
SABER, SEN I TROBAR: RAMON DE CORNET AND THE CONSISTORY OF THE GAY SCIENCE¹**Marina Navàs Farré**

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Received: 31 Oct. 2013 | Revised: 10 Feb. 2014 | Accepted: 10 March 2014 | Available online: 20 June 2014 | doi: 10.1344/Svmma2014.3.15

Resum

Sovint l'estudi de la lírica occitanocatalana del segle XIV ha estat supeditat a la poètica de certamen que gravita a l'entorn del Consistori del Gai Saber de Tolosa de Llenguadoc. A aquest fet, cal sumar-hi el judici pejoratiu que gran part de la crítica ha formulat sobre el Consistori, atribuint-li la voluntat d'imposar una forma artificiosa acompanyada d'un contingut moral o devot que s'avingués amb l'ortodòxia cristiana. Els pocs autors conservats de l'època que no es podien encabir del tot en aquest marc, com ara Ramon de Cornet –paradoxalment l'autor amb més obra conservada de la primera meitat del Tres-cents i amb una difusió més àmplia–, són considerats una excepció i fins i tot, en el cas de Cornet, d'estrafolari. Però si estudiem la seva obra en el marc de la tradició literària més immediata, la dels darrers trobadors, veurem com la poètica del XIV és una evolució natural d'aquest llegat, que respon a unes exigències de gust literari que va molt més enllà de les suposades coaccions consistorials. Una mostra d'això és la peça «Al noble cavalier» de Cornet.

Paraules clau: Ramon de Cornet, lírica occitanocatalana, trobadors, Consistori de la Gaia Ciència, Escola de Tolosa

Abstract

The study of 14th-century Occitan poetry has been overshadowed by its alleged subjection to the poetics of the contests organized by the Toulousain Consistory of the Gay Science. Moreover, most scholars have criticized the Consistory for trying to impose an excessively contrived poetic form, coupled with moral or pious contents, in compliance with Christian orthodoxy. The few authors from that century who do not completely match that framework, such as Ramon de Cornet – paradoxically, the author with a greater amount of preserved works and with a wider diffusion - are considered an exception and even, in his case, an eccentric figure. But when studying Cornet within his most immediate literary context, it becomes apparent that 14th century poetics are the natural evolution of the late troubadour tradition and are in no way limited to the alleged consistorial pressures. This can be illustrated by Ramon de Cornet's "Al noble cavalier".

Key words: Ramon de Cornet, Occitan poetry, Troubadours, Toulouse Consistory

¹ This article falls within the scope of the *CODITECAM III Digital Corpus of Medieval Catalan Texts III* project, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, University of Girona (FFI2011-27844-C03-02, Martí Sadurní PI). The author is a fellow of the La Caixa Foundation and the French Embassy in Spain. This article is an expanded version of a paper presented at "Spaces of knowledge. 1st ARDIT International Congress of Predoctoral Medievalists" held in Barcelona from 14 to 16 November 2012. I want to thank Miriam Cabré and Martí Sadurní for their suggestions and review of this work. I am the only responsible for the eventual errors..

1. Introduction

The study of 14th-century Occitan poetics has been traditionally affected by several factors. First, because it is located halfway between two decisive moments of our culture: the troubadour lyric and the poetry cultivated at the court of Alfons the Magnanimous, with the major figure of Ausiàs March. Indeed, on the one hand, the so-called end of troubadour poetry in the late 13th century, claimed by scholars such as Joseph Anglade (1905), has often led to forget the poets who succeeded the troubadours. On the other hand, the critics of March and the poets of his generation acknowledge their troubadour roots, have traced the Latin sources on which they draw, and, especially have emphasized the novelty of the language and the treatment of amorous passion with respect to the immediately preceding poets. In the shadows, between troubadours and the poets immediately prior to March, we find the poetry of the first half of the 14th century, which often enough (but not always) conveyed a sapiential, religious and doctrinal discourse, sometimes attributed to the coercion of the Consistory of the Gay Science or the Inquisition, to the detriment of a more courtly and lighthearted poetry, in the manner of the classic troubadours.

The concept of the Consistory of the Gay Science is another distorting factor that hindered an overview of 14th-century Occitan poetry. The Consistory, also known as School of Toulouse, was founded in Toulouse in 1323 with the intention of holding an annual contest of Occitan poetry (called “Floral Games” in modern times). It started as a private initiative, called *Sobregaya Compahia dels VII Trobadors de Tolosa*, and soon settled under the aegis of the consistory of Toulouse. Its effects echoed all over and other poetry contests were organized in the Crown of Aragon, although in those cases the institution behind them was the royal house. There is no doubt that the Consistory exercised a remarkable influence on the poetic exercise; however, some traditional considerations perpetuated by a wide sector of the scholars need clarification:²

1. The consistory has been granted a clearly excessive influence. These scholars suppose that the institution monopolized the cultivation of poetry at the time. Therefore, they tend to reduce 14th-century lyric poetry to contest poetry, which would mean the disappearance of noble courts as protectors of troubadour culture, which would have been replaced by a bourgeois dilettantish initiative.
2. Such scholars believe that this new institution aims not only to replace the role previously assumed by nobility, but was created as an attempt to recover troubadour poetry, considered agonizing at best, as an emblematic and genuine sign of the Occitan territory.

