical reality. Love was no longer a satisfactory topic, love stories were now required; and the curious turns of the misogynistic love song, what Jeanroy called the "sirventes déguisé," had to be explained in terms of incidents of betrayal, exile, and reconciliation. What many critics have always objected to in the vidas and razos, i.e. their stylistic deficiencies, their deformation of the historical record, and their 'soap-opera mentality' might actually be better explained in terms of the needs of the audience for whom they were composed.

Topoi of Love and Patronage

Maria Luisa Meneghetti points out in her book, *Il pubblico dei trovatori*, that the earliest known chansonnier, the central section of manuscript D (known as D^a), is a collection of songs chosen by Alberico da Romano, one of the two brother/lords of Marca Trevisana. The collection pre-dates the manuscript's table of contents, which is dated 1254; and this entire section is introduced by the sentence: "Hec sunt inceptiones cantionum de libro qui fuit domini Alberici et nomina repertorum earundem cantionum." If this collection was assembled for Alberico just prior to the date indicated, then Meneghetti quite rightly surmises that it was likely Uc de Saint Circ who undertook the project. Jeanroy (1934, xiv) dated Uc's stay in Italy from 1220 to 1253, during the end of which time he would have been permanently established at Alberico's court. If this is true, it would implicate Uc at the very inception of a written tradition of lyric transmission and suggest very practical reasons why he might have undertaken to compile a collection of vidas and razos as well. A 1974 article by François Zufferey disclosed that a recently discovered document from the Biblioteca Capitolare in Treviso mentioned Uc de Saint Circ, saying that in 1257 the ecclesiastical authority of the city had charged the poet with usury and heresy and that the accused had confessed his guilt. Meneghetti notes with reason that manuscript P's version of Uc's vida, also composed in Northern Italy at some time prior to 1310, adds weight to this isolated piece of evidence in the form of a phrase not found in the other five manuscript versions: "...e fort fo escars d'aver" (...and he was very tight with his money).

The reason I stress this otherwise minor incident during a supposed discussion of love and patronage is that if there is any one thing within the razo texts which sets them apart from subsequent readers' interpretations of the troubadour lyrics, it is precisely the emphasis they lay on money, contractual obligations, and exchange. It is not an exaggeration to say that the razos portray a world in which all value is perceived in economic metaphors. "Give so as to receive"; "reciprocity doesn't pay"; "a good ally is like a silver coin"; "value is a matter of speculation": all of these ideas find play in the razo texts and in ways that undermine much of the inherited critical lore concerning the troubadours. If Uc de Saint Circ is indeed the author of many of these texts and was also found to have been "escars d'aver" and guilty of usury, we have perhaps reached a happy convergence of history and literary practice.

The razos have often been criticized for having invented love stories through the arbitrary assignment of *senhals* (code names) to actual ladies and the willful deformation of historical information to fit a preconceived notion of the normal course of *fin'amors*. These same critics have then quite often gone on to construct their own *romans d'amour*, identifying each senhal with a new lady, and each song with a new heartbreak. A poet's career was charted according to periods of happiness when in love with lady X, grief after their break-up, a new patron, a new lady, etc.. The songs are not, of course, chronicles of love affairs. Nor can they always be so conveniently shown to address a lady. If the razos, for their part, are guilty of having invented many a love affair (and many a lady, for that matter), we might explain this by saying either that the author was just no more successful at fixing the meaning of the songs than we have been, or that he was simply responding to the requirements of his audience. I lean toward the latter explanation, given that the razos are built around the uneasy alliance of love and recompense mentioned above. If the author constructed a story that conformed to the horizon of expectations of those used to hearing idealized tales of love, he did not do so at the expense of censoring his own and fellow troubadours' experience in making their fortunes in the fickle and highly mimetic courts where the praise song reigned. On the contrary, he has given us a first-hand view of the system of patronage within which he had to work, then added to it a veneer of romantic fiction in the form of an eventual love-tie between lady and her singer, all the while letting the final conditions (the gift of sex, land, power) of their arrangement remain as ambiguous as possible.

