

PAST PARTICIPLES WITH ACTIVE MEANING:
AN INTERPRETATION OF TWO TROUBADOUR
PASSAGES (*BDT* 29.14, 39 AND 293.25, 67)

In his introduction to *Concordanze della lingua poetica italiana delle origini* (*Clpio*), d'Arco Silvio Avalle deals briefly with past participles with active meaning. His first citation is quite striking, as is also the manner of the reference, which brings together, by means of a *confer*, a grammatical study and a quotation from a poem (CLXXIV):

Participi passati con valore attivo (cfr. i “Participia perfecti aktiven Sinnes” nei *Vermischte Beiträge zur französischen Grammatik*³, I R., pp. 151–165 di A. Tobler, e il *disiato riso* del V dell’*Inferno*, dove *disiato* significa ‘desideroso’, ‘avido’, come *desirré*, citato da Tobler, «voll Verlangen»)¹ [fourteen examples taken from the *Clpio* corpus then follow].

Avalle takes for granted an interpretation which, to my knowledge, does not figure in any Dante commentary, whether ancient or modern, yet it is an interpretation which adds to the context and improves its meaning (the queen wishes to be kissed by Lancelot, just as, we may infer, Francesca wishes to be by Paolo), bringing it closer to its Arthurian source (where the queen draws a timid Lancelot to her lips).²

Though this passing and peremptory reference, however enlightening, does not fully satisfy the reader, there is no doubt that past participles with active meaning are fairly common in the Romance languages, especially in their earlier stages, and so Avalle’s hypothesis would not seem unfounded. Examples are given by Tobler for French, and Jensen for Occitan (1986, §§778–782). These authors mainly deal with participles that

1. Tobler’s examples: “‘au cheval abati le frain . . . , Laissa paistre de l’erbe, dont il est desirrés’, *God. Bouill.* 257; daher das Adverbium: ‘Mut desireement adès l’agarderont, Ne de lui a veoir saisier ne soi porunt’, *Poème mor* 445c” (I quote from Tobler 1902:149).
2. “Lors [Guinevere, Lancelot, and Galehaut] se traient tuit troi ansamble et font sanblant de conseilhier. Et la reine voit que li chevaliers n’an ose plus faire, si lo prant ele par lo menton, si lo baise devant Galehot assez longuement [. . .]” (Kennedy 1991–1993, I:894).

have taken on active meaning permanently; examples include Old French *apris* ‘experienced, informed’ or Occitan *auzat* ‘daring’. However, the use of past participles with active meaning would still seem to be possible in the modern Romance languages, as is the case for instance of colloquial Italian *navigato* ‘worldly wise’, a meaning first attested in 1819 (Leopardi). The older form *odorato* ‘fragrant’ (three occurrences in the fourteenth century, one of which in Petrarch) would seem to have had an exclusively literary usage and survives up to Leopardi’s *odorata ginestra* and beyond; but with all probability this is simply a Latinism, and indeed the term first appears with this meaning in Arrigo Simintendi’s translation (1333–1334) of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (“la vicinanza dell’ardente Sole ramorbido l’odorate cere, legami delle penne”: “rapidi vicinia solis / mollit odoratas, pennarum vincula, ceras,” VIII 225–226).³ Nevertheless, the Latinism is backed up by earlier vernacular usage: cf., apart from Avalle’s examples, the symmetrical case of *lo ’namorato dardo*, i.e. ‘love’s dart, amorous dart, causing love’ in the anonymous Siculo-Tuscan poem (ante 1300) *Come per diletanza* (PSs 49.12, 14, ed. Riccardo Gualdo).

The moderate productivity of the process of assigning active meaning to a past participle has no doubt brought about semantic hapaxes such as Dante’s *disiato*, if this means ‘desirous’, as I believe it does. An unquestionable example from Occitan is to be found in Peire Vidal’s song *Tant me platz*, where *meravelhatz motz*, vv. 13–14, most definitely means ‘marvelous words’ (*BdT* 364.48, 9–16; Avalle 1960, I:44):

E sapchatz, s’ieu fos amatz,
 que n’auziratz esmeratz
 chantaretz prezatz,
 qu’era que sui malmenatz,
 fas meravelhatz
 motz ab us sonetz dauratz,
 e no m’en val amistatz
 ni no chan mas de percatz.

