The Public Body: Sex Work in Twelfth and Thirteenth Century Occitania

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List of Abbreviations

ADHG	Archives départmentales de la Haute-Garonne
AMT	Archives municipales de Toulouse
NRCF	*Nouveau receuil complet des fabliaux*
PAN	Paris archives nationales
PL	*Patrologia Latina*

Introduction: Let's Talk about Sex (and Gender), Baby

The *idea* of prostitution serves as a lightning rod for questions about work, masculinity, class, bodies; about archetypal villainy and punishment; about who 'deserves' what; about what it means to live in a community; and about what it means to push some people outside that community's boundaries…Sex work is the vault in which society stores some of its keenest fears and anxieties.

- Smith and Mac, *Revolting Prostitutes*[1]

You're born naked and the rest is drag.

- RuPaul

This project began just over ten years ago somewhere between Judith Butler's argument that the body's expression in this world must be understood as a specific set of historical possibilities and Foucault's belief that the body is constrained, prohibited, and obliged by strict powers.[2] And in many ways, those same ideas are expressed in the above quotations by Smith and Mac and RuPaul. I believed, and still believe, that by studying sex work in the Middle Ages, we might be able to expand the historical possibilities by which we limit ourselves and our bodies, and in doing so, may find a modicum of freedom from the strict powers that seek to contain our ultimately limitless potential.

Although I was drawn in by how clearly I felt I could see the hierarchical powers of the Middle Ages exerting pressure on individuals, I quickly found the force of these powers is only obvious when you exist outside of them. How might we understand sex

[1] Molly Smith and Juno Mac, *Revolting Prostitutes: The Fight for Sex Workers' Rights* (London ; Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2018).

[2] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal (Washington, D.C.)* 40, no. 4 (1988), 521. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 136.

and gender if we did not feel we knew biological fact? How might we understand sexuality if we confronted our perceptions of those who engage in commercial sex? What cultural forces do we unknowingly bend to? This project has forced me to abandon many beliefs about the past and present and what we can find in each. The Middle Ages does not provide an alternative to our gendered system nor do modern people "know" sex and gender in an ineffable way that medieval people did not. Rather we have taken the same board game with the same playing pieces but written a new set of rules. Instead of privileging one over the other, let's open the vault.

This dissertation examines sex work in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Occitania with the explicit aim of understanding how engagement in sex work changed perceptions of the gender of sex workers. Bringing together questions of the social utility of sex work and the effeminacy of men who have sex with other men as laid out by theologians, literary portrayals of sex workers in twelfth century literature, and archival records that show where sex workers lived and found community, I attempt to construct a fuller picture of the sex worker in the High Middle Ages. As part of this process, I include jongleurs and jongleuses as sex workers, due to their identification with what I term, "lascivious corporeality." The various discourses in this project reveal that sex workers did gender differently from others.

As RuPaul succinctly suggests in the quotation opening this chapter, gender is a social construct. As such, gender, can be broken down into a set of social signs. Certain hair styles, modes of dress, or ways of behaving can be associated with one gender or the other. Although a man may have long hair and wear dresses, the prevailing social read of a distant figure with long hair in a dress is that they are a woman. In the modern era,

however, in our attempts to define, categorize, and catalog ways of being, we have shackled ourselves to what we consider biological reality. The man described above, with long hair and wearing a dress, still has, according to social categorization, a "real" and "definitive" sex that exists separate from his gender performance. Of course, Foucault has already argued against the separation of sex and gender, which suggests that sex is somehow outside the scope of culture and therefore universal. Sex is rather another construct, and modern Western notions of the sexed body are deeply rooted in the modern Western world's ideologies. It serves mainly to provide a basis upon which to place the gender binary.[3] Needless to say, the gross simplification of sex as an immutable "fact" is insufficient not only in terms of the social structure of gender but also in terms of the realities of biological science, realities that are more complicated than the presence or absence of a phallus.

In creating a discourse around binary sex (male vs. female), we have also created a discourse around binary gender (man vs. woman). One either performs the sex assigned at birth or does not, and one is therefore in alignment with their biological reality or is not. Notice that in this formulation the binary is not "one performs the sex assigned at birth or performs the opposite." It is not, in fact, an issue of an individual performing the opposite, but an issue of conforming or transgressing, no matter what form that transgression may take. To be trans, in this hegemonic formulation, is to not be cis (the prevailing descriptor for individuals whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth). Thus transness includes not only trans men and trans women, but

[3] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988).

nonbinary and genderfluid individuals. Defining transness through the negation of cis identity is problematic and overly reductive but recognizing our societal tendency to do this allows us to understand the degree to which a society that chains itself to a biological "reality," in this case binary sex, is not only a society of extreme limitations but also a societal ideal that does not and cannot exist.[4] All individuality is possible transgression, because the perfect gender performance of a perfect biological sex does not exist.

Studying the Middle Ages allows us to shake off, if only momentarily, the oppressive confines of this system that believes it has objective truth on which it can depend. Given modern understandings of biological sexual difference, the boundaries of which are increasingly being questioned,[5] the impulse is often to assume that medieval people must have understood sex differentiation as we do. But Jane Gilbert says, simplifying Foucault's argument, "We cannot… expect other cultures to join us, either in recognising the same 'biological facts' of sex as we do, or in giving those 'facts' any

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[4] Judith Butler discusses the way cisheterosexuality only props itself up as a stable idea through constant imitation in "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York: Routledge, 1991). Robert McRuer argues the same is true of the able-bodied identity in *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*, Cultural Front (Series) (New York: NYU Press, New York University Press, 2006). Blake Gutt brings these two ideas together to discuss embodiment in *Tristan de Nanteuil* in "Holy Queer and Holy Cure: Sanctity, Disability, and Transgender Embodiment in *Tristan de Nanteuil*," in *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. Blake Gutt and Alicia Spencer-Hall, Hagiography Beyond Tradition (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 223–44.

[5] One need only visit the website for the Intersex Society of North America to see the variety of ways one can be intersex based on different biological markers, "Intersex Society of North America," accessed May 21, 2023, https://isna.org/. An article by researchers at Brown university attempts to describe the frequency of sex variations in medical records from 1995 to 1998; it includes no fewer than fifteen categories of potential variance. Melanie Blackless, Anthony Charuvastra, Amanda Derryck, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Karl Lauzanne, and Ellen Lee. 2000. "How Sexually Dimorphic Are We? Review and Synthesis," *American Journal of Human Biology,* 12:151-166.

particular cultural significance."[6] The belief that the "one-sex" body model, which argues in part that male and female bodies are homologous, was dominant in medieval medical circles has been thoroughly debunked.[7] However, Joan Cadden's argument that "the vast and evolving body of knowledge which constituted medieval medicine and natural philosophy…did not offer a single model of the sexes," remains true.[8]

In her review of the mythology of the "one-sex" body, Katharine Park demonstrates that the "one-sex" model was not a cohesive theory in the Middle Ages, and the main proponent of it, Thomas Laqueur, brought together several premodern medical theories regarding sex difference and "implied that these four claims were necessarily connected, rather than merely compatible."[9] The idea that male and female bodies were biologically homologous was only one of these claims, and while that claim seems only to have been supported by one major medieval medical writer, that being Ibn Sınā

[6] Jane Gilbert, "The Practice of Gender in Aucassin et Nicolette," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* XXXIII, no. 3 (1997): 218-219, https://doi.org/10.1093/fmls/XXXIII.3.217.

[7] Mostly recently by Katharine Park, "The Myth of the 'One-Sex' Body," *Isis* 114, no. 1 (2023): 150–75, https://doi.org/10.1086/723726, who cites the many scholars that have rejected Laqueur's theory. Limiting ourselves to the medievalists, these include Ahmad Dallal, "Sexualities: Scientific Discourses, Premodern," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, eds. Joseph Fuad and Najmabadi Afsaneh (Leiden: Brill, 2006): 401–407, https://doi.org/10.1163/1872-5309_ewic_EWICCOM_0201; Sherry Sayed Gadelrab, "Discourses on Sex Differences in Medieval Scholarly Islamic Thought," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 66 (2011): 40–81; Ahmed Ragab, "One, Two, or Many Sexes: Sex Differentiation in Medieval Islamicate Medical Thought," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 24 (2015): 428–454, https://doi.org/10.7560/jhs24304; and Monica H. Green, "Bodily Essences: Bodies as Categories of Difference," in *A Cultural History of the Human Body in the Medieval Ag*e, ed. Linda Kalof (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), 141–162. Leah DeVun, "Erecting Sex: Hermaphrodites and the Medieval Science of Surgery," *Osiris*, 2015, N.S., 30:17–37, https://doi.org/10.1086/682954; and Leah DeVun, *The Shape of Sex: Nonbinary Sex from Genesis to the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2021), 163-199..

[8] Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture*, Cambridge History of Medicine (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2-3.

[9] Park, 158.

(Avicenna in Latin), some of the other claims were more widely supported.[10] Leah DeVun, studying a wide range of sources from the third to fifteenth century CE in their book *The Shape of Sex*, aims "to show how traditional ideas about binary sex came into being, rather than accepting them as natural, timeless, and ahistorical."[11] They conclude (although in a more nuanced way than summarized here) that early Christianity embraced the *idea* of nonbinary sex, which was then rejected at the turn of the thirteenth century, but witnessed a new popularity at the dawn of the Renaissance.[12] Regardless of the trajectory of these ideas, within religious discourse about bodies, "the idea that God created humans as distinctly binary-sexed was by no means self-evident to all premodern thinkers."[13]

Furthermore, in the Middle Ages, sexual interaction played a large part in constituting and stabilizing gender. The people with whom one had sex and the ways in which one had sex — including sexual positions and intentions behind sexual intercourse — had a direct bearing on cultural understandings of gender. Barring a vow of lifelong chastity, the most holy course of action, according to Christian teachings, was to marry and reproduce. Thus, a significant part of being a woman was being biologically female and using that biology to reproduce and being a man was being biologically male and using that biology to reproduce. Engaging in sex acts that cannot result in reproduction

[10] The other three claims Laqueur cites are that "men and women's bodies are arrayed along a spectrum of bodily complexion between hot and cold," conception involves both male and female seed and requires both parties to orgasm, and finally that if women create enough heat they can, postnatally, spontaneously become men. The first of these was a relatively common belief while the last seems to have been far more limited in its influence. Park, 156-158.

[11] Leah DeVun, *The Shape of Sex*, 38.
[12] DeVun, *The Shape of Sex*, 11.
[13] DeVun, *The Shape of Sex*, 38.

transgresses this fundamental usage of sexual organs and is sinful.[14] But how one had sex had gendered implications, both in how gender is performed and how it is perceived. To be the active partner, the partner that penetrates, was part of performing masculinity. Being the passive partner, the one who was penetrated, was part of performing femininity.

Medieval people lived in a society wherein having sex was a directional act rather than a mutual one, a transitive rather than intransitive verb.[15] This is not meant to suggest that all medieval people always felt the weight of gender performance in their sexual activities or had their sexual activities scrutinized for gendered implications. Sex work, however, was necessarily public. As Ruth Karras has argued, sex workers' bodies were common property, to be used by men in the community.[16] But it was not just that their bodies were public; what they did with their bodies was also public; the sex they engaged in was public; with whom and how they had sex was a matter of public debate. And the very publicness of their sexual performances and their sexuality rendered visible and public the genders they enacted during sex. Because medieval sex work was believed to fulfill a specific social function, discussed below, society did not need to see the actual

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[14] While acknowledging that not all medieval theologians, let alone medieval people held the same monolithic beliefs, the general import of reproduction is laid out by James Brundage in *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), for a broad overview 1-9. The rest of Brundage's book is organized chronologically and broken down by type of sexual engagement within the chronology (i.e. marital sex, fornication, adultery, etc). For the tension between chastity and reproduction see Ruth Mazo Karras and Katherine E. Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others*, fourth edition. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2023), 41-88.