In the razos, as will be clear from the numerous textual notes, ladies seek troubadours at least as much as troubadours seek ladies. The author is very forthright in his assessment of their motivations: ladies want praise because it increases their renown. Thus they seek out poets. As for the poets, they come to ladies wishing to be recognized as official singers of a court, i.e. expecting compensation that involves, among other things, the public recognition that comes from singing of a highly placed patron. Contrary to much of what has been written about the level of secrecy required in the practice of 'courtly love,' both parties have everything to gain from 'going public.' The reputation of each party is initially enhanced by such an arrangement, and the liaison attracts rivals and imitators; but any expectation of a long-term business or intimate relationship is actually doomed once it hits the public arena. Such a mutually enhancing and reciprocal relation can survive only as long as the true power-brokers, the courtly public, maintain their interest. To continue to prosper in such a market, one or the other of the parties must

eventually move on, or at least pretend to move on, to another target. Nothing is so fatal to prestige as inaction. The troubadour must continually renew his standing by expanding his repertoire to new fields, new ladies, new patrons; and the lady/patron must also turn her attentions to whatever new figure blazes upon the cultural scene. The poems are thus replete with references to other ladies to whom the poet almost, but not quite, succumbed; or to whom he did succumb, but for which he must now repent. The razo author, in turn, explains the poet's very necessary forays into enemy (i.e. rival) terrority as merely unfortunate incidents, failings toward the one true lady; and he raises these crises to the level of melodrama by providing us with the names of each of these rivals, the names of their powerful husbands, and their standing at court. Thus he explains the poets' ambiguous references to crimes and scandal-mongers, indecision and masochism, as the literal consequences of straying from one's lady/lover at the same time that he exposes the poet's lady as but another interested patron.

This scenario is not very convincing, especially when applied to poets who are themselves very powerful lords who nonetheless compose their songs using terms that are identical to those used by 'bourgeois' poets or knights of the lower orders. Bernart de Ventadorn, Folquet de Marseille, Peire Vidal, Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, Gaucelm Faidit, Guillem de Saint Leidier, Gui d'Uisel: these are poets whose incomes, at least in the early portion of their careers, almost certainly depended upon their maintaining good relations with a patron and renewing periodically their appeal to that patron by demonstrating their appeal to others. But what of Savaric de Malleo, Dalfi d'Alvergne, and, to some extent, even Bertran de Born? These were powerful and influential men, capable of patronizing their own poets and singers, who nonetheless composed songs in the same style as their less well-off fellow poets. They were surely not in need of renewing their credentials or praising a patron in the same way or for the same reasons that a less-noble poet might.

There are two possible explanations for this paradox, both of which are suggested by the razo author but never really proffered as full explanations. The first is that much of what remains closed to our understanding in troubadour lyrics involves the degree to which these songs are coded messages that address one or several people mentioned only in veiled references. These codes can be broken once the references are understood, but they have for so long been so badly explained that they continue to resist clarification. Take for example the senhals by which the poets address an unnamed figure in the final stanzas (*tornadas*)

of the song. Stanislaw Stronski showed in his 1910 edition of the songs of Folquet de Marseille that all of the senhals used in Folquet's songs are code names for other male troubadours (e.g. Bernart de Ventadorn, Bertran de Born and Pons de Capdoill), not code names for his various lovers. Stronski presented the convincing argument that many, even most, of the troubadour songs are missives exchanged between men, on the theme of love, rather than on any specific occasion of its practice. Thus a poet could adopt a collection of tropes about love and praise, set them to certain well-known rhythmic patterns, rework this material into an original composition, and direct it to the person to whom he wished to appeal. The song could then be personalized with a final address to a patron (male or female), friend, or lady, someone who is being praised in the conventional terms of a discourse on love; or it could be just a love song that is 'dedicated' to that patron, i.e. composed in his/her honor. In addition, one can find songs, and especially sirventes, that are addressed to another poet, identified only by a senhal ('My-Magnet,' 'My-Entire-Joy,' 'Better-than-a-Lady'), and to which that other poet responds, using the same melody and/or rhyme scheme as the original. The razo author several times refers to these arrangements without ever saying that what is really at stake is a sort of literary correspondence or competition. In keeping with his desire to render the songs comprehensible and attractive to a foreign audience eager for courtly fictions, he will only state, in enigmatic terms, that a certain poet and lord called each other by the same name (e.g. Peire Vidal and Sir Baraill, the lord of Marseille, who called one another 'Rainer', razo 59), or that a certain poet, his friend, and his lover all called each other by the name 'Bertran' (Guillem de Saint Leidier, razo 51). The ramifications of such arrangements are titillating and certainly pique interest in the story, but what is often at stake is no more than poetic muscle-flexing, a game of one-upmanship in which two poets of whatever social rank match their skills at versifying and in which the subject matter is of only secondary importance.

