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Telling the difference: linguistic differentiation and identity in Guillem de Berguedà, Giacomo da Lentini and Bonifacio Calvo

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Abstract: Editorial practice in literary traditions still dominated by neo-Lachmannian philology remains focussed on the establishment of the text as the medieval author knew it himself. For adherents of this method, the influence of “foreign” languages is labelled as a contamination that should, if possible, be removed as unauthentic. This article proposes a less doctrinaire practice and demonstrates its fruits when brought to bear at the interstices of literary history and Romance philology, as represented by poems by Guillem de Berguedà, Giacomo da Lentini, and Bonifacio Calvo. Approaching both medieval poets and their modern editors in the light of Derrida’s *Le monolinguisme de l’autre*, the present contribution counters the tendency to impose linguistic and cultural identities on medieval authors, instead allowing their manuscripts to speak for themselves. It further considers the thinking of medieval poets and their transmitters on the nature of language and lyric poetry, and how these systems could and should be used and developed.

Keywords: textual criticism, troubadours, manuscripts, scuola siciliana, identity, literary history

1 Languages and Identities

The intersections of language and identity in literary texts of the High Middle Ages have been the object of a considerable volume of scholarship in recent

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decades. Building on the fruits of work done within and between the disciplines of philology and literary studies, this research has had two main axes: first, the extent to which linguistic choices both facilitate and structure the conceptualization and expression of the identity of individuals and social groups, and second, a renewed consideration of the possibility and stakes of identifying languages themselves. The first trend has found particularly rich stimulation on the two sides of the English Channel. Serge Lusignan, for instance, demonstrated compellingly the changing status of Old and Middle French alongside Latin among intellectuals and administrators in England and France, and how it came to define those groups as well as individuals (Lusignan 1986; 2004). Similarly, Ardis Butterfield's *The Familiar Enemy* (2009) examined the grey-zones between English and French in the same period in the context of a study of the insecure "Englishness" of medieval English, while Elaine Treharne (2012) has studied the politics of language use and its place in the elaboration of identity in England after the Norman Conquest.

Second, more a classically philological approach has concerned itself with the technical stakes of attempting to "identify" individual languages, as exemplified by Fabio Zinelli's recent examination of Catalan witnesses of Occitan lyric (Zinelli 2013, 145). In view of the literary *diasistema* legible in these manuscripts, Zinelli suggests that the Lachmannian pursuit of a recreated *Urtext* may sometimes go no further than establishing the original graphy of a text. Similarly, Simon Gaunt (2013b, 24–26), using the example of Marco Polo's *Devisement du Monde*, has highlighted the potential dangers of an excessive *toilette de texte* for works whose tradition straddles linguistic frontiers. In this study and elsewhere, Gaunt has also considered how the intersections of linguistic identities (for instance, Occitan and Catalan) invite meditation on conceptions of genre (Gaunt 2013a). He thereby complements Catherine Léglu's work on the contested status and uses of Occitan and Catalan in the later Middle Ages (Léglu 2010). A further recognition of limiting factors on philological study comes in the form of Frédéric Duval's perceptive appeal for a better understanding of linguistic competence and awareness among medieval people (Duval 2011). Thus, he proposes, scholars must take account of the horizon of experience of the individual language-user, and allow for the subjectivity of any engagement with language, a local perspective often elided in philological studies.

It is the purpose of the present article to bring together these two strands of research, and to consider how manuscript transmission and modern editorial practices colour our appreciation of languages and identities, both personal and linguistic, in the medieval period. It also questions the place of such linguistic interference in elaborating poetic identities, and, further, the consequences of our approach to such interference for the writing of literary history.

My examples come from three zones: Catalonia, Sicily, and the court of Alfonso X of Castile, each a place of contact both in linguistic and literary historical terms. In the first, the Catalan-speaking Guillem de Berguedà, active at the end of the twelfth century, composed his lyric in Occitan, largely transmitted in Catalan-produced manuscripts. In the second, Giacomo da Lentini translated poems by Occitan troubadour Folquet de Marselha into Sicilian, later transmitted in Tuscan manuscripts. Finally, the Genoese Bonifacio Calvo, during a period of several years spent at the Castilian court, addressed a *sirventes* in Occitan, French and Galician-Portuguese to King Alfonso. All three poets were thus dealing with, or were later brought into contact with, a “foreign” language alongside others to which they stake a particular claim, whether or not it was the language of their poetry.

In this context, Jacques Derrida’s *Le Monolinguisme de l’autre* (1996) provides an illuminating approach to poets’ self-positioning relative to the languages they use—or not, in some instances—and those of their audiences and transmitters. It also provides valuable help in thinking though how editors contribute to this linguistic determination. A major investigation of the place of language in the construction of an individual’s self-understanding, *Le Monolinguisme* is above all concerned with the impossibility for any language-user to assert himself over the language he uses. In the case of the three poets under discussion here, these tools are often dialectal traits, which various actors in the lifespans of these poems attempt to use, thus revealing an awareness of the double bind whereby, in Derrida’s formulation, “Je n’ai qu’une seule langue, ce n’est pas la mienne”. He continues: “Mais qui la possède, au juste? Et qui possède-t-elle? Est-elle jamais en possession, la langue, une possession possédante ou possédée? Possédée ou possédant en propre, comme un bien propre?” (1996, 35s.) [‘But who truly possesses it? And whom does it possess? Does language ever possess—a possessing and possessed possession? Possessed or possessing in its own right, like a personal possession?’.] The ability to use language is thus an illusory power, with as much authority vested in the language itself as in the user (if not more). The advance of Derrida’s essay, influenced by his own formative experience as a francophone Jew brought up in Algeria, is therefore to refocus our thinking on language as a faculty rather than as a monolithic system, one that can use us as much as we use it. Seen in this way, the appropriation of both texts and the right to determine their linguistic *patina*, reveal the violence inherent in the editorial process, and, more seriously, in certain fundamental principles of Romance philology. The power to use linguistic markers and the identities these connote is one aspired to by all actors in the processes that constitute literary transmission in the largest sense—poets, scribes, and editors. But it is a power that, ultimately, none can ever achieve.

