Scribes and Singers:
Latin Models of Authority and the Compilation of Troubadour Songbooks

by

Christopher J. Davis

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Comparative Literature)
in The University of Michigan
2011

Doctoral Committee:
      Professor Peggy S. McCracken, Chair
      Professor Alison Cornish
      Professor Yopie Prins
      Professor Elizabeth L. Sears
      Associate Professor Catherine Brown

Dedication

For my parents, William Davis and Christina Tree

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my chair, Peggy McCracken, for her patience, encouragement and support throughout this process. She has been, from start to finish, the ideal dissertation advisor. I also wish to thank Catherine Brown for coaching (both work and life) and for being a model of academic curiosity. I owe a debt of gratitude to the other members of my committee, Yopie Prins, Alison Cornish and Betsy Sears, for their generous feedback and support at every stage of this project.

I would also like to thank the many friends who have read and commented on this dissertation, particularly Alan Itkin, Mira Seo, Ari Friedlander, Stephanie Elsky, Carrie Wood and Daniel Hershenzon. I am particularly grateful to Julen Etxabe and Monica Lopez for years of good conversation, and to my fellow Michigan medievalists, Maria Canal, Tom Maranda and Julie Human for their many observations. I am grateful to Emily Zinnemann for criticism of all kinds. I would also like to thank the fellows of the Michigan Humanities Institute for their contributions and comments.

Finally, I wish to thank my family for their love and support, particularly my parents, William and Christina, and also Liam, Timothy, Yuko, Aki and Taiga, who was born in the same year as this dissertation.

Table of Contents

Abstract

"Scribes and Singers: Latin Models of Authority and the Compilation of Troubadour Songbooks" offers a new reading of medieval troubadour poetry in its manuscript contexts to argue that the *chansonniers*, the medieval anthologies that preserve this poetry, stage formal comparisons with Latin textual culture. This dissertation re-conceptualizes the place of troubadour lyrics in medieval vernacular literature by reading manuscripts not as written scripts of oral performances, but as complex compilations of literary texts, which engage contemporary concerns about the vernacular as a language of literary authority.

Each chapter studies a distinctive characteristic of the troubadour *chansonnier*-corpus and its effect on the reception of song-texts. Chapter One, "*Vida*, *Razo*, *Accessus*: Latin Commentary and the Vernacular *Auctor*," explores the relationship between two genres of commentary, the Latin *accessus ad auctores*, and the troubadour *vidas* and *razos*. Focusing on *accessus* for Ovid and *razos* for Bertran de Born, I argue that Occitan commentaries appropriate Latin conventions and reading strategies to represent the troubadour as a vernacular *auctor*, exemplary of aesthetic and ethical values identified with *fin'amor*.

Chapter Two, "Silent Songbooks: Musical Notation and Blank Spaces in Manuscript *R*," examines the use of musical notation and the relationship between text and music in the verse-*libre* of Guiraut Riquier. I argue that troubadour melodies were

copied not for oral performance, but to support an influential fiction of orality in the manuscripts.

Chapter Three, "The Best Example: Occitan Grammars and the Transcription of Troubadour Songs" re-evaluates the importance of Occitan grammars to the development of troubadour textual culture. I argue that treatises by Raimon Vidal, Jofre de Foixà, and Uc Faidit established standards of correctness based on Latin models that guided the transcription of *chansonniers*. I focus on examples of hypercorrectness in manuscript *A* as evidence that scribes privileged grammatical unity over linguistic variation.

The Conclusion compares attitudes towards language in the work of Guilhem IX and in Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, charting an evolution from a concept of poetic authority based in individual composition and performance to an abstract model, derived from Latin, and from the authority of a textual canon.

Introduction

i.   Grammaticalizing the Vernacular

Sometime around the year 1200, the Catalan troubadour Raimon Vidal de Besalù composed a grammar of the Occitan language (which he refers to as *Limousin*) designed as an aid to composition for non-native speakers. In this groundbreaking treatise, he makes a series of claims about the status of Occitan as a lyric language, and also about the relationship of troubadour song to Latin *grammatica*:

> Per q'ieu vos dic qe totz hom qe vuella trobar ni entendre deu aver fort privada la parladura de Limousin. Et apres deu saber alqes de la natura de grammatica, si fort primamenz vol trobar ni entendre, car tota la parladura de Lemosyn se parla naturalmenz et per cas et per nombres et per genres et per temps et per personas et per motz, aisi com poretz auzir aissi sib en o escoutas.

> Therefore I tell you that everyone who wants to compose or understand songs has to be very intimate with the Limousin idiom. And he must also know

something of the nature of grammar [*grammatica*] if he wants to do those things well; for the entire Limousin tongue is spoken naturally and correctly with respect to case, number, gender, tense, person, and part of speech, as you will hear if you pay attention to me.[1]

Raimon Vidal's description of the language of the troubadours as a grammatically stable idiom, structured by the paradigm of Latin grammar, stands in stark contrast to the representation of poetic language in the works of many twelfth-century troubadours, which are often characterized by anxiety about the stability of songs in oral circulation, as in this example by the early troubadour Jaufré Rudel:

Bos es lo vers can no·i falhi

E tot so que·i es, ben esta,

E sel que de mi l'apenra

Gart se no i·falha ni·l pessi,

Qu[e] si l'auzo en Lemozi

E Bertrans e·l coms el Tolza.

The song is good, since I didn't fail in it,/ And all there is in it goes well/ and the one who will learn it from me,/ let him beware lest he fail in it and break it

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[1] Text from J.H. Marshall, The *Razos de Trobar* of Raimon Vidal and Associated Texts (London: Oxford University Press, 1972) 2; translation from Marianne Shapiro, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*: Dante's Book of Exile (University of Nebraska Press, 1990) 113.

up,/ for thus may they hear it in the Limousin,/ both Bertran and the count in

the Toulousain.[2]

Raimon's approach to defining Occitan as an autonomous language, structured by

abstract standards of correctness, reflects the emergence of a formal textual culture

surrounding troubadour poetry, and the influence of Latin models of compilation and

commentary on the transcription of songbooks. Despite obvious differences in

context in medium of transmission, Raimon's grammatical definition of Limousin

echoes a theme common among earlier troubadours: namely, that the language of

poetry is separate from other kinds of speech and that the act of defining the language

of song—of establishing a *langue d'auteur*—is essential to mastering the art of

trobar.

Raimon's conception of Occitan as a literary language is clearly influenced by

the model of Latin, as is the *Donatz Proensals*, which was composed in Italy in the

mid-thirteenth century, likely by the troubadour Uc de Saint Circ. Originally from

southern France, Uc spent most of his career at courts in northern Italy, where he had

more influence than any other single individual on defining the textual culture of

troubadour song. He likely participated in the production of the earliest extant

songbook *D* (Modena, Bibl. Naz. Estense, ∝. R. 4. 4), as well as the composition of

many of the biographical commentaries that accompany songs in manuscripts. These

vidas and *razos* were loosely modeled on similar genres of commentary found in

Latin school texts, and the importance of Latin as a conceptual and methodological

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[2] Rupert Pickens, <u>The Songs of Jaufré Rudel</u> (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of
Medieval Studies, 1978) 236-237.

model is evident throughout Uc's work. The *Donatz Proensals* is modeled on the *Ars Minor* of Donatus, and begins with an explicit comparison between Occitan and Latin:

> Las oit partz que om troba en gramatica troba om en vulgar provençhal, zo es: nome, pronome, verbe, adverbe, particip, conjunctios, prepositios et interjetios.[3]

> The eight parts that are found in Latin [*gramatica*] are found in the Provençal vernacular, these are: noun, pronoun, adverb, participle, conjunction, preposition and interjection.

References to *grammatica* by both Uc and Raimon represent a commentary on the linguistic structure of Occitan, which also invites an extended comparison with Latin, through which the authoritative qualities of Latin are systematically applied to the language of *trobar*. For medieval readers, the *auctoritas* of Latin was linked to its status as a language of texts, both sacred and secular, and the treatment of troubadour songs in grammars and many songbooks shows a desire to represent the troubadours and their language as exemplary of a similar textual authority. This trend is evident in many of the distinctive aspects of *chansonniers*, from the emphasis on standardized orthography and noun-declension to the organization of collections according to

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[3] J. H. Marshall The *Donatz Proensals* of Uc Faidit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) 88; my translation.

abstract criteria, such as poetic style (*trobar leu* or *trobar clus*) and geographical provenance.

How did the musical and mobile art of the troubadours come to represent a model of textual authority comparable to Latin? This shift from a primarily oral model of performance to the evaluation of authority through textual means reflects a variety of social and historical developments. Throughout the twelfth century, troubadour songs circulated in an ever-expanding cultural orbit. Although originally identified with the aristocratic courts of the Midi, the troubadours received an enthusiastic reception outside of the Occitan region, particularly on the linguistic frontiers of Catalunya and northern Italy. The early troubadour Marcabru traveled to Spain, while Bernart de Ventadorn spent time in England, and many poets of the 'Golden Age' of the mid-twelfth century, such as Peire Vidal, Arnaut Daniel and Peire d'Alvernha, found patrons in the courts of Lombardy and the Veneto. Following the destructive events of the Albigensian Crusades (1209-1255), which eroded the social and intellectual culture of Occitania, many troubadours chose to settle abroad permanently. Uc de Saint Circ is the most prominent of these emigrés, but he was not the only one concerned with preserving the language and poetry of the troubadours in textual form. There is evidence that Peire Vidal and Arnaut Daniel may have compiled their own songs, while Guiraut Riquier, who traveled between the courts of Italy and Spain, assembled an innovative collection of his songs that survives in two manuscripts.[4]

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[4] Paden, "Manuscripts," 307-333.

The dissemination of troubadour songs outside of Occitania encouraged numerous poets to adopt Occitan as a language of composition for whom it was not a mother tongue. These included Raimon Vidal and Cerverí de Girona, in Spain, as well as Dante Alighieri, among many others, in Italy. [5] This work bears witness to the influence of textual culture, both the grammatical standards of written language and the anthology as a medium of performance. At the same time, the second half of the thirteenth-century and the first few decades of the fourteenth saw an explosion in the production of troubadour *chansonniers*, particularly in Italy. Sixteen of the surviving *chansonniers* were produced in Lombardy and the Veneto between 1254 and the start of the thirteenth century. These bear witness to increasingly elaborate efforts to represent the troubadours as a coherent literary tradition, defined by a common language and history, and representative of certain ideological and aesthetic values, specifically associated with the ethical and erotic code of *fin'amor*.[6] The process of textualization was thus also retrospective: it reflected a desire to monumentalize a literary culture that was already past its prime. In attempting to represent this culture, to *perform* troubadour song in the textual medium of the songbook, scribes imposed new ideas about the figure of the author, the function lyric, and the nature of Occitan as a language of literary authority.

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[5] The twelfth-century "Sicilian school" of poets associated with the court of Frederick II in Sicily adopted the language and style of the troubadours for the purpose of composition. See Frede Jensen, The Poetry of the Sicilian School (New York: Garland, 1986).

[6] William Burgwinkle, "The *Chansonniers* as Books" in The Troubadours: An Introduction, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 246-262; Ruth Harvey "*Fin'amor* and the Development of The Courtly *Canso*" in The Troubadours: An Introduction 28-46.

This dissertation concentrates on the manuscripts produced in Italy during this pivotal period from the compilation of the earliest *chansonnier* in 1254 to the first decades of the fourteenth century, when troubadour song transitioned from oral to textual models of performance and circulation. Although similar trends occurred in other languages during the same period, the troubadours constitute an unusual example of this process both because of the early date of these songs, and also because of the prestige status accorded to Occitan as a lyric language by speakers of other vernaculars. The troubadours were commonly represented as examples of poetic authority and, more precisely, of textual authority, despite the fact that the majority of songs were composed before the widespread production of texts and were intended for oral performance. I contend that this perception of textual authority is represented in the manuscripts through analogy with Latin. The reception of Occitan as a vernacular equivalent, or, even, competitor to Latin is due both to the nature of literary Occitan as a trans-regional poetic idiom, and also to the efforts of compilers and commentators, who systematically applied the grammatical standards of Latin textual culture to the transcription and compilation of troubadour songs.

ii.   Manuscripts

The roughly fifty medieval anthologies of lyric poetry in Occitan, known collectively as *chansonniers*, constitute an inexhaustibly rich source of information about

troubadours and their songs.[7] They also present a practical challenge to both critics and casual readers alike. These *chansonniers* range from unadorned and seemingly informal collections of vernacular song-lyrics to luxurious poetic compendia, in which songs are elaborately indexed and organized, ornamented with gold lettering and colorful illustrations and accompanied by musical notation, biographies of poets (*vidas*) and glosses on individual songs (*razos*). The most elaborate *chansonniers* were produced over a period roughly spanning 1250-1400, in Catalonia, southern France and Italy. Twenty-seven of the surviving songbooks were composed in Italy, mostly in and around Venice in the late 13th century.[8]

Diversity among *chansonniers* is reflected in the variety of poetic texts they contain. Some manuscripts represent songs without line or stanza breaks, while others consistently make such divisions, calling attention to meter and rhyme as the basis for generic distinctions. Most manuscripts do not contain music, though two of the largest and most elaborate do have inconsistent musical notation. Some of the manuscripts appear to be organized haphazardly, while others are structured according to abstract editorial principles, such as chronology, genre, social status of the poet and even alphabetical order.[9]

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[7] François Zufferey, <u>Recherches Linguistiques sur les Chansonniers Provençaux</u> (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1987), 4. This number is disputable. Clovis Brunel, in his <u>Bibliographie</u>, catalogues 376 codices containing Occitan literary texts, of which 95 contain troubadour lyric and 52 were produced in Italy. Zufferey has reduced this number by eliminating exact copies, as well as French and Catalan manuscripts that include only small selections from Occitan.
[8] See Zufferey, <u>Recherches</u>. Also William Paden, "Manuscripts" in <u>A Handbook of the Troubadours</u> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 307-333.
[9] Hendrik Van der Werf, <u>The Chansons of the Troubadours and Trouvères</u> (Epe, The Netherlands: Hoogie, 1972), 14-17.

One quality that all *chansonniers* have in common, however, is abundance. Anthologies typically contain hundreds of lyric texts; the largest collection, manuscript *C*, contains 1,206.[10] In total, the *chansonniers* preserve roughly 2,500 poems in Old Occitan, with many songs appearing in multiple, often very different versions, even within the same manuscript.[11] Although such variation reveals much about the practice and reception of troubadour poetry, it also presents a significant frustration for the editor or reader in search of the 'definitive' text. Scholars have adopted various approaches to this methodological challenge. Early twentieth-century editors, such as Alfred Jeanroy and Carl Appel, following the method of Joseph Bédier, selected (or constructed) what they deemed to be the best version of a song, often favoring modern aesthetic criteria. In contrast to this strategy, at least one editor, Rupert Pickens, has attempted to collect all the various manuscript versions of a troubadour's songs, those of Jaufré Rudel. The result is an edition containing thirty-one versions of the seven songs attributed to Jaufré, with as many as eleven different versions of a single song.[12] While Picken's edition amply demonstrates the value of sticking close to the manuscript tradition, it also testifies to the impracticality of undertaking a similar project with, for example, Marcabru, to whom forty-four songs are attributed.

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[10] The *chansonniers* were first assigned sigla by Karl Bartsch in 1872 and subsequently revised in 1933 by Pillet and Carstens, who also added a system for numbering individual songs. See Bibliographie der Troubadours (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968). For further explanation see Paden, "Manuscripts," 309-10, and Van der Werf, Chansons 14. In addition to sigla, manuscripts also have library reference numbers, which I will cite from Zufferey. The reference for manuscript *C* is: Paris, Bibl. Nat. fr. 856. Zufferey Recherches, 4.

[11] Paden, "Manuscripts."

[12] Pickens, Jaufré Rudel.

These contrasting editorial strategies raise fundamental questions about the nature and status of troubadour texts in manuscripts. How can we identify the "text" of a troubadour poem? Can we distinguish between "oral song" and "written text"? How does the orality of troubadour song influence its representation as text? I address such questions here by evaluating the *chansonniers* as vehicles of transmission, and asking how the representation of lyrics might engage contemporary debates about language and the function of poetry. How do formal techniques of compilation and transcription influence the reception of individual poems? What role do song-anthologies play in shaping a 'Tradition'?

iii.   Orality and Textuality

These questions are especially pertinent in the case of the troubadours, because of the historical gap between the composition of poems and the production of manuscripts. The first recorded troubadour, Guilhem de Peiteus, was active in the three decades after 1100, initiating a movement that flowered throughout the twelfth century and well into the thirteenth. The 150-year hiatus between Guilhem and the first troubadour *chansonnier* (*D*) poses a conceptual puzzle: How were these songs transmitted before the compilation of anthologies? What effect did the process of transcription have on the reception of songs?

The surviving songs provide important insights into these questions, frequently commenting on the conditions of their own composition, performance and transmission. Troubadour poetry is dominated by tropes of oral performance from a

vocabulary that prominently features words associated with music, such as *chantar*

and *vers*, to formal elements such as the concluding *tornada*, which addresses the

song to a specific individual, or genres such as the *tenso*, which stage a debate among

singers. In contrast to this prevalent poetic fiction of orality, however, troubadour

poems also contain many references to writing and transmission through texts.[13]

These have prompted scholars to posit the existence of some sort of temporary or

intermediary text, usually referred to as a "songsheet" (*liederblätter*), which might

have passed from troubadour to *joglar*, copied and re-copied before eventually being

collected and anthologized in the *chansonniers*.[14]

No such songsheets have survived, however, and the persistent debate about

the medium of transmission has provoked contrasting views concerning the relative

orality of troubadour texts. This discussion has been dominated by the work of Paul

Zumthor, who claimed that medieval lyric in general is dominated by oral paradigms,

which also govern the production of poetic texts.[15] Zumthor credited the troubadours

with formulating an influential poetic code, "a dynamic set of both mental and

expressive tendencies and of structuring rules" and he argued that variation in

manuscripts, or *mouvance*, represented a continuation by scribes of the practices of

oral performers, who reacted to these "rules" by creatively reworking them

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[13] These can be ambiguous, such as Jaufré Rudel's instructions that his song be sent without parchment: "senes breu de parguamina/ tramet lo vers." R.T. Hill and T.G. Bergin, <u>Anthology of the Provençal Troubadours</u> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973) 32.

[14] Paden, "Manuscripts" 316; Amelia Van Vleck, <u>Memory and Re-Creation in Troubadour Lyric</u> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) 42-43.

[15] Paul Zumthor, "The Text and The Voice," <u>New Literary History</u>, 16, 1 (Autumn, 1984): 67-92.

(*remaniement*). [16] This may indeed be the case for the French trouvères, who were the focus of Zumthor's study, but the influence of oral-performative practices on troubadour manuscripts is more difficult to evaluate. For the trouvères, there is no significant historical gap between composition and transcription: songs and *chansonniers* were often produced simultaneously and manuscripts are clearly oriented toward oral performance, especially in the later tradition. [17]

For the majority of troubadour *chansonniers*, however, especially those produced in Italy, the relationship between composition, performance and transcription cannot have been so cohesive. Italian scribes were, in a sense, the first scholars of the troubadours, attempting to produce "editions" of a poetry that was historically distant, as well as culturally and linguistically foreign. Little is known about the mostly anonymous copyists, notators and editors who compiled troubadour material. [18] Some, such as Uc de Saint Circ and Bernart Amoros, were native Occitan speakers and poets in their own right. [19] Many others, however, may not have had any first-hand experience of the poetry they were reproducing and only a limited knowledge of its language. For these scribes and compilers, experience of the oral tradition of troubadour song would likely have been mediated by texts.

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[16] Paul Zumthor, <u>Toward a Medieval Poetics</u>, trans. Phillip Bennet (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992) 144.

[17] The opposite is true of troubadour *chansonniers*. The four manuscripts with musical notation are among the oldest. See Van der Werf, <u>Chansons</u> 22-23.

[18] Van der Werf divides the general term "scribe" into these three distinct functions. <u>Chansons</u> 15.

[19] Bernart Amoros compiled a *chansonnier* (now lost), which he claims was based on a written source by a non-native speaker. Poe, <u>Compilatio</u> (Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum, 2000) 14.

iv.   Manuscripts Studied in This Dissertation

All of the manuscripts discussed in depth are of Italian origin with the exception of

manuscripts *C* and *R*, which were both produced in Languedoc during the fourteenth

century. Manuscript C (Bib. Nat. f. fr. 856) is the largest troubadour *chansonnier* and

is generally considered exemplary of the corpus as a whole. It contains well over a

thousand songs, including *vidas* and *razos*, which are scrupulously organized and

transcribed in a professional hand with relatively few errors. For these reasons, *C*

often serves as a base-text for modern editions. There is considerable overlapping in

the contents of *C* and *R*, which suggests that these manuscripts might be related or

perhaps copied from a common source. Both contain the only versions of the semi-

autonomous collection of fifty-two songs by the late thirteenth-century troubadour

Guiraut Riquier, which the poet may have organized himself. These copies of

Guiraut's *libre* are nearly identical with the important difference that musical notation

accompanies nearly every song in the *R*-version.

      Manuscript *R* (Bib. Nat. f. fr. 22543) preserves the largest number of

troubadour melodies, and is one of only four extant *chansonniers* to preserve

melodies at all. The others, *R*, *G*, *X* and *W* together contain ninety melodies, while *R*

alone contains 160 melodies.[20] The fact that forty-eight of these are for songs by

Guiraut Riquier does not alter *R*'s unusual status as a collection that is oriented

toward music. The manuscript's compilers deliberately organized their collection

around the presentation of melodies by drawing staff-lines above the first stanza of

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[20] Details about these manuscripts and their systems of notation will be provided in
Chapter 2.

almost every song. This work was apparently done before melodies were obtained; of the 800 songs that are accompanied by musical staves, 688 were never notated and remain blank, a fact that sheds considerable light on the circulation of troubadour texts and melodies during this period.

The remaining *chansonniers* that I address in depth, *A*, *K* and *I*, were all produced in the north of Italy during the thirteenth century. Like *C* and *R*, these manuscripts are closely related and may be derived from common sources. The Italian songbooks are much closer in appearance and structure than their French counterparts: all three contain extensive collections of *vidas* and *razos*, as well as author portraits, which are drawn into the historiated initial of the first song of a poet's collection. These miniatures are highly formulaic and typically portray troubadours in the act of singing, wooing a lady or armed for battle. For this reason, they provide a convenient record of the themes that illustrators considered essential to the genre. The Italian manuscripts favor the *canso* as a genre, and preserve a large number of works, vidas and portraits for troubadours such as Bernart de Ventadorn, Guiraut de Bornelh and Jaufré Rudel, who appear to promote a conception of love as an ethical devotion. For this reason, some critics, such as Burgwinkle and Meheghetti, have argued that they functioned as handbooks of *fin'amor* for the Italian courts.[21]

In addition to the manuscripts described above, this project also includes references to several collections that are not usually included among the *grands chansonniers*. Karl Bartsch, who devised the alphabetical system of sigla, initiated the practice of distinguishing parchment songbooks from paper ones, using upper and

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[21] Maria Luisa Meneghetti, <u>Il Pubblico dei Trovatori</u> (Torino: Guilio Einaudi, 1992); William E. Burgwinkle, <u>Love for Sale</u> (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997).

lower-case letters. This practice has established an aesthetic hierarchy that persists to the present day, despite the fact that paper manuscripts contain invaluable information about the transmission of songs, even, in some cases, preserving lyrics that are older than the versions found in parchment *chansonniers*.[22] Since paper was cheaper than parchment, these collections tend to be the work of amateurs or individual collectors, rather than elaborate compilation projects, commissioned by patrons. The *chansonniers* of Miquel de la Tor and Bernart Amoros are the work of individual collectors, whose commentaries and marginal glosses testify to a less 'official' and systematic engagement with songs than we see in the parchment songbooks.[23]

v.   Critical Trends in Troubadour Manuscript Studies

The contrast between paper and parchment songbooks underlines the fact that the *grands chansonniers* represent the interests not only of individual patrons or compilers, but also of reading communities. Little can be said definitively about the uses to which these manuscripts were put during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; nevertheless, the evident diversity in the corpus clearly reflects the different, sometimes competing values and expectations of the poets, scribes, readers and listeners involved in the production and transmission of these complex documents. In some cases, it is possible to link specific characteristics of manuscripts to social and historical conditions in the regions where they were compiled. This is

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[22] Karl Bartsch, <u>Grundriss zur Geschicte der provenzalischen Literatur</u> (Eberfeld: R.L. Frïderichs, 1872).

[23] Both of these manuscripts have been lost, but survive in later copies. See Paden, "Manuscripts" 328-329.

particularly true of the selection and organization of songs within an anthology, as well as the composition of commentary texts, and the use of decorative elements, such as author portraits and rubrics.

When modern troubadour scholarship began in the second half of the nineteenth century, it was largely focused on philology. Frédéric Mistral championed the troubadours as part of his effort to revive the regional language and identity of Provence. His somewhat romantic approach to the medieval tradition was countered by the rigorously philological work of a generation of German scholars, notably Karl Bartsch, Emil Levy and Carl Appel, who compiled many of the reference materials, dictionaries, and critical editions that are still in use today. Although these scholars did edit and publish entire *chansonniers*, they were mostly interested in establishing editions of the songs of individual troubadours, which often involved drawing lyric-texts from multiple sources, or combining numerous versions to produce an 'ideal' text. Such practices efface the importance of songbooks by removing lyrics from their manuscript contexts; this approach thus also reflects an attitude toward the *chansonnier* as imperfect repository of lyric texts, rather than a complex vehicle and medium of performance in its own right. The preference for publishing the works of individual troubadours, which persists to the present, is understandable but inevitably tells only part of the story, since it removes songs from the context of a collection and eliminates the role of commentary texts.

This approach was challenged in the 1960s by the influence of structuralism, and the work of Paul Zumthor in particular, whose analysis of Old French trouvère lyrics established a new model for reading medieval poems in manuscript. Zumthor

argued that troubadour and trouvère songs are fundamentally self-referential, deriving

meaning from the recycling of common formal and thematic elements, and thus

cannot be understood outside of a larger generic context, what he called "la circularité

du chant." Zumthor further argued that the continuation of oral-formulaic practices on

the part of scribes accounted for the high degree of variation or *mouvance* in the

manuscript corpus. This approach advocated for the importance of individual

manuscript readings by attributing variation to art, rather than error; at the same time,

however, Zumthor's emphasis on orality and *la voix* effectively devalued the text by

radically privileging the context of oral performance, "the whole potential of the

spoken word," over its textual record.[24] The interplay of orality and textuality were

also at the heart of subsequent studies by Franz Baüml and Walter Ong, which argued

for the importance of oral practices in shaping textual forms and also for the dominant

influence of Latin in establishing textual conventions. Ong has argued that "cultural

diglossia," a pervasive division between oral and textual languages, Latin and

vernacular, and played a determinant role in the development of medieval vernacular

textual culture.[25]

More recent work has treated *chansonniers* not only as sources for lyrics, but

as invaluable records of reception, which shed light on the social, aesthetic and

ideological factors that shaped to the reception of songs. The groundbreaking work of

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[24] "Medieval texts present us with nothing but an empty form that is without a doubt profoundly distorted from what was, in another sensorimotor context, the whole potential of the spoken word." Paul Zumthor, Text and Voice 5.

[25] Franz H. Baüml, "Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," Speculum, 55, No. 2 (Apr., 1980): 237-265; "Medieval Texts and Two Theories of Oral-Formulaic Composition: A Proposal for a Third Theory," New Literary History, 16, No. 1 (Autumn, 1984): 31-49; Walter Ong, "Orality, Literacy and Medieval Textualization," New Literary History, 16 (1984): 1-12.

Maria Luisa Meneghetti advanced this approach by situating songbooks within the context of Italian court culture and the reading public. Likewise, studies by Maria Careri and Elizabeth Wilson Poe investigated the role of manuscript form on the transmission and reception of songs, particularly the emergence of new lyric genres, such as *vidas* and *razos* and their influence on the reception of lyrics. Such work has also succeeded in rehabilitating the 'accessory texts' that accompany lyrics in manuscripts. The troubadour biographies have been the focus of a comprehensive study by William Burgwinkle that analyzes their relationship to systems of patronage and the growth of a market economy.[26] Sarah Kay has made several recent contributions to the study of Occitan grammatical, which challenge convention understanding of the distinction between grammar and poetry, and the relationship of troubadour texts to medieval language theory.[27]

The importance of *vidas* and *razos* and their relationship to the lyric texts has long been recognized; renewed interest in the *chansonniers* has led critics such as William Burgwinkle and Elizabeth Wilson Poe to re-evaluate this relationship and the role of other 'accesory' texts, such as indexes, word-lists and grammars in the production of meaning. The Occitan grammars in particular have been the subject of several recent studies. Once considered examples of the pedantic later treatment of the oral tradition, these innovative texts are increasingly for the role they played in shaping the textual reception of troubadour poetry, and establishing literary and linguistic categories. Sarah Kay's recent work on Matfre Ermengard's *Breviari*

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[26] William Burgwinkle, <u>Love for Sale</u> (New York: Garland, 1997).
[27] Sarah Kay, "Occitan Grammar as a Science of Endings," <u>New Medieval Literatures</u> 11 (2009): 46.

d'Amor, for example, has challenged the distinction between grammatical and literary texts, while the work of Simon Gaunt and John Marshall has argued for the important role played by grammars and arts of composition in the development of vernacular literary consciousness more generally.[28] Such work is facilitated by the recent publication of facsimiles, editions and linguistic studies of the troubadour *chansonnier*-corpus, including the work of François Zufferey and the Intavulare series, which continues to publish surveys of individual manuscripts.

vi.   Chapter Outline

In each of the following chapters, I draw on extensive archival research with original documents in order to analyze how a characteristic of textual compilation influences the reading of songs in a specific manuscript. Chapter 1, "*Vida*, *Razo*, *Accessus*: Latin Commentary and Vernacular Love Lyric," compares two genres of commentary, the Latin *accessus ad auctores* and the Occitan *vidas* and *razos*, in order to argue that biographical criticism in troubadour manuscripts exemplifies a strategy of authorization through analogy with Latin. This chapter focuses in particular on the Latin *vitae* for Ovid and the Occitan *razos* for the troubadour Bertran de Born. I argue that the works of these poets challenge conventional models of authorship in ways that expose the underlying ideologies and expectations of commentary.

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[28] Gaunt, Simon and John Marshall, "Occitan Grammars and the Art of Troubadour Poetry" in The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism. Vol. 2, the Middle Ages, ed. Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) 472-495.

Chapter 2, "Silent Songbooks: Musical Notation and Blank Spaces in Manuscript *R*," studies one of only four songbooks to contain musical notation, asking how the transcription of melodies and lyrics comments on the textual status of troubadour song. I contend that the omission of musical notation from the vast majority of *chansonniers*, particularly in Italy, reflects an understanding of lyric authority that is based on textual rather than oral precedents. Nevertheless, musicality remained a distinctive marker of vernacular lyric, which was exploited by compilers in various ways to convey the experience of oral performance, even after melodies had ceased to be transmitted. This chapter concludes with a study of fifty songs and melodies by the thirteenth-century troubadour Guiraut Riquier, which he compiled as an autobiographical lyric cycle. I argue that this autonomous *libre*, as well as other works by Guiraut, constitute innovative experiments in the textual representation of troubadour songs, which also reflect evolving notions about the status and function of the vernacular lyric.

Chapter 3, "The Best Example: Occitan Grammars and the Transcription of Troubadour Song," re-evaluates the role played by Occitan grammatical texts in the production of *chansonniers* by arguing that these treatises provided both practical guidelines and conceptual models for the later transcription of lyrics, especially in areas where Occitan was not the spoken language. I examine three of the most influential grammars, the *Razos de Trobar* of Raimon Vidal, the *Regles de Trobar* of Jofre de Foixà and the *Donatz Proensals* of Uc Faidit, paying special attention to the mediating influence of Latin on the representation of Occitan as a language of literary texts. I further explore the relationship between grammar and transcription by

analyzing examples of grammatical hypercorrectness, specifically noun-declension, in the thirteenth-century Italian manuscript *A*. I argue that the tendency of scribes in some manuscripts to favor systematic declension and normative orthography over the possibility of variation for meter and rhyme reveals the dominant influence of Occitan grammars and the standards of Latin textuality on the process of transcription.

My central claim throughout the dissertation is that the analogy between Occitan and Latin, though perhaps a natural product of medieval textual culture, is nevertheless made explicit in many songbooks and elaborated through commentary and other means to become a distinctive characteristic of the troubadour corpus. The appropriation of Latin models is especially striking given the absence of intermediary texts bridging the gap between oral composition and the compilation of large-scale anthologies. The design of many manuscripts therefore draws attention to the fact that inherently textual models of literary authority, language and authorship are imposed onto lyrics that evoke a context of oral composition and performance. For this reason, the production of *chansonniers* essentially re-conceptualized the lyric by identifying it as a literary text and providing readers with apparatus for textual criticism and written composition. The dominant influence of manuscript culture on reception is clear from the work of later vernacular authors, such as Dante, who were influenced not only by troubadour lyrics, but also by the example of *chansonniers* as authoritative poetic texts in the vernacular.

Chapter 1

Vida, _Razo_, _Accessus_: Latin Commentary and the Vernacular _Auctor_

The evolution of *chansonniers* produced in Italy during the thirteenth and fourteenth

centuries attests to the growing prestige of troubadour poetry among non-native

speakers of Occitan.[29] Of the roughly fifty surviving *grands chansonniers*, twenty-

seven were produced in Italy between the mid-thirteenth and late-fourteenth

centuries. The earliest of these, Manuscript *D*, compiled in 1254, is a relatively

simple collection of songs: it contains an extensive index of authors and first lines,

but no portraits or glosses. Manuscript *H*, however, produced only twenty-five years

later, already tells a more complex story. In addition to recording song-lyrics, *H* also

contains eight stylized author-portraits, all of which depict female troubadours, as

well as twenty-six *vidas* and *razos*, prose texts that provide interpretive and

biographical commentary.[30] Subsequent manuscripts contain even more numerous

and diverse illustrations, as well as glossaries, rhyming dictionaries, grammars and a

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[29] See Introduction and Chapter 3 for continued discussion of Occitan poetry in Italy.
[30] Elizabeth W. Poe, <u>Compilatio: Lyric Texts and Prose Commentaries in Troubadour Manuscript <i>H</i></u> (Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum, 2000).

proliferation of *vidas* and *razos*, which are sometimes collected together in a separate section within the anthology.

These developments, characteristic of Italian *chansonniers* in general, attest to what has been described as an increasing 'textualization' of the oral song.[31] As troubadour anthologies became more complex and elaborate, they tended to omit features indicative of oral performance, such as musical notation, in favor of illumination and prose commentaries, which were directed primarily at readers, rather than listeners.[32] Such innovations indicate not only a change in medium, but also a significant shift in the conception of the lyric, which alters the representation of songs in a variety of significant ways. In particular, the scribes who compiled the troubadour *chansonniers* employed formal techniques of transcription, organization and commentary that were adapted from Latin grammatical models. This practice may not be remarkable in itself; however, in many troubadour texts, the use of Latin techniques of transcription and compilation establishes an implicit comparison between Occitan and Latin, the troubadour and the Latin *auctor*, that amounts to a claim for the authority and textual status of vernacular song. Such claims are characteristic of anthologies and commentaries produced in Italy and Spain, and are thus related to the textual transmission of troubadour song and its role in the emergence of other vernacular literatures.

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[31] See Walter Ong "Orality, Literacy and Medieval Textualization," <u>New Literary History</u>, 16 (1984): 1-12.

[32] Only one of the twenty-eight Italian *chansonniers* contains musical notation (*G*), while extensive or intermittent notation is present in contemporary manuscripts copied in Spain and especially in France, where notation was standard in lyric anthologies.