[15] Karras and Pierpont, 5.

[16] Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England*, Studies in the History of Sexuality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3, 138.

sexual act to perceive and cast judgment on the gender of sex workers based only on their status as sex workers. And this very public, communal quality also contravenes norms. Sex workers cannot enact normative gender.[17] The plurality of understandings about what differentiated the male and female sexes and the role of sex in gender performance created an inherent sense of gender as unstable, and sex workers were at the locus of this instability.

As Leah Otis-Cour convincingly argues, sex work was tacitly accepted in twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the south of France before the rise of institutionalized municipal brothels in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[18] Yet, despite the fact that her book begins in the twelfth century, Otis-Cour spends little time on sex work's history before the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries during the period of institutionalization. This is logical given the source base, which is far more plentiful during that period, and her stated interest, namely institutions.[19] Her argument for the tacit acceptance of sex work, while convincing, is partially based on negation; there is a clear institution in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and that did not exist in the earlier centuries. She also

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[17] In this introduction and the project as a whole, I use "normative" and "nonnormative" as well as "nonconforming" and "transgressive." Greta LaFleur, Masha Raskolnikov and Anna Kłosowska rightly question, "whether normativity or non-normativity provides an adequate framework for considering the many forms of gendered embodiment, experience, and knowledge in these distant periods" when the study at hand focuses on a time "several hundred years prior to the advent of the "normal" as a statistical concept in the nineteenth century," in "The Benefits of Being Trans Historical," in *Trans Historical: Gender Plurality Before the Modern*, ed. Anna Kłosowska, Greta LaFleur, and Masha Raskolnikov (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2021), 13. I can only acknowledge here the limitations of language and say that I find alternatives such as "nonconforming" similarly laden with presentist meaning. Throughout this introduction and project, I attempt to make clear that this "normativity" is an idealized and impossible goal both in the past and present and that what is "normal" today does not necessarily represent what was "normal" in the Middle Ages.

[18] Leah Otis-Cour, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985).

[19] Otis-Cour, 1.

cites early thirteenth century municipal documents, in which various town councils expel sex workers from the town. Their trade is not prohibited nor are they criminally penalized, but they are not to reside or work within the town walls. Her other evidence for this passive acceptance of sex work is based on the idea espoused by Augustine and repeated by many twelfth century jurists that sex work is a lesser evil. While not desirable, it provided an outlet for men's desires for premarital sex and non-procreative sex.[20] In this way, sex with a female sex worker was explicitly meant to be sex you would not have with an honorable woman, and sometimes types of sex one did not need a woman to have, such as oral, anal, or interfemoral sex.[21]

In this project, I further examine this time period of non-institutionalized sex work. Though Otis-Cour only briefly surveys twelfth century theology, a closer look at religious treatises at the time bears out her conclusion. At the University of Paris, Peter the Chanter, Thomas Chobham, and others created rules around sex work. For example, they argued sex workers could licitly retain their wages except in cases of fraud. They mused on whether or not the Church could accept alms from sex workers, which according to some was permissible if the alms were received in private and according to others was only acceptable if the sex worker had left the profession.[22] Inherent in all of these discussions was the basic understanding that sex work was a common, if immoral, profession. These religious men were not writing invectives to end sex work but rather to

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[20] Otis-Cour, 12-16.

[21] Curiously, there are not a lot of references to oral sex in medieval writings. This does not mean it didn't happen, merely that we have very few records of it. Karras and Pierpont, 122-123, 163.

[22] See Chapter Two for a full discussion of these sources.

explain how a regular person might interact with a sex worker in the most moral way possible.

Literature of the time also suggests that sex work was a common occurrence. But much as with the acknowledgment of the churchmen, accepting the existence of sex work and accepting sex workers was not the same thing. The sex workers in these stories are often aggressive, conniving, and greedy. In some genres, they are simply unable to exist within the text, which requires them to meet certain standards of womanly behavior. This generic convention results in the narrative turning away from the sex worker's portion of the plotline for the duration of her time engaged in sex work.[23] Some might argue that most women in the Middle Ages were seen as potentially aggressive, conniving and greedy and were required to meet certain standards of womanly behavior. This is true. But, as Smith and Mac suggest, what sets sex work apart is the way women in sex work represented everything society feared a woman could be while being seen as useful to society as a paragon of everything a woman should not be. This establishes women in sex work in opposition to other women, complicating the way their bodies are gendered.

But do these conclusions really give us the full picture of sex work in the Middle Ages? To answer this, it is worth lingering on how sex work was understood at the time. In his work on canon law, James Brundage discusses the two main criteria used to define sex work, with various individuals or groups giving one or the other precedence: promiscuity and remuneration. He argues that ultimately the Church's ambivalence on the question of sex work was part of the reason that sex work was so prevalent in the

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[23] See Chapter Three for a full discussion of these sources.

Middle Ages. He also notes that understandings of canon law "accommodated moral principles to the realities of human behavior."[24] Ruth Karras draws more focus to the role of promiscuity, or "whoredom," in understanding sex work in the Middle Ages. She argues sex work was defined by "public and indiscriminate availability of a woman's body" and emphasizes the way that sex work and its machinations were ultimately a convenient excuse to exercise greater control over women and their sexuality in general.[25] Ironically, the institutionalization which Otis-Cour views as the apex of sex work acceptance in the Middle Ages, exemplifies the ever-expanding mechanisms of control that Karras points out.

Karras successfully queried the importance of monetary exchange in understanding sex work in the Middle Ages, decentering the commercial aspect and highlighting promiscuity instead. A woman did not need to accept money for sex to be a whore but merely to have an innately whorish nature. But if we view sex work as the exchange of sex acts for money, we have only interrogated half of the formula. In addition to questioning the centrality of money, I ask: Are sex *acts* the defining aspect of sex work in the Middle Ages? A view of sex work in the modern world would include erotic dancing, jobs in pornography, phone sex, or camming, performing sexual activities in front of a webcam for a live, virtual audience. Where might we find analogs to such sexual performances in the Middle Ages, and how can a study of sex work that includes

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[24] James Brundage, "Prostitution in the Medieval Canon Law," *Signs* 1, no. 4 (1976), 845.

[25] Karras, *Common Women*, 10.

those analogs help illuminate sex work as a whole? What new people can we study through this lens? What new time periods?

We can begin to answer this, as so many scholars do, with religious teachings. Medieval theologians didn't just condemn the exchange of sex acts but condemned a broader "lascivious corporeality." This outlook emphasizes selling one's physicality, rather than just a sex act. In order to explore the social and gender implications of sex work in the twelfth and thirteenth century, I have expanded my definition of sex work to include jongleurs and jongleuses. These men and women, who were paid for a variety of performances, from acrobatics to singing and dancing, were associated with the *meretrices publicas,* the term usually translated "prostitutes," and were often subject to the same prohibitions. For many medieval musicologists, drawing on the writings of Boethius, there was something too *bodily* about the performances of jongleurs and jongleuses.[26] This central corporeality of dancing or tumbling constituted a type of "whoredom," and the two groups were seen as participating in different subsets of a greater type of activity, which I propose to define as sex work. This is not to suggest that medieval people saw no difference between selling sex acts and selling theatrical performances. But much as 21st century people would understand the difference between erotic dancing and selling sex acts while still viewing both as sex work, medieval people viewed jongleur performance as different from sex acts but still sexual in nature. Just like the *meretrices*, they sold their bodies for money.

[26] For the sake of convenience, going forward, I will often default to "jongleurs" to refer to jongleurs and jongleuses. Though it will become clear, and will be addressed in this introduction, that most jongleurs included in this discussion are male.

Most studies of medieval sex work focus on the late Middle Ages, as with the works of Otis-Cour and Karras, due to the paucity of sources.[27] Others focus on more well-documented areas of study that provide their own source base and framework, as with Brundage's work on canon law. Moving beyond the understanding of sex work as only the exchange of sex acts allows us to move beyond the restrictions of these earlier works. The High Middle Ages has remained relatively unexplored, obscured from view partially due to the production of fewer documents, but also due to the very fact that sex work was unregulated at the time. The study of highly regulated sex work in the later Middle Ages can only be enhanced by the existence of studies of earlier, unregulated sex work. As I demonstrate in Chapter Four, taking into account the status of sex workers in the twelfth century can bring to light new gendered dimensions of social mobility in the more well studied later sources.

Understanding the gendered nature of social mobility for sex workers is also only possible if one can study male sex workers along with female sex workers. In an era when sex and gender are constantly informing and (re)forming each other, no complete gender-sensitive study can be done of women in sex work, if their male counterparts are not also examined. Medieval male sex work has received very little scholarly attention, because so few records exist of men selling sex.[28] Although recent work has shown that

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[27] Most other major studies of sex work in the Middle Ages focuses on the late Middle Ages as well. See Maria Serena Mazzi, *A Life of Ill Repute: Public Prostitution in the Middle Ages*, trans. Joyce Myerson (Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020). Jacques Rossiaud, *Medieval Prostitution*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988). Agathe Roby, *La prostitution au Moyen Âge: le commerce charnel en Midi toulousain du XIIIe au XVIe siècle* (Villemur-sur-Tarn: éditions Loubatières, 2021).

[28] With the notable exception of John Boswell in *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago:

women did engage in extramarital sex, and perhaps quite frequently in some social classes,[29] there is very little evidence of male sex work aimed for women's consumption. This does not mean that it did not happen, but rather that as yet, no traces of it have been discovered in the archives, only literary representations. This leaves only men as potential clients for male sex workers, since, though not theoretically allowed to engage in extramarital sex, men who did so were viewed more leniently than women. Medieval male sex work was rendered doubly invisible by the stigma of sex work and the stigma of male-male sexual relationships, which were forbidden by the Church in the High Middle Ages. Incorporating jongleurs under the category of sex work allows me to look at the previously unexplored world of male sex work in the Middle Ages. While there are very few records of men selling sex in the High Middle Ages, male performers proliferated. And although they are also an elusive group to study, there are archival documents recording their lives and livelihood as well as art and literature depicting them that add depth to the details in archives.

Even in many of the sources about jongleurs, however, the primary purchasers or audience for male sex work were other men. These male-male sexual exchanges had serious implications for the gender of male sex workers. The participant penetrating their sexual partner was gendered male, while the participant being penetrated, the passive

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The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 254-256. Boswell uses references to youths selling their bodies in poetry, and alleged references to male brothels in poems, to argue for the resurgence of male sex work in the High Middle Ages. Boswell's arguments, especially those regarding the brothel, remain controversial today.

[29] For example, Michelle Armstrong-Partida, "Concubinage, Clandestine Marriage, and Gender in the Visitation Records of Fourteenth-Century Catalonia," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 26, no. 2 (2017): 207–38, https://doi.org/10.7560/JHS26203.

participant, was gendered female. In same sex intercourse, one man had to take on the passive role, or a woman had to take on an active role in same sex intercourse between women. This not only contravened the biological reasons for having sex since it was not reproductive but also the accepted gendered mode of having sex. The man being penetrated was transgressing gender norms by acting as a woman. The man doing the penetrating might even be viewed as relatively sexually normative since he was not so much having sex with another man as having sex as a man with another man playing the part of a woman. While such thinking may seem like mental gymnastics to a modern person, if we understand sexuality as defined by the sexual role one plays rather than the gender of the object desired the formulation makes more sense. A normative male did not so much desire women as desire to play the male role in sex. Rather than viewing male-male intercourse as contravening heteronormative sexuality, as we would today, medieval people saw the male being penetrated as contravening normative gender while the male doing the penetrating maintained a normative gender. Male sex workers ended up feminized, because they were seen as sexually available to play the woman's part for other men. Of course, we do not know if all male sex workers played the passive role in sex or even if the majority did, but the social perception was that they were playing the woman's part.