Given our highly mediated access to medieval texts, the question of authorial intent is problematic here, whether the state in which we encounter a manuscript text can be said to reflect a version known or, much less, approved of by the author. It is, for instance, rare that one can say confidently that a poet deliberately adopted a particular linguistic profile such as Ardis Butterfield (2009, 306) convincingly proposes of Charles d'Orléans' "distinctive and self-generated" English. It is for this very reason that scholars need to approach identity in its linguistic expressions as being created by exterior agents as much as it is from within. Each actor, however dimly lit, contributes to shaping linguistic make-up and is thus influential on resultant interpretations and editorial treatments. This state of affairs consequently requires a more responsive approach to the way we interrogate poets and their languages. What follows is an attempt at such an approach.

2 Guillem de Berguedà

Guillem de Berguedà, active in the last decades of the twelfth century, is known for the robust political invective of his poetry and the equally colourful nature of his life, which culminated in the murder of neighbouring nobleman Ramon Folc de Cardona in 1175. Guillem has been admired for the inventiveness of his verse. Though a Catalan speaker by birth, the stylishness of his Occitan, at a time when it was not clearly distinguishable from Catalan, has also gained attention.¹ For instance, Martí de Riquer remarked that Guillem "escrivi un provençal tan correcte que supposava un atent aprenentatge fet potser en estades a terres de més enllà del Pirineu o, tal vegada, per haver rebut lliçons d'un 'mestre de trobar'" (Riquer 1996, 17s.) ['Guillem writes Occitan so correctly that it suggests a thorough apprenticeship while visiting landholdings closer to the Pyrenees or, perhaps, from having taken lessons with a 'master of poetry']'. The two isolated "slips" in his linguistic veneer thus acquire particular significance. Both are witnessed by *chansonnièr* Sg, (Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, MS 146), a major mid-fourteenth-century Catalan collection, which contains four songs by Guillem at the end of the manuscript; the first is acephalous. The first complete piece is the *unicum* "Cantarey mentre m'estau" (PC 210, 8a), written at the height of his feud with Raimon Folc de Cardona (Riquer 1996, 21). It begins:

¹ The first text generally accepted as "Catalan" is a 1241 translation of the West Gothic *Liber iudiciorum* (Rogge/Beinke 1991, 197), although many accounts point to the 1054–1076 *Canço de Santa Fe*.

Cantarey mentre m'estau
chantaret bon e leiau
qe xanton macips de Pau
del fals veill coronat bisbau
e d'En Folcalquer lo barrau:
can re-ls sofrain dinz lur ostau
van sojornar en cort reiau.
Puis van xantan lirinunvau,
balan, notan gent e suau.²

1 I shall sing while I must
A little song, good and loyal,
That the apprentices of Pau sing
About the false, old, enthroned bishop
5 And Sir Folcalquer, the barrel:
When something is lacking at home
They go to stay at the royal court.
And then they go, singing tralala
Dancing and playing delicately and sweetly.

The strophe shows certain Catalan traits. Particularly eye-catching are the graphic forms *xanton* and *xantan* (ll. 3 and 8) as in contrast to *chantaret* (l.2). *Macip* is also clearly Catalan (cf. DCVB). Most noteworthy, however, is *cantarey*, a mixed linguistic form combining Catalan desinence with Occitan consonantalism (compare Oc *cantarai* or *chantarai* and modern Catalan *cantaré*), programmatically placed at the beginning of the song, and used, moreover, to talk about the fundamental troubadour interest: singing.

The final strophe of the poem is similarly notable for its Catalan graphy, a feature emphasized by the repetition of rhyme sound in *coblas unissonans*:

Mon chantar volvv en biaix
e met l'a-N Folc el caraix
e valgra li mais us laix;
e pes del joy de que engraix,
que-m ten joyos e-m vest e-m paix,
e no son chufas de Roaix,
c'ans es jois novels c'ades naix.
Puis van xantan lirinunvaix,
balan, notan autet e baix.

37 I turn my song to one side
And throw it in Sir Folc's face
More, it would be worth a lay³ to him,
40 And I think of the joy that fattens me
That keeps me joyful, clothes and feeds me
And they are not lies from Edessa⁴
Rather there is new joy being born now.
Then they go about singing "lirinunvaix"
45 Dancing and singing high and low.

Riquer in his earlier edition observes that words with endings homophonous to those which end the lines of this strophe are used in Guillem's song "Qan vei lo temps camjar e refrezir" (PC 210, 16). In all the witnesses of that song, they have a conventional Occitan-type [-ais] or [-ays] ending (*savaïs*, *asais*, *engrais*, *atrais*),

2 The bishop is Arnau de Preizens, bishop of Urguell, and "En Folc" Ramon Folc de Cardona. Edition: Riquer (1996, 126–137). All translations are my own.

3 Neither of Riquer's editions translates this word, though he does note the possibility of reading it as *lais* "en el sentit de plany funeral, que el trobador desitjaria al seu enemic" (Riquer 1996, 136, n. 39).

4 The "lies from Edessa" are fantastical stories told by returning Crusaders (Riquer 1971, vol. 2, 68s., n. 42).

and Riquer declares it inconceivable to write them with the graphy [-aix] (text and *apparatus* Riquer 1996, 329–341). Therefore:

“es imposible dar a las rimas de esta canción una forma catalana, y ello nos podría llevar a concluir que el copista de S^g ha catalanizado en -aix una solución fonética que también en *Cantarey* (V), Guillem de Berguedà habría resuelto en -ais” (Riquer 1971, vol. 1, 234s.).

[‘it is impossible to give the rhymes of this song a Catalan form, and this could lead us to the conclusion that the copyist of S_g has Catalanized a phonetic solution with -aix that, also in *Cantarey* (V), Guillem de Berguedà would have ended in -ais’.]