² Among the studies that call into question some aspects of the traditional view of the Occitan-Catalan lyric of the first half of the 14th century, without proposing any alternative comprehensive outline, stand out ASPERTI (1985), OLIVELLA (2002 and 2006), KELLY (2005), GONFROY (1988), FEDI (1999, 2001, 2011), LÉGLU (2010).

3. And finally, they attribute a restrictive character to this recovery, that is, subject to duress. Supposedly, the Toulousain Consistory, under the influence of the Inquisition, imposed moral and religiously orthodox themes, which led to a contrived formal complexity. In the words of Jordi Rubió i Balaguer “és la *ciència del gai saber*, que paralitza la llibertat creadora” (1992: 147), or, as Jaume Massó i Torrents puts it, “Els bons ciutadans de Tolosa varen intentar posar caminadors a la lliure poesia, ja en plena decadència” (1932: 309). Such imposition would result in a deplorable poetry, thematically insipid and formally corseted, tedious and without the slightest trace of originality.

The starting point of this conception of the Consistory is a usually inflated historiographical basis: the influence of the Occitan crisis on culture. The new political, social and religious circumstances endured by Occitania from the 13th century onwards, such as the Albigensian Crusade, the French invasion and the Inquisition, founded in Toulouse in 1229, the same year that the University, have led to believe in a decline of courtly troubadour culture, so that the troubadours of the end of the 13th century would be the last representatives of this agonizing lyric.³ We do not intend to deny their influence, but neither do we believe that all the changes that occur in literature are due to such factors, because the aesthetic evolution of the Occitan poetry of the time—the formal search, the cult of the Virgin, ambiguity or parody, for example—occur similarly and in parallel across Europe and, therefore, in very different contexts.

Paradoxically, this view of the Consistory does match the work of the most renowned poets of the time, such as Joan of Castellnou, Peire of Ladils or, especially, Ramon de Cornet, who cultivated many genres, both moral and religious pieces and profane songs, political *sirventes*, or bawdy parodies. The freedom and variety evident in this corpus cannot be justified within the alleged formal and thematic constraints imposed by the Consistory. Given this contradiction, the hypotheses of the critics have been as diverse as striking. Most have considered Ramon de Cornet as an eccentric character, unique and bizarre, who escapes the impositions of consistorial poetry. Robert Lafont even labeled him as the “enfant terrible” of the Consistory of Toulouse (1970). Let us see two examples:

³ The power exercised by the Inquisition over poetry is difficult to precise. According to Jaume Massó i Torrents, “no sabrem mai fins a quin grau els inquisidors coaccionaven l’actuació del consistori” (1932: 311). In the *Leys* there is an explicit reference to “l’Enqueridor”, who had to sanction the “dictat que parle de santa theologia”. It could be understood that only theological compositions had to undergo censure, not the rest of the compositions, songs for example. Furthermore, this reference appears only in the third draft of the *Leys*, Although the first draft was carried out during the papacy of John XXII, when the coercion and repression of the radical followers of the poverty of Christ, such as the spirituals, the Beguines, the *fraticelli* or visionaries hardened, with inquisitors as well known as Bernard Gui. Perugia attributed to inquisitorial pressure the changes of lessons in some compositions by Cornet (1985). Fedi also sees in the changes in the composition of the *Leys* a “precisa volontà di censura” (2001, p. 176). In contrast, Jordi Passerat notes that the *Leys* draw on Peter of John Olivi, the Franciscan who fathered the spiritual movement. According to Passerat’s hypothesis, the Consistory was not coerced by the Inquisition when it establish the orthodox theme of the literary contest, but they could be considered heretics who camouflaged among their *Leys* a jealously persecuted unorthodox message.

Sembla que, adhuc a Tolosa mateix, degué haver-hi prous esperits que potser no es sotmetien massa de grat a la fèrula inexorable del consistori. Aquest aspecte ens l'ofereix més de la meitat de l'obra abundosa de frare Ramon de Cornet, que és francament amorosa i mundana» (MASSÓ 1932: 315)

Il fréquentait, on l'avu, le Gai Consistoire; mais il n'était pas homme à soumettre servilement son inspiration aux règles d'orthodoxie et de morale imposées par l'académie naissante aux poètes qui briguaient ses couronnes (NOULET, CHABANEAU 1888: XXXVII)

If the works of the principal authors do not conform to the still current notion of post-troubadour poetry, it seems evident that it is necessary to rethink the overall vision of this lyric and the role played by the Consistory, especially if we consider that the two most important authors, Joan of Castellnou and Ramon de Cornet, were directly related to it, in one way or another. Thus, the analysis of their work, instead of considering it as marginal, should serve as the basis for the description of the poetry of the time.