In this chapter, I will approach this important shift in representation by focusing on one aspect of these manuscripts in particular: the representation of authorship. The author is the central organizing principle of the majority of troubadour songbooks. Textual compilation fundamentally altered the relationship between individual troubadours and their songs by eliminating the performer, and creating the conditions necessary for establishing a textual canon. In this respect, the most important innovation of songbooks was the compilation of *vidas* and *razos*. Although these biographical texts may have roots in oral performance practices, their representation in manuscripts adheres to the conventions of Latin commentary, specifically the genre of biographical commentary known as the *accessus ad auctores*.[33] By imposing this scholastic model onto the troubadours, scribes also imported models of individual and textual authority that were derived from medieval Latin criticism.

i. *Vidas* and *Razos*: Medieval Commentary and Modern Perspectives

Widespread compilation of troubadour lyrics opened up a new conceptual space, one that is uniquely textual, in which the interests and experiences of new generations of readers were given voice and form. The *vidas* and *razos*, in particular, exemplify the re-conceptualization of the lyric implicit in this shift of performative medium. Initially intended to introduce or clarify songs, *vidas* and *razos* took on a life of their own in the manuscripts, eventually becoming semi-autonomous poetic genres within

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[33] See Alexander Schutz, "Were the Vidas and Razos Recited?" <u>Studies in Philology</u> 36 (1939): 565-70.

the lyric tradition, and even competing with the poems from which they derived.[34]

The surviving manuscripts attest to the importance that Italian readers, in particular, assigned to these new lyric genres. Of the twenty manuscripts that preserve *vidas* and *razos*, fifteen were compiled in Italy.[35] Two of these preserve biographies in an independent section within the *chansonnier*.[36] Unlike the lyrics, which circulated widely and in numerous versions, the *vidas* and *razos* appear to have been composed or collected simultaneously, perhaps even by a single individual, and they show a comparatively high degree of linguistic and stylistic consistency.[37]

Although the manuscripts do not always distinguish between *vidas* and *razos* as separate genres, some basic generic distinctions do apply.[38] In general, *vidas* are short prose biographies that introduce a selection of a troubadour's songs. They are highly formulaic, typically providing a concise set of details about the troubadour's place of birth, social class, patrons, lovers and poetic genre or style. *Razos*, on the other hand, are attached to individual songs, and give more extensive interpretation and commentary on the 'reason' (*razo*) for a poem's composition. *Razos* paraphrase the lyric, contextualize it or tell a loosely related story inspired by the song. In both

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[34] The *vida*-tradition culminated in the early-modern period in the popular Vies des plus Célèbres et Anciens Poètes Provençaux by Jehan de Nostredame, brother of the prophet.

[35] Jean Boutière and A.H. Schutz Biographies des Troubadours (Paris: Nizet, 1964) iv.

[36] Elizabeth W. Poe, "The Vidas and Razos" in F.R.P Akehurst and Judith M. Davis, A Handbook of the Troubadours (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 187-188.

[37] Boutière-Schutz viii-xi.

[38] The distinction between *vidas* and *razos* is respected more regularly in fourteenth-century manuscripts. See Boutière-Schutz ix.

vidas and *razos*, historical and biographical details may come directly from the poems, from an independent source or from the imagination of the commentator.

Despite the popularity of these texts among medieval readers, modern critical evaluations have tended to be dismissive of their value as either literature or commentary. In the opinion of Jean Boutière, the historical and critical value of these texts is marred by their dubious accuracy, their "lacunes" and "erreurs," while the language, though occasionally elegant, falls well short of the high standard of eloquence set by the lyric.[39] Much modern criticism insists on making a similar contrast between prose commentary and lyric, often replicating a *belles lettres* attitude about the comparative value of poetry and prose. William Paden, for example, chose to omit all the *vidas* and *razos* from his edition of Bertran de Born, arguing that they detract from an authentic experience of the lyric.[40] Although the language of the biographies is certainly more formulaic and less polished than that of the lyrics, the regular presence of both genres together on the manuscript page would seem to contradict Paden's claim; medieval readers clearly felt that prose commentary added to the experience of reading troubadour poetry, rather than detracting from it.

Apart from notions of style, modern critical disparagement of the biographies reflects a distinctly modern preference for the truth-value of lyric poetry, with its

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[39] "En dépit de leurs lacunes, de leurs erreurs et leurs légendes, *vidas* et *razos* nous sont fort précieuses…. Si l'expression y est génialment assez pauvre, la langue est simple et claire; le style, monotone souvent, a parfois une certaine élégance, et s'élève, à l'occasion (notamment dans certains razos de Bertran de Born,) jusqu'à l'éloquence." Boutière-Schutz xv.

[40] William D. Paden Jr., Tilde Sankovich and Patricia H. Stäblein, <u>The Poems of the Troubadour Bertran de Born </u>(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) 72.

claims for individual experience and emotional sincerity, over the anecdotes and romantic fantasies found in the *vidas* and *razos*. The lyrics may not always tell the literal truth, but at least they strive to express a higher emotional truth, which troubadour biographies merely imitate, dilute or obscure.[41] Such a concern with truth-value (or lack of it) may explain the reluctance on the part of many scholars to accept troubadour biographies as legitimate forms of commentary.[42]

The unwillingness to identify *vidas* and *razos* as history, "proprement dite," indicates both a rigid understanding of generic classification, and also an intriguing judgment about the comparative status of commentary and fiction. For Jeanroy, this is both a methodological and also an ethical distinction: not only do troubadour commentaries provide insufficient or unreliable information, they reveal a lack of *scrupules* on the part of the commentator. Responsible commentary should facilitate reading by providing sound interpretation of historical facts; failure of *vidas* and *razos* to do any of these things in a consistent way has left scholars like Jeanroy to puzzle over their intended function.[43]

And yet, medieval authors did not defend the line between poetic fiction and historical fact as stridently as modern critics, and to critique them for this is to reveal

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[41] Paden makes even grander claims for Bertran de Born: "[His] true reason to sing is an aesthetic and moral imperative demanding expression in order to judge, to criticize, even to change—or attempt to change—the world around him." 72.

[42] This ambivalence clearly underlies Alfred Jeanroy's description of the *vidas* as: "Ce curieux essai d'histoire littéraire… conçu un peu tard, poursuivi avec des moyens d'information rudimentaire, et surtout avec si peu de scrupules qu'il est permis… de la rattacher aussi bien à la littérature romanesque qu'à l'histoire proprement dite." La Poésie lyrique des troubadours (Paris and Toulouse: Privat et Didier, 1934) 104.

[43] Boutière even wondered whether they were composed with the deliberate goal of fooling posterity (a possibility he rejects), "Les 'biographes' ont-ils voulu délibérément tromper la postérité? Nous ne le pensons pas." Boutière-Schutz xiv.

our own assumptions about the proper function of commentary.[44] As short, mostly

anonymous prose texts that accompany poems in manuscripts, *vidas* and *razos*

naturally fall into the broad category of textual gloss. Their form and language may

be subject to a variety of influences, including scriptural exegesis, saints' lives and

Latin grammatical commentary. Of these, *vidas* and *razos* bear the strongest

resemblance to the genre known as the *accessus ad auctores*: prose prefaces that

accompanied the works of classical authors in medieval manuscripts and were

intended for students in Latin grammar schools.[45]

The role of the *accessus* as a structuring model on the *vidas* and *razos* has

been frequently noted by modern critics, but rarely explored. Troubadour

chansonniers were compiled at a time when vernacular textual culture was dominated

by Latin models, particularly in literary biography and gloss. It is reasonable to

assume that scribes and readers, even if they were not entirely literate in Latin, would

have been familiar with the basic structure and function of these forms. Less clear,

however, is the rhetorical effect produced by applying Latin models of textual

commentary to vernacular love poetry. This may have been a reflexive step for

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[44] As Boutière notes, "Au Moyen âge, les écrivains—poètes aussi bien que prosateurs, y compris les chroniqueurs—ne croyaient pas qu'il fût déloyal d'entremêler la vérité et la fiction, leur but essentiel étant de distraire, de divertir." Boutière-Schutz xiv.

[45] The relationship between troubadour biographies and *accessus ad auctores* has frequently been noted, but the implications of this comparison and its influence on the reception of songs has rarely been explored. The most thorough examination of the relationship between *accessus* and *vidas* is by Maria Luisa Meneghetti, Il Pubblico dei Trovatori (Torino: Guilio Einaudi, 1992). See also William E. Burgwinkle, Love for Sale (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997); Margarita Egan, "Commentary, *Vita Poetae*, and *Vida*. Latin and Old Provencal 'Lives of the Poets'" Romance Philology 37:1 (1983:Aug): 36-48; Elisabeth Wilson Poe, From Poetry to Prose in Old Provençal (Birmingham, Alabama: Summa Publications, 1984) and "Old Provençal Vidas as Literary Commentary." Romance Philology 33:4 (1980): 510-518.

readers educated in the Latin tradition, accustomed to the experience of text and gloss; yet it may also attest to the special prestige accorded to troubadour lyric, especially by the new generation of Italian readers who compiled the majority of songbooks. In this case, *vidas* and *razos* may be said to promote the status of the vernacular author through systematic classification and analogy with Latin.[46]

The process of textualization thus implies more than a simple transition from oral to written forms. In transcribing troubadour songs, scribes and readers actively engaged familiar textual models, the most dominant of which derived from Latin. As a result, *chansonniers* may be said to stage a confrontation in which the literary status of the vernacular poem and its author are evaluated and defined through the formal conventions of Latin textuality. The relationship between the troubadour biographies and the *accessus ad auctores* provides a particularly rich example of this process, because the latter was a pedagogical genre, which sought to provide students with a concise definition of literary authority. As a result, the imitation of this genre in troubadour manuscripts implicitly frames the reading of songs within Latin standards of textuality and authority.

ii.   *Acessus ad auctores*: Latin Commentary, Medieval Perspectives

The medieval *accessus* traces its roots back to commentaries by the late fourth century Roman grammarians, which were designed to provide students of rhetoric

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[46] As Maria Luisa Meneghetti claims, "*Vidas* e *razos* nascono, si è visto, col duplice scopo di 'distanziare', di oggettivare la ricezione dei testi trobadorici a beneficio dell'eterogeneo pubblico di corti feudali per lo piú tarde e laterali, e, insieme, di creare un'interpretatzione 'ufficiale' di tali testi." Meneghetti 209.

with an approach (*accessus*) to understanding challenging works. Several different

accessus-models were adopted during the Middle Ages.[47] The most common, which

seems to derive from Boethius, divided texts according to seven distinct questions or

headings: the title of the work (*titulus libri*), the name of the author (*nomen auctoris*),

the intention of the author (*intentio auctoris*), the subject matter of the work (*materia

libri*), the method of procedure (*modus agendi*), the order of the work (*ordo libri*), the

utility (*utilitas*) and the branch of learning to which the work belonged (*cui parti

philosophiae supponitur*).[48]

These categories were adopted and reproduced by schoolmasters as early as

the tenth century, and were a central part of Latin language learning throughout the

Middle Ages. Among the most popular school texts were the *Accessus ad Auctores*

attributed to Bernard of Utrecht,[49] a late eleventh-century Benedictine, and two

twelfth-century texts, a commentary on Ovid by Arnulf of Orléans[50] and the *Dialogus

Super Auctores* of Conrad of Hirsau,[51] a dialogue in which a teacher explains the

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[47] Models of preface used by medieval writers included Aristotle's four causes, as well as fourth-century commentaries on Vergil by the grammarians Servius and Donatus. For a more detailed discussion of the different types of *accessus*, see R.W. Hunt, "The Introductions to the *Artes*," Studia Mediaevalia (Bruge: De Tempel, 1949); Also A.J. Minnis, Medieval Theory of Authorship (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984) and J.B. Allen "Commentary as Criticism: Formal Cause, Discursive Form and the Late Medieval Accessus" Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Lovaniensis (Louvain: 1971).

[48] Minnis, Theory of Authorship 15-28.

[49] R.B.C. Huygens, Accessus ad Auctores: Bernard d'Utrecht (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970).

[50] Latin texts of *accessus* of Ovid are from Fausto Ghisalberti, "Mediaeval Biographies of Ovid," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes 9 (1946): 10-59. English translations (unless indicated) from Elliot, "Accessus ad Auctores: Twelfth-Century Introductions to Ovid," Allegorica 5 (1980): 6-48.

[51] R.B.C. Huygens, Dialogus Super Auctores (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1955).

virtues of various classical authors to his student.[52] During the twelfth century, introductions by prominent commentators were compiled independent of classical works and circulated in schools throughout Europe, where they became standard pedagogical texts in their own right.[53]

The medieval *accessus* exemplifies a practice of reading that attempted to find Christian ethical lessons in any text. This practice served a necessary function within a Christian educational system that was largely based on the study of pagan authors. The *accessus* provided students with models of how to interpret the Latin *auctores* in ways consistent with Christian doctrine. The first duty of the medieval teacher and exegete was to instruct students in responsible reading before granting them freer access to classical texts. As a result, medieval teachers developed and formalized a variety of reading practices that were employed to derive ethical lessons from classical literary texts, a practice that J.B. Allen has dubbed "the ethical poetic."[54] Their approach was primarily pedagogical, rather than hermeneutic. As Conrad of Hirsau wrote, "the moral explanation is when what is said is adapted to encourage and cherish good moral qualities."[55]

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[52] The texts mentioned above appear in numerous twelfth-century manuscripts. For specific manuscript references, see Huygens, <u>Accessus</u> and <u>Dialogus</u>; also Elliot, "Accessus ad Auctores."

[53] For more information on the development of the medieval commentary tradition and its relation to classical commentary, see A.J. Minnis and A.B. Scott, <u>Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism</u> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988) xv-37.

[54] 'Moral' might be a more accurate word than 'ethical,' but the latter has acquired critical currency thanks to J.B. Allen's book <u>The Ethical Poetic of the Later Middle Ages</u> (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982). See also John Dagenais, <u>The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture</u> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

[55] Minnis, <u>Medieval Literary Theory</u> 45.

Throughout the twelfth century, techniques developed for the interpretation of sacred texts, such as allegorical and typological reading, were systematically applied to secular poetry. At the same time, the format of the literary *accessus* described above began to compete with more traditional Biblical commentary, such as the *glossulae*, or short prefaces to individual books of the Bible. *Accessus* and *glossulae* perform similar functions: both structure the reading of a text in manuscript by summarizing and classifying its notable features. Such overlapping of sacred and secular commentary is a sign of the growing status and influence of secular texts; moreover, it reveals a shared anxiety about the moral dangers inherent in poetic language. Just as the most commonly glossed book of the Bible was the *Song of Songs*, so the most extensive *accessus* were reserved for authors whose language was particularly complex (Vergil) or whose poetry contained subversive themes (Ovid). Commentators effectively sought to limit the spiritual dangers of a text by limiting the possibilities of interpretation, presenting students with an 'authoritative' reading that systematically affirmed Christian moral values.

The interpretations produced as a result of ethical reading may often seem contrived; and yet this apparent contrast between text and gloss reveals much about the exegetical function of the *accessus*. As Conrad of Hirsau explained in the *Dialogus Super Auctores*, the job of the commentator was not to interpret the literary nuances of a given text in depth, but rather to situate the work within a Christian moral paradigm, thus providing the student with a sound intellectual and ethical 'approach' (*accessus*) to reading. As the student in this dialogue explains,

Nec etiam a te magna requiro: quero enim a te non ut totius domus apertae

suppellectilem scruteris, sed clausis claves adhibeas ostiis, non auctorum

quero lectionem vel expositionem, sed ex principio eorum, id est materia vel

intentione, colligere medietatem et finem.

I am not asking you for much. I do not ask you to examine the furniture of the

whole house you have thrown open to me, but simply to insert the keys in the

closed door. I am not seeking a commentary on or exposition of the authors,

but simply the chance to form an impression of the contents of the central and

final parts of their work from their beginnings, that is their subject matter or

their intention.[56]

The *accessus* placed importance on the commentator's ability to "illuminate" moral

obscurities, as Conrad's *magister* goes on to explain:

Commentatores sunt qui solent ex paucis multa cogitare et obscura dicta

aliorum dilucidare.

Commentators are those who can work out many ideas, beginning with just a

few facts and illuminate the obscure sayings of others.[57]

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[56] Huygens, <u>Accessus</u> 73-74; Minnis, <u>Medieval Literary Theory</u> 41-42.
[57] Huygens, <u>Accessus</u> 75; Minnis, <u>Medieval Literary Theory</u> 43.

The commentator was not beholden to the letter of the text, the *nuda littera*, but to his own understanding of the author's true intention, "what the author's words really mean," as Conrad put it.[58] The systematic development of authorial intention as a critical category is perhaps the most significant innovation of the medieval *accessus* as opposed to the classical genre. *Intentio auctoris* was a category familiar to readers of scriptural commentary, in which the "expositor" (to use Conrad's term) sought to determine the divine intention of God (*intentio dei*) in the physical text. No longer a mere intermediary, like the human author of scripture, the secular *auctor* was the 'efficient cause' of his own work, whose individual character and intention became legitimate objects of study. Unlike the scriptural expositor, who relied on revelation to illuminate the intention of God, the literary exegete used a concrete set of biographical *circumstantiae*, including place of birth, social rank, patrons and literary works, to determine authorial intention. Conrad's teacher acknowledged the essential importance of biography to interpretation:

> In his inquisitionibus tuis auctoristam mihi depinxisse videris, qui secularibus adprime disciplinis eruditus clave scientiae pulsantibus solet aperire, quippe cui nec minima excidunt vivaci memoriae, dum maiora loco, tempore, persona cogitur dispertire.

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[58] "Explanatio est ad literam, ubi dicitur quomodo nuda litera intelligenda sit, ad sensum, <ubi dicitur> ad quid referatur quod dicitur, ad alegoriam, ubi aliud intelligitur et aliud significatur, ad moralitatem, ubi quod dicitur ad mores bonos excitandos colendosque reflectitur." Huygens, <u>Accessus</u> 78; Minnis, <u>Medieval Literary Theory</u> 45.

In making these requests, you seem to me to have painted the picture of an

expert on the authors who, having a first-rate knowledge of the secular

disciplines, is wont to use the key of knowledge to open the door to those who

knock; a man whose lively memory never lets the most significant fact elude

it, when he has to sort out great truths in terms of place, time and person.[59]

This statement assumes that the facts of an author's life (place, time and person)

reveal something about moral character, which would, in turn, be reflected in the

work he produced. The function of biography was therefore to establish the moral

authority of a text by portraying its author as a moral figure.

A.J. Minnis has identified the scholastic *accessus* as representative of what he

terms the "medieval theory of authorship." For Minnis, twelfth and thirteenth-century

literary theory was increasingly interested in the author as the embodiment of a

specialized *auctoritas*, which was intellectual, but also related to ethics:

The concern with authorial role or function—sometimes termed the author's

'office' (*officium*)—is manifest by two facets of the author's individuality

which the exegete sought to describe, his individual literary activity and his

individual moral activity.[60]

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[59] Huygens, <u>Accessus</u> 73; Minnis, <u>Medieval Literary Theory</u> 41.
[60] Minnis, <u>Medieval Theory of Authorship</u> 5; "Twelfth-century exegetes were
interested in the *auctor* mainly as a source of authority, but in the thirteenth century, a
new type of exegesis emerged, in which the focus had shifted from the divine *auctor*
to the human *auctor* of scripture. It became fashionable to emphasize the literal sense
of the Bible, and the intention of the human *auctor* was believed to be expressed by

The medieval *accessus* placed particular emphasis on the biographical or *vita poetae* section. Originally a subset of the classical *accessus,* biography eventually came to dominate the whole document, exercising a major influence on the development of late-medieval encyclopedias and reference books.[61] At its most formulaic, the *vita* constitutes the first few lines of a preface and contains concise information about the poet's life, as in this *accessus* to the *Ars Poetica* of Horace:

> Horatius Flaccus libertino patre natus in Apulia cum patre in Sabinos commeavit. Quem cum pater Romam misisset in ludum literarum parcissimis impensis, angustias patris vicit ingenio; coluitque adolescens Brutum, sub quo tribunus militum in bello militavit captusque est a Cesare Augusto, post multum vero temporis beneficio Mecenatis non solum servatus, sed etiam in amiciciam est receptus. Quapropter Mecenati et Augusto in omnibus scriptis suis venerabiliter assurgit.

> Horatius Flaccus, the son of a freedman, was born in Apulia and migrated with his father to the Sabine country. His father sent him to Rome to receive education, on a very tight allowance, but he overcame his father's straightened circumstances by his ability (ingenium), and as a young man cultivated the

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the literal sense. As a result, the exegetes' interest in their texts became more literal." Minnis, <u>Medieval Literary Theory</u> 5.

[61] Minnis cites the <u>Speculum Maius</u> of Vincent of Beauvais and the <u>Compendiloquium</u> of John of Wales as encyclopedic works that draw heavily on *accessus*-material. <u>Medieval Literary Theory</u> 14.

friendship of Brutus. He served as military tribune under him in the war and was taken prisoner by Caesar Augustus. But after a long period spent in captivity, thanks to the kindness of Maecenas he was not only rescued, but actually admitted to his [i.e. Caesar's] friendship. Consequently, in all his writings he always rises to give Maecenas and Augustus respectful greeting.[62]

The commentator provides fundamental details about Horace's social origins, education and literary activity, a basic biographical model that is strikingly reminiscent of the more formulaic troubadour *vidas*. He refrains from making overt critical judgments or interpretations, noting only that Horace came from an inferior social class, received limited education and achieved success through a combination of innate talent and the generosity of influential patrons. In commending Horace's praise of Augustus and Maecenas, he also evokes the values of the medieval court with its literary economy of patronage and praise.

In this respect, the model of authorship is not significantly different from what we might find in the classical 'life.' The real point of distinction comes later in the *accessus*, when the exegete considers the poet's *intentio* and the usefulness (*utilitas*) of his work:

Utilitatem ex intentione collige, quae est omnibus illis quae hic precipiuntur instructum esse. Ethicae subponitur, quia ostendit qui mores conveniant

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[62] Huygens 49-50; Minnis, <u>Medieval Literary Theory</u> 32-33.

poetae, vel potius logicae, quia ad noticiam rectae et ornatae locutionis et ad

exercitationem regularium scriptorum nos inducit.

You can gather what the usefulness of this work is from the author's intention,

which is that the poet should be instructed in all the precepts given in this

book. It pertains to ethics, since it shows what behavior is appropriate for a

poet, or rather to logic, because it guides us to a knowledge of correct and

elegant style and to habitual reading of authors who may serve as models.[63]

The medieval *accessus* departs from classical models by insisting that the *Ars Poetica*

instruct a reader in ethics as well as in poetic style.[64] Although these claims are not

explicitly Christian in this case, it is clear that the conception of *auctoritas* at work

demands an ethical or moral dimension—a demand that is inscribed into the very

schema of the *accessus*. By urging readers to consider the *utilitas* or *finalis causa* of a

work (the "fructus legentis" as Conrad of Hirsau put it) the *accessus* effectively

required an ethical interpretation: this was the pedagogical justification for reading

pagan classics, especially in cases where the text did not appear to conform to

orthodox values.[65]

Minnis and Allen view ethical reading as the logical result of a distinctively

medieval mania for classification, which sought to demonstrate the authority of a

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[63] Huygens 50; Minnis, <u>Medieval Literary Theory</u> 33.
[64] Ambivalence about this claim is reflected by the fact that the commentator corrects
himself, classifying the work as both "logic" and "ethics."
[65] Huygens, <u>Accessus</u> 78; Minnis, <u>Medieval Literary Theory</u> 46.

given text by showing its adherence to a defined set of abstract criteria.[66] For Minnis, classification is a means of authorization, and it is the consistent identification of a given text with a recognizable *auctor*-figure that allows biography to perform this authorizing function—indeed, demands it.[67] Even in its simplest forms, therefore, biography functioned as a tool for authorizing secular texts, often providing a rationale for ethical reading that may not be supported by the text alone. This is particularly true in the case of Ovid, whose poems received more commentary than any other classical author, with the exception of Vergil.[68] While the number of *accessus* for Ovid attest to his popularity during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (the so-called *aetas ovidiana*), they also betray an anxiety about accepting the *auctoritas* of poems that take sexual desire, often of an illicit or adulterous nature, as their explicit theme. Ovid presented a challenge to evaluation literary authority according to ethics: how could the *auctor* constitute an ethical figure if his poetry is so obviously unethical? This was the objection posed by the pupil in Conrad of Hirsau's *Dialogus*:

> Cur scripta viciosa sunt appetenda, quorum sensus inificit studiis exercitanda
>
> ingenia? Cur ovidianis libris Christi tyrunculus docile summittat ingenium, in

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[66] J.B. Allen, "Commentary as Criticism: Formal Cause, Discursive Form and the Late Medieval Accessus," <u>Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Lovaniensis</u>, ed. J Ijsewijn and E. Kessler (Munich, 1973) 29-48.

[67] "The *auctor* must be utterly trustworthy and of excellent character, or else … the authority of his works will be undermined." Minnis, "De Vulgari Auctoritate: Chaucer, Gower and the Men of Great Authority," <u>ELS Monograph Series</u> (1991) 37.

[68] Martin Irvine, <u>The Making of Textual Culture</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 118-160.

quibus etsi potest aurum in stercore inveniri, querentem tamen polluit ipse

fetor adiacens auro, licet avidum auri?

Why should we seek out writings tainted with vice whose meaning taints

minds that should be trained by what they study? Why should the young

recruit in Christ's army subject his impressionable mind to the writing of

Ovid, in which even though gold can be found among the dung, yet the

foulness that clings to the gold defiles the seeker, even though it is the gold he

is after?[69]

And yet, as Conrad admits, it was impossible to ignore the standard represented by

Ovid's Latin, which was superior to that of many *auctores* enshrined as moral

authorities. Ovid's popularity, both ancient and medieval, thus presented the Christian

commentator with a dilemma, as Alison Elliot has noted: "He had the choice of

glossing the content and keeping the poetry, or of doing away with Ovid's verse

altogether. Fortunately poetry won out."[70]

The *accessus* of Arnulf of Orléans exemplify the strategies employed by

commentators to support ethical readings of Ovid. At the hands of medieval exegetes,

the poet underwent a miraculous metamorphosis of his own, wherein he ceased to be

"tainted with vice" and became instead "the instructor of good morals, the uprooter of

evil."[71] Arnulf achieved this by taking the pursuit of unstated authorial intention as an

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[69] Huygens, <u>Accessus</u> 114; Minnis, <u>Medieval Literary Theory</u> 56.
[70] Elliot 8.
[71] Elliot 19.

excuse to make an almost entirely allegorical reading of the text, as in this preface to the *Metamorphoses*:

> Intencio est de mutacione dicere, ut non intelligamus de mutacione que fit extrinsecus tantum in rebus corporeis bonis vel malis sed etiam de mutacione que fit intrinsecus ut in anima, ut reducat nos ab errore ad cognitionem veri creatoris… Dedit enim deus anime rationem per quam reprimeret sensualitatem, sicut motus irrationalis VII planetarum per motum firmamenti reprimitur. Nos vero rationabilem motum more planetarum negligentes contra creatorem nostrum rapimur. Quod Ovidius videns vult nobis ostendere per fabulosam narrationem motum anime qui fit intrinsecus.[72]

> Ovid's intention is to describe transformation, not so that we may understand the change which takes place externally into good or bad corporeal forms, but rather so that we might understand that which takes place internally, in the soul, to lead us back from error to the knowledge of the true creator… God in fact gave reason to the soul by which it might restrain sensuality, just as the irrational motion of the seven planets is restricted by the motion of the firmament. But we, neglecting the rational motion as do the planets, are driven against our Creator. Ovid, seeing this, wishes to show us through a fabulous narrative the motion of the soul, which occurs internally.

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[72] Elliot 14-15.

Arnulf's reading of Ovid in this case mirrors his own methodological approach: his critical focus is not on the external meaning of the text, its literal sense, but rather on the internal meaning, which he claims to be the unstated intention of the author. Reading for authorial intention effectively freed the commentator from the responsibility of defending a problematic text on its own terms. As long as he could demonstrate that the intention of the author was pure, then the text could be considered morally acceptable, as well. In other words, Arnulf redeemed Ovid's poetry by redeeming Ovid himself.

This task was made easier by the fact that no classical life of Ovid had survived into the Middle Ages, so commentators exercised unusual freedom in composing their biographies, either gleaning information from Ovid's work or inventing biographical details in order to exemplify ethical lessons. Ovid's love affairs and his exile became rich soil for speculation, gossip and outright myth-making. For example, Arnulf gave three different explanations for Ovid's exile:

> Quaeritur autem cur missus sit in exilium. Unde tres dicuntur sententiae, prima quod concubuit cum uxore Cesaris Livia nomine, secunda quod sicut familiaris transiens eius porticum vidit eum cum amasio suo coeuntem, unde timens Cesar ne ab eo proderetur miit eum in exilium, tercia quia librum fecerat de Arte Amatoria, in quo iuvenes docuerat matronas decipiendo sibi allicere, et ideo offensis Romanis dicitur missus esse in exilium.

It is asked why he was sent into exile. On this subject there are three opinions.

First, that he slept with Caesar's wife, whose name was Livia; second that

being a friend of Caesar and crossing his portico, he saw Caesar having

intercourse with a male lover, whereupon Caesar, fearing that Ovid might

betray him, sent him into exile; third, that he wrote the *Ars Amatoria* in which

he taught young men to attract married women by deception, and it is said that

he was therefore exiled because he had offended the Romans.[73]

Only the last of these has any basis in historical fact, yet it is the first two

explanations that were appropriated by subsequent commentators, then retold and

elaborated, often to fabulous effect, as in this fourteenth-century *vita poetae*:

> Ovidius igitur de ingenuis parentibus extitit oriundus et in Liviam Augusti
>
> uxorem anhelavit quam in libro sine titulo sub falso nomine Corinnam
>
> vocavit, unde illud: 'Moverat ingenium' etc…. In Consultis prognosticis
>
> Ovidius ad territos imperatricis talamos per scalam eneam ascendebat.
>
> Coactus autem necessario per nimio timore, per sua vestigia repredare,
>
> quosdam de scala gradus Virgilius abstulerat fraudolenter. Ovidius ergo non
>
> ore suo facinus suum sed cruris fractione demonstravit. Unde Ovidius de
>
> cetero Virgilium habuit odio.[74]

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[73] Elliot 34-35.
[74] Elliot 44-45.

Ovid therefore was born of noble parents, and he pursued Livia the wife of Augustus, whom in his book without a title he called Corinna, whence he says "moverat ingenium" [she inspired my genius].… Following the advice of soothsayers, Ovid, although terrified, used to climb up to the bedroom of the empress by a bronze ladder. He was compelled, however, by necessity to retrace his footsteps because of excessive fear; Vergil treacherously removed some of the rungs from the ladder. Ovid therefore revealed his crime not by his face but by a broken leg. For this reason, Ovid hated Vergil.

The echoes of vernacular romance and fabliaux in this vignette suggest that that by the fourteenth century, at least, the function of commentary was no longer purely pedagogical. Rather than systematically supporting an orthodox model of authorship, the *vitae Ovidii* show a playful and contentious array of authorial representations: Ovid is described as a Christian prophet and a moral teacher, but also as an exemplar of immoderate lust and righteous punishment, even a magician in league with the devil.

The *accessus* make clear that attitudes towards Ovid as a figure of literary authority were fundamentally divided; and yet commentators were forced to acknowledge the appeal of his poetry and duty-bound to justify it according to the established system of values. The end result is that the *accessus* for Ovid, more prominently than for other classical authors, legitimize and promote the possibility of a different kind of reading, one which does not have the pursuit of ethical lessons as its explicit aim. The clearest justifications for reading Ovid were not ethical or

pedagogical, but aesthetic: reading Ovid was reading for pleasure, as Arnulf of Orléans admits: "The final cause, evidently the utility, is to recognize the ornamental style and the beautiful word order here."[75]

Biographies of Ovid reflect changing attitudes towards the values and goals of reading in general, particularly in conjunction with the rise in popularity and availability of vernacular texts. Many thirteenth-century Italian readers expressed misgivings about reading solely for pleasure, rather than moral instruction, especially in the case of vernacular love lyric and romances that promoted erotic themes. Such concerns clearly preoccupied Dante, whose major work attempts to redeem secular love lyric as a vehicle for Christian salvation. Minnis evokes Ovid in order to describe the challenges that Dante's project posed to existing paradigms of literary authority:

> Certain vernacular writers (Dante most of all) sought to locate and empower their writings and those of distinguished contemporaries in relation to the systems and strategies of textual evaluation that scholasticism had produced…. But there was a major stumbling block: the shade of Ovid, as it were, haunted such attempts at valorization. Vernacular secular literature had human love as its main subject, and how could a poet who wrote about love, and/or expressed his own (limiting and probably demeaning) emotional

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[75] Elliot 39.

experiences, be trusted as a fount of wisdom, accepted as a figure worthy of respect and belief? An *auctor amans* was a contradiction in terms.[76]

Yet, as the *accessus* demonstrate, a century before Dante, the *auctor amans* already represented a problematic figure for Latin criticism. In the remainder of this chapter, I will examine the role of prose biographies in shaping the figure of the troubadour as *auctor amans*, and the influence of this critical model on the reading of songs.

iii.   *Vidas* and *Razos*: Provençal Commentaries

Perhaps the most obvious similarity between troubadour *vidas* and *razos* and Latin *accessus ad auctores* is their physical representation in manuscripts. The conventions of Latin commentary were firmly established by the time that the first troubadour songbooks were compiled in the mid-thirteenth century. Typically, biblical glosses were situated in the margins of primary texts, while secular commentary preceded the work, appearing as a block of text, often written in smaller letters in red ink. *Vida*s and *razos* followed the latter format, and were also compiled and circulated separately, as in the case of academic prefaces.

In addition to physical similarities, these two genres also share significant stylistic and functional characteristics. Both seek to facilitate the reading of poetic texts by providing additional information and interpretation. Both do this systematically: the *accessus* adhere to the seven questions or *circumstantia* described

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[76] Minnis, "De Vulgari Auctoritate" 39.

above, while the *vidas* conform to a less official but no less consistent structure. In general, they seek to identify individual troubadours by situating them within recognizable historical, geographical, linguistic and social contexts. As with the Latin *vitae*, biographical commentary on the poet naturally leads to critical commentary on the poetry. The absence of any real distinction between these categories, however, makes it hard to evaluate the *vidas* according to the same criteria that govern the *vitae*.

Margarita Egan and Elizabeth Wilson Poe have made opposing claims for the status and function of *vidas* as literary criticism. Egan argues that the *vidas* are a fundamentally oral genre, analogous in some respects to the Latin tradition, but not in fact historically related:

> *Vitae poetae* were read. They tell of learning, of books, of the true faith. They focus on the written Latin word and provide canonical readings of the *auctores*. The *vidas*, by contrast, were recited to a lay public. Their interpretations of troubadour lyrics are governed by the pragmatic realities of a medieval minstrel's existence.[77]

Egan's view depends on a problematic distinction between written and oral, which effectively ignores the fact that *vidas* were copied and circulated as texts throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In fact, there is no record of oral recitation, and the evidence strongly suggests that *vidas* were composed in Italy during the

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[77] Egan, "Commentary" 47.

thirteenth century, probably by a single individual.[78] The predominance of *vidas* and

razos in Italian manuscripts from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries suggests that

commentary was an attribute of increased textualization, elaborating lyrics that were

already circulating in written form. The *vidas*, like the *vitae*, were therefore designed

for reading and comment on the written word.

Elizabeth Wilson Poe has made more effective claims for the function of *vidas*

and *razos* as literary commentary. Poe acknowledges that *vidas* are primarily stories,

but she argues that they perform an important critical function by grounding the "I" of

the lyric in specific cultural and historical contexts: "The troubadour lyric tradition

observed a built-in equivalence between experience and song, an equivalence which,

among other things, allowed biographical data to function as literary commentary."[79]

Unlike the *accessus*, then, which re-interpret classical works to conform to a Christian

context, the *vidas* endorse and explain vernacular lyric by presenting affective

experience as historical fact.

The boundary between biography and commentary is illustrated by the *vida*

for Arnaut Daniel, which begins by providing some basic biographical facts:

Arnautz Daniels si fo d'aquella encontrada don fo N'Arnautz de Meruoill, de

l'evesquat de Peiregors, d'un castel que a nom Ribairac, e fo gentils hom.[80]

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[78] See Alexander Schutz, "Where were the Provençal Vidas and Razos Written?" Modern Philology 35 (1937-1938): 225-232; William Burgwinkle, Love for Sale (New York and London, Garland, 1997) 75-115.
[79] Poe, "Old Provençal Vidas" 513.
[80] Boutière-Schutz 59.