Riquer’s later edition, however, adopts the graphy [-aix] without comment. If this graphy is extraordinary, its use shows either Guillem or intermediary transmitters exerting their linguistic power, whether for political or aesthetic reasons. Given that the single scribe of S_g uses the more usual form elsewhere, and the manuscript respects the *facies* of his sources (Cabré/Martí 2010, 101), this action cannot be interpreted as a mistake. François Zufferey demonstrates that this graphic form is reserved for Guillem and the beginning of the section devoted to Raimbaut de Vaqueiras (Zufferey 1987, 255; see also COM1). As in the case of “Cel so qui capol’e dola” discussed below, “*Cantarey*” shows the use of Catalanism, in the first instance, to stylistic effect, that is, to paint Guillem as a Catalan, even when writing in Occitan, and in the second to stake a claim to one of the earliest troubadours in the manuscript. The visual contrast with the Occitan *koiné* used for the rest of the poets in the manuscript underscores this aspect of Guillem’s identity and Catalan “possession” of the poet. While this can be read as simple evidence of the dangers of over-emphasizing the evenness of the Occitan *koiné* (compare, for example, the reservations of Varvaro 1995; Poli 1997), this attempt to differentiate Guillem linguistically also mirrors a “conscience de groupe très forte” in Catalonia (Rossinyol 1974, 138) at the time of MS S_g, probably in the 1350s (Ventura 2006, 23).

Visually, then, the closing strophe of this song is more emphatically and more consistently marked by the line-end than were preceding strophes with their refrains beginning “Puis van xantan liridunva”. The grapheme [x], used throughout the song to represent both the phonemes /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ (as in *xantan*), colours the appearance of the final strophe, even if thirteenth-century changes in phonology meant that [-ais] and [-aix] were probably homophonous by the time S_g was compiled.⁵ This change leaves open the question of whether this usage might reflect Guillem’s. Given the changing linguistic circumstances, Guillem’s declaration at the end of the strophe that his song “volvv a biaix”, while translated by

5 Simone Ventura, private correspondence, August 2014.

Riquer (1996, 137) as ‘giro el meu cantar de biaux’, can be juxtaposed with the closing passage of the early thirteenth-century *Razos de Trobar*. In it, Raimon Vidal, writing what he proposes as a text-book for his fellow Catalans who aspire to know “la dreicha manera de trobar” (Marshall 1972, 1, l. 2), criticizes the use of non-standard spellings:

Et tug aqill qe dizon *amis* per *amics* et *mei* per *me* an fallit, et *mantenir*, *contenir*, *retenir*, tut fallon, qe paraulas son franzesas, et no las deu hom mesclar ab lemosinas, aquestas ni negunas paraulas biaisas. Dieis En P. d’Alvergne *galisc* per *galesc*, et En Bernartz dieis *amis* per *amics* et *chastiu* per *chastic*. Et crei ben qe sia terra on corron aitals paraolas per la natura de la terra, et ges per tot aiso non deu dir sas paraulas en biais ni mal dichas neguns hom qe s’entanda ni sotilezza aia en se (Marshall 1972, 24, ll. 461–468).

[‘And all those who say *amis* instead of *amics* and *mei* instead of *me* have made a mistake, and *mantenir*, *contenir*, *retenir*, they are all mistakes, for these words are French, and one must not mix them with Limousin words—these or any other inappropriate words. Sir Peire d’Alvergne says *galisc* instead of *galesc*, and Sir Bernart [de Ventadorn] says *amis* instead of *amics* and *chastiu* instead of *chastic*. And I truly think there is a land where such words are current according to the nature of the land, and all the same a man who understands these things or who has any fine feeling in him should never use dialectal or ill-expressed words’]

Biaix as Raimon Vidal uses it seems to mean spellings and words which diverge from the Occitan *koiné*. Indeed, the appeal made in the *Razos* for linguistic purity invites an understanding of *biaix* as also connoting “foreign” linguistic elements. Thus, in Guillem’s song the expression can reasonably be understood as referring to sounds that depart from the norm, drawing attention to his access to, and appreciation of, a wider range of linguistic identities. Sounds in the song, then, join the graphies used in *Sg* to reinforce a differentiation and to emphasize an idea of Guillem’s belonging, to stake a claim to his Catalan-ness. This reflects a widespread idea of unbroken poetic descent in the Crown of Aragon (compare Cabré/Martí 2010, 96, “il n’y a chez les poètes catalans aucune conscience d’un changement de tradition, de césure” [‘among Catalan poets, there is no sense of a change in tradition or a caesura’])).

The other departure from the Occitan poetic *koiné* in Guillem’s corpus is in “Cel so qui capol’e dola” (PC no. 210, 6b).⁶ The fourth strophe reads:

⁶ Sansone (1991) attributed authorship of the concluding stanzas of Guillem’s piece to Guillem de la Tor, given similarities with “Una, doas, tres e quatre” (PC 236, 10).

Un'e doas e tres et quatre,
 cinc e seis e set e uit,
 m'avenc l'autrer a combatre
 ab ma osta tota nuit,
 e si-m trobes flac ni buit,
 per la que-us dey, bel fratre,
 io agra tost mon pan cuit,
 e puis fora fins de batre.

25 One and two and three and four,
 Five and six and seven and eight [sc. times]
 It befell me the other day to fight
 with my hostess all night long
 and so you find me soft and spent,
 30 For what I owe you, dear brother,
 I will soon have cooked my bread
 And then the fight will be over.

The rough, bawdy content, and popular overtone led Riquer to suggest these lines “podrien procedir de la tradició catalana, com sembla revelar l'ús del pronom personal *io*” (Riquer, 1996, 223) [‘could descend from the Catalan tradition, as the use of the personal pronoun *io* seems to reveal’]. This is the only instance where Catalan *io* replaces Occitan *ieu* in that section of *Sg*. Redeploying elements of Guillem’s native language to special stylistic effect is an unusual example of what Peter Trudgill calls “reallocation”, where “variants may acquire different degrees of formality and be reallocated to the function of stylistic variants” (Trudgill 1986, 110). Once again, however, it remains unclear whether these traits are attributable to Guillem himself, and are thus proof of deliberate manipulation of Occitan, rather than, as Riquer suggests, errors on Guillem’s part. The combined accuracy of the poet and the *Sg* scribe lead one to believe that these are not errors. Instead, the Catalan pronoun, like other variants, should be understood as Guillem subverting preconceptions about poetry and poetic style, which then takes the form of targeted linguistic contamination. This decision therefore bears witness to the elaboration of the idea of a poetic language in late twelfth-century Catalonia, as seen through the lens of the fourteenth-century *chansonnier Sg*.