This perception of the effeminized male sex worker, particularly the jongleur, is clear across literature, both religious and secular. Theologians take umbrage against certain types of performers that they deem as dancing effeminately or reciting "monstrous

and effeminate songs."[30] Boethius, the renowned late antique scholar of music, argues that music should ideally be manly. Yet, there was a clear sense that music practitioners and other performers were problematically feminine. In this way the close relationship between performance and sex work fed into and was fed by the gendered nature of sex. A man who was a performer was a sex worker, whether or not he was actually sexually available, just as a woman behaving promiscuously may or may not sell sex but could be seen as a sex worker. Since, ideally, the consumers of sex work were other men, the jongleur was sexualized and womanly. This feminization, in turn, only served to feed back into the idea that jongleurs were sexually available since they could be used as women by other men. Whereas female sex work was often tacitly accepted and later actively institutionalized, male sex work was explicitly illegal and seen as immoral. The former had a societal function; the latter was sex without reproduction and without social utility.

To be clear, these jongleurs were not suddenly women in everyday life, or even always women in their musical performances. And, perhaps most importantly, they may not have seen themselves as women at all. But societally, they were, in a meaningful way, not really men either. I am not arguing here for a third gender by which to encapsulate them. Indeed, the point is they were beyond such encapsulation, and the behavior and performances, literal and gendered, by each individual jongleur likely changed the degree to which they were understood as women or not. Instead I want to

[30] Peter the Chanter, *Pierre le Chantre: Summa de Sacramentis et Animae Consiliis*, ed. J.-A. Dugauquier, vol. III, 2A, 5 vols. (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1963), III [2a], 426-427.

query the very same binary which individuals are querying today. Has there ever been a time "when men were men and women were women"? The Middle Ages was by no means trans friendly, but nor was it a time when gender was perfectly understood and enacted. And it was a time when sex, how one had it, with whom one had it, under what auspices one had it, played a large part in defining gender. Sex workers, then, are the perfect case study for viewing the spectrum of gender in the Middle Ages, precisely because they are the vault in which gender anxieties reside.

I would like nothing more than to conclude my arguments on gender at that and to view the Middle Ages as a time and a place when gender was fluid and easily changed even if that fluidity was not seen positively or rewarded. When I began this project, I set out to do just that. But there are no convenient answers in history, and the gender binary, while constructed, was and is a powerful social force. It is perhaps helpful at this moment, to consider Judith Butler's explanation of performativity and historicity:

> …the reading of "performativity" as willful and arbitrary choice misses the point that the historicity of discourse and, in particular, the historicity of norms (the "chains" of iteration invoked and dissimulated in the imperative utterance) constitute the power of discourse to enact what it names.[31]

Performance, such as gender performance, in Butler's formulation, is culturally constructed but not a product of the free will of individuals. That is to say the constant reiteration of norms by culture exerts power over individuals even if they do not conform to those norms. They ultimately cannot choose or create an identity that exists outside of culture and therefore are subject to the limiting powers of culture. To understand the

[31] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 139.

power behind gender and sex work, we must disentangle the close examination of a particular moment in history from the wider lens of a longer historical chronology. What is possible, perceived, and actualized within the span of a lifetime looks different when placed in the context of several consecutive lifetimes. The final chapter of this dissertation views sex work and gender over a longer timeline than the project generally seeks to cover. This chapter can be viewed as a rebuttal of the other chapters but might more helpfully be seen as a recursion in the manner that Susan Gal uses recursion to refer to public and private space. Gal argues that the modern distinction between public and private spheres is useful in the study of the Middle Ages only when used relationally and by taking into account how spaces can often be further subdivided into their own sections of public and private space. The home is private compared to the street, but the entryway of a home is public compared to the bedroom.[32] The object is to zoom out and view sex work and gender from farther away from the individuals engaged in sex work. Ironically, this chapter contains the closest view of real individuals engaged in sex work in the Middle Ages but uses a scope that takes into account multiple centuries.

Over the course of the later Middle Ages it becomes clear that certain types of sex work allowed for social mobility over time, and that mobility, in turn, points to different gendered experiences of sex work. Families that were engaged in jonglerie can be seen moving into more prestigious societal positions, buying additional properties for income, and moving out of their old neighborhoods. Simultaneously, the rise of municipal

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[32] Susan Gal, "A Semiotics of the Public/Private Distinction," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 13.1 (2002): 77-95.

brothels increased municipal control over the movements and bodies of women who sold sex, while decreasing their profits. Most recently, Agathe Roby shows how the municipal brothel became a quasi-carceral space in the later Middle Ages.[33] And by the sixteenth century, as Leah Otis-Cour argues, the dismantling of municipal brothels in the wake of religious fervor for reform would lead to harsh censuring of commercial sex. The difference between selling sex and selling performance also seems to play a role in this social mobility, as we have no clear sense of men who sold sex increasing in social prospects over time. However, the disparity in the long-term prospects of women who sold performance and men who sold performance indicate a gendered dimension to this social mobility. The rise of guilds and the corporatization of trades provided male entertainers pathways to social legitimacy and financial stability while systematically excluding women performers. This does negate the fluidity seen in previous chapters, the "zoomed in" recursion, but it does suggest that over time the binary between men and women was socially recognized and remained meaningful in spite of that gender instability.

Before proceeding, I would like to clarify that this project does not seek to identify individual trans people in the Middle Ages.[34] My argument focuses on societal perceptions of gender and the way certain sexual interactions, namely sex work,

[33] Roby, 161-165.

[34] There are books that do this in ways that acknowledge the difficulties of identifying past individuals with present identity markers. See Kłosowska, LaFleur, and Raskolnikov, *Trans Historical*, the first two sections of which are devoted to the individual. For an older and less academically focused book that is nevertheless sensitive to the problems of ascribing identities to individuals that did not themselves claim those identities see Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors: Making History from Joan of Arc to RuPaul* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

destabilized gender, moving individuals along a spectrum of gender. Inherent in this is the argument that in the Middle Ages gender was not strictly binary or fixed. Thus, while I am not writing a history of trans people's lives, I am echoing the assertion by Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt that "trans lives could be envisioned and, therefore, trans lives could be lived."[35] Medieval people were capable of seeing people existing in a variety of embodied states, including non-normative genders that we today would term trans. There were surely people who experienced body dysphoria and people who felt they were different from the social role of gender they were assigned based on their sex. I believe some of these people fall into the group I study given the large geographical and chronological frame. But the limitations of this particular project mean that making an argument for any of these individuals' gender risks imposing my own beliefs on their lived experiences. As Drager and Platero explain when discussing the move away from using terms such as "transsexual" and "transvestite," to redefine the lived experiences of those who existed with different constructs and different terms runs the significant risk of eliding nuance and denying agency. To cast people of the past as either "tragic figures who could never be their 'true' selves" or "gender-conforming figures limited by the time in which they lived" serves no one.[36] Herein lies the difficulty of using any single term to describe a variety of experiences while neither excluding nor offending anyone. It "has

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[35] Alicia Spencer-Hall, Blake Gutt, and Walter de Gruyter & Co, *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, 1st Ed., Hagiography Beyond Tradition (Amsterdam: University Press, 2021), 27.

[36] Emmett Harsin Drager and Lucas Platero, "At the Margins of Time and Place: Transsexuals and the Transvestites in Trans Studies," *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (2021), 417.

the effect of erasing the particularities of the vernacular the historical, or the chosen names for one's experience."[37]

Seeing and acknowledging trans individuals in the past is important work, because, "people are, precisely, trans histories."[38] Trans histories cannot exist without use acknowledging that trans individuals existed. But this project cannot meaningfully engage in such work, and thus it seeks to, in the words of Kłosowska, LaFleur, and Raskolnikov, "think beyond the unit of the person or population to evince what we might call a trans metaphysics."[39] Here again, Spencer-Hall and Gutt provide a useful framing of such a metaphysics; I use the lens of transgender scholarship to identify sex work as "a way of disrupting normative and essentializing frameworks."[40] I do not use the term transphobia in this project, but Spencer-Hall and Gutt's definition of it provides a basis for understanding how I envision the stigma against sex workers and their perceived genders in the Middle Ages:

> Transphobia is the stigmatization of ways of being that do not conform (or are *perceived as not conforming*) to socio-culturally normate, binarized delineations of 'gender appropriate' roles, appearances, affects, embodiments, and identities. Transphobia may target individuals who do not consider themselves to be transgender because it is a practice that functions to enforce normativity, and lacks nuanced understanding of the structures it seeks to eradicate, or the lives made possible by and within them.[41]

In their formulation, the perception of non-conformity matters just as much self-identification as trans, because structures of power do not distinguish between the two.

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[37] Harsin Drager and Platero, 419.

[38] Kłosowska, LaFleur, and Raskolnikov, "The Benefits," 7.
[39] Kłosowska, LaFleur, and Raskolnikov, "The Benefits," 7.
[40] Spencer-Hall and Gutt, 13.

[41] Spencer-Hall and Gutt, 13.

Thus these structures cast a broad net when trying to enforce normativity, discriminating against individuals who do not conform and who do not seem to conform.

We will likely never know how most individuals identified in terms of gender, or even how individual identity existed, in the Middle Ages. But we can and should look for past resonances of identities that we now acknowledge. Just because being a woman may have meant something different for women in the Middle Ages it does not mean we should not look for women, feel kinship with them, and even use our own experiences in our attempts to understand their experiences. Just because the category and identity of transgender did not exist in the Middle Ages, does not mean we cannot meaningfully seek trans pasts. In doing this work, I am keenly aware that "the trans past is not a playground" for cisgender scholars to use and abuse without acknowledging the modern stakes.[42] It is my hope that this project can point to a long history of individuals who did not conform to gender norms, who were willingly or unwillingly identified as different from their sexed body. In doing so, I hope not only to point to trans pasts, but also provide a picture of trans futures. While people in the Middle Ages were not always kind to those who did not conform to gender ideals, they did recognize that there were countless ways to inhabit a body and express that body. They recognized that social construction and social performance mattered and that, at times, biology was woefully insufficient in understanding who a person was even if they sought to simplify such complications and force the binary on nonbinary bodies.[43]

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[42] Spencer-Hall and Gutt, 15.

[43] Leah DeVun, "The Jesus Hermaphrodite: Science and Sex Difference in Premodern Europe," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69, no. 2 (2008): 193–218, https://doi.org/10.1353/jhi.2008.0013, 198. Although this article, and in particular the portion of the article titled "Hermaphrodites in Medieval Medicine and

As the difficulty of trans histories demonstrate, translation and terminology have a complex relationship with the subject being examined. In the case of individuals who traded sex for money, even in the Middle Ages there was no single term. *Meretrix*, the most common term for a sex worker, sometimes referred to a sex worker, sometimes to a promiscuous woman, and sometimes simply to a woman making money. This led to its later modification to *meretrix publica*, to distinguish between promiscuous women and paid sex workers, but even then the term *meretrix* could still be used to mean a paid sex worker and the meaning of either term comes down to how one reads the context of its usage. Vernacular languages had their own terminology as well. In Occitan, *filhas*, could be used to indicate a sex worker but also retained it's more basic meaning of "girls," again understanding the term requires context. Other times a descriptive title was used for sex workers, such as "women who give themselves for money" or "trifling and vulgar women."[44] Clearly any catchall translation for these terms will inevitably be flawed, as it will only apply in specific circumstances. Yet, many studies have taken for granted the applicability of the term "prostitute." My decision to eschew this term and use "sex worker" instead is a calculated one based on the modern cultural baggage of the word "prostitute," the moral obligations we have to modern and premodern individuals, and the need to expand our conception of the landscape of sexual commerce in the Middle Ages.

