

Troubadour Biographies and the Value of Authentic Love

Daude de Pradas and Uc de Saint Circ

Abstract

The idea of an essential connection between the quality of a song and the sincerity of the emotion it expresses (“I sing because I love”) is a *topos* used in various ways by troubadours, one which lent itself naturally to discussion of their relationship to audiences and to other poets. The *topos* transferred across to the thirteenth-century biographies (*vidas*) found alongside the songs in numerous manuscripts, as in the arresting claim, made in the *vida* about Daude de Pradas, that his songs “did not spring from love and therefore did not find favour with audiences.” Elsewhere, however, the biographies give a different account of inauthenticity, as the edge which allows troubadours to exercise control over their social environment; significantly, this version of the *topos* appears in the *vida* for Uc de Saint Circ, who is believed to be the main author of the corpus. In these contrasting accounts of poetic inauthenticity, we can see the biographies wrestling with questions of control and definition of the cultural capital of troubadour lyric: patron and poet, cleric and lay. The thirteenth century saw authors and their audiences increasingly asserting the lasting cultural value of vernacular literature in general, and (through its association with troubadour production) Occitan in particular. Accordingly, these texts reflect the poets’ engagement with the court audiences for whom they were writing, at the same time as they look ahead to the enduring record of posterity.

Giles Fletcher’s sonnet collection *Licia* (published in 1593) opens with a dedicatory letter addressed to his patron Lady Mollineux. In this preface, Fletcher addresses the conceptual distinction between poet and lover which, as he acknowledges, his poems aim to blur: “Now in that I have written Love sonnets, if any man measure my affection by my style, let him say, I am in Love” (Fletcher 75). The idea is pursued further in the letter addressed *To the Reader* which immediately follows that to Lady Mollineux:

and for the matter of love, it may bee I am so devoted to some one, into whose hands these may light by chance, that she may say, which thou now saiest (that surelie he is in love) which if she doe, then have I the full recompence of my labour, and the Poems have dealt sufficientlie, for the discharge of their owne duetie. (78)

The success of Fletcher's love poetry, both passages suggest, depends on the extent to which it convinces the reader that authentic love underlies it. Yet the poet stops short of validating the truth-effect thereby created; his statements are couched in hypothetical language ("it may be that...") or attributed to others ("let him say..."). Evoking the curiosity of its inscribed reader about the identity of the lady to whom the sonnets are addressed, the first preface deliberately flags up the alternative possibility that no real-world experience corresponds to the rhetoric marshaled in the poems: "a man may write of love, and not bee in love, as well as of husbandrie, and not go to the plough: or of witches and be none: or of holiness and be flat prophane." (76) In having his cake and eating it, Fletcher brings to light the vexed relationship between the value a work is perceived to have and its audience's investment in its verisimilitude; now as much as then, love stands out as a literary topic which invites audiences to identify the experience described with their own real-world emotional responses, and consequently to attribute analogous emotional states to the author of the work.¹

1. The phenomenological assumption is often identified as a particularly significant part of the functioning of lyric: "The principle of intelligibility, in lyric poetry, depends on the phenomenization of the poetic voice" (De Man 55).

The game playing at work here goes to the heart of a tension inherent in the genre of love poetry, one tied up with that poetry's use of a first-person speaking position. On one hand, the force of such poetry relies on how believable the loving subject is about his or her emotional state, and the audience's recognition of that emotional state as one of *being-in-love*; on the other hand, this is a genre which relies to an unusual extent on conventional forms, themes and images, one in which each new intervention constitutes an attempt to re-work material inherited from predecessors into something novel. Indeed, the very assertion of authenticity is itself frequently found as a conventional feature of the game of love poetry.

What is true for Giles Fletcher at the tail end of the sixteenth century is of equal import in medieval vernacular lyric, where the speaking subject's claim to authentic love becomes an essential part of the generic conventions from an early stage (Bruckner, "Jaufré Rudel;" Dragonetti 21–30; Kay, *Subjectivity* 139–41, 161–67; Meneghetti, *Il pubblico* 121–75; Weiss). As has frequently been noted, the conven-

2. See e.g. Kay, *Subjectivity* 170: “the troubadours’ use of irony and evasion always leaves in doubt what degree of belief their texts can command. In particular, the ‘love’ plot seems to float uneasily between historical anchorage points and literary play.” On naming in medieval lyric more generally, see Jeay.

3. This *vida* is found in chansonniers ABIK. The sentence “Savis hom fo...” is in IK only. Manuscript B ends: “non foron cantadas ni grazidas” (“nor were they sung or appreciated”).

4. For ease of cross-referencing, the *Bibliographie der Troubadours* [BdT] reference for every troubadour song quoted here will be given in brackets. All translations are my own unless stated otherwise.

tion of sincerity raises some awkward, but fascinating, questions about how to evaluate the insistent claims to authentic love in the songs, a hesitation exacerbated by the allusive and veiled use they make of reference to people and places.² That this problem was of equal interest to the troubadours’ contemporaries is evident from the following assertion found in the *vida* (a short prose biography) for the thirteenth-century troubadour Daude de Pradas:

Deude de Pradas si fo de Rosergue, d’un borc que a nom Pradas, pres de la ciutat de Rodes quatre legas, e fo canorgues de Magalona. Savis hom fo molt de letras e de sen natural e de trobar. E saup molt la natura dels ausels prendedors; e fez cansos per sen de trobar, mas no movian d’amor, per que non avian sabor entre la gen, ni non foron cantadas. (Boutière et Schutz 91)³

(Daude de Pradas was from the Rouergue, from a town called Pradas, four leagues from the city of Rodez, and he was a canon at Maguelone. He was a wise man, skilled in learning, natural wit and poetry. And he knew much about the nature of birds of prey; and he wrote *cansos* [love songs] thanks to his poetic talent, but they did not spring from love and so they did not find favour with people, nor were they sung.)

As Daude’s editor Alexander Schutz notes, the *vida* author’s claim about the impopularity of his songs is contradicted by the surviving evidence: songs by Daude are found in twenty of the extant troubadour *chansonniers* (anthological manuscripts), and two songs (Daude de Pradas, nos. 7–8) are found in thirteen manuscripts apiece. Daude is also cited in Matfre Ermengaud’s *Breviari d’amor* (begun in 1288) as being among the most popular troubadours.

What might have prompted the biographer to make this claim about Daude’s inauthenticity and its effect on his success with audiences? Schutz suggests that the *vida* may reflect a misreading of the following lines from a Daude *canso* (BdT 124.11):⁴

No cugiey mais ses comjat far chanso;
mas ar m’ave, mal grat mieu, far parer
lo pensamen q’el cor no-m pot caber,
tan m’en a dat silh a cui ieu me do.
Per q’ieu comens, a ley de cossiros;

*e si mos chans non es molt amoros,
ia non rept' om mas amor e merce,
quar si-m volguesson portar bona fe
ia no si-m feira midons tan estranha.* (12.1–9; italics mine)

(I thought I would never again make a song without permission; but now, in spite of myself, I must reveal the thought that I cannot keep hidden in my heart, so much has she given me to whom I give myself. Therefore I begin, in the manner of one who is upset, *and if my song is not very full of love, let no one be accused but Love and Mercy*, for if they had acted towards me in good faith, my lady would not keep her distance as she does.)

Such a suggestion, however, raises further questions, since it supposes a reading that goes against the overall thrust of this stanza, where the sense of “non es molt amoros” is clearly intended to convey unhappiness, rather than indifference. All available evidence suggests that the authors of the biographies were practicing troubadours themselves (as will be discussed further below); therefore, if *No cugiey mais ses comjat far chanso* is the direct source of the *vida*'s comment, we must be dealing with a deliberate traducing of his words, rather than a misunderstanding of a very common troubadour *topos*. Indeed, the opening lines of Daude's song present the authentic feelings of the troubled heart as the trigger that forces the poet, “in spite of [him]self,” to make songs. Thus these lines actually reinforce the *topos* linking authentic love to poetic inspiration, and the only bad faith on display is that of the allegorical figures Love and Mercy, who have failed to reward the speaker's integrity.

The discrepancy between the *vida* author's account and the available evidence raises questions of wider significance for understanding the cultural value of the troubadour tradition in the thirteenth century, at a time when authors from Catalonia to Italy were beginning to discuss it as cultural capital, a reflection of courtly values to be documented and passed on to posterity. The biographies are part of this process of commemoration, as are the poetic anthologies (ordered by author and/or genre) which began to appear in the same period. Commemoration does not necessarily entail idolization, and several troubadours come in for criticism or mockery in the biographies. But why is Daude in particular taxed with inauthenticity, and why is this seen as a problem? What value is being attached to authenticity in these biographical texts, and what are they telling us

about the status and function of vernacular poetry in the thirteenth century?