3 Giacomo da Lentini

Manipulation of linguistic detail is also found in the transmission of the Sicilian poet Giacomo da Lentini, who, rather than using elements of his own native tongue to nuance another poetic language, uses echoes of Occitan to elevate and position his “own” language as one fit for literature. The relationship between the first elevated lyric poetry composed in Italy and troubadour lyric is well-documented and well-studied (see, for instance, Brugnolo 1999b). The Occitan translations of the Sicilian school, including those by Iacopo Mostacci, Rinaldo d’Aquino and Guido delle Colonne, stand metaphorically at the head of the Italian lyric tradition. Indeed, one of them does so physically: “Madonna, dir vo voglio” by Frederick II’s notary, Giacomo da Lentini, opens the *Canzoniere vaticano* (Biblio-

teca Apostolica Vaticana, lat. 3793), one of major collections of thirteenth-century poetry. The first two strophes of this poem translate Folquet de Marselha's "A vos midontç voill retrair' en cantan" (PC 155, 4). This song by a troubadour well-known and evidently popular in Italy is transmitted uniquely and incompletely by the late thirteenth-century Italian *chansonnier* T. Folquet's song reads as follows (Squillaciotti 1999, 414–441).⁷

A vos, midontç, voill retrair' en cantan cosi-m destreign Amor[s] e men' a fre vas l'arguogll gran, e no-m aguda re, qe-m mostras on plu merce vos deman;	1	To you, madam, I want to relate in song How Love torments me and directs me To great pride (and it does not help me) That you show me there where I ask you for greater mercy,
mas tan mi son li consir e l'afan qe viu quant muer per amar finamen. Donc mor e viu? non, mas mos cors cocios mor e reviu de cosir amoros a vos, dompna, c[e] am tan coralmen; sufretç ab gioi sa vid' al mort cuisen, per qe mal vi la gran beutat de vos.	5 10	But so great are my worry and travails That I live as I die, from loving exquisitely. So I live and die? No, but my eager heart Dies and lives again from love's worry About you, lady, whom I love so deeply; Accept with joy his life on painful death, For I ill saw your great beauty.
Parer non pot per dic ni per senblan lo bens ce vos voigll ab † len carna fet ⁸ mas nie[n]s es so ce vos dic: si-m te al cor us fio[c]s que no-s † remuda o dant Per cals raisons no-m ausi consuman? Savi dion e-l autor veramen qe longincs us, segon dreic e raiso[s],	 15	Neither in speech or in appearance could the goodness appear that I wish you with ... But what I say to you is nothing, so I hold To my heart a flame that does not... Why it does not kill me [by] consuming [me]? The wise and the authorities say truly that longstanding custom, as is right and reasonable,
si convertis e natura, don vos deves saber car eu n'ai eissamen per longinc us en fioc d'amor plaisen	20	Changes itself into nature, from which you Must know for from you I have also A flame of pleasing love from long habit

Combining *amor de lonh*, the perceived obligation of a *domna* to recognize her lover, and the centrality of the gaze (*mal vi la gran beutat*, l. 11, and Folquet's pain at the sight of the *domna*), "A vos midonç" brings together many of the classic *topoi* of troubadour lyric. Living death caused by Folquet's lady who does not

⁷ Squillaciotti reproduces Stroński's text (1910, 94s.), incorporating amendments proposed by Roncaglia (1975, 26).

⁸ The daggers bookend Squillaciotti's conjectures, which I do not translate. Appel (1890) and Stroński (1910) offer readings for these sections, while Roncaglia (1975, 31) maintains that reconstruction is futile.

acknowledge him (ll. 5–11), although not itself particularly unusual, is heavily emphasized: Folquet repeats *mor e viu* (ll. 7–8), of which *reviu* acts as an emphatic *mise en abyme*. The phonetic proximity of the internal rhymes and, to a lesser extent, external ones (*finamen: coralmen*) reinforce the comprehensive nature of Folquet's knowledge of and engagement with courtly love.

Lentini's version develops this living death while waiting for one's lady to unbend. I reproduce Gianfranco Contini's text (1960, vol. 1, 51–54); see also Roberto Antonelli's *apparatus criticus* (2008, 5–38).

Madonna, dir vo voglio
 como l'amor m'ha priso
 inver' lo grande orgoglio
 che voi, bella, mostrate, e no m'aita,
 oi lasso, lo meo core,
 che'n tante pene è miso
 che vive quando more
 per bene amare, e teneselo a vita.
 Donqua mor'u viv'eo?
 No; ma lo core meo
 more più spesso e forte
 che no faria di morte—naturale,
 per voi, donna, cui ama,
 più che se stesso brama,
 e voi pur lo sdegnate:
 amor, vostr'amistate—vidi male.

Lo meo 'namoramento
 non pò parire in detto,
 ma sì com'eo lo sento
 cor no lo penseria né diria lingua;
 e zo ch'eo dico è niente
 inver' ch'eo son distretto
 tanto coralemente.
 Foc'aio al cor, non credo mai si stingua,
 anzi si pur alluma:
 perché non mi consuma?
 La salamandra audivi
 che 'nfra lo foco vivi—stando sana;
 eo sì fo per long'uso:
 vivo'n foc'amoroso,
 e non saccio ch'eo dica:
 lo meo lavoro spica—e non ingrana.

1 My lady, I want to say to you
 How love has taken me
 Towards the great pride
 That you, beauty, show, and do not help me,
 5 Alas, my heart,
 Which is placed in such pain
 that it lives as it dies
 From loving well, and keeps itself alive.
 So do I live and die?
 10 No, but my heart
 Dies more often and more forcefully
 Than it would from natural death
 From you, lady, whom it loves
 And craves more than itself,
 15 And you just disdain it;
 Love, I did not see well your friendship.