The other explanation for wealthy lords' dabbling in poetic themes about economics and advancement through love is that the troubadour's classic techniques for ensuring his usefulness, poetic praise and public censure, are equally applicable to issues of political alliance. In Bertran de Born's calls for an active gift economy, in his condemnation of hoarding and consumption, in his public announcements of the rising and falling fortunes of the barons of Aquitaine as they switch their allegiance from one Plantagenet to another, we see the potential for the conflation of amorous and political metaphors fully exploited. Bertran's lord is his lover, and he trumpets his own usefulness as public relations expert in

much the same way that Raimon de Miraval does when he tells his lady/patrons that he can make them or break them. When lords/patrons/allies disappoint him by retiring from the marketplace (i.e. the practices of gift-giving and waging war), Bertran decries their cowardice. His own well-being, both material and moral, depends upon the symbiotic relation of patron and poet, master and slave, in which he holds them. Lest any of them forget, he goads them with love songs that turn poisonous and critiques that end with a kiss. Love, he has discovered, is stronger as metaphor than as reality, and is stronger still when paired with a blade. Are we really to believe, in razo 12, that the most powerful lords of Europe (Richard-the-Lionhearted, Geoffrey of Brittany, Raimon V of Toulouse, and King Alphonse of Aragon) are all vying for the attentions of Bertran's imaginary lover, Maeuz of Montaingnac, as the razo author pretends? How much more satisfying to accept the song (80,37) on its original allegorical level rather than follow the razo author's lead. Where Bertran tells us that his lady wants neither "...Poitiers nor Toulouse, Brittany nor Saragossa" and goes on from there to castigate lazy and inactive lords, the razo author sees each of these regions as representing a potential suitor. In fact, Bertran has constructed a series of synecdoches that do indeed refer to each region's principal lord, but with political implications that allow for the literal and allegorical to apply simultaneously: "she" (being Bertran or his castle, Autafort) has no desire for the man or pretensions to his land. Bertran is only demanding that a lord exercise his function in the public sphere and keep the economy moving through gift exchange and war. The courts of Northern Italy may have had ideological reasons for insisting on reducing love to a simple battle between the sexes, and so, for that matter, might the romantic critics who popularized the courtly lyric in the nineteenth century; but should we follow them in their biased readings, even when the razos so clearly deconstruct that fiction in other, more subtle ways?

Style

In her excellent study *From Poetry to Prose in Old Provençal*, Elizabeth Wilson Poe examined the ways in which verse was transformed into prose in the razos. She showed how one can follow the literal construction of certain razos by reading the poetic text and comparing it, stanza to sentence, to the razo's prose version. It is easy to imagine an author working in this way, especially in the case of razos that were composed specifically for a particular manuscript rather than having been inherited from prior oral versions. What, however, would have been an

author's precedent for doing so? Assuming that he still expected these introductions to be performed (and one need only peruse the closing formulae of many of the texts to see that), what could have led him to compose in prose rather than in verse? Prose was surely an anomaly at this time; the vidas and razos are actually among the earliest vernacular examples of extended prose writing. Some of the impetus for such a decision may, once again, have been provided by the conditions under which Uc de Saint Circ and his followers were composing.