In this paper we propose to clarify these assumptions, in our opinion biased, which have often been applied to the study of poetry of the first half of the 14th century. Certain passages of a composition by Ramon de Cornet will serve to illustrate that the characteristics of that poetry are the natural evolution of poetic trends developed in the second half of the 13th century by the most important poets of the time, the so-called last generation of troubadours.

The poets of this generation are still considered troubadours, despite the literary similarities between them and the authors at the turn of the century: let us bear in mind in this regard that scholars have reserved the name of troubadour to the poets cataloged by Pillet and Carstens, whose works are copied in the corpus of troubadour chansonniers, and therefore the census excludes most 14th-century poets. Despite this historiographic distinction, well founded but no less arbitrary in relation to the natural evolution of any tradition, a troubadour such as At de Mons is much more related to Ramon de Cornet than to William of Aquitaine or Jaufré Rudel, for example, although some of them remain labeled as troubadours and the other, in contrast, as a representative—founder or rebel, depending on the scholar—of the so-called School of Toulouse.⁴ Initially, it might seem that the conclusion is very obvious, and it probably is, but no less necessary. The fact that even today in most manuals of Catalan literature pre-March lyric appears in a different chapter and detached from the poetry of the troubadours is a clear symptom.

2. *The Extent of the Influence of the Consistory of the Gay Science*

A sector of critics who deal with poetry in *langue d'oïl* sees the poetry composed in the milieu of the Toulousain Consistory as a precedent for the French *Grande Rhétorique* and, far from

4 See ASPERTI (1999) on the justification of how the census of troubadours has been defined excluding most 14th-century poets. FEDI (2011) also claims the need to review the label School of Toulouse.

current aesthetic prejudices, do not consider formal complexity as a rigidity which is a symptom of decay, but as a sign of modernity.⁵ This point of view not only reassesses the poetry written in Occitan, but it also plays down the role of the Consistory with regard to the formal imposition and the intention to revive its past troubadour glory in front of the French threat. On the contrary, if we consider the Consistory within the whole European context, beyond the golden age of the troubadours and the specific political circumstances, we note that this is not an initiative adopted in extremis, and that maybe the culture of the invaders was not only a hypothetical threat, but also a very likely influence, although the weight of the troubadour poetry on the poets in *langue d'oïl* is evident.

The contest of the Gay Science is a novelty, for it is sponsored by a public institution, such as the consistory of the town of Toulouse, but holding a poetic competition is not a new initiative. Some towns in northern France and Flanders had long celebrated the *puis*, literary contests where a jury crowned the best works submitted and the best the poets representing *jeux-partis*, and within confraternities were held celebrations where there was also room for poetic contests, most of them devoted to the Virgin Mary.⁶ The editors of Cornet's chansonnier,⁷ Jean-Baptiste Noulet and Camille Chabaneau, warned of the possible French influence on the award-winning poems of the the first contest held by the Consistory in 1324, the song of praise to Mary *Mayres de Dieu, verges pura* by Arnaut Vidal de Castelnaudari, copied as the only testimony in this chansonnier (mid-14th century) under the rubric *Cirventes*, an Occitan name that does not fit in any case the genre of the composition. It does fit, however, the *langue d'oïl* term *serventois*, which designated pieces dedicated to the Virgin, presented at *puis*. Just as the *serventois* crowned in Valenciennes at the beginning of the 14th century, it was also composed of five verses plus a refrain.⁸

There is another perhaps more revealing example, and unnoticed by the editors, the first known mention of a new genre that will reach its peak in the 15th and 16th centuries in the French and Burgundian courts, the *bassa dansa*, it appears precisely in a composition by Cornet, the *versa*: “Jotglars an tost apres | coblas e may versetz, | cansos e bassas dansas”(vv. 235-7) (AUBREY 1989: 119), in which he suggests that jongleurs are alert and spread new fashions. The Cornetian

⁵ See, especially, GONFROY (1988).

⁶ On the *Pui* and the confraternity *des Ardents d'Arras*, see in particular Berger (1981).

⁷ Toulouse, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 2885 (*olim* Académie des Jeux Floraux, 500.010).

⁸ Arnaut Vidal is the author of a narrative work in verse, *Guilhem de la Barre*, cited by critics as an example of the decline. Two recent analyses by Catherine LÉGLU (2010) and Sabrina GALANO (2011) reassess this work and deny the fame of inconsistency that he had always been given. Léglu proposes to interpret it as an ironic reading of French models. Other examples also approach us to French lyric. One of the pieces cited as a model in the anonymous *Leys* was maybe written by the *trouvère* Thibaut de Champagne, King of Navarre (GONFROY 1998). Meanwhile, Alfred Jeanroy noted the similarity between the burlesque and factious compositions by Ramon de Cornet, such as the *trufa* or the *saumesca*, with the *sottes chansons* awarded at the *puis*, although, as opposed to Gonfroy or Noulet and Chabaneau, he considers “d’ailleurs peu vraisemblable que Cornet ait pu connaître” (1941: 51). Thus, for example, the *sotte chanson*, the *fatrasie* and the hybrid genres among them are considered as novelties as regards French poetic forms, contemporary to the activity of Cornet and with some echoes of Cerverí (ULH 2011). What is considered a novelty from the point of view of the *langue d'oïl* is considered decadent poetry in *langue d’oc*.

reference to the genre moves back a century or more other known references, such as that in Francis of Via's *Procés de la Senyora de Valor*, for instance.