My falling in love
 Cannot be presented in words,
 But as I feel it, thus,
 20 A heart would not think it nor tongue say it.
 And what I say is nothing
 In truth, so I am distraught
 So heartily.
 I have fire in my heart, I do not believe it will
 25 ever go out, rather burn on
 Why does it not consume me?
 I heard the salamander
 That lives under the fire, remains healthy.
 As do I from long practice:
 30 I live in the fire of love
 And I do not know what I might say:
 My trouble hurts, and does not bind.

Lentini's poem adopts the central statement of the lover's sacrifice—purely formal, as he is neither consumed by his fire (l. 26) nor conclusively bound up (l. 32)—and develops it in combination with Folquet's fire imagery. Furio Brugnolo notes the poem's "tendenza razionalizzatrice", which is characteristic of subsequent Sicilian borrowings from the troubadours (Brugnolo 1999b, 49). Part of this practice is dividing the *ieu* into clearly separated *io* and *cuore* in ll. 9–10. He emphasizes the heart at the line endings ll. 6–9, *finamen*, *mos cors cocios*, *amoras*, *ce am tan coralmen*, a privileged place much exploited by Lentini. The remaining three strophes of his poem, which do not show the same close links to Folquet's piece, meditate on his dejection and impotence before his lady.

The main witnesses of "Madonna dir vo vogilo" are *canzonieri* produced in mainland Italy. Written by northern scribes, these are held to record largely reliable texts, though it is difficult to exclude interference.⁹ Lentini's poem is transmitted in four collections—V, the already mentioned *Canzoniere vaticano*; L (Florence, Bibl. Medicea Laurenziana, Redi 9), and P (Florence, Bibl. Nazionale Centrale, Banco rari 217) and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibl., MS 14389—and in the *Memoriali bolognesi*, to which I return below. All five witnesses include a number of so-called *rime siciliane*, considered insufficient in prosodic terms, and therefore rejected, by later poets on the Italian mainland. For example, Lentini rhymes *long'uso* with *amoroso* (ll. 29–30).¹⁰ Placing them in rhyme position (e.g. *audiui*: *vivi* in place of the standard *audivo* and *vive*, ll. 27–28) draws the reader's attention to the "forme più o meno perfettamente siciliane" (Contini 1960, vol. 1, 51) ['more or less perfectly Sicilian forms'].

The text transmitted in the *Memoriali bolognesi* is particularly striking. These ledgers, kept by public notaries, recorded private transactions in the city of Bologna. To prevent fraudulent additions the notaries regularly copied poems to fill the blank spaces (see further Orlando 1981). Here, we find the forms *despiache* and *fache* in ll. 43–44 of the witness of Bologna, Archivio di Stato, *Mem.* 74 (fol. 238r), as against the forms *dispiace* and *face* used in the literary manuscripts, forms Orlando (1981, 50) characterizes as "notevoli sicilianismi grafici" ['remarkable Sicilian graphies']. This hypercorrectivity places the *scuola poetica siciliana* as an archaic relative to contemporary Tuscan poets. The same could be said of the form *cusi* in place of *così* (l. 51). Together, these echo the [x] in the witness of Guillem de Berguedà; both acts of medieval philology show awareness of older

⁹ Cf. Zinelli (2013, 145) on the production and possibility of evaluating Catalan troubadour MSS: "la tradizione era [...] iniziata nel segno dell'interferenza".

¹⁰ The question of rhyme in the *scuola siciliana* remains controversial. See Coluccia (2005) for an overview of the debate on *rime siciliane*, particularly between Brugnolo (1999a) and Sanga (1999).

or, in the *Memoriali*, more “exotic” graphies, and how they could record and instantiate literary history. If attributed, as seems probable, to the scribe of the *Memoriali*, this retro-projection of linguistic identity demonstrates both an acute sense of the Sicilian origins of the poetic tradition (as seen from Bologna), as well as a simultaneous desire to connote *ex negativo* the novelty and local connections of contemporary poetry.

Linguistic play in this piece, however, is not solely between Sicily and the Italian mainland. As Simonetta Bianchini (2005, 11s.) has shown, Lentini often uses conjugations and lexis typical of Occitan. The clearest instance of this habit in “Madonna, dir vo voglio” is the conditional form (*soffondara*), exposed in rhyme position:

ché, s’eo no li gitasse,
parria che sofondasse
(a bene soffondara)
lo cor, tanto gravara—in suo disio.

57 Which, if I were not to throw them,
it would appear that it should sink
(and it would sink)
my heart, so it would oppress it in its desire.

This form stands out in the poem against other standard conditional forms ending *-ia* (*penseria né diria*, l. 20; *dispiaceria*, l. 68). Although it could also be parsed as an Italian future tense, (‘it will sink’), Contini (1960, vol. 2, 51) proposes convincingly that *soffondara* derives from the Latin pluperfect **SUB-FUNDARET*, and it is therefore reasonable to conclude that Giacomo is gesturing to his Occitan forebears. Unlike the *Memoriali*, in the *canzonieri*, scribal intervention or shortcomings are unlikely: as Sanga (1999, 21) notes, the literary manuscripts of the Sicilian poets are “testimoni sostanzialmente fededegni, con solo una leggera, superficiale e non sistematica toscanizzazione” [‘largely trustworthy witnesses with only slight, superficial and non-systematic Tuscanization’]. The adoption of Occitan lexis such as *blasmar* (l. 47), and *chito* (l. 39) declares the poet’s borrowings and inspirations, demonstrating that he is speaking the same (poetical) language.¹¹ The linguistic openness of these works thus documents eloquently the cultural ties across the Strait of Messina.

More importantly, Lentini’s lexical choices and those of his transmitters gesture at both stages toward the “old” language of poetry, be that Occitan or Sicilian, while simultaneously demonstrating what can be done with the new. Linguistic traits are used to triangulate relationships between connected traditions, and to construct a new literary identity, proving ownership of this new language, counter-intuitively, by drawing attention to its lineage. Yet further,

¹¹ Antonelli (2008, 31) reads *blasmare* as a gallicism.

linguistic choices also play a capital role in underlining the poem's literariness; as we shall see with Bonifacio, the thirteenth century is a period when, in the Mediterranean, to be lyric is to be Occitan. Lentini's echoes of Occitan thus return us to Derrida's double bind of not truly possessing one's only true language. He needs the old, the other, as a supplement with which to define the new language to which he lays claim, just as the scribe of the *memoriali* is dependent on the connotations of the Sicilian forms he uses.