Wlad Godzich and Jeffrey Kittay have studied the emergence of prose in the thirteenth century and the tensions inherent in the act of translating from verse. Referring to prose as to a new 'signifying practice,' they illustrate how, in the first stages, the prose text was seen merely as a supplement to the older, versified text; how it retained many of the characteristics of the verse text and often contained the verse within it (Godzich and Kittay, 1987: 7). The impetus was often to break with a tradition that accorded to verse and oral performance hegemony in the dissemination of culture. Breaking with verse and, by extension, with performance, implies a break with the institutions that guaranteed the absolute authority of those utterances. Thus, these authors found that in the thirteenth century verse itself begins to come under attack, even from within verse, for being full of lies (Godzich and Kittay, xvi). In keeping with this idea, Gabrielle Spiegel has shown that the earliest prose translations of the versified *Pseudo-Turpin* cycle, translations which initiated the practice of vernacular, prose historiography in France, were all produced within the lands of, and with the patronage of, the French-speaking Flemish aristocracy, whose autonomy was being threatened by the pretensions of the French king, Philippe Auguste (1986: 207-224). Thus, at its very inception, prose can be seen to be ideologically motivated, its role being to appropriate a body of culturally canonized founding texts from the exclusive dominion of another supposedly privileged signifying practice, namely verse, that is too closely associated with the dominant political order. In a similar way, Godzich and Kittay liken the thirteenth-century *chantefable*, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, with its alternation between prose and verse sections, to a "...cultural revolution in which these [courtly] codes are forced to acknowledge their limitations of extension, thus losing their claim to universality, and to effect internal distinctions that reveal their constructed nature and deny their claim of organicity (p. 101)."

The razos are contemporary with the texts studied by Godzich and Kittay, and as Poe and Meneghetti had already shown, participate in many

of the same strategies. Stylistically, the razos give evidence of having been conceived as translations. The sentences are often long and unwieldy, made up of chains of phrases (corresponding to verses) and lists (condensed information from the songs) joined by conjunctions. Pronominal referents are often unclear, as the switch from first to third person, dictated by the use of indirect discourse, multiplies the possibilities of referents for the accumulating 'he's' and 'she's.' On the other hand, some of the difficulties encountered in other prose translations are less apt to be found in the razos since the 'stories' they are retelling are often not stories at all in the songs, but rather disjointed reminiscences, maxims, and impressions to which a story line must be added. As Poe has noted, sirventes and tensos lend themselves particularly well to prose adaptation with their format of accusation and explanation, or issue and array of opinions (1984: 50). Not surprisingly, many more of the razos treat these latter genres rather than the more well-known *canso*. The function of the razos was indeed, first and foremost, to supplement the verse texts. Only in the later manuscripts were they adapted to the point where they could be considered independent tales capable of standing on their own. Thus they mark an intermediary stage in the development of prose rather than an outright revolutionary stance. They do, nonetheless, interpret the lyrics by framing them, and once a line of verse that has been heard as part of a razo presentation is read or heard within the song, it carries a semantic charge that is difficult to shake. In this respect, the razos are successful glosses. Some editors of critical editions (see, for example, Paden et al., 72) have, in fact, refused to include them with the songs, rightly assuming that once they have been read it will be difficult to view the songs on their own merits, or to read or hear them as the enigmas they were very likely meant to be. Paradoxically, this very defect in the razos is what makes of them such an important and fascinating body of texts today. Allowing a voice from outside the lyric to circulate within it, choosing which details to accentuate, explaining references, creating connections with historical events, both monumentalizes and destroys the pretensions of the songs. On the one hand, the prose commentaries valorize the songs, elevating their prestige to the rank of 'classic' and their language to the status of 'literary.' The songs are treated as important cultural and historical artifacts, the equivalents of other cultures' foundation myths, the guarantors of the nobility of a system of courtly patronage and political autonomy that made of the Hispano-Catalan-Italiano-Provençal region a privileged locus for the elaboration of a unique system of art and ethics. On the other hand, the prose texts are inevitably disruptive, challenging by their presence the songs' pretensions to truth as records of experience. The