Short Occitan prose biographies such as these *vidas* are collected in a number of troubadour manuscripts, purporting to give information about a poet's life, or to explain a song's coming into being; the former type is known by critics as a *vida*, the latter as a *razo*, though the distinction is not always watertight and some texts appear to do both simultaneously. These texts mix genuine historical truth with fiction, the latter often being culled directly from the relevant troubadour's *oeuvre*. Importantly for my purpose, the *vidas* and *razos* famously do what troubadour poets (pre-empting their distant descendant Fletcher) do not deign to do: they name names, they place the songs within the context of particular love affairs, they purport to tell us how these affairs began and sometimes how they ended.

Early scholarship focused on the accuracy of the biographies, and found them deficient on this score; viewed as literary criticism, they have been judged equally disappointing, since they appear to show strikingly little concern for the ambiguity and non-referentiality of lyric language; quotation from individual songs is used primarily to confirm pragmatic details of the story being told.⁵ The past thirty years have seen a welcome renewal of critical interest. Sympathetic readers have highlighted the important role these biographies played both in consolidating the prestige of troubadour lyric, and in guiding interpretation of the texts (see in particular Burgwinkle; Meneghetti, *Il pubblico*; Poe, *From Poetry to Prose*; Zink, *Les troubadours*). Probably the most famous example of this process is the *vida* for the early troubadour Jaufrè Rudel, which has achieved wider and more lasting fame than Jaufrè's lyric productions themselves. The biography's account of Jaufrè taking the cross in order to meet the Countess of Tripoli, only to die in her arms, enacts a literalization of various motifs found insistently in Jaufrè's songs, such as his evocation of *amor de lonh* (distant love) and pilgrimage imagery in *Lanquan li jorn son lonc en may* (Monson). The narrative's representation of self-sacrifice in service of absolute commitment to an idealized love (on which see Gaunt, *Love and Death*) struck a chord with both medieval and modern audiences.⁶ Authors and audiences alike accepted with gusto the invitation to displace their interest in Jaufrè from his poetic skill (given rather short shrift by the biographer) to his lived life and emotional experiences. The *vida* thus works to support and enrich the authenticity convention deployed by Jaufrè and

5. Michel Zink ("Les Razos et l'idée de la poésie" 85) nicely phrases this apparent lack of fit: "Pourquoi une lecture aussi anecdotique de poèmes qui le sont si peu?" ("Why such anecdotal readings of poems that are so little anecdotal?").

6. The thirteenth-century anthological *chansonnier I* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 854) chooses to illustrate the portion of the manuscript devoted to Jaufrè's songs with an image of him dying in the arms of the Countess; the last two centuries have seen numerous poems, a play and an opera inspired of the story.

other troubadours; it imagines the poet as literary hero to the extent that his songs can be read as evidence for his commitment to the behavioural standards of *fin'amor*.

If the literal renderings of allusive language in this *vida* are a good example of how the biographies work, we should nevertheless beware of treating it as typical of the genre. As with the songs themselves, the *vidas* and *razos* come in many different forms; some, like the Jaufre *vida* or the 'eaten heart' *razo* associated with Guilhem de Cabestanh, are written in the idealizing mode, while others tend more towards demystification and satire, or reflect on political realities (Poe, "Toward a Balanced View"). Unlike the lyric corpus, however, the biographies in their extant form are believed to be in large part the work of a single figure, the thirteenth-century troubadour Uc de Saint Circ (Poe, "*L'autr'escrit*").⁷ It is likely that they were anthologized some time in the 1220s after he had settled in the Veneto, and that the songs and biographical material brought together by Uc were the starting point for the earliest known *chansonniers*. Even those texts (mostly *vidas*) which postdate Uc's activity follow the linguistic and formal parameters he appears to have put in place. Despite the diversity of attitudes displayed towards troubadours and their patrons, these texts can therefore be read as offering a partial and partisan interpretive lens born of a particular historical moment, a time of fundamental economic and political change. The aristocracy that championed troubadour activity was under potential threat both from the new mercantile economy that had taken hold across Europe, and from rising monarchical and Papal desires to wield temporal power – the French monarch in Occitania itself, and the Emperor in Italy. William Burgwinkle's persuasive reading of the *razos* reveals how they reflect a new ethos of negotiation between poet and patron, with troubadours such as Uc increasingly conscious of themselves as poetic guns-for-hire, whose rhetorical skills could be deployed to enhance the cultural capital of patrons in exchange for material reward.

Just as significantly for an understanding of the biographies, the thirteenth century saw a sharp rise in the production of manuscripts for lay readers, and consequently an increasing willingness to treat the vernacular as a language of written record. Occitan lyric was at the forefront of this process, with grammatical-compositional treatises appearing in Catalonia from the early 1200s, and the earliest known vernacular poetic anthologies being produced in northern Italy. As noted above, Uc's role in assembling and shaping the materi-

7. See, however, Meneghetti, "Uc e gli altri," who argues that the number of biographies attributable to Uc may have been overstated.

8. As Burgwinkle (20) astutely notes, the two concerns were to a partial extent interlinked: “It must have been tempting to see the self and court generalized beyond their contingent position in the present and figured as part of a glorious past of poetic tradition. The past thus becomes an ornament, a contingent badge of transferable and textual recognition that could be used as a bargaining tool in dealing with patrons.”

9. Perhaps most surprising in this regard is the *vida* for Folquet de Marselha, which omits any mention of his time as Bishop of Toulouse, in which capacity he was a notoriously zealous supporter of the Albigensian Crusade.

als into written form was crucial to the latter development of the tradition. The particular historical context for the elaboration of the biographies thus requires us to read them as answering not only to contemporary social and political concerns, but also to a desire to create Occitan as a language of written authority, and to pin down a canon of vernacular knowledge documenting for posterity the activities of southern European courts (Davis; Hinton; Kay, *Parrots and Nightingales*).⁸ In fact, there is strikingly little explicit reference to current affairs in the *vidas*. This is all the more noteworthy given that the Italian patronal courts, nourished by political rivalries between the patrons themselves, produced a particularly lively, vituperative and personalized *sirventes* tradition: fifty percent of extant Occitan compositions from these courts deal with politics and history (Burgwinkle 52). The biographers seem to have consciously attempted to transcend contemporary preoccupations in order to speak to future users of the *chansonniers*.⁹

Both of these orientations – towards the here-and-now of court life, and the durable record of posterity – will be in play in the remainder of this article, as I assess the ideological work performed by the (in)authenticity theme as refracted in the troubadour biographies. Accordingly, the following section will set out briefly how anxiety over inauthenticity plays out as a theme in troubadour songs: specifically, how it allows poets to address the relationship between author, text and audience, and pose questions about who controls the meaning and value of the song. I will then consider the extent to which Daude maintains the integrity of the *topos* in his poetic corpus, and what elements in his songs might have disturbed the biographer. A third section will discuss other *vidas* which contrast with Daude’s, including that of Uc de Saint Circ himself; Uc is also described as an inauthentic composer, writing love songs that are not motivated by a corresponding sentiment, yet he attracts praise rather than the blame apportioned to Daude de Pradas. Finally, I will return to the details of Daude’s life (as documented both in literary form and in archival documents) in order to ascertain how his *vida* fits into the system of values defended by the biographies.

Authenticity and audience in troubadour love lyric

In her landmark study *Il pubblico dei trovatori* (121–23), Maria Luisa Meneghetti argues that the assertion (and valorization) of a connection between the poetic product and the psychological-sentimental disposition of its author became a central pillar of troubadour song from the second generation of poets onwards, with the Périgourdain Bernart de Ventadorn (*circa* 1147–70) playing the most important role in crystallizing the *topos*. In a typical moment from the opening lines of his *canso* *Non es meravelha s'eu chan* (BdT 70.31), Bernart asserts that the quality of his song is guaranteed by that of his love:

Non es meravelha s'eu chan
melhs de nul autre chantador,
que plus me tra-l cors vas amor
e melhs sui faihz a so coman. (1.1–4)

(It is no marvel if I sing better than any other singer, for my heart draws me more towards love and I am better made to carry out its commands.)