Arnaut Daniel came from the same region as Lord Arnaut de Meruoill, from

the bishopric of Perigord, from a castle named Ribérac, and he was a noble

man.[81]

The commentator gives Arnaut's geographical context (Périgord), social rank (noble)

as well as his association with another famous troubadour (Arnaut de Meruoill). The

remainder of the *vida* elaborates on this basic character sketch by showing how

Arnaut is different from other troubadours:

Et amparet ben letras e delectet se en trobar. Et abandonet las letras, et fetz se

joglars, e pres une maniera de trobar en caras rimas per que soas cansons no

son leus ad entendre ni ad aprendre.

And he learned letters well and he took delight in inventing poetry. And he

abandoned letters and became a minstrel; and he developed a way of inventing

with difficult rhymes, which is why his songs are not easy to understand or to

learn.[82]

This is presented as additional biography, yet it also amounts to a significant critical

appraisal of Arnaut's work, which is characterized as formally complex and

intellectually challenging. This description also signals a shift in focus away from

[81] Egan, The *Vidas* of the Troubadours (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984) 8.
[82] Egan, *Vidas* 8.

biography and towards criticism. This subtle shift apparent in the concluding

sentences, where the commentator cites a passage and attempts to interpret it:

Et amet una auta domna de Gascoinga, muiller d'En Guillem de Buovilla, mas

non fo cregut que la domna li fezes plaiser en dreit d'amor; per qu'el dis:

Eu son Arnautz qu'amas l'aura

E chatz la lebre ab lo bou

E nadi contra suberna

And he loved a high-born lady from Gascony, wife of Lord Guillem de

Bouvila. But it was not believed that the lady gave him pleasure in love,

which is why he says:

I am Arnaut who gathers the wind,

and hunts the hare with an ox

and swims against the tide.[83]

The *vida*-writer offers a biographical motive—frustrated love—in order to make

sense of a difficult passage. This is reminiscent of the critical approach of the

accessus, which also present the poet's unstated intention (*intentio*) as a fundamental

category of textual interpretation. In the same way that the *accessus* cite Christian

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[83] Egan, *Vidas* 8.

ethics as an interpretive paradigm, the explanation provided here stresses Arnaut's participation in another objective ethical system, that of courtly love.

iv.   Troubadour *Razo* and *Intentio Auctoris*

The *vida* evaluates the authority of a troubadour by making assessments about social origins, ethical character and the nature of the poetry. These three criteria correspond to categories in the *accessus*-scheme, namely the *nomen auctoris*, *materia libri*, *modus agendi*, and *intentio auctoris* headings. In the remainder of this chapter, I would like to think about how reading of the *vidas* and *razos* changes if we view them through the lens of Latin literary-critical terminology. How do the *vidas* and *razos* represent individual *auctoritas*? What role does *intentio* play in establishing this? And how do Latin models of criticism construct the representation and reception of song-texts?

The primary work that *vidas* and *razos* do in manuscripts is to contextualize, explain and interpret songs within a collection for the benefit of later readers, who may have had only limited knowledge of the language and history of the Occitan region. The *vidas* and *razos* survive primarily in Italian manuscripts from the late thirteenth century, and appear to have been composed in Italy sometime around that time.[84] Since Uc de Saint Circ names himself as the author of two biographies,

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[84] Boutière and Schutz claim that there were two waves of biographies, the initial thirteenth-century texts, which may have been based on oral performance, and those of the fourteenth century, which are clearly products of a developed textual culture. "Les *razos* des autres troubadours n'apparaissent qu'au siècle suivant, le XIVe, et certaines, plusieurs fois remainiées et amplifiées, atteignent, particulièrement dans le

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numerous scholars have speculated that he may have composed a substantial number

of these texts, perhaps while in residence at the northern Italian court of Alberico da

Romano.[85]

As with the *acessus ad auctores*, interpretation in the *vidas* and *razos*

naturally leads to invention, a process that Jeanroy described as "metaphor giving

way to anecdote," producing independent narratives and even mini-novellas that are

often loosely based on the songs they purport to explain. A famous example of this

process occurs in the *vida* of Jaufre Rudel, which precedes his small corpus in several

northern Italian manuscripts from the late thirteenth century.[86] The *vida* transforms

Jaufre's ambiguous refrain, "amors de terra lonhdana" (love from/of a distant land),

which is repeated in two songs, into a dramatic tale about the poet's love for the

countess of Tripoli, whom he had never seen, and his voyage across the sea to die in

her arms. There is no external evidence for this story, which appears to have been

purely an invention of Jaufre's biographer. Nevertheless, this imaginative

'interpretation' had a profound influence on the reception of Jaufre's songs. His fatal

love for the countess exemplifies an ethic of *fin'amor*, which is suggested by the

songs, but drawn in more vivid detail in the biography. In fact, the *vida* has

overshadowed the poems, inspiring numerous retellings, including an opera, and

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manuscript P, un développement considerable, et constituent des manières de
nouvelles en prose, dont paraissent s'être inspirés les conteurs italiens, et notamment
l'auteur du *Novellino*." Boutière-Schutz, ix.

[85] See Guido Favati, Le Biografie Trovadoriche (Bologna: Palmaverde, 1961);
Burgwinkle, Love For Sale; Elizabeth Wilson Poe, "Towards a Balanced View of the
Vidas and *Razos*," Romanistische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte: Cahiers
d'Histoire des Littératures Romanes, 1-2 (1986): 18-28. Uc de Saint Circ was in Italy
by the mid-thirteenth century. Alberico da Romano controlled the Veneto and had a
court based at Treviso. See Burgwinkle, Love for Sale 59-74.

[86] The *vida* for Jaufré Rudel appears in *A, B, I, K* and *N*. Boutière-Schutz, 16.

transforming Jaufré into an example of the courtly lover for readers from the Middle
Ages to the present day.

The *vida* for Jaufré demonstrates the power of commentary to shape the
representation of a troubadour and the reception of his songs. In many cases, the
process of fashioning a biography out of lyric texts reveals the expectations and
critical ideologies that motivated the process of compilation. The emphasis on
fin'amor in the *vida* for Jaufre reflects the prevalence of courtly love as a theme in the
selection and organization of songs in the northern Italian manuscripts, in particular.
These *chansonniers* privilege the love song (*canso*) to the exclusion of the debate
song (*tenso*) or poems on political and moral themes (*sirventes*). They also favor
songs by poets, such as Bernart de Ventadorn and Guiraut de Bornelh, who conform
to an image of the troubadour as courtly lover. Furthermore, the prominence of
biographical commentary in these songbooks is in keeping with a general emphasis
on the figure of the author, which is the structuring principle for the most important
Italian *chansonniers*. In addition to extensive indexes and biographies, these
manuscripts include author portraits, which appear within the historiated capital letter
of the first song, and are positioned directly next to the *vida*. In many cases, these
caricatures clearly illustrate prominent details from the *vida*, rather than the songs.
The *vida* for Guiraut de Bornelh, for example, specifies that he always traveled with
"dos cantadors que cantavon las soas chansos" ("two singers who sang his songs");
accordingly, his author portrait in manuscript *I* depicts him flanked by two singers.[87]
Likewise, the images of Bertran de Born show him armed for battle, clearly reflecting

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[87] Boutière-Schutz 39.

the martial themes in his songs and biographies. Such portraits are highly formulaic by nature, depicting troubadours as singers, lovers or armed knights, authorial poses which highlight the themes of court performance, *fin'amor*, and chivalry conventionally associated with troubadour song.

The portraits thus work in conjunction with biographies to promote an image of the troubadour as an author figure that conforms to certain prominent courtly ideals and may in turn reflect a narrowly ideological conception of the relationship between troubadour song and the ethical values of *fin'amor*. This is particularly true of the Italian *chansonniers*, which project an impression of uniformity that is at odds with the diversity of the corpus in general, overshadowing the qualities of parody, irony and play. Portraits and commentaries show the power of textual compilation to shape the reception of a troubadour and his songs in accordance with the values and expectations of thirteenth-century readers. The distinctive characteristics of these songbooks, from tables of contents, to *mise-en-page*, illustrations and biographies, contribute to create a meta-commentary on the role of the troubadour as an author figure, which shapes and even in some cases overshadows the representation of song texts.

The *vida*s are, in general, more formulaic than the *razos*, but, taken together, they reveal a degree of inconsistency and debate regarding the reputation of individual troubadours. For example, the extant commentaries for Bernart de Ventadorn show somewhat conflicting responses to his songs. The *vida*, which survives in most of the major Italian manuscripts, describes Bernart's rise from humble origins to become a court poet and the lover of Eleanor of Aquitaine. It paints

him as a model troubadour, who transcended his social background through devotion

to love, and eventually ended his days in a monastery. In contrast, the *razo* for

Bernart's most famous poem, *Can vei la lauzeta mover*, presents a somewhat

different image of Bernart as a lover. The poem opens with the famous image of a

lark rising and falling through the sunlight:

> Can vei la lauzeta mover
>
> De joi sas alas contral rai
>
> Que s'oblid' e·s laissa chazer
>
> Per la doussor c'al cor li vai.[88]

> When I see the lark move its wings
>
> For joy against a ray of sunlight
>
> So that it forgets itself and lets itself fall
>
> Because of the sweetness that comes into its heart.

The *razo* introducing the song in manuscript *R* provides the following gloss on these

lines:

> … E apelava la Bernart 'Alauzeta', per amor d'un cavaliers que l'amava, e
>
> ella apelet lui 'Rai'. E un jorn venc lo cavaliers a la duguessa e entret en la
>
> cambra. La dona, que·l vi, leva adonc lo pan del mantel e mes li sobra·l col, e

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[88] Hill and Bergin 53; my translation.

laissa si cazer e[l] lieg. E B[ernart] vi tot, car una donzela de la domna li ac

mostrat cubertamen; e per aquesta *razo* fes adonc la canso.[89]

… And Bernart called her 'Lark' because of her love of a knight who loved

her, and she called him 'Ray.' And one day the knight came to the duchess

and entered the bedroom. The lady, who saw him, lifted the side of her coat

and put it around his neck and let herself fall onto the bed. And B(ernart) saw

all this, for one of the lady's young servant girls had secretly shown it to him;

and it is for this reason that he composed the song.

This explanation is typical of the process of invention at work in the biographies. The

razo draws on notable words and phrases from the text to produce an entirely new

narrative of the song's origins; in so doing, it imposes an explicitly sexual scenario

onto an image that is often cited as emblematic of *fin'amor* as a spiritual doctrine. It

also puts Bernart de Ventadorn, the courtly-lover *par excellence*, in the position of a

peeping tom. Kendrick cites this *razo* as an example of what she calls "sentenssa

follatina," by which she means "facetious, eroticizing explication" which burlesques

the conventions of academic commentary.[90] Although the *vida* and *razo* corpus is

generally formulaic, there are numerous examples of biographies that play with the

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[89] Boutière-Schutz 29.
[90] Laura Kendrick, <u>The Game of Love: Troubadour Wordplay</u> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) n. 202.

figure of the troubadour, often by poking fun at the pious ideals of courtly love.[91]

This is the case with Guillem de Cabestaing, a relatively minor troubadour, known primarily for his *vida*, which recounts the famous story of the *coeur mangé*.[92] Likewise, the *razos* for Arnaut Daniel describe him as a clever trickster, while the commentaries for Peire Vidal promote a reputation for madness that is only loosely related to details in his lyrics.[93]

It is possible to read these biographies not simply as parody, but also as representative of debate surrounding the status of the troubadour as an ethical exemplar. Such treatment is characteristic of *chansonniers* from the south of France; indeed, it is not surprising that the *razo* for Bernart de Ventadorn cited above survives only in one manuscript from Languedoc, *R*, which contains numerous burlesque elements.[94] Although many of these same texts are included in the major Italian *chansonniers* from the late thirteenth century, those songbooks project a uniformity of representation, which constructs the figure of the troubadour according to certain obvious values and themes.[95] They are thus characterized not only by an interest in

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[91] See in particular the *vida* for Gaucelm Faidit, who was reported to have married an extremely overweight prostitute; Egan, *Vidas* 37-38. Also see Elizabeth Wilson Poe, "Toward a Balanced View of the *Vidas* and *Razos*."

[92] Guillem was murdered by a jealous husband, who cut out his heart and fed it to his unfaithful wife in a pepper-sauce ("pebrada"). Boutière-Schutz 532.

[93] The *vida* states that Peire Vidal mistook himself for the Emperor of Constantinople, while one of the *razos* claims that he dressed as a wolf in order to impress a lady named "La Loba" and was hunted down and beaten by shepherds. Egan, Vidas 80; Burgwinkle, *Razos* 229-231.

[94] See Chapter 2 for an extended description of R (BN F. Fr. 22543).

[95] The outlier in this group is manuscript *H* (Vat. Lat. 3207), which is also organized around the figure of the author, but notably emphasizes female troubadours. For more, see Poe, Compilatio; Maria Careri, Il Canzoniere Provenzale *H* (Modena: Mucchi, 1990).

authorship, but by a relatively coherent definition of literary authority that recalls the formulaic definitions of *auctoritas* in the Latin *accessus*.

The function of *vidas* and *razos* in constructing authorship is closely related to the process of compilation, and the design of manuscripts points to a distinction between these two biographical genres. Both genres of commentary are referred to as *razo* by their authors, and the practice of distinguishing between them is partly a modern critical judgment, partly a result of their position in *chansonniers*, where *vidas* either precede a group of songs or are collected in an autonomous section, while *razos* always accompany the songs they comment on.[96] This difference in position points to a more significant difference in function. The *vida*s are self-contained, providing details and anecdotes that could stand independently of the corpus of a troubadour's songs. The *razos*, however, refer both to specific songs, and also to each other, drawing connections among the works of different troubadours and producing extended narratives which situate songs within a dramatic context or draw connections among the works of different troubadours.

There may be some precedent for this practice in oral performance; however, it is especially effective in the medium of the *chansonnier*. *Razo*-cycles provide internal framework for large and diverse collections, such as the *AIK*-family of *grands chansonniers*.[97] They also allow the compiler to shape representation by identifying troubadours with imagined communities, and by situating songs within historical, political and emotional narratives. While the *vidas* are interested in the

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[96] The *vidas* are collected in separate sections in *P* (Biblioteca Laurenziana XLI.42) and *R* (BN f.f. 22543).
[97] Burgwinkle, Love for Sale 120-122.

external details of a troubadour's life—place of birth, social class, etc.—*razos* are preoccupied with the circumstances of a poem's composition, and thus purport to explain the author's internal motivations and intentions. As with the *accessus ad auctores*, then, the practice of reading for intention (*intentio auctoris*), provides an opportunity for commentators to shape the portrait of the troubadour as in accordance with preconceived notions of authority and genre.

The most extensive cycle of *razos* accompanies the songs of Bertran de Born. These account for seventeen of the nineteen *razos* preserved in manuscripts *I* and *K*, which were produced in the Veneto in the second half of the thirteenth century. These two manuscripts are referred to as 'twin songbooks,' because they are virtually identical in form and content. They are also closely related to manuscript *A* and the Occitan manuscript *B*, which may have been a common source.[98] The *razos* for Bertran de Born stand apart from the corpus in general in several significant ways. For one, they were probably the first biographies to be written down, perhaps as early as 1219, and may have served as the template for subsequent *vida*s and *razos*.[99] They also appear to have been composed by a single individual, who assumed they would be read or heard as a group. Both these facts are implied by the opening formula, "As I have told you," "As I have told you already," "As I told you in the other *razos*" which is repeated throughout and implies unity of composition. Poe, among others, has convincingly argued that Uc de Saint Circ composed all the *razos* for Bertran de Born and that these were copied, maybe as an even larger group, sometime during his

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[98] Zufferey, _Recherches_ 35-67; Lemaitre and Vielliard, _Initiales des chansonniers provencaux I & K_ xvii-xlv.

[99] The *razos* for Bertran de Born describe events that occur largely between 1169-1199, and refer to none after 1219. See Burgwinkle, Love for Sale 117.

exile in Italy.[100] They were therefore produced at roughly the same time as the

songbooks that contain them and for a similar audience.

The songs of Bertran de Born demanded an unusual amount of commentary,

because of the controversy surrounding Bertran himself. The troubadour was deeply

involved in the political events of his day, particularly the revolt of the 'Young King'

Henry against his father, Henry II, and the conflicts of his other brothers, Richard the

Lionheart and Geoffrey of Brittany. Many of Bertran's *sirventes* allude to the shifting

alliances and petty intrigues of late twelfth-century Aquitaine, and, more specifically,

to his dispute with his own brother Constantine over their family castle, Autafort. The

average Italian reader likely required a gloss in order to keep track of these historical

characters and events. In addition, the description of Bertran's exploits provided the

commentator with an opportunity to paint a vivid portrait of the world of the

troubadours at the peak of their activity. As a nobleman from the Limousin, who

consorted with kings and princes, Bertran is presented in the *chansonniers* as

emblematic of the courtly tradition of troubadour song.[101]

The *razos* play an especially important role in this treatment, since Bertran's

large and diverse corpus of songs frequently endorses behavior that is not in

accordance with the ethic of *fin'amor* as it is represented in the manuscript tradition.

Rather than the passive, suffering lover, represented by Jaufre Rudel, Bernart de

Ventadorn and Guiraut de Borneill, among others, Bertran de Born is an aggressively

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[100] In one of the *razos* for Folquet de Marselha, the commentator refers to details he
has already provided in the *razos* for Bertran de Born, saying "As I have already told
you in the other text." Poe cites this as strong evidence for single authorship. See,
"l'Autre escrit of Uc de Saint Circ: The *Razos* for Bertran de Born," Romance
Philology 44 (2) (1990b): 123-126.
[101] Poe, From Poetry to Prose 50.

bellicose and domineering figure, reminiscent of Guilhem IX at his most macho.[102]

As William Paden put it, "the art of Bertran de Born springs from an obsession with conflict and a drive to master conflict by an act of will."[103] Although Bertran did compose a number of love songs, violence is his preferred theme and occupies a place in his poetry that is more conventionally reserved for love. In fact, Bertran even subverts lyric conventions in order to represent war as a kind of love-object or erotic *jouissance*. The song *Be·m plai lo gais temps de pascor*, begins with an *exordium*, which describes the poet's pleasure at the coming of spring, not because it is the season of love, but rather of military campaigning. The description of birdsong ringing through the forest gives way to graphic images of battle:

E·us dic qe tant no m'a sabor

Manjar ni beure ni dormir

Cum a qand auch cridar, 'A lor'

D'ambas las partz, et auch bruir

  Cabals voitz per l'ombratge

Et auch cridar, 'Aidatz! Aidatz!'

E vei cazer per lo fossatz

  Paucs e grans per l'erbatge,

E vei los mortz qe pels costatz

Ant los tronchos ab los cendatz.

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[102] Unlike Bertran de Born, Guilhem IX received very little commentary in the manuscripts, despite his social and historical prominence.
[103] William Paden <u>The Poems of the Troubadour Bertran de Born</u> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) 33.

I tell you, eating or drinking or sleeping hasn't such savor for me as the moment I hear both sides shouting 'Get 'em!' and I hear riderless horses crashing through the shadows, and I hear men shouting 'Help! Help!' and I see the small and the great falling in the grassy ditches, and I see the dead with splintered lances, decked with pennons, through their sides.[104]

This is hardly Jaufré Rudel and the Countess of Tripoli; and yet, there is nothing contrary to chivalry in Bertran's praise of martial aggression. More problematic, however, are songs that touch on his complex relationship with Henry II and Richard the Lionheart. By joining the revolt of the 'Young King,' Bertran broke his oath of feudal allegiance to Henry, even using his songs to promote rebellion. This was not in keeping with the chivalric ethos, nor was his endless, greedy conflict with his brother over the castle of Autafort, which appears contrary to the courtly values of obedience and largesse. Bertran's songs earned him a reputation as a breaker of oaths and fomenter of internecine conflict, and it was for these reasons that Dante condemned him to the inferno, holding his own severed head.[105]

Bertran therefore posed a challenge for his compilers similar to the one that Ovid presented for the Latin schoolmasters. Like Ovid, his poems were abundant and their artistic quality and interest undeniable. Yet many of his themes, as well as the historical details of his life, appeared to contradict a critical paradigm that advocated reading troubadour poetry as exemplary of an ethical poetic. This paradigm did not

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[104] Text and translation from Paden, <u>Bertran de Born</u> 342-343.
[105] *Inferno*, XXVIII.

apply to every reader and compiler by any means; many of the most important *chansonniers* from southern France (*CRB*), Spain (*Sg*) and even Italy (*DG*), show diverse strategies of representation, and do not attempt to promote the troubadours as ethical exemplars in any coherent way. It is notable, however, that of the songbooks I have just mentioned, only one (*R*) contains *vida*s and *razos*. The desire to equate the troubadour with an ethical code of *fin'amor* is most clearly pronounced in the three northern Italian songbooks, *AIK*, which together also constitute the largest source of troubadour biographies and author portraits. The extensive elaboration of the author figure in these manuscripts draws on Latin strategies of reading and interpretation, which imposes a paradigm of ethical *auctoritas* onto troubadour songs. The *vida*s and *razos* are essential tools for this kind of critical refashioning and the *razos* for Bertran de Born exemplify this process, as well as the social and ideological pressures that may have motivated commentators.

Paden and his fellow editors chose not to publish any of the biographies for Bertran de Born in their recent critical edition of his songs, claiming that:

> Not only do the prose texts confuse historical matters, they mask Bertran's vigor, clarity and wit, and make it difficult to perceive the lively modulations in his tone. The modest but genuine merits of the *vida*s and *razos* lie in their pleasant fantasy, their casual imaginative ease. These qualities do disservice to any troubadour who takes his craft more seriously, and gravely distort the

strenuous intransigence of Bertran, whose true reason to sing is an aesthetic and moral imperative.[106]

Paden's appraisal of the biographies as "pleasant fantasy" dismisses the real critical work that they do in manuscripts. At the same time, his decision to omit the *razos* acknowledges the important influence they have on a reader's reception of Bertran's songs, even today. The cycle of *razos* does succeed in mitigating his "strenuous instransigence" by presenting Bertran as a more conventional author-figure than the songs would suggest. The *razos* in *I* and *K* impose an order on the songs that is different from the order of composition, but which succeeds in establishing a highly coherent set of themes.[107] These can be divided into two basic groups: *razos* that deal with love, and those that deal with war. In both cases, the commentator invents details and anecdotes, which contextualize the songs within an over-arching narrative governed by conventionally courtly themes and behaviors. This narrative not only explains the poems, but actually competes with them by placing the values of the collection before those of the individual song. This is turn establishes an opposition between the values of the troubadour, as they are expressed in the songs, and those of the commentator and his audience.

Five of the seventeen *razos* deal with Bertran's love affair with a lady named "Maeuz de Montaingnac," who is identified as "moiller d'En Talairan" ("the wife of Talairan"). She appears to have been an entirely fictional creation, though some

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[106] Paden, <u>Bertran de Born</u> 72.
[107] Paden, <u>Bertran de Born</u> 70.

members of her family mentioned in the *razos* are historically verifiable.[108] The fact that the commentator had to invent a lover for Bertran highlights the secondary quality of love as a theme in his work, as well as the artificial quality of these five *razos*. They do little to inform a reading of the songs, except by providing a narrative framework. They are primarily interested in depicting Bertran de Born as a lover and describing his behavior in a courtly setting, rather than on the battlefield. For example:

> Bertrans de Born si era drutz de ma dompna Maeutz de Motaingnac, de la
> moiller de Tallairan, que era aitals dompna com vos ai dich en la razon del
> sirventes de la 'domna soiseubuda'. Et si com vos eu dis, ela·l parti de si e det
> li comjat et encusava lo de ma domna Guiscarda, de la Moiller del vescomte
> de Conborn, d'una valen domna que fon de Bergoingna, sor d'En Guiscart de
> Beljoc. Avinens domna et enseingnada era, conplida de totas beutatz; si la
> lauzava fort en comtan et en chantan.[109]

> Bertran de Born was the lover of my Lady Maeutz of Montaingnac, the wife
> of Tallairan, the same lady I told you about in the *razo* to the sirventes on the
> "borrowed lady." And as I told you, she broke off with him and sent him away
> and made accusations about him and my lady Guiscarda, wife of the Viscount

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[108] Stanislaw Stronski, <u>La legende amoureuse de Bertran de Born</u> (Paris: Champion, 1914). The commentator may have confused Maeuz of Montaignac with Maeut, the second daughter of Henry II, who is misidentified as "Lena" in another *razo*. See William Burgwinkle, <u>Razos and Troubadour Songs</u> (New York and London: Garland, 1990) 60.
[109] Boutière-Schutz 78.

of Comborn, an esteemed lady from Burgundy, sister of Sir Guiscart de

Beaujeu. She was a lovely and learned lady, replete with all the signs of

beauty, and he highly praised her in speech and song.[110]

Lady Maeuz provides the thinnest of pretexts for tying together two songs that are not

otherwise connected. In each case, the *razo* gives a back-story that essentially

paraphrases the dramatic situation described in the poem and represents it as

historical by replacing *senhals* with specific names and titles. Only six of the forty-

seven poems attributed to Bertran are love songs, so the choice to compose *razos* for

almost all of these indicates a desire to emphasize this aspect of his corpus. The

commentator even attempts to impose a love-narrative on songs where this applies

only tangentially, as in the following case:

> Bertrans de Born si era anatz vezer una serror del rei Richart, que fon maire de
>
> l'emperador Oth, la quals avia nom ma domna Eleina… Ela, per la gran
>
> voluntat qu'ella avia de pretz e d'onor, e per so qu'ella sabia qu'En Bertrans
>
> era tan fort presatz hom e valens e qu'el la podia for ensanar, si·l fez tant
>
> d;onor qu'el s'en tenc fort per pagatz et enamoret se fort de leis, si qu'el la
>
> comenset lauzar e grazir. En aquella sazon qu'el l'avia vista, el era ab lo
>
> comte en un' ost el temp d'invern, et en aquel' ost avia grant desaise. E cant
>
> venc un dia d'una domenga, era ben meitzdia passatz que non avian manjat ni
>
> bengut. E la fams lo destreingnia mout, et adoncs fetz aquest sirventes que dis:

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[110] Burgwinkle, *Razos* 50.

Ges de disnar non for' oimais matis.[111]

Bertran de Born had gone off to see a sister of King Richard, the mother of the

Emperor Othon, whose name was my Lady Eleina... She, because of the great

desire she had for renown and honor and because she knew that Sir Bertran

was such a highly esteemed and noble man and that he could greatly advance

her reputation, paid him so great an honor that he felt fully satisfied. He fell

completely in love with her and so began to praise and glorify her. During the

same time that he had gone to see her, he (Bertran) was in an army with Count

Richard in the winter season and this army was suffering from a scarcity of

food. And it happened that on one Sunday they had still had nothing to eat or

drink by noontime. He was tormented by hunger and so he composed this

sirventes which says:

From now on, morning should not be for eating…[112]

Bertran's relationship with Lady Eleina provides an opportunity to describe the poet

as a courtly lover, and emphasize his association with famous aristocratic figures,

such as Richard. Burgwinkle notes that the description of Bertran's relationship with

Lady Eleina suggests an economic exchange, in which he provides praise and in

return is "ben pagatz" (literally, "well-paid") for his efforts. This is significant

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[111] Boutière-Schutz 86.
[112] Burgwinkle *Razos* 60.

because it reproduces the paradigm of courtly patronage described elsewhere in the biographies, and also implies that the relationship is not primarily sexual, but closer to the idealized conception of *fin'amor* as an exhange of honor and praise. The love-story also establishes a chronology, which allows the commentator to infer that the song was composed while Richard's army was in winter quarters. He then interprets the first line, "From now on, morning should not be for eating" as proof that Bertran was hungry when he wrote the song.

Although somewhat implausible, this last detail exemplifies the technique of exposition at work in the *razos*, which reconstruct the circumstances of a song's composition by imagining the emotional state of the poet and his internal motivations. The *razos* thus influence reading by identifying songs with an emblematic character whose behavior endorses a specific interpretation of prominent themes. In the case of Bertran's *cansos*, this critical frame imposes a model of *fin'amor* that obscures some of the subtle play inherent in the songs; however, the consequences for a reader are minimal. In the case of the poems on political themes, however, the *razos* intervene in a more substantial way, altering the presentation of situations and events.

The majority of the *razos* for Bertran de Born focus on his conflict with Henry II and Richard the Lionheart, and his dispute with his brother Constantine over Autafort. In general, these texts attempt to shape the representation of Bertran as an author figure by framing these conflicts within an ethos of chivalry. This is problematic, since in both cases, Bertran's behavior could be seen as a violation of feudal values of loyalty and honor. This is true of his dispute with the Plantagenets,

which was the source of most subsequent criticism of Bertran, particularly in Italy.[113] As a vassal of Henry and Richard, Bertran was bound by oath to serve them, and his decision to join the rebellion of southern barons could be seen as a dishonorable violation of feudal law. The commentator anticipates this criticism and responds to it, by repeatedly emphasizing Bertran's loyalty to the Young King rather than his disloyalty to Henry. In the *razo* that accompanies the famous lament for the death of the Young King, the commentator asserts that:

Lo plainz qu'En Bertrans de Born fetz del rei Jove non porta autra *razo*n si non que·l reis Joves era lo meiller hom del mon, e·N BErtrans li volia meills qu'a home del mon e lo reis Jove ad el meills qu'a home del mon e plus lo crezia que home del mon.[114]

The *planh* that Sir Bertran de Born composed for the Young King was written for no other reason than that the Young King was the finest man in the world and Sir Bertran loved him more than any man in the world and the Young King loved him more than any man in the world and trusted him more than any man in the world.[115]

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[113] See, William Paden "Bertran de Born in Italy" Italian Literature, Roots and Branches: Essays in Honor of Thomas Goddard Bergin, ed. Giose Rimanelli and Kenneth John Atchity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976) 39-66.
[114] Boutière-Schutz 115.
[115] Burgwinkle, *Razos* 86.

Although the *razos* acknowledge Betran's role in the revolt against Henry and Richard, they manage to transform this act of rebellion into a demonstration of feudal obedience and devotion to the Young King. Indeed, even Henry II is forced to recognize that Bertran's intentions were pure:

> Lo reis Enrics d'Engleterra si tenia assis En Bertran de Born dedins Autafort e·l combatia ab sos edeficis, que molt li volia grand mal, car el crezia que tota la Guerra que· reis Joves, sos fillz, l'avia faicha, qu'En Bertrans la·il agues faita far; e per so era vengutz denant Autafort per lui desiritar… En Bertrans ab tota sa gen fon menatz al pabaillon del rei Enric, e·l reis lo receup molt mal. E·l reis Enrics si·l dis: 'Bertrans, Bertrans, vos avetz dig que anc la meitatz del vostre sen no·us ac mestier nulls temps, mas sapchatz qu'ara vos a el ben mestier totz.' 'Seingner,' dis En Bertrans, 'el es ben vers qu'eu o dissi, e dissi ben vertat.' E·l reis dis: 'Eu cre ben qu'el vos sia aras faillatz.' 'Seingner,' dis En Bertrans, 'ben m'es faillitz.' 'E com?' si lo reis. 'Seingner' dis En Bertrans 'lo jorn que·l valens Joves reis, vostre fillz, mori, eu perdei lo sen e·l saber e la conoissensa.' E·l reis, quant auzi so qu'En Bertrans li dis en ploran, del fil, venc li granz dolors al cor, de pietat, et als oills, si que no·is poc tener qu'el non pasmes de dolor. E quant el revenc de pasmazon, el crida e dis en ploran: 'En Bertrans, En Bertrans, vos avetz ben drech, et es ben razos, si vos avetz perdut lo sen per mon fill, qu'el vos volia meils que ad home del mon. Et eu, per amor de lui, vos quit la persona e l'aver e·l vostre castel e vos ren la mia amor e la mia gracia, e vos don cinc cenz marcs

d'argen per los dans que vos avetz receubutz.' En Bertrans si·l cazec als pes, referrant li gracias e merces.[116]

King Henry of England had sir Bertran de Born holed up within Hautefort and was attacking the castle with his war machines, for he really had it in for him. He believed that the whole war that his son, the Young King, had waged against him had occurred because Sir Bertran had made him do it. And so he had come to Hautefort to see him dispossessed… Sir Bertran and his followers were led before King Henry's pavilion and the king received him very badly, saying 'Bertran, Bertran, you have said that you never needed more than half your wits in any situation but now you must realize that you need every bit you have.' 'Lord,' said Sir Bertran, 'it is true that I said that and it was the absolute truth.' And the King said: 'It looks to me as if they have failed you this time.' 'Lord,' said Sir Bertran, 'the day that the valiant Young King, your son, died, I lost all my wits, intelligence and learning.' And the King, when he heard what Sir Bertran had said about his son and saw him crying, felt such sadness and pity in his heart and in his eyes that he could not hold back from fainting with sorrow. And when he came out of it he cried out, saying through his tears: 'Sir Bertran, Sir Bertran, you are so right; and it is understandable that you would lose your wits over my son, for he loved you more than any

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[116] Boutière-Schutz, 107-108.

man in the world.' Sir Bertran fell to the King's feet, giving him thanks and homage.[117]

The King goes on to absolve Bertran of any crime, and even rewards him with five hundred marks. The dispute thus becomes an opportunity to advertise the troubadour's adherence to an ethic of chivalry and feudal loyalty, and the narrative arc of the *razo*-cycle restores his place within a feudal hierarchy by dramatizing a series of reconciliations with both Henry and Richard.

Given the evidence of controversy and debate surrounding Bertran's reputation in Italy during this period, it is reasonable to treat such patterns of representation in the *razo*-cycle as evidence of a deliberate program of rehabilitation. This conclusion is supported by the fact that all of the *razos* cited above occur in three closely related manuscripts, where they are also accompanied by author portraits depicting Bertran de Born as an iconic figure of chivalry.[118] As in the case of Ovid, then, biographical commentary succeeds in transforming a notorious troubadour into a model of ethical behavior and representative of a tradition unified by clear values.

Meneghetti has argued that some Italian *chansonniers* were specifically designed as handbooks of courtly behavior for thirteenth-century Italian aristocrats.

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[117]Burgwinkle, *Razos* 65-66.

[118] See Jean-Loup Lemaitre and Françoise Vielliard, Portraits de Troubadours: Initiales du Chansonnier Provençal *A* (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: Città del Vaticano, 2008); also, Jean-Loup Lemaitre and Françoise Vielliard, Portraits de Troubadours: Intiales des Chansonniers Provençaux *I & K* (Boccard: Paris, 2006).

[119] I think this is true of the *AIK*, which preserve the *razos* for Bertran de Born, and as

the *Liber Alberici* (*D*), which Burgwinkle has argued was compiled by Uc de Saint

Circ as a tribute to his patron, Alberico da Romano.[120] Although Burgwinkle does not

think that the troubadour biographies as a corpus endorse a coherent set of ethical

values, he does acknowledge that those texts composed by Uc de Saint Circ, and

especially the *razos* for Bertran de Born, constitute an "idealizing collection," that

conforms to the expectations and values of late thirteenth-century Italian aristocrats.

He concludes that Italian patrons such as Alberico were primarily interested in the

"moral content" of troubadour lyric, and that Uc de Saint Circ pandered in a

somewhat cynical way to the demands of his market.[121] Elizabeth Poe has similarly

divided the corpus of *vidas* and *razos* into those that are "idealistic" and those that are

"anti-idealistic," a division that takes into account not only abstract ideals, such as

fin'amor, but also class distinctions, wealth and other signs of courtly refinement.

Although these categories have a tendency to break down in the *razos*, Bertran de

Born's prominence as a historical figure and as a troubadour earned him a role as

representative of courtly idealism.[122]

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[119] "Così le avventure e le passioni amorose attribuite ai diversi trovatori diventano exempla e fondano una sorta di prontuario comportalmentale per la buona società del XIII secolo." Meneghetti 242.

[120] Burgwinkle, Love for Sale 120.