Puis and literary festivals were not just celebrated in the North. Occitan had already been used in competitions, not as systematically as the Consistory would later manage to achieve, but rather continuously in the courts of the South. Let us think about the poetic debates and games that took place at the court of Henry II of Rodez, in which Guiraut Riquier, Folquet Lunel, Guilhem de Wall, Raimon de Castelnou, Bertran Carbonel, Daude of Pradas and Cerverí took part, among many others. According to Anglade, "Cette École de Rodez prépare l'École toulousaine du XIV siècle" (1973: 111). In this environment the predominant literary tendency are formal and technical experimentation and literary debates in the style of scholastic *disputationes*, where rhetoric skills are more valued than the cause itself (GUIDA 1983). In this court took place the contest to gloss a canço by Guiraut of Calanson: the winning gloss, by Guiraut Riquier has an obvious parallel with the gloss composed by Ramon de Cornet which a few years later on a poem by Bernat Panassac, one of the seven founders of the *Sobregaya Companhia*.⁹ Moreover, several troubadour compositions refer to a *pui*, about which we know very little, although we know that in Puy-en-Velay the *Puis* of Our Lady were also dedicated to the Virgin, as their name indicates (BATTELLI 1999).

Therefore the Toulousain competition is part of an existing tradition; and just as these literary meetings—both at the court or within confraternities—it assumed a cultural role that went far beyond a poetry contest. Unlike these, however, the Consistory is an institution exclusively devoted to the promotion and regulation of poetry. Nevertheless, its task is not conservative, understood in the sense of recovering—without success—the golden age of the troubadours, but the regulation of existing poetic activity and the setting of new fashions. This is best explained by a fact that has also quite puzzled scholars: the limited presence of classic troubadours in the citations included in the *Leys*. In fact, the *auctoritates* cited therein are either contemporary or immediately previous to the Consistory, such as At de Mons, a troubadour who, by himself, appears in almost 80% of the citations. The *Leys* cite only five times classic troubadours, three of which are anonymous (GONFROY 1998, FEDI 2001).¹⁰

The other task, and the main one assumed by the Consistory, is academic. In this sense, its intention is not too far from that of Ramon Vidal de Besalu in writing *Razos de trobar*, the first European grammar in vernacular language: to lend prestige to the use of Occitan as a language of culture and provide it with a status comparable to that of Latin. *Trobar* is considered a *gay*

⁹ On the comparison of the two glosses, see CAPUSSO (1989) and CURA-CURÀ (2007). Henry II was considered the last important protector of troubadour culture. It is true that he brought together an extraordinary literary activity. However, I would like to recall that Ramon de Cornet dedicated four compositions to the family of Armagnac, two of them to the wife of John I, Count of Armagnac and Rodez (the grandson of Henry II).

¹⁰ This interpretation does not exclude the phenomenon noted by ASPERTI (1985), and followed by FEDI (2001).

science, but it lacks a school, given that the “official” language of education is still Latin. The Consistory aims to fill this gap by regularizing the learning of Occitan in parallel to the university. Joseph Anglade explained at length the parallels between the functioning of the Consistory and the University of Toulouse, including the fact that the winners of the competition would adopt the title of master or doctor in Gay Science (a title already awarded to authors such as Guiraut Riquier or Cerverí). The internal organization of the *mantenedors* of the Consistory, the imitation of university regulations or the ritual of the celebration of the contest are aspects that emulate the formal events of the University of Toulouse (1919).

The educational wish of the *saber de trobar* is just one of the fashions that starts with the troubadours of the 13th century and will gradually consolidate until, for instance, Jaume March’s *Diccionari de rims*, or the 15th-century French compilations of the *Seconde Rhétorique*. In the first half of the 14th century we have the example of the *Cançoneret de Ripoll*,¹¹ possibly emerged in the monastic milieu and related to the *infant* Pere de Ribagorça, which includes rhetoric and grammar treatises followed by an anthology of poems, possibly chosen in order to illustrate the theory (BADIA 1983). In 1324, and therefore at the time of the first competition of Floral Games but before the creation of the Consistory itself, Ramon de Cornet dedicated a small Occitan grammar, the *Doctrinal de trobar*, to the *infant* Pere himself, to whom the gloss of Joan de Castellnou on Cornet’s *Doctrinal* will be later dedicated in 1341, on this occasion directly related to the Consistory.