This linguistic bleeding, perhaps better described as transfusion in view of the deliberate and life-giving action behind it, gives the lie to the myth of mastering and owning one's language. As Michèle Goyens (2011, 488) reminds us, language implies a vast hinterland of meaning as well as other users: "on ne traduit pas simplement d'une langue à l'autre, mais on traduit un texte inscrit dans une tradition, dans l'histoire d'une communauté socioculturelle, ce qui nous amène à définir les confins de langages comme confins de cultures" ['one does not simply translate from one language to another, but rather one translates a text which has been inscribed in a tradition, in the history of a socio-cultural group, and this leads us to define linguistic boundaries as cultural boundaries']. That the boundaries of language follow those of cultures at large militates against ownership and authority. Thus whilst there is an "Oedipal desire", in Alison Cornish's phrase, to replace the original text with a new one as there is to replace an "old" language with a "new", it is a qualified replacement which carries within it the desire to plot literary history (Cornish 2011, 10). Lentini lay bare this process, and was rewarded for this by the compiler of the Vatican *canzoniere* with his position at the "start" of the Italian lyric tradition. As the case of Bonifacio Calvo demonstrates, however, other poets were not so richly rewarded for muddying the linguistic waters.

4 Bonifacio Calvo

The Genoese poet Bonifacio Calvo is known to have been active at the court of Alfonso X "el Sabio" between 1253 and 1255 (on this sojourn see Marcenaro 2007). The polyglot *sirventes* "Un nou sirventes ses tardar" (PC 101, 17) is dated to this period in view of its encouragement of the king of Castile and Leon to capitalize on Thibaut of Navarre's death, and fulfil his dynasty's long-standing designs on Navarre (Pelaez 1896–1897, 10). Bonifacio makes this song, with strophes in Occitan, Galician-Portuguese and French, into a political weapon, a gesture which distinguishes it from the ludic or amatory tone of much multilingual lyric. "Un nou sirventes ses tardar" is Bonifacio's only polyglot exercise (although he also composed two lyrics in Galician-Portuguese, the language of Alfonso's own

major poetical work, the first century of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*).¹² Appel's edition of the text reads as follows (1902, 108s.):¹³

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Un nou sirventes ses tardar
voill al rei de Castella far,
car no-m sembla ni pes ni crei
qu-el aia cor de guerrear
Navars ni l'aragones rei;
mas pos dig n'aurai zo qe dei,
el faz' o que quiser fazer. | 1. 1 A new sirventes, without delay,
I want to compose for the King of Castille
For it does not seem to me, nor do I think or believe
That he has it in his heart to fight |
| Mas ieu ougz' a maintos dizer
que el non los qer cometer
si non de menassas, e qen
qer de guer' ondrado seer,
sei eu mun ben qe lli conven
de meter hi cuidad e sen,
cuer e cors, avoir et amis | 5 Navarre or the King of Aragon;
But because I say it, I shall have said of it what I must,
So let him do what he wants to do.

But I also hear many say
That he does not wish to commit |
| Por qoi ja dis au roi, se pris
vuet avoir de ce q'a empris,
.....sens menacier,
que rien ne mont', au mien avis,
que j'ai por voir oi comter
que il puet tost au champ trover
los dos reis, se talent en a. | 10 If not for menaces, and that
He does not desire to be distinguished in war,
I know well what he needs
To mobilize his thought and intention,
Heart and body, means and friends

15 For which reason I say to the king, if you wish
To have honour from your undertaking
..... without menaces,
That nothing is worth, to my mind,
for I have in truth heard say |
| E se el aora no-s fa
vezer en la terra de la
.....tend' e son confalon
a lo rei de Navar' e a
so sozer lo rei d'Aragon,
a caniar avenra razon
tal que solon de lui ben dir. | 20 That he could easily find on the field
The two kings, if he so wishes.

And if he does not now make himself
Seen in the land over there
...tent and his banner |
| E comenzon a dire ia
que mais quer lo reis de Leon
cassar d'austor o de falcon
c'ausberc ni sobreseing vestir. | 25 To the king of Navarre and to
His cousin the king of Aragon,
Then they will have reason to sing
Those who used to speak well of him.

And they already begin to say
30 That the King of Leon prefers
To hunt with sparrow-hawks or falcons
Than to put on his mail-coat or breastplate. |

¹² These are “Mui gran poder á sobre min amor” and “Ora non moiro, nen vivo nen sei” in the Ajuda and Colucci-Brancuti manuscripts. Editions: Branciforti (1955, 151–154), and D’Heur (1973, 251–253).

¹³ See also Branciforti’s edition (1955, 95–98).

The effect of the linguistic composition of the piece is to instantiate in poetry the confrontation which “should” have taken place on the battlefield, had Alfonso not delayed: Old French represents the King of Navarre and Galician-Portuguese Alfonso. Bonifacio thus confronts the king with the language of his French enemies, not, as Pelaez (1896–1897, 12) had interpreted it, the Aragonese of Thibaut’s allies. The Occitan language itself, as noted above, *the* language of lyric, acts as discursive marker in the first strophe and the *tornada*. In the event, the half-hearted annexation was rebuffed by an Aragonese-Navarrese alliance.

The poetical rejoinder made by the troubadour to the king has, nevertheless, generated much debate. Bonifacio’s argument is straightforward: waiting for *menassas* to counter will shame Alfonso, and anything less than immediate mobilization will undermine his authority. *El Sabio*’s vacillation contrasts with the poet’s self-confidence, so much so that these *menassas* could as easily refer to literary nudges from courtiers as to exterior threats. Given Bonifacio’s high standing at Alfonso’s court, both as the son of the Genoese ambassador and in his own right, these criticisms were perhaps not without weight (Marcenaro 2007, 16). Not only does Bonifacio know what the king should do, he pretends to know “o que [sc. the king] quiser fazer” (l. 7) [‘what the king wishes to do’]. This confidence at the end of the strophe contrasts with: “no·m sembla, ni pes, ni crei, | qu’el aia cor de guerreiar” (ll. 3–4) [‘It does not seem to me, nor do I think or believe, that he is minded to make war’], his parataxis a savage parody of the king’s dithering.