destruction of the Southern courts and the new cultural reality of the Venetian-area courts demanded a reinterpretation of the lyric that would eliminate much of the deliberate ambiguity of the originals. The coded messages of praise and threat that characterize the lyrics were referentialized; the gender confluence in the person of the lady or patron was dissipated or ignored; and the "self-fashioning" techniques of the troubadour anxious to create from textual elements in circulation a unique persona which would bring him material or political success were reduced to the plaints of an unsatisfied lover. Uc de Saint Circ and his like managed to retain some signs of the economic base on which the whole system rested. The nature of prose itself, demanding logic through antecedence, managed nonetheless to deny the play of meaning within the song and the mutability of its form as it circulated among the courts. Understandably, this more limited view of social practice, based on stable power structures, devoted lovers, and sound economic practice must have seemed a mirror to the burgeoning Italian court, a mirror in which they may have been able to glimpse the highly attractive image of their own becoming.

Editorial Policy for this Edition

The coupling of the razos and songs in this edition is based on the conviction that though the lyrics can and should first be read on their own, it is highly instructive to read the two together, as the razo authors intended. This allows us to attempt to read as a thirteenth-century contemporary might have. It also alerts us to re-read the lyrics' amazingly complex renditions of erotic experience in terms of the razo author's deliberate dilution of that complexity; and then to re-read the lyric in terms of the razo author's perspicacious analysis of the economic ambition that underlies the whole system of fin'amors.

The presentation of the texts is based upon the Jean Boutière and A. H. Schutz 1973 critical edition of the biographies of the troubadours. Within the category of biography, Boutière and Schutz (referred to throughout the text as B/S) included both vidas (biographies) and razos (commentaries). Margarita Egan published in 1984, in this same series, a translation and introduction to the vidas. This volume is thus limited to the razos, and excludes any texts which may have fallen into the cracks between the two pseudo-genres but are included in Egan's collection. I have followed the B/S edition even as to the order of presentation so as to facilitate the reading of the texts in their original Occitan or modern

French versions. I would, moreover, encourage readers to use this volume in just that way, reading the original text and then the English translation included here. The only exceptions to this policy are found among the razos to Bertran de Born. I have included three texts not known to B/S and made other minor adjustments in order based on the grouping of Bertran's songs in Paden, Sankovitch and Stäblein's 1986 edition. The razos are all identified according to the number of the song they explicate (as given in Pillet/Carstens' *Bibliographie der Troubadors*), just as they are in B/S. In addition, I have numbered the razos according to the order in which they appear in this text. All references in the notes and commentary will be to that number.

The songs, too, are identified according to the Pillet/Carstens classification, since that is the one commonly accepted bibliography to which almost all critical editions refer. Thus, in referring to songs in notes, I give the number of the razo that accompanies them and their Pillet/Carstens number. In addition to listing at the head of the song the source from which I have worked in translating, I have also included a listing of the manuscripts in which the various versions of the song can be found. I have done so both to indicate the 'popularity' of the song (for those wishing to examine why some songs and not others may have been accorded a razo in a given manuscript) and to provide a listing for those wishing to go directly to the manuscript sources to work on the original Occitan text. I regret that the original text is not included and expect that this archival information will facilitate the task of finding edited or unedited versions of the songs to read along with these translations. I have included only those manuscripts which contain at least two full stanzas of a song, as anything less would be of little use. More complete lists may be found in Pillet/Carstens and in any of the critical editions for the individual poets.