The fact that the Consistory is dedicated exclusively to the promotion of the Gay Science does not mean that the promotion of poetry is exclusive to the Consistory, although there has been a tendency to confuse one with the other. In addition to the examples quoted above, the poems by Ramon de Cornet, Joan de Castellnou and other contemporary authors illustrate that the noble courts, not only in Catalonia but also in Occitania, are still interested in the promotion of the lyric in *langue d’oc*. This is shown in many of his poems, dedicated to lords of the nobility. And it does not only affect noblemen, for Cornet also addresses high ecclesiastics.¹² A number of years ago, Stefano Asperti in a still essential article already advanced the plurality of the centres that promoted culture, not just poetry, beyond the Consistory (1985).

Therefore, the Toulousain academy did not monopolize the literary post-troubadour activity and never replaced noble courts, but it was just another centre of the Occitan cultural network, which mainly dealt with the pedagogical aspect of the Gay Science.

¹¹ Barcelona, Arxiu de la Corona d’Aragó, Ripoll fonds, MS 129.

¹² We will not dwell on this point because we have dealt with it in previous works: CABRÉ, MARTÍ, NAVÀS 2009; CABRÉ, MARTÍ 2010; NAVÀS 2013.

3. An Example by Ramon de Cornet

Ramon de Cornet is the Occitan poet of the first half of 14th century with the broadest manuscript tradition and more extant works (a total of 51 pieces), which circulated and had links both in Occitania and Catalonia. He is therefore a key figure in order to outline and understand the poetry of the time, and define its characteristics, uses and tastes.

Earlier we mentioned that his corpus covers a wide range of genres that he cultivated with greater or lesser freedom, and, for that reason he has been labeled an exceptional poet, alien to the Consistory, halfway between the troubadours and the Toulousain academy, and he has even been called the last troubadour.¹³ However, his work is not as an exceptional as it is representative of the aesthetic fashion of his time, inherited from his immediate predecessors and evolved according to the new demands of the audience.¹⁴ Thus, for instance, in some of his works he builds a character, following two of the favourite veins of his predecessors and contemporaries: in burlesque, obscene and satirical compositions he borrows the figure of the false priest (that is, he parodies himself, for he had been a Friar Minor, a priest and a Cistercian monk), who is presented as a priest prone to worldly pleasures, like the Goliards, the late troubadour Jofre Foixà or his contemporary, the Capellà de Bolquera (attested to in the *Cançoneret de Ripoll*). In other compositions, especially the doctrinal and moral pieces, he assumes the role of educator and is presented as a teacher or a moral authority, such as Peire Cardenal, At Mons, Cerverí, and Guiraut Riquier. It is not in vain that on more than one occasion the manuscript tradition has mistaken him for Peire Cardenal (NAVÀS 2010 and 2013).

To illustrate that the lyric of the 14th century goes on and still develops some trends cultivated in the poetry of the later troubadours, we have chosen a piece in which he takes on the role of the wiseman, the epistle “Al noble cavalier”, composed in 1327.¹⁵ Although we do not have the whole composition, the few extant fragments are sufficient to refute the three assumptions about consistorial poetry that we announced at the beginning and to illustrate some of the characteristic features of 14th-century poetry.

First, the piece addresses a “noble cavalier” (noble knight), “de mot gran estamen” (of high position) and of “bon linhatge” (good lineage). Unfortunately, the line in which he discovered the identity of the person has not been preserved; yet we know that it is dedicated to a knight of the high nobility, which proves, such as other Cornetian works whose recipient is known, the survival of the courts as protectors of the culture of troubadour roots.

¹³ See NELLI (1977), BEC (1984), FLYNN (1989), GONFROY (1998) and PASSERAT (2003). “C’est certainement l’esprit plus brillant du trobar tardif et qui, beaucoup mieux que Guiraut Riquier, mériterait vraiment le titre de ‘dernier troubadour’” (BEC 1984, p. 113).

¹⁴ Also interpreted in this way by HUCHET (1990), KELLY (2006), OLIVELLA (1998, 2002, 2006). NOULET, CHABANEAU (1888), JEANROY (1941), BEC (1984), NELLI (1977) read Cornet in the context of tradition, but consider him outside the Consistory, as an exceptional case.

¹⁵ BdPP 558, d and 558, f (ZUFFEREY 1981). Pieces III and IV in the edition NOULET, CHABANEAU 1888.

Second, the choice of genre is also revealing: it is a “letra” or epistle, in this case a string of hexasyllabic couplets, a metrical scheme used in the epistles, the *ensenhamens*, the *saluts* and didactic narrative, cultivated mainly by Guiraut Riquier, At de Mons, Cerverí, Amanieu de Sescas, Arnaut de Maruelh, and Peire de Ladils (FRANK 1966, II: 79-80).¹⁶ According to the classification of genres established by the BedT, throughout the corpus of troubadours there are twenty epistles, nineteen of which are composed by so-called last generation troubadours (active in the second half or third of the 13th century) from Languedoc. Of these nineteen, fifteen are by Guiraut Riquier, three by At de Mons, and one by Matfre Ermengaut. Riquier and At de Mons propose a hybrid genre that shares the formal characteristics of the epistle of moral and educational content, which include resources of scholasticism.¹⁷ The letter of Cornet has as a reference this kind of epistle and more specifically the one written by At de Mons and dedicated to King Alfonso X of Castile (PC 309, I), a philosophical and religious debate about predestination and free will. The role model of the Toulousain troubadour is quite clear when Cornet invokes him as an authority:

De ventura parlar
 no vuelh ni d’astre plus,
 car mot ne parlet clus
 n’Atz de Mons, que sabia,
 per que s’ieu ren dizia
 cug trop que y defalhis,
 si no que repetis
 tot so qu’el ne parlet
 en la tenso que det
 al bo rey de Castela.