"Prostitute" is often assumed to be a functional term that describes a person with a particular profession. As a modern term, the baggage it carries is often unchecked and

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Society," is what originally influenced my thinking here, DeVun's book covers the topic in greater depth and includes a chapter on "The Jesus Hermaphrodite."

[44] Otis-Cour, 50.

unannounced. But as with all other terms, it rose to prominence in a specific cultural context. The proponents of ousting the word from our modern vocabulary point to the word's close association with disease and drug use, drawing on modern concerns of public health and conceptions of what it means to engage in commercial sex, both medically and morally.[45] This figure is instantly recognizable in shows such as *CSI* and *Law and Order*, where her, for it is nearly always *her*, engagement in commercial sex is a means of feeding an addiction, and she presents the specter of sexually transmitted infections. This image does not resonate with the *meretrix* of the Middle Ages. Such a woman may similarly have been denounced on moral grounds and seen as a societal "undesirable." However, as will be see in Chapter Two, female sex work in the Middle Ages was a prophylactic against moral ills, even as the women themselves were seen as immoral. Though I would not suggest the word "prostitution" is appropriate for scholars of modern history either, in the particular case of the Middle Ages, it is no less anachronistic than sex work.

"Prostitution" also carries the weight of coercion, often implying the decision to engage in commercial sex was forced upon these individuals. Hence some refer to "prostituted women," and, again, they almost always refer exclusively to *women*, to emphasize how these women have been victimized. This forces anyone engaged in commercial sex into the victim position. It assumes they have no power and no autonomy

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[45] Kate Lister provides a concise explanation of terminology and why many women in the commercial sex industry prefer the term sex worker in "Sex Workers or Prostitutes? Why Words Matter," inews.co.uk, October 5, 2017, https://inews.co.uk/opinion/columnists/sex-workers-prostitutes-words-matter-95447.

to make choices in their own lives.[46] But it not only denies autonomy to modern and historical individuals, it also adds to stigmas around those who do choose sex work and exacerbates problems faced by individuals who are being trafficked and enslaved, sexually or otherwise.[47] Some would argue that even if we accept the agency of those involved in the sex trade, both past and present, using "sex work" erases the coercive nature, literal and economic, of commercial sex and minimizes its exploitative nature. But as Smith and Mac explain, such an argument assumes that other forms of work are not exploitative or coercive based on economic or social circumstances[48]:

> A single mother with several children explained that she got into sex work to support her family; another woman said that, as an undocumented migrant, sex work was one of the few jobs available to her; a third explained that when she came out as trans and started her transition, she lost her mainstream job.[49]

Despite the heavily capitalistic bent of this argument, we can see a similar reality in the Middle Ages. As Ruth Karras and I argue elsewhere:

> [Sex work] may have been the best alternative available to a particular woman because wages for women were low (which they were), because women were

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[46] I use the word autonomy here rather than "agency" to avoid promoting the illusion of choice. As Carisa Renae Showden argues, "Autonomy is self-governance, even if governing through a relational sense of self. Agency is autonomy plus options," in *Choices Women Make: Agency in Domestic Violence, Assisted Reproduction, and Sex Work* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 1. See also Ilana Gershon, "'Neoliberal Agency,'" *Current Anthropology* 52, no. 4 (August 2011): 537–55, https://doi.org/10.1086/660866.

[47] Amaranta Heredia Jaén discusses the relationship between the anti-trafficking industry complex and the rescue industry, and how they are mobilized to combat sex work while also harming or ignoring trafficked individuals. For example, she notes that "around 90 per cent [of humans trafficked] are forced into occupations such as construction, farming, mining, manufacturing and domestic work." "Sex Work Is Work. That's the Problem...and the Key," January 23, 2019, https://www.eurozine.com/sex-work-work-thats-problem-key/. See also the Global Network of Sex Work Projects' concise explanation of the differences between sex work and sexual exploitation. "Sex Work Is Not Sexual Exploitation," *NSWP: Global Network of Sex Work Projects*, n.d., https://www.nswp.org/sites/default/files/briefing_note_sex_work_is_not_sexual_exploitation_nswp_-_2019_0.pdf.

[48] Smith and Mac, 40-55.

[49] Smith and Mac, 46.

> excluded from many of the skilled crafts (which they were), or because she had become pregnant and it was very hard for a single mother to find work.[50]

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. Some differences are clear, such as the wider array of occupational options open to some women. But others, whose marginalization as women intersects with other forms of marginalization, still find sex work to be the best alternative among a number of undesirable, and we might add exploitative, options.[51] As Butler suggests of performativity, sex work cannot be neatly divided into compulsory or freely given, since it exists in a cultural context that exerts power over individuals. Instead, sex work scholars have increasingly turned to the idea of "constrained agency,"[52] which acknowledges that willfully choosing something does not always equate to choosing something of one's own free will.[53] These considerations alone convince me that sex work is a fruitful term for describing commercial sex both in the modern and medieval world.

We need not view using "sex work" as only a way around using "prostitution" though. It provides more than a convenient alternative to a word many in the sex industry find offensive. It is also a more encompassing term, one which allows for the consideration of a broader array of activities when thinking about how sex and sexuality were bought and sold. Using the term sex work allows me to include jongleurs, who were

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[50] Karras and Pierpont, 157.

[51] It is worth noting as well that Leah Otis-Cour found examples of women who seem to have done quite well in the sex industry, and who, she surmises, were well off financially. Otis-Cour, 64-66.

[52] Heather Berg, *Porn Work: Sex, Labor and Late Capitalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, The University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 23.

[53] Valentina Mia offers a brief glimpse into the intricacies of sex work as both a choice of free will and coercion in "The Failures of SESTA/FOSTA: A Sex Worker Manifesto," *TSQ : Transgender Studies Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (2020): 237–39, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-8143393.

seen as providing sexualized entertainment rather than sex acts. Such an assertion is only possible if we understand commercial sex to be more than just the exchange of sex acts for money. We have long since accepted that a variety of occupations are part of the modern world of sexual commerce. But scholars have yet to consider how our expansive view might not only be an invention of the modern era. By continuing to use the term "prostitute," we have limited our understanding of what counted as sexual commerce rather than assessing how sexual activities are grouped and creating a category that allows for a broader understanding.

In defining the term "sex work," I will closely follow Leah Otis-Cour's model with two notable adjustments: sex work is "a phenomenon in which a socially identifiable group of [individuals] earn their living principally or exclusively from the [sexual] commerce of their bodies."[54] As Otis-Cour says, defining sex work in strictly professional terms separates it from other socio-sexual institutions like marriage and concubinage.[55] While concubinage in particular has often been, and continues to be, seen as a form of sex work, the stability and pseudo-marital arrangement of concubinage is a fundamentally different phenomenon from the sex work this project examines.[56] My own

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[54] Otis-Cour, 2.

[55] Otis-Cour, 154, n.9.

[56] See, for example, Michelle Armstrong-Partida, "Concubinage," in which she explains, "parishioners distinguished between promiscuous women, both prostitutes and those who engaged in sexual relationships without the promise of being 'maintained,' and concubines, whom they regarded as spouses. The marital qualities of a concubinous relationship accorded these women a level of respectability because they acted and were treated as wives and were expected to show wifely fidelity to their partners. The incredibly low number of men who engaged in two concubinous relationships at the same time underscores the expectation that concubinage was a form of marriage in its requirement of exclusivity, economic dependence, and habitual cohabitation," 223.

changes to Otis-Cour's definition, represented in brackets, gesture toward some of what has already been said. I specify sexual commerce, instead of just commerce, to accommodate the inclusion of jongleurs. Given the expansion beyond individuals who exchange sex acts for money, which is surely what Otis-Cour meant when she said "commerce of their bodies," I find it necessary to be specific with the type of bodily commerce. Soldiers, manual laborers, and others who used their physicality to earn a living can be seen as using the commerce of their bodies. However, jongleurs and individuals selling sex were engaged in a sexual commerce that set them apart from these other workers. My other alteration, to change women to individuals is in deference to my attempt to include male sex work in this study. When clarification is needed between the groups the distinction will be made explicitly by reference to "selling sex" versus "selling sexualized performance" or "individuals who sold sex or sex acts" versus "individuals who sold performances or sexualized performance."

Introducing jongleurs requires more defining, and the taxonomy of musicians in the Middle Ages is a complicated one. Despite many accomplished scholars attempts to untangle it, it eludes clear delineation.[57] As Marie Bouhaïk-Gironès queries of being an

[57] For a basic discussion of terms, see Lawrence Gunshee, Richard Rastall, and David Klausner, "Minstrel," *Grove Music Online*, July 25, 2013, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18748, 1-2. Though one would wish for more footnotes, Walter Salmen provides a general overview including a discussion of terminology in "The Social Status of the Musician in the Middle Ages," in *The Social Status of the Professional Musician from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century*, ed. Walter Salmen, trans. Herbert Kaufman and Barbara Reisner (Pendragon Press, 1983), 1-30. For a lexical and etymological discussion of terms see Raleigh Morgan Jr., "Old French 'Jogleor' and Kindred Terms: Studies in Mediaeval Romance Lexicology," *Romance Philology* 7, no. 4 (1954): 279–325. The discussion of what a jongleur is and differences between jongleurs and other types of performers emerges throughout Edmond Faral, *Les jongleurs en France au moyen âge* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1987), but see in particular 1-16, 44-47, 66-86, 103-118. See also Luc Charles-Dominique, *Les ménétriers français sous l'ancien régime.* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1994), 19-23. Gretchen Peters, *The Musical Sounds of Medieval French Cities: Players, Patrons, and Politics*, Paperback (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 219.

actor: "is it a craft? An art? A status? A labor? A *techné*? A lifestyle? An inclination? A profession? An occupation? Is it occasional? Everyday? The term refers to a reality that is multifarious, complex, shifting according to periods; one that is burdened, even more than others, with subjectivity and fantasy."[58] Ultimately, the medieval terms for entertainers are too fluid to meaningfully parse or pin down. There is no consistency to the terminological divisions even amongst writers moving within the same intellectual circles, such as those identified as part of Peter the Chanter's circle. For example, Robert de Courçon agrees with Thomas Chobham in believing instrumentalists are morally acceptable, specifically those who play the *lire*, *cithare*, *tympana*, *psalteria*, and *organa*. But de Courçon rejects *mimi*, *adultores*, *histriones*, and *joculatores* saying it is not permissible to hire them.[59] Yet, although they are in agreement conceptually, they differ in their terminology. Chobham defines *ioculatores* as a type of *histrio* and argues that *ioculatores* are one of the few redeemable types of performer.

Where possible, I will retain the original term from the source or provide it in the footnotes. English translations will be varied throughout, depending on the context of the references at hand. Every attempt will be made to be precise when using words like actor, singer, dancer, or musician. When speaking generally, making a broader point, or bringing together sources that use multiple terms, I default to jongleur. It is the most encompassing of the available terms, suggesting an entertainer engaged in multiple types

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[58] Marie Bouhaïk-Gironès, "How Can We Write the History of the Actor in the Middle Ages?," trans. Carol Symes, *ROMARD: Research on Medieval and Renaissance Drama* 50 (2011), 32.