[121] "I do not deny that such an idealizing collection may be what Alberico had in mind when he commissioned Uc to compose for him the *Liber Alberici* and undertook the study of composition himself. It may well be that what interested the Italian patrons (and even later poets, such as the *stilnovisti*) in the troubadour lyric was the moral content. This is certainly true of many of the early romantic critics as well. If so, Uc managed nonetheless to subvert his moral treatises with a heavy lacing of cynicism and market savvy." Burgwinkle, Love for Sale 144.

[122] Poe demonstrates that the division between "idealistic" and "anti-idealistic" *razos* corresponds to the use of the words "troubadour" and "joglar." Idealistic treatment

The efforts of the *razo*-writer to shape Bertran's reputation do not produce anything resembling a *Bertran moralisé*, yet they do resemble the medieval treatment of Ovid in several notable ways. Like Ovid, Bertran was an undeniably popular poet whose work posed a challenge to prevailing critical views of literary authority by praising themes that contradicted courtly ethics. The addition of biographical commentary provided an opportunity to impose a normative critical paradigm on the poet and his songs by ascribing motivations and intentions considered exemplary of ethical values. The *razo*-corpus for Bertran de Born therefore provides an unusually stark portrait of the reception of troubadour poetry in Italy and the underlying ideologies that informed the representation of authorship in the *chansonniers*.

<p style="text-align: center;">v.   **Uc de Saint Circ and the Ghost of Ovid**</p>

I would like to end this chapter by drawing attention to another potential point of connection between Ovid and the troubadour *vidas* and *razos*. In the *vida* for Uc de Saint Circ, which the poet likely wrote himself, his life mirrors that of Ovid in several respects. The *vida* first describes Uc's early life and his family's attempt to give him a formal education, despite his natural attraction to poetry:

> Aquest N'Ucs si ac gran ren de fraires majors de se. E volgran lo far clerc, e
> mandaron lo a la escola de Monpeslier. E quant ils cuideront qu'el ampares

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thus supports a class-distinction that locates the professional singer, who composes primarily for money, in a different social and artistic category from aristocrats, such as Bertran de Born. See Poe, "Towards a Balanced View of the *Vidas* and *Razos*."

letras, el amparet cansos e vers e sirventes e tensos e coblas e·ls faich e·ls dich

dels valens homes e de las valens domnas que eron al mon, ni eron estat; et ab

aquel saber el s'ajoglari.[123]

This Sir Uc had many brothers older than he. And they wanted to make him a

cleric, and they sent him to school in Montpellier. And when they thought that

he was learning letters, he was learning cansos and verses and sirventes and

tensos and coblas and the deeds and the sayings of the worthy men and the

worthy women who were living or who had lived in the world; and with this

knowledge, he became a minstrel.

This passage contains several possible allusions to the autobiographical information

that Ovid provides in the *Tristia*. Here, Ovid also describes himself as a younger

brother, whose family sent him to Rome to study for a career in law and politics:

At mihi iam puero caelestia sacra placebant,

inque suum furtim Musa trahebat opus.

Saepe pater dixit: 'studium quid inutile temptas?

Maeonides nullas ipse reliquit opes.'

Motus eram dictis, totoque Helicone relicto

scribere temptabam verba soluta modis.

Et quod temptabam scribere versus erat.[124]

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[123] Boutière-Schutz 239; my translation.

But, even as a boy, divine service pleased me and the Muse drew me furtively

to her work. Often my father said: 'Why do you attempt this useless effort?

Homer himself left no wealth.' I was moved by his advice, and leaving poetry

aside, I attempted to write words freed from meter. But whatever I tried to

write was verse.

Like Ovid, Uc de Saint Circ abandoned a conventional career to purse a poetic

vocation against the wishes of his family. Both biographies characterize the poets as

educated men of letters, who are overcome by a natural and irresistible desire to

compose verse. The *vida* goes on to draw out this parallel by providing several details

about Uc de Saint Circ's poetic activity and his relationship with women:

Cansos fez de fort bonas et de bon sons et de bonas coblas; mas non fez gaires

de las cansos, quar anc non fo fort enamoratz de neguna; mas ben se saup

feigner enamoratz ad ellas ab son bel parlar. E saup ben dire en las soas

cansos tot so que·ill avenia de lor, e ben les saup levar en ben far cazer. Mas

pois qu'el ac moiller no fetz cansos.

He composed very good songs and some good melodies and good rhymes; but

he never did much with love-songs, because he never fell in love with any

woman; but he knew well how to feign being in love with them through his

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[124] <u>Tristia</u>, 4.10. 20-26. <u>Ovid: Tristia; Ex Ponto</u>, Arthur Leslie Wheeler, ed.
(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996); my translation.

beautiful speech. And he knew well how to say in his songs everything that

happened to him because of women, and he knew well how to exalt and how

to belittle them. But after he was married, he never made songs.

This passage recalls the figure of the *Magister Amoris* in the *Ars Amatoria*, and the

reputation as a seducer and verbal manipulator that is frequently attributed to Ovid in

the medieval biographies and *accessus*. Whether deliberate or not, the comparison

with Ovid thus demonstrates the degree to which inner motivation or *intentio* was

considered relevant to biographical commentary, as well as some of the

characteristics motivations associated with authorship in the lyric tradition.

vi.   Conclusion

Scholars such as Boutière and Egan have focused on formal similarities between the

Occitan biographies and the Latin *accessus*, rather than the role of prose

commentaries in the organization and representation of songs and authors within the

context of anthologies. The appropriation of a Latin model of authorship

fundamentally changes the relationship of the troubadour to both poem and audience

by identifying the "I" of the lyric with a historical figure, and representing the

emotions and intentions dramatized in the poem as historical fact. The *vidas* and

razos contributed to the process of compilation by providing the cultural and

historical context that facilitated the establishment of a canon and a literary tradition.

The appropriation of Latin forms of commentary performs an authorizing function by

identifying oral songs with textual models and by evaluating the authority of

individual troubadours according to the criteria of Latin *auctoritas*, as formulated in

the *accessus*. At the same time, however, the contrast between troubadour lyrics and

Latin pedagogical texts emphasizes certain formal and thematic differences, notably

surrounding the theme of love. The tendency of Italian *chansonniers*, in particular, to

adhere to a conception of *fin'amor* as an ethical code reflects the influence of Latin

commentary, which is supported by numerous other features of these manuscripts.

The *vidas* and *razos* thus function as tools for imposing the ethical and aesthetic

values of thirteenth-century readers onto twelfth-century songs, which exploit the

medium of the anthology and its relationship to Latin precedents. At the same time,

the diversity of both biographies and *chansonniers* attests to a variety of attitudes

towards the role of the author, the status of the song as text and the nature of Occitan

as a literary language.

Chapter 2

Silent Songbooks: **Musical Notation and Blank Spaces in Manuscript *R***

i.   **Troubadour Melodies: The Manuscript Evidence**

Among the many mysteries surrounding the textual transmission of troubadour

poetry, perhaps none is more significant and less investigated than the role of music.

Troubadour *poems*, we are frequently reminded, were in fact *songs*: they were

composed to be sung, either by the poet or by a professional *joglar*, perhaps with

instrumental accompaniment.[125] And yet, the surviving manuscripts contain strikingly

few actual melodies. Of the fifty-two extant troubadour *chansonniers*, only four,

manuscripts *W*, *X*, *G* and *R* contain musical notation.[126] While these manuscripts

preserve a substantial number of notated melodies, roughly 250 in total, they fail to

present anything like a clear picture of the role of music in transmission and

performance.[127]

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[125] For more about conditions of performance, see Ruth Harvey, "Joglars and the Professional Status of the Early Troubadours," <u>Medium Aevum</u>, v. 62 (1993): 221-241. Also, Hendrik Van der Werf, "Music" in F.R.P Akehurt and Judith M. Davis, <u>A Handbook of the Troubadours</u> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) 121-166.

[126] *W* and *X* are collections of Occitan songs compiled within Old French trouvère manuscripts, referred to as *U* and *M*, respectively.

[127] Mary O'Neil, <u>Courtly Love Songs of Medieval France</u> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 2. For more precise numbers, see Elizabeth Aubrey, <u>The Music of the Troubadours</u> (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) xvi.

This is largely due to the difficulty that modern readers have in interpreting the surviving examples of troubadour music. These melodies were transcribed in a form of notation that does not indicate rhythm, pitch or instrumentation. Likewise, the manuscripts contain no glosses or visual cues for musical interpretation. As a result, it is impossible to reconstruct performance in a historically accurate way. Another puzzling feature of the manuscript corpus is the large number of blank spaces and empty staves. Although gaps in transmission are not unusual in manuscripts containing music, the incidence of such lacunae is dramatically higher in troubadour *chansonniers* than in similar manuscripts from the same period.[128]

All four notated troubadour *chansonniers* employ the same basic format for representing text and music: text appears in two columns without line or stanza breaks, with the exception of the initial four or five lines, which are written into musical staves drawn in red ink with melodies entered above in the form of square "quadratic" notation or neumes.[129] This layout is typical of vernacular songbooks from this period, notably trouvère *chansonniers*.[130] The many stylistic similarities between troubadours and trouvères have led scholars to treat their melodies as a

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[128] Melodies have survived for roughly one-fifth of the surviving troubadour song-texts, as opposed to three quarters of the extant trouvère songs. Van der Werf, Chansons 15.

[129] For more information about the notation of individual manuscripts, as well as medieval notation in general, see Hendrik Van der Werf, Extant Troubadour Melodies (Rochester: 1984). The number of strophes that receive notation varies somewhat, but four lines is typical. Neumes represent vocal, rather than instrumental notation, and we have no record of music for instruments from this period. For an extended analysis of the history and interpretation of neumes, see Jean Beck, La Musique des Troubadours (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1928) 24-58.

[130] The first trouvère songbooks were compiled around 1240, roughly a decade before the earliest troubadour *chansonnier*, though the earliest troubadour songs date from the start of the twelfth century. The age and provenance of troubadour songs may explain the lower rate of preservation of melodies than in Old French.

single musical corpus, a practice that overlooks the very different treatment of melodies in the two manuscript traditions.[131] Far greater attention was given to the representation of melodies in trouvère manuscripts than in troubadour *chansonniers*. Twenty trouvère songbooks have survived with musical notation, preserving roughly 1,500 melodies for 2,000 songs, as opposed to only about 250 troubadour melodies for 2,500 songs.[132]

A variety of historical factors may have contributed to this dramatic disparity. By the middle of the thirteenth century, Paris had become the largest and most developed center of book production in Europe, as well as the site of important innovations in musical notation.[133] As a result, more professional music scribes or notated exemplar texts may have been available in the north than in the south. Whatever the reason, however, the importance accorded to music in trouvère manuscripts had a notable influence on the development of subsequent lyric poetry in French. Throughout the thirteenth and into the fourteenth centuries, music was an increasingly prominent element of French courtly lyric, culminating in the musical

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[131] This is a significant stumbling block to research on troubadour song. Beck and Aubry do not consistently distinguish between troubadour and trouvère music, nor does Van der Werf in <u>Chansons of the Troubadours and Trouvères</u>, though he does in <u>Extant Troubadour Melodies</u>. Elizabeth Aubrey's <u>Music of the Troubadours</u> provides a detailed evaluation of the troubadour melodies as a distinct corpus.

[132] Van der Werf, <u>Chansons</u> 15.

[133] Scholars at the university of Paris experimented with musical notation throughout the first half of the thirteenth century, developing new methods for indicating rhythm in square notation. Haines, <u>Eight Centuries of Troubadours and Trouvères</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 27. There were also thriving book centers in the south of France and northern Italy, where *R* and *G*, respectively, were compiled. It is unlikely that musical notation was limited exclusively to the north, especially since many scribes and illuminators were itinerant.

compositions of Guillaume de Machaut, among others.[134] This may testify to a greater

appreciation for melody among French audiences, however, it is intriguing to

consider the effect that manuscript form might have had on shaping experience and

expectations of vernacular song.

An opposite movement seems to have occurred in the transcription of

troubadour songs, particularly in Italy, where the majority of troubadour *chansonniers*

were compiled. Twenty-eight of the 52 surviving troubadours manuscripts are of

Italian origin, yet only one of these, manuscript *G*, contains any sort of notation.

Italian manuscripts bear witness to reception of the song as written text, which is

indicated by the elaboration of lyrics with extensive biography and commentary

(*vidas* and *razos*) and the addition of other related texts, such as grammars of Occitan

and arts of composition, within the songbook. These developments are, moreover,

consonant with the emergence of an Italian vernacular literature that adopted the

musical forms and style of the troubadours, while clearly eschewing musical

performance. Unlike the French *trouvères*, Italian lyric poets of the thirteenth and

fourteenth centuries do not appear to have prided themselves on musical composition

and no Italian melodies survive from this period.

The four surviving notated troubadour manuscripts constitute a diverse

corpus, representing a variety of techniques and attitudes toward the textual

transmission of melody. Two of these manuscripts, *W* and *X*, were produced in the

north of France in the mid-thirteenth century, and are literally incorporated into the

trouvère manuscript tradition, since they were compiled within Old French

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[134] Sylvia Huot, <u>From Song to Book</u> (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987) 249-260.

songbooks. As a result, there is a strong French influence both on the language of these collections and also on the representation of text and melody, which reproduces the format typical of trouvère anthologies. Musical staff-lines accompany almost every song in *W* and *X*, a majority of which are notated in both collections. *X* (Bib. Nat. f.f. 20050), which is the older of the two manuscripts, also has the fewest notated melodies, preserving music for twenty-two troubadour songs, or roughly three-quarters of its collection.[135] Produced in Lorraine circa 1240, the manuscript appears to have been the work of numerous copyists and several distinct hands can be identified in the notation. This may account for the apparently haphazard distribution of melodies in the collection, which does not favor the work of any one troubadour, and may also indicate that scribes used a variety of sources for text and notation.[136]

Manuscript *W* (Bib. Nat. f. f. 844), which was compiled roughly a decade later, contains 428 lyric poems, including sixty-one troubadour songs, of which fifty-one have notated melodies. Although it survives in poor condition today, *W* was produced as a luxury songbook, with wide margins, painted initials and colorful miniatures. The manuscript is often referred to as the *chansonnier du roi* because it contains a collection of songs by Thibaut de Champagne, King of Navarre, which were organized into an independent *libellus*, supposedly by Thibaut himself. The majority of troubadour melodies in *W* were copied by two distinct scribal hands, although several others were filled in at a later date and in a slightly different form of notation traceable to the end of the thirteenth century.[137] Although *W* is a more

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[135] Van der Werf, <u>Extant Troubadour Melodies</u> 23.
[136] Aubrey, <u>Music</u> 34-38.
[137] Aubrey <u>Music</u> 42.

coherent collection than *X,* there is no clear logic to the distribution of notation here, either, and no single troubadour receives a disproportionately larger number of notated melodies.[138] Some overlapping in the contents of *W* and *X* may indicate the popularity of troubadour songs or the availability of notated exemplars in the north of France, where both manuscripts were compiled.

The two southern manuscripts, *G* and R, contain more extensive collections of troubadour song than their French counterparts. Although the organization of these manuscripts, as well as the format for representing text and melody, is similar to that of *W* and *X,* they do not conform as clearly to the model of trouvère songbooks. The highly inconsistent representation of notated melodies in both *chansonniers* highlights the influence of other prominent textual models and presents a somewhat confusing picture of the transcription of troubadour songs in the south of France and in Italy. Unlike the two *chansonniers* produced in the north, *G* and *R* contain only troubadour songs in Old Occitan, and both represent deliberate attempts to compile troubadour melodies along with lyrics.[139]

It has been suggested that the absence of musical notation from Italian and Provençal *chansonniers* is indicative of a less developed manuscript culture in the south, which produced fewer notated exemplar texts and fewer musically literate scribes. While the high rate of blank staves and lacunae in both *G* and *R* may indicate that compilers had some difficulty transcribing melodies or acquiring notated exemplars, the quality of notation where it does occur attests to the activity and

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[138] The poet who has the most notated melodies in *X* is Gaucelm Faidit, with seven; in *W* it is Bernart de Ventadorn with eight.

[139] Aubrey claims that "[*R* and *G*] seem to have been prepared for bibliophiles who wished to own a manuscript devoted exclusively to Occitanian works." <u>Music</u> 43.

general competence of music scribes in the south. In this respect, these two songbooks, though somewhat anomalous, provide important evidence of transmission practices in general. Although no other French or Italian *chansonnier* contains musical notation, it is likely that troubadour melodies, as well as the technology necessary for transcribing them, were available to compilers. In this respect, the evidence of *G* and *R* highlights the absence of melodies in the corpus as a whole.

Manuscript *G*, which was produced in northern Italy in the late thirteenth century, contains 235 lyric poems in Occitan and eighty-one notated melodies, which are clearly the work of a professional music scribe. There is a strong Italian influence on the language of the manuscript, and also on the selection of authors, which includes many troubadours who were active in Italy, such as Folquet de Marselha, Uc de Saint Circ, and the Italian troubadour Sordello. The manuscript begins with a large selection of songs organized by author, and also alphabetically within an author's works by the first letter of the first line.

Although *G* is not a luxury manuscript, containing no author portraits and few decorations, it appears to have been conceived as a coherent collection in which melodies were to occupy a prominent place. The first section of lyric poems are accompanied by musical staves, many of which received notation; this is followed by a collection of *tensos*, without staff-lines, and then by another large group of lyric songs in which melodies are recorded more infrequently. The copyist eventually abandoned musical staves altogether, first for non-strophic works, such as *ensenhamens*, and then returned to lyric forms, but now without making any provision for melodies at all.

The music scribe of *G* filled in melodies immediately after the text had been copied, but before rubrics and decorations had been drawn. Aubrey and Van der Werf agree that he showed considerable creativity in adapting to the format of the text scribe, who regularly failed to leave sufficient space for melodies, a habit that results in the frequent misalignment of text and notation.[140] This further suggests that text and music were not copied from the same sources, an assumption supported by the fact that notation was not transcribed in the order established by the text, but rather was entered throughout the manuscript, apparently as it became available.[141] These characteristics provide insight into the working methods of music scribes; at the same time, however, they demonstrate the problems inherent in reading these manuscripts as evidence for the transmission of melodies. Although the presence of musical notation may attest to the circulation of notated exemplar texts in Italy, the high frequency of blank spaces also suggests that such texts were available only on a limited basis or that the preservation of melody was not a priority of compilers.

Similar issues are raised by the design and notation of manuscript *R*, which is the only extant songbook with melodies produced in the south of France. Although there is some debate surrounding the date and provenance of *R*, it is generally thought to have been compiled either in Narbonne or Toulouse circa 1300.[142] The language

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[140] See Aubrey, Music 43-46; Van der Werf, Extant Troubadour Melodies 14-17.

[141] "This practice suggests that he was unfamiliar with the tunes he was copying, that he was not writing them down from memory or dictation, and that the music was not found in the same exemplars from which the texts were copied." Aubrey, Music 44; Van der Werf, Extant Troubadour Melodies 16.

[142] There is no trace of the manuscript's history before the eighteenth century, when it belonged to the Parisian library of the aristocratic Urfé family. For an extensive discussion of the manuscript's history, see Elizabeth Aubrey, A Study of the Origins, History and Notation of the Troubadour Chansonniers Paris Bibliothèque f. Fr.

and decoration of *R* identify it as a product of Languedoc and a close relative of manuscript *C* (Bib. Nat. f. fr. 856), the largest surviving troubadour *chansonnier*, which was produced in the same region only a few decades earlier, and contains many of the same songs.[143]

Manuscript *R* is a large and diverse anthology, containing over a thousand works on 150 folios, including 947 lyric poems, twenty-seven *vidas*, and numerous prose works on didactic and religious themes.[144] *R* is the largest single collection of troubadour music, preserving 160 melodies, including forty-eight melodies for fifty-two songs by the late thirteenth-century troubadour Guiraut Riquier. This degree of consistent notation is exceptional, however; elsewhere in the manuscript, melodies appear intermittently or not at all, despite the fact that scribes regularly drew four staves in red ink for the initial stanza of each song. The manuscript is otherwise complete: texts and rubrics have been copied, decorations and initials are drawn and colored, yet of the approximately 800 musical staves in the manuscript, 688 remain empty.

This apparent disparity between manuscript layout and execution contributes to the impression that *R* is "erratic" and "not carefully planned from its inception."[145] Although the text is the work of a single scribal hand, it does not reflect a coherent

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22543, diss., U. of Maryland 1982, 51-77. For a more detailed analysis of the language and spelling of the manuscript, see Zufferey, <u>Recherches</u> 105-133.

[143] Both manuscripts contain the *libre* of Guiraut Riquier, which I will discuss at length below. For a discussion of *C* and its relationship to *R*, see Zufferey, <u>Recherches</u> 134-152.

[144] These include a "revelatio" of Saint Paul and "a discourse on the nature of certain birds and other beasts." For a full catalogue of the contents of *R*, see Aubrey, <u>Study</u> 290-366.

[145] Van der Werf, <u>Extant Troubadour Melodies</u> 17; Aubrey, <u>Music</u> 46.

manuscript design from start to finish, particularly with regard to musical notation. The scribe appears to have begun copying the manuscript without the intention of preserving melodies for every song. In the first gathering, he drew musical staves for only ten out of seventy-two songs, seven of which received notation. From the second gathering on, however, he began to draw staff-lines regularly, the majority of which remain empty. This abrupt change in technique indicates that the text scribe was not working from a notated exemplar, and was thus unsure of which songs had melodies. The decision to include staves for every song after the second gathering suggests that the scribe was confident that melodies would be available, although this was evidently not true or else the work of notation was never completed. In either case, it is clear that the text scribe and the music scribes relied on different exemplars, and that the manuscript's unusual appearance is to some degree the result of miscommunication during transcription.

Notation was evidently the last major element of the manuscript to be undertaken, just before the table of contents was made. Aubrey identifies one principle music hand for R, with several others occasionally contributing melodies. A uniform style of quadratic non-mensural notation is used in most cases, which leads Aubrey to conclude that the scribes of *R* were professional notators with some formal musical training.[146] Van der Werf disagrees, however, citing inconsistencies in the notation, specifically in the shape of neumes and clefs, to argue that it is essentially the work of skilled amateurs.[147] Both agree, however, that the music scribes relied on written exemplars, and that many errors in transcription indicate that they were

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[146] Aubrey, <u>Music</u> 48-49.
[147] Van der Werf, <u>Extant Troubadour Melodies</u> 17-20.

unfamiliar with the songs they were copying or had some difficulty reading their sources.

The predominance of empty staff-lines in manuscript *R* provides a valuable glimpse into the process of compilation, which also comments on the status of troubadour song at the end of the thirteenth century. Since *R* is the only large Provençal songbook with notation to have survived, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions about the transmission of melodies from the evidence it provides. While the manuscript attests to the circulation of at least 160 melodies in written form, the lack of notation for the remaining 800 staves suggests that melodies may have unavailable for many troubadour songs. Furthermore, lack of notation does not correlate with the date or provenance of songs. *R* preserves melodies from every period, including several for the early twelfth-century troubadours Jaufré Rudel and Marcabru, as well as for poets who were active outside of Provence, such as Guiraut de Bornelh and Raimon de Miraval.[148] The survival of melodies for early poets may reflect contemporary popularity and reputation as composers.[149] While it is beyond the scope of this project to speculate whether troubadour melodies were still in oral circulation at the end of the thirteenth century, it is significant that scribes appear to have relied extensively on written sources for musical compilation and did not

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[148] The notable exception is Guiraut Riquier, who was a native of Narbonne and composed poetry into the 1290s, within decades of the compilation of R. His songs are discussed in detail below.

[149] This is particularly true of Raimon de Miraval and Bernart de Ventadorn, to whom numerous melodies are attributed in other sources.

transcribe melodies through oral performance, which was a common practice during the period.[150]

ii.   Blank Spaces and Empty Staves: The Case of Manuscript *R*

Scholars of troubadour music have paid little attention to the unusually high rate of lacunae in the surviving manuscripts. This is understandable, perhaps, since empty staves alone are not an unusual or unexpected phenomenon in medieval music, and scholars can do little more than speculate about their underlying causes. Nevertheless, empty staves and blank spaces are potentially important sources of information, providing a window onto the working methods of scribes, the design of songbooks, and the status of melodies in textual transmission. The four *chansonniers* that contain notation are notable exceptions within a corpus that otherwise does not make any provision for music. As such, they draw attention to the absence of music as a textual convention in the corpus as a whole, prompting us to question the role of musical performance in an increasingly textual medium.

Hendrik Van der Werf, who pioneered modern study in this field, assumed the loss of more than two thousand troubadour melodies, or roughly ninety percent of the surviving corpus, due to a faulty combination of oral and written methods of transmission, factors that he claimed could also account for the blank spaces in manuscripts *G* and *R*. [151] Subsequent scholars have tended to agree with Van der

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[150] Van der Werf, <u>Extant Troubadour Melodies</u>.

[151] "There are indications… that very often the text was copied first and the melody was entered afterwards, sometimes by a different scribe. Unfortunately, for some chansons, this scribe never had a chance to do his work; the staffs are drawn, but the notes were never entered." Van der Werf, <u>Music</u> 126.

Werf, attributing lacunae in *G* to a variety of historical factors.[152] These manuscripts may simply have been left unfinished, or perhaps conceived on a grander scale than proved possible to execute. Gaps in musical notation might be the result of miscommunication between scribes responsible for text and music, they may indicate the loss of an exemplar, or they may even have been left blank deliberately in the hope that a reader would supply the melody.

Although these are all plausible explanations, they downplay the scale of this phenomenon in the surviving manuscripts, as well as the significance of blank spaces for our understanding of the medieval reception of troubadour songs. Attributing the loss of melodies to historical accident alone implies that melodies were still circulating in some form, either oral or written, an assumption that is not supported by manuscript evidence. In fact, the overwhelming majority of troubadour *chansonniers*, forty-eight out of fifty-two, make no provision for music at all; the large number of empty staves even in manuscripts deliberately organized around the presentation of melody suggests that musical notation was not available. The surviving troubadour manuscripts thus present us with an intriguing paradox: despite the central importance of music in the rhetoric and iconography associated with this poetry, the medieval texts reveal a curious indifference to preserving actual melodies. This conclusion challenges the accepted view of the medieval experience of this poetry: the majority of medieval readers, it seems, like modern ones, would have experienced troubadour song as an exclusively literary medium.

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[152] William Paden, "What Music Does to Words." For a description of scribal practices for copying musical texts, see Haines, <u>Eight Centuries of Troubadours and Trouvères</u> 26-32.

Rather than attributing the loss of melodies to historical accident, as Van der Werf and others have done, it would be better to treat this absence as a distinctive characteristic of the troubadour manuscript corpus, as deliberate and revealing as the compilation of *vidas* and *razos*. As Elizabeth Aubrey notes, the lower rate of survival for troubadour melodies suggests as much about the intention of compilers as it does about the historical conditions of compilation:

> Most of the compilers of troubadour song never intended to include music in their manuscripts and therefore did not provide space for it, as they did for rubrics and decorated initials. The lack of surviving music in general thus appears to be no accident.[153]

What, then, is the role of music in the few anthologies that do contain melodies? Given the inconsistency of musical notation in these sources, it might be helpful to think not in terms of transcription, but rather *representation* of song. Stephen G. Nichols has described the development of troubadour anthologies as " a shift from a tradition of 'performative presence' to one of 'performative absence," claiming that, "Books' and the readers they created signaled a new concept of consumption and performance, one that placed both a temporal and a physical space between poet and audience."[154] How did the creation of space for music on the page, with or without notation, convey an impression of oral performance that might influence a reader's reception? In other words, do blank spaces and empty staves, along with author

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[153] Aubrey, Music of the Troubadours 28.
[154] "The Early Troubadours" in The Troubadour: An Introduction 70.

portraits and *vidas*, support a characterization of the text as musical, even without

transcribed melodies? Do these kinds of textual strategies represent attempts to

represent oral performance in a different medium?

Ardis Butterfield has argued that the representation of music in thirteenth

century manuscripts in general bears witness to a "crisis of representation in the

written medium," produced by the confrontation of oral and literate models of

authority in the vernacular.[155] She argues that in a variety of vernacular texts, musical

notation functions as a form of citation, a "visual gloss," to borrow Sylvia Huot's

term, which associated the written song with an oral-performative context, as well as

a popular conception of vernacular literary authority.[156] By consistently representing

songs with music, as in the case of the *trouvères*, compilers not only identified lyric

texts with specific melodies, but also inscribed a dramatic fiction of oral performance

into the textual record of the song. Alternately, by omitting melodies, as was the case

in the vase majority of troubadour manuscripts, scribes either constructed or affirmed

a distinction between oral song and literary text, representing the song as a purely

verbal discourse, which was valued primarily for its lyrics.

The numerous blank spaces in *R* may be the product of just such a crisis of

representation. Whatever the historical conditions were, the omission of music

suggests a fundamental ambivalence about the need for transcribing music at all.

With or without notation, musical staff-lines are significant spaces on the manuscript

page: they form a consistent visual marker, inscribing music into the text, even when

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[155] Ardis Butterfield, <u>Poetry and Music in Medieval France</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 180.

[156] Butterfield 7-8. 179. Sylvia Huot, "Visualization and Memory: The Illustration of Troubadour Lyric in a Thirteenth-Century Manuscript," <u>Gesta</u> 31 (1992): 10.

no actual music is recorded. As Butterfield argues, blank spaces in manuscripts "probably became an influential aspect of song layout in its own right," which shaped expectations of the troubadour lyric by associating it with an iconic notion of musical performance, while also preparing readers to treat songs as written texts.[157]

Therefore, the omission of music from the majority of manuscripts marks a sharp and intriguing distinction between song and reception, between poetic form and textual representation. With this in mind, the blank spaces in *G* and *R* should not be dismissed simply as errors in transmission. Instead, they testify to a range of experimentation, indecision and conflict surrounding the representation of vernacular lyric. In the remainder of this chapter, I will examine the different ways in which musical space might frame or structure the textual representation of song. I will focus in particular on the more than fifty songs by Guiraut Riquier that were compiled with melodies in manuscript *R*.

iii.   The *Libre* of Guiraut Riquier: Organizing Text and Melody

There is little discernible order to the distribution of musical notation in manuscript *R*. A wide range of poems received notation, regardless of historical period, provenance or poetic style, although melodies tend to appear in clusters, with songs by some

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[157] "The absence of music, however much it may have represented a simple lack of expertise in the art of writing (as opposed to performing) music, probably became an influential aspect of song layout in its own right. Thus although some manuscripts without music no doubt took that form because of a lack of copying skills, once a work was circulated without music for its song citations, it may have begun to create an audience who were prepared to consider the songs principally for their words." Butterfield 180.

authors receiving a disproportionately higher amount of notation than others. The most significant example is the collection of fifty-two songs by the late thirteenth-century troubadour Guiraut Riquier, of which forty-eight have musical notation. There is no explanation given in the manuscript for why such a large number of melodies were copied for this one troubadour, whose songs in *R* constitute by far the largest extant collection of melodies. In the remainder of this chapter, I will examine the songs by Guiraut Riquier in manuscript *R*, asking what the distinctive characteristics of this collection might tell us about the function of musical notation in the plan of this manuscript, as well the role of melody in the textual representation of troubadour song at the end of the thirteenth century.

Guiraut Riquier belonged to the last generation of Provençal poets to lead the kind of itinerant court-life described by troubadours of the classical period. Born in Narbonne around 1230, Guiraut traveled widely during his life, serving at the courts of Aimery IV, Count of Narbonne, as well as Henry II, Count of Rodez, and also in Spain at the court of Alphonso X, King of Castille. Guiraut was active throughout the second half of the thirteenth century, during the major period of *chansonnier*-production, and is thought to have died in 1292, shortly before manuscript *R* was compiled.

Joseph Anglade described Guiraut as a product of "la décadence," a critical judgment that has colored reception of his work ever since.[158] The second half of the

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[158] Joseph Anglade. <u>Le Troubadour Guiraut Riquier: Étude sur la Décadence</u> (Paris: Albert Fontemoing, 1905). The only complete edition of Guiraut's poetry is by S.L.H. Pfaff, "Guiraut Riquier" in <u>Die Werke der Troubadours in Provenzalischer Sprache</u> ed. C.A.F. Mann (Berlin: Ferd. Duemmlers Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1853). More recently, Ulrich Mölk compiled an edition of the *cansos*, <u>Guiraut Riquier: Las Cansos</u>

thirteenth century, following events of the Albigensian crusades, has been characterized as a period of creative stagnation in troubadour poetry, which produced little in the way of stylistic or thematic innovation, apart from a shift toward religious themes and an emphasis on grammar and genre. Troubadours of this period show an increased interest in technical virtuosity and are more likely than their predecessors to work in a variety of lyric genres, which became increasingly developed and refined.

The more than one hundred surviving songs of Guiraut Riquier are notable for their generic variety and range. In addition to *cansos* and *vers*, Guiraut composed several hymns to the Virgin Mary, *retroenchas*, *tensos*, *partimens, albas, letras* and one *serena*, a form of his own invention. He is best known among modern readers for a cycle of dated *pastorellas*, in which the speaker repeatedly encounters the same shepherdess at different points in his life, from 1260 to 1282.[159] His corpus as a whole displays an innovative approach to working with conventional forms and an awareness of the song as written text that is new to the troubadour tradition. Riquier's career coincided with the major period of *chansonnier*-production, the second half of the thirteenth century, and it is likely that he encountered troubadour songbooks and even assisted in their compilation. The organization of his songs in manuscript *R* demonstrate an understanding of the relationship among individual texts in a compilation, and a desire to assert control over the transmission of his own work, using a variety of textual devices to shape his songs into a coherent 'book.'

(Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1962). 19. The *letras* are also available in a French edition by Joseph Linskell, <u>Les Epitres de Guiraut Riquier</u> (Liège, Belgium: Buteneers, 1985).
[159] For a full catalogue of Guiraut's work, see Mölk, <u>Cansos</u> 11-13.

iv.   Manuscripts *C* and *R*: The *Libre* of Guiraut Riquier

Two major collections of Guiraut's poems survive, one in manuscript *R* and the other

in manuscript *C* (Bib. Nat. f. fr. 856), which was also compiled in Languedoc circa

1300.[160] The contents of the two collections are nearly identical and in both cases an

intricate system of rubrication is used to give formal and narrative shape to the

collection, which is described as a "book" in the initial rubric of manuscript *C*:

> Aissi comensan li can d'en
>
> Guiraut Riquier de Narbona
>
> enaissi cum es de cansos e de
>
> verses e de pastorellas e de
>
> retroenchas e de descortz e d'al-
>
> bas e d'autras diversas obras
>
> enaissi adordenamens cum
>
> era adornedat en lo sieu libre,
>
> de qual libre escrig per la sua
>
> man fon aissi tot translatat,
>
> e ditz enaissi cum desus se conten.[161]

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[160] Manuscript *C* is the largest troubadour *chansonnier* and also one of the most meticulously executed. Numerous similarities in the contents of *C* and *R*, as well as their date and provenance, suggest that the two manuscripts are related, although *C* does not contain music and *R* is more erratic in its execution. For a study of the history and contents of both manuscripts, see François Zufferey, <u>Recherches</u>.
[161] Mölk, <u>Las Cansos</u> 19; my translation.

Here begin the songs of sir Guiraut Riquier of Narbonne, made up as they are

of *cansos*, *verses*, *pastorellas*, *retroenchas*, *descortz*, *albas*, and various other

works, in the same order as it was ordered in his book, from which book,

written by his own hand, everything was copied here, and it says the same as

is contained above.

Although earlier poets had been represented as compilers as well as composers, this

claim for an 'author-supervised codex' is unique in the tradition, as is the assertion

that songs were transcribed by the poet himself ("escrig per la sua man"). The

similarity between the two collections in *C* and *R* suggests that they may indeed have

been copied from a common source, perhaps even the autograph-copy referred to in

the rubric. It is not hard to imagine why Guiraut Riquier, composing at the close of

the thirteenth century, might have had this novel impulse. Trained as a cleric, he was

literate and likely familiar with developments in vernacular book culture, particularly

in France and Spain, where he spent significant time. He likely encountered

troubadour songs in *chansonniers* and may have anticipated a similar fate for his own

work. His songs therefore chronicle a period not only of "decadence," but also of

transition in the conception of textual performance, charting a move away from the

dramatic fiction of oral performance and toward the new possibilities represented by

the anthology as a medium.