Linguistically, Bonifacio’s piece has been problematic, both for modern editors and medieval scribes. Attempts at identifying the individual languages and delimiting where they are used record a medieval conception of language that was distinctly fluid. The difficulty of tracing out different languages in this piece is complicated by the *coblas capcaudadas*, which require the last few words of the stanza to use the language of the following strophe to repeat the final rhyme of the preceding stanza. The first and fourth stanzas and the *tornada* are clearly Occitan and the third clearly Old French. The second, however, has generated much disagreement. Pelaez’s diagnosis, “forse Aragonese”, was rejected by both Tavani and Jean-Marie D’Heur, likewise William Horan’s vague “Old Spanish” (Horan 1966, 69–71; D’Heur 1973, 235; Tavani 1980, 16). Sansone’s “Catalan” was also rejected (Sansone 1955). Tavani and D’Heur identify it instead as Galician-Portuguese, something Tavani’s prescriptive edition brings out more than Branciforti’s.¹⁴ In this respect Tavani merely continues Branciforti’s own reasoning:

¹⁴ These continue principles first elaborated in relation to Cerverí de Girona’s plurilingual cobla, “Nuncha querria eu achar” (PC 434a, 40), also known as teh “Cobla en .vi. lengatges”: “Le lingue della poesia, nella tradizione culturale catalana, sono quattro, non sei; ed è da questa premessa che ritengo si debba partire per individuare le lingue usate nella cobbola, non già dai caratteri

“Bonifacio Calvo conosceva sicuramente il gallego-portoghese...e l’antico francese; quindi gli ibridismi, che si notano nelle due stanze suddette, debbono attribuirsi ai copisti provenzali. Con ciò tutto si risolve in una reintegrazione delle forme normali, nei limiti della tradizione manoscritta” (Branciforti 1955, 97).

[‘Bonifacio Calvo certainly knew Galician-Portuguese and Old French, thus the hybridisms visible in the two strophes in question must be attributed to the Provençal scribes. In which case, everything can be resolved with the reintegration of normal forms within the limits of the manuscript tradition’.]

Such an editorial stance raises a number of problems. The first is that of the manuscripts. “Un nou sirventes ses tardar” is transmitted in the Italian *chansonniers* *IKa’d*. The first two are thirteenth-century manuscripts, the latter two sixteenth-century. Except for *a’* (a 1589 Italian copy of Bernart Amoros’s songbook), they share a direct common ancestor. Provençal scribes thus have little to do with the lyric’s transmission, and if they did, they cannot be supposed to explain Bonifacio’s “errors”. Secondly, what can we consider to be “normal forms”? Thirdly, is any attempt at “reintegration” not doomed to mis-represent the medieval text?

The notion of “knowing” a “foreign” language requires more delicacy than Branciforti and Tavani seem to think possible. In her study of “second” languages and medieval translation into French, Sarah Kay sheds light on both the problems of thinking about medieval writers’ capacities in languages not their own and the stakes of manuscript transmission for philological study. She notes, importantly for the case of Bonifacio, that while French writers were careless about writing Occitan correctly, their Occitan and Italian colleagues were considerably more solicitous in their treatment of Old French (Kay 2011, 472). This trend can also be seen in the manuscripts of “Un nou sirventes ses tardar”. Building upon the Raupachs’ and Ineichen’s studies of Occitan lyric in French manuscripts, Kay suggests that for these writers, grammatical correctness as moderns might understand it was not the key to being French, but rather the use of a *scripta* that would be recognized as “French” outside France (Raupach/Raupach 1979). Kay quotes Ineichen:

“Il est encore légitime de poser qu’une langue exportée, soit le français du Moyen Âge, parlé ou plutôt récitée hors des pays de France, est identifiée moins à l’aide de l’ensemble des traits distinctifs, mais à cause de certains traits phonologiques assumant une valeur différentielle et caractéristique par rapport à l’idiolecte de l’auditeur moyen” (Ineichen 1969, 212s.).

linguistici del testo che, come si è visto, sono spesso ambigui sia per la scarsa differenziazione tra lingue romanze della stessa area regionale (portoghese e castigliano) sia per la conoscenza rudimentale che Cerveri poteva averne (guascone e italiano)” (Tavani 1969, 67).

[‘It is nonetheless legitimate to suggest that an exported language such as medieval French, spoken, or more probably recited, outside France, is identified less by the accumulation of individual traits but rather by certain phonological traits which take on a differential and characteristic value relative to the idiolect of the average member of the audience’.]

Kay thus promotes an understanding of linguistic identity informed by how different languages are in the recipient’s perception. Yet further, Duval’s concept of a relative neologism (2011, 499, “le néologisme n’est pas un fait objectif mais le fruit d’un jugement” [‘a neologism is not an objective fact, but the result of a judgement’]) draws attention to the extent that linguistic differentiation depends on the knowledge and perspective of individual recipients. For example, for someone with no knowledge of Iberian languages, the difference between Catalan and Castilian is far less obvious than for someone who knows one or the other. In Bonifacio’s poem, the Galician-Portuguese strophe of his *sirventes* does not need to be perfect. Thus when Tavani “corrects” Branciforti’s “Mas eu ouz’a muintos dizer” (l. 8) to “Mas eu ouç’a muitos dizer”, he presupposes that a clear division between languages was intended and that such a division in the medieval world would match his modern understanding. He also presumes that Bonifacio had the intention of composing in Galician-Portuguese as written, or even spoken, by native speakers. In Derrida’s terms, Tavani joins a series of actors attempting and failing to claim control over a language which cannot ever truly be theirs.