However, the apparent bullshiness of this declaration is undercut in the *canso*'s fifth stanza:

Ai Deus! car se fosson trian
d'entrels faus li fin amador,
e-lh lauzenger e-lh trichador
portesson corns el fron denan!
Tot l'aur del mon e tot l'argen
i volgr'aver dat, s'eu l'agues,
sol que ma domna conogues
aissi cum eu l'am finamen. (1.33–40)

(Oh God! If only the false lovers could be sorted from the true, and the hypocrites and cheats had horns on their foreheads. I would happily have given all the gold and silver in the world, if I had it, if only my lady could know how truly I love her.)

Lauzengiers are the bogeymen of the troubadour lover-singer, malicious slanderers and hypocrites whose behaviour threatens the lovers' harmony. In Sarah Kay's apposite formulation, the *lauzengiers* are

10. Several scholars have recognized these figures as critical to the textual logic of lyric – see notably Köhler; Kay, “Contradictions;” Gaunt, *Gender and Genre* (Chapter 3).

“the scapegoats of the genre, the objects of its opprobrium, [thrust] into the role of ‘bad’ in opposition to the ‘good’ of the lyric poet-lover” (“Contradictions” 216).¹⁰ Yet, as Bernart’s words make clear, while these rivals may be represented as embodying an opposed ethical pole, their behaviour and speech are frequently indistinguishable from that of true lovers. The inauthentic discourse of the *lauzengier* therefore threatens the troubadour persona’s success, both with his lady (who may struggle to discriminate between true and false lovers) and with his audience (because the very criterion that Bernart had established for discerning between good and bad song – the quality of one’s love – cannot be assessed with confidence from outward signs). The linking of sincere love with the quality of the song invites us to read this nervousness about the lover’s relationship with the loved lady – will my love language be accepted as genuine? – simultaneously as an anxiety about the poet’s relationship with his audience: will my love song be accepted as legitimate?

Bernart’s opening guarantee of his song’s quality is underwritten by a claim to an internal emotional disposition towards the right kind of love. Elsewhere he attempts to reconcile the claim to self-knowledge that distinguishes him from the crowd with the possibility of communicating this private disposition to others, as in the *tornada* to *Chantars no pot gaire valer* (*BdT* 70.15), another song built around the authenticity theme:

Lo vers es fis e naturaus
e bos celui qui be l’enten;
e melher es, qui-l joi aten.

Bernartz de Ventadorn l’enten,
e-l di e-l fai, e-l joi n’aten! (2.50–54)

(The verse is true and natural and good for one who understands it well, and it is even better for one who hopes for joy. Bernart de Ventadorn understands it, performs it, composes it, and hopes for joy from it.)

This offers a way out of the impasse created by the *lauzengier*’s inauthentic performance. Audience members who take up the implicit invitation to identify as one of those “who understand [the verse] well” by that token become witnesses to the quality of Bernart’s sentiment, and guarantors of the song’s quality. Indeed, Bernart’s act of self-naming here asks his audience to recognise that not only this

11. On Bernart's self-naming, see Bourgeois; Galvez 75–79; Jeay 39–41.

12. Kay interprets the *lauzengier* theme as a mechanism to resolve or efface the contradictions of love in lyric poetry, which she reads as mediations of social tensions at court: “by being offered as a scapegoat among whom all can unite, because they embody the real and ineradicable threat to courtly society: other courtiers” (“Contradictions” 225).

13. The translation of this song is taken from Sharman's edition (394–98).

piece, but the entire body of songs associated with his name, fulfils the criterion he has established.¹¹

The anxieties here relate to literary reception as well as to status and preferment at court. In both cases, the threat posed by the *lauzengier* is that of inauthentic speech which mimics that of the true lover / sincere courtier.¹² Whether these two concerns dovetailed or not depended on the extent to which individual poets relied on literary success for their rank at court; this could vary significantly, as demonstrated by the well-known *tenso* between Raimbaut d'Aurenga and Giraut de Bornelh, *Era-m platz, Giraut de Bornelh* (*BdT* 242.14). This song, in which the two troubadours debate the extent to which a poet should concern himself with being understood by a wide public, hinges on the question of who controls the value of a song – its creator or its audience. Raimbaut begins by equating accessibility with the abolition of a hierarchy of value:

aiso-m digatz:
si tan preztatz
so que vas totz es cominal?
car adonx tug seraun egal. (ll. 3–6)¹³

(Tell me this: do you have such a high regard for what is available to everyone? For then everyone will be equal.)

Giraut's defence, placed at the equivalent point in his answering stanza, is that “es mais amatz / Chans e preztatz / Qui-l fa levet e venansal” (“song is better loved and esteemed when it is made easy and lowly,” ll. 9–11). His argument here is based not on what *he* values, but on what he claims his audience wants. Moreover, the use of “venansal,” which corresponds at the rhyme with Raimbaut's “cominal” in line 6, indicates that despite the oppositional format of the song, the two poets share a common value system, aligning the “common” with the “ordinary” or “lowly” against what is “plus quar” (“most precious,” l. 21). Similarly, where Raimbaut frets about his compositions being mangled (ll. 15–16), Giraut claims to be relaxed, even enthusiastic, about just such an outcome:

mos sos levatz,
c'uns enraumatz
lo-m deissazec e-l digua mal,
a cui non deia hom sesal. (ll. 39–42)

(I'd rather any old gravelly-voiced singer sing my noble song badly, for I don't deem it worthy of anyone of greater standing.)

14. Both Sharman (397) and Kay ("Rhetoric" 122–29) have argued that Giraut's position in this song is disingenuous, while Gaunt (*Troubadours and Irony* 145–82) has demonstrated the presence of irony in many of Giraut's comments supposedly defending accessible poetry across the corpus of his songs. As Gaunt states (178), "Whenever he did compose in the *trobar leu*, he managed to convey his disdain for the style and for its public through irony, thus on one level giving a part of his audience what it wanted, and on another laughing at it with another section of his audience."

15. "Amor blasmen per no-saber / fola gens, mas leis no-n'es dans, / c'amors no-n pot ges dechazer / si non es amors comunaus. / Aisso non es amors; aitaus / no-n a mas lo nom e-l parven / que re non ama si no pren:" 2.15–21 ("Foolish people blame love out of ignorance, but no harm is done to love, for love cannot deteriorate unless it is common love. This is not love at all; it has nothing but the name and outward appearance of it, and is not interested in anything it cannot profit from").

The argument Giraut offers here (quite possibly disingenuously) is that compromise with audience taste is a necessary evil if one is to gain a good reputation as a poet.¹⁴ What Giraut does not challenge is Raimbaut's assertion that abandoning the distinction between good and bad audiences is likely to compromise the song's quality. The positions taken up here no doubt reflect the relative social standing of each of the participants. Raimbaut, a powerful lord, could afford to approach *trobar* on terms of his own choosing, whereas Giraut apparently came from a more modest background, and may have relied on his rhetorical skill for advancement at court. Whatever the social stakes, the *tenso* shows both poets (however playfully) reflecting on problems of ownership and textual authority provoked by the dissemination of *trobar*, as its popularity expanded to a wider number of courts in the second half of the twelfth century (Meneghetti, *Il pubblico* 37–45; Paterson 91–100).

Raimbaut's solution, like Bernart, is to set a criterion by which the value of discourse can be measured, based on a principle of discrimination. His use of the term "cominal" to refer to a song that belongs to all, regardless of their powers of discernment, answers Bernart's condemnation in *Chantars no pot gaire valer* of "amor comunaus" ("common love," l. 18), which he contrasts with "fin'amors coraus" ("heartfelt, noble love," l. 4). Here again, Bernart laments the inability of "foolish people" (l. 15) to distinguish between true love and its debased imitation, which "has nothing but the name and outward appearance of it" (ll. 19–20).¹⁵ Both poets attempt to resolve the limitations and risks of public, conventional language by filtering it through a carefully constructed amorous and poetic subjectivity. Unlike Bernart, however, Raimbaut represents this measure of value as underwritten less by common agreement with those around him than by his own conviction of the objective quality of his sentiments. Rather than offering an invitation to the audience to join his community of praise and mutual validation ('this is a worthy song if you are a worthy audience,' and vice versa), Raimbaut challenges his audience to take him or leave him.