These themes—text, time, and the role of the poet—govern the shape of

Guiraut's 'book,' which skillfully integrates individual lyrics into a meaningful

whole. The *libre* is immediately distinguished from other collections in *C* by its

complex system of internal organization. In both versions of the *libre*, songs are

organized both chronologically and generically: each song is preceded by a rubric,

written in red, which gives the date of composition, the genre, and also the number of

the song within its generic group. For example, the first poem in the collection is

described as:

La primeira canso de Guiraut Riquier de Narbona, facha en l'an de la

encarnacion de Ihesu <Christ que> hom comtava MC<C>L IIII.[162]

The first *canso* of Guiraut Riquier of Norbonne, made in the year of the

incarnation of Jesus Christ that man has numbered 1254.

The first fifty-four poems in the collection are a mixture of twenty-seven *cansos* and

twenty-seven *vers*, which are in chronological order.[163] This scheme is abandoned for

the remaining fourteen songs in manuscript *C*, which are grouped in generic

segments—*retroenchas*, *pastorellas*, and other mixed genres--but listed

chronologically within their genre. For example, the six *pastorellas* appear together,

covering a span of twenty-two years, from 1260 to 1282. The final poem of the *libre*,

Sancta Verges, is dated 1285, while the final poem of the *canso-vers* book, *Be·m*

degra, occurs fifteen poems earlier, but is dated 1292.

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[162] Mölk, Las Cansos 20.
[163] Manuscripts *C* and *R* both omit the twelfth *vers*, but leave space for it, thus
preserving the symmetrical balance between *cansos* and *vers*. Manuscript *R* also
omits the final three *vers*. See Bossy, "Cyclical Composition," Speculum 66.2 (1991):
277-293.

Manuscript C appears to transmit the most complete version of the *libre*. *R* omits several songs, notably the *pastorellas* and the final hymn to the Virgin Mary, which are important to the thematic and numerical symmetry of the collection.[164] Earlier scholars, such as Joseph Anglade, overlooked much of this complex internal logic, focusing instead on Guiraut's generic distinctions. More recent work has drawn attention to the complex interplay of genre, narrative and temporality that constitute the textual architecture of the book.[165] Within this larger structure, songs are arranged systematically, producing numerous interlocking patterns. Bossy has made the most extensive analysis of the *libre*'s internal workings:

> It takes more than a little scrutiny to grasp the logic of Guiraut's table of contents. At first sight the distribution of *cansos* and *vers* looks arbitrary… Yet beneath the apparent randomness lies a concealed order. If, for a start, we bisect the numerical series of fifty-four poems into equal halves and count the number of *cansos* and *vers* in each portion we see an interesting symmetry begin to emerge. The first half presents nineteen *cansos* and eight *vers*, while in the second half the ratio is exactly the inverse—eight *cansos* and nineteen *vers*.[166]

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[164] The importance of these songs is suggested by the fact that the scribes of *R* left space for several of the missing songs. *R* also concludes with fifteen epistles, lacking in *C*, which I will discuss at length below.

[165] "Riquier plans his *libre* as a master builder might plan a Gothic nave for a cathedral. In the nave, descending vault ribs meet and are bound to the circumference of pillars. In the libre, songs are bundled together to form a sequence of pillars—some more slender than others, to be sure." Bossy, "Twin Flocks" <u>Tenso</u> 9.2 (1994): 153.

[166] Bossy, "Cyclical Composition" 282.

These formal cycles provide a framework for the narrative, which is the story of the poet's love for his lady *Belh Deport*. This *senhal* means either "Beautiful Amusement" or "Good Conduct" an intentional ambivalence that hints at two possible interpretations of the narrative. Guiraut arranged the first fifty-four poems (the *canso-vers* book) to tell an allegorical love story with a teleological arc, in which the poet-lover eventually comes to reject physical desire for a more spiritual understanding of love. *Belh Deport* is a metaphor for the courtly ideal that Guiraut claims to have spent his life seeking from various patrons, mostly without success.[167] The central love story thus mirrors Guiraut's career as a professional poet, presenting a "fictive autobiography" that nevertheless alludes to real historical and political events. [168] This chronological narrative takes us from the poet's youthful infatuation with "Beautiful Amusement" in the first *canso* of 1254, *Tant m'es plazens*, through her death in 1283. This central crisis forces the poet to re-evaluate his definition of *Belh Deport*, eventually resurrecting "Good Conduct" with a series of poems on religious themes. The *libre* concludes with a hymn to the Virgin Mary, *Sancta Verges*. As in later lyric cycles by Dante and Petrarch, the poet's conversion from profane to Christian love is achieved through the death of his lady. Unlike Beatrice or Laura, however, the metaphorical nature of *Belh Deport* allows this love story to

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[167] "She seems to dwindle from an abstract personification into a common noun," says Bossy, "Cyclical Composition" 284.
[168] Bossy, "Cyclical Composition" 284. The eighteenth poem in the collection, *Ples de tristor*, is an elegy on the death of Guiraut's first patron, Amalric IV of Narbonne. The songs also contain references to the military projects of Alfonso X and the Sicilian Vespers plot of 1282. See Bossy, "Twin flocks" 166-168; Anglade, Guiraut Riquier 186-189.

function simultaneously—or, perhaps, primarily—as a meditation on courtly values and the changing role of the courtly poet.

As Bossy has astutely noted, the fifty-four poems in the *canso-vers* book can be divided into three cycles of eighteen poems, each of which concludes with a song that is an explicit reflection on these major themes.[169] The first of these three songs, *Ples de tristor* (poem eighteen, 1270), laments the death of Guiraut's early patron, Amalric IV, Count of Narbonne, who is eulogized as an embodiment of the courtly ideal. This poem is followed by a series of love songs in which the poet tries, unsuccessfully, to win satisfaction from *Belh Deport*. The song that holds the central place in this three-part structure, *Pus Sabers* (poem thirty-six, 1282), is a lover's complaint, in which the poet despairs of being trapped in a futile affair with no hope of joy or relief, despite having been a "fis amaire" and faithfully adhered to the tenets of courtly love:

> Pus sabers no·m ual ni sens,
>
> Qu'az amor aus ren desdire,
>
> Que·m fassa voler, paruens
>
> M'es, qu'aman me deu aucire;
>
> Tant, li suy obediens.
>
> Qu'ieu avia malanans
>
> Estat d'ans .XX. fis amaire,
>
> E pueys a·m tengut .V. ans

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[169] For extensive analysis of this and other structural patterns in the *libre*, see Bossy, "Cyclical Composition."

Guerit ses ioy del maltraire,

Eras ay de mal dos tans.[170]

Neither wisdom helps me, nor sense,/ Since love says nothing,/ about what she wants from me, it is clear,/ that love should kill me./ I am so obedient to it./ I was sick for twenty years, as a faithful lover/ and then for five years/ I was cured, without the joy of mistreatment,/ now I am sick for the second time.

Within the chronological narrative established by the collection, *Pus sabers* immediately precedes the death of *Belh Deport*, which is announced in the *tornada* of the following poem. The highly conventional language of the lover's complaint acquires new force and significance within the compilation, where it signals a dramatic turning point in the evolving conception of courtly love, further symbolized by the death of the poet's lady. *Pus sabers* ends with an appeal to Peter of Aragon, whose patronage Guiraut sought unsuccessfully throughout his career. *Pus sabers* therefore represents a complaint not only about the emotional economy of courtly love, which does not repay *obediens*, but also about the real economy of courtly song, which is equally unrewarding.

The various chronological and thematic patterns of the *libre* are united in the final poem of the *canso-vers* book, *Be·m degra* (song fifty-four, 1292). *Belh Deport* and the theme of erotic love are conspicuously absent from this poem; instead, the

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[170] Text from Mölk, Las Cansos 103. My translation.

singer looks back over the years, and poems, that have come before and also ahead, to the remainder of the collection, lamenting the sad state of court life and his own uncertain position in a world that no longer respects the "belh saber de trobar":

> Be·m degra de chantar tener,
>
> Quar a chan coven alegriers;
>
> E mi destrenh tant cossiriers
>
> que·m fa de totas partz doler
>
> remembran mon greu temps passat,
>
> esgardan lo prezent forsat
>
> e cossiran l'avenidor
>
> que per totz ai razon que plor…
>
> Mas trop suy vengutz als derriers.

> Qu'er non es grazitz lunhs mestiers
>
> Menhs en cort que de belh saber
>
> De trobar.[171]

It suits me well to keep from singing,/ for lightness of spirit befits a song;/ and so many worries weigh on me/ that make me grieve on all sides/ remembering my heavy past/ looking on my present, beaten down,/ worrying about the

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[171] Text from Joseph Anglade, <u>Anthologie des Troubadours</u> (Paris: Broccard, 1927). My translation.

future/ that for all of this I have a reason to cry/… But I have come too late./

For now no craft is esteemed less/ in the court/ than the beautiful art of poetry.

Much has been made of Guiraut's claim that he "arrived too late," when the creative force of the tradition was already in decline. This claim can be read in different ways, depending on whether we situate it within a historical, biographical or textual context. Dated 1292, *Be·m degra* occurs at the end of a long poetic career, forty years of singing for patrons, and reflects a disillusionment with the life of the court. *Be·m degra* is the final poem in the *canso-vers* book, however, and it marks the thematic center of the collection: a point of transition, rather than conclusion. After this song, the format of the compilation abruptly changes and songs are grouped by genre, rather than by linear chronology. In fact, the clock starts over; the next three songs cover the years 1270 to 1279. These are followed by the sequence of six *pastorellas*, which begins in 1260 and ends in 1282.

This shift in the structure of the *libre* suggests a solution to the dilemma of the singer in *Be·m degra*. Olivia Holmes has argued that the entire *libre*, including the poet-lover's conversion from carnal to divine love, can be read as a "figure for the historical movement from orality to writing."[172] In this case, the disruption of linear chronology marks a transition away from the historical present of song and towards the atemporal medium of the written word. No longer confined to the fleeting moment of musical performance or the demands of patronage, the poet is now free to revisit his songs and reshape them in whatever form he wishes:

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[172] Olivia Holmes, "The Representation of Time in the 'Libre' of Guiraut Riquier," <u>Tenso</u> 9.2. (1994): 130.

His own poetic career comes to stand for the entire history of troubadour lyric when both his life and that history are finished and retracted, when they can both be reduced to a written text, thus limiting the open-ended process of time by restricting it spatially and presenting all points at once.[173]

Just as the death of *Belh Deport* allows the poet to transcend physical desire, the transition to writing is presented as an ascent away from the physical medium of song. In constructing a complex fictional world out of the material of his poetry, Guiraut exposes the dramatic fiction of oral performance inherent in written transmission.

v.   *Pastorellas*

The relationship of a poet to a song in oral transmission is the principle theme of the *pastorella*-sequence, which stages a kind of comic re-telling of the drama of the *canso-vers* book. Here again Guiraut constructs an autobiographical narrative around a love object: the *pastorella*, which is both the name of a girl, a "shepherdess," and also of a poetic genre. As with *Belh Deport*, this double sense underscores the nature of the poet's desire throughout, making the cycle simultaneously a narrative of erotic desire and an allegory for poetic composition. Guiraut's first encounter with the shepherdess is described as a moment of poetic inspiration: walking by a river one

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[173] Olivia Holmes, Assembling the Lyric Text (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) 118.

day, thinking of love, the poet begins to compose a song ("pesses de chan"), when suddenly the *pastorella* appears before him:

> "Toza, mot m'agrada
>
> quar vos ai trobada,
>
> si·us puesc azautar."
>
> "Trop m'avetz sercada,
>
> Senher? Si fos fada
>
> pogra m'o pessar."

> "Girl, I am very pleased/ to have found you/ If I can please you."/"Have you sought me long,/ Sir? If I were a fool/ I could believe it."[174]

The word "trobada" (*trobar*), which is repeatedly used to describe their encounters, literally means "found," but also "composed," suggesting that the girl may be a product of the poet's imagination. Throughout the cycle, she seems to embody a tension between the real and the imaginary, between the poet and his creations. In this sense, she, too, is a metaphor, like *Belh Deport*. Unlike the silent, courtly lady, however, this girl talks back, asserting her autonomy by willfully resisting the poet's sexual advances. The shepherdess teases him for his literary ambitions, advising him to find another line of work:

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[174] Text and translation (modified) from <u>The Medieval Pastourelle</u>, ed. and trans. William Paden, (New York: Garland, 1987) 342-343.

Senher, autre via

prenetz tal que·us sia

de profieg major (38-40).

Sir, take/ another road that will be/ more profitable.[175]

This exchange sets the tone for the remaining five poems, in which the two encounter

each other repeatedly over a span of twenty-two years. The *via* that is the scene of

these encounters comes to represent the road of life: Guiraut advances in his career as

a courtly poet, earning fame and patronage, while the shepherdess ages, has a

daughter and eventually opens an inn by the side of the road near Béziers. The

mundane realism of her life-story provides a counterpoint to the idealized figure of

Belh Deport and Guiraut pokes fun at his own lofty ideals by admitting his

unrelenting sexual desire for the shepherdess. Since the dramatic date of the

pastorellas comes before the end of the *canso-vers* book, we are meant to read the

series retrospectively as anticipating the poet's gradual disillusionment with

courtliness.[176] Furthermore, the lessons of the love narrative are borne out in this

comic cyle; whereas Belh Deport dies, the *pastorella* prospers, becoming a wife and

mother, and a prosperous *ostaleyra*.

Much like a song in oral circulation, the *pastorella* takes on a life independent

of her creator: she changes her appearance, becomes the property of other men, and

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[175] Paden, Medieval Pastourelle 344-345.
[176] The *pastorella*-sequence ends in 1282, just before the death of Belh Deport in 1283. For an extensive analysis of the correlations between the two cycles, see Bossy, "Twin Flocks."

even reproduces (her daughter, a little *pastorella*). This clearly frustrates Guiraut, who repeatedly asserts his ownership over her, calling her "Gaya pastorella trobay," (gay shepherdess, whom I found/composed) "La bergeira que d'autras vetz ai trobada" (the shepherdess whom I had found/composed other times) and "la bergeira mia" (my shepherdess). By the third song (1264) Guiraut can't even recognize his own creation:

> Toza, no·m cossire
>
> Tant qu'aisso entenda.
>
> Etz ges la chantada?

> Girl, though I've tried to remember/, I can't recollect:/ Are you the girl in my songs? [177]

The *pastorella*-sequence is an allegory for the poet's relationship to his song that is also a meditation on the construction of poetic identity. Each of the poet's songs is an extension or representative of himself, over which he relinquishes control through the act of performance. Although the song, like the shepherdess, may ultimately find success in circulation, the poet will never have authority over it as he did at the moment of creation. The intricate compilation of the *libre* opposes this reality by

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[177] Paden, Medieval Pastourelle 352-353.

combining individual lyrics to produce a more stable and authoritative representation of poetic identity, one that is only possible in the medium of an anthology.

vi.   Text and melody

Scholars writing on Guiraut's *libre* invariably use *C* as their base text, because it appears to transmit a more complete and symmetrically balanced collection than *R*. The version in *R* lacks the initial rubric cited above and songs are not numbered, though genre designations and dates of composition are the same. *R* also omits a number of songs that appear only in *C*, notably the *pastorella* sequence, and includes a series of fifteen non-musical *letras* addressed to different patrons. The most important difference between the two versions, however, is the presence of musical notation in manuscript *R*, which contains forty-eight melodies for fifty-two songs, by far the largest collection of melodies for a single troubadour in this or any extant manuscript. These melodies account for almost one-third of the total number of notated songs in manuscript *R* and roughly one-fifth of the entire surviving corpus of troubadour music.

There is no immediate explanation for why *R* preserves so many melodies by Guiraut Riquier. The manuscript also contains eighteen notated songs attributed to Bernart de Ventadorn and twenty-two for Raimon de Miraval—both poets with a popular reputation for musical composition, whose melodies are recorded in multiple sources. In contrast, all of the melodies attributed to Guiraut in manuscript *R* are

unique and survive nowhere else.[178] The unusually high rate of melodic preservation in this case suggests that scribes who copied manuscript *R* viewed musical notation as an integral part of Guiraut's *libre*. Furthermore, the special effort made to integrate melodies and text, even in the notationless *C*-version, reflects an attitude toward the relationship between poetic authority and textuality that is unique in the troubadour manuscript tradition. This attitude is expressed both in the complex structure of the *libre*, and also in the series of *letras*, which I will discuss in detail below.

vii.   Guiraut's Melodies

In addition to the exceptionally high ratio of notated melodies to text in *R*, there are several reasons to believe that music may have played an important role in the textual scheme of Guiraut's *libre*. In the first place, both *R* and *C* preserve instructions in their rubrics that specifically pertain to musical performance, though only *R* contains actual notation. These instructions occur twice, in the rubrics for *Pus sabers* and then again eleven songs later for the *vers*, *Res no·m val*. In both cases, the rubric provides specific advice about how to sing a complex metrical form that also draws attention to the significance of the song and its form within the collection. The rubric defines *Pus sabers* as a *canso redonda*, a song of circular composition, in which the last rhyme of each stanza becomes the first rhyme of the following stanza, and the first and last rhyme of the poem are the same, creating a sort of loop. This rhyme-pattern would be clear even from a silent reading of the text; however, the rubric adds another level of

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[178] Aubrey, <u>Music of the Troubadours</u> 39.

complexity by insisting on the circular nature of the melody, as the rubric for *Pus sabers* makes clear:

Canso redonda et encadenada, de motz et so, d'En Gr. Riquier, facha l'an .m.cc.lxxxij. en abril. El so de la cobla segonda, pren se el miehc [sic] de la primiera, e sec se tro la fi. Pueys torna al comensamen, e fenis el mieg aisi co es senhat et aisi canta se la .iiija. e la vja. E la tersa e la va. aisi co la primieira e no y cap retornada.

Canso redonda and *encadenada*, of words and music, by Giraut Riquier, made in 1282 in April. For the melody of the second stanza, begin at the middle of the first and stop at the end. Then return to the beginning, and finish at the middle where the sign is. And thus sing the 4th and 6th [stanzas], and sing the 3rd and 5th [stanzas] like the first, not returning to the start.[179]

The rubric instructs a singer to divide the line into two melodic parts, which alternate throughout the song, resulting in an unusually complex round-scheme. [180] This

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[179] Text and translation from Aubrey, Music of the Troubadours 173. Aubrey uses a slightly modified version of the text of *R*, which differs from *C* only in spelling and punctuation. For the *C*-text, see Mölk, Las Cansos 103. *Redonda* literally means "rounded"; *enadenada* means "enchained."

[180] "This canon directs the singer to begin the melody of the second, fourth and sixth stanzas at a point halfway through, which the scribe marked by a large cross on the staff. The melody is thus divided into two large sections, the first in large-scale AA'B form, which is the reversed to BA'A in alternate stanzas. Two stanzas together then would yield the form AA'BBAA', a very large-scale rounded structure. The rhymes of this song are similarly transposed in succeeding stanzas, although not in such a

scheme is unique in the troubadour repertoire, so it is not surprising that a singer

would have needed clarification; however, the rubric also identifies song twenty-

seven, *Voluntiers faria*, as a *canso redonda*, though in this case there is no description

of melody. Bossy has noted the significance of this generic designation, arguing that

"these two merry-go-round rhyme patterns in turn serve as structural markers within

the *Libre* as a whole," each marking the completion of one of the book's internal

cycles.[181] More immediately, however, the "enchained" melody of *Pus sabers*

reproduces the theme of the poem, which is about repetitive internal struggle:

> As the rubric makes clear, there is linkage through inversion in the music: The
>
> melody of each stanza's first half coincides with the melody of the previous
>
> stanza's second half. Consequently, all even-numbered stanzas begin and end
>
> midway in the musical scheme offered by all odd-numbered stanzas. At first,
>
> musical form may sound out of kilter with stanzaic form, but once the song is
>
> heard in its entirety, it becomes apparent that music and verse intertwine (or
>
> "enchain) themselves into three symmetrical pairs of stanzas.[182]

This is a prime example of the rubric's active intervention in the organization of

songs within the collection, as well as its function as a guide for the reader to

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way as to line up with the retrograde of the melody phrases." Aubrey, <u>Music of the
Troubadours</u> 173.
[181] Bossy, "Cyclical Composition" 284. *Voluntiers faria* marks the end of the first
cycle of twenty-seven poems, which is also the halfway-point in the *canso-vers* book.
Pus sabers completes the second of three eighteen-poem cycles, and foreshadows the
death of *Belh Deport*.
[182] Bossy, "Cyclical Composition" 283.

understanding and appreciating structural nuances. Judged solely on verse form, as many as eighteen poems in the collection would qualify as *cansos redondas*. The two poems defined as such are distinguished primarily by their lack of concluding *tornadas*. An additional rubric at the end of *Pus sabers* draws attention to this feature of the song, stating "Aissi no cap tornada" ("Here there is no final stanza").[183]

As with the melodic direction, this note about the verse form functions as an interpretive gloss. *Pus sabers* foreshadows the death of *Belh Deport*, an event that should, but significantly does not, mark the end of the *canso-vers* narrative. Here, as in *Voluntiers faria*, the truncated form of the *canso redonda* represents the themes of circularity, of completion without ending, progress through time and stasis, which are central to Guiraut's textual project. This unending circle is inscribed into the metrical form of the poem, and then explicitly re-inscribed into the melody, thus ensuring that it is given visual and aural representation within the text.

The other song for which melodic direction is given, *Res no·m val*, mirrors *Pus sabers* in numerous ways. Occurring five years and eleven poems after the death of *Belh Deport*, it reprises similar concerns about the futility of courtly poetry, this time signaling a definitive break with that world:

Res nom val mos trobars

Mos sabers ni mos sens

Per penre honramens

En cortz, don m'es amars

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[183] Mölk, <u>Las Cansos</u> 105.

Lurs segres…

Per que y uolgra fugir,

Si m'en pogues sufrir.[184]

My songs are worth nothing,/ nor my wisdom, nor my sense, for getting honor

in the court,/ where it is bitter for me to follow them…/ Which is why I want

to flee,/ if I can endure it.

The song concludes with a *tornada* that emphasizes the closing of this thematic cycle

and the poet's alienation from the court:

No sai, vas on m'albir

Per menhs d'afan sufrir.

I don't know where to turn my thoughts,/ so that I might suffer the least

sorrow.[185]

Although the rubric identifies *Res no·m val* as a *vers*, it is similar in form to the

circular *canso redonda*. In this case, the rhyme-words in each stanza are repeated in

reverse order in the following stanza, and the rhyme-word at the end of the first and

last stanzas are the same ("sufrir"). This produces a mirror effect, each stanza being a

reflection of itself, just as the entire poem reflects the language and themes of *Pus*

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[184] Text from Pfaff, "Guiraut Riquier" 52.
[185] Text modified from Pfaff, "Guiraut Riquier" 69.

sabers. Likewise, the rubric for *Res no·m val* provides musical direction that echoes the repetitive movement of the earlier song:

> Lo XXII vers de'En Gr. Riquier, encadenat e retrogradat de motz e de son, fach en l'an MCCLXXXVII en ianoyer; e canta se aissi quon la cobla primeira la tersa e la quinta, et aissi con la segunda la quarta.

> The twenty-second *vers* of Sir Gr. Riquier, *encadenat* and *retrogradat* of words and melody, made in the year 1287 in January; and you should sing the third and fifth stanzas like the first, and also the fourth like the second.[186]

Although the alternating pattern of the melody is reminiscent of the *canso redonda*, it is not nearly as complex, nor is the rhyme scheme as unusual. In fact, it is not immediately clear why this song needs specific instructions for performance. I would argue that the rubric indicates a thematic relationship between the two songs, which is emphasized by the designation of both as *encadenadas*, although the later poem escapes from its "shackles" by means of a *tornada*.[187]

These two examples of musical direction suggest an unusually close relationship between text and melody in Guiraut's *libre*, an impression that is

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[186] Text from Pfaff, "Guiraut Riquier" 69. *Coblas retrogradadas* are "Stanzas in which the rhymes change position according to a fixed pattern of permutation." <u>The Troubadours: An Introduction</u>, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 292.
[187] "The lover's return to the shackles of love is mirrored within *Pus saber*'s form by the chain-linked devices of versification and melody." Bossy, "Cyclical Composition."

confirmed by close analysis of the notated melodies. Riquier's musical compositions

have been criticized for their use of extended melisma, which strikes some

musicologists as an excessive display of virtuosity.[188] Nevertheless, Guiraut's

approach to musical composition significantly parallels his work as a poet and

compiler. In both music and poetry, his style is characterized by complex variation on

traditional forms. Although his melodies are not remarkably different from those

attributed to earlier troubadours, such as Marcabru and Bernart de Ventadorn, his

subtle and strategic use of melody as an organizing device within the song, as well as

the collection, is remarkably innovative.[189] The notated texts of manuscript *R* show

that Guiraut regularly used melody as a way of placing emphasis on certain keywords

in the text, indicating connections between words sung on the same note, or

mimicking the sense of the text with melodic variation, such as melisma. [190]

      In general, Guiraut's songs demonstrate an unusual degree of symmetry in the

disposition of words and melody. Both Elizabeth Aubrey and Chantal Phan claim that

these distinctive qualities suggest the influence of the written text on musical

composition. Phan notes that even if Guiraut did not transcribe his own melodies,

they nevertheless reflect a distinctly visual conception of the song, "une

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[188] "Les melodies de Guiraut Riquier furent longtemps la cible de critiques plus ou moins éclairées de la part de musicologues, le style mélismatique complexe de plusieurs melodies de Guiraut Riquier suscita des commentaires plutôt acerbes, le compositeur se voyant accusé de virtuosité gratuite, de légèreté, de manque d'art." Chantal Phan, "Structures poético-musicale du chant chez Guiraut Riquier et Alphonse le sage," Tenso 11.2 (1996): 163.

[189] "Plus que ses modèles, Guiraut Riquier a reconnu la puissance organisatrice de l'ornamentation musicale: la vocalise, chez lui, est loin d'être arbitraire; elle acquiert un poids structurel jamais connu auparavant." Chantal Phan, "Le style poético musicale de Guiraut Riquier," Romania 108.1(1987): 67.

[190] See Phan, "Style poético-musical" for a more detailed analysis of Guiraut's musical style. Also Aubrey, Music of the Troubadours 132-198.

comprehension visuelle de l'oeuvre (du moins d'un schema imaginé)."[191] The

coherent integration of melody and lyric functions much like a complex rhyme

scheme, limiting the possibility of variation in performance. Phan argues that in the

case of notated melodies, such as we have in *R*, this is *primarily* a visual

correspondence, which may be quite distinct from the reality of oral performance:

> Il nous semble que le caractère si visuel, si schématique des structures
>
> répétitives de ces oeuvres fixe bien la mélodie dans ses plus petits détails,
>
> mais la fixe peut-être en tant que pièce d'anthologie. L'interprétation chantée
>
> (ou meme instrumentale) de ces chansons, en fait, n'est pas nécessairement
>
> dictée par ces manuscrits si cohérents, puisqu'au contraire, la demarche de
>
> restructuration dont naquirent les chansonniers d'auteur est un acte qui
>
> s'éloigne essentiellement de l'oralité.[192]

It is only reasonable to treat the extant troubadour melodies as rough approximations;

nevertheless, the intimate correspondence between text and notation in Guiraut's

work points to another possible function of notated melodies, beyond the more or less

direct transcription of oral performances. Even for a reader with a limited

understanding of musical notation, the transcribed melodies may function as a visual

gloss on the song, either conjuring the aural shape of an imaginary performance, or

adding an additional layer of text and commentary, as in the "enchained melody" of

Pus sabers. If this is true, melodies constitute an integral part of Guiraut's textual

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[191] Phan, "Style poético-musical" 77.
[192] Phan, "Structures poético-musicales" 174-5.

model, participating not only in the oral performance of songs, but in their visual representation on the page.

There is some justification for thinking that these melodies, like the lyrics, might in fact have been "escrig per la sua man," either transcribed or supervised by Guiraut himself. Guiraut spent the last decade of his life in Narbonne, where manuscript *R* was produced around 1300. It is therefore possible that he may have participated in its compilation or had some contact with its scribes. It is also possible that, due to his long association with the city of Narbonne and its court, melodies composed by the poet might have been more readily available to compilers there, either through oral performance or as notated texts. In either case, the potential of a troubadour's direct involvement in the transcription of his own melodies makes this a highly unusual example of transmission, and may account for its relative success.

Scholarly opinion is divided as to whether or not Guiraut's *libre* circulated with text and melodies together in one edition. Manuscript *C*, which is generally considered to be the more authoritative version, does not contain musical notation. Although *R* does contain a large number of melodies, it is clear that in the manuscript in general, these were entered only after the text had been copied, and by a different scribe, who had considerable difficulty making musical notes correspond with text. This seems to indicate that the text scribe was not working from a notated exemplar. Van der Werf cites several examples of crowding, particularly around melismas, as evidence that music circulated separately. He argues that music scribes may have produced their own exemplar texts or transcribed songs directly from performers,

perhaps even from Guiraut himself. In any case, he admits that the manner in which the songs were transmitted is "highly atypical."[193]

Elizabeth Aubrey, on the other hand, suggests that the melodies in the *libre* are atypical even *within* manuscript *R*, noting that in this one section alone, the scribe seems to have no difficulty aligning text and melody. She points to the striking uniformity of transcriptions, as well as the fact that all forty-eight melodies are unique to this source, as evidence that they must have been copied from an exemplar that contained both text and melodies together.[194] Although this case would be unique in the manuscript, as well as in the transmission of troubadour song more generally, she concludes that "Its unified appearance provides so sharp a contrast with the rest of the codex as to seem the exception that proves the rule."[195]

A close examination of the correspondences between text and melody in Guiraut's *libre* thus suggests that the exceptionally high number of notated songs in manuscript *R* points to the conclusion that in this case lyric and melody were treated as a single and even indivisible textual unit. If so, this represents a truly experimental approach to the transcription of troubadour song, one that has more in common with lyric texts in French and Spanish than it does with other troubadour *chansonniers*. The French *trouvère* Thibaut de Champagne compiled his own songs in the mid-thirteenth century, as did the later poet Adam de la Halle. Author-compilation became the model among the next generation of French poets, notably Machaut, who prided

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[193] Van der Werf, <u>Extant Troubadour Melodies</u> 28.
[194] Aubrey, "The Transmission of Troubadour Music" 227.
[195] Aubrey, "The Transmission of Troubadour Music" 227.

themselves on musical composition.[196] Although Guiraut's *libre* anticipates this trend,

it may also reflect the increased cultural influence of the north on the south, as well as

the poet's own experience of literature in other vernaculars.

viii. The *Letras*: Orality and Authorship

Guiraut's views on authorship are articulated most clearly in the series of verse

letters, which are found exclusively in manuscript *R*. These non-musical metrical

compositions are separated from the rest of Guiraut's work by several blank pages,

suggesting that they were appended to the collection, but not considered to be part of

the *libre*. A rare troubadour form, the *letra* (or *epitre*) is a late variation on the

ensenhamen, or didactic poem, with which it shares a metrical form of short, six-

syllable lines and rhyming couplets.[197]

The fifteen *letras* by Guiraut Riquier are the largest collection of poems in this

genre, though numerous others were composed by Guiraut's contemporaries, At de

Mons and Cerverí de Girona.[198] All three troubadours spent time at the court of

Alfonso X of Castile and their *letras* reflect that cultural and intellectual milieu.

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[196] Huot, From Song to Book 64-72.

[197] The most extensive study of the *ensenhamen* is by Don Alfred Monson, Les "Ensenhamens" Occitans (Paris: Klincksieck, 1981). Also see Suzanne Thiolier-Méjean, Les Poèsies Satiriques et Morales des Troubadours (Paris: Nizet, 1978); Anglade, Guiraut Riquier 263-283.

[198] The career of Cerverí de Girona overlaps with Guiraut's in several ways. Officially attached to the court of Peter of Aragon, he also visited the courts of Alfonso X and Enric II of Rodez, both patrons of Guiraut. Numerous scholars have argued that the manuscript containing the bulk of his work, Manuscript *Sg*, was compiled by Cerverí himself. Several of his songs are also included in manuscript *R*. For details, see Miriam Cabré, Cerverí de Girona and His Poetic Traditions (London: Tamesis, 1999).

Alfonso was a poet himself, who compiled the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, as well as an accomplished jurist, and many of the literary productions of his court have a distinctly scholastic flavor. The *letras* are formal compositions that treat philosophical, theological and moral themes, often employing language evocative of legal texts, academic glosses and the *ars dictaminis*. Although they are in Occitan, their rhetorical models are clearly Latin, and they may be seen as part of a wider movement of *translatio auctoritatis* that characterized the use of Occitan in the courts of Spain and Italy during this period, as Miriam Cabré has observed:

> Rather than an effort to preserve troubadour poetry following an awareness of its decline, this compelling activity has to be considered in the context of an operation of *translatio auctoritatis*… which aims at conferring on Occitan the status of an authoritative language by mimicking the scholastic materials and procedures associated with Latin.[199]

Guiraut's *letras* exemplify this project of assimilation. Addressed to numerous royal patrons, they are virtuoso displays of learning, which treat subjects from politics to poetry, and employ a range of formal rhetorical strategies. Although the letters may have the feel of literary exercises, they nevertheless attest to a significant shift in the status of the troubadour, who assumes the role of a moral teacher, rather than an entertainer. Guiraut appropriates the language of a Latin *auctor* as part of a deliberate plan to redefine the role of the vernacular poet not merely as an exercise in style, but

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[199] Cabré, <u>Cerverí de Girona</u> 26.

as part of a deliberate attempt to distinguish the troubadour from other vernacular, oral poets, and to redefine the nature of his authority.

This literary-critical project is articulated most explicitly in the famous exchange of *letras* between Guiraut and Alfonso X, dated 1274 and 1275, during the poet's decade-long sojourn at the court of Castille. The first letter, *Pus Dieu m'a dat saber*, is a *supplicatio*, or formal petition to the king, requesting that he make an official distinction between troubadours and *joglars*.[200] Guiraut employs several scholastic strategies of argumentation to make his case. He begins by describing the social order in general, in which each class of person is assigned their proper place "Per mandamens/ de Dieu," "By the command of God" (174-5). At the top is the clergy ("clerc"), followed by the knights ("cavayers"), the bourgeois ("borzes") and the peasants ("pages"). Furthermore, within each social category, people are assigned names according to their qualities and activities: thus, among the knights, there are dukes, counts, kings and emperors, while among the peasants there are shepherds, swineherds, gardeners and laborers.

Guiraut's argument is modeled on scholastic etymologies; having demonstrated the divinely regulated relationship between words and things, social titles and essential qualities, he notes that there are also many different types of *joglar*, however, they are all referred to by the same name. He urges that new titles be given to distinguish the court-poet, such as himself, from the lower class of performer, who,

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[200] The rubric in *R* reads: "Aisso es suplicatio que fe Guiraut Riquier al rey de Castela per lo nom d[e] joglars l'an [MCC]LXXIIII." Texts of Guiraut's letters are from Joseph Linskell, <u>Les Epitres</u> 169-231. My translations.

Senes saber

Ab sotil captener,

Si de calqu' estrumen

Sab un pauc…

O autre, ses razo,

Cantara per las plassas

Vilmen, et en gens bassas

Metra, queren, sa ponha,

En totas, ses vergonha,

Privadas et estranhas,

Pueys ira·s n'en tavernas,

Ab sol qu'en puesc aver;

E non auzan parer

en deguna cort bona (563-79).

Without talent, with bad manners, just because he knows how to play an

instrument a little, goes around in the streets… or another, without reason,

sings in public squares, and mingles with the lower classes, shamelessly

looking for money from every sort of person, friends or strangers, so that he

can drink in the taverns; and he doesn't dare appear in any noble court.

These *joglars* are characterized by their lack of formal education ("saber," "razo")

and by the practice of public, musical performance (calqu'estrumen/ sab un pauc). In

contrast, a *trobador*'s songs are addressed to an aristocratic audience, and have the

goal of educating the nobility:

Per bos faits recontar

Chantan, e per lauzar

Los pros et enardir

En bos faits.

To recount great deeds in song, and to praise the worthy and incite them to

good actions.