[59] Christopher Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France 1100-1300* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 194-195.

of performance – singing, acrobatics, dancing, juggling, poetic recitals – rather than the later *menestrel*, which tended to be associated specifically with singing and professionalization.[60] *Histrio* and *mimus* are similarly restrictive in their associations with acting and miming or farce respectively, with *mimus* having the added drawback of being far less common. Jongleur also captures an important sense of itinerancy, public or street performance, and generally non-normative lifestyle in terms of finances and work hours. If, however, *ioculator* is being used in a specific way in the sources being referenced, I will use entertainer or performer rather than jongleur in an attempt to avoid confusion.[61]

Court jesters and troubadours, who are also performers, are, for the most part, not included in this project. They were part of different social strata than jongleurs, just as priests' wives or concubines were different than individuals selling sex on the street or in brothels. The troubadours were composers and occasionally performers, but they were rarely the itinerant jongleur entertainer that I define as a sex worker. The majority of the troubadour corpus is composed by individuals of a noble status or individuals who enjoyed the direct patronage of nobility and spent their time composing at courts. There is also a question of composition versus performance. While there is an impulse to separate those who compose (troubadours) from those who perform (jongleurs), this distinction does not function. Some nobility, such as Guillaume IX, Duke of Aquitaine

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[60] *Menestrel* coming from the Latin *ministrellus* meaning servant, which also associates it with more legitimate professions. Luc Charles-Dominique, "Du jongleur au ménétrier: évolution du statut social des instrumentistes médiévaux," in *Instruments à cordes du moyen âge: actes du colloque de Royaumont*, *1994* (Grâne: Créaphis, 1999), 29–48.

[61] In Chapter 2, for example, *jongleur* is rarely used as *ioculator* is almost always part of the taxonomical distinctions various theologians attempted to make. While the distinctions change from writer to writer, the consistent use of *ioculator* to mean a specific point of the performer hierarchy makes it confusing to constantly refer back to *jongleurs* as a broader category.

and Gascony and Count of Poitou, clearly composed and performed their pieces, but one would not consider Guillaume a jongleur as the term has been defined for this project. While they may be engaged in the same activities, there is clearly an important difference in the lived experience of the two as individuals. This distinction seems to hold true for the core group of well-known troubadours. They were successful and enjoyed relatively sedentary and relatively stable lives, even if they were not born into nobility.[62] This last caveat, however, points to how the closer one examines the troubadours the harder it becomes to find an exact line between those we consider troubadours and those we consider jongleurs. If a troubadour was a jongleur, who became renowned for his talent, but all of the information available is about that individual as a troubadour, can we use that information to meaningfully discuss him as a jongleur? What of the troubadours who were born noble but poor? What of the peripheral group of troubadours, who had moderate success but may never have enjoyed financial stability?

I do not doubt that some of these individuals belong to the category of jongleur as I have defined it. It seems even if troubadour lyric, which by and large does not address life as jongleur, does not belong in this study, the lives of certain troubadours are relevant. However, I have not undertaken a survey of troubadours to decide which ones are relevant, and any who do appear are included as individuals and not as part of the larger culture of troubadours. To understand the role of troubadours as a group, in sex work, one would have to determine which troubadours to include and which to exclude,

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[62] See Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, "Appendix 1: Major Troubadours," in *The Troubadours*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 279–91, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511620508.020, for information on the lives of some of the most well-known troubadours.

how their lived experiences mirrored or differed from itinerant jongleurs, what such similarities and differences mean for their connection to sex work, and finally, if this connection provides any information about how gender is affected by engagement in sex work. Such an inquiry is a worthy study but a separate one. Jongleurs as I have defined them, as part of a larger category of sex workers, are at the center of this study.

Troubadour lyric will be discussed further in Chapter One as part of the larger cultural context of twelfth and thirteenth century Occitania. It will not, however, form part of the literary analysis of this dissertation. This is primarily because it deals very little with topics relevant to the study of sex work. As will be made clear, others have already discussed the close relationship between economics, troubadour poetry, and desire, and while there are other fruitful avenues of research to explore in troubadour lyric, particularly in relation to sexual desire, the connection to sex work itself is tenuous. To prove troubadour lyric affected or interacted directly with medieval sex work would require a different project.

The sources at the heart of this dissertation are necessarily eclectic. The study of marginalized people in history remains one of piecing together fragments, pulling a reference from one discourse and placing it next to another, and viewing the resulting patchwork with an open mind. The people studied in this dissertation appear minimally in the archive, their lives seemingly being categorized as unimportant by those involved in archive making or archive maintaining.[63] The information we find about them is largely

[63] This is certainly not meant to include modern archivists, many of whom are attune to the issues of hierarchical biases in collections.

incidental and meant either to adjudicate what was moral (as the theological sources in Chapter Two), provide entertainment (as the literary sources in Chapter Three), or record a transaction (as the archival sources in Chapter Four). They were not meant to illuminate the lives of twelfth century people for an historian, and they were certainly not meant to tell us about the gender or perceived gender of these individuals.

As a result, this study will feel disjointed at times, as though it is attempting to fit together pieces that were not designed to speak to each other. It is. But I contend that we must bring together these separate discourses if we want to say anything meaningful about sex work and gender in twelfth century Occitania. The historical record will simply not allow for an exploration of one type of source. To avoid the problems and coherence difficulties of putting all of these sources in conversation would be to give up on saying anything at all about sex workers and gender in this time period. By doing so, we cede to the powers and hierarchies of the past, which prioritized specific voices, allowing them to drown out others or, perhaps worse, completely disregard them. The ensuing project is my attempt to pick out the fainter strains in these sources and to see how the extant records can be used to shed light on people not meant to be remembered.

Given that this project will require moments of silence to be bridged by reasonable, informed conjecture, historical context is of paramount importance. Therefore, Chapter One will be dedicated to establishing the time and place at the heart of this study: late twelfth to early thirteenth century Occitania. Chapter Two will further establish context by examining religious teachings about selling sex and selling sexual performances. Of course to deem a single, specific ideology a "Church teaching" or to refer to "religious teachings" already elides the many divergent beliefs within the various

Church hierarchies. While sampling several different kinds of theological literature – canon law, treatises, exempla, sermons – this chapter largely focuses on a small, influential subset of the Western Church: the scholastics teaching in and around the University of Paris, particularly those influenced by Peter the Chanter. Though the teachings of these university masters and theologians do not necessarily represent most, or even a majority, of regular people's beliefs or lived experiences, the Church is a large, well-documented social institution that both informs and is informed by society and societal changes.

Although Peter was based in Paris, his influence was vast. Not only were his own works disseminated throughout Latin Christendom, with his *Verbum Abbreviatum* surviving in no fewer than ninety manuscripts, but many of his students and those connected to his intellectual circle traveled throughout France.[64] Most notably for present purposes, Robert de Courçon traveled to the south of France to preach against the Albigensian heretics in 1214 and as a papal legate he traveled to Limoges, Moissac, and Montpellier. Thomas Chobham appears in a poem written at Toulouse.[65] Beyond the large questions of theological interest that preoccupied so many of his contemporaries, Peter and his cohorts were interested in questions of morality that appeared in day-to-day life. As such, their works, particularly Peter's, were written to appeal to an audience

[64] John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter The Chanter & His Circle*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), I, 14-17, for more on his popularity see 3-16.

[65] Baldwin, *Masters*, I, 17-46, particularly 19-25 for Robert de Courçon and 34-36 for Thomas Chobham. Baldwin notes that the poem refers to a particular Thomas who taught at Paris, and it is a gloss in a different hand that identifies this as Thomas Chobham.

beyond the university, and in this he seems to have been successful. They focused on quandaries such as giving money to sex workers and whether or not sex workers could give money earned through their trade to the Church.

Crucially, this chapter will establish the long-standing connection that religious authorities made between music and sexual commerce, supporting my overall assertion that jonglerie must be considered part of sex work in the Middle Ages. Close examination of these sources also reveals a concerted effort to separate women sex workers from the overall category of women in order to preserve "good women." Male sex workers posed a different set of issues for these religious authorities and served as a focal point for theologians' censure, allowing them to further entrench the importance of normative sex and gender. While female sex workers were considered undesirable but necessary to public health and safety, male sex workers created dangerous spaces of deviant sex and gender. The Church, however, is a hostile institution when it comes to sex work, and in exploring the beliefs of theologians we will be given a particular, negative, ideologically driven view of sex work. This is an unavoidable reality. Chapter Two, therefore, should be viewed as an exploration of a well-documented institution's antipathy and attitude towards an otherwise poorly documented phenomenon, sex work, which will provide the base layer of this project. Through subsequent chapters I hope to add more depth to this base layer in understanding the social realities of sex work.

Chapter Three turns to the robust literary tradition of twelfth century France in an attempt to add nuance to the hostile portrayal of the Church. In particular, I focus on the Old French romances *Guillaume de Dole, The Folie d'Oxford* from the Tristan corpus, *Galeran de Bretagne, Aucassin and Nicolette,* and *Boeve de Hautome* and the fabliaux,

short, humorous and bawdy tales with often facetious morals attached. Old French literature begins to leave a significant mark on the historical record around 1100, though it surely had roots earlier than that. In the second half of the twelfth century, there is a notable uptick in the literary corpus, with French texts being produced in ever greater numbers from the early thirteenth century onwards.[66] The *romans*, or romances, are a major part of this robust literary corpus, from the retellings of classics like the *Aeneid* to the burgeoning collection of Arthurian legends starting with the work of Chrétien de Troyes. Certain formal qualities often help in identifying the romance, such as eight-syllable rhyming couplets, but not every romance adheres to this structure. The key components rather, are self-contained episodes, allowing the romance to unfold in a series of discrete parts, the importance of detailed descriptions, and prologues, the last of which often point to a self-reflexivity in the genre that will be further explored in Chapter 3.[67]

For the purposes of establishing the context of romance, the most salient element of romance is that it "speaks to lovers," which "marks the path of its divergence from the Latin and vernacular epic traditions that contributed so much to its beginnings."[68] Much ink has been spilled trying to decipher the way romance speaks to lovers about love. What is clear is that romance, much like troubadour lyric, is often preoccupied with love

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[66] Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, "Editorial Matter: Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1.

[67] Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, "The Shape of Romance in Medieval France," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13, 20-25.

[68] Bruckner, "Shape of Romance," 17.

not so much for the sake of love but love as a mode of exchange and as an indicator of status. Love, and sexual desire which is often more subterranean in romance than in troubadour lyric, is a vehicle for displaying a complicated series of social exchanges with different stakes for everyone involved. The issues this raises are varied: "problems of identity linking the individual and society; the role of love within competing value systems; power relationships and relations of affection; the effects of language and representation, as well as the interplay of history and romance."[69] Gender, in particular, has played an important role in all of these studies, with some scholars arguing it marks new engagement with subjectivity through engagement with women and femininity, both of which were often absent from earlier French texts.[70] Others problematize this view noting that the inclusion of women, while novel, is still filtered through the lens of the male author and therefore the femininity in the romances is still defined by men.[71] In either interpretation, the new emphasis on the interplay between masculinity and femininity, each defined by the other, is central to the cultural innovation of the romance

[69] Bruckner, "Shape of Romance," 28.

[70] Jean-Charles Huchet, *Le roman médiéval*, 1re éd., Littératures modernes 36 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1984).

[71] Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature*, Cambridge Studies in French (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511519505, 71-72. See also Roberta L. Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance*, Cambridge Studies in French 43 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). E. Jane Burns, *Bodytalk: When Women Speak in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993). There are, of course, far more studies of gender in relationship to specific romances to be found. Though older now, the *Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, still provides a helpful starting point for studying medieval romance. See Roberta L. Krueger, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, Cambridge Companions to Literature (New York, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Krueger herself contributes a chapter on gender in Old French romance, see Roberta L. Krueger, "Questions of Gender in Old French Courtly Romance," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 132–49.

genre. This is necessarily embroiled with questions of sexuality since courtly love, with all of its implications, is at the center of romance texts. The medieval dialectic between sexuality and gender, and the stakes of each for men and women, provide a through-line in many romances, reflecting and shaping medieval attitudes at the time.