The question of how, whether and why to police access to the love lyric continued to preoccupy troubadours into the thirteenth century, as the tradition underwent further modifications. The appearance of compositional aids – of which Raimon Vidal's *Razos de*

16. “voill eu far aqest libre per far conoisser et saber qals dels trobadors an mielz trobat et mielz ensenhat” (“I want to make this book to let it be known which troubadours have composed best and offered the best teaching”). Line references are to the manuscript *B* text.

trobar was the first, composed probably between 1190 and 1213 – offered the opportunity to educate audiences in how to assess the value of individual songs. The opening lines of the *Razos de trobar* explain that its purpose is to show “which troubadours have composed best” (2–4).¹⁶ Like Bernart de Ventadorn affecting anxiety about his lady’s inability to distinguish the *fin* from the *fals* in love, Raimon worries about the audience’s capacity to identify quality in *trobar*. Indeed, the problem here is compounded, since the lack of audience discernment threatens to create a vicious circle; if troubadours cannot tell between genuine and feigned praise, they themselves may fall into bad habits:

li auzidor qe ren non intendon, qant auzon un bon chantar, faran senblant qe for[t] ben l’entendon, et ges no l’entendran... et en aisi son enganat li trobador, et li auzidor n’an lo blasme. Car una de las maiors valors del mont es qui sap lauzar so qe fa a lauzar et blasmar so qe fai a blasmar. (33–35; 41–42)

(listeners who understand nothing, when they hear a good song, will pretend to understand it well, and yet they will understand nothing... and in this way troubadours are deceived, and the blame lies with their listeners. For one of the greatest virtues in the world is knowing how to praise what should be praised, and to blame what should be blamed.)

17. The very term *lauzengier* encapsulates the confusion between praise and blame which they threaten to impose; its root, *lauzar*, has the sense of “to praise,” yet the term’s deployment repeatedly stresses the damage that they do through their *blasmar* or criticism.

Against this threat, Raimon underscores the ethical importance of knowing when to offer praise and blame appropriately.¹⁷ As in Bernart’s *tornada* to *Chantars*, this passage invites its readers to agree with a general moral principle as the signal for entering into a mutually beneficial textual relationship: the reader identifies as a member of the knowledgeable elite, and in doing so validates Raimon’s assertions, his didactic project, and his criteria for assessing the quality of *trobar*. The *Razos de trobar* explicitly conceives of its target audience of *aficionados* as a sub-culture within the wider public of troubadour lyric:

Ieu non dic ges qe toz los homes del mon puesca far prims ni entendenz ni qe fassa tornar de lor enueitz per la mia paraula... mas tan dirai segon mon sen en aqest libre, qe toz homs

18. See Kay, *Parrots and Nightingales* 42–57 and 59, who views Raimon Vidal’s poetic project in the *Razos* and his two *novas* (short narratives) as framed by the desire to identify and educate an audience of connoisseurs.

19. Poe, *From Poetry to Prose* 67, notes that “the Catalan grammarian shares with the composers of *vidas* and *razos* a unique preoccupation with the troubadours and a compelling desire to keep that poetic heritage alive.” One might nuance this slightly: it is less a case of keeping the heritage alive (since troubadour activity continued to flourish) than a desire to preserve it in writing for present and future readers.

20. “Per qu’ieu vos dig qe en neguna ren, pos basta ni ben ista, no-n deu om ren ostar ni mais metre:” 18–19 (“Therefore I tell you that in no detail, since it suffices and is good as it stands, should anything be removed from or added to it”). Cf. Poe, *From Poetry to Prose* 69: “Vidal’s concern over the corruptibility of his own work when entrusted to the public parallels another, for was it not a recognition of the corruptibility of Lemosi when employed by ignorant people which motivated him to write *Las Razos de trobar* in the first place?” The new, explicitly literate frame for the reception of Occitan literature thus affects Raimon’s thinking about both his own work and the wider troubadour tradition. The permanent record of writing offers an escape from the appropriation and adulteration inherent in performance by others (of course, the request to readers not to tamper with his words is an acknowledgment by Raimon that he could not, ultimately, control the integrity of his text; we are dealing with an *ideal* of fixity rather than its reality).

21. The term “authorization” is a translation of Laura Kendrick’s “auteurisation,” used to describe the methods (largely derived from centuries of Latin book culture) by which the creators and compilers of lyric chansonniers aimed to “élever les troubadours à la dignité d’auteurs” (Kendrick, “L’image du troubadour” 513).

qe l’entendra ni aia bon cor de trobar poira far sos chantars
ses tota vergoigna. (44–46; 56–58)

(I am not saying that I can make everyone in the world wise and receptive, nor that I can make them turn away from their errors by my words... but I will say as much as my understanding allows in this book, so that any man who understands it and has a good heart for *trobar* can compose his songs without any shame.)¹⁸

Bernart, Raimbaut, Giraut and Raimon all express concern over the risks of misinterpretation posed by the bad faith or poor understanding of an audience. And just as Bernart invites his audience to validate his claim to amorous authenticity by associating themselves with his assertion that “singing can have little value if the song does not spring from the heart” (*Chantars no pot gaire valer*, ll. 1–2), so Raimon claims to write for those who have “bon cor de trobar” (“a good heart for composition”). Yet Raimon’s solution speaks of Occitan’s developing status as a language of writing (as indeed does the very form of his prose reference work) – in Catalonia, where Raimon was based, and simultaneously in Italy, where Uc’s poetic and biographical anthologies were circulating.¹⁹ Raimon’s *libre* is intended for the discerning composer or consumer of lyric, who might want it on hand to consult at opportune moments. Where Giraut affects fatalism about the corruption of his songs by untalented singers performing before complacent audiences, Raimon entreats his readers not to alter his words – his book is to be afforded the permanence of written record.²⁰

The “authorization” of Occitan – that is, the treatment of it as a respectable written language on the model of Latin, capable of transmitting authoritative knowledge²¹ – reframed, and in some ways sharpened, these questions of ownership and interpretive control. The nature of the poetic artifact was in flux; its identity as a voiced object delivered in performance was now doubled by a developing conception of the poetic text as a document to be preserved in parchment, and therefore as an object to be owned. As we have seen from Raimon Vidal’s prologue, the architects of this process were developing a conception of troubadour lyric as a vehicle of written record, capturing the world of the courts in all its moral diversity. In probing the motivations underlying the love claims of troubadour song, then, the treatment of (in)authenticity in the biographies brings the twelfth-century poets’ concerns about defining and refining their au-

diences into contact with new questions about what a vernacular poetic canon might look like, and what ends it might serve.

The *cansos* of Daude de Pradas: authenticity, convention, cynicism

Reluctance in love is one of the most insistent themes across the body of Daude's *cansos*. The first stanza of *Trop ben m'estera si-s tolgues* (*BdT* 124.18) is fairly typical in this respect:

Trop ben m'estera si-s tolgues
 Amors de mi et ieu d'Amor;
 q'ieu no-n ai re mas la dolor,
 et ill vol de mi totz sos ses:
 q'ieu chant e-m deport e-m solatz,
 non per mi, mas car a lieis platz;
 e ill non faria per me
 neis mal, si-m cujava far be. (9.1–8)

(It would be better for me if Love took his distance from me and me from Love; for I have nothing from him but suffering, and he demands his tribute from me in full: for me to sing and desport and show joy, not for my own good but for his pleasure; and he would even avoid doing me harm, if he thought that harm would do me some good.)

The point being made here is the conventional one about the singer's inability to escape the wounding power of love's arrow; but where other poets may place stress on a paradoxical *desire* for Love's punishment, Daude's singer claims to long for a separation that is enacted formally in the chiasmic structure of line 2: "Amors de mi et ieu d'Amor." The stanza works to underscore the asymmetry between Love's pleasure at the act of singing, and the lover's own dissatisfaction with the situation; consequently, the song, sport and manifested joy of the lover are keyed as decidedly *inauthentic*. Meanwhile, in line 7 Amor is denoted by the masculine pronoun "ill," when the common noun *amor* is feminine in Occitan. If, as Bruckner argues, the troubadour *canço* frequently exploits the grammatical femininity of *amor* "to represent and conflate his own feeling, love personified, and most important, his beloved" ("The Trobairitz" 225), here the opposite process is at work. Daude's stanza creates a world where

the joy of love is a relationship between two masculine figures, and female figures disappear from view entirely; the male personification of Amor heightens the potential for allegorical reading that may move the song's interpreter away from the usual *canço* domain of heterosexual erotic love.

A similar device is employed in the opening of another *canço*, *Pois Merces no-m val ni m'ajuda* (*BdT* 124.13):

Pois Merces no-m val ni m'ajuda,
 ges de chantar non ai razo;
 mas qui pot, de rason perduda,
 far mot plazen ab leugier so
 assatz deu esser plus grazit,
 car mot ses rason son faidit;
 e qui no-ls capte ab dir gen,
 son perdut, e-l sos eissamen. (5.1–8)

(Since Mercy does not deign to help me, I have no reason to sing about anything; but he who can, having lost his reason, make pleasant words with light melodies should be all the more appreciated; for words without reason are ignored.)