“I will not talk more about fortune or the stars, because At de Mons already talked about it at length and hermetically (technically), who knew about it, therefore if I say something, I fear I would be wrong unless I repeated everything he said in that tenço addressed to the good king of Castile.”

Not only did Cornet cultivate this genre (as it had been conceived by Riquier or Mons) at least three times, but it also occupies a privileged position in his chansonnier: copied after the *versa* (a moral poem) and before the cançons. This didactic-moral genre that emerges among the last troubadours but still occupies a marginal position in the manuscript tradition of the chansonniers (the epistle of At de Mons, for example, is copied in one of the final parts of the chansonnier *R*,¹⁸ devoted to non-lyrical compositions, in the didactic-religious section) becomes a preminent

¹⁶ The metre and the didactic character lead Monson (1981) to refer to the second part, “Als trobayres vuelh far”, as a possible *ensenhamen*. It should be noted that Monson could not know that it is a part of the epistle, for the edition by Noulet and Chabaneau established that there were two different parts. We have dealt with this issue in another work (NAVÁS, in press).

¹⁷ ALVAR (2006) relates the formal innovation of the genre and its theme with the interests of Alfonso X and the cultural effervescence of his court, where the intellectuals of the time gathered and becomes a proper framework for the exchange of influences and experiments. On the epistles by Guiraut Riquier and At de Mons, see the editions in LINSKILL (1985) and CIGNI (2013), respectively.

¹⁸ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fr. 22543.

genre, which will be able to overthrow the amorous canço. The structure of Cornet's Register, which establishes a hierarchical arrangement of genres, endorses the importance of these genres, recently emerged among the last troubadours, such as the gloss, which brings us to a university environment.

The narrative verse, characteristic of narrative but also of the didactic and religious production, is one of the favourite forms of the compilers of the *Leys*: the letters of the Consistory, the composition of the *Flors del Gay Saber* (an abridge verse version of the *Leys*), and most metric examples are expressed through the new rhymes (FEDI 2001). The experimentation, hybridization and recoding of the system of lyric genres is one of the characteristics of later troubadours, which will consolidate among later poets. Thus, for instance, the recovery of the *vers* as the moral genre moral par excellence, simultaneously carried out by Cerverí and Riquier, fully consolidated in the 14th century, such as the hierarchy of most poetic precepts of the time shows (all the compositions of the *Leys*, the *Compendi* by Joan de Castellnou or Cornet's *Doctrinal*), where the *vers* raises to a privileged position, and overthrows first the canço and then the *sirventes*.¹⁹ The genre of the *dansa*, also renewed by Cerverí emulating French fashions, is also successful in the work of Peire de Ladils and the *Cançoneret de Ripoll*, for example.²⁰ Another important characteristic of Cerverí that we find again in Cornet and the *Leys* is the titling of some compositions, which is related to the hybridization of genres. Cerverí composed a *mig sirventes*, a *gelosesca* or a *peguesca*; Cornet a *saumesca*, a *corona*, a *trufa* and the abovementioned *versa*, and in the *Leys* we find *Desconortz de las donas*, *Cocirs* and *Porquiera*.²¹ The spirit of experimentation and creation of new forms is the result of the aesthetic values in rise and not of the imposition of the Consistory. This explains the fact that the names of some genres do not correspond the *Leys*: that is the case of Cornet's *chanso replicada* (among many other innovative forms that do not appear in the treatise),²² of Bertran de Santa Roscha's *canço dansa* and Huguet del Vallat's *chanso et dansa mesclat*, the latter awarded at the Toulousain contest.²³

Returning to the epistle of Cornet, the contents are, like its model, doctrinal. The gaps do not let us know all the topics covered, but the extant lines after the initial *salutatio*, hint at the topic of worldly vanity and the crisis of values. Cornet evokes the motivations of the wiseman for rejecting material wealth, of him who does not know how to follow his own advice—which can

¹⁹ On Cerverí's cultivation of verse, see CABRÉ 2011 and ASPERTI 2006.

²⁰ On the success of the *dansa* in the Crown of Aragon, see CABRÉ (2011: 205-10), RADAELLI (2007), AVENOZA (2009).

²¹ On the genre denominations of Cerverí, see CABRÉ (2001).