If romance exhibits an idealized courtly love, fabliaux turn such ideals on their head. Emerging only in the thirteenth century, the fabliau was a new genre "that dealt with sexual encounter in more materialistic terms…[and] added to literary language a vocabulary of vulgarisms from spoken vernacular."[72] Pithy, ribald, and comical, fabliaux deal explicitly with questions that romances and troubadour lyric elide. Although the genre remains difficult to define, most scholars agree on a particular core of texts with other associated texts that can be included or excluded.[73] Questions over the origins and the audience of the genre have been a staple of the field since Joseph Bédier published his study *Les fabliaux* in the late nineteenth century. Since then scholars have written books on how to read and understand fabliaux, how to interpret parody in fabliaux, the role of the anticlericalism present in so many of the stories, and whether or not one can view the genre as feminist.[74] The nature of these debates makes clear that if there is one element

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[72] Sarah Melhado White, "Sexual Language and Human Conflict in Old French Fabliaux," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24, no. 2 (1982): 185–210, 185.

[73] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, 234.

[74] Norris J. Lacy, *Reading Fabliaux*, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities Vol. 1805 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993); Anne Elizabeth Cobby, *Ambivalent Conventions: Formula and Parody in Old French*, Faux Titre 101 (Amsterdam; Atlanta, Ga.: Rodopi, 1995); Daron Lee Burrows, *The Stereotype of the Priest in the Old French Fabliaux: Anticlerical Satire and Lay Identity* (Oxford ; New York: P. Lang, 2005). The argument regarding feminism is perhaps best represented through a series of articles: Raymond Eichmann, "The Antifeminism of the Fabliaux," in *Authors and Philosophers,* French Literature Series, vol. VI (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1979); Anne Ladd, "Classifications of the Fabliaux by Plot Structure," in *Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Beast Epic, Fable, and Fabliau*, ed. Kenneth Varty (Glasgow: Kenneth Varty, 1976), 92-107; Lesley Johnson, "Women on Top: Antifeminism in the Fabliaux?" *MLR* 78, Pt. 2 (April 1983), 298-307; Norris J. Lacy, "Fabliau Women," *Romance Notes*

that every fabliau contains, it is the ability to undermine: undermine authority, undermine expectations (of readers and characters), undermine social convention, undermine moral strictures.

The sexuality portrayed by the fabliaux is not only materialistic and overt but also designed to upend carefully established norms. If romance crafted the rules, fabliaux broke them. This is not to say there is no internal ordering to the fabliau genre nor that the writers of the fabliaux were liberated from the norms of their own culture. The ever-relevant flow of scholarship about gender in the fabliaux shows that we cannot take an inversion of norms to mean freedom from cultural baggage. But we can see the fabliaux as an important response to the idyllic world of the romance and one in which taboo subjects are relished. And just as romance reflects and constructs realities, fabliaux, too, must reflect and construct realities. The world in which these two genres coexist, forming perhaps part of a single repertoire of a jongleur, is therefore clearly one which has a lot to contribute to medieval and modern ideas about sex, gender, and sexuality.

While these texts all provide colorful portraits of sex workers, they must be used carefully as historical sources. The authors do not represent the average individual's perception of sex work, though they may have helped shape perceptions, nor are they always kind in their portrayal of sex workers. In exploring these texts, the connection between sex and sexual performance is again highlighted, especially as it relates to a perceived sexual availability or promiscuity of male performers. In the courtly world of

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25 no. 3, (1985), 318-327. There are also chapters on fabliaux women in the Burns, *Bodytalk*, 31-70 and Jane Burns, "This Prick Which is Not One: How Women Talk Back in Old French Fabliaux," in Linda Lomperis and Sarah Stanbury, eds., *Feminist Approaches to the Body in Medieval Literature*, New Cultural Studies (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 188-212.

romance, such sexuality is merely gestured at, never lingering long on such untoward topics. However, in those moments, the feminization of male performers is clear. Women sex workers are equally difficult for romance to linger on. In this case, however, it seems less a matter of propriety than an inability of the genre to sustain its own conventions while acknowledging the gender, class, and ethnic complexity of the various women who disguise themselves as jongleurs. To enact the appropriate happy ending, these women must be reduced to the idealized woman, a positionality they cannot inhabit while engaged in jonglerie.

The fabliaux, on the other hand, provide the perfect space for sex workers to flourish. In the topsy turvy world established by the genre, sex workers are seen as the ultimate tricksters. They move through the narratives with ease, using their wit to achieve their own ends, usually monetary gain. The fabliaux's portrayal reinforces the image of the woman sex worker as cutthroat, greedy, and sly, but many women appear cutthroat, greedy, and sly in the world of the fabliaux. The paradox of the fabliaux is that these female sex workers are perfectly normal within the genre, but this only serves to reinforce how abnormal they are in the "real world." Women sex workers in the fabliaux also pose a particular threat in the way they are shown to reproduce themselves by corrupting young women. Whereas in the extratextual world they are seen as providing a positive social service, in the fabliaux they are portrayed as a threat to the hierarchy. The paradox cuts the other way for male sex workers. In the unconventional conventions of the fabliaux, women are not precluded from purchasing sex. Thus, the image we get of the male sex worker is one who, in abiding by the non-normative rules of fabliaux through offering his services to women, also abides by the "real world" societal norms of

sex and gender by having sex with women. Unlike his "real world" counterpart, who is seen as having no social utility, the male sex worker in the fabliaux also provides a social service by satisfying the voracious sexual desire of fabliaux women and putting them in their place in the gender hierarchy.

Having established some of the discourses surrounding sex work, in Chapter Four I turn to an archival case study that focuses on the city of Toulouse. In many ways, the archival documents represent the most difficult aspects of medieval sources on sex work. They are both scant in number and seemingly silent on the issues most of interest to the historian of gender and sexuality. These are particular difficulties of the twelfth century documentation. In later centuries, police and court records provide documentation of sex work, but in the twelfth century, not only were sources scarce, but sex work, while frowned upon, was not criminalized. Since brothels had yet to become official municipal entities, documents that are central to studies of sex work in the late Middle Ages are non-existent in the period of interest to this study. Instead, the core of this project's archival research, comes from property records, mostly kept in the collection of the Order of Malta in the departmental archives of Toulouse. This collection houses records of the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem or St. Remy of Toulouse, and it was expanded in the fourteenth century to include the Orders of the Temple of Jerusalem. The Templars' collection does not survive, having been destroyed during the Albigensian Crusade.[75]

[75] John H. Mundy, *Liberty and Political Power in Toulouse, 1050-1230* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), 214.

There are pros and cons to the use of this collection. As the largest collection in the Departmental Archives, it is an invaluable resource, providing documents of nearly every kind. Additionally, the Order of Malta proved to be meticulous record keepers, copying earlier acts regarding a specific piece of property or contractual matter before recording the new transaction being undertaken. The result is large rolls like that of H Malte Toulouse 3, 147 (the 3 referring to the box number, and 147 referring to the individual piece number within the box). This is a document that contains five acts regarding a single piece of property spanning almost thirty years. There are no independent copies of any of these acts, and if the first four acts had not been copied onto the parchment before the fifth act, the only act contemporary to the creation of the document, we would have no way of knowing who owned or rented that property prior. In such cases, the historian is especially lucky as the records of the property predate the religious order's ownership of the property. This allows one to see individuals buying, selling, and renting property outside of any institutional connections. The earlier records are property transactions between people and families rather than acquisitions or agreements by organizations such as the Church. This is a rare insight into the world of the twelfth century.

However, this last point also reveals the cons of the Malta collection as a source base. A large proportion of the sources used in this study are, unfortunately, one-off acts between the religious organization and an individual. These isolated documents do not provide much context for property over time, and it means the vast majority of records only include individuals who were living on land either owned by the Hospital or being purchased by the Hospital. This does not necessarily limit the geographic spread of the

documents; many come from outside the city. But it does place a specific, institutional limit on who is visible, and even if that limit is ultimately arbitrary, we cannot forget that the documents are skewed towards the affiliations of the Order. As Bouhaïk-Gironès suggests, "The lack of fulsome documents is itself a historical fact that requires interpretation" and "the historian knows that the document was not produced for the express convenience of the critic. To go beyond the *aporia,* he asks himself why and how documents were redacted and preserved."[76]

Property records themselves pose similar difficulties. While these are not records of jongleurs purchasing property, but rather purchasing fiefs, which is more akin to renting in this context, one needed a certain level of financial resources to rent property. It also implies a sedentary life, at least temporarily. We must acknowledge, then, that there is a level of society that we cannot access through property records. As is further discussed in Chapter Four, this is perhaps why none of the property records I have found involve jongleurs renting property on the *Rue des Jongleurs.* In addition to the Malta Collection, Chapter Four features various acts from other collections in the Departmental Archives of Toulouse, several from the National Archives, and documents from various municipal archives.

Taking a longer chronological view than the rest of the project, Chapter Four traces the movement of individuals involved in sex work both socially and geographically. First, I establish a community that includes at least two jongleurs living in and around the Dalbade Church and the Church of St. Remy, or St. Remezy as it

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[76] Bouhaïk-Gironès, 33.

sometimes appears. This area is near to the *Rue des Jongleurs* though not precisely next to it. Since property is described by its proximity to other property and individuals are often identified by their occupation, I am able to place these jongleurs in a socioeconomic context. They live near other trade-workers such as cutlers, weavers, butchers, and tanners. The last two of these suggest the area was not exactly desirable, as they would have resulted in potent smells. This was also the Jewish quarter at time. So while bustling with commerce, it was unlikely to have been considered prime real estate. It was also located close to a street where women sold sex. This is evident from a 1201 custom, an oral law governing behavior and practice that comes to be written down, from the Municipal Archives of Toulouse. This is the earliest known document pertaining to women selling sex in Toulouse, and it provides the pivot point upon which Chapter Four hinges. The custom documents a complaint brought by men living on the *Rue de Comminges*, who said that women selling sex on their street were causing disturbances. In response, the consulate expels all women who sell sex from the city.

From here the stories of men who sell sexual performances, the jongleurs in this chapter, and women who sell sex, the meretrix, diverge. While I unfortunately cannot trace any of the late twelfth century community of the Dalbade area beyond the year 1198, the slow solidification of last names assists in picking up the narrative. The earlier documents record *ioculator* as a professional designation, but as professions become increasingly used as appellations of identification, they begin to take on the status of a surname. Thus, in the late fourteenth century, when documents show two brothers with the family name *menestrel* selling family property on the *Rue des Jongleurs*, we can perceive a faint but clear throughline. These men, whose father was ennobled in 1341, are

now defined as bourgeois and own partial rights to a vineyard outside of Toulouse.[77] They represent men from a family formerly engaged in jonglerie, who have moved up in the social hierarchy, indicating that certain engagement with sex work does not preclude social mobility over the course of a few generations. The increased professionalization of jonglerie throughout the thirteenth century provides a pathway towards a legitimate profession for male entertainers. Yet while the opportunities to better their status abound for men, women engaged in sex work, particularly selling sex, are subject to an ever-increasing number of restrictions with the municipalization of brothels. Women performers see a decrease in opportunity as well, as the guilds and corporations that legitimize men in the profession systematically exclude women. Jongleuses all but disappear from the records in Occitania, and women selling sex are increasingly confined to brothels, which become a semi-carceral space.[78] Chapter Four shows that while engagement with sex work resulted in perceived gender deviance, the larger structure of gender persisted in creating meaningful differences in the opportunities available to male and female sex workers.

Two final points bear mentioning here, both of which point to problems I hope future research may resolve. The first is that sex work, in this study, is an urban phenomenon. While commercial sex surely existed outside the city limits, lack of sources and informality of such arrangements make it difficult to study. It is also likely to have manifested differently in smaller populations, where social politics might be more

[77] For the sale of the family property see AMT II 55.7. For the ennoblement see PAN JJ 72 f. 202v, doc no. 278.
[78] Roby, 135-165.

intimate.[79] Some scholars have already begun tackling the issue of sexual mores in rural areas. Michelle Armstrong-Partida, for example, has argued that in fourteenth century rural Catalonia concubinage was not uncommon and did not preclude the men or women involved in such arrangement from future marriages with others.[80] More work of this kind is needed, particularly considering the percentage of the medieval population who lived and worked in rural areas. To tackle such topics for the twelfth century would require creative and rigorous archival work, if archival materials even exist for this period, but would do much in helping frame what has, thus far, been studied only in populous medieval cities.