In both songs, as in the previously-discussed *No cugiey mais ses comjat far chanso*, the love object disappears behind a personified value – Love, Mercy, or both – which is lambasted for failing to reward the speaker's devotion. In this case, though, Daude goes further than simply reversing the joyous-love theme; the poet-persona appears to take seriously the possibility that the value of one's song ought to reside at least as much in its technical realization (the quality of the words and music) as in any emotional reality that underlies it. The word "grazit" in line 5 recalls the variant in the *B* version of Daude's *vida*, which stated that his songs were not "grazidas;" this coincidence, along with the implication at the end of the stanza that audiences do not offer "mot ses rason" (including Daude's own *canços*?) their proper due, might make this stanza a more likely candidate as the *vida*'s source.

The conditions Daude appears to be creating here for the appreciation of inauthentic love lyric can be read as a challenge to the authenticity *topos*. This notion finds support in ironic form from one of Daude's satirical songs, *Amors m'envida e-m somo* (*BdT* 124.2). It opens with a stanza where Daude announces that, for once, he is "comforted and appeased by a joy that has come into my heart from

a hope that has overcome me” (ll. 7–10). This sounds like a conventional authentic-love opening, but quickly degenerates in the second stanza as Daude introduces a tripartite definition of love that will structure the rest of the song:

De totz los bens qu'en amor so,
 ai ieu ara calque plazer,
 car ieu ai mes tot mon esper,
 mon pensar e m'entencio
 en amar dompna coind'e bella,
 e soi amatz d'una piucella,
 e quan trob soudadeira gaira,
 deporte mi cossi qe-m plaia;
 e per tant non son meins cortes
 ad a amor si la part en tres. (14.11–20)

(I now have some pleasure from all the benefits that are found in Love, for I have put all my hope, my thoughts and my understanding in loving a gracious and beautiful lady; and I am loved by a maiden; and when I find a merry prostitute, I conduct myself as I desire; and I am not thereby less courtly towards love, for splitting it thus into three.)

We now realise that this is a satirical song, and to hammer the point home Daude goes on to describe his occasional dalliances with prostitutes as a way of fulfilling his commitments to love:

Amors vol ben que per razo
 [...]
 m'aizine tant que ab lieis jaia
 un ser o dos de mes en mes
 per pagar ad Amor lo ces. (14.21, 28–30)

(Love is happy for me to [...] amuse myself by lying with her [the *soudadeira*] one night or two from time to time, in order to pay Love's tribute.)

The formulation “to pay Love's tribute” (*ces*) is strikingly similar to line 4 from *Trop ben m'estera si-s tolgues*, where Daude complained that “Love demands from me all his tribute” (*ces*). Love's tribute, there, referred to the singer's act of joyful singing, which was undertaken with a reluctance that threatened to render it insincere. The sordid *détournement* of the idea in the satirical song, where meta-

phorical abstraction gives way to the hard economics of prostitution, underlines Daude's act of wilful demystification. The point is made again in the final stanza, where the constraining will of 'Amor' (usually brought to bear on the poet-persona in Daude's *cansos*) is invoked to entreat the prostitute to "give me, with a minimum of fuss, everything that Love demands in bed" (ll. 52–53).

Yet one element of the courtly lyric paradigm remains untouched: the first kind of love, that of the lady, is conceived as quite different in nature to the other two kinds, and Daude explicitly rejects any idea that this more courtly love should lead to consummation:

Non sap de dompnei pauc ni pro
qui del tot vol si donz aver.
Non es dompneis, pois torn'a ver,
ni cors s'i ren per guizerdo. (14.31–34)

(He who wishes to have everything from his lady knows nothing at all about love-service. It is not love-service if it is made real, or if the lady gives her body as a reward.)

The expression "torn'a ver" in line 33 is arresting, and can be glossed in complementary ways. Firstly, love-service ("dompneis") is defined in terms of chaste decorum and renunciation; it is not courtly, when dealing with one's lady, to even wish to turn the rhetoric of desire into genuine copulation. Yet this has a further implication: the use of "ver" equates 'truth' with concrete, physical love, and by implication, colours the abstract, courtly desire of the lyric lover as an elegant fiction.

Daude is hardly the only troubadour to attack the rhetoric from which the tradition is built, though it is certainly striking how insistently he hints at uncoupling the connection between poetic expression and sincere love. In *Amors m'envida e-m somo*, he appears to attack the immorality of carnal love by voicing the hypocrisy of promiscuous suitors who believe they can "part [l'amor] en tres" and still remain "cortes." If this may have been received as unwelcome intervention by a cleric into the *mores* of the laity, one obvious response was that Daude himself had no business with either lady, maiden or prostitute; and that the celibacy required of his professional calling rendered his own love language inauthentic. Where Daude's songs aim at recognition within the community of *trobar*, the *vida* attempts to situate him on the outside, looking in.²² His clerical status under-

22. The religious and political context may also be significant here. Lateran IV (1215), as well as bolstering the Albigensian Crusade which had such disastrous effects on Southern France, made provision for the Church to enhance its control over the love lives of both clergy and laity: for the former, by ensuring through strict penalties that they had none (canon 14); for the latter, by instigating confession as a means for the clergy to police the moral health of their parishioners (canon 21, *Omnis utriusque sexus*). These developments may help to explain why the biographies, whose principal aim appears to be to establish the cultural authority of *trobar* and the lay courts where it flourished, might be hostile to clerical participation in the game of love song.

mines the legitimacy of his rhetoric; his play with the conventions of the *canso* comes to seem like an act of appropriation on the part of a phenomenological outsider (one who replicates the surface of appropriate language but lacks the emotional substance shared by the true lover-poet and those who can understand him). In the terms defined by the conventions of the *canso*, this effectively assimilates him to the *lauzengier*, the Other against whom any respectable troubadour defines himself.

Literacy, education and advancement: Uc and Daude

Uc de Saint-Circ's *vida* may or may not be autobiographical; certainly, nothing differentiates it internally from the *vidas* of other troubadours. Like the *vida* for Daude de Pradas, it broaches the topic of poetic insincerity, but offers a very different account of its literary and social consequences:

N'Ucs de Saint Circ si fo de Caersi, d'un borc que a nom Tegra, fils d'un paubre vauvasor que ac nom N'arman de Saint Circ [...] Aquest N'Ucs si ac gran ren de fraires majors de se. E volgron lo far clerc, e manderon lo a la scola a Monpeslier. E quant ill cuideront qe'el amparet lettras, el amparet cansos e vers e sirventes e tensos e coblas, e-ls facih e-ls dich dels valens homes e de la valens domnas que eron al mon, ni eron estat ; et ab aquel saber el s'ajoglarai. [...] Cansos fetz de fort bonas e de bons sons et de bonas coblas; e anc no fo gaires enamoratz. Mas se saup feigner enamoratz ad ellas ab son bel parlar; e ben saup levar las soas dompnas e ben decazer, quant el lo volia far, ab los sieus vers e ab los sieus digz. (Boutière et Schutz 239–43)²³

(Sir Uc de Saint Circ was from the Quercy, from a town called Tegra, son of a poor *vavassor* called Sir Arman de Saint Circ [...] This Uc had many brothers older than him. And they wanted to make him a cleric, and they sent him to school in Montpellier. And when they thought he was learning his letters [Latin], he was learning *cansos* and *sirventes*, and *tensos* and *coblas*, and the deeds and words of the worthy men and ladies who were in the world, and ever

23. *Vida* found in manuscripts ABIKN₂P. The editors' base manuscripts IK differ in some passages from the version given above, which is taken from B (and followed closely in AP). Notably, IK offer the detail that "non fez gaires de las cansos [he did not write many love songs], quar anc non fo fort enamoratz de neguna," and later that "pois qu'el ac moiller non fetz cansos." This version appears to want to stress and justify a low production of *cansos* (although Uc's haul of fifteen *cansos* out of about forty songs is hardly insignificant!), but it accords with the other manuscripts in describing Uc's ability to feign love through his skill with words.

had been; and with this knowledge he became a *joglar*. [...] He wrote excellent love songs, with good melodies and good stanzas; and he was never in love. But he knew how to feign love to ladies with his smooth speech; and he knew well how to praise his ladies and how to shame them, when he wanted to do so, with his songs and his words.)