²² FEDI notes the non-declared influence of Cornet on the *Leys* (2011: 375). In contrast, the same form of Cornet's *chanso replicada* can be found again a century later in the treatises on the *Seconde Rétorique*, specifically in the *Art et science de rhétorique vulgaire*, under the name of "redoublée" or "couronnée" rhyme, and in the *Art de Rhétorique* by Jean Molinet, under the name of "rethorique à double queue" (LANGLOIS 1902). Therefore, these innovative forms will also be successful in *langue d'oïl*, far from the influence of the Toulousain Consistory.

²³ For the metric and rhyme structure of these compositions, different from one another despite the similarity of the rubric, see FEDI (2011), who wonders whether it is due to a lack of knowledge on the part of the compilers of the *Leys* or it is a novelty still not consolidated when the treatise is written.

be found in his other works, in Peire Cardenal, in Raimon de Castellnou (BELTRAN 1998), and in Cerverí (CABRÉ 2011)—of the powerful man who revels in acquiring knowledge more than in common sense, because he indulges in the wishes of the body, which “es mals”, more than in the other “bos e leylals”, that please common sense and good faith.²⁴ Then he makes a theoretical disquisition on knowledge and wisdom, where he deals with the influence of the stars on human nature and the need for education and common sense to guide the will and act properly, resuming the themes of the epistle of At de Mons to the Wise King and several scholastic topics, such as *sen* “sense”, “common sense, the faculty to perceive and assess the impressions reaching us through our senses”, and *calitat*, “the natural complexion of the individual”, that we will find again in Ausiàs March and which, in lyric appear for the first time in the 13th century, in the *Thezaur* by Peire de Corbian, Daude de Pradas, the *ensenhamen* by Sordello, At de Mons or the *Breviari d’Amors* by Matfre Ermengaut. Ultimately, the balance between nature, knowledge and understanding is what provides true wisdom:²⁵

Sens ve d’aytal razo
 Cum fay voluntatz bona.
 Certa calitatz dona,
 may que re, voluntat,
 pero segon vertat
 noyrimens en pot dar.
 Calitatz ve, so·m par,
 de costellacios,
 que fan layssus els tros
 los planetas movens,
 don fregz e cautz e vens,
 aygas e neus e glatz,
 escruyshes e clardatz
 parto si cum vezem;
 per q’om ditz qu’astrat em
 per lor, segon natura,
 mas leylals noyridura,
 sabers e dregz e sens
 nos podon certamens
 de mal astre gardar.

“Common sense comes from the reason provided by good will. A good quality is provided, more than by anything else, by the will, but in truth, education can also provide it. The quality comes, or so I believe, from the constellations [positions of the planets], which create the thunders up there [the order of angels in charge of moving the planets] when they set the planets in motion, which originate cold, heat and wind, water, snow and ice, thunder and clarity, and thus we see; for it is said that by nature we are determined by the planets. But fair education, knowledge and justice and sense, can certainly preserve us from any evil star.”

²⁴ In the words of At de Mons: “[Hom] a doble voler: | hom vol segon sazo | e vo[I] segon razo.” v. 1547-9. Quoted from the edition by Cigni (2012).

²⁵ See CIGNI (2003) and KELLY (2006) on the philosophical lexicon of At de Mons. On the use of these terms in Ausiàs March, see especially L. CABRÉ (1996).

After this digression, the recipient is ready to receive the teachings that master Cornet offers, thanks to his knowledge:

Quar dregz senhers capdela,
vos, cuy [ab] gran plazer
del mieu petit saber
vuelh un pauc demostrar,
me volhatz perdonar

“For justice guides the lords, thou, to whom with great pleasure I want to show a little bit of my knowledge, please do forgive me”

For Cornet, as a good wise man, has the moral duty of spreading his knowledge to edify others. In this case the lesson is about the *saber de trobar*, namely the art of composing lines, which three years before he had already spread in the *Doctrinal*. From here until the conclusion of the composition, he will deploy a kind of short grammar treatise to illustrate the troubadours:

Als trobayres vuelh far
reglas que per trobar
essenho romans fi

“I want to make rules for troubadours, that will teach the perfect vernacular language for the composition of poetry”

The combination of moral and rhetoric reflection that we will find again developed in the *Leys*, is not surprising, since it is part of the nature of sapiential literature cultivated by the predecessors of Cornet. In the composition addressed by At de Mons to the king of Castile he does not talk about rhetoric, but he does, however, in another composition, an *ensenhamen* for jongleurs (PC 309, V), in which moral and poetic rectitude coexist. Cerverí, in the piece entitled *pistola* (PC 434a, 2), which has the same goal, also establishes a link between morality and rhetoric (CABRÉ 2011: 69-70). Because the exercise of poetic composition, dictated by common sense, is morally beneficial and ennoble the individual. As Cornet claims in the *sirventes* he includes as an example in the *Doctrinal de trobar*:

Dels soptils trobadors,
don naish pretz e valors,
deu hom qui pot apendre
(v. 1-3)

“Everyone who can, must learn from wise troubadours, from whom worth and valour are born”

Perhaps the field of poetics is where the proliferation of the trends initiated by the troubadours of the 13th century is more evident, reaching a peak with the vast compendium of the *Leys*. The fact that Cornet indoctrinates on the *saber de trobar* shows, once again, that noblemen, such as the unknown recipient, still sponsor and cultivate poetry, along with the Toulousain Consistory.