Secondly, including jongleurs under the category of sex work, while logical and useful for studying male sex work, creates a new division for which I have no solution as yet. The majority of discussion around selling sex involves women, because there are so few sources which discuss men selling sex. Conversely, the majority of discussion around selling sexualized performance, revolves around men, partially because it is the only avenue for exploring male sex work. But there are also more sources about male jongleurs than female jongleurs, and when the latter are mentioned it is often as an add-on to the former. This means that in seeking to represent both genders, I have unbalanced the stakes of the social interaction. Medieval people, just as modern people, understood there was a difference between selling sex and selling sexual performances, and that

[79] Otis-Cour, 2. R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 90.

[80] Armstrong-Partida, "Concubinage," 209, 236.

difference was and is meaningful in terms of social prospects.[81] Some of these implications will be explored in Chapter Four, and a greater balance is struck in Chapter Three, since women performers were more present in literature than archival or even religious writings. However there is more research and work to be done in trying to provide a nuanced and balanced view of sex work by both genders in the Middle Ages. It is my hope that this project will provide a starting point.

In their work on depictions of intersex people in alchemical literature, Leah DeVun argues:

> Despite the continuum of sex difference proposed by the Hippocratic/Galenic model, Pseudo-Albert, Peter of Poitiers, and Peter the Chanter limited the transgressive potential of a hermaphrodite by establishing him/her firmly within either one of two genders—he/she cannot be neither or both in social contexts. As noted, hermaphroditism was also readily associated with sexual practices considered deviant or undesirable, such as masturbation or sodomy …These examples suggest that hermaphrodites were a source of confusion and even suspicion to their contemporaries, necessitating their division into binary gender categories of male and female, and conveying the extent to which *neitherness* and *bothness* had the potential to threaten social and natural norms.[82]

I include the entirety of this quotation, because in it DeVun incidentally gets at the core of the conundrum regarding sex work in Occitania in the twelfth and thirteenth century. They are right in asserting that theologians, such as Peter the Chanter, had a vested interest in establishing and reinforcing the dichotomy between the sexes, and this, when viewed over the course of time, is a binary that wins out over the transgressive potential not only of intersex people but sex workers as well. However, unlike the intersex people

[81] See discussions of whorearchy in Tilly Lawless, "Sex Worker and Activist, Tilly Lawless, Explains the Whorearchy," interview by Karley Sciortino, May 23, 2016, https://slutever.com/sex-worker-tilly-lawless-interview/.

[82] DeVun, "Jesus Hermaphrodite," 198.

DeVun studies, sex workers as individuals were *not* categorized neatly into their binary gender categories, and it is precisely because they represent potential threats to the social norms that they cannot be completely integrated into either "man" or "woman" as they were constructed in the Middle Ages. As sex workers, they had sex in ways or with individuals that a regular man or woman should not. In the case of women sex workers, this meant their bodies were public spaces in which to house immorality and potential transgressions, protecting other women from debasement. And, in a circular logic, this also made it even more imperative to keep them separate from other women. Male sex work, since it did not provide a social use like female sex work did, was more troubling in the way it undermined the binary gender order. However, it presented the same problem, inviting such men into the category of man muddied the waters. They were men behaving as women, to suggest they were bad men behaving as women still invited the behavior of women into the larger category of men. Far better to suggest these men were effeminate, immorally and inappropriately effeminate, but still rhetorically distanced from the larger category of men, which could then remain safely masculine.

At the heart of this dissertation then, is an unresolvable contradiction. High medieval sex workers in Occitania were seen as gendered differently from other men and women, and this gendering had implications for how they were viewed by the rest of society and how they were treated. Yet, sex work itself did not give rise to a system or group of people outside of the gender binary. In the end, the construct of gender, the iterability of norms identified by Judith Butler, won out over time. Men coming from families engaged in jonglerie appear in the late Middle Ages as up-and-coming townsmen and ennobled property owners, but no such paragons of social climbing success appear

for women. Instead, in an increasingly professionalized landscape, women are pushed out of legitimate performing and the decline in the status of women selling sex during the municipalization of brothels only worsens in the subsequent dismantling of brothels and outlawing of sex work. But in this contradiction we might also find comfort in knowing that individual expression matters, that these expressions echo loudly through history, that gender was not and is not now a fixed entity, and that for centuries people have been accused of doing gender wrong and have continued to exist nonetheless.

You're born naked, and the rest is history.

Chapter 1: I'm in an Occitan State of Mind

The twelfth and early thirteenth centuries in Western Europe have often been termed a "renaissance" in terms of culture and a commercial revolution in economics.[1] The First Crusade, ending in 1099 CE on the eve of a new century, saw a previously unimaginable flow of people between the Northern reaches of Europe and the Holy Land. The increase in international travel due to crusades created an increase in international trade, proving true Frederic Cheyette's observation "that the quickest way to open markets was to cut them open with a sword."[2] Religious fervor also led to an increase in pilgrims crisscrossing Europe heading to Jerusalem, Rome, and Santiago de Compostela. Merchants took advantage of the easier travel to find new sources of clientele, slowly separating themselves from their local provinces and aristocratic households to sell their wares to other courts.[3] The land-based, manorial economy was being supplemented by an economy driven by long-distance trade. In the mid-twelfth century, the famous fairs of Champagne held at Troyes, Provins, Bar-sur-Aube, and Lagny were established. These were temporary markets held throughout the year, where international merchants could

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[1] The term "Twelfth Century Renaissance," coined by Charles Homer Haskins in his book *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century,* to discuss the surge of interest in classical law and literature at this time, remains the subject of much debate. See C. Stephen Jaeger, "Pessimism in the Twelfth-Century 'Renaissance,'" *Speculum* 78, no. 4 (2003): 1151–83, which provides a detailed overview along with a lengthy footnote on the first page of relevant works.

For information on the "commercial revolution" in Europe see Robert S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350*, Economic Civilization of Europe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

[2] Fredric L. Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours*, Conjunctions of Religion & Power in the Medieval Past (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 89.

[3] William E. Burgwinkle, *Love for Sale: Materialist Readings of the Troubadour Razo Corpus*, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, Vol. 2067, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 43.

gather to exchange goods not available locally. With merchants travelling long-distance with valuable goods, the fairs required their own system of law and order that functioned beyond the scope of individual towns, counties, and even countries.[4]

Variously called Occitania, Provence, Languedoc, Southern France, and le Midi, the region encompassing the southern half of modern day France proved an especially fertile ground for such changes.[5] Located in between Spain and northern Europe and adjacent to Italy, Occitania was one of the first places to feel the effects of the increase in international trade and international violence.[6] In fact, it was often the site of such violence and trade.[7] Through to the thirteenth century, it had a different style of lordship than the north of France. As Ruth Harvey explains, rather than a vassal holding the land of an overlord in exchange for military service, *hommage* and loyalty, "the norm among the aristocracy [of Occitania] seems for a long time to have been *convenientiae*, egalitarian contracts between individuals in which each party promised fidelity and non-aggression, respect for the life, limb and rights of the other."[8] In her study of the ritual of the handshake, Hélène Débax notes in particular the flexibility of the Languedocian

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[4] Theodore Evergates, *Henry the Liberal: Count of Champagne, 1127-1181*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). See also Jérôme Sgard, "Global Economic Governance During the Middle Ages: The Jurisdiction of the Champagne Fairs," *International Review of Law and Economics* 42, no. . (2015): 174–84, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.irle.2013.08.001.

[5] While the term "Occitania," with its separatist political implications, is not often used in modern discourse, it is the most comprehensive word to describe the region of France now called le Midi. It has the added benefit of simplifying the relationship between the region and the language, Occitan. Thus, Occitan and Occitania will be used throughout this dissertation.

[6] Burgwinkle, *Love for Sale*, 43.

[7] Cheyette, *Ermengard*, 88-89.

[8] Ruth Harvey, "Courtly culture in medieval Occitania," in *The Troubadours: An Introduction*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10.

agreements, and the importance of fidelity, faith, and submission to a higher, religious authority as part of the binding agreement.[9]

A key factor in Occitanian history at this time is that the "region" did not exist as a coherent political entity in the twelfth century. The various names used to talk about this geographical region, in fact, suggest the different ways it could be divided. Provence is generally defined as an area in the southeast of France that includes territory from Arles to Nice, and inland towards Orange. It is comparable to the modern-day region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azure. Languedoc is the area just west of Provence, across the Rhône River, encompassing Montpellier, Nîmes, Narbonne, Carcassonne, Toulouse and more. The name Languedoc refers to the Occitan langue, the *langue d'oc*, meaning the language in which "yes" is "oc," as opposed to the *langue d'oil* in the north, where "oil" means "yes." But even the entity of Languedoc can be divided into the Upper and Lower Languedoc, with the former being the further inland, higher elevation areas, such as those around Toulouse, and the latter being closer to the sea, such as Montpellier and Narbonne. Occitania is a broader term, referring to both Lower and Upper Languedoc, the regions along the modern border with Spain, and today's Midi-Pyrénées, but excluding Provence. Using "Occitania" rather than the other terms available is meant to be more inclusive, allowing for a larger source base, while still remaining within a specific cultural region.

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[9] Hélène Débax, "Le serrement des mains: éléments pour une analyse du rituel des serments féodaux en Languedoc et en Provence (XIe-XIIe siècles)," *Le moyen âge* CXIII, no. 1 (2007): 9–23, https://doi.org/10.3917/rma.131.0009. Débax's earlier book explores in depth the system of *hommage*, fiefdoms, and oaths in Languedoc, a system long thought to have been non-existent in the south, *La féodalité languedocienne - xie-xiie siècles: serments, hommages et fiefs dans le Languedoc des Trencavel* (Presses universitaires du Midi, 2003).

Indicative of the permeability of the boundaries within Occitania is the variety of powerful counts, viscounts, aristocratic and patrician families, and others, who laid claim to cities or lands in both Upper and Lower Languedoc, occasionally coming into conflict with each other over these claims. From the south, the counts of Barcelona controlled Carcassonne and Provence. The counts of Toulouse, however, also claimed Provence and Narbonne, along with the city of Toulouse, although they never truly asserted control of the region. The viscounts of Narbonne, despite the assertions of the count of Toulouse, exerted rulership of that city. To the northeast were the lords of Montpellier, and near them the family of the Trencavels, who ruled over Béziers, Agde, and Nîmes, as well as the farther inland town of Albi.[10] The kingdom of France, which held no sway over the southern region in the twelfth century, would prove the final victor in these territorial battles after the Albigensian Crusade. This political landscape only proves more complicated the closer one gets, as each city develops its own internal power struggles among counts, viscounts, city councils, and bishops. Nevertheless, a region did exist, though defined more by language and culture than by political cohesion.[11]

In her introduction to Jacqueline Caille's book on medieval Narbonne, Kathryn Reyerson notes some of these cultural staples that define medieval Occitania:

> Heterodoxy in religion, particularly the Cathar heresy. Troubadour culture. Minorities and cross-cultural exchange. A flourishing urban world closely tied to rural surroundings and engaging with the wider Mediterranean through trade and

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[10] Frederick Cheyette, *Ermengard*, 4. Linda M. Paterson, *The World of the Troubadours: Medieval Occitan Society, c. 1100-c. 1300* (Cambridge : New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1-2.

[11] Paterson, 3-9.