The indistinct boundary between languages in Bonifacio’s *sirventes* is particularly noticeable when we examine the strophe-endings. The use of *coblas capcaudadas*, where the last rhyme sound of the preceding strophe becomes the first of the new strophe, requires Bonifacio to close the strophe with a few words of the language of the next. He thus conforms to the widespread rule that rhyme is only possible within a single language.¹⁵ These *coblas capcaudadas* generate two problems. First is Tavani’s proposed correction to l. 14, from Branciforti’s “cuer e cors, aver et amis”, to “ave<i>r”. The “i”, which Modist universal grammar would call an accidental characteristic, viz. something which renders more specific a basic form of language, is absent in the manuscripts. Thus, what may have been deliberately omitted has been imposed by the editor, determining Bonifacio’s linguistic form and thereby projecting onto him a certain identity and understanding of language. *Aver*, available to both Old French and Occitan, may originally have been preferable to the unarguably French *aveir* for its greater universality. The generic Romance which is visible here, perhaps the language to

¹⁵ The most celebrated departure from this practice is Dante’s *Commedia*, especially *Purg.* 26. 139–141 and 146–148, where Arnaut Daniel’s Occitan is integrated into the Italian *terza rima*. Dante also makes rhymes between French, Latin, and Italian in his multilingual poem, “Aï faus ris”. On linguistic boundaries in this last piece, see further Murray (2013).

which Bonifacio aspired, appears only at the interstices between other idioms in a manner reminiscent of Walther Benjamin's "reine Sprache" (1972, 14). Equally, the "accuracy" of the individual word did not matter because the whole phrase is already coded graphically, perhaps also aurally, as French.

The second problem comes at the end of the French strophe. After reminding Alfonso how much worth he would gain from a decisive attack on his enemies "sens menacier" ['without first being menaced'], Bonifacio notes how simple mobilization would be. Branciforti's text reads:

qe j'ai por voir oï comter	19	In truth I have heard it said
que il puet tost au champ trover		that he could quickly meet the two kings on the
les doi rois, se talent en a.		[sc. battle-]field, if he desired it.

This play on the multiple meanings of *trover* gestures toward Alfonso's own extensive literary activity: Bonifacio suggests that he could as easily compose his songs at war as at home. It is, however, the kings who are problematic: *IKa*¹ read *li doi rei*, and thus fall between Old French and Occitan, while Branciforti and Tavani alike pin Bonifacio's text to one specific *ydroma*. In the manuscripts, then, the transition to Occitan begins earlier than in the other stanza-closing lines, or the Italian scribes have deliberately blurred Bonifacio's schema.

The end of this line, which the pattern of the *coblas capcaudadas* demands be Occitan, that is, the language of the following strophe, appears to be perfectly French, with *talent* in all manuscripts where we might expect Occitan *talan*. An explanation for this is offered by Ineichen's observation that "le -t final [était] souvent une espèce de lettre quiéscence, le graphème -ant parfois la représentation générique de la nasale" (Ineichen 1969, 215) ['final *t* was often a variety of silent letter, the grapheme -ant sometimes being the general representation of nasalisation']. Again, sound wins out over spelling, though graphy is closely bound to the evocation of particular characteristic sounds, as seen in the case of Guillem de Berguedà. What the French strophe makes clear is the extent to which the removal of linguistic particularities begins relatively early in the transmission of the poem, if not with the author himself. Removing linguistic features specific to languages other than Occitan denotes a claim made to a certain "ownership" of Occitan, defined *ex negativo* by the otherness of the other two languages.

The shortcomings of existing editions encourage a more circumspect, less prescriptive approach, and so I offer the following text based on *IK* with limited emendations. In comparison with Appel and, especially, Branciforti and Tavani's versions, a text faithful to these manuscripts, not known for their hypercorrectivity, allows us better to confront the hazy boundaries between romance *ydromata* and how they were appreciated in the Middle Ages. This approach thereby offers

5 Conclusion

In Derrida's account, no language lies fully in the authority of any one user, and thus any identity construed on a linguistic foundation is insecure. The three poets discussed in this article and the circumstances of their manuscript transmission demonstrate a complex interaction between language and identity. It is a relationship influenced by the networks and inter-authorial space formed by the poetic tradition, and transcends linguistic frontiers (including those of poetic idiolects), and geographic frontiers. Just as Derrida proposed elsewhere that texts aspire to a genre, so too, language and the identity of a language in the High Middle Ages were composed of a series of markers which could be adopted, adapted, and projected onto texts according to the needs and desires of the moment (Derrida 1980). It is these moments that allow us to see the exercise of both linguistic and poetic power. As Eugenio Coseriu noted, "la labor creativa [...] consiste en gran parte en descubrir cada vez nuevas asociaciones significativas [...] posibles en el sistema (es decir, virtualmente existentes), pero inéditas en la norma" (Coseriu 1952, 52) ['creative work consists for the most part in uncovering at each turn new signifiatory combinations that are possible within the system (that is to say, virtually existent), but unheard of in the norm']. These innovations by individual language users are, however, governed by what is existent in the system at large, itself the province of a collective authority.

In the context of medieval lyric, linguistic manipulation is doubly mediated, firstly by manuscript transmission, and secondly by the choices and practices of modern editors. In a discourse on language that accepts ideas such as those examined by Derrida in *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre*, as Fabio Zinelli (2013, 145) has cogently argued in a slightly different context, the purpose of Romance philology becomes a search for the original graphy of a text rather than any more primordial form. Between them, the three poets discussed here reveal some of the obstacles in the path of this goal. They also demonstrate how these obstacles are not simply to be removed but hold essential information about medieval and modern thinking about the elaboration and display of identity through and in language. This includes the (retro-) projection of Catalan-ness in Guillem de Berguedà in *chansonnier* Sg, Lentini's witness to the phoenix-like birth of new poetry from old, and the framing by modern editors of Bonifacio and his transmitters as more or less gifted linguists. Together, they reinforce the need for careful judgement of how possible it is to negotiate both medieval and modern readers' expectations and preconceptions, as well as the value in approaching medieval lyrics and their transmission in a more descriptive fashion. Only in this way can the interstitial languages and linguistic identities of the high Middle Ages be brought to light.

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