There does not appear to be any other occurrence of *meravelhat*, in all its orthographical variants, with the meaning ‘marvelous’.

The possibility of identifying an active meaning in a past participle may lead to a new discussion of some difficult passages in the troubadours, such as the two I examine below.



The *tornada* of Arnaut Daniel’s sestina (*BdT* 29.14, vv. 36–39) has caused many a difficulty in its interpretation. The following is a synop-

3. I have used the database of the *Tesoro della lingua italiana delle origini* directed by Pietro Beltrami (<http://tlio.ovi.cnr.it>), and for the troubadours the *Com 2* (Ricketts 2005).

sis of the principal editions, both critical and non, with their respective translations:⁴

Bartsch:

Arnautz tramet son chantar d'oncl'e d'ongla,
ab grat de lieis que de sa verga l'arma,
son Desirat, qu'a pretz dins cambra intra.

[No translation]

Canello, Lavaud, Toja, Wilhelm, Riquer:

Arnautz tramet sa chansson d'ongla e d'oncle,	(d'oncle e d'ongla <i>Wilhelm</i>)
a grat de lieis que de sa verg'a l'arma,	(verga l'arma <i>Wilhelm</i> ; verj'a <i>Riquer</i>)
son Desirat, cui pretz en cambra intra.	(dins <i>Riquer</i>)

Arnaldo manda la sua canzone d'unghia e di zio, col permesso di colei che della sua verga ha l'anima, al suo Desirato, nella cui stanza il Pregio ripara (*Canello*);

Arnaut envoie sa chanson sur l'ongle e l'oncle, pour l'agrément de celle qui a l'âme inflexible de sa verge, à son ami Désiré, dont la réputation en (toute) chambre entre (*Lavaud*);

Arnaldo invia la sua canzone su *ongla e oncle* —per il piacere di lei che della sua verga ha l'anima—al suo “Desiderato,” la cui virtù in camera entra (*Toja*);

Arnaut sends his song of Uncle-Nail for the pleasure of her who arms him with her rod, his Desired One, whose value enters into the chamber (*Wilhelm*);

Arnaut envía su cantar de uña y de tío, con el consentimiento de aquella que tiene el alma de su verga, a su Deseado, cuyo mérito entra en cámara (*Riquer*).

Perugi 1978:

Arnautz tramet son chantar d'ongl'e d'oncle
a grat de si qui de sa verja l'arma
son desirar, cui prez en chambra intra.

[Arnaut invia il suo canto d'unghia e di zio per il piacere di quella che della sua verga . . . (?)]

Perugi 1996:

Arnautz tramet son chantar d'ongla e d'oncle:
a grat de lei qui de sa verja l'arma
son desirar, c'a pres de chambra: intra.

[No translation]

4. Bartsch 1868, col. 136; Canello 1883:119; Lavaud 1910:114; Toja 1960:378; Perugi 1978, II:634, 1996:39; Wilhelm 1981:5; Eusebi 1995 [1984]:162; Perugi 1996:39; Riquer 1994:96. The *sestina's varia lectio* may be examined more easily in Eusebi 1982 than in the different critical apparati; for the *tornada* in particular see Canettieri 1996:178–185 and Barbiellini Amidei 2004. I previously suggested the hypothesis discussed here in Di Girolamo and Lee 1996:136, which has been accepted at least in part by Barbiellini Amidei (2004:467, 470 n.).

Eusebi:

Arnaut tramet son cantar d'ongl'e d'oncle
a Grant Desiei, qui de sa verj'a l'arma,
son cledisat qu'apres dins cambra intra.

[Arnaut invia la sua canzone d'unghia e di zio a Gran Desio, che della sua verga ha l'anima, canto contesto a graticcio che, appreso, in camera entra.]

Alternative reading proposed by Eusebi (for "chi trova azzardata la congettura"):

Arnaut tramet son cantar d'ongl'e d'oncle,
a grat de lieis qui de sa verj'a l'arma,
son Desirat qu'apres dins cambra intra.