This statement puzzles for its lack of fit with the biography of Daude. Uc, the biographer claims, was never in love, but this is no barrier either to composing excellent songs or to establishing appropriate relationships with “his ladies;” the ability to talk the talk provides ample compensation for an absence of genuine sentiment. Similarly, the short *vida* for the earliest known troubadour, the Count of Poitiers Guilhem de Peitieu, describes him as “one of the most courtly men in the world and one of the greatest deceivers of women. He was a fine knight at arms, liberal in his womanizing, and a fine composer and singer of songs. He travelled much through the world, seducing women.”²⁴ Guilhem’s status as a great lord makes the quality of his compositions marginal to the biographer’s assessment of his life, but the inclusion of his powers of deception in the list of otherwise positive qualities suggests at the very least that the biographer does not wish to flag this attribute up as a character flaw. Nor is it viewed as a stumbling block to literary success, as it was in the case of Daude de Pradas. The convention of authenticity, observed more-or-less across the board in troubadour *cansos*, is often undermined in biographies that portray the self-interest guiding social and poetic transactions at court; why it should be upheld with regard to Daude, and used as a stick to beat him with, requires further explanation.

Scholars have often situated Daude’s known period of activity as 1214–82, based on archival documentation in the Rodez area (which would have made him remarkably old to be still employed within the clerical establishment in 1282). Recently, however, Gerardo Larghi has established the existence of two separate figures named Daude de Pradas employed within the cathedral chapter at Rodez; one, the uncle of the other, was a canon of the cathedral and must be our troubadour. Larghi is therefore able to suggest new dates for Daude’s professional career, spanning the period 1190s–1244 – in this latter year, prayers were said in memory of Daude *uncle*. Intriguingly for our purposes, this would make him a (slightly senior) near-contemporary of Uc, whose dates of known activity are 1217–53.

As noted above, it is conceivable but by no means certain that Uc wrote his own *vida*; I consider it quite likely that he was responsible

24. “Lo coms de Peitieu si fo uns dels majors cortes del mon e dels majors trichadors de dompnas, e bons cavalliers d’armas e larcs de dompnejar; e saup ben trobar e cantar. Et anet lonc temps per lo mon per enganar las domnas” (Boutière et Schutz 7–8).

for Daude's. Whether we are dealing with one author (Uc or someone else) for both biographies, or separate authors, we can make two general observations: first, that both texts observe a strong generic unity in terms of style and choice of content, and second, that the value of authenticity is not stable, but fluctuates across the corpus of biographies. The explanation for this fluctuation must be sought in the interplay between the information detailed in the biographies on the one hand, and each poet's literary and historical trajectory (such as it can be traced independently of the *vidas* and *razos*) on the other. Close attention to this interplay can aid in understanding how the theme of authentic love is marshalled to underwrite the ideological aims of the biographies.

A comparison between the *vidas* of Uc and Daude reveals details which speak of the spread and growing importance of literacy and education in the thirteenth century. In both cases the troubadour's learning and skill at composition are flagged up. The first thing we learn about Daude, after the location of his birthplace, is that he was a canon:²⁵ a clerical education had evidently taken him into a secure institutional position, and this education is explicitly harnessed in manuscripts *IK* to his skill as a troubadour: "He was a learned man in letters and in natural wisdom and in composition [*trobar*]." Yet the "sen de trobar" ("skill in composition") noted in a passage common to all manuscripts, associated here with a Latin education and innate intelligence, is not sufficient to impart into his songs that ineffable quality that would give them either flavour or favour in the eyes of audiences.

The educational trajectory of Uc de Saint Circ displays both similarities and differences. We are told that he was pushed into education in Montpellier by his older brothers, who wanted to make him a churchman. However, instead of learning his letters like the good student that Daude evidently was, Uc devised his own syllabus based on troubadour song and the values of the courts in which those songs circulated: "And when they thought he was learning letters, he was learning *cansos* and *vers* and *sirventes* and *tensos* and *coblas*, and the deeds and words of the worthy men and the worthy ladies who were in the world and had ever been; and with this knowledge, he became a minstrel."²⁶ The insincerity which the biographer identifies in the songs of both poets can be connected to their rhetorical skill (explicitly, in Uc's case, his "bel parlar"), honed by a clerical education; yet their relationship to this education is strikingly different in each case. Uc's trajectory constitutes an explicit rejection of institutional learn-

25. Archival documents support this claim, though they place him in the cathedral chapter at Rodez rather than Maguelone as specified in the *vida* (see discussion further down).

26. On this *vida* as evidence for a developing conception of Occitan as a language of study, see further Hinton 84.

27. Davis (74–77) notes intriguing parallels between the portrayal of Uc in this *vida* and that of Ovid in the *accessus ad auctores* tradition which may have bolstered the troubadour's literary authority: "Like Ovid, Uc de Saint Circ abandoned a conventional career to pursue 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." On the *accessus* tradition more generally as a model for the *vidas*, see in particular Meneghetti, *Il pubblico* 209–44, and Egan.

ing in favour of a new vernacular curriculum centred on the poetic and moral value of *trobar*. Armed with this secular learning, Uc gambles on giving up advancement within the Church for life as an itinerant performer, and finds that the faith he has placed in the educational qualities of troubadour song have prepared him for successful passage through the world of the southern courts.²⁷

Uc's decision to become a professional performer ("s'ajoglarai") is echoed in *vidas* for other troubadours. Indeed, his route from clerical training to court performance is presented as a well-trodden one, with numerous poets said to have abandoned "letras" and become *joglers*. There has long been debate about the extent to which such accounts should be taken seriously as evidence for how the professional lives of Occitan poets were structured. Analysing evidence concerning the early troubadours, Ruth Harvey judges it very unlikely that literary activity could have constituted the primary professional activity for any of them ("A figure described [in the *vidas*] as a *joglar* need not be a professional performer who made his living by his art," 226). Rather, men like Marcabru and Cercamon are likely to have progressed from clerical training to employment at some level in the administration of courts, with *trobar* an ancillary activity. Socio-economic change, coupled with the sudden expansion in the diffusion of troubadour lyric from the last quarter of the twelfth century, no doubt made thirteenth-century courts more conscious of the reputational opportunities offered by association with troubadour activity; at around the same time, the quantity of men emerging from clerical training began to exceed the number of available institutional positions (Harvey 229), and it was natural that many of these would seek to use their skills in the secular world instead. In such conditions of supply and demand, it is more likely that a rhetorically gifted individual might have been able to carve out a literary living under the wing of a wealthy patron. However, we should beware of accepting too readily the *vidas*' claim that many troubadours like Uc de Saint Circ were first and foremost professional performers; available evidence suggests that most of the authors of secular Latin go-liardic poetry were in secure professional employ, yet in the songs they presented themselves as wandering vagabonds (Kendrick, *Game of Love* 59–60). Uc himself appears to have sought non-literary income streams, since (as Zufferey has demonstrated) he confessed to a charge of usury in 1257; the number of poets who combined their literary work with other occupations (clerical, mercantile, and so on) makes it more rather than less likely that court poets

28. It is also worth considering that, in the major *chansonniers* which contain author portraits, only a handful of poets are unambiguously depicted as performers with instruments: 2 in A, 4 in I, and 1 in K. Comparing the marginal instructions to the illustrator of A with the finished portraits suggests that the stock image of a man declaiming used across all these manuscripts may, at times, represent a *joglar*; but this does not appear to affect the overall pattern greatly, since only five out of A's forty-four images are labelled as "jogolar." See Lemaitre et Vielliard LXIX–LXXI.

or performers might also have had other responsibilities alongside the literary support they offered their patrons.²⁸

When faced with this repeated insistence on the abandonment of one career for life as *joglar* or *trobador*, it is then legitimate to speak of a fantasy, where the troubadour's commitment to the performance and composition of songs for courtly audiences is presented as a change of professional status, a sacrifice demonstrating the poets' faith in the opportunities for social advancement that *trobar* may bring them. There is a rhetoric of social mobility here which Eliza Ghil has argued has an ideological function in promoting the unity and harmony of lay Occitan courts, a defensive move against the rising influence of the clerical establishment and the French monarchy in Occitania after the Albigensian Crusade. In imagining troubadour activity as an autonomous, self-willed career, these depictions also reflect the more mercantile economic context of the thirteenth century. As Burgwinkle (191–257) has shown, the songs of this period tend to stage poet/patron interactions as a transactional negotiation, with Uc an archetypal figure in this regard. His songs are characterised by "a tone of defiance in the face of demands placed on him by the patronage system, a rhetorically proactive posture, and a highly developed strategy for furthering his own reputation as image-maker and caustic critic" (Burgwinkle 85). In similar fashion, the way inauthenticity is handled in Uc's *vida* places emphasis on his hermeneutic superiority over his audiences; a man may write of love and not be in love, but (when done well) his audiences will be none the wiser. The *canso*'s anxiety over the poet-lover's need to differentiate *fin'amor* from the *lauzengier*'s hollow imitation has been rewritten here to underscore the poet's autonomy. The canny poet can exploit undiscerning audiences for social and economic gain. In its representation of Uc manipulating his education for secular advantage, the *vida* thus celebrates the poet's authority over the literary text against the insistent (and conflicting) claims of both court audiences and institutional clericalism.