Guiraut acknowledges that troubadours are a class of *joglars*, just as kings are a class

of knight, however, they are distinguished from the rest by their elevated social

context and by the moral and pedagogical nature of their songs. He concludes by

defining the category of poet he describes as troubadours:

Solamen entendetz

que·us o dic dels sabens,

un sabers es e sens,

e vers e cansos fan

ab razo, e riman

fan belhs ensenhamens:

Aquels solamens

Que an saber onrat

E fan d'aucturitat

Lurs trobars.[201]

Understand that I am only talking about those wise men, in whom there is

both wisdom and sense, who make verses and *cansos* according to reason,

who in rhyming give beautiful lessons: those alone who honor knowledge and

write their poems with authority.

The words "aucturitat," "saber" and "razo" are scholastic terms, which evoke

conventional definitions of literary authority current in the Latin *accessus ad*

auctores. In these academic glosses, as discussed in the previous chapter, the Latin

authors (Vergil, Horace, Ovid) are presented as moral exemplars, whose works

should be copied and studied for their inherent beauty and wisdom.[202]

 Pus Dieu m'a dat saber is simultaneously an extended self-advertisement for

Guiraut's talents, and also a theoretical justification for the authority of the

troubadour as an artist and a moral teacher. The comparison with Latin models of

authorship identifies Guiraut's troubadour as a textual figure, whose poems may

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[201] Linskell 824-34.
[202] Linskell 211. For more extensive discussion of the *accessus ad auctores*, see A.J.
Minnis, <u>Medieval Theory of Authorship</u>.

circulate orally at court, but will endure in one form or another long after this initial performance:

> Mas dels sabens ab sen
>
> Que fan los bos trobars
>
> Rete hom lurs cantars
>
> E als de ben que fan;
>
> E val pueis atertan
>
> Per solatz e per sen
>
> Co se·i eran prezen,
>
> Ab tot que sian mort.[203]

> But of those who make good poetry with art and intelligence, men preserve their songs and the other good things they've made; and because of the pleasure and instruction they give, they are worth as much after the death of their makers as they are in the present.

In its concern for constructing a stable and authoritative model of vernacular authorship, the letter appears to provide a theoretical framework for the textual and chronological experiments in the *libre*. The poet-lover's movement away from *Belh Deport* and the court, towards the Virgin Mary and God, mirrors this assumption of moral authority.

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[203] Linskell, 740-7.

The *supplicatio* is followed by a response, the *declaratio*, which is the official

decree of Alfonso X in favor of Guiraut's request. Although the *letra* is written in the

voice of Alfonso, it is generally agreed to be the work of Guiraut.[204] He begins by

summarizing the major points of Guiraut's argument, extending his etymological

analysis in order to claim that this confusion about *joglars* and troubadours signals a

fault in the Occitan language. He then appeals to Latin, the language of authority,

which has a more precise vocabulary on this issue. In Latin, *joglar* who merely play

instruments are called "istriones," while troubadours are referred to as "inventores."

He also notes than in Spain and Italy, specific titles are used to designate those

performers who only sing the works of others ("remendadors"), lower-class

performers ("cazuros") and pantomime artists ("bouffons").[205] Alfonso concludes by

establishing a new professional category of *joglar* in accordance with the terms of

Guiraut's definition:

E sian dig *doctor*

de trobar li valen

c'ab saber et ab sen

fan verses e cansos

e d'autres trobars bos,

profichans e plazens

per bels ensenhamens.[206]

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[204] Linskell 232-41; Holmes, <u>Assembling the Lyric Self</u> 119.
[205] Linskell, 198-245.
[206] Linskell, 378-374

> And I call Doctors of Poetry those who merit this title because they make verses and cansos and other good songs with wisdom and sense, which bring profit and pleasure through their good teaching.

Olivia Holmes has observed that here, as in the rubrics of the *libre*, Guiraut deliberately situates his poems within a network of authoritative texts by appropriating the language and textual conventions of academic glosses, legal documents, oaths and contracts, which reflects "an impulse to establish official, authoritative, legally binding versions of the poems."[207] The *declaratio* takes this practice a step further by actually pretending to be alegally binding document in its own right, which confers the same authority upon Guiraut and his poetic productions. This claim for textual authority highlights how very different Guiraut's poetic medium had become from that of his predecessors. As a witness to the rapid development of vernacular book culture, not only in Occitan, Guiraut recognized that he had "arrived too late" to pretend that his was still a primarily oral art. As a result he attempted to position his work and his poetic identity within the new textual medium that they would inevitably inhabit.

At first glance, the inclusion of Guiraut's *letras* seems out of step with the musical project of manuscript *R*. The poet's explicit attempt to re-define the troubadour as a textual figure would seem to distance his songs from the context of oral performance evoked by the transcription of melodies. However, this move is not

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[207] Holmes, <u>Assembling the Lyric Self</u> 118.

clearly stated in the *letras*, where the troubadour is still described as a singer, though one of an entirely different order than the common *joglar*. In comparing himself to a Latin *auctor*, then, Guiraut does not claim a new role for the troubadour, so much as re-conceptualize his role within the existing terms of the tradition, which is explicitly musical. As a result, his work advocates a radical textualization of the entire troubadour song, including melodies. The unusual attention given to melodies in the structure and rubrics of the *libre* indicates that they are an integral component of Guiraut's textual model. He clearly devoted considerable effort not only to the composition of his melodies, but also to controlling their textual transmission. Whether or not an autograph copy contained text and music, the many intricate correspondences between both throughout the *libre* suggest that Guiraut intended them to circulate together as a coherent textual unit.

How might this example help us to understand the representation of melodies and the frequent occurrence of blank spaces in manuscript *R*? The peculiar layout of the *chansonnier* as a whole shows the importance granted to the *libre*, which is its most coherent section. Manuscript *R* was compiled in or around Narbonne, Guiraut's native city, somewhere near the end of the poet's life. It is therefore possible that he was either directly involved in the project, or that it was undertaken by scribes, musicians and patrons who were under his artistic influence, perhaps even as an homage. The fact that Guiraut's *libre* is the only section of *R* that is relatively complete with respect to melodies suggests that it may be the textual model on which the entire manuscript is based. Scribes may well have used a copy of the *libre*

containing both text and melody as the basis for their far more ambitious collection, conceived along the same lines.

Guiraut's *libre* and his *letras* provide a theoretical context for the highly unusual layout of manuscript *R*. Although the songbook is unique among troubadour *chansonniers*, its integration of text and music reflects the distinctive characteristics of Guiraut's textual projects, as well as more widespread developments in vernacular book culture. In this respect, *R* truly is "the exception that proves the rule," as Aubrey put it, foreshadowing both the complex lyric compilations of Dante and Petrarch, and also the musical anthologies of the fourteenth century. The roughly eight hundred blank staves are an indication of the novelty of this project within the troubadour manuscript tradition. Although scribes may have failed in their attempt to compile melodies for every troubadour in the *chansonnier*, they nevertheless succeeded in integrating music into the textual representation of troubadour poetry, if only underscoring the silence of written song.

Chapter 3

The Best Example: Occitan Grammars and The Transcription of Troubadour Songs

The works of Guiraut Riquier display an awareness of textuality and of the place of songs in a written tradition that are characteristic of the treatment of troubadour poetry among non-native speakers, particularly in Catalunya and Italy. These regions saw the most enthusiastic reception of the troubadours in their native language, perhaps because of the similarity among languages, as well as the migrations of Occitan speakers from southern France after the Albigensian Crusades. Numerous Catalan and Italian poets adopted Occitan as a language of composition, and the extant *chansonniers* bear witness to the desire to collect songs in their original tongue and to preserve a tradition of troubadour poetry. In addition to literary texts, writers in these regions also produced a variety of commentary texts, which provide invaluable information about language and poetry in the period when local vernacular literatures were beginning to take shape.

Among the most significant of these commentary texts are the Occitan grammars, an innovative corpus composed in the thirteenth century by writers working in Catalunya, Italy, Majorca, Sardinia and Southern France. This geographical range testifies to the widespread popularity of troubadour song and also

sketches a network of textual circulation among the courts of Northern Italy and the Catalan courts of the Mediterranean. Despite differences in form and provenance, these grammars share a number of characteristics: all are addressed to non-native speakers of Occitan, providing basic guidelines concerning linguistic structure and composition; all evoke a context of reading and writing, rather than oral performance; and all appropriate terminology and format from Latin grammatical texts. For these reasons, the Occitan grammars have been treated as a coherent grammatical tradition—indeed, the oldest for any romance vernacular by as many as three centuries.[208] At the same time, however, this diverse corpus reveals a variety of conflicting attitudes concerning the status of Occitan as a literary language. In this chapter, I examine the strategies employed by grammarians to define the language of troubadour song its relationship to Latin textual models. I then investigate the role played by grammars in the transcription of lyrics in *chansonniers*.

The categories of authority, textuality and the literary at work in these treatises are mediated to varying degrees through comparison with the Latin language and the scholastic tradition of *grammatica*. Occitan grammarians drew on classical Latin pedagogical texts, such as the *Ars Minor* of Donatus and Priscian's *Institutiones*; however, it is difficult to gauge whether allusions and appropriations from classical authors are polemical, instrumental, or merely intuitive for writers

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[208] Apart from the Occitan grammars, the next earliest grammar for a romance language was the Castilian grammar of Antonio de Nebrija, which was published in 1492. Bembo's Italian grammar was published in 1525, around the same time that the earliest French grammars were written (in English) with the first French grammars appearing in France at the end of the sixteenth century. See W. Keith Percival, "The Grammatical Tradition and the Rise of the Vernaculars," Current Trends in Linguistics, ed. Thomas A. Sebok (The Hague: Mouton, 1975) 231-275.

whose primary model of textual language and grammatical analysis was that of Latin.

As in the case of the *vidas* and *razos*, it is essential, when approaching Occitan

grammars, to remember the degree to which Latin models shaped the medieval

understanding of language and literature, and perilous to assume that readers and

writers were aware of this influence in every case. The work of Martin Irvine

illustrates the dominant influence of Latin textual conventions on medieval literacy.

Irvine distinguishes between *grammatica*, which he defines as "a science of the text,"

and "grammatical culture" which refers to a more pervasive understanding of

language, literacy, and authority that derived from Latin texts but was not confined to

them. As Irvine explains,

> Grammatical culture [is] the kind of literate and literary culture sustained and
> reproduced by *grammatica*, considered not only as a discipline with a
> circumscribed body of knowledge but as a model for textual culture with
> implications that extend far beyond the apparent objective contents of a
> discipline.[209]

These larger cultural implications of *grammatica* are important when considering the

appropriation of Latin models by vernacular grammarians. Although the works of

Raimon Vidal and Uc Faidit may invite comparison with Donatus and Priscian, it

would be incorrect to assume that these projects are deliberately comparative. Rather,

the use of grammatical terminology and methodology exploits cultural notions of

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[209] Martin Irvine, <u>The Making of Textual Culture</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University
Press, 1994) 1.

literary authority that were deeply ingrained among medieval readers. Irvine has

described the medieval system of grammatical education as "primarily a textual

discipline, which privileged writing over speech" and promoted a conception of

literary and linguistic *auctoritas* that was based on the normative Latin of classical

literary texts.[210] In the absence of precedents in their own languages, it is hardly

surprising that vernacular writers and grammarians would revert to these pervasive

norms. In fact, as Irvine has noted, the emphasis on critical analysis and inquiry in

grammatical education encouraged the production of new texts, while also defining

the normative conditions of textuality:

> *Grammatica* was not simply descriptive, isolating and labeling the parts of its
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> subject matter, but *productive* of knowledge: it supplied a network of
>
> presuppositions, discursive strategies and rules for argumentation that
>
> governed inquiry and provided the grounds of possibility for knowledge.
>
> *Grammatica* was thus a paradigm.[211]

As a "paradigm," *grammatica* was thus also exportable, conferring the authority of

ancient precedent wherever it was applied. The earliest Occitan grammar, the *Razos*

de Trobar of Raimon Vidal, drew on the *Ars Minor* of Donatus for a basic

grammatical vocabulary and generic format, but did not attempt a thorough analysis

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[210] Irvine, <u>Textual Culture</u> 4. Medieval grammarians did not always distinguish literary criticism from the study of language: "*Grammatica* initially knew no separation between the study of language and literature since the object-language, Latin, was the normative written Latin of a literary canon, both classical and Christian." Irvine, <u>Textual Culture</u> 20.

[211] Irvine, <u>Textual Culture</u> 8.

of linguistic structures. This was followed fifty years later by the *Donatz Proensals* of Uc Faidit, which replicated the grammatical model of Donatus in a more comprehensive way. I contend that the contrast between these two grammars reflects a shift in attitudes toward Old Occitan as a textual language during the half-century that separates them.

This pivotal period (1200-1250) saw the decline of troubadour song in Occitania, as well as the fragmentation of Occitan court culture and the export of its language and culture to neighboring regions. The earliest surviving *grand chansonnier* was compiled in Italy in 1254, followed by a dozen parchment songbooks in the next fifty years and at least fourteen more by the mid-fourteenth century. Raimon Vidal's *Razos de Trobar* was composed as early as 1190, more than fifty years before the compilation of the oldest surviving *chansonnier*. It therefore constitutes the earliest surviving collection of troubadour songs, as well as the first attempt to define and categorize a vernacular poetic tradition. The other surviving Occitan grammatical texts, the most important of which are the *Donatz Proensals* of Uc Faidit (c. 1243) and the *Regles de Trobar* of Jofré de Foixà (c. 1289), were all written in the second half of the thirteenth century, during the major period of *chansonnier*-production. Both grammars and *chansonniers* testify to the transmission and reception of troubadour poetry outside of the Occitan-speaking regions. Raimon Vidal addressed his treatise to a Catalan audience, while Uc Faidit composed his grammar at the behest of two Italian noblemen, and Jofre de Foixà wrote for the Sicilian court of the Catalan King Jacme II. Likewise, more than half of the extant troubadour *chansonniers* are of Italian origin, while many of the most famous

troubadours were active in the courts of Catalunya. Grammatical texts were thus composed, copied and circulated for the same audience and perhaps even by the same scribes who compiled the *grands chansonniers*. Italian songbooks in particular confirm the influence of grammatical principles on scribal practices. Several manuscripts contain glossaries and rhyming dictionaries, while at least one manuscript includes multiple grammars with songs in a single anthology.[212]

This chapter explores the relationship between grammatical texts and lyric anthologies by examining the various strategies employed by grammarians to define and exemplify poetic language in three of the most influential Occitan grammatical texts: the *Razos de Trobar*, the *Regles de Trobar* and the *Donatz Proensals*. Scholars have long recognized that these texts constitute a unique and innovative vernacular corpus, which provides an important perspective on contemporary attitudes toward troubadour poetry and its reception. What has not been recognized, however, is the active role that grammatical texts may have played in the production of troubadour *chansonniers* and the development of vernacular textual culture more broadly. How would it change our reading of troubadour songbooks if we considered Occitan grammars not as products or accessories of textualization, but rather as foundational works, which exerted a guiding influence on the production of vernacular texts by providing a critical justification, methodological model and exemplary corpus that supported the treatment of Occitan as an authoritative text-language?

i.   The *Razos de Trobar*: Grammaticalizing the Vernacular

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[212] Manuscript *P* (Biblioteca Laurenziana, XLI.42).

Raimon Vidal was a Catalan troubadour from Besalù, near Girona, who began his

career as a *joglar* associated with the court of Hug de Mataplana.[213] Active from the

end of the twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century, he is best known as the author of the

Razos de Trobar, as well as three long poems in Occitan, *Si fo·em temps com era*

gais, *Abrils issia e mai entrava* and the mini-romance *Castia Gilos*. Raimon

composed during the 'Golden Age' of troubadour poetry, and his diverse corpus

testifies to active participation in the poetic culture of his day. His works contain

frequent references to other troubadours and display a consistent concern with the

production and practice of troubadour song, the distinction between troubadours and

joglars and the transmission of songs among non-native speakers of Occitan.

This interest in performance and reception reflects an engagement with

troubadour song as a foreign literary tradition, an attitude that is expressed most

clearly in his grammatical treatise, which was composed sometime around the year

1200.[214] In fact, the *Razos de Trobar* is less a grammar in the modern sense, than an

art of composition: a pedagogical text that addresses both language and rhetoric and

formulates general guidelines for lyric composition. In the opening lines, Raimon

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[213] Hug de Mataplana (1173-1213) was active in the courts of Alfonso II and Peter II
of Aragon. He was a poet himself and a friend of Raimon de Miraval, whom Raimon
Vidal praises extensively in his works.

[214] All citations from the text of Raimon Vidal's *Razos de Trobar*, as well as the
Regles de Trobar of Jofre de Foixà are from J.H. Marshall <u>The *Razos de Trobar* of
Raimon Vidal and Associated Texts</u> (London: Oxford University Press, 1972). The
English translations of the *Razos* are modified from Marianne Shapiro, <u>*De Vulgari
Eloquentia*: Dante's Book of Exile</u> (University of Nebraska Press, 1990). Translations
of other Occitan texts, including the *Regles*, are my own, except where indicated.
Marshall places the date of composition for the *Razos* sometime in or before 1213,
perhaps as early as 1190. Five principle manuscripts have survived, the earliest from
the end of the thirteenth century. See Marshall, <u>*Razos*</u> lxvi-lxxi.

states that his goal is to define standards of correctness, which will enable readers to

evaluate the quality of troubadour songs and also to compose songs in the correct

manner:

> Per so qar ieu Ramonz Vidals ai vist et conegut qe pauc d'omes sabon ni an
>
> sabuda la dreicha maniera de trobar, voill eu far aqest libre per far conoisser et
>
> saber qals dels trobadors an mielz trobat et mielz ensenhat, ad aqelz qe·l
>
> volran aprenre, con devon segre la dreicha maniera de trobar.

> Since I, Raimon Vidal, have seen and understood that few people know or
>
> have ever known the correct manner of composition, I want to write this book
>
> so that it might be known which troubadours have best composed and best
>
> taught, so that those who would like to learn might adhere to the correct
>
> manner of composition.[215]

It has frequently been noted that Raimon fails to meet these stated goals. Pierre

Swiggers described the *Razos* as "une synopse grammaticale malconstruite" while

John Marshall admits that "the *Razos de Trobar* is a disappointing work, in the most

literal sense of that expression."[216] This critical disparagement stems from the fact

that Raimon did not undertake a comprehensive analysis of Occitan grammar,

choosing instead to focus on certain aspects of usage that he deemed essential for

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[215] Marshall, <u>Razos</u> 2; Shapiro, <u>De Vulgari Eloquentia</u> 113.
[216] Pierre Swiggers, "Les premières Grammaires Occitanes: les *Razos de Trobar* de Raimon Vidal et le *Donatz Proensals* d'Uc (Faidit)" <u>Philologie</u> (105): 134-147. Marshall, <u>Razos</u>, lxxix.

reproducing the language in its correct form. He is particularly interested in

distinguishing Occitan from Catalan. For this reason, the bulk of the treatise is

devoted to nouns, particularly noun-flexion, which is a trait of literary Occitan shared

only by Old French, while his analysis of verbs is limited to irregular forms of the

first person, which could be easily confused by Catalan speakers.[217]

As a grammar, the *Razos* is notably incomplete, and it is difficult to imagine

how it could have been used to teach Occitan to someone who did not already have a

firm command of the language. As a work of language theory, however, the *Razos*

stands on its own. In the prologue, Raimon defines the language of troubadour song

by identifying it with a specific geographical region and community of speakers, and

also by describing its function as a poetic language and its relationship to established

models of literary authority.[218] His concern with correct usage reflects the conditions

of oral performance and transmission in areas where Occitan was not the primary

spoken language. He addressed his treatise to a select class of readers, the *prims hom*,

and one of his objectives is to promote or defend the status of Occitan as a prestige

language by limiting the intrusion of other vernaculars, particularly Catalan. This was

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[217] Twelfth-century Occitan uses a terminal –s to distinguish between nominative and oblique cases, although this case-marker is used inconsistently in the extant sources, particularly manuscripts from the south of France, and seems to have died out in the spoken language over the course of the thirteenth century. See Frede Jensen, Old Provençal Noun and Adjective Declension (Odense, Denmark: Odense University Press, 1976). Raimon Vidal does not specifically mention that Old French also has inflected nouns, though he does imply that French has a similar status to Occitan as a language of literary authority.

[218] For more analysis of the prologue to the *Razos de Trobar* and its relationship to the rest of the work see Elizabeth Wilson Poe, "The Problem of the Prologue in Raimon Vidal's *Las Razos de Trobar*" Res Publica Litterarum, 6 (1983): 303-317.

evidently a concern because of the widespread popularity of troubadour song, which, as Raimon vividly described, circulated everywhere and among all people:

> Totas genz christianas, iuseiuas et sarazinas, emperador, princeps, rei, duc, conte, vesconte, contor, valvasor, clergue, borgues, vilans, paucs et granz, meton totz iorns lor entendiment en trobar et en chantar, o q'en volon trobar o q'en volon entendre o q'en volon dire o q'en volon au/zir; qe greus seres en loc negun tan privat nit ant sol, pos gens i a paucas o moutas, qe ades non avias cantar un o autre o tot ensems, qe neis pastor de la montagna lo maoir sollatz qe ill aiant an de chantar.

> Now these days, everyone—Christian, Jew, or Saracen, emperor, prince, duke, count, viscount, vavasseur, cleric, bourgeois, peasant—simply everyone, great or small, is putting his whole heart into singing. They want either to compose songs or understand them, or sing or hear them, so that you could hardly find yourself in so private or solitary a place, with so few or so many persons, that you would not hear someone or other, or all together, singing; for even the most rustic shepherds of the mountains find their greatest solace in song.[219]

This passage is notable for its description of circulation that transcends all social categories from king to shepherd. Underlying this universal model, however, is a sense of anxiety about the dangers of free oral circulation, which inevitably produces

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[219] Marshall, *Razos* 2; Shapiro 113.

corruption and variation, as Raimon goes on to claim. He is especially concerned about the problems that result when uneducated audiences have no clear standards for discerning good poetry and good language:

En aquest saber de trobar son egalment li trobador e li ausidor motas vetz enganat. E diray vos quo ne per que ne son enganat li ausidor qui re en trobar no entenen: per ço que, com ausiran un bon xantar, faran semblan que fort be l'entendon, ei ia res no·n entendran. E fan ho per ço cor se cuydan que hom los tengues per pechs si dizion que no·l entendisson. Axi enganon lur matex, car un dels maiors seyns del mon es qui vol aprendre e demandar ço que no sap, per que assatz deu haver maior vergonya aquell qui no sap, que aquell qui demana e vol / apendre.

In this pursuit of song both troubadours and audience are often deceived. I will tell you why: people who understand nothing, when they hear a good song, pretend to understand it thoroughly even though they grasp not one single thing, because they think they will be respected less if they admit it…. and even those who are connoisseurs of song will praise some bad troubadour they hear, just for the sake of manners—if not praise, at least blame him. So the troubadours themselves are fooled, and it is the fault of the audience.[220]

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[220] Marshall, *Razos* 5; Shapiro 114.

Raimon's concern with understanding reveals the social dimensions of his grammatical project. His endorsement of strict normativity promotes the status of Limousin as a specialized discourse, which cannot be understood by just anyone, only by the trained *entendedor*, presumably an aristocratic and literate reader, capable of conceptualizing the *saber de trobar* within the Latinate terms of the treatise. For this reason, the *Razos* is essentially prescriptive, seeking to define the language of troubadour song within the narrowest possible terms. For example, he specifies that the correct name for the language of the troubadours is *Lemosi* (Limousin), rather than a generic term like *romanç*. He thus identifies a pure and authentic form of the language with a specific geographical territory: the region of southwestern France that produced some of the most famous troubadours.[221]

> Totz homs qe vol trobar ni intendre deu primieramant saber qe neguna parladura non es naturals ni drecha del nostre lingage, mais acella de Franza et de Lemosi et Proenza et d'Alvergna et de Caersin. Per qe ieu vos dic qe, qant ieu parlarai de 'Lemosy', qe totas estas terras entendas et totas lor vezinas et totas cellas qe son entre ellas. Et tot l'ome qe en aqellas terras son nat ni norit an la parladura natural et drecha. Mas cant uns d'els [es] eiciz de la parladura per una rima qe i aura mestier o per autra causa, miles o conois cels qe a la parladura reconeguda.

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[221] There was no single name for the language of troubadour song during the Middle Ages, and each of the grammarians uses a different term in his treatise. Raimon Vidal uses *lemosi*, Jofré de Foixà alternates between *romanç* and other terms, and Uc Faidit prefers *provençhal*. Since these terms have significance, as in Raimon's case, I reproduce them when discussing specific grammars, though I use Occitan to refer to the language of troubadour song in general.

First of all, everyone who wants to compose or understand songs must know

that no speech is as natural and correct in our language as that of France, and

the Limousin, and Provence, and the Auvergne, and Cahors. Therefore I

advise you that when I speak of 'the Limousin' I mean all the surrounding

territories and those that lie between them. All who are born and raised in

those places speak naturally and correctly. But when anyone parts company

with this kind of speech, for need of a rhyme or some other reason, those who

speak the recognized language are most aware of it.[222]

The reference to "nostre lingage" exposes the tension inherent in Raimon's

conception of Limousin as a language that is exclusive, yet, at the same time,

intelligible. This term suggests that Limousin belongs to an inclusive family of

romance languages, which includes Catalan; however, the map that Raimon draws

excludes Italy and the Iberian Peninsula, where he was writing. He repeatedly stresses

that Limousin stands apart from these languages because it is a language of poetry,

and, more specifically, of lyric poetry. He outlines a hierarchy among poetic genres as

evidence of Limousin's superior authority with regard to other vernaculars,

specifically French:[223]

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[222] Marshall, _Razos_ 4; Shapiro 114.
[223] This identification of language and poetic genre became conventional after
Raimon Vidal and Dante makes a similar distinction in _De Vulgari Eloquentia_. See
Botterill, 23.

La parladura francesa val mais et [es] plus avinenz a far romanz et pasturellas, mas cella de Lemosin val mais per far vers et cansons et serventes. Et per totas las terras de nostre lengage son de maior autoritat li cantar de la lenga lemosina qe de neguna autra parladura.

French is the language that is best and most attractive for the composition of romances and pastorelles, but Limousin is better for *vers* and *cansos* and *serventes*. And throughout the lands where our language is spoken, songs in Limousin have more authority than any others.[224]

Raimon elaborates this claim by arguing that Limousin achieves this status as a language of poetry because it is better suited for poetic composition *by its nature* (*naturalmenz*). He repeatedly describes Limousin as "natural and correct," stressing the fact that this poetic nature is the result of grammatical characteristics that are inherent to the language in its correct form. He goes on to explain, however, that these distinctive qualities are not always obvious to the untrained ear because Limousin shares so much of its vocabulary with other vernaculars:

Mant om son qe dizon qe *porta* ni *pan* ni *vin* non son paraolas de Lemo/sin per so car hom las ditz autresi en autras terras com en Lemosin. Et sol non sabon qe dizon; car totas las paraolas qe ditz hom en Lemosin [aisi com en las autras terras autresi son de Lemosin com de las autras terras, mas aqellas qe

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[224] Marshall, _Razos_ 6; Shapiro 115.

hom ditz en Lemosin] d'autras gisas qe en autras terras, aqellas son

propriamenz de Lemosin.

There are many who say that *porta* and *pan* and *vin* are not Limousin words

because they are spoken in the same way in other places. They do not know

what they are talking about; for all words spoken in the Limousin province as

well as in others belong to Limousin as well as to the other tongues, but those

words that are spoken differently in Limousin are particular to that place.[225]

Raimon's grammatical analysis focuses on words that are distinctive to Limousin.

These are, for the most part, nouns, since poetic Occitan retained a system of noun

flexion. This grammatical feature is important in poetry, since nouns often appear at

the end of a line of verse, and inflected forms must be reproduced correctly in order

to maintain rhyme schemes. Furthermore, the identification of grammar with

versification is a characteristic that Occitan shares with Latin, since the proper

variation of long and short vowels is also essential to maintaining classical Latin

meter. Subsequent Occitan grammarians also placed emphasis on this shared

characteristic, producing what Sarah Kay has termed a "science of endings" in the

Occitan grammatical tradition.[226] Indeed, one of Raimon's central claims in the *Razos*

is that the status of Limousin as a language of *trobar* is inseparable from *grammatica*:

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[225] Marshall, *Razos* 6; Shapiro 115.
[226] Kay argues that "flexion, especially nominal flexion, is presented in these treatises as much more than an idiosyncrasy which non-native speakers of Occitan need to master; it is also seen as indispensible to Occitan as the language of lyric poetry."

Per q'ieu vos dic qe totz hom qe vuella trobar ni entendre deu aver fort

privada la parladura de Lemosin. Et apres deu saber alqes de la natura de

gramatica, si fort primamenz vol trobar ni ente[n]dre, car tota la parladura de

Lemosyn se parla naturalmenz et per cas et per [nombres et per] genres et per

temps et per personas et per motz, aisi com poretz auzir aissi si ben o

escoutas.

Therefore I tell you that anyone who wants to compose or understand songs

has to be very intimate with the Limousin idiom. And he must also know

something of the nature of grammar [*grammatica*] if he wants to do these

things well; for the entire Limousin tongue is spoken naturally with respect to

case, number, gender, tense, person, and part of speech, as you will hear if you

pay attention to me.[227]

By describing Limousin as "naturally" grammatical, Raimon defines the language of

troubadour song as a distinct category of language, an authoritative text-language,

like Latin, that is governed by stable forms and exemplified by a canon of

authoritative authors.[228]

Sarah Kay, "Occitan Grammar as a Science of Endings," <u>New Medieval Literatures</u>
11 (2009): 46.
[227] Marshall, <u>Razos</u> 6; Shapiro 115.
[228] See Martin Irvine, "*Grammatica* and Literary Theory," <u>Cambridge History of
Literary Criticism</u>, v. 2, ed. Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 2005) 15-41.

The reference to *grammatica* also evokes formal practices of reading, writing and interpretation associated with Latin pedagogy. While it is unclear whether Raimon was working from written sources or from memory, his precepts impose standards of orthography and morphology that are derived from textual models and aimed at readers, rather than listeners. For example, his insistence on maintaining *–s* as a nominative and oblique case-marker reveals a preference for visual over aural consistency, since twelfth-century troubadours often employed variant forms when metrically convenient. Raimon's strenuous opposition to this practice reveals the central importance he accorded to establishing normative standards of orthography and declension. He states that, "a troubadour should seek out words and rhymes that are neither faulty nor false in person or case" and that "he must see to it that no rhyme he might need puts him beyond correct property, case, gender, number and part of speech, word, tense, person, elongation, or abbreviation."[229]

Nevertheless, Raimon cannot avoid acknowledging that his model of correct usage is not always supported by the troubadours. Rather than admitting some flexibility in his grammatical standards, however, he labels variant forms as "errors" even when they occur in "good songs" by "the best troubadours" and claims that "even among the best [troubadours] you will find plenty of ill –used words."[230] Raimon critiques individual poets for what he perceives as errors, clearly privileging grammatical values over aesthetic ones. For example, he criticizes Folquet de Marselha and Peire Vidal for mixing up first and third-person verbs, and singles out Bernart de Ventadorn and Peire d'Alvernha for confusing singular and plural and also

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[229] Shapiro 123; Shapiro 125.
[230] Shapiro 125.

for using French words. This reflects an emphasis on standardization that even extends beyond conjugation and declension, forming the basis of an aesthetic. He views linguistic and rhetorical consistency as a value that is essential to good composition:

> E atressi matx deu gardar, si vol far un cantar o un romanç, que diga raso e
> parladuras continuades e propries e avinents, e que son cantar ne / son romanç
> no sien de parladuras biaxades ni de dues parladuras ni de razos mal
> continuades ni mal seguides. [231]

> If [someone] wants to make a good song or a romance, he must see to it that
> he uses logically continuous words and arguments that are proper and
> pleasant, and that his song or romance not contain mistaken words, or two
> different languages, or discontinuous, inconsistent arguments.

Raimon's narrow definition of correct and incorrect forms does not accurately describe the language of twelfth-century troubadours, as later grammarians would note.[232] Instead, it constitutes a more accurate record of the values that Raimon Vidal and, perhaps, his readers considered essential to the authority of literary language: namely, a standardized grammar and orthography based on the language of literary texts. In this sense, his work is aspirational, rather than practical; underlying his claims to provide descriptive guidelines for study and composition is the desire, as

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[231] Marshall, _Razos_ 23; Shapiro 125.
[232] See the discussion of the _Regles de Trobar_ of Jofre de Foixà below.

Sarah Kay has put it, to "forge a new kind of language," a lyric vernacular that would possess the textual authority of Latin.[233] Equally important to grammatical exposition, in this respect, was Raimon's citation of troubadour songs as grammatical exemplars. This practice represented songs as having textual authority and also sketched the foundation of a canon, which foreshadowed the organization of *chansonniers* by classifying lyrics according to abstract criteria.[234]

The *Razos de Trobar* had an enduring influence on the reception of troubadour songs by formulating a conceptual model that represented Occitan as a language exemplary of textual authority in the vernacular, according to Latin grammatical standards. At its best, this model succeeded in asserting the status of the vernacular as a literary language and facilitated transcription by providing clear examples of correct and incorrect language. At its worst, however, the *Razos* advocated a narrowly dogmatic conception of linguistic correctness that limited the possibility of variation and provided a rationale for hypercorrectness, which is a persistent characteristic of many thirteenth-century *chansonniers*, particularly those produced in Italy, as I shall discuss below.

ii.   The *Regles de Trobar*: Vernacularizing Grammar

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[233] "The appeal to *grammatica* not only addresses (or fuels) a desire to learn Occitan in a way similar to that in which Latin was learned, but it also serves to conjure it into existence as a lay and secular alternative to Latin, perhaps even as a language whose poetry might rival that of Latin… A sense of trying to forge a new language, as opposed to trying to describe one that already exists, is reflected in the authors' collective uncertainty as to what to call the idiom that is the object of their treatises." Kay, "Occitan Grammar" 47.

[234] The importance of citation in the *Razos* is indicated by the fact that all subsequent grammarians in the 'Vidal Tradition' chose their own citations, even when they imitated Raimon's treatise in other respects.

The strongest argument for the influence of Raimon Vidal's conception of poetic language is the frequent adaptation of his treatise throughout the thirteenth century. The "Vidal Tradition," as John Marshall has called it, includes a diverse body of texts that are all modeled, to varying degrees, on the *Razos de Trobar*. Taken as a group, these testify to the importance of Raimon's ideas and of troubadour poetry more generally in establishing standards of literary achievement and linguistic correctness for other Romance speakers. Like Raimon, the authors of these grammars were all non-native speakers of Occitan, working outside of the major centers of composition and manuscript production: in Catalunya, Sardinia and Sicily.[235] Such geographical diversity is evidence of a wide network of circulation and readership for troubadour texts by the beginning of the fourteenth century. Raimon Vidal may have held a special appeal for these readers since he was also a non-native speaker of Occitan who succeeded in establishing a place within the troubadour canon. Yet these writers' engagement with the *Razos* shows an interest in adapting Raimon's definition of literary language to a more flexible and universal vernacular context.

The most accomplished of Raimon's imitators was Jofre de Foixà, who composed his *Regles de Trobar* between 1286 and 1291. Jofre came from a noble Catalan family and had a successful a career as an ecclesiastic and diplomat in Sicily. Only four of his songs have survived, but these, as well as his prose work, testify to

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[235] The other grammars included in the 'Vidal Tradition' are the *Regles de Trobar* by Jofre de Foixà, the *Doctrina d'Acort* by Terramagnino da Pisa and the *Doctrina de compondre dictats*, which is anonymous but often attributed to Jofre de Foixà. There are also two anonymous treatises from MS Ripoll 129. For additional information, see Marshall, *Razos* and Kay "Occitan Grammar."

an extensive knowledge of troubadour poetry and performance practices. In the opening paragraph of the *Regles*, Jofre presents his treatise as a kind of commentary on the *Razos de Trobar*, which has the explicit goal of explaining the earlier work for the benefit of readers who have no knowledge of Latin grammar.