In general, I have translated all known stanzas of the song that is mentioned in the razo. In some rare cases where it is clear that the razo author did not have before him some of the stanzas included in the critical edition, I have dropped those stanzas and indicated in notes where they could be found. The main focus of this edition is to compare what the razo author may reasonably have known about a song, based presumably upon the version from which he was working, and what he then said about it. In the case of variant texts, I have generally followed the critical editors' texts, except in cases where I could see that a version of the song contained in a manuscript that also contains the razo gave a different reading for the line. In those cases, I have indicated in notes that I was

diverging from the critical edition and why. It is, unfortunately, extremely difficult to trace the passage of songs and razos from one manuscript to another or to find clear links between manuscripts. In comparing the manuscripts in which the razo text is found with the manuscripts in which the song is found, one is immediately struck by the fact that it often happens that a razo for a particular song is included in a manuscript which does not contain that song. Take, for example, Pons de Capdoill's song 375, 18. The razo is contained in four manuscripts: E, P, R and Sg. The song is contained in none of those manuscripts. The same thing can be noted for songs corresponding to many of the razos in manuscripts N^2, P, and R. This proves that those compiling these manuscripts (including most probably Uc de Saint Circ, see above) were either writing extended variations on a previously known razo and recognized that the story would now be able to stand on its own, independent of the song (as in manuscripts P and R); or that they were simply compiling every known version of a razo even if they did not have access to the song. Equally puzzling is the fact that the placement of the razo in the manuscript sometimes belies its stated relation to the vida or the song, whether or not the song is included. Razo 64, for example, which accompanies Raimon de Miraval's songs 406: 4, 27, 38 and Peire Vidal's song 364, 21, tells us: "You have certainly heard about Raimon de Miraval, who he was and where he came from, in the razo that is written before his songs..." In fact, in manuscripts E, P and R, the only ones that contain this razo, the vida (here called a razo) to which the razo refers does not precede the songs but is grouped with all other razos in a separate section of the manuscript. Again, this would imply that the scribe is copying from another document from which he has culled the razo texts and then reproduced them together.

I have left all proper names within the razo texts in the form in which they were given in the original Old Occitan in the B/S critical edition and changed only commonly known place names to their modern equivalents. I have also modernized names of places and people in the songs when that makes it clearer to whom they refer. I have tried to keep footnotes to a minimum yet still point out the more interesting features of each razo, offer alternate translations, relate the texts to others within the collection, and identify the references when possible. In cases where a reference to a person or site that is not explained within the text is also left unexplained in the notes it is because neither the editor of the critical edition nor I have been able to shed any light on the identification.

The Translations

The first thing that must be stressed about the translations is that there has been no attempt here to do 'literary' translations. These could more appropriately be termed 'working' translations whose purpose is not to beautify or simplify. I have tried to stay very close to the phrasing of the original text, even when that means that the phrasing in English sounds odd or convoluted. The original texts *are*, in many ways, odd and convoluted, and I see no reason to mask that with a smooth and colloquial English translation. It should therefore be understood that these translations are not intended in any way to replace the many fine translations of the songs that already exist. On the contrary, I would urge readers to seek out other translations listed in the introductory segment to each individual song. As for the razos, this is the only available English translation of the collection.

One could reasonably question the utility of translating those songs in the collection for which there exist published translations. My reasons can be summarized as follows: first, I wanted to provide a version of each song in numbered verse so as to facilitate the task of future scholars, unable to work exclusively in Old Occitan or French, who wish to compare my translations to the original text; second, I wanted to give some uniformity to the translations so that those which were done more with English poetics in mind would not stand out from among my more unadorned versions; and third, I wanted to do translations based on having first read the razo so as to stress elements in the songs that seemed significant enough to the razo author to mention them in his prose text. I therefore tend to translate more literally than many before me the economic language and metaphors that underlie much of the poets' dealings with the lady/patron. This was done consciously, even at the risk of destroying some of the more ethereal and idealistic passages, so as to open to examination the question of economics and poetry and to explain the razos' emphasis on ladies' and poets' quests for that elusive goal, fame.

I would therefore urge interested readers to return to other editors' work and the excellent anthologies that exist, especially those of Paul Blackburn, Meg Bogin, Anthony Bonner, Frederick Goldin, Alan Press, and James J. Wilhelm. In the case of individual editors, I am highly indebted to all of them for their editorial and investigative skills, and especially to James J. Wilhelm, Ruth Verity Sharman, and Joseph Linskill. I must mention, in particular, the model edition of the songs of