> travel. A noble culture linked by oaths of fidelity. A secular political society rather than one dominated by the Church…[12]

The list goes on. Reyerson's summation alone should suffice in convincing readers that Occitania in the High Middle Ages is fertile ground for studies in many areas of scholarly interest. This chapter will not, and indeed cannot, address all of these points. But I will take a moment to linger on some of the most salient aspects in regard to sex work in general and this project in particular. As a time of rapid change, with a boom in urban growth, shifts in the development of the economy, and new ideas about how love and desire are constructed, valued, and commodified, the twelfth and early thirteenth century offer scholars a distinctive look at medieval gender and sexuality. The primary purpose of this chapter is to set the stage for the project to follow by providing a general historical overview of the cultural influences, literary developments, and economic changes occurring in Occitania at the turn of the thirteenth century.

Geography and Qiyan

Geography played a significant role in the cultural changes taking place in Occitania in the twelfth century. Even before the call for crusade in 1095, many Occitan lords were taking part in the closer conflict between Christians and Muslims in Iberia.[13] Modern borders might lead one to forget that there was no clear division between what

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[12] Kathryn Reyerson, "Introduction," in *Medieval Narbonne: A City at the Heart of the Troubadour World*, by Jacqueline Caille, ed. Kathryn Reyerson, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), xvii

[13] Marcus Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade: The Limousin and Gascony c.970-c.1130*, First Edition (Oxford : Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 70-114. See also Jonathan Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land: Relations Between the Latin East and the West, 1119-1187* (Oxford [England] : New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1996).

we now call France and Spain in the early Middle Ages. Instead Occitania and Catalunya, the area in Iberia that abutted Occitania, mingled together, a connection that can still be seen today in their linguistic similarities. Despite the Pyrenees, people in Occitania would have had knowledge of their southern neighbors. They likely coveted the silks and ivories and musical instruments that flowed from al-Andalus.[14] There were also many diplomatic and marital ties between Occitania and the various polities of Iberia, arranged through ambassadors, many of whom, notably, would have been poets.[15] However, the mid to late eleventh century saw a new level of contact between the two cultures. Roger Boase outlines some of the major interactions that would affect the development of European poetry, the earliest of which was the taking of Barbastro by Norman and Occitan forces in 1064.[16] Several Arabic chronicles recount the siege, some in great detail, emphasizing the extreme brutality of the Christians. Even if some of this is hyperbolic, it should not be forgotten that "cultural exchange," stems from violent encounters as well as peaceful interactions.[17] According to the chronicles, after the initial taking of the city, the Normans were enthralled by Barbastro and its culture, with many opting to remain. The Aquitainians, enthralled with the spoils of war but with their own homes nearby, opted to

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[14] María Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (New York, Boston: Back Bay Books, 2002), 123-125.

[15] Roger Boase, "Arab Influences on European Love-Poetry," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Boston: Brill, 1992), 464.

[16] Boase also mentions: the 1085 capture of Toledo by Alfonso VI; the defeat of the poet-king al-Mu'tamid of Seville by the pious Berber Yiisuf b. Tashfin, in 1091, which marked the beginning of the Almoravid era; the 1091 completion of the Norman conquest of Sicily; the First Crusade in 1096-99; the unification of Provence and Catalonia under Ramon Berenguer IV in 1112; the 1118 conquest of Saragossa by Alfonso I of Aragon. Boase, 462.

[17] Dwight Reynolds, *The Musical Heritage of Al-Andalus* (London: Routledge, 2020), 198.

take their loot with them back to Occitania. Part of this loot was a group of *qiyan*, or enslaved women trained in singing, with chroniclers reporting there were anywhere from 500 to 1,500.[18] Though the actual status of *qiyan* in the culture of al-Andalus can be debated, there is no doubt that these women were viewed in Occitania as enslaved women or as servants.[19] Their presence and the Arabic tradition of sung poetry they brought with them had a profound effect on musical and poetic culture in Occitania.

The influence of the *qiyan* is surely more complicated and dispersive than we are now able to document, but their sway over Occitanian culture also seems to have occurred in a surprisingly direct manner. Leading the troops from Aquitaine, and undoubtedly receiving a good number of captives, was Guillaume VIII, the duke of Aquitaine and count of Poitiers. Though he is a powerful figure in his own right, the importance of Guillaume VIII's acquisition of these *qiyan* can be seen through his son Guillaume IX, often cited as the first troubadour, the great love poets. Guillaume IX was Guillaume VIII's only male issue and came from his father's third marriage. Thus when Guillaume VIII died at the age of 61 and his son inherited the throne, Guillaume IX was only fifteen years old. Given his later importance in establishing lyrical poetry, it is

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[18] Menocal, *Ornament,* 118-125. See also María Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 27.

[19] See Lisa Emily Nielson, "Diversions of Pleasure: Singing Slave Girls and the Politics of Music in the Early Islamic Courts (661-1000CE): Their Influence, History and Cultural Roles as Seen through the *Kitāb Al-Muwashsha* (*Book of Brocade*) of Ibn Al-Washsha, the *Risala Al-Qiyān* (*Epistle on the Singing Girls*) of Al-Jāhiz and the *Dhamm Al-Malāhī* (*Centure of Instruments of Diversion*) of Ibn Abi'l Dūnya," (Maine, University of Maine, 2010), 83-118. For a discussion of the education of the *qiyan* see Reynolds, 191-198. Whereas Boase contends that "most of these women became lute-playing singers and concubines in the courts of southern France" (465), Reynolds argues that not all, or even most, of these women would have been the musical slaves that the term qiyan is often associated with, though he concedes that there were surely singing qiyan among them.

notable that Guillaume was exposed to and inherited a number of *qiyan* from a young age.[20] He is also known to have continued relations with Iberia. He married the widow of Sancho I of Aragon in 1094, whose "retinue would almost certainly have included some jongleurs or female singers similar to those who had been captured at Barbastro."[21] His sister, likely with his mediation, married Peter I of Aragon and later Alfonso VI of Castile, and his daughter married Ramiro II of Aragon. Perhaps his most famous progeny was his granddaughter, Eleanor of Aquitaine, who was renowned as a patron of the arts.[22]

The connection between women singing and dancing and foreign Arab influence is integral to understanding later Occitanian and French perceptions of women performing music. In the ninth century *Epistle on Singing Girls* (*Risalat al-qiyan*) the renowned Arab writer al-Jāhiz described the *qiyan* as providing

> a combination of pleasures such as nothing else on the face of the earth does…When the girl raises her voice in song, the gaze is riveted on her, the hearing is directed attentively to her, and the heart surrenders itself to her sovereignty . .. From this there arises, together with the feeling of joyous abandon, [an indulgence in] the sense of touch…[she] is hardly ever sincere in her passion ... for both by training and by innate instinct, her nature is to set up snares and traps for her victims.[23]

This highly sexualized and duplicitous vision of the *qiyan* could not but have an effect upon cultural, particularly courtly, understandings of women performers. The further

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[20] Boase, 466. See also Menocal, *The Arabic Role*, 27.

[21] Angus MacKay, *Spain in the Middle Ages: From Frontier to Empire, 1000-1500*, New Studies in Medieval History (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977), 93.

[22] Boase, 466. See also Menocal, *The Arabic Role*, 27-33 and A. R. Nykl, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry, and Its Relations with the Old Provençal Troubadours.* (Baltimore: J. H. Furst company, 1946), 382.

[23] al-Jāḥiẓ, *The Epistle on Singing-Girls by Jāḥiẓ (Risālat al-Qiyān)*, ed. and trans. A.F.L. Beeston, Approaches to Arabic Literature 2 (Warminster: Aris and Phillips Ltd., 1980), 30-32. As quoted in Boase, 466, though I have restored the original order of the prose.

association of women performing music with slaves or servants helps explain why women who performed for money were seen as low-class, and the added exoticism of this musical influence likely only served to reinforce such sexualization and demonization. Of course, Christians did not need to look to foreign cultures for misogyny. As will be explored in Chapter Two, the exchange of money for physical acts, as opposed to concrete goods, also led to women performers being conflated with sex workers. Along with *joglaressa*, they could be referred to as a *soldadera/soldadeira*, coming from *soldado*, Latin *solde*, meaning salaried. Soldadera, a term used more in the Iberian peninsula, came to be conflated with courtesan or sex worker. In fact, it is only recently that scholars realized that "professional female entertainer" is a better translation for soldadera than "prostitute."[24]

Boase suggests that the reversal of power between the Christian kingdoms of northern Spain and the Caliphate of Cordoba not only increased contact through warfare but is the reason that the Christian kingdoms suddenly seemed amenable to adopting some of the cultural practices of their southern neighbors. Whereas previously the Christian kingdoms were subjugated by the Muslim states, now that the Christians had

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[24] Judith R. Cohen, "Ca No Soe Joglaresa: Women and Music in Medieval Spain's Three Cultures," in *Medieval Woman's Song: Cross Cultural Approaches*, ed. Anne L. Klinck and Ann Marie Rasmussen, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 69. See also Maria Coldwell, "Jougleresses and Trobairitz: Secular Musicians in Medieval France," in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950*, ed. Jane M. Bowers and Judith Tick (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 39–61. See Denise K. Filios, *Performing Women in the Middle Ages: Sex, Gender and the Medieval Iberian Lyric*, 1st ed., New Middle Ages (Palgrave Macmillan (Firm)) (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 3 for a discussion of *soldadeiras* in courts. For a discussion of how the fictional performances of the *soldadeira* identity interacted with perceptions of the off-stage identity of the *soldadeira* see 33-82. See also Catherine Léglu, "Did Women Perform Satirical Poetry? Trobairitz and Soldaderas in Medieval Occitan Poetry," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* XXXVII, no. 1 (2001): 15–25.

regained a sense of their own power "there was more willingness (as well as more opportunity) to imitate aspects of Arab culture which previously were perceived as debilitating and effeminate."[25] The connection between effeminacy and performance of love lyric was certainly powerful, and, just as the *qiyan* played a powerful part in shaping perceptions of women performing, the association with effeminacy would color perceptions of men performing. But, as will be seen in Chapter Two, the idea of certain musical performances as effeminate was not new and not all Christians found such performances permissible even after the Christian kingdoms gained the upper hand in Iberia. Furthermore, as Dwight Reynolds suggests, there is a danger in the word "influence," if it is taken in its literal meaning, which implies a unidirectional relationship.[26] The flow of ideas and cultural mores between Iberia and Occitania was anything but one way, and the Arab musical tradition that made its way to France would be returned to Iberia, and the wider Mediterranean, in a new guise in the form of troubadour lyric.

The Troubadours and their Language

The Occitan language, and Occitania itself, is most well known as the language of the troubadours and their poems of "courtly love" (*fin'amor*), which reached their apex at courts in the late twelfth century.[27] The rise of the troubadours and their poetry, with its sexual implications, had an indelible effect on medieval culture. Over the past century, in

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[25] Boase, 462.

[26] Reynolds, 3.

[27] Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, "Introduction," in *The Troubadours: An Introduction*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2-3. Harvey, 15.

particular, a vast array of scholarship has been published on the troubadours and their lasting effect on culture cannot be doubted.[28] These works have ranged on topics from irony in troubadour lyric, to gender, to subjectivity and identity, to questioning the very notion of "courtly love" as a construct.[29] Many scholars have also queried role of the troubadours in shaping and being shaped by historical context.[30] As Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay explain, "the themes of love and chivalry have excited controversy over the extent to which they are literary fictions or social practices, debates that have often been paralyzed by naive assumptions about literature merely reflecting a 'reality' which in fact it helps to shape, and of which it is therefore part."[31]

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[28] Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, two preeminent scholars in this field themselves, provide a thorough overview of the historiographical movement of troubadour scholarship in "Introduction," 1-7.

[29] Simon Gaunt, *Troubadours and Irony*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature*, Cambridge Studies in French (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Laura