Co en Ramons Vidals de Besaldu, en art de trobar savis e entendens, veses motz dels trobadors fallir, per no saber en llurs trobars, a donar a ells e als altres qui res no sabien doctrina e ensenyamen, per que poguessen venir a perfeccio de aquella art, dictet e fe un libre qui es appellat Regles de Trobar. Mas com aquell libre nulls homs no puga perfetament entendre ses saber la art de gramatica, e trobars sia causa que p[er]tanga a l'emperador e a reys, a comtes, a duchs, a maques, a princeps, a barons, a cavallers, a burzeses, ancara a altres homens laichs, li plusor dels quals no sabon gramatica, eu en Iaufres de Fuxa, per manament del noble e alt senyor En Iacme, per la gracia de Deu rey de S[i]cilia, … studiey e pessey a dar, segons lo meu / saber, alcuna manera de doctrina en romanç; per que cells qui no·s entenen en gramatica, mas estiers sobtil e clar engyn, pusquen mils conexer e aprendre lo saber de trobar.[236]

Sir Raimon Vidal of Besalu, learned and well versed in the art of poetry, saw that some troubadours failed in their compositions through ignorance. So as to give to those and to others who know nothing of the rules and teachings, and

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[236] Marshall, *Razos* 66; my translation.

so that they might be able to perfect this art, he dictated and made a book, which is called the Regles de Trobar. But seeing as no man can understand this book perfectly without knowledge of the art of *grammatica*, and since composition is an interest that pertains to the emperor, king, count, duke, marquis, prince, baron, knight and burger, as well as to other laymen, most of whom do not know grammatical, I Jofre de Foixà, by command of the noble and high lord Jacme, by the grace of God, King of Sicily … have studied and thought to give, to the best of my knowledge, some sort of doctrine in the vernacular, so that those who do not understand *grammatica*, but who have a clear and subtle nature, might better know and learn the *saber de trobar*.

Jofre here abandons the authorizing framework of *grammatica* in favor of a more popularizing approach to grammar. This choice indicates a confidence in the authority of the troubadours as a canonical literary tradition, whose cultural prestige and textual status do not need to be asserted. This allows him, I believe, to devise a linguistic model that describes the practice of twelfth-century troubadours more accurately than the Latinate grammars of Raimon Vidal and Uc Faidit.

Instead of making the vernacular conform to *grammatica*, Jofre proposes to adapt the Latin model according to the needs of vernacular readers. The morphological section of the treatise demonstrates this shift in numerous ways. In place of Raimon's *lemosi*, he uses the more general terms *romanç* and *proensal*, apparently without distinction. As a convenience for his readers, he avoids using Latin terminology, and provides explanations of fundamental grammatical concepts

such as tense (*temps*), number (*nombre*) and agreement (*linatges*), as well as a

definition of rhyme (*rima*) for the purposes of composition. This suggests that his

treatise is aimed at an audience without experience of Latin grammar. The orientation

of the treatise towards the needs of vernacular readers is further suggested by the fact

that he includes an analysis of the article, which Raimon omitted.

Jofre's most significant departure from the *Razos* is his defense of variant

forms that Raimon had condemned. Citing "la costuma" of famous troubadours, he

argues for the validity of irregular masculine nouns and adjectives, as well as the

alternative first-person verb forms "eu cre and "eu trai," which Raimon had

specifically rejected. Jofre uses these examples in order to mount a pointed critique of

Raimon's insistence on hypercorrectness:

E eu altrey li que segons art el dix ver e que·ls deu hom axi pausar… per ço

car us venç art, e longa costuma per dret es haüda tant que venç per. E con sia

us en alguanes terres on le lengatges es covinentz e autreyatz a trobar que tuyt

cominalment diguen aytant o plus en la primera persona eu cre com u crey, e

en la terça persona diguen aytant ausi com ausic, per aquestra raho dice u que

li trobador ho han ditz en llurs trobars, es us e confermamentz de lengatge;

mas si us o dos ho haguessen ditz, assatz pogra dir que fos enrada.[237]

I grant him [Raimon Vidal] that according to strict grammar he spoke the

truth… but I do not grant that the troubadours were in error, because usage

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[237] Marshall, *Razos* 84.

prevails over strict grammar and custom is held to be law for so long that it

prevails through usage. And as it is the usage, in certain lands where the

language is appropriate to composing poetry, that people as commonly say *eu*

cre as *eu crey* in the first person and as commonly *usi* as *ausic* in the third

person, I therefore maintain that the troubadours did not err in this matter, for

they followed the usage and custom of the language. And since all the

troubadours have spoken so in their compositions, this is usage and

confirmation of the language; but if only one or two had spoken this way, one

might well say that it was an error.

Jofre employs legalistic language to defend the authority of usage (*us*) over strict

grammar (*art*), a clerkly argument, which anticipates the more extensive defense of

dialectical variation and oral practice mounted by Guilhelm Molinier in the *Leys*

d'Amors a half-century later. The endorsement of 'usage' as a critical category thus

amounts to a revision of Raimon's standards of grammatical correctness by making

space for variation and the patterns of speech within the formal structure of the

language. John Marshall credits Jofre with recognizing that "literary usage was not

absolute and immutable, but relative and fluctuating and that its relationship to the

spoken vernacular was more protean than Raimon had allowed."[238] Beyond this

specific critique of Raimon, the claim that "us venç art" also represents an important

contribution to the development of vernacular grammar by providing theoretical basis

for abandoning the Latin paradigm of fixed grammar in favor of a more intuitive

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[238] Kay, "Occitan Grammars" 486.

relationship between the written text and the spoken word. This move is evident throughout the *Regles*, from Jofre's initial claim that he is writing for an audience "senes gramatica," whose literary acumen derives from "subtil e clar engyn, pusquen mils conexer e aprendre lo saber de trobar." By appealing to the native "engyn" of writers and reader, Jofre essentially re-defines Raimon's category of "natural" language in opposition to the artifice of Latin grammar.

Nevertheless, Jofre's acceptance of oral variation does not undermine the textual status of troubadour poetry. If anything, his experience of the troubadours was more exclusively textual than Raimon's, nearly a century earlier. Although the *Regles* does address aspects of oral performance, such as rhyme, the fact that even basic elements of *trobar* required explanation suggests that songs were no longer being performed—an assumption that is supported by the fact that the *Regles* contain no mention of music. Like Raimon, Jofre illustrates his grammatical points with citations from troubadour songs, and his selection of authors mirrors the canonical hierarchy of many *chansonniers*. Jofre is also thought to have been the author of a treatise on genre, the *Doctrina de Compondre Dictats*, which outlines generic definitions and divisions also characteristic of thirteenth-century songbooks.[239]

Despite the critical differences between the *Razos* and the *Regles*, both Jofre de Foixà and Raimon Vidal ultimately promote a conception of troubadour song as a specialized poetic idiom that is exemplified by authoritative texts. Although Jofre admits a degree of oral variation, he still endorses the grammatical values of linguistic

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[239] The *Doctrina* does include extensive commentary on music, but there are indications that the melodies cited for certain genres do not correspond with actual performance practices. See Marshall, <u>Razos</u> xciii-xcvi.

stability and formal unity. He objects to mingling languages, mixing genres and to the general hybridization that is characteristic of oral circulation.[240] In fact, by incorporating variation into the approved structure of the language, his rehabilitation of variant forms produces a more comprehensive standardization. Jofre's critique of Raimon Vidal is directed primarily at the hypercorrectness that is produced by applying a strictly Latinate grammatical model to the vernacular. By characterizing Raimon's approach as artificial, Jofre does not condemn the idea of standardization or grammatical regulation so much as advocate for a vernacular grammar that is based on actual practice, both spoken and written, rather than on Latin theory. Jofre's "ungrammatical" grammar therefore results in an assertive valorization of the vernacular as a literary language by grounding claims to authority in the native "engyn" of authors and audience, rather than in any external paradigm.

iii.   The *Donatz Proensals*: The Grammatical Vernacular

The most accomplished of the medieval Occitan grammatical texts, at least from the point of view of language exposition, is the *Donatz Proensals*, which was composed in Italy around 1240.[241] The manuscripts attribute the work to Uc Faidit, or "Uc in Exile," which may in fact refer to the Provençal troubadour Uc de Saint-Circ, who

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[240] "Lengatge fay a gardar, car sit u vols far un cantar en frances, no·s tayn que·y mescles proençal n cicilia ne gallego ne altre lengatge que sia strayn a aquell." Marshall, <u>Razos</u> 64.

[241] One manuscript includes an incipit stating that the treatise was composed "Precibus Iacobi de Mora et domini Coraçhuchii de Sterlleto," who have been identified as two nobleman attached to the court of Frederick II. See J.H. Marshall, The *Donatz Proensals* of Uc Faidit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) 62-63. All citations from the <u>Donatz</u> are from this edition; translations are my own.

was based in the north of Italy during the same period, and identifies himself as the author of several, if not all, of the *vidas*.[242] Both the *vidas* and the *Donatz Proensals* are modeled on Latin pedagogical texts: respectively, the *accessus ad auctores* and the *Ars Minor* of Aelius Donatus, which was widely used as a primer for Latin language learning throughout the Middle Ages. As a result, the term '*donat*' came to refer to a variety of vernacular grammatical texts and retained this general meaning into the early modern period.[243] In the case of Uc's treatise, however, the relationship to the Latin original is more than merely analogous: the "Donatus Provincialis" applies the grammatical structure and terminology outlined by Donatus as directly and extensively as possible to the language of troubadour song. The result is a point-by-point comparison between the grammar of Occitan and that of Latin, with relatively little in the way of exposition or commentary. This approach is clear from the very first sentence of the treatise, which begins:

> Las oit partz que om troba en gramatica troba om en vulgar provençhal, zo es: nome, pronome, verbe, adverbe, particip, conjunctios, prepositios et interjetios.[244]

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[242] See Dieter Janzarik, "Uc de Saint Circ: Auteur du Donatz Proensals?" <u>Zeithschrift für Romantisch Philologie</u> 105 (1989): 264-275.

[243] See Percival, "The Grammatical Tradition"; Brian Merrilees, "Teaching Latin Through French: Adaptations of Donatus' *Ars Minor*," <u>Fifteenth-Century Studies</u> 12 (1987): 87-98.

[244] Marshall, <u>*Donatz*</u> 88.

The eight parts that are found in Latin [gramatica] are found in the Provençal vernacular, these are: noun, pronoun, adverb, participle, conjunction, preposition and interjection.

Unlike Raimon Vidal, Uc Faidit does not provide a prefatory rationale for his project, nor does he attempt to define "vulgar provençhal" or make claims for its literary and grammatical status. His approach is primarily descriptive, rather than theoretical; he accepts as unproblematic that the grammar and syntax of Latin are also applicable to the language of troubadour song. As a result, he presents these two languages as equivalent, despite the fact that they fail to correspond in many fundamental ways. Discrepancies inevitably arise in the course of exposition, however, and when they do, Uc adopts various strategies to integrate Provençal into the model adopted from Donatus. For example, he claims that nouns in Provençal have six distinct cases, just as in Latin:

Li cas sun seis: nominatius genitius, datius, acusatius, vocatius, ablatius. Lo nominatius se conois per *lo*, cum:

Lo reis es vengutz

Genetius per *de*, si cum:

Aquest destriers es del rei;

Datius per *a*, si cum:

Mena lo destriers al rei;

Acussatius per *lo*, si cum

Eu vei lo rei armat. [245]

The cases are six: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, ablative.

The nominative is known by *lo*, as in: *the* (lo) *king has come*; the genitive by

de, as in: *This horse is of the* (del) *king*; the dative by *a*, as in: *lead the horse*

to the (al) *king*; the accusative by (*lo*), as in: *I see the* (lo) *king in his armor*.

There are in fact only two distinct noun cases in Provençal; however, Uc attempts to

justify his claim by drawing attention to the contraction of the article with the

preposition, a feature that Jofre de Foixà rightly noted is distinctive to the vernacular.

Uc's insistence on adhering to the Latin paradigm effectively erases this important

difference, while also ignoring the actual noun declension that occurs in the examples

he provides: the shift between the nominative and oblique forms of "lo reis" and "lo

rei." Although Uc does acknowledge this shift, its exclusion from the passage

specifically dealing with noun-declension reveals a strong desire to correspond as

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[245] Marshall, *Donatz* 92.

systematically as possible to Latin grammar and also to maintain internal coherence within the treatise. [246]

Numerous aspects of the *Donatz Proensals* and its manuscript history indicate that it was intended for an audience that was proficient in Latin, though not necessarily in Provençal. The treatise was translated almost immediately into Latin, either by Uc Faidit or by another author, and this Latin version survives in interlinear and facing-page translations. Several manuscripts also contain Latin glosses on the original text and are accompanied by glossaries and rhyme-lists that provide Latin definitions for Provençal words. The rhyme-lists, in particular, suggest that the <u>Donatz</u> was intended as an aid to composition; however, the high degree of mediation by Latin in the treatise implies that readers may have had limited proficiency in literary Provençal. Both Elizabeth Wilson Poe and Sarah Kay have noted that these *nominalia* display an eclectic range of meaning, and do not appear to have been designed for the purpose of building a poetic vocabulary.[247] Although they do draw vocabulary from some prominent troubadours, notably Guiraut de Bornelh, they also include words such as "*petiers*" (farter) and its feminine form, "*petiera*," "*estron*" (turd), and many others not likely to be found in any *canso*. For example:

In –ers larg   (in –ers with open e)

cers   cervus   (stag)

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[246] "E no se pot conosser ni triar l'acusatius del nominatiu sino per zo que·l nominatius singulars, quan es masculis, vol –s en la fin e li autre cas no·l volen lo enl plural." Marshall, <u>Donatz</u> 92.

[247] Kay, "Occitan Grammar" 50-55; Poe, <u>From Poetry to Prose</u> 67-82.

sers	servus	(serf)
guers	strabo	(squint-eyed)
vers	versus	(verse)
vers	ver	(springtime)
envers	inversus	(inverted, topsy-turvey)
travers	obliqus	(sideways, oblique)
convers	conversus	(converted; monk)
pervers	perversus	(perverse)
revers	reversus	(reverse) [248]

The relationship between the grammar and *nominalia* raises larger questions about the function of the treatise as a whole. Whereas Raimon Vidal and Jofre de Foixà explicitly state that their intention is to help enthusiasts learn to compose new troubadour songs, the nature of Uc Faidit's project suggests that his goal was primarily descriptive, even encyclopedic. Both the Latinate format and the extensive word-lists seem to identify the *Donatz* with the reception and circulation of troubadour poetry in Italy. This conclusion supports my earlier argument that Italian *chansonniers* testify to textualization of the lyric through appropriation of Latin strategies of transcription and commentary. Even if the *Donatz Proensals* was not used for composition, it still provides a guide for text-production and a demonstration that Latin grammatical categories can be successfully reproduced.

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[248] Kay, "Occitan Grammar" 52.

The Latin version of the *Donatz* is exceptionally faithful to the original, which suggests that it was primarily meant to serve as a crib for readers who had limited knowledge of Provençal. This assumption is supported by the fact that the translation does not seem to have circulated independently of the original, appearing in the extant manuscripts only as interlinear text or in separate columns on the same page, which can be easily referenced and compared. Likewise, the word lists are organized alphabetically, and could have functioned as primitive dictionaries for readers encountering troubadour poetry in manuscripts. It is difficult to imagine how these texts could have been used in oral performance; rather, the structure of the grammar and its glosses situates the *Donatz Proensals* within a distinctly textual culture of reception and circulation. The Latin supplement may thus indicate a broad circulation for the treatise, as well as for troubadour texts more generally, among readers who were unable to understand Provençal by ear, but who were sufficiently literate to interpret texts with the aid of reference materials, and through comparison to their own vernaculars.

Uc's appropriation of Donatus may have been a convenience for readers trained in *grammatica*, whose default model of textual language derived from Latin pedagogy. The Occitan text of the *Donatz Proensals* contains a significant amount of Latin, both in marginal glosses and also in the accompanying word lists, which provide Latin translations for Provençal words. Raimon Vidal and Jofre de Foixà also use Latin terminology and syntax as a way of mediating between the language of troubadour song and Catalan, and their expositions are shaped by an awareness of distinctions among spoken vernaculars. By contrast, Uc Faidit does not acknowledge,

even implicitly, that his readers might speak any language other than Provençal or Latin. Although the language of the text is marked by obvious Italianisms, its structure and content do not reflect the influence of Italian in any significant way.

In this respect, the *Donatz* is a substantially different grammatical project than the texts of the Vidal tradition. While the Catalan grammars are predominately interested in defining qualitative differences among a variety of languages, the *Donatz Proensals* effectively erases linguistic difference by presenting Provençal and Latin as grammatically equivalent. It is impossible to say whether such direct comparison reflects a critical agenda on the part of Uc Faidit, or is merely the unintended result of adhering strictly to the model of Donatus. It is intriguing to note, however, that the most direct references to spoken vernaculars do not occur in the Provençal text of Uc Faidit, but rather in the Latin translation. Although the translator is generally faithful to the original, he is frequently forced to depart from it in places where direct translation is not possible. In a passage dealing with the future passive tense, for instance, the Occitan text provides several examples, which the translator was unable to reproduce in Latin. Instead, he composed a brief gloss on this passage, instructing the reader to think about the construction of the future "in suo vulgari":

> Inspiciat lector in huius modi modis et temporibus et consideret qualia verba debet profere in vulgari suo et quod intellectum habent, quia in vulgare provincialis lingue eundem sensum habent ista verba quem sua in suo vulgari.[249]

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[249] Marshall, *Donatz* 121-123.

Let the reader examine [….] and consider what kind of verbs he should use in his own vernacular and how they are understood, because these verbs have the same meaning in the Provençal language that they have in his own vernacular.

This passage amounts to an admission that Provençal is closer grammatically to other vernaculars languages than to Latin. There are numerous other examples in the Latin version, and also in the word-lists, where attempts at literal translation put pressure on the claim that Latin grammar can be applied directly to Provençal. The translation therefore undermines the assumption of equivalence between the two languages that is central to the *Donatz* as a grammatical project.

At the same time, however, the references to spoken 'vulgar' languages provide useful information about how the text was used and by whom. The advice to compare verb-formation is helpful but obviously superficial; while verbs in Provençal may resemble Italian more than Latin, they are not identical and such comparison could easily produce the kind of hybridization among vernaculars that concerned Raimon Vidal. The references to spoken vernaculars here and elsewhere thus strongly suggest that the audience for the *Donatz* was not interested in learning how to reproduce complex verbs forms in Provençal, but merely to recognize them when encountered in the course of reading. This emphasis on reading, rather than composition, marks an important difference between the *Donatz Proensals* and the *Razos de Trobar*, which may explain why Uc Faidit, unlike Raimon Vidal, did not feel the need to supply extensive linguistic description or aesthetic commentary. The

Donatz is designed to provide access to song-texts, not to produce new songs or to define a lyric tradition. This implies a relatively secure status for troubadour texts and, perhaps, a clearer distinction among vernaculars in mid-thirteenth century Italy than in twelfth-century Catalunya. The extended comparison with Latin and the *Ars Minor* certainly enhances this impression, while confirming the authority of Provençal as a grammatical, literary language. Therefore, while the *Donatz* is manifestly less theoretical than the texts of the Vidal tradition, it nevertheless does contribute to Raimon's theory of literary language by producing a grammatical model for the language of troubadour song that promotes normative standards of orthography, conjugation and declension. In fact, the Latin translator underscored the similarity between the two treatises on this point by adding a coda that reads:

> Ugo Faiditus nominor qui librum composui… ad dandam doctrinam vulgaris provincialis et ad dissernendum verum a falso in dicto vulgare.

> I, who am named Uc Faidit, composed this book in order to lay down rules for vulgar Provençal and to discern true from false in the vulgar speech.

There is an echo of Raimon Vidal in the pedagogical tone of this passage and in the insistence on distinguishing between "true and false." Both writers lay claim to an authentic and authoritative version of Occitan, which they explicitly relate to Latin grammatical models. In so doing, they also locate the authority of Occitan as a literary language not in the qualities of verbal invention and versification that were

privileged by the troubadours, but rather in its status as a textual language, as defined by the prescriptive standards of Latin *grammatica*.

iv. Songbook as Grammarbook: Transcription in Manuscripts *AIK*

The Occitan grammars represent a variety of strategies related to the definition of a literary vernacular and the establishment of an authoritative canon. Despite the many differences among these texts, taken together, they promote a conception of the language of troubadour song as a stable and standardized linguistic system, derived primarily from poetic texts, and thus distinct in nature from other spoken vernaculars. This impression is reinforced by the recurring analogy with Donatus' *Ars Minor* and the appropriation of terms and structures from the Latin science of *grammatica*, which defined literary language as inherently textual, embodied and exemplified by the works of the Latin *auctores*.

It is perhaps not surprising that scribes and poets working in Occitan during the thirteenth century should display this kind of Latinizing tendency, particularly in places where Occitan dialects were not the primary spoken languages. Nevertheless, the extent to which the analogy with Latin was formalized and executed in grammatical texts is an intriguing commentary on the status of troubadour song as cultural capital during the major period of *chansonnier*-production. Previous criticism of the Occitan grammars has suffered from a tendency to view these texts as a discrete corpus, a curious offshoot of the manuscript tradition, which testifies to the

pedantry of scribes and imitators.[250] It has been my contention throughout this chapter, however, that grammars played an active role in the compilation of songbooks by providing precedent and rationale for the projects of textualization and monumentalization that are on display in many of the more elaborate *chansonniers*.

But is it possible to trace this influence in any concrete way? Even a superficial comparison between grammars and songbooks reveals obvious similarities. In a very general sense, both are compilations, which organize songs or excerpts of songs according to abstract principles. They are also essentially retrospective, defining and classifying texts that belong to an already-established poetic corpus. In this respect, they are records of reception, which seek to mediate the relationship of contemporary readers to works of the past, and also to describe the time and place in which those works were produced. It is with regard to this last point, perhaps, that the intervention of grammars in the process of compilation might be detected most strongly. Although troubadour songs identify themselves in many ways as oral vehicles, the most monumental *chansonniers* are characterized by a comprehensive textualization of oral song. As I have discussed in previous chapters, the omission of musical notation reflects a programmatic representation of the song as text, while the addition of *vidas* and *razos* fundamentally alters the oral-performative nature of the lyric by incorporating individual songs into unifying narratives, which depend on textual compilation for their effect. Both of these practices are characteristic of manuscripts produced in Italy and Catalunya, the same regions that produced the Occitan grammars.

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[250] See in particular Swiggers, "Premières Grammaires Occitanes" and "La Méthode Grammaticale d'Uc Faidit" <u>Revue de Langues Romane</u> 95 (1991): 343-350.

And yet, none of these examples could be cited as definitive proof for the influence of grammars on the production of *chansonniers*. With the exception of the *Razos de Trobar*, all the grammatical treatises were composed during the major period of *chansonnier*-production, and it would be reasonable to assume that they were subject to similar intellectual and cultural influences. In other words, how can we tell whether grammars were influencing manuscripts, or the other way around, or not at all? And why does it matter? The most logical place to look for the impact of grammars on *chansonniers* would be in the language of individual manuscripts. After all, if scribes were actually reading Raimon Vidal and Uc Faidit, then we might expect them to apply their grammatical precepts in the process of transcription, especially if their native language was not Occitan. A close comparison between the grammars and the language of the manuscripts might provide insight into who compiled the *chansonniers* and how.

The troubadour manuscript corpus has been a site of interest for philologists since at least the second half of the nineteenth century, when Karl Bartsch devised the system of sigla, assigning capital letters to parchment manuscripts and lower case letters to paper ones. This alphabetical order reflects a subjective assessment concerning the respective quality of each *chansonnier*: *A* being the 'best,' *Z* the 'worst.' The system has survived with few modifications to the present day and the hierarchy enshrined by Bartsch's alphabet has no doubt had some lasting impact on

the establishment of critical texts and on scholarly approaches to the study of

chansonniers more generally.[251]

This is the case for troubadour manuscript *A* (Vat. Lat. 5232), a thirteenth-

century *chansonnier* produced in Lombardy, which has been used as the base-text for

numerous critical editions, at least in part due to the privileged status it holds at the

pinnacle of Bartsch's system of classification. *A* presumably earned its high rating

because it is a remarkably well-executed manuscript, in many respects exemplary of

the aesthetic qualities and strategies of representation that are admired in the

troubadour *chansonnier*-corpus as a whole. The manuscript consists of more than 200

parchment-pages, containing 626 compositions, of which 502 are *cansos*, and the

remainder *tensos* and *sirventes*. The collection is organized according to genre and

preceded by a comprehensive index listing first lines and authors. In addition, *A*

preserves 52 *vidas*, the majority of which are accompanied by historiated initials and

author portraits. The text of the poems appears to have been the work of a single

scribal hand, which may account for the unusual degree of consistency in its

execution. The letters are exceptionally neat and clear, and the text is generally free

from linear correction or marginal gloss. François Zufferey has speculated that *A* may

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[251] "It was, to my mind, a great misfortune in Provençal studies that the attribution of the letters of the alphabet by Bartsch was not arbitrary: on the contrary, they corresponded, in his intention, to a sort of order of merit, so that the MSS labeled *A*, *B* and *C* had, as it were, received a first, whereas *V* had barely earned a Pass degree, and *W*, *X*, and *Y* were clear Fails. It is bad enough, no doubt, to label students in this way: worse still for manuscripts, which have a longer life-span—and which, like students, will commonly appear to conform to the grading placed upon them. Certainly all Provençal scholars are, in varying degrees, unconsciously affected by these letters." Marshall, The Transmission of Troubadour Poetry (London: Westfield College, 1975) 9.

have been the work of an Italian copyist working in Venice, and compiled from the same source as several other important Italian *chansonniers*, notably *B, I* and *K*.[252]

The similarity of *A* to other extant songbooks has allowed modern editors to use it as a convenient base-text, which can be easily compared with alternate versions in other sources. Nevertheless, in recent years a debate has sprung up among editors concerning the apparently high degree of scribal intervention in the text of *A*. William Paden used *A* as the base for the majority of poems in his edition of Bertran de Born, noting that it is "generally acknowledged as the best troubadour codex."[253] This preference is in keeping with editors such as Appel and Avalle, who also use *A* for their editions of troubadours whose songs appear in numerous manuscripts.[254] By contrast, the editors of the most recent critical edition of Marcabru—Simon Gaunt, Ruth Harvey and Linda Paterson—deliberately avoid using *A*; they claim that although "*A* tends to produce a plausible and grammatically correct reading," this is frequently the result of intervention and innovation on the part of the scribe, who tried to correct errors or irregularities in his sources.[255] Such intervention is characteristic of the *AIK* manuscripts as a family, all of which were produced in northern Italy at the end of the thirteenth century; however, the scribe of *A* was particularly active in this respect, frequently correcting what he perceived as errors in songs, which may be attested in other sources. For these reasons, the editors tend to doubt the readings found in these manuscripts, despite their obvious merits:

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[252] Zufferey, <u>Recherches</u> 40; see also, François Zufferey "Autour du Chansonnier Provençal *A*" <u>Cultura Neolatina</u> 33 (1973): 147-160.
[253] Paden, <u>Bertran de Born</u> 95.
[254] See Carl Appel, <u>Bernart Von Ventadorn</u> (Halle: 1915) and D'Arco Silvio Avalle, <u>Peire Vidal: Poesie</u> (Milano: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1960).
[255] Gaunt, <u>Marcabru</u> 10.

Because *A* and *IK*'s sources are capable of producing plausible emendations to

a faulty source, thereby obscuring what the *AIK* common source contained, it

is not always possible to tell where this common *AIK* source was defective;

similarly, it is not always possible to tell when apparently correct readings in

the *AIK* tradition result from innovation, either by *AIK*'s common source or at

a later intermediate stage.[256]

Of course, scribal intervention can be found in any troubadour text, no matter what its

origin, and the high degree of *mouvance* in the manuscript corpus frustrates any

attempt to recover the authentic version of a troubadour's song. This is particularly

true of an early troubadour like Marcabru, whose songs are likely to have spent

significant time in oral circulation, and who employed unusual language and metrical

forms that may have appeared problematic to later scribes. Gaunt *et alia* assert that

the most important manuscripts of southern French origin, *C* and *R*, also show

frequent scribal interventions, though of a markedly different sort. They describe

these versions as a "vulgate" tradition, characterized by the simplification of syntax

and vocabulary, the replacement of historical detail with apocryphal material, and

also by hypercorrectness.[257] Such popularizing *remaniement* suggests the influence of

continued oral performance on manuscripts produced in the Occitan region, as

opposed to Italian manuscripts that survived primarily in written form, and were thus

relatively fixed. It is even possible that the *AKI chansonniers* produced in Italy

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[256] Gaunt, <u>Marcabru</u> 10.
[257] Gaunt, <u>Marcabru</u> 11.

transmit the oldest versions of Marcabru's poems, though this does not necessarily mean that they are the most authentic, given the degree of intervention by scribes.

Close analysis of the text of any troubadour poem demonstrates the problems inherent in trying to identify specific influences on the language of individual collections. Orthographical tendencies, re-ordering and omission may indicate cultural and linguistic influences, or simple incomprehension. However, it is difficult to judge whether perceived errors in the language or versification of a lyric text are the result of scribal intervention or faulty transmission, or whether they reflect non-normative characteristics of a poet's language.[258] One example of this is the tendency towards hyper-correctness that the most recent editors of Marcabru identify as typical of manuscript *A*. They note that *A* is "generally hyper-correct with the case-system" adding or removing –*s* at the end of nouns to indicate nominative and oblique cases where other manuscripts record non-inflected forms.[259] This practice could indicate attempts on the part of the scribe to standardize non-normative forms and meters, which are in fact characteristic of Marcabru's poetic practice. The resulting changes are therefore subtle, though significant: rhymes are altered and lines reworked to maintain meter, erasing 'infractions' that may in fact have been intentional on the part of the author. Gaunt draws attention to one such example in Marcabru's corpus, where the poet makes the following accusation to a patron, according to the text of *A*:

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[258] "Normative" is the term used by the editors of <u>Marcabru: a Critical Edition</u>. In a response to this edition, Paden takes issue with the idea of normativity in Occitan. He notes that the impression of stable case systems is produced by the work of neo-classical grammarians such as Meyer and Chabineau. See, Paden, "Declension in Twelfth-Century Occitan" <u>*Tenso*</u> 18 (2003): 67-118.
[259] <u>Marcabru</u> 272.

Segon tas leis

As plus conqueis

Que non fetz Cesar als romans

According to you, you have conquered more than Caesar for the Romans.[260]

The scribe of *A* did not decline the masculine noun "Cesar," which is in fact

grammatically correct, since proper names derived from Latin are not declined in Old

Occitan. This rule is not followed in the Occitan manuscripts *CR*, however, which

give the reading "Cezars"; *A* thus reflects an unusually strict adherence to

grammatical rules or, perhaps, the influence of Latin forms. This example is not quite

"hypercorrect," since the form is acceptable and the declension does not alter the

meter. Both Gaunt and Paden list numerous other examples in the text of *A*, however,

where the scribe has adhered to a neo-classical models of flexion that results in

misreading and lines that are either ungrammatical or unmetrical.[261]

Issues of hypercorrectness in the case system are not limited to the *AKI* group

of manuscripts, but rather occur throughout the *chansonnier* corpus and may have a

variety of explanations. Indeed, a survey of early non-lyric texts, such as the one

William Paden has undertaken, reveals a high degree of ambivalence and variation

with regard to noun-declension in general, a revelation which casts doubt on the very

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[260] Marcabru 533.
[261] It should be noted that the editors of Marcabru: a Critical Edition are more willing
than most to classify lines as hypercorrect. In his long response to this edition, Paden
disagrees with their judgment in numerous cases. See Paden "Declension in Twelfth-
Century Occitan."

assumption that Old Occitan exhibited normative noun-declension at all.[262] If this is the case, then how do we approach the obvious hypercorrectness in the grammatical precepts of Uc Faidit and Raimon Vidal? In light of evidence in the manuscript corpus, the standardized morphology endorsed by these grammarians seems to be artificial and out of touch with oral practices. Yet this in itself is significant; if non-lyric texts display a flexible case system, then the desire to emphasize noun-flexion could be related to the lyric as a genre, indicating the perceived importance of declension to troubadour poetics—what Sarah Kay has described as a "science of endings."[263] Furthermore, the romances examined by Paden differ fundamentally from *chansonniers*, which are designed to situate songs within a literary tradition, including a cultural and historical context. If flexibility with regard to noun-flexion is indeed a mark of the oral language, then hypercorrectness may reflect a desire to assert the monumental status of troubadour lyrics as written texts.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the highest incidence of hypercorrectness in the Marcabru corpus occurs in manuscripts *A* and *C*, which are (respectively) the most monumental *chansonniers* in the Italian and French families. Both manuscripts are remarkable for their size and quality, and also for the active role that scribes played in the organization and representation of song-texts. In both, the author is the prime factor of organization: manuscript *A* contains biographies and author portraits, while *C* preserves large collections for individual authors, including the *libre* of Guiraut Riquier. The obvious care and attention to detail in the production of these

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[262] Paden, "Declension in Twelfth-Century Occitan."
[263] Kay, "Occitan Grammar."

manuscripts also extends to the language of transcription, which is notably free of error:

> We see the scribes of *A* and *C* in particular (or their immediate sources) as intelligent editors of the material they collected… These two MSS, which are in many respects attractive as bases for editions in that they often require little intervention to produce limpid and grammatically correct versions of the lyrics they transmit, contain many readings that are not technically 'errors' in that they make sense and are grammatical, where other MSS might be suspect, but which we think in all likelihood result from a scribe attempting to make sense of a source he deemed unsatisfactory.[264]

This high degree of intervention shows the important role of the scribe not only as copyist and organizer, but also as author, in a sense, of the texts he compiles. The kind of scribal activity described above is substantially different from the classic model of *mouvance* exhibited elsewhere in the *chansonnier*-corpus. By assuming the role of corrector, the scribe asserts authority over every aspect of the text, not only the organization of the collection and the authenticity of its contexts, but also the quality of its language.

It is in this respect, therefore, that it might be possible to detect the influence of Occitan grammars on the transcription of songs. As I stated above, the *Razos de Trobar* represents not only the earliest grammatical text, but the earliest surviving

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[264] Gaunt, <u>Marcabru</u> 29.

anthology of troubadour songs, a kind of *florilegium*, in which Raimon Vidal selects and organizes citations according to personal criteria and asserts his authority as arbiter of their quality and linguistic correctness. Although Uc Faidit does not provide citations as grammatical examples, the words in his glossary and rhyme lists are drawn from extant songs and thus assert control over the corpus by defining an approved vocabulary for the lyric, which limits invention and the free play of language.[265] Later grammatical texts by Jofre de Foixà and Terramagnino da Pisa perform a similar function by remaining close in form to Raimon, while replacing his original song-citations with their own selections.[266] Skill in compilation was apparently important to the authority of the grammarian, as well as that of the scribe.

Such overlapping between the activity of the grammarian and that of the scribe suggests that the precepts formulated by Occitan grammars applied not only to the language of transcription, but also to the structure of compilations more broadly. In previous chapters, I have examined how the addition of *vidas* and *razos* and the use of musical notation represent the appropriation of strategies of textual representation derived from Latin. But is it possible that these strategies filtered through the Occitan grammatical tradition, rather than adopted directly from Latin sources? This is likely the case for the family of manuscripts from northern Italy, *AKI*. Manuscript *A* is notable both for the hypercorrectness of its language, and also for unusually active scribal intervention in the organization and presentation of songs. The same could be said of *I* and *K*, which taken together as a group contain the largest number of

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[265] Kendrick 49.
[266] This kind of creative replacement is particularly striking in the *Doctrina Dacort*, in which Terramignino da Pisa sets the *Razos de Trobar* to verse. In this case, there is no reason to replace Raimon's citations, though the author does throughout.

troubadour *vidas*. These manuscripts also contain extensive author portraits, which were conceived according to a decorative program that emphasizes prominent courtly themes. [267]

As discussed earlier, these features construct the author as the central organizing principle of the collection, a scribal strategy that may reflect an ideological agenda. Meneghetti has claimed that the rigorously systematic organization apparent in the most elaborate *chansonniers* represents an attempt to impose an 'official' interpretation by linking songs to a specific author-figure and historical narrative.[268] I would suggest that this official appearance is reinforced if collections have obviously been vetted by a grammarian, who imposed textual authority on oral compositions. In a manuscript such as *A*, this grammatical intervention may be signaled by the clean appearance of the script and the unusually tidy *mise-en-page*, as well as by adherence to rules of declension in the written language that were more strict than those observed in speech and performance. The clearest link between the Occitan grammars and *chansonniers* is the compilation of grammars and songs in a single manuscript, as in the case of *P*, a fourteenth-century Italian *chansonnier* related to the *AKI*-family, which contains a version of the *Donatz*

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[267] See Lemaitre and Vielliard <u>Portraits</u>; Huot "Visualization and Memory."