Daude's inauthenticity, clericalism and crusade

Daude's editor characterizes his general approach to the love *canso* as "un exercice de scolastique amoureuse" (Daude de Pradas XXIV). This formulation draws an implicit connection between the *vida*'s claim that Daude's love songs lacked authenticity and his profession-

29. In the fourteenth century, the *vida* for Ferrari da Ferrara (the latest-known to be written) portrays him as a new kind of vernacular “maistre,” so well versed in the language of Occitan poetry that other poets and performers would seek him out at court for advice (Boutière et Schutz 581–82; see further Hinton 84–85).

al status as a canon. Of course, a number of troubadours were clerics or had clerical training according to the *vidas*, and most of these seem to have taken their studies more seriously than Uc. Giraut de Bornelh’s *vida* (Boutière et Schutz 39) claims that he was called “maestre dels trobadors” (“master of the troubadours”) for the quality of his songs. The clerical overtones of “maestre” are given no negative weighting here; but nor do they pull troubadour song towards the clerical sphere.²⁹ Instead, Giraut observes a seasonal separation: in the winter he fulfills his institutional teaching duties, while in the summer he travels between the courts with two singers who perform his songs. Here the *vida* cleverly uses the *reverdie topos* so common in the exordia of Occitan *cansos* as a device for emphasizing the distance between the world of “escola” – represented by winter, the season associated with absence of loving – and that of court life, which takes place under the summer sun of love’s rebirth.

The *vida* for Monge de Montaudon displays a similar desire to keep the lay and clerical worlds separate, even as it promotes the individual’s ability to move between them. The *vida* tells us that Monge’s poetic name derives from his professional life as a monk, an identification followed by the author portraits found in manuscripts *ACIK*. Yet Monge’s loyalty to the clerical environment is not uncomplicated: in his famous satirical revue of fellow troubadours, *Pos Peire d’Alvernh’a cantat*, he calls himself “lo fals Monge de Montaudon,” suggesting that his monastic identity might not be entirely orthodox; another of his songs stages a debate with God in which Monge affects to challenge the Church’s authority over amorous matters. No doubt seizing on such clues, the biographer imagines Monge being freed from his incarceration in monastic orders in order to take part in the life of the courts (Boutière et Schutz 307). The divine impetus for this lay vocation in Monge’s *tenso* is here given a purely secular rationale. The poet secures his abbot’s agreement to release him from holy vows through the influence of king Alfonso of Aragon, who subsequently takes on the imperative role performed by God in the *tenso*: “E-il reis li comandet qu’el manjes carn e domnejes e cantes e trobes; et el si fez” (“And the king ordered him to eat meat and court ladies and sing and compose; and so he did”).

This *vida* invites us to recognize Monge’s ‘secularisation’ as an improvement in his social position underwritten by Aragonese royal power, and several other *vidas* feature troubadours abandoning the clerical world under the impetus of sexual desire and attraction to the courtly environment. Peire Rogier is identified as a canon whose

30. “E laisset la canorga e fetz se joglars, et anet per cortz, e foron grasit li sieu cantar” (“And he left the canonry and made himself a joglar, and travelled around the courts, and his songs were well received”).

31. Two other manuscripts contain portraits of Daude. That of *K* closely resembles the tonsured figure of *I*, as is often the case with this pair of manuscripts; *A* also underlines Daude’s clerical status, this time by portraying him seated reading from a book. A marginal instruction to the painter makes clear that this is intended to be “.i. calonego ka leça” (“a canon reading”).

32. One is reminded of the questions playfully explored by Jorge Luis Borges’s “Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote” (in Borges, *Labyrinths*): the biographical context threatens to reorient in radical fashion the reader’s engagement with the text’s meaning and value.

decision to abandon his livelihood and become a wandering *joglar* is rewarded by audience appreciation for his songs (Boutière et Schutz 267) – the contrast with Daude in both professional trajectory and poetic success is instructive.³⁰ Peire Cardenal and Gausbert de Poicibot are both (like Uc) placed into a clerical institution at a young age, from which they ultimately escape into the secular world. In Peire’s case this move is presented as a sign of maturity “quant fo vengutz en etat d’ome” (“when he became a man:” Boutière et Schutz 335), while Gausbert is motivated by sexual desire: “per voluntat de femna issi del mostier” (“he left the church out of desire for women:” Boutière et Schutz 229). By contrast with all these figures, nothing in Daude’s *vida* suggests any derogation from clerical rule, and what we know of his actual career suggests a life spent successfully building relationships within the Church hierarchy and with the local aristocracy in order to curry influence and advancement (Larghi).

The *vida*’s comment about the lack of love in Daude’s *cansos* undermines the phenomenological, and therefore poetic, force of the songs which the biography serves to introduce in the *chansonniers*. The first piece following the *vida* in manuscript *I* (fol. 111v), for instance, is the *canso* *Ben ay’amors, quar anc me fes chauzir* (*BdT* 124.6); primed by the biographer, the reader may be less disposed to invest emotionally in a line such as the following, from the third stanza: “Gaugz e plazers m’en ven on plus mi duelh, / e suy pagatz, tan m’esn bon a suffrir” (“I derive joy and pleasure from what hurts me most, and I am well-paid, so pleasing is the suffering to me,” 3.17–18). The *vida* encourages us instead to view this statement as devoid of amorous sentiment – a formal exercise in paradox and oxymoron – and, subtly, invites us to align ourselves with the inscribed reception community in rejecting its language as inauthentic. Meanwhile, the portrait of Daude incorporated into the capital “B” of the first line reminds us, through his tonsure, of the poet’s clerical status.³¹

The *vidas* for figures such as Daude or Uc are playing with the biographical assumption that, according to de Man, inheres in the reader’s engagement with lyric poetry, telling us that it matters who is speaking and from what vantage point.³² The *vida* encourages us to read Daude’s love songs for traces of cynicism which, when we read other poets’ songs, we might be more inclined to understand as reflecting the bitterness of the spurned lover – and therefore as a further declaration of the lover’s emotional commitment. For instance, Bernart de Ventadorn’s famous *Can vei la lauzeta mover* (*BdT* 70.43) builds up to the following assertion of defeated idealism:

Aissi-m part de leis e-m recre;
 mort m'a, e per mort li respon,
 e vau m'en, pus ilh no-m rete,
 chaitius, en issilh, no sai on.
 [...]
 De chantar me gic e-m recre
 e de joi e d'amor m'escon. (31.53–56, 59–60)

(So I leave her and give up; she has killed me, and I answer her as one who is dead, and I go away, since she will not keep me – miserable, in exile, I know not where [...] I renounce and give up singing, and I hide from joy and love.)

We are not, after all, very far from the line in Daude's song 12 proposed by Schutz as the basis for the *vida's* comment: "if my song does not contain much love, then no one but Love and Mercy are to blame" (ll. 6–7). In both cases, the intention is to underscore rather than undermine the speaker's commitment to an ethos of love service.

It appears that Daude de Pradas is being singled out by the biographer for reasons that are only partially explained by the content of his songs. Larghi's recent investigation into Daude's life throws up some intriguing details that may shed further light on the matter, raising the possibility that Uc and Daude may be linked more closely than has been realised. For Uc's early professional activity seems to have been in some aspects a less successful counterpart to Daude's. In the early part of his career, Daude appears to have been connected to two powerful noble families, the Anduza and Roquefoilh lineages. Perhaps through these networks (the Roquefoilhs had a history of donations to the cathedral chapter), he seems to have integrated the entourage of the Rodez episcopal court around the turn of the thirteenth century. The first Albigensian Crusade was something of a turning point in local politics, overturning the balance of power between the ecclesiastical and secular worlds; Daude's presence as witness to a number of key negotiations between Simon de Montfort (leader of the Crusade) and local dignitaries suggests that he was well-placed to profit from the pro-French alignment of the Rodez ecclesiastical establishment. In 1214 the number of canons in the cathedral chapters was increased, a move Larghi (38–40) interprets as designed to bring the canons more firmly under episcopal control and make the chapter more supportive of the crusade. Shortly after this,

during a further restructuring of the chapter, Daude was appointed as a secular canon.

