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### **Calandrino and Il Grasso: *Beffe*, Language, and the Aristotelian Soul**

The paper examines the ways in which the 15th-century *Novella del Grasso Legnaiuolo* models itself on the *beffa* of *Decameron* IX.3 (Calandrino's pregnancy).

I would like to present in particular on how both of these two *novelle* engage with Aristotelian and Thomistic theories of the soul in order implicitly to undermine these theories and demonstrate their shortcomings. The *beffe* of *Decameron* IX.3 and *Il Grasso Legnaiuolo* upset the explanations of sense perception and self-knowledge that Aquinas, following Aristotle's account in *De Anima*, develops in the "Treatise on Man" in the *Summa Theologica*. To achieve this critique, the *beffatori* in the *novelle* employ a variety of signs: bodily gestures, facial expressions, manipulation of the urban environment, and, most importantly, language. While both Aristotle and Aquinas view language as an expression of inner states of the imagination and intellect, and thus pass over semiotics in their accounts of the soul, *Decameron* IX.3 and *Il Grasso Legnaiuolo* show the ways in which language structures our perception of ourselves and of the exterior reality that surrounds us. By misreading a series of signs, Calandrino and Il Grasso reveal how essential the act of reading is to any explanation of the human soul.