[268] Meneghetti 209; also, "Lo scopo fondamentale delle biografie provenzali era quelo d'individualizzare e storicizzare il referent dell'*io* lirico, e, insieme, di valorizzare le motivatizioni concrete che si voleva sottostessero al gioco formale della poesia cortese, di *interpretare*, proprio come intendevano i magistri dell'epoca, i testi lirici, no si può non orientare l'indagine verso la coeva prassi esegetica scolastica, nel cui ambito è documentato l'uso di far precedere il commento alle opere dei classici da una schematica prefazione, demoninata appunto *accessus ad auctores*." Meneghetti 216.

Proensals.[269] Grammatical texts may have been appended to songs in order to strengthen the appearance of the tradition as a whole or as a glossary for reading and interpretation. In either case, the compilation of grammars in *chansonniers* signals their integral importance within the lyric tradition, as opposed to an independent genre of commentary.[270]

v.   The Grammarian as Poet: Scribe-Organized Songbooks

It is difficult to demonstrate the direct influence of scribes in the examples I have cited, since little is known about the people or circumstances involved in the compilation of these manuscripts. Nevertheless, the most elaborately executed parchment *chansonniers*, represented by *C* and *A,* bear witness to a complex program of scribal intervention, which indicates the increasingly important role of the scribe as authority over the language and classification of songs. In addition to such large and deliberately comprehensive anthologies, the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries saw the production of numerous collections that were explicitly organized around an individual figure, either author or collector. Manuscript *C* contains the un-notated version of Guiraut Riquier's *libre*, while *I* and *K* transmit the *razos* that unify the songs of Bertran de Born into a coherent narrative. Both may have circulated

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[269] Manuscript *H* also contains extensive marginal glosses on lyric that appear to draw on the *Donatz Proensals*. See Poe, *Compilatio*.

[270] William Burgwinkle has argued that the inclusion of grammars within *chansonniers* indicates the "canonization of interpretation," which he interprets as "an attempt to limit meaning within the deliberately acentric and heteroglossic lyric texts." Burgwinkle, 144.

independently, as is the case for autonomous collections of songs by Peire Cardenal and Arnaut Daniel.[271]

The late thirteenth century also produced several anthologies in which the compiler is explicitly named. These range from the personal songbook of Ferrari da Ferrara, to the *chansonniers* of Miquel de la Tor and Bernart Amoros. In each of these cases, as with Uc de Saint Circ, the compiler claims for himself the role of poet, critic and grammarian. Ferrari da Ferrara was an Italian troubadour, probably a notary, who assembled a collection of 223 songs in Old Occitan, which were eventually transcribed in the early fourteenth century and appended to the extant collection in *D*, where they were preceded by the following *vida*:[272]

> Maistre Ferari fo da Feirara. E fo giullar et intendez meill de trobar proensal che negus om che fo mai[s] en Lombardia e meill entendet la lenga proensal. E sap molt be letras, e scrivet meil ch'om del mond e feis de molt be letras, e scrivet meil ch'om del mond e feis de molt bos libres e de beill[s]. Cortes om fo de la persona e bons hom fo. Ades e voluntera servit as baros e as chavalers. E tos temps stet en la chasa d'Est. E qan venia qe li marches feanon festa e cort, e li giullar li vinian che s'entendean de la lenga proensal, anavan tuit ab lui e[·l] clamavan lor ma[i]stre; e s'alcus l·in venia che s'entendes miel

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[271] The songs by Peire Cardenal preserved in Manuscript *D* constitute the earliest known collection of a single author's work. Burgwinkle, <u>Love for Sale</u> 122.

[272] Boutière and Schutz note that Ferrari has also been identified with one "Magister Ferrarinus doctor grammatice" who appeared along with his son, Guicardus, in a papal record from 1310. Boutière-Schutz 583.

che i altri e che fes questios de son trobar o d'autrui, e maistre Ferari li

respondea ades; si che li era per un canpio en la cort del marches d'Est.[273]

Master Ferrari was from Ferarra. And he was a minstrel and understood how

to compose Provençal better than any man who was ever in Lombardy and he

understood the Provençal language better. And he was well versed in letters,

and he wrote better than any man in the world and he made many books that

were good and beautiful. And he was a courtly in his demeanor and he was

also a good man. And he willingly served barons and knights. And when it

happened that the Marquis held feasts and court, and the minstrels came who

understood the Provençal language, they would all go to him and proclaim

him their master; and if anyone came there who understood better than the

others and asked questions about his work or about anything else, then Master

Ferrari would answer straightaway, so that he was like a champion in the court

of the Marquis d'Este.

The *vida* stresses Ferrari's knowledge of Occitan and also of written language,

"letras," which almost certainly includes Latin. Although his poetic activity is

initially situated within a context of court performance, where he functions as an oral

resource for other *joglars*, the *vida* also narrates a transition from oral to written

transmission, presenting Ferrari as a pivotal figure in this process:

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[273] Boutière-Schutz 581. My translation.

E fe[s] un estrat de tutas las cançs des bos trobador[s] del mon; e de
chadaunas cançs o serventes tras .I. cobla o. II. O .III., aqelas che portan la[s]
sentenças de las cançs e o son tu[i]t li mot triat. Et aqest estrat e scrit isi
denan; et en aqest estrat no*n* vol meter nullas de las soas coblas; mais [a]qel
de cui es lo libre li·n fe[s] scriure, per che fos recordament de lui.[274]

And he made a collection of all the songs of the good troubadours of the
world; and for each one of these songs or *sirventes* he took one stanza or two
or three, those which convey the sense of the songs and in which the words
are all the word are contained. And this collection is written here below; and
in this collection he did not want to put any of his own stanzas; but the one to
whom this book belongs had them written down, so that he might be
remembered.

No motive is given for Ferrari's decision to collect songs; the fact that he didn't
transcribe the entire song, but only selections, indicates that the collection was
probably not meant to function as a *liederbuch*, or a handbook for performance, but
rather as a florilegium, which would have been used for personal enjoyment or study
of a song's *sentença*. The fact that it was necessary to write down Ferrari's songs "per
che fos recordament" may also indicate that oral transmission was no longer reliable.

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[274] *Ibid*. "Aqel de cui es lo libre" may refer to Alberico da Romano, who
commissioned the compilation of *D*, perhaps with the help of Uc de Saint Circ, who
may also have written the *vida* for Ferrari. Burgwinkle, Love for Sale 120-124.

Like Raimon Vidal, Ferrari da Ferrari was not a native speaker of Occitan, but rather an educated admirer, who exercised his expertise in the language of troubadour poetry through composition and compilation. It is likely not a coincidence that Ferrari was Italian and active in the same northern Italian court as Uc de Saint Circ, who may be the author of the *vida* and compiler of the manuscript in which it was contained. Likewise, the only other named author of a *vida*, Miquel de la Tor, was also the compiler of a *chansonnier*, which he produced in Montpellier in the second half of the thirteenth century. Although the original has not survived, fragments were copied into later manuscripts, including a prefatory note stating that "Maistre Miquel de la Tor de Clermont d'Alvernhe si escrius aquest libre estant en Monpeslier" ("Master Miquel de la Tor wrote this book when he was in Montpellier").[275] Miquel employs similar language in identifying himself as author of the *vida* for Peire Cardenal:

Et ieu, maistre Miquel de la Tor, escrivan, fauc asaber qu'En Peire Cardinal, quan passet d'aquesta vida, qu'el avia ben entor sent ans. Et ieu, sobredig Miquel, ai aquestz sirventes escritz en la ciutat de Nemze.[276]

And I, Master Miquel de la Tor, writer, assert that Sir Peire Cardinal, when he left this life, was almost one hundred years old. And I, the aforesaid Miquel, have copied these sirventes in the city of Nîmes.

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[275] Zufferey, Recherches 157. Zufferey has an extensive analysis of the language and manuscript history of the *chansonnier* de Miquel de la Tor, which he identifies specifically with manuscripts *b-E*. Recherches 157-188.
[276] Boutière-Schutz 336.

It is striking that Miquel refers to himself in both cases as "maistre," a term which identifies him as a clerk or even grammar teacher (*magister*), an assumption also supported by the description of his occupation as "escrivan" and by his use of the legalistic formula "sobredig Miquel."

One of the most definitive sites of influence for the Occitan grammars on the compilation of songbooks occurs in the *chansonnier* of Bernart Amoros, a clerk who was active in the Midi during the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries.[277] Like his contemporary, Miquel de la Tor, Bernart Amoros compiled a songbook, which survives only in later copies. Nevertheless, the extant versions are complete enough for Zufferey to reconstruct the original *chansonnier* as *a*, which (as its *siglum* suggests) bears a strong resemblance to manuscript *A*, and likely shares a common Auvergnat source with the family of thirteenth-century songbooks produced in Venice. The surviving copies contain a prologue by Bernart Amoros, which suggests that the he had knowledge of both the *Razos de Trobar* and the *Donatz Proensals*:

> Eu Bernartz Amoros, clergues, scriptors d'aqest libre, si fui d'Alvergna, de
> son estat maint bon trobador, e fui d'una villa qe a nom de Saint Flor de
> Planeza. E sui usatz luenc temps per Proenza, per las encontradas on son mout
> de bonz trobadors, et ai vistas et auzidas maintas bonas chanzos.
>
>   Et ai apres tant en l'art de trobar q'eu sai cognoisser e devesir en rimas
> et en vulgar et en lati, per cas e per verbe, lo dreig trobar dels fals. Per q'eu
> dic qe en bona fe eu ai escrig en aqest libre drechamen, lo miels q'ieu ai

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[277] Zufferey, <u>Recherches</u> 79-81.

sauput e pogut. E si ai mout emendait d'aqo q'ieu trobei en l'issemple, don ieu

o tiein e bon e dreig segon lo dreig lengatge. [278]

I, Bernart Amoros, clerk, writer of this book, am from Auvergne,

where there have been many good troubadours, and I am from a town that is

called Saint Flor de Planeza. And I have traveled for a long time through

Provence, through regions where there are many good troubadours, and I have

seen and heard many good songs.

And I have learned so much about the art of composition that I know

how to recognize and distinguish correct compositions from false ones, for

rhymes in the vernacular and also in Latin, according to case and conjugation.

For which reason I say that I have written this book correctly and in good

faith, to the best of my knowledge and ability. And I have emended much of

that which I have found in the examples, from which I have taken what is

good and correct, according to the correct language.

This preface is laced with terms and phrases that seem to allude to extant grammatical

texts; the claim that he knows how to "devesir en rimas et en vulgar et en lati, per cas

e per verbe, lo dreig trobar dels fals" echoes the Latin epilogue of the *Donatz

Proensals* ("ad dissernendum verum a falso in dicto vulgare") as well as Raimon

Vidal's prologue. Bernart situates himself in Auvergne, in the region that Raimon

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[278] Text cited in Zufferey, Recherches 80; my translation. For additional analysis of
the relationship between the prologue of Bernart Amoros and the Occitan grammars,
see Luciana Borghi Cedrini, "Lingua degli Autori e Lingua dei Copisti" I Trovatori
nel Veneto e a Venezia (Roma: Editrice Antenore, 2008) 326-346.

identified as the source of the authentic language of poetry, and his assertion that

"[eu] ai vistas et auzidas maintas bonas chanzos" could be a response to the opening

claim in the *Razos de Trobar*:

> Ieu, Raimon Vidal, ai vist et conegut qe pauc d'omes sabon ni an saubuda la
>
> dreicha maniera de trobar.

> I, Raimon Vidal, have heard and understood that few men know or have
>
> known the correct manner of composition.

Bernart makes a direct allusion to "la dreicha maniera de trobar," when he describes

"lo dreig lengatge" which is correct "per cas e per verbe." Furthermore, Bernart's

claim that his critical acumen in both Latin and the vernacular enables him to

distinguish "lo dreig trobar del fals" recalls Uc Faidit's statement in the Latin

translation of the *Donatz Proensals* that he composed his treatise "ad dissernendum

verum a falso in dicto vulgare" (for the purpose of discerning true from false in the

vernacular).[279] These and numerous other echoes in the prologue strongly suggest that

Bernart was familiar with the Occitan grammars.[280] Even more intriguing, however, is

the fact that he seems to be citing the grammatical categories defined by Raimon

Vidal and Uc Faidit as rationale for his method of transcription. He admits that he has

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[279] Marshall, *Donatz* 255.
[280] Other words and phrases possibly drawn from Occitan grammars include
"entendimen" and "aver drecha l'entencio," as well as the reference to "prims e sutils
hom." Cedrini also cites as possible sources the phrase "saber ab dreichura/ quals est
aycella parladura" from the *Doctrina d'Acort* (v. 5-6) and Jofre de Foixà's "lo
lengatge adrech del proensal parler" (526-7). Cedrini 334.

'emended' the songs in his collection, according to the same ideals of "bon" and "dreig" language evoked by Raimon Vidal in his critique of the troubadours' errors. At the same time, he expresses a reluctance to emend texts at all, which reflects the authority accorded to the troubadours and their language among later readers:

> Per q'ieu prec chascun qe non s'entrameton de emendar, e granmen qe, si ben i trobes cors de penna en alcuna letra, chascuns hom, si truep pauc no saubes, pogra leumen aver drecha l'entencio; et autre fail non cuig qe·i sia bonamen. Qe granz faillirs es d'ome qe si fai emendador si tot ades non a l'entencion, qe maintas vets per frachura d'entendimen venon afollat maint bon mot obrat primamen e d'avinen razo, si com dis uns savis:
>
>> Blasmat venon per frachura
>>
>> D'entendimen obra pura
>>
>> Maintas vetz, de razon prima,
>>
>> Per maintz fols qe·s tenon lima.
>
> Mas ieu m'en sui ben gardatz, qe maint luec son q'eu non ai ben aut l'entendimen. Per q'ieu no·i air en volgut mudar, per paor q'ieu non peiures l'obra, qe truep volhgra esser prims e sutils hom qi o pogues tot entendre, specialmen de las chansos d'en Guiraut de Borneil, lo maistre.[281]

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[281] Zufferey, <u>Recherches</u> 80-81; translation, Van Vleck, <u>Memory and Re-Creation</u> 31-32.

Therefore I beg every man not to undertake to emend a great deal unless you truly find a slip of the pen in some letter. Every man, if he knows too little, will not easily be able to get the intended meaning right. And I do not think that another man's error should properly be there. For it is a great failing in a man who makes himself an emender unless he first has the intended meaning. For many times, through a great flaw in understanding, many good verses of the first workmanship and elegant reasoning have come to a bad end. As a wise man says: 'Through flaws in understanding of the first *razo*, pure works often come to be blamed, on account of many fools with erasers in their hands.' But I took good care not to do this. For there are many passages where I did not really grasp the intention, and for this reason I did not wish to change anything, for fear that I might make the work worse. For a man will have to be extremely superior and subtle in order to understand everything, especially the songs of Guiraut de Bornelh, the master.

Bernart's concern about damaging the language of songs shows the degree to which transcription and compilation were theorized as deliberate practices, rather than simply mechanical activities. His admission that he does not always understand the language of the songs suggests that the gap between literary and spoken Occitan had become considerable by time that songs were transcribed, and even fluent speakers like Bernart required guidelines for reading and transcription. The deference to Guiraut de Bornelh, "lo maistre," is also significant since many *chansonniers* begin with songs by Guiraut de Bornelh, which an aesthetic preference for *trobar clus* over

trobar leu. The songbook of Bernart Amoros begins immediately after the prologue with the *vida* for Guiraut de Bornelh, which paints the troubadour as a kind of hybrid figure, half performer, half scholar:

[Guiraut de Borneill] fo hom de bas afar, mas savis hom fo de letras e de sen natural. E fo meiller trobaire que negus d'aquels qu'eron estat denan ni foron apres lui; per que fo apellatz maestre dels trobadors, et es ancar per toz aquels que ben entendon subtils ditz ni ben pauzatz d'amor ni de sen… E la soa vida si era aitals que tot l'invern etava en escola et aprendia letras, e tota la estat anava per cortz et menava ab se dos cantadores que cantavon las soas chansos. Non volc mais muiller, e tot so qu'el gazaignava dava a sos paubres parenz et a la eglesia de la villa on el nasquet.

[Guiraut de Bornelh] was a man of low birth, but he was intelligent in letters and had natural sense. And he was the best inventor of poetry among any of the ones who came before him or who came after him. For this reason he was called the master of the troubadours and he is still so called by all those who truly understand subtle discourse in which love and reason are well expressed… And his life was such that all winter he spent in school, and he taught letters, and all summer he traveled about the courts and took with him two singers who sang his songs. He never wanted a wife, and everything he earned he gave to his poor relatives and to the church of the village where he was born.

The *vida* presents Guiraut as a typical cleric: a man of low-birth who acquired

prestige through his own intelligence and knowledge of "letras." The assertion that he

was a teacher, as well as a poet, explicitly identifies him with a formal context of

Latin grammar and pedagogy, a detail which may explain why emphasis is placed on

the difficult quality of his language and the high degree of subtle understanding that

his songs require from the audience. Both the *vida*-writer and Bernart Amoros present

Guiraut as an unusually difficult poet whose songs demand careful study, qualities

that evoke a context of reading rather than performance, and present Guiraut as a

figure closer to an pedagogical *auctor* than a performing *joglar*. Indeed, the *vida* even

specifies that *lo maistre* did not deign to perform his own songs, a detail that is

routinely reproduced in his author portraits, where Guiraut appears flanked by

singers. Guiraut de Bornelh thus represented a different kind of author figure, one

who combined the traditional role of itinerant court performer with that of the scholar

and pedagogue. Bernart Amoros's decision to give Guiraut pride of place in his

collection indicates a change in the perception of the troubadour from verbal

inventor—a 'finder' in the literal sense of *trobar*—to a figure whose literary authority

derived in part from a formal knowledge of *letras*.

vi.   Conclusion

The grammar of Raimon Vidal had a profound influence on the development of

troubadour manuscript culture by providing a rationale for the treatment of Occitan as

a prestige language of poetry, as well as a theoretical model that established the troubadours and their language as exemplary of textual authority in the vernacular. Uc Faidit reinforced this textual status by making the comparison with Latin, implicit in Raimon's work, into the basis for an explicitly comparative grammatical exposition. The later reworking of the Raimon Vidal by Jofre de Foixà shows the degree to which these models were internalized by readers of troubadour poetry and exercised a determining influence on the conceptualization of vernacular grammar and poetic practice beyond the Occitan tradition. Furthermore, it is possible to detect the influence of the Occitan grammars on the compilation of songbooks both through direct references by scribes, and also through the application of prescriptive grammatical standards that limit variation. Of course, many different—and, ultimately, unknowable—factors govern the behavior of scribes, however, the popularity of Occitan grammars in the regions where *chansonniers* were compiled suggests that they constituted an important element of the *saber de trobar* for later readers, and contributed to creating a climate in which premium value was placed on the performance of literacy and textual authority.

The Occitan grammars thus add to our understanding of the troubadour *chansonnier*-corpus by demonstrating that the shift from an oral to a textual medium of performance was not merely a symptom of the decline of this poetry as a vital art. Instead, they testify to a lively debate about the nature of language and the relationship of poetry to grammar and the written word, which in turn reveals changes in attitude towards the status of the vernacular as a language of literary authority. These texts are, of course, only part of that larger story, which played out in many

different languages, including Latin, as well as in intellectual and cultural contexts that were far removed from courtly lyric. Nevertheless, the high concentration in the troubadour corpus of texts that interrogate the nature of poetic language and vernacular textuality reflects the exemplary status of this poetry and its language on the development of vernacular literature more broadly.

Conclusion: *Lo Vers Auctor*

The troubadour manuscripts compiled in Italy, France and Spain during the thirteenth century support the view that Occitan was accorded a privileged status among vernaculars and was widely recognized as an authoritative language of lyric composition. The manuscript culture surrounding troubadour poetry testifies to deliberate attempts at standardization, including the compilation of dictionaries and grammars, such as the *Razos de Trobar* of Raimon Vidal and the *Donatz Proensals* of Uc Faidit, which attempt to codify Occitan as a grammatical language, along the model of Latin.

One of my objectives in this dissertation has been to investigate the ways that formal attempts to represent Occitan as a grammatical language, similar to Latin, might re-conceive ideas about linguistic definition, invention and self-representation that are characteristic of troubadour lyric from its earliest stages. These themes are central to the work of Guilhem IX, Count of Poitiers, who is the earliest recorded troubadour, and was active in the first decades of the twelfth century, more than a hundred years before the widespread compilation of *chansonniers*. Guilhem's songs promote attitudes toward the nature and function of poetic language that stand in stark contrast to the works of later grammarians, such as Raimon Vidal and Uc Faidit. Four times in the eleven songs attributed to him, Guilhem distinguishes between the

language of his songs, Occitan, and another kind of language, which he refers to as "lati." *Lati* (or, sometimes, *latin*) is the Occitan word for Latin, which also acquired a secondary meaning, attested in the songs of various troubadours, as well as in French and Italian sources, designating not only Latin, but also language in general.[282] In Guilhem's songs, *lati* has a variety of meanings: in one poem, it describes the song of birds that greet the spring "Chascus en lor lati," "Each in their own language." In another poem, it refers to the nonsense language that the speaker invents to seduce two noblewomen. In yet another poem, Guilhem contrasts *lati* with *romans*, a common term for Occitan, and advises his son to employ both languages when making an appeal to a figure of power.[283]

For Guilhem, *lati* seems to designate a shifting linguistic category, which changes depending on the identity of the speaker and the context in which it is used. This definition reflects a persistent theme in Guilhem's songs: that poetic language is a tool for asserting individual authority and power. Although *lati* may well indicate something different in each situation, in all of them it signals linguistic difference; it calls attention to the language of the poem and asserts the speaker-as-poet's ability to manipulate this language as a means to an end: sexual, political or artistic. In fact, it is always artistic; the conceit of many of Guilhem's poems is that poetic authority is

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[282] "*Langage*" according to Emil Levy, <u>Petit Dictionnaire Provençal-Français</u> (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1973) 222. *Lati* is especially common among early troubadours.
[283] Poems cited from Gerald A. Bond, <u>William VII, Count of Poitiers</u> (New York: Garland, 1982) 36, 18, 40.

enacted and confirmed through poetic language, what Guilhem refers to as "lo vers auctor," the poem as author, authority or witness to the quality of its maker.[284]

Guilhem expounds an artistic doctrine that equates verbal invention with linguistic definition. Each act of poetic composition marks a rupture with the language of other people, an assertion of independence that allows him to re-define language and claim it as his own by making a poem. Guilhem is not the only troubadour to make these sorts of claims; similar statements about definition and control can be found in the works of Marcabru, Arnaut Daniel and Peire Cardenal, among many others.[285] These poets also refer to *lati* as an objective term for the language of song, and assert the importance of *trobar* as a means of laying claim to language and defining the medium of expression. This may reflect the status of the vernacular as a fluid, and loosely defined poetic medium in the early twelfth century, which required the efforts of the poet to stabilize it, to "lace it up" in Guilhem's words, with meter and rhyme.[286]

The great thirteenth and fourteenth-century troubadour *chansonniers* also attempt to bind and contain the language of troubadour song, but by using a different set of rhetorical tools. Rather than asserting the authority of an individual song and its language through oral performance, compilers promoted the authority of a tradition, canonizing the troubadours as vernacular *auctores* through formal and thematic

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[284] "Qu'ieu port d'aicel mestier la flor—/ ez es vertatz!—/ e puesc ne trair lo vers auctor/ quant er lasatz." ("For I take the prize in that profession—/ And that's the truth!—/ And I can produce the song itself as witness of that/ When it's laced up." Bond, 25.

[285] For example, Marcabru XVII: "Dirai vos e mon lati/ D'aizo qu'eu vei e qu'eu vi"; also Peire Cardenal LVI.

[286] See note 3 above.

comparison to Latin. The importance of linguistic definition to the broader authority of the troubadour tradition is evident from the grammars, which base claims for the authority of troubadour songs on systematic description of the language. The status of Occitan as a textual and grammatical language plays an important role in Dante's two unfinished treatises on the vernacular: *Il Convivio* and *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. Although they make very different claims, both texts attempt to define the nature poetic language in the vernacular and to identify examples. *Il Convivio*, which was written in Italian, is an ambitious collection of academic-style commentaries composed by Dante to accompany his own lyric poems. *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, written in Latin, is a more theoretical text, which stages a formal inquiry into the nature of the vernacular and then promotes a specific conception of the vernacular, the "vulgare illustre," as the best language for poetry.

Because these texts were written before the *Divine Comedy*, they have been treated as sites where Dante works out his concerns about undertaking an ambitious poetic project in Italian, rather than in Latin. As a result, they have also been read as commentaries on the peculiarly medieval situation of "cultural diglossia," the schism between Latin and vernacular literary cultures.[287] Nevertheless, the linguistic distinctions promoted by Dante in these texts are far more complex, contradictory and, finally, idiosyncratic than this binary paradigm suggests.

In fact, the two treatises make contradictory statements about which language is better for composing poetry, Latin or the vernacular. In *Il Convivio*, which is the earlier of the two texts and is written in Italian, he unequivocally endorses the

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[287] See Jan M. Ziolkowski, "Performing Grammar" New Medieval Literatures 11 (2009); Shapiro 91-112.

superiority of Latin over the vernacular. In particular, he praises Latin, "because of its nobility, for Latin is eternal and incorruptible, while the vernacular is unstable and corruptible." He supports this claim by arguing that the Latin of his day is the same as that of the ancients; this could never be the case with the vernacular, however, which, "being fashioned according to one's own preference, undergoes change."[288] Dante thus endorses a model of language that is universal, rather than particular, stable rather than corruptible, and which resists the whims of the individual speaker, presumably because it is fixed by grammatical rules.

De Vulgari Eloquentia goes a step further by abandoning the explicit comparison between Latin and Italian and introducing a new set of terms: "gramatica" and "volgare." *Gramatica* is an artificial language, characterized by rules and theory that can only be learned through lengthy study; it includes Latin, but is not limited to it (Greek is another example). "Vulgare," on the other hand, is defined as "that which infants acquire from those around them when they first begin to distinguish sounds… that which we learn without any formal instruction."[289] Dante goes on to expand his definition of the "vulgar" to encompass not only Italian, but also every language in the world that is not formally bound by grammatical rules. These include the Edenic language (Hebrew), and all of its post-lapsarian descendents, which Dante refers to as the languages of *io*, *oïl*, *oc* and *sì*, according to their respective words for *yes*. All of these languages, he claims, are in fact the same language, the *vulgare*, though spoken with different pronunciations and using different words. This new category allows Dante to maintain universality and

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[288] Richard H. Lansing, <u>Dante's Il Convivio</u> (New York: Garland 1990) 13.
[289] Botterill 3.

temporal continuity as linguistic values, while reversing his previous position about the inherent superiority of Latin. "Of these two kinds of language," Dante claims, "the more noble is the vernacular" ("Noblior est vulgaris").[290]

The vernacular thus emerges as the universal language of human expression. It remains to be proved, however, that the vernacular is also better suited to literature. After all, the great *auctores*, Vergil, Ovid, Statius and Homer, all wrote in grammatical languages. Dante refines his definition by evaluating the literary capabilities of the principle romance vernaculars, the languages of *oïl*, *oc* and *sì*. He comes to the conclusion that not every kind of vernacular is suitable for great poetry; this highest honor is reserved for a language he calls "the illustrious vernacular." This, like *gramatica,* is also a language characterized by stability and universality; it transcends dialectical particularities, is understood by many people in many places, and is not changed or corrupted by the passage of time.

So which of the vernacular languages qualifies as the "illustrious vernacular"? The natural candidate would seem to be Occitan. After all, it satisfies the requirements mentioned above and was widely identified with lyric poetry. Dante even cites several troubadours (Arnaut Daniel, Giraut de Bornelh and Folquet de Marseille) in the original Occitan as examples of what poetry in the illustrious vernacular sounds like. Yet he firmly states that Occitan is *not* the illustrious vernacular. Here and also in *Il Convivio* Dante inveighs against Italians who, out of

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[290] "Vulgarem locutionem asserimus quam sine omni regula nutricem imitantes accipimus. Est et inde alia locutio secundaria nobis, quam Romani gramaticam vocaverunt. Hanc quidem secundariam Greci habent et alii, sed non omnes: ad habitum vero huius pauci perveniunt, quia non nisi per spatium temporis et studii assiduitatem regulamur et doctrinamur in illa." Botterill 3.

blindness, envy or pusillanimity, hold Occitan to be the superior language. The illustrious vernacular, he says, is an *Italian* vernacular. The problem is that the language of *sì* is divided into at least fourteen different dialects. So which one is it? He systematically considers, and rejects, the dialects of each region of Italy—Sicily, Apulia, Romagna, Tuscany—comparing this investigation to a panther hunt. The illustrious vernacular, like a rare and elusive animal, does not respect borders, instead: "It has left its scent in all cities, but made its home in none."[291]

The *vulgare illustre* emerges not as a proper language, but as a conceptual category, which is best defined by its qualities. The *vulgare illustre* can be used for prose, or for poetry; it is best suited to the highest style, the tragic style, and to the best form, the *canzone*; and it treats the most important subjects, notably love. In other words, it is an elevated form of poetic discourse that allows for the purest and most beautiful human expression. Dante compares his vernacular to God, who is present in everything, but more evident in human beings than in animals, in animals than in plants, in plants than in minerals.

Who speaks the illustrious vernacular? It is not available for everyone to use: only the most intelligent and knowledgeable people. In addition to this, there must be what Dante calls an "affinity" with this language: "It must be suited to us as individuals."[292] This assertion involves a fundamental reversal of position: Dante has repeatedly characterized his ideal language as universal, but in the end he locates it firmly in the individual; and not just any individual, either. The examples that Dante provides of illustrious vernacular poetry include troubadours and trouvères (for

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[291] Botterill 39.
[292] Botterill 49.

example, Folquet de Marseilles and the King of Navarra) as well as more contemporary Italian poets, including Dante himself (whom he refers to only as the "friend" of the poet Cino da Pistoia). The illustrious vernacular is in fact Dante's own language or, rather, the language of his finest poems, even, by extension, Dante himself.

In the end, Dante identifies his own language with the *vulgare illustre* and even seems to present himself as a kind of personification of the illustrious Italian vernacular. After all, this is described as an itinerant language, without fixed abode, like the itinerant poet in exile. This reading implies that Dante's inquiry into the nature of the vernacular functions as a rhetorical tool for self-authorization, similar to his appropriation academic-style commentary in *Il Convivio*. Albert Ascoli argues that by presenting himself as an exemplar, as "Italian personified," Dante contradicts his own linguistic model, which systematically values the universal over the particular.

> Dante is not simply an exemplary, even privileged, historical knower and user of the *vulgare illustre*: he *is* the illustrious vernacular; he oxymoronically personifies its authority and nobility, even as he sets out to define that authority in transpersonal terms.[293]

Ascoli views this as a logical inconsistency, born of Dante's driving ambition to present himself, and his language, as exemplary, even at the expense of logical

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[293] Albert Ascoli, "Neminem Ante Nos: Historicity and Authority in the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*," <u>Annali d'Italianistica</u> 8 (1990): 211.

continuity. I would argue, however, that the contradictory nature of Dante's claims here signal the text's participation in a network of similar claims and ideas about the nature and authority of the vernacular that derive from the troubadour manuscript tradition. Dante's paradoxical self-identification might be explained—or at least contextualized—if we consider how it positions the text and its author within this lyric tradition. Indeed, *De Vulgari Eloquentia* establishes this context for itself; it draws heavily on the grammar of Raimon Vidal, and serves as a kind of abridged anthology of troubadour poetry, organized and glossed according to aesthetic principles reminiscent of the *chansonniers*.

The investigation into the nature of language provides a pretext for Dante to confront the vernacular poetic canon, to re-define this canon, and to incorporate himself within it. These aims are similar to those that drive Raimon Vidal's *Razos de Trobar*. By emphasizing the nature of the *vulgare illustre* as a universal language of poetry, Dante succeeds in establishing a new community of speakers, who draw authority from each other, even as each exemplifies this authority in his own verse, *lo vers auctor*: the authoritative and authorizing language of poetry. This tension between the individual and the universal, the personal and the systematic, ties together two themes that are distinctive of early troubadour tradition. The *vulgare illustre* is a kind a hybrid category combining the ethos of individual definition and identification inherent in Guilhem's *lati* with the systematic strategies of authorization employed by Raimon Vidal and Uc Faidit. The result is a new conception of poetry as a kind of grammar, a structuring framework, which enables

the poet to re-define and elevate common speech by endowing it with the stability and universality of art.

This dissertation has used the troubadour *chansonnier*-corpus as a site for exploring the development of fundamental themes in early vernacular textual culture, namely the construction of authorship, the textuality of song and the representation of the vernacular as a language of literary authority. It has been my contention throughout that for thirteenth-century readers, the troubadours held a prestige status as exemplars of literary authority in the vernacular. I have further argued that the scribes who compiled *chansonniers* affirmed this authority by using techniques characteristic of Latin grammar to represent the language and form of troubadour song.

Such practices may be the natural result of textualization in a literary culture dominated by Latin paradigms; nevertheless, the new medium of the songbook fundamentally altered the nature of the troubadour song and the conditions of its performance. In particular, the establishment of a textual canon with its own distinctive conventions, including commentary and iconography, succeeded in constructing a new role for the troubadour as a textual *auctor,* comparable to Latin figures, whose authority derived from ethical behavior, as well as artistic skill. Likewise, the composition of grammars and dictionaries drew on Latin pedagogical models in order to support the authority of Occitan as a specialized literary language that was distinct from other vernaculars. The evolving conception of poetic language that I have described above—from Guilhem IX's *lati* to the grammatical definition of

Raimon Vidal's *lemosi* and, ultimately, Dante's *vulgare illustre*—is indicative of this larger conceptual development in the treatment of Occitan as a *langue d'auteur*.

By reading troubadour songs in their manuscript contexts, I have attempted to resituate the reception of lyrics within a literary culture that was not focused around the south of France. A close study of material texts highlights the trans-regional nature of the troubadour corpus and its circulation within a wide and diverse network of readers throughout Europe. The distinctions that I have described among manuscripts produced in France, Occitania and Italy raise important questions about the role of Occitan literature in the development of vernacular literary and linguistic consciousness. Conversely, they also demonstrate the role of local cultures and languages in shaping the reception of the troubadours as a literary tradition. For example, the preference for Latin-style commentary in Italian manuscripts, as opposed to French ones may shed light on the underlying social and intellectual factors that shaped manuscripts design. Likewise, the use of musical notation in French songbooks and its absence from Italian ones may comment on different conditions of manuscript production. Such issues highlight the importance of troubadour songbooks as sites for exploring the relationships among a variety of spoken and written vernaculars.

My emphasis on the analogy between Occitan and Latin has enabled me to identify a model for viewing Occitan as a trans-regional language of literary authority that is drawn directly from the manuscript evidence. The claims to Latin grammatical authority in the extant manuscripts provide a means of evaluating the status of troubadour texts within a contemporary system of values. This project thus represents

an important step in a continuing re-conceptualization of the troubadours, which emphasizes the significance of these lyrics not only as innovative literary works in their own right, but also as exemplary texts, which supplied an invaluable precedent and point of departure for other vernaculars literatures. As in the case of Latin, the appropriation of themes, forms and language from troubadour poetry by subsequent authors provided opportunities for experimentation and self-definition. The surviving texts are thus inherently synthetic, bearing the mark not only of the original composers, but also of the larger reading community whose voices are inscribed in the manuscript tradition.

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