Uc is known to have frequented the Anduza family in 1212, and to have stayed at the court of Henry I of Rodez, whose brother Uc had been deposed as Bishop of Rodez the previous year by Pope Innocent III, with the pro-French archdeacon Peire de la Treille taking his place. It is therefore quite possible that he and Daude crossed paths during this period, and that Uc's ties with Henry placed the two troubadours on opposite sides of a local power struggle initiated by the controversial Crusade; Larghi also believes it almost certain that while in the Rouergue Uc gathered at least a part of the materials he later used to write the *vidas*.

The possibility that allegiances arising from the Albigensian Crusade might be lurking in the background of the *vida*'s attack on Daude is strengthened by its incorrect assertion that he was a canon at Maguelone. This cathedral and bishopric were notable for their strong support for the anti-Cathar agenda; Peire de Castelnau, the papal legate whose assassination sparked the Crusade into life, was archdeacon there when he was appointed legate for the suppression of Catharism in 1199, and Maguelone was staunch in its pro-Papal position through the subsequent events. Whether deliberate or not, the misattribution of Daude to Maguelone thus serves to further tie him to the world of the pro-Crusade establishment. Larghi suggests that the mention of Maguelone may also reflect a later stage in Daude's career progression. He appears to have been involved with the foundation of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Montpellier (he appears as a signatory to its statutes, approved by Jean II de Montlaur, Bishop of Maguelone), and he may also have taught there. Montpellier, of course, is where Uc had been sent to study (according to his possibly autobiographical *vida*) and where he had staged his secret rejection of the clerical curriculum. All these details thus contribute towards the impression that Daude and the pre-Italian Uc were two troubadours separated by the same life experiences: the one had thrown his lot in with the pro-French, pro-Papal religious establishment, while the other rejected (or was rejected by?) that world in favour of the courts of lay – and often anti-Papal – protectors.³³

The curious comment in Daude's *vida* may be explicable as a response to the rhetoric of his songs in the context of tensions surrounding clerical involvement in troubadour production and the political ramifications of the Papal Crusade in the first decades of the thirteenth century; specifically, I have suggested that it may have

33. It should be noted, however, that Uc's main patron in the Veneto, Alberico da Romano, was alternately Guelph and Ghibelline, a reflection of (and reaction to) the shifting alliances and unstable political conditions in Italy at this time.

been Daude's implantation within the very structures through which Uc passed briefly and not entirely successfully early in his career that led to his characterization as deficient on the love side of the 'singing for love' *topos* – a hypothesis that is obviously much strengthened if we assume that Uc was the author of Daude's biography. More broadly, the disparaging of Daude's *cansos* also feeds into the trend we observed at work in the *vida* for Uc, with its insistence on distinguishing clerical learning from the documentation and study of troubadour song, considered to be a new kind of lay, vernacular curriculum. The marginalization of the clerical element in Uc's education goes hand in hand with the representation of Daude as failing to strike a chord with the reception community of the *canso*. In both cases, we see the biographies working to assert ownership of the emerging written tradition on behalf of increasingly literate lay patrons and the poets they favoured.

As argued above, the biographies represent only one intervention in the thirteenth-century debate over the value and ownership of troubadour song. Their judgment is necessarily partial and, at times, in contradiction with the historical evidence. When it comes to Daude de Pradas, the high number of surviving songs suggests that the *vidas'* claim to speak for the textual community of *trobar* was unsuccessful. It is possible to identify competing narratives about the troubadour textual record. One such is offered by Matfre Ermenegaud's late thirteenth-century *Breviari d'amor*, which sets out to demonstrate that all love, including the carnal love celebrated by the troubadours, has the divine love of God at its essential root.

In the final 7,000 lines of this 35,000-line work, the author weaves 267 quotations drawn from the songs of sixty-five named Occitan poets and a good number of anonymous ones. Matfre, a cleric expounding a doctrine of salvation, clearly stands in a different relation to the troubadour tradition from Uc de Saint Circ and the other biographers. As with the biographies, the *Breviari's* engagement with quotations drawn from songs works to invest Occitan poetry with cultural and moral authority.³⁴ However, Matfre's selection of troubadours for quotation speaks eloquently of the gulf separating his conception of the troubadour from that of the *vidas* and *razos*. Daude is cited six times from five different songs, and described as "lo fis aimans" ("the courtly lover:" 32367) "quez ac mout bon cor de sufrir" ("who had a good heart for suffering:" 28548); by contrast, Uc's name is entirely absent – the only song of his to be cited (twice) is attributed by Matfre to the earlier troubadour Uc Brunenc.

34. See Kay, *Parrots and Nightingales* (Chapter 3 for the biographies and Chapter 7 for the *Breviari*).

Conclusion

Sarah Kay has argued convincingly that the twelfth-century emergence of a vernacular ‘literature of entertainment’ with love as its principal topic, and its conflicting tendencies towards irony, idealization and debate, reflects the role of clerics in the elaboration of lay courtly culture (*Courtly Contradictions*; “Courts, Clerks, and Courtly Love”).³⁵ She views the *lauzengier* theme in particular as a means of both acknowledging and defusing the tensions caused in the mediation between lay and clerical concerns and power structures (“Contradictions”). I have suggested above that the closely related authenticity *topos* allowed poets to mediate in similar fashion between the demands of court audiences and their own claims over the meaning and value of the texts they were creating. By invoking a private domain of sentiment and self-knowledge which underwrites the value of both amorous and poetic discourse, troubadours are able either to invite assent and validation from their public, or alternatively to assert independence from the limitations imposed by audience expectations.

Responding to these dynamics in the material they were commenting and supplementing, the biographies reflect the growing importance of literacy in lay *milieus* in the thirteenth century. These developments raised questions about the preservation and documentation of troubadour song: how to define the relationship (and not least the hierarchy) between vernacular written practices and their Latinate models, and where textual authority should reside – in the established textual communities of institutional literacy or the emergent literate practices of the courts. The biographies, through their treatment of the theme of emotional authenticity, reflect the claims of the courts, but also the poets’ own stake in the cultural material they were producing. Individual *vidas* frequently conclude with a formula along the lines: “and here some of his songs are written.”³⁶ The possessive pronoun signals the troubadour’s ownership of his corpus, while the *chansonniers* themselves embody the material and textual investment in troubadour production of those who commissioned them at great expense. In similar fashion, the biographies promote the fantasy of a world where poets create their own educations and careers away from institutional structures, and through their poetic art hold the power to make or break reputations; yet at the same

35. See also Jaeger; Gaunt, *Love and Death* 42.

36. For instance, at the end of Uc’s *vida* in manuscript A, we read: “Et aqui son escriutas gran ren de las soas chanssos.”

time, those poets' own fortunes depend on establishing and maintaining good relations with their patrons. One *vida* for the early troubadour Marcabru (Boutière et Schutz 12–13) describes how his scathing attacks on court immorality eventually led the castellans of Guyenne to put him to death, offering a stark reminder of the limits of poetic autonomy when turned against the community.

The *vida* for Daude de Pradas depicts him as a canon, ensconced within an institutional structure that insulates him from this need for negotiation between poet and court. Implicitly, his lack of appreciation for authentic love is attributed to his status as a successful man of the Church, at a time when religious institutions were viewed with suspicion at many southern courts for their involvement in the traumatic disruptions of the Albigensian Crusade. Viewed in this context, the cynicism found in certain of his songs is read as a lack of investment in a game to which, the biographer insists, he remains an outsider. The charge of inauthenticity, then, serves to delegitimize Daude's voice from participation in troubadour lyric. Uc's inauthenticity, by contrast, is portrayed as the edge that allows him to work the system to his advantage, taking the upper hand in his negotiations with audiences; as Meneghetti puts it (*Il pubblico* 203), "simulation becomes synonymous with professionalism." Springing from the rhetorical skills developed independently and in place of the educational curriculum offered him at school in Montpellier, Uc's ability to fake amorous emotion stands as one more sign of the independence of this self-made poet who turns the resources of Latinate culture to his own ends in order to exploit his patrons. Given the importance now attached to Uc's role in the anthologising of Occitan literary materials, the *vida* narrative can be read as the tale not only of a poet, but also of an emerging literary tradition appropriating the forms of learning on behalf of lay, vernacular concerns. Both repository and interpretive act – document/monument, to borrow Le Goff's influential formulation³⁷ – the biographies look forward to a posterity in which the rival ownership claims of different stakeholders over the cultural capital of the songs will be weighed and sifted by future generations of readers.

37. See also Ricoeur 116–19.

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