[No translation]

From a Lachmannian point of view, shared or at least accepted by all these editors, each one of these textual reconstructions is fully justified and solidly based on a part of the tradition, except for Eusebi's conjectures *a Grant Desiei*] *a grat de lieis* (de si Perugi 1978) and *cledisat*] *desirat* (with the minority reading *desirar*, accepted by Perugi).

Canello's text, followed by others, has an acceptable meaning if *a grat de* is taken to mean "col permesso di" (Canello), "con el consentimiento de" (Riquer). This however rather stretches the prepositional locution which, like *per lo grat de*, can only mean 'for (someone's) pleasure, to (someone's) liking'.⁵ If this were the case, the *tornada* would refer to two addressees simultaneously, *lieis* and *Desirat* (the latter with unmarked or absolute dative function; see Jensen 1986, §§88–89), because it seems clear to me, contrary to what Eusebi believes (see below), that 'sends his song for her pleasure' is equivalent to 'sends her his song for her pleasure'. In theory *lieis* and *son Desirat* could be one and the same, but it would be odd to use a *senhal* to illustrate a pronoun. There is no point, moreover, in going back to the old discussion about whether *Desirat* is a *senhal* for Bertran de Born (see Toja 1960:382–383 and Perugi 1978, II:644).

In 1978, Perugi produces a text which he fails to translate completely and in effect rejects Canello's reading, maintained by nearly all the other editors, *verg'a l'arma* (*verga l'arma*, with *arma* as a verb, was Bartsch's reading, followed by Wilhelm and most recently by Barbiellini Amidei⁶). The

5. Cf. for example Pons de la Garda: "Mandat m'es que no-m recreia / de cantar ni de solatz; / e quar plus soven no fatz / chansos, m'o tenon a mal / sill a cui chans e deportz abelis; / et a grat de sos amis / deu hom far, com que l'en prenda" (*BdT* 377.4, 6–7; Frank 1949:300); Aimeric de Peguilhan: "adonças pren veray'amors nasquensa / d'aisso que l'huelh fan al cor agradar, / qu'estiers no pot naysser ni comensar; / mas per lo grat dels tres nays e comensa" (*BdT* 10.8, 33–36; Shepard and Chambers 1950:57); Cerveri de Girona: "Al Rey lais Dieus so que vol comensar / ab grat de luy, honran s'i, affinar" (*BdT* 434.16, 27–28; Riquer 1947:311).

6. For the sake of completeness, this is the text and translation proposed by Barbiellini Amidei: "Arnaut tramet son cantar d'ongl'e d'oncle, / a grat de lieis qui de sa verja l'arma, / son desirat, qu'a pretz en cambra intra"; "Arnaut invia la sua canzone d'unghia e di zio per il piacere di colei che lo arma della sua verga, canzone desiderata

text offered by Perugi in 1996, anticipating a new edition of the troubadour, presents a much more dynamic syntax compared to earlier editions. Since he gives no translation or explanatory notes, the reader must be content with the following observations:

[. . .] il ‘desiderio’ o *voler* personificato è il protagonista di tutto il componimento: è lui che, sulla scorta di un motivo lancillottiano, ha finalmente la possibilità di entrare in camera in luogo e in rappresentanza del ‘corpo’ dell’autore. Ed anche nel congedo, se l’abbiamo ben interpretato, il *desirar* — separato ormai dal proprio soggetto (vv. 29–30)— indugia ancora sulla soglia della camera: è soltanto per la propria canzone che Arnaut chiede il permesso di entrare. (30)

This would seem to imply that desire enters the chamber: it lingers on the threshold, while the song in turn might be able to enter.

A similar interpretation was put forward by Eusebi in 1984:

[. . .] il vero soggetto dell’ingresso nella *cambra*, alla fine dello stupendo congegno montato da Arnaut —a meno che si dubiti proprio qui della consapevolezza del trovatore— non sarà *Desirat*, né tanto meno il suo *pretz*: vero soggetto è il *cantar*, il *son* . . . *qu’après dins cambra intra*, ‘la canzone che appresa in camera entra’. (154)

According to Eusebi, however, the solution he proposes for v. 39 with *son* as a noun, ‘song’, leads to a situation where “*tramet* resta senza complemento di termine, complemento che la locuzione avverbiale [rather: prepositional] *a grat de liei* [not translated] non riesce a surrogare” (155). This gives rise to the two weighty editorial conjectures, *a Grant Desiei*, which creates a new troubadour *senhal*, and *cledisat*, ‘intertwined’, qualifying *son*. On the other hand, *qu’après*, instead of an incongruous *cui pretz*, constitutes a singular coincidence, despite a different segmentation and meaning, with Perugi’s new edition, *c’a pres*.

It is to Eusebi’s credit to have seen in the song itself, in the *son*, the subject of the final *intra*: only the song, memorized by the addressee, may enter the chamber from which the lover is banned. The song is the ‘song of desire’. If *desirat* is understood as a past participle with active meaning, ‘of desire, desirous, full of desire’, then proof will be had of what all readers of the *sestina* have always believed and of what Arnaut Daniel actually said. The text and the interpretation which I propose are the following:

Arnaut tramet son chantar d’ongla e d’oncle
a grat de liei, qui de sa verj’a l’arma,
son desirat qu’après dins chambra intra.

[Arnaut sends his song of nail and uncle for the pleasure of she who possesses the soul of his rod, song of desire which, once learned, enters the chamber.]

[but on p. 467: canto desiderato —ma anche del desiderio—] che con valore entra in camera” (2004:473).



In *Estornel, cueill ta volada* (BdT 293.25), Marcabru describes a fickle, flippant lady, who “De mil amix es cazada / e de mil senhors amia” (vv. 58–59), ‘is kept by a thousand lovers and is the lover of a thousand lords’. Sexual double entendres increase as the poem proceeds, ending with the use of strong words, though still in a metaphorical context. This is the case of vv. 67–69:

De fin’amor dezirada
a una flor pic-vairada
plus qued autruna pazuada.⁷

The *flor pic-vairada* is “a euphemism for the female *putenda* [also alluded to before in vv. 61–62, when it is said that ‘she always leaves her door, *l’us*, open’], and its variegated colour here indicates that her love is impure and not to be trusted.” (Harvey 1989:180). However, alongside the euphemism, the term *pauzada*, ‘whore’, appears.⁸ Marcabru presents a lady who has transformed the model of courtly love into a purely carnal affair, yet she pretends to act according to that model: *fin’amor*, then, remains a strident element of contrast.

What follows are the editors’ translations of the lines:

Dejeanne:

De fin’amor dezirada
az una flor pic vairada
plus que d’autruna pazuada.
De noble amour désiré, elle a une fleur bigarrée mieux placée que chez toute autre.

Riquer (following Dejeanne’s text):

Tiene una flor multicolor de leal amor deseado más que cualquier otra prostituta.

Gaunt, Harvey, and Paterson (2000):

Of perfect yearned-for love she has a more mottled flower than any other whore.

If the meaning of *flor* suggested by Harvey is accepted (but even a less marked interpretation would not alter things), what does ‘Of perfect yearned-for love she has a more mottled flower etc.’ mean? Besides the improbable syntax, if *de fin’amor dezirada* qualifies *flor*, the troubadour would be saying that no other whore has a more mottled flower of perfect yearned-for love than this particular lady, but it is not clear what the rela-

7. Gaunt, Harvey, and Paterson 2000:343; the reader is referred to their detailed commentary. Previous editions are Dejeanne 1909:121 and Riquer 1975, I:211 (Dejeanne’s text with some changes).

8. Roncaglia 1957:49. Dejeanne did not grasp the meaning of *pauzada*, registered in vol. VI (1910) of Levy’s *Provenzalisches Supplement-Wörterbuch*, s.v. *pauzar*, n. 3, “sich preisgeben.”

tionship is between *fin'amor* and whores. Here, too, I believe that the lady's pretended, false aspiration to higher ideals of behavior is sarcastically opposed to a much baser reality. Thus, I would suggest that *dezirada*, with active meaning, 'desirous', does not refer to *fin'amor* but to the subject, the woman. I would place a comma at the end of v. 67 and translate:

De fin'amor dezirada,
 a una flor pic-vairada
 plus qued autruna pazada.
 Longing for perfect love, she has a more mottled flower than any other
 whore.

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Abbreviations

<i>BdT</i>	Pillet-Carstens 1933
<i>Clpio</i>	Avalle 1992
<i>PSs</i>	Antonelli et al. In press

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