So far, we could still think that the poetry of Cornet circulates outside the consistorial sphere, but the lines of the conclusion reveal the opposite, since the author directly thanked the seven troubadours of the Consistory for the education he has assiduously received:

Qui vol far bos dictatz
 deu saber so qu'ieu dic
 e del saber antic
 lo cors e la maniera,
 qu'ieu no puesc ges a tiera
 dire tot lo saber
 de trobar ni-l dever
 que tanh a bo romans,
 mas be·n saubra ·ii· tans
 ecenhar, si·m legues,
 don fau a Dieu merses
 ez als bos trobadors
 de Toloza, senhors
 del noble consistori,
 on yeu soen demori
 pel dig saber aprendre
 que·m fay ma Roza prendre
 sol per lies alegrar.
 No·u vuylh plus anojjar,
 may que Dieus vos ajut
 per la sua virtut
 e vos gart de peccar,
 e cant haurets pasar
 lo trebalh d'aquest mon
 al gaug de paradis,
 on es daport ab ris
 e vida molt ...osa.
 Senyors, dins en Tolosa
 son faytes les presens,
 l'any de ·m· e trecents
 e vint e set dessus.
 No us vulh re dire plus,
 q'eu vos hiray veser,
 se Deu vindr'a plaser.

“He who wants to compose beautiful writings should know what I say and the essence and the ways of ancient knowledge, because I cannot explain from top to bottom all the *saber de trobar*; or that which corresponds to a good language, but, if he reads me, he will know twice as much, for which I thank God and the good troubadours of Toulouse, lords of the noble Consistory, where I often stay to learn the aforesaid *saber*; which my Rose makes me do just to please her. I do not wish to annoy you any more, for God, by his virtue, will help you and preserves you from sin, and once you have endured the pains of this world [may He send you] to the jewel of paradise, where there is laughter and pleasure and a lifer very much ... Lord, these have been composed in Toulouse, in 1327. I will not say anything else about this, for I will go and see you if it pleases God”

These lines, especially those in italics show the coexistence of the Consistory and the court, and particularly demonstrate the educational function of the cenacle of Toulouse.

4. Conclusions

In the introduction we set out to review a number of topics that have hampered the study of the first post-troubadour poetry and have relegated it almost to oblivion. To redirect the discourse spread by most critics it is necessary to rethink the notion of the Consistory of Toulouse and focus on the extant works to understand the poetry of time on the basis of their analysis. Therefore, we vindicate the role of Ramon de Cornet and other contemporary poets for the description of the uses and literary tastes of the period that link troubadour poetry to the predecessors of Ausiàs March.

To illustrate the scope of the Consistory of Toulouse and some of the features of the poetry of the 14th century we have used Cornet's epistle "Al noble cavalier". The testimony of this piece belies the three assumptions that were often attributed to the Consistory. First, we have seen that it is a mistake to reduce all the lyric poetry of the 14th century to contest poetry, for the extant works show that poetry was cultivated far beyond the scope of the competition, and its links with nobility, still interested, to a greater or less extent, in the poetic exercise. The Consistory is a main focus of sponsorship of Occitan poetry, along with the courts and part of the clergy, and, therefore, does not replace the role formerly assumed by such courts, but acts along with them, assuming an educational and pedagogic function in the vernacular language.

Second, this institution does not intend to revitalize the ancient splendour of troubadour poetry which was considered finished, basically for three reasons: a) its main purpose is the glorification of the poetic exercise, conceived as a gay science or knowledge, and its learning in a centre that tries to emulate the university. b) Troubadour poetry is not dead, but still alive, although it has evolved in its forms and content to suit the fashion of its time. c) The poetry the Consistory aims to institutionalize is not that of the golden age of troubadours, but the most recent one, the new poetry, rooted in the late 13th century troubadours.

Third, the Consistory does not impose a religious theme and moral, or a contrived way to coerce "creative freedom", but these constraints impose themselves because they respond to major trends of the poetry of the 14th century beyond the Occitan cultural area. Therefore, the poetic fruits born from this period do not respond to a declining or outdated aesthetic, but to the fashion spread throughout late medieval Europe: the formal richness, ambiguity, obscurity or conceptual indoctrination are precisely aesthetic values on the rise (OLIVELLA 2006, KELLY 2005, HUCHET 1990).

In short, the poetry of mid-14th century is a natural evolution of the last trends of troubadour poetry; on the one hand, formal experimentation proliferates and excels, and, on the other, there

is a wish to instruct in the field of morality, religion, regulations and grammar and rhetoric; a wish related to the access of the laity access to culture and the vernacularization of knowledge throughout the West, especially from the 13th century onwards. In this context, the figure of Ramon de Cornet emerges, filled with meaning, from the eccentricity he had been associated with by most critics.

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