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Narrative cohesion through text and material: texts, co-texts and the manuscript tradition surrounding Leonardo Bruni's *Seleuco*

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The novella of *Seleuco*, attributed to Leonardo Bruni, survives in sixty manuscripts from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Focusing on the textual and material composition of those manuscripts, this paper explores the potential for a broadly-based analysis of the relationships between texts, materials, and wider cultural narratives about reading and writing using two forms of narrative theory. The paper first introduces the varied configurations of the manuscripts and examines the ways in which those configurations prompt or influence particular approaches to textuality, through the narrative representations of particular situations of text creation, use, and transmission, which are themselves seen through the lens of a sociological narrative theory. Turning away from the contents of the text to some extent, then, it goes on to examine, using two examples, how visual and codicological elements can disrupt the construction of narratives of textuality. The groundwork for the paper has been laid by existing studies on the textual tradition of the novella and the manuscripts that contain it and on the attribution of the novella. The present paper, then, proposes a new way of reflecting on the text and the objects that contain it, integrating manuscript studies and book historical approaches with narrative theory.

KEYWORDS: Bruni, manuscript studies, narrative theory, descriptive bibliography, materiality, textuality

This paper examines the potential for using sociological narrative theory alongside narratology in order to explore the intersections between text content and material form in a set of medieval manuscripts, an issue that is also relevant in other areas of textual transmission and other eras. In particular, it explores how manuscripts reinforce or participate in public narratives of reading and textual transmission: the broad understandings that help us organise and make sense of social and cultural practices among people, objects, and institutions. In order to do so, I take a single text with a relatively well-documented tradition, the Italian novella of Seleuco attributed to Leonardo Bruni, and look at the ways in which that text and several frequent co-texts can be interpreted through textual and material forms of analysis. These interpretations rely on logical and material connections that inform what I refer to as “narrative cohesion”, and which then contribute to wider narratives beyond the immediate texts and manuscripts. In particular, it looks at moments in which the cohesion of the text and material are at odds, complicating the move from textual narratives to public narratives.

I begin by introducing the idea of narrative cohesion, before viewing the construction of particular narratives around textuality from the perspective of the contents of the texts. This analysis begins with the text of the novella itself, and the nature of several other texts that often appear alongside it as related documents in the manuscripts. The relationship and arrangement of these texts in the manuscripts is taken as the foundation for an exploration of narrative framing and temporality that have implications for the construction of the implied narrators and audiences as well as the notion of interpretive communities. I then examine how codicological elements not traditionally considered to be narrative in themselves can contribute to the maintenance or contestation of the broader narratives established by the contents. Throughout I draw on existing work in cataloguing and critical editing, both related directly to the tradition of

Bruni's 'Seleuco' and related to more general reflections on manuscript copying and assembly.

What I refer to as 'narrative cohesion' should be understood as a characteristic of texts (or combinations of texts), including both textual features and material features, that creates narrative and interpreting links within and among texts. It is related to linguistic cohesion, the features that allow a reader to connect different parts of a text (through substitution, pronoun use, rewording, etc.), thus creating "texture" within the text.¹ Narrative cohesion may include tools of linguistic cohesion to create narrative within a text, but can also function across texts to create intertextuality and cross-textual narrative lines.

It is important to note here that for the purposes of this analysis, it is not primarily the real practices of manuscript assembly, copying, commissioning, or reading that are under analysis, but the narratively constructed visions of them; the behavioural habitat and community of the 'implied reader' of narratology. The analysis is not intended to illuminate so much the historical reality surrounding the manuscripts as the narrative realities constructed within them through textual and material means, regarding these practices. Furthermore, although the analysis here progresses from the texts to these broader communities and narratives, this is not intended to imply that the construction of narratives is so clearly directional, or that these particular texts are somehow responsible for what are very often topoi of literature: pre-existing narrative forms into which these texts fit and which they help to perpetuate. Rather, the movement from the texts and manuscripts toward these larger narratives is intended to highlight the utility of this particular method of analysis, combining textual and bibliographical analysis with recent thought on narrative theory. Beginning from the novella and working through the immediately

¹ See M.A.K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (London: Longman, 1976).

surrounding co-texts towards wider narratives is thus a methodological rather than an ontological choice.

The novella of Seleuco is a vernacular retelling of a tale from Plutarch's life of Demetrius.² Martelli argues that the attribution of the tale to Bruni is incorrect, based on certain details that differ from Plutarch's version to the vernacular text, including the name of the physician, Stratonica's heritage, and the identity of Seleuco. As Bruni was a scholar of Latin and Greek, and a translator and admirer of Plutarch in particular, Martelli concludes that it is highly unlikely that Bruni would have written a tale containing such banal and easily rectified errors. Martelli suggests that perhaps another writer heard Bruni tell the story in such a situation as is described in the frame, and then introduced the errors himself when writing down the story at a later date.³ The correctness of the attribution does not affect most of the argument here, although we will return to the possibility suggested by Martelli later in the analysis.

² Mario Martelli, 'Considerazioni sulla tradizione della novella spicciolata', *La novella italiana: Atti del Convegno di Caprarola, 19-24 settembre 1988* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1989), pp. 215-244 (p. 238-39). (Martelli 'Considerazioni', p. 240). See also Martelli, 'Il Seleuco, attribuito a Leonardo Bruni, fra storia ed elegia', *Favole Parabole Istorie: Le forme della scrittura novellistica dal medioevo al rinascimento. Atti del Convegno di Pisa 26-28 ottobre 1998*. Ed. Gabriella Albanese, Lucia Battaglia Ricci, and Rossella Bessi. (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2000), pp. 231-55.

³ Martelli, 'Considerazioni', 240. See also Martelli, 'Il Seleuco, attribuito a Leonardo Bruni, fra storia ed elegia', *Favole Parabole Istorie: Le forme della scrittura novellistica dal medioevo al rinascimento. Atti del Convegno di Pisa 26-28 ottobre 1998*. Ed. Gabriella Albanese, Lucia Battaglia Ricci, and Rossella Bessi. (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 2000), pp. 231-55.

The novella appears in sixty fifteenth- and sixteenth-century manuscripts,⁴ and in almost all cases is accompanied by a framing narrative.⁵ The frame describes how the narrator finds himself ‘in compagnia di piú gentili huomini e donne in una villa non molto di lungi da Firenze, nella quale si faceva convito e festa’.⁶ One of the women in this group reads aloud the story of Tancredi from the *Decameron*, and then another person, a man ‘di grande studio e greco et Latino e molto curioso delle Antiche storie’⁷ tells the tale itself. The tale of Seleuco is chosen

⁴ Nicoletta Marcelli, ‘Due nuovi testimoni della “Novella di Seleuco e Antioco”’, *Interpres*, 24 (2005), 201–14; and ‘La “Novella di Seleuco e Antioco.” Introduzione, testo e commento’, *Interpres*, 22 (2003), 7-183; both reprinted in Marcelli, *Eros, politica e religione nel Quattrocento. Cinque studi tra poesia e novellistica* (Manziana [Rome]: Vecchiarelli, 2010). The restriction of the date excludes two manuscripts catalogued by Marcelli, both Paris Bibliothèque Nationale: Collection Moreau 848 and lat. 17888, described as assembled by Philibert de la Mare in 1642 and 1653 respectively (Marcelli, ‘La “Novella”’, 71-72, sigla P¹ and P³). It also excludes one other manuscript, Florence Biblioteca Nazionale Central, Gino Capponi cod. 138, which Marcelli lists but does not catalogue, as it is not relevant to the creation of the stemma (Marcelli, ‘La “Novella”’, pp. 98-99), and which *Iter Italicum* dates to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Kristeller, Paul Oskar, *Iter Italicum I. Italy. Agrigento to Novara* (London: The Warburg Institute; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), p. 166).

⁵ The only two manuscripts in which at least the beginning of the novella is present without the frame are Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana 2960 (which Marcelli omits from her detailed catalogue as incomplete, see Marcelli, ‘La “Novella”’, p. 98); and Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana 761.

⁶ Leonardo Bruni, ‘Novella di Seleuco e Antioco’, in Marcelli ‘La “Novella”’, pp. 145-174, (p. 145). All quotations from the text of the novella and the frame are taken from Marcelli’s critical edition. Italian text is not translated, but translations are provided for the Latin, and are the author’s.

⁷ Bruni, pp. 148-49.

deliberately because in relation to the tale of Tancredi, it is described as ‘quasi per l’opposito’,⁸ and thus will brighten spirits dampened by Tancredi’s tragic story.⁹

Antioco, son of King Seleuco of Syria, falls in love with Stratonica, Seleuco’s new wife and thus Antioco’s step-mother. Antioco attempts to hide his love, knowing that it is inappropriate, and sinks into a decline that the physicians called to see him are unable to remedy. Finally, a doctor named Filippo, a friend of the King, realises that the source of Antioco’s illness is love, and further discovers that the object of this love is Stratonica. He goes to the King and first tests him by saying that it is Filippo’s own wife with whom Antioco is in love. The King asks Filippo to give up his wife for the life of Antioco, saying that he would himself give up Stratonica to save his son. Filippo then reveals that it is in fact Stratonica whom Antioco loves, and the King willingly divorces his wife and has her marry his son. Antioco regains his health, Stratonica eventually gives birth to a number of children, and the King, overjoyed with the result, continues to give thanks to the wise Filippo.¹⁰

⁸ Bruni, p. 149.

⁹ In the tale of Tancredi, taken from Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (Day IV, first story), Tancredi, Prince of Salerno, has a daughter, Ghismonda, who has been widowed while still young. Tancredi, who does not wish to part from her again, fails to have her remarry as he ought, and so she, young and desirous of amorous company, takes from her father’s court a lover, Guiscardo, whom she judges to be noble of spirit although he is not her social equal. When Tancredi finds out, he has Guiscardo killed and his heart presented to Ghismonda in a golden cup. Ghismonda laments the death of Guiscardo, then pours poison over the heart and drinks the poison from the cup. Tancredi repents his cruelty and has the two buried in a single grave, which, given his previous behaviour, is rather too little, too late.

¹⁰ Bruni, pp. 149-74.

The situation posited for the tale by the frame thus refers to the tale of Tancredi, but the actual text of ‘Tancredi’ is not included in the frame. In a number of manuscripts, however, this lack is compensated for by the inclusion one of two other texts alongside ‘Seleuco’ and its frame. In some, the tale of Tancredi, in Boccaccio’s Italian, is included; in others, the manuscripts contain Bruni’s Latin translation of Boccaccio’s ‘Tancredi’, along with a letter from Bruni to Bindaccio Ricasolano,¹¹ stating that the writer is sending to Bindaccio the translation he had requested (i.e. of Boccaccio’s ‘Tancredi’ into Latin) along with the ‘fabulam Seleuci et Antiochi filii’ (‘the tale of Seleuco and [his] son Antiochus’).

Some of the scholarly attention paid to the attribution of the tale progresses by identifying inconsistencies among this group of texts as well as divergences from the tradition of the tale of Seleuco itself.¹² The focus here, however, is on how the relationships between those texts, seen as a form of narrative cohesion, serve to construct particular interpretive paradigms through their textual and material attributes. Such paradigms correspond to some extent with what Muzerelle and Ornato call ‘informazioni di carattere ricorrente, implicitamente dotate di significato per la storia della cultura scritta’, referring to the importance of the composition of manuscript miscellanies, and in particular with reference to the ‘interrelazione fra la materialità del libro... e quella della molteplicità dei testi’.¹³ These paradigms can also be seen as part of the narrative

¹¹ The text of this letter is available in Marcelli, ‘La “Novella”’, p. 129.

¹² See for example Martelli, ‘Considerazioni’; Martelli, ‘Il *Seleuco*’; Marcelli, ‘La “Novella”’, p. 138; and Letterio di Francia, *Novellistica* (Milan: Vallardi, 1924), p. 323. See also note 2 above.

¹³ Denis Muzerelle and Ezio Ornato, ‘La terza dimensione del libro: Aspetti codicologici della pluritestualità’, *Il Codice miscellaneo: Tipologie e funzioni. Atti del Convegno internazionale*

construction of what Fish referred to as ‘interpretive communities’, by showing how the agents of manuscript transmission (copyists, commissioners, and readers) contribute to narrative and interpretive frameworks alongside the textual cues to interpretation.¹⁴ An analysis of the textual composition of the Seleuco tradition can help to illustrate how the textual and material decisions made regarding the manuscripts (whether by copyists or commissioners) in particular are able, through their engagement with wider public narratives about text, to ‘activate’ and ‘constitute’ these communities, to use Gumbrecht’s terms.¹⁵ The communities themselves, as well as the behaviours in which they engage regarding texts, are, I would suggest, visible in terms of sociological narrative theory.

We return first, however, to the narrative cohesion among the texts. The connection between interpretation and transmission is almost made explicit in the Latin letter, in which Bruni entrusts his two texts (the Latin Tancredi and the Italian Seleuco) to Bindaccio Ricasoli. Bruni links Ricasoli’s reception of the text to its future transmission, writing ‘Tu igitur eas leges ceterisque legendi copiam facies, si modo tibi digne videbuntur que in manus exeant aliorum’ (‘You will therefore read them and will make a copy of both tales, if they seem to you worthy to

Cassino 14-17 maggio 2003. Ed. Edoardo Crisci and Oronzo Pecere. Special issue of *Segno e testo*, 2 (2004), pp. 43-74 (pp. 44-45).

¹⁴ Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980). For the critique that Fish did not in fact explain how such communities might come into being, see for example Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*. 25th anniversary edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), 125; and Linda Brodkey, *Academic Writing as a Social Practice* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), p. 93.

¹⁵ Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *The Powers of Philology* (Urbana and Chicago: The University of Illinois Press, 2003), p. 32.

go into the hands of others’).¹⁶ Although this is a relatively standard topos for dedicatory letters, it is one that functions by creating an image of a reading and reception context for the texts and designating expected behaviours and reactions to texts. Furthermore, in the practical reality of transmission, Ricasoli’s anticipated judgment of the worthiness of the texts for future transmission is potentially one aspect of their tradition. Similar interpretive judgements, not mentioned in the letter, on the part of the various scribes and copyists who created the various manuscripts, or patrons who commissioned them, involve not just the individual moral worthiness of the tales, but the appropriateness or narrative logics that might connect them together.

Marcelli examines the manuscripts that contain what she refers to as the Latin and vernacular diptychs: the combinations, in order, of either the Latin ‘Tancredi’ (prefaced by the letter) and the Italian ‘Seleuco’, or the Italian ‘Tancredi’ followed by the Italian ‘Seleuco’.¹⁷ She observes that the tradition of these diptychs is not isolated in any particular part of the stemma, and that thus it appears that they are created not simply through copying (or commissioning copies) but through a particular desire to assemble logically connected texts.¹⁸

¹⁶ Quoted in Martelli, ‘Considerazioni’, p. 216. This text is also available in Martelli, ‘Il *Seleuco*’, p. 250.

¹⁷ Manuscripts B¹, L, La¹, M, Na, and Sa contain the Latin ‘Tancredi’ and the letter with ‘Seleuco’; manuscripts H², La³, and Si¹ contain the Italian ‘Tancredi’ with ‘Seleuco’. See Appendix A for a list of the sigla from Marcelli (‘La “Novella”’). Appendix B contains a list of which manuscripts contain the particular configurations, as well as information about the order of the texts, and which manuscripts have been viewed by the author. Appendix C contains an indicative stemma of the manuscripts.

¹⁸ ‘Dunque, non sarebbe illogico ipotizzare che la dinamica che portò questi copisti a ricomporre un dittico tutto volgare sia stata la stessa che spinse i sei, di cui si è parlato nel primo

The logical connection that is expressed in the contents of manuscripts can be both thematic and explicitly narrative. In studies on manuscript miscellanies, a category that does include some of the *Seleuco* manuscripts, the thematic is often foregrounded. In the context of the Renaissance Italian novella, and of Boccaccio's *Decameron* in particular, Daniels discusses thematically organised or selected manuscript miscellanies as well, including some of those discussed here, but with a focus on the construction of Boccaccio as an author, and on the literary realities surrounding copying and commissioning the manuscripts.¹⁹ Of course, the intentionality of such thematic organisation can always be debated. Gibson notes with regard to editing miscellanies that the process of assembly of miscellanies is significant, with such variations as non-seriatim copying and the presence of multiple hands challenging simple analyses of coherent thematic intent on the part of the copyist or owner.²⁰

The composition of the manuscripts in which the novella of Seleuco is found can certainly bear such analysis. Hankins, for example, interprets 'Seleuco' alongside a number of other works by Bruni – the *Vite di Dante e Petrarca*, the *Historiarum florentini populi* (History of the Florentine People) and its *volgarizzamento* by Donato Acciaiuoli, and Bruni's political orations – as suggesting Bruni's commitment to a form of civic humanism and as showing the

paragrafo, a ricomporlo, questa volta però nella sua forma originale' (Marcelli, 'Appunti', p. 36).

¹⁹ Rhianon Daniels, *Boccaccio and the Book* (London: LEGENDA, 2009), particularly pp. 88-95.

²⁰ Jonathan Gibson, 'Synchrony and Process: Editing Manuscript Miscellanies', *Studies in English Literature*, 52.1 (2012): 85-100. Although Gibson's work is with English miscellanies, this general observation about their assembly is clearly applicable beyond England.

inappropriateness of passion in civil society.²¹ The *Vite* and a number of the orazioni appear frequently in the manuscripts along with ‘Seleuco’, and surely many of the other works that also appear in these manuscripts – histories, orations, letters – could also fit this thematic category. Marcelli observes that the *novella* appears to be included in its manuscripts as ‘un *exemplum* e, segnatamente, un *exemplum liberalitatis*’;²² this comment is based on the thematic analysis of the manuscripts that contain ‘Seleuco’. Kaborycha interprets the tale as fitting variously into exemplary frameworks of moral behaviour, good manners, and ‘bel parlare’ as well as connecting to popular understandings of health and sexuality.²³ The combination of the two tales can also be read in the same light as early modern debates on love (drawing from the classics) or on the strictness of parents.²⁴ These wider issues of selection and inclusion within the

²¹ James Hankins, ‘Humanism in the Vernacular: The case of Leonardo Bruni’, *Humanism and Creativity in the Renaissance: Essays in Honor of Ronald G. Witt*, ed. Christopher Celenza and Kenneth Gouwens (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), pp. 11-29. A slightly revised version of this chapter appears as Hankins, ‘The Popularization of Humanism in the Fifteenth Century: The writings of Leonardo Bruni in Latin and the vernacular’, *Language and Cultural Change: Aspects of the Study and Use of Language in the Later Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Lodi Nauta (Leuven, Paris, Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006) pp. 133-147 (pp. 135-140).

²² Marcelli, ‘La “Novella”’, p. 41.

²³ Lisa Kaborycha. *Copying Culture: Fifteenth-Century Florentines and Their Zibaldoni* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of California Berkeley, 2006.)

²⁴ On reading the comic/tragic pairing of ‘Tancredi’ and ‘Seleuco’ in this light, see Pauline Pionchon, ‘Style, Matière et Morale Tragiques dans un Diptyque de Nouvelles Attribué à Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444)’, *Cahiers d’études italiennes*, 19 (2014), 29-43 (p. 30). On such an interpretation of Giannozzo Manetti’s treatment of the same pair of tales, see Timothy Kircher, ‘Alberti in Boccaccio’s Garden: After-dinner thoughts on moral philosophy’,

manuscripts can certainly be analysed within a similar framework, but for the purposes of this article, I focus on ‘Seleuco’ and the texts most immediately accompanying it.

Although we can talk about the combinations of ‘Seleuco’ listed above as thematic, we can also describe them as being narrative, as we began to see above with the Latin diptych. Using a structural understanding of narrative to examine the texts that make up these groupings,²⁵ as well as a broader formulation of narrative as a tool for the social construction of identity by Somers and Gibson,²⁶ these combinations can be viewed in a few different ways. First, from the perspective of narratology, the texts themselves are each narrative in a traditional sense, containing individual and distinct events organised through written language. From a structural perspective, it is possible to assign terms to each of the texts in relation to the story of ‘Seleuco’: the Latin letter is a type of paratext; the introduction beginning ‘Non sono molti anni passati’ is an embedding text where the frame is not closed after the embedded text;²⁷ the Italian ‘Tancredi’ in combination with ‘Seleuco’ can be seen as an example of Genette’s idea of

Humanism and Creativity in the Renaissance: Essays in Honor of Ronald G. Witt, ed.

Christopher Celenza and Kenneth Gouwens (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), pp. 171-95, (p. 179).

²⁵ What I am describing as a structural understanding of narrative is also known as ‘narratology’ (cf. Monika Fludernik, ‘Histories of Narrative Theory (II): From Structuralism to the Present’, *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 36-59 (p. 37).

²⁶ Margaret R. Somers and Gloria D. Gibson, ‘Reclaiming the Epistemological “Other”’: Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity’, in Craig Calhoun (ed.) *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* (Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 37-99 (p. 57-63).

²⁷ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: An Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd edition, trans. Christine van Boheemen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985/2009), p. 57.

repeated narrative,²⁸ an intertext, or a piece of metalepsis,²⁹ in that it quotes what is later narrated in the frame as being read. The Latin ‘Tancredi’ is a co-text that shares the paratextual letter. These structural distinctions allow for a variety of larger stories to be constructed through their combination and deployment. Reading them then as both individual texts in their own right and as related in particular ways to each other, specifically through the text of ‘Seleuco’, it is possible to see them as presenting narrative models of the construction and use of manuscripts.

The diptychs constitute coherent narratives in the sense of presenting an identifiable plot in which the order of the texts corresponds to some perceived chronology of their contents. It is this characteristic that is recognised by Marcelli when she excludes from her listing of the Latin and vernacular diptychs those manuscripts in which the tales are reported either in the ‘opposite’ order (with ‘Seleuco’ before either version of ‘Tancredi’) or with additional texts between the two.³⁰ The organisation of the Latin diptych is governed by the Latin letter, which describes its co-texts and the narrative action that joins them together: ‘Itaque nunc tandem eam fabulam... ad te mitto; et... aliam de meo adiunxi fabulam, Seleuci et Antiochi filii’ (‘Therefore I now finally send you that tale [‘Tancredi’]; and... I have added another of my own, the tale of Seleuco and [his] son Antioco’).³¹ The sending of the texts together, as described in the letter, is a narrative about their transmission, in addition to the narratives contained in each tale.

²⁸ Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 113-17.

²⁹ Genette, pp. 227-43.

³⁰ See Appendix B for details of the manuscripts, including the order of texts.

³¹ Quoted in Martelli, ‘Considerazioni’, 216.

Similarly, the placement of the Italian ‘Tancredi’ before ‘Seleuco’ responds to a textual prompt, in this case from the frame of the tale of Seleuco, which describes a *locus amoenus* in which one of the participants reads aloud the story of Tancredi:

fu dal signor della villa tratto fuore per ispazzo di quelle donne uno libro chiamato *Le centonovelle*, composto dallo eccellente poeta Giovanni Boccacci; e, aperto il libro, una di loro, giovane leggiadra e molto piacevole, cominciò a leggere e a caso gli venne innanzi la novella di Sigismonda figliuola di Tancredi.³²

In this case, the framing is not epistolary, recounting the presentation and reception of text read aloud rather than documenting the placement of the written texts together. However, as Marcelli notes, the choice to create the vernacular diptych serves to ‘ricreare, per così dire, visivamente e sulla carta quanto narrato nel proemio del *Seleuco*’.³³

Seen from the perspective of the narrative theory proposed by Somers and Gibson, these individual texts and their combinations participate in broader narratives focused on identity and literary participation, specifically the identities of producers and consumers of written and oral texts and the ways in which they interact with each other and with the texts. Somers and Gibson identify four main types of narrative: ontological narratives; public narratives; conceptual narratives; and metanarratives.³⁴ The first category refers to those narratives that are used by individuals in the process of constructing the self and embedding that identity in narrative. This category has also subsequently been referred to as ‘personal narratives’, which I adopt here as

³² Bruni, pp. 146-47.

³³ Marcelli, ‘Appunti’, p. 36.

³⁴ Somers and Gibson, pp. 60-63.

the idea of narratives as ontological can actually apply to any of these types.³⁵ The second, public narratives, moves to a level above the individual to deal with ‘narratives attached to cultural and institutional frameworks... [and] to intersubjective networks or institutions’.³⁶ Conceptual narratives are those that are constructed primarily by researchers for the purpose of explaining and conceptualising personal and public narratives as well as explaining the forces that surround them. Finally, metanarratives, for Somers and Gibson, can be equated to the ‘master-narratives’ that underlie all other narratives and narrative constructions. I am primarily concerned here with personal and public narratives—the personal narratives relating to the activities of authors, scribes, readers, and audience members among others, and the public narratives that form a shared sense of these behaviours, the interactions between these constituted agents, and the idea of what literature is and how it works.

According to the narrative framework of Somers and Gibson, we can interpret the combinations of texts at hand not only in terms of their narrative (i.e. plot-bearing) contents, but as constituent parts both of the identities of various agents involved and of wider concepts of literary agency and audience. The Latin letter from Bruni to Ricasoli is a personal narrative, in which Bruni explains his own behaviour and frames his actions in terms of both his relationship with Ricasoli and the literary networks in which he sees himself as participating. Similarly, the framing introduction to ‘Seleuco’ constitutes a kind of personal narrative of the narrator and his or her role within the social literary system, although potentially fictional. The personal

³⁵ See Mona Baker, *Translation and Conflict: A Narrative Account* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 28.

³⁶ Somers and Gibson, p. 62.

narratives thus constructed are not only meaningful at a personal ontological level, however; they are meaningful to others in the system as well and as part of broader public narratives about society, literature, and reading. Each grouping of texts, the circulation of that group, and the recomposition of that group in other manuscripts can be seen as highlighting the particular modes of reading and modes of transmission, that is, particular ways of existing within the literary system that are not solely personal, but interpersonal.

That shared meaning, then, contributes to the reproduction of those narratives in later manuscripts, participating in wider narratives of events and agents in that system that circulate and can be drawn upon by various members of the community. In their capacity as public narratives, the groupings focus attention on the wider questions of how texts move, and how participants (writers, readers, copyists, speakers, audiences) might behave. In this sense, the assembly of a manuscript is constitutive of experience in several ways: by narratively describing it, by mimicking it (reproducing the structures that are suggested by the logic of the contents), and by forming part of the public narratives that speak to experiences of literature, in addition to potentially reflecting the compiler's experience, as Kent has suggested.³⁷

These public narratives about the function and use of texts and about the behaviours of participants in textual transmission are reflected not only in the content of the texts but also in the construction and aesthetics of the manuscripts themselves. That is, the arrangement of the manuscript, as well as other features such as letter forms and ink colour, can contribute to or detract from the construction of these narratives in various ways, as well as highlighting the participation of other agents whose personal narratives may not be explicitly written into the

³⁷ Dale Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 71.

contents of the texts. The intersection of the content and the structure of a manuscript in terms of these broader narratives can also reveal dynamics that are not immediately obvious.

As mentioned above, the vernacular diptych recreates to a certain extent the experience of the audience of the frame, presenting first the Italian ‘Tancredi’ along with a description of how it came to be read in this particular context, and then the introduction and telling of the tale that follows it within the fictional frame. This organisation means that the reader, if they read in order, experience the tales in a way that is at least chronologically similar to the experience of the characters in the frame. There is, however, a slight disjunction in the form of metalepsis that is created by the reproduction of ‘Tancredi’ before the beginning of the frame in which the reading of that tale is described; for a more precise imitation of that experience, ‘Tancredi’ would be included within the frame of ‘Seleuco’, rather than separately and in advance. Of course, it is also possible that the manuscript containing both stories would itself have been used to read out loud from, thus re-creating the experience at a second level.

Even in reading, though, this metalepsis however does not significantly disrupt the sense of continuity or the near-chronological ordering of the two tales and the frame. In several manuscripts, the separation between the texts is not strongly marked visually in the *mise-en-page*, and thus the impact of the metalepsis is diminished; in La³ and Si¹, Marcelli notes that the tale of Seleuco starts on the same page as the end of the tale of Tancredi, and in the case of La³ in the same column.

In the case of the Latin diptych, instead, the recreation of the initial communication from Bruni to Ricasoli places the reader alongside Ricasoli as a further recipient of the written tale, or perhaps places the reader after Ricasoli as the reader of what Ricasoli has judged to be worthy and copied, as requested by Bruni in the letter. In this case, provided that the texts are placed in

diptych order (the letter, followed by the translation into Latin, followed by ‘Seleuco’), there is no discontinuity in the experience; the reader experiences the texts as Ricasoli would have (either reading through in order or skipping). Here, the aspect of transmission is foregrounded through the text, positioning both Bruni and Ricasoli explicitly as agents of transmission, in a way that acknowledges materiality but focuses on content.

In each case, a form of causal emplotment—that is, the perception or creation of an understanding of narrative chronology and the relation between different events, or in this case different texts³⁸—helps produce a cohesive narrative that presents either the experience of the *locus amoenus* and the vernacular tradition of tale-telling or the humanist exchange of letters to the reader. Causal emplotment is a function not of any specific content of texts but of their juxtaposition and the resulting assumption of a connection between them. In the case of the texts at hand, this is strengthened by explicit intertextual references, but it is important to note that these references do not change depending on the combination of texts. That is, the frame of ‘Seleuco’ always refers to the recitation of the vernacular ‘Tancredi’, whether or not the Italian ‘Tancredi’ (or the Latin) is included in the same manuscript.

It is not only the diptychs recognised by Marcelli that actively construct such narratives around the text groupings, but also those manuscripts in which the grouping is either in a different order, or separated by other texts.³⁹ The narratives that they construct are partially distinct from the narratives of the *locus amoenus* and genteel storytelling and of the experience

³⁸ See Somers and Gibson, p. 59-60.

³⁹ These manuscripts are, for the combination out of diptych order of the Latin ‘Tancredi’ and ‘Seleuco’ Ba¹, M², N⁵, and R, and for the vernacular combination out of diptych order, D, R³, R⁴, and V³.

of humanist Latin/vernacular exchange, although even in a different order, the texts do still represent these narratives. At the same time, however, they may be seen to prioritise and foreground the experience of the reader or the copyist, in which the temporality of events can in fact be reversed on the page (or in the manuscript), or assembled according to other logics. The choice to include in a manuscript a text that has already been referred to constructs a new chronology organised not around the events of the frame or the reading order proposed by the Latin letter, but by the experience of reading itself, in which a reference can only be amplified or expanded after the reading has taken place, and not before. Non-diptych arrangements can thus be seen as presenting a narrative of the process of reading and copying itself, in which the temporal rules of the text are those of the external consumer and producer, rather than those of the characters or historical people represented within the text. These audiences and interpretations (in a narrative context) are what Gumbrecht described as ‘activated and constituted’ by the contents of the tales and texts themselves, but also by the arrangement of those texts in the manuscript.⁴⁰

The non-diptych arrangement is one aspect of manuscript construction that can then affect the promotion of particular narratives, either supporting the constructions that appear in the contents of the texts or contesting them to some extent. We now look at other aspects of the aesthetic presentation and the construction of manuscripts that affect the perception of the public narratives activated or maintained, supporting them in some ways but also contradicting them and emphasising disjunctions or discrepancies. Two further examples of different types of

⁴⁰ Again, this analysis could be carried out at a larger scale, including all of the texts in a manuscript, as well as at the level of this particular set of related texts, but the focus remains here on the latter.

manuscript elements show some of the ways in which they can counter the construction of and participation in public narratives that is promoted by the contents of these manuscripts. The first looks specifically at aesthetic elements in a text, and represents a relatively simple disruption of narrative continuity that is an amplification of a discontinuity already present in the content. The second is a more extended example showing further interaction between the physical structure of the manuscript, the text, and one additional text present in this manuscript.

In one of the two copies held in the Harvard University Houghton Library copied by Felice Feliciano (H²), the tale of Tancredi in Italian begins on fol. 11r, with an incipit in red, a space of two lines, and then the text, starting with the name ‘Tancredo’ taking up a full line width in blue capitals.⁴¹ The tale of ‘Seleuco’ begins on fol. 23v, immediately after the end of ‘Tancredi’, with a rubric in three colours taking up the full page. The text itself begins on fol. 24r, but the reference to the telling of the story of Tancredi comes only on fol. 24v. This again is the metalepsis noted above with regard to the Italian diptych: in the fiction, chronologically the telling of ‘Tancredi’ happens in the middle of the action of the frame described on 24v, but in the manuscript, the story (almost necessarily, as a ‘separate’ text) appears on earlier pages. The use of relatively prominent rubrics and initial words in the manuscript further delineates the boundaries between the tales, constructing a very clear visual discontinuity in addition to the chronological one of the narrative metalepsis.

⁴¹ This manuscript, which is included in the Houghton Library’s Printing and Graphic Arts Collection, features text in at least four colours and often with decorative use of letterforms and layout on the page. The manuscript can be viewed on the Harvard University Library website: [http://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:16110663\\$1i](http://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:16110663$1i). The other Harvard copy (H¹), also in Feliciano’s hand, does not include either version of ‘Tancredi’.

In addition, the decorative aspect of the manuscript presentation calls attention to the presence and significance of a figure whose personal narrative is not included as part of the texts: Feliciano himself, as the creator of the physical manuscript. One might hypothesise that Feliciano, a professional scribe with a particular interest in the aesthetics of script, in fact wanted readers to focus on the visual materiality of the object in hand and appreciate it.⁴² More than others, then, this manuscript uses the texts not only to point towards the public narratives of storytelling and textual transmission that are represented and partly reproduced in the presentation of the contents of the two stories, but to the physical realities of that transmission, albeit without explicitly discussing those realities or the narratives of design, aesthetics, or even economics that underlie them.

The second example, Ricc. 1121 (R⁴) from the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence, also contains both the novella of Seleuco and a copy of Boccaccio's Italian version of the story of Tancredi. In this case, 'Seleuco' immediately precedes 'Tancredi', so the imitative effect of recreating the order of the novelle and the experience of the storytelling in the *locus amoenus* is not accomplished.⁴³ The present configuration of the manuscript, however, is not enough to determine its potential contribution to the narrative surrounding the texts, as we will see.

⁴² This focuses on the experiences of the reader; the possibility certainly remains that the manuscript would have had an audience of listeners as well, who would not have been necessarily paying attention to the visual aspect.

⁴³ For this reason Marcelli does not include R⁴ in her discussion of the manuscripts containing the vernacular diptych ('Appunti', pp. 36-41).

As far as the tradition goes, or our knowledge of the manuscript itself, R⁴ is not particularly remarkable.⁴⁴ It does not hold a key position in the stemma, nor was it created by a recognised copyist. The structure of the manuscript, however, and some indications from a brief note that accompanies ‘Seleuco’ and ‘Tancredi’, suggest that it can serve as an example of the benefits of an interpretive framework including both the content of these texts and the structure of the manuscript. Such an analysis can prompt hypotheses about the copyists and audiences, and about the representation of audience experiences, leading as above to reflections on the connection between the manuscript as an object, its narrative contents, and the wider narratives that concern us. My approach here begins with a straightforward study of the manuscript itself.

The manuscript R⁴ contains 72 numbered folios, plus three front fly leaves and two rear. Marcelli identifies the hand as *mercantesca* but gives no particular indication as to the number of scribes contributing to the whole manuscript.⁴⁵ The novella of Seleuco appears on fols. 33r through 42r, and the novella of Tancredi, in Boccaccio’s Italian, appears on 43r-52v (see figures 1 and 2 for the first pages of the two tales). The collation proposed by Marcelli is I-III¹⁰ IV⁽¹²⁻¹⁾ V-VII¹⁰ – three gatherings of ten leaves each, one gathering of twelve with one removed, and then three more of ten – but this fails to account for the 72 folios actually present and seems to misrepresent quire IV. Based on my own examination of the manuscript, I propose a slight modification, to I-III¹⁰ IV⁽¹⁰⁺²⁾ V-VII¹⁰, where instead of a fourth gathering of twelve with one removed, we have a gathering of ten with two additional leaves in quire IV tipped in on the first

⁴⁴ It is catalogued in, among others, Vittore Branca, *Tradizione delle opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, v. 2 (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1958), p. 94; Hankins, *Repertorium Brunianum*, vol. 1 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1997), p. 71; and Marcelli (‘La “Novella”’, pp. 79-80).

⁴⁵ Marcelli, ‘La “Novella”’, p. 79.

page of the quire. In this construction, the novella of Seleuco begins on the first page of quire IV that constitutes the gathering of ten leaves, with the two tipped-in leaves completing the text that came just before (a copy of six orazioni by Stefano Porcari, 23r-32v). Quire v is composed solely of the text of ‘Tancredi’.⁴⁶

Figure 1: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana 1121, fol. 33r: Leonardo Bruni, ‘Seleuco’. Reprinted with permission from the Biblioteca Riccardiana; copying prohibited.

Figure 2: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana 1121, fol. 43r: Giovanni Boccaccio, ‘Tancredi’. Reprinted with permission from the Biblioteca Riccardiana; copying prohibited.

⁴⁶ The contents are as follows, identified by Marcelli (‘La “Novella”’, p. 80):

fols. 1r-22v, Leonardo Bruni, *Lives of Dante and Petrarch* (quires I-II and the first two folios of III);

fols. 23r-32v, Stefano Porcari, six orations (the last 8 folios of quire III and the two tipped-in leaves at the start of IV);

fols. 33r-42r, Leonardo Bruni, ‘Seleuco’ (quire IV);

fols. 43r-52v, Giovanni Boccaccio, ‘Tancredi’ (quire V);

fols. 53r-63r, Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron* X.10 (tale of Griselda) (quire VI and the recto of the first folio of VII);

fols. 63v-67r, Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron* intro to day III (continuing quire VII);

fol. 67r-v, Francesco Petrarca, extract from Donato Albanzani’s translation of *De viris illustribus* (continuing quire VII);

fols. 67v-71r, Gregorio Roverbella, frottola (continuing quire VII);

fols. 71v-72v, Matteo Griffoni, ‘Canzone alla vergine’ (completing quire VII).

Although some parts of the manuscript contain catchwords, as Marcelli notes,⁴⁷ there is no catchword at the end of the second tipped in page at the beginning of the fourth quire (32v) that leads to the rubric or incipit of the novella of Seleuco on 33r, nor is there one at the end of quire IV (42v) leading to ‘Tancredi’, although there is one at the end of quire III (30v) leading into the first of the tipped-in pages completing Porcari’s work. It appears that the catchwords in this manuscript are used to keep together individual texts when they extend over more than one quire (e.g. Porcari’s *Orazioni* between quire III and the tipped-in pages of quire IV, or within the story of Griselda from the *Decameron* between quires VI and VII), but not between different texts.

The binding is modern,⁴⁸ which combined with the collation and the evidence of the catchwords, means that it is possible that the quires containing ‘Seleuco’ and ‘Tancredi’ were originally intended to be in the opposite order, but were either reversed in the original binding (if they were written in unbound quires) or in a subsequent re-binding.

Complicating the idea that this is simply a matter of two quires re-bound out of order, however, is a short text that is included after the explicit of the tale of Seleuco (see fig. 3).⁴⁹ On fol. 42r, ‘Seleuco’ concludes with ‘Che tutto per contrario facendo Tancredi nostro Italiano/ et la figlia de vita/ et se medesimo dogni contentamento per ruuideçça de natura priuare in perpetuo sostenne. Fimis’, and then after an empty line begins the following text, which continues onto fol. 42v.

⁴⁷ Marcelli, ‘La “Novella”’, p. 80.

⁴⁸ See Vittore Branca, p. 94 and Marcelli, ‘La “Novella”’, p. 79.

⁴⁹ This comment is mentioned briefly by Branca (*Tradizione*, p. 94).

Debbe adonque ciascuno quanto puote | ornarse de ellegantissimi costumi: Imperó|che niuna
 cosa piu arse el <core> pecto | de la vagha et piaceuole Sigismonda | che li ornati costumi de
 lo Infelice Gui-|schardo/ Lassando ognialtro amore/ | che in richo / famoso/ o/ nobile giouene
 | trouare se potesse. He amaestra | anche la traducta nouella de Tancredi | che ipatri non
 debbono per suo commodo | o/ piacere/ retenere le figliole in casa | o/ vidue/ o/ polcelle
 chelle siano/ ultra | il debito tempo da desponsarsi. |

Debbessi anche ogni giouene poi che tale | historiette a nostra doctrina descripte | sonno/
 ritrarse quanto puote da li amorosi | laççi/ ne confidarsi chol callido et astuto | ingegno potere
 cellare quel che la Inuidiosa | fortuna ha deliberato cum amareçça et | dolore fare palese. |
 Sonno anche molti iquali credendossi valere | et occultare la Infamia/ oue hanno tro-|uato la
 moglie/ o/ figlia in piacere chol | suo amante/ cerchano torli la vita/ et | sonno cagione/ che
 quello che solamente | per doi/ o/ tre si sapea/ venga a noticia | de tutta la villa/ o/ cita., |
 Vnde mi pare che al Bochaççio et a | Leonardo siamo non pocho obligati/ che | cum
 piaceuoleçça ne habbiano porto | alchuni preclarissimi documenti/ iquali | se sauij saremo/
 daremo opera cum ogni | industria seguitarli. |
 Finis

The tale of Tancredi, in Italian, begins on the next recto, which as noted above is also the
 beginning of quire v.

Figure 3: Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana 1121, fol. 42r: The end of Leonardo Bruni, ‘Seleuco’,
 and beginning of the note ‘Debbe adonque ciascuno’. Reprinted with permission from the
 Biblioteca Riccardiana; copying prohibited.

Several things are noteworthy about this short text, in terms of both the construction of
 the manuscript (and of the manuscript stemma), and the interpretation of the diptych. The first is
 that the phrase ‘traducta nouella de Tancredi’ suggests that in fact, the comment looks not toward
 the pairing that exists in the manuscript’s current form, but in either another form or another
 manuscript that contains not the Italian ‘Tancredi’ but Bruni’s Latin translation. The phrase ‘He

amaestra anche la traducta nouella' is unfortunately unclear about whether the Latin translation should be expected to precede the note (and the copy of 'Seleuco' to which it is added) or to follow it. The overall sense of the comment, however, and the concluding remark about the 'preclarissimi documenti' that Boccaccio and Leonardo 'cum piaceuoleçça ne habbiano porto' seem to suggest that these documents should already have been seen by the reader.

That the comment itself suggests textually that it was intended to follow copies of the Latin 'Tancredi' and the 'Seleuco', however, does not mean of course that this was ever the case in R⁴ itself. The hand does appear to be the same through the Porcari *Orazioni*, the 'Seleuco' with this comment, and the Italian 'Tancredi'.⁵⁰ Given the lack of catchwords between texts, it is still of course possible that at some point, either in binding or re-binding, the quires were rearranged, and that the original intent of a single copyist was to present them in the diptych order with the Italian 'Tancredi' preceding 'Seleuco', along with the short commentary that was part of the 'Seleuco' manuscript being copied, but there is no particular evidence of a Latin 'Tancredi'. Without the word 'traducta' one might imagine even that the copyist was in fact the author of the comment, adding their own thoughts after copying the two texts, but given the discrepancy between the combination of texts as described in the comment and the combination appearing in the manuscript, this seems less likely.

The word 'traducta' thus gives a sense both of the distinction between the scribe and the author of the comment, and a sense of the temporality of the narrative, in which the narrative as

⁵⁰ Marcelli describes the hand as 'mercantesca' ('La "Novella"', p. 79). Kaborycha seems to imply that the copyist of Ricc. 1121 is the author of this text (*Copying Cultures*, pp. 115, 135, 329, 334). Her description of the manuscript in Part II of the thesis is very brief, and does not engage further with the question of the authorship of the note (*Copying Cultures*, p. 473).

the manuscript presents it – ‘Seleuco’, comment, ‘Tancredi’ – is a product not of a single moment but of a process through time. Thinking of the object in time, then, it seems more likely that the comment, along with the novella of Seleuco, was copied from one source, and the novella of Tancredi in Italian was added from another to make up the pair at the same time or at another, either as a diptych that has subsequently been re-ordered or in the order in which it is currently found.

Unfortunately it is not clear from the existing evidence where the text might have been copied from. Marcelli’s manuscript stemma traces R⁴, along with B³, B¹, R, and the branch □² (containing 13 other manuscripts), to branch □¹.⁵¹ In this group there is one other exemplar containing the Italian ‘Tancredi’ (La³) as well as four with the Latin (B¹, R, La¹, and Sa). None of these five appears to have the note after ‘Seleuco’, nor do several others in the group (but not containing either version of ‘Tancredi’) that have been consulted.⁵² In any case, whether or not the note in R⁴ is found in any of the other manuscripts in the group, the combination here points to the fact that the texts were at some point copied from different manuscripts, whether by the

⁵¹ She does not mention this particular note for any of the manuscripts, although elsewhere in the construction of the stemma she uses a similar commentary, addressing the relatively common theme of the power of love, and contained in both R⁵ and R⁶, as evidence of being part of group □ (Marcelli, ‘La “Novella”’, p. 117). The text of this note from R⁵ is available in Martelli (‘Considerazioni’, pp. 233-234); a slightly different version is given in Hankins (‘Humanism’, pp. 28-29). For the complete stemma, see Appendix C.

⁵² La¹ is viewable online through the ‘Teca Digitale’ of the Biblioteca Laurenziana; images of the final page of ‘Seleuco’ and the beginning of the following text have confirmed this for manuscripts CS, La³, M¹, M⁴, N⁴, R, R¹, and R⁷. Information from the respective libraries confirms this for manuscripts B¹, B³, and Sa.

copyist of R⁴ or by a previous copyist whose manuscript provided the source for all three texts in R⁴.

There are a few implications of this choice in terms of narrative at both the level of representing forms of textual transmission and in terms of wider narratives of reading and copying. First, the presence of the note, and the discrepancy between its identification of the ‘traducta’ novella and the presence of the Italian novella complicates even the non-diptych representation of readerly chronology. As currently assembled, the manuscript represents a narrative chronology that follows the experience of the reader, or of the reader-copyist, who first observes the reference to ‘Tancredi’ in the text of ‘Seleuco’ and then subsequently (both in chronology and in the manuscript itself) reproduces that text. The discrepancy is then another disjuncture similar perhaps in scope to the metalepsis in the vernacular diptych, not necessarily disrupting the participation of the manuscript in the wider narrative of transmission and readership.

However, as a disjunction, it points to another moment of transmission and another set of agents and processes, much as the aesthetic concerns in H² point to the presence of the copyist. In R⁴, in addition to the narrative of readerly transmission in the out-of-order diptych, or the description of the *locus amoenus* and imitation of the experience (in a hypothetical original configuration of the quires), the assembly of the manuscript from discrete sources is made present, and the respective roles of the writer, narrator(s), and copyist detached from each other. The distinction between third person narrator and writer was already problematised through analysis of the discrepancies in the story of Seleuco by Martelli, who saw the errors as suggesting that perhaps Bruni was the actual tale-teller of the tale of ‘Seleuco’ in real life, which

episode was then recorded by another writer.⁵³ That distinction relies, however, on knowledge of Plutarch and of Bruni's scholarship. The discrepancy in R⁴ relies on no outside knowledge; simply a recognition that the text mentioned by the comment is not in fact a text that appears to be present—the 'traducta' novella.

There are also several levels of narrative about what is supposed to be done with a text. The first is the level of the narrative context of the texts, which represents the model of literature as entertainment and the *locus amoenus* inhabited by genteel consumers of literature that is suggested by the vernacular diptych. The next level perhaps is represented by the commentator, who engages with the text through their own analysis of the two stories, although in a slightly different from than what is present in this manuscript. Finally there is the level of some copyist or patron, perhaps the copyist or patron of R⁴, who makes decisions about what to include, and sources texts from different manuscripts.

The manuscript itself thus suggests the realities of manuscript transmission (and particularly the transmission of texts in miscellanies), including the temporality of the process and the multiplicity of roles. The manuscript thus becomes not only an example of the practices of reading and reproduction that constitute manuscript transmission, but also a space in which the distinctions between the roles of reader, author, and copyist can be highlighted interpretively through analysis of the combination of texts. The copyist here can be seen through the assembly

⁵³ Martelli, 'Considerazioni', p. 240. See note 2 above.

of the manuscript in their role as selector or agent, moving among sources and languages even for a manuscript that is entirely in the vernacular.⁵⁴

These models of engagement with text are, as we noted at the start, not new in and of themselves. What this example suggests is that apart from outside knowledge of the texts, or comparative analyses of manuscripts, these models, themselves seen as narrative in the sense of Somers and Gibson, are presented and contested within single exemplars through both narrative content and elements of manuscript assembly and production.

Such a narrative analysis of texts and of manuscripts can also be triangulated with other sources on readerly and writerly practice, manuscript transmission, and textual traditions. The distinction, for example, between the *copisti per passione* and the *copisti a prezzo* – loosely between amateurs and professionals – and their practices as regards narrative framing and organisation, in this case as well as in others, could provide additional keys to understanding the cultural narratives surrounding text. Further examination of other manuscripts in the same tradition along the lines of what has been done here could also contribute additional information about copying, and about the fluidity of the texts themselves and of the relationships between them.⁵⁵ The issue of manuscripts in multiple hands is also not addressed here; in these cases, a narrative account might need to include the possibility of additional (later) copyists effectively modifying or re-situating the narratives created by the document.⁵⁶ In addition, the present work

⁵⁴ The application of the moral of the note to the vernacular also shows a particular understanding of translation that might be put into dialogue with contemporary discussions of translation.

⁵⁵ cf. Gibson, p. 86.

⁵⁶ Relevant to this effort would be the discussions of “renarration” in translation studies, where the iterative process of translation is seen as re-narrating a text, usually in a new context and

has focused entirely on the manuscript copies of the texts, to the exclusion of some contemporary print versions.⁵⁷ It has also examined only a very small group of texts that has its own internal coherence, and the approach could potentially be applied to entire manuscript miscellanies, viewing their contents not only in thematic terms but as forms of narrative and textual forms that participate in public or meta-narratives about text or about other topics. Finally, it remains to be seen whether the treatment of other novelle circulating separately or in small groups (as opposed to circulating in collections such as the *Decameron*, the *Novellino*, or the *Pecorone*) is similar to the treatment of Bruni's novella of Seleuco as regards the construction of textual narratives and the framing of the novelle within the boundaries of broader cultural or public narratives.

What this work accomplishes is a view of the connections between manuscript and narrative, incorporating the objects themselves into the reading of the narratives, broadly understood, that they contain and in which they participate. The coherence of the text with these narratives depends in part on the narrative cohesion within and among texts as well as on the physical characteristics of the manuscripts that can support or undermine that cohesion. This reading focuses on how manuscript construction, in terms of both the physical ordering of texts and the temporality of copying, both within single manuscripts and across the tradition, intersects with the texts, in this case including the main texts of the two stories in Italian, the translation

often within a new set of public and metanarratives. See for example Mona Baker, 'Translation as Re-Narration', *Translation: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, Ed. Juliane House (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 158-177.

⁵⁷ The tale appears in two sixteenth-century print versions: Leonardo Bruni, *Questa si e Una Novella bellissima di Antioco figliuolo di Seleuco...* (Siena: Simone di Niccolo and Giovanni di Alexandro, 1511); *Novelle antiche, ossia Libro di novelle* (Florence: Giunti, 1572). On the texts of these two versions, see Marcelli, 'La "Novella"', pp. 120-24.

into Latin, and the comments and other paratexts. These connections, and the cultural narratives that they produce about reading, writing, and textual transmission, are inscribed in the manuscripts themselves. An awareness of how manuscript transmission, or indeed other forms of transmission, affect and are affected by the material constraints of the text as well as by the construction of internal and external narratives, can be a powerful tool in approaching both historical and contemporary cultural transmission.

Appendix A: List of manuscripts and sigla (Marcelli, ‘La “Novella”’)

(asterisk indicates manuscript seen in person by the author)

A ²	Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Ms 189
B ¹	Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 313
B ³	Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS 1598
Ba ¹	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 3929
Ba ²	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 4051
Ba ₃	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 3664
Ca	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Capponi 10
Co	Rome, Biblioteca Corsiniana, Rossi 163
CS	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conventi soppressi C3 2703
D	Darmstadt, Hessisches Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, MS 2001
*F	Florence, Biblioteca Moreniana, Frullani 25
*FM ₁	Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, C CLIII

G	Florence, Principe Ginori Conti MS 0063 ⁵⁸
*H ₁	Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Houghton Library, MS Typ 24
*H ₂	Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Houghton Library, MS Typ 157
K	Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Olim Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Ms. Ital. qu. 77
*L	London, British Library, Harl. 3830
*La ₁	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pluteo 90 sup. 89
*La ₂	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Pluteo 90 sup. 138
*La ₃	Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Palat. 90
Lu	Lucca, Biblioteca Statale, MS 1284
M	Milan, Biblioteca Trivulziana, Ms 761
*M ₁	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. VIII.1413
*M ₂	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. IX.2
*M ³	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. IX.54
*M ⁴	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. XXI.158
*M ⁵	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magl. XXI.175
Me	Madrid, Sr Don Bartolomé March, Ms 524
*N ¹	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Naz. II.II.16
*N ²	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Naz. II.II.56
*N ³	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Naz. II.III.136

⁵⁸ The whereabouts of this manuscript are unknown, so it is not catalogued in Marcelli ('La "Novella"', p. 98); the siglum is my own. Kristeller lists it (*Iter Italicum I*, p. 228) as containing 'Seleuco' but not either version of 'Tancredi'.

*N ⁴	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Naz. II.IX.137
*N ⁵	Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Naz. II.IX.148
Na	Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale «Vittorio Emanuele III», VII E 2
Ot	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. lat. 3316
Pr	Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, Pal. 306
Pt	Pistoia, Archivio Capitolare del Duomo, 58
*R	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 1157
*R ¹	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 1074
*R ²	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 1078
*R ³	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 1095
*R ⁴	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 1121
*R ⁵	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 2254
*R ⁶	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 2330
*R ⁷	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 2544
*R ⁸	Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 2960
Ro ¹	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ross. 759
Ro ²	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ross. 1134
Sa	Savignano sul Rubicone, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Rubiconia dei Filopatrìdi, Ms 75
Si ¹	Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, J VI 25
SM	Siena, Prof. Domenico Maffei, s.n.
T	Tours, Bibliothèque Municipale, Marcel 2103

Ts ¹	Trieste, Biblioteca Civica «Attilio Hortis», I.24 (I.XXVIII)
V ¹	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 2876
V ²	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4820
V ³	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5337
V ⁴	Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4830
Vr ¹	Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, CCCCLXXI (314)
Vr ²	Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, CCCCXCI (335)
Y	New Haven, Yale University Beinecke Library, Ms 329

Appendix B: Combination of Texts

(‡=manuscript written by a single hand, when known)	# of mss
Novella alone ⁵⁹ A ² ; B ³ ; Ba ² ; Ba ³ ; Ca; Co; CS; G; F; FM ¹ ‡; H ¹ ‡; K; La ² ; Lu‡; M ¹ ‡; M ³ ; M ⁴ ; M ⁵ ; Me‡; N ¹ ; N ² ; N ³ ; N ⁴ ; Ot; Pr‡; Pt‡; R ¹ ‡; R ² ‡; R ⁵ ; R ⁶ ; R ⁷ ‡; R ⁸ (without frame); Ro ¹ ‡; Ro ² ; SM‡; T‡; Ts ¹ ‡; V ¹ ; V ² ; V ⁴ ; Vr ¹ ‡; Vr ² ‡; Y.	43

⁵⁹ Marcelli omits M⁵, R⁸ and Ca from her catalogue as incomplete ('La "Novella"', p. 98). M⁵ ends mid-sentence, just before the end of the novella; closer investigation of the manuscript might provide further information. R⁸ includes the entire novella, but not the frame (presumably the reason that Marcelli considers it incomplete). Ca has only the beginning of the text, but is the last of the volume; it is easy to hypothesise the loss of the last few leaves (or indeed more than that).

Novella, Latin letter to Bindaccio, Latin <i>Tancredi</i> (†=diptych order) ⁶⁰ B ¹ †; Ba ¹ ; L†; La ¹ †; M† (without frame) ⁶¹ ; M ² †; N ⁵ ; Na†; R; Sa††	10 ⁶²
Novella, Italian <i>Tancredi</i> (†=diptych order) D†; H ² ††; La ³ †; R ³ ⁶³ ; R ⁴ ; Si ¹ ††; V ³	7 ⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Marcelli omits N⁵ from her catalogue as incomplete ('La "Novella"', p. 98). It lacks the latter part of the tale, but 'Seleuco' is preceded by the Latin 'Tancredi' and the letter. Although the volume contains a number of different hands (Kristeller, *Iter Italicum V. Alia Itinera III and Italy III. Sweden to Yugoslavia, Utopia, Supplement to Italy (A-F)* (London: The Warburg Institute; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), p. 572), and appears to have been assembled at a later date, it does seem that these texts were planned together.

⁶¹ The two texts are separated by Francesco Petrarca's note on Laura's death, which is the same as that written in the margin of a copy of Virgil (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ms A 79 inf.). The note is available in in E.H. Wilkins, *Life of Petrarch* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 77.

⁶² Marcelli ('Appunti', p. 34) includes in her count Paris BN Collection Moreau 848, which is omitted here as being assembled in the seventeenth century. Omitted here and also omitted by Marcelli ('Appunti') is Paris Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 17888, of similar provenance, and containing the Latin letter but not the translation of 'Tancredi'.

⁶³ Includes the texts in the correct order, but separated by Francesco Accolti's 'Canzone di Ghismonda' (Marcelli, 'Appunti', p. 39; Marcelli, 'La "Novella"', p. 79), which she notes also appears in T and in Vr₂ (Marcelli, 'La "Novella"', pp. 91, 97 and 103).

⁶⁴ Marcelli ('Appunti', pp. 36-41) includes in her count only those manuscripts in which the Italian 'Tancredi' is copied immediately preceding 'Seleuco'.

Appendix C: Stemma

Figure 4: Stemma from Marcelli,⁶⁵ incorporating the two manuscripts described in Marcelli ('Due nuovi testimoni'). Manuscripts containing the Latin 'Tancredi' (in any order) are underlined; those containing the Italian 'Tancredi' (in any order) are in bold. Reproduced with permission from Nicoletta Marcelli.

⁶⁵ 'La "Novella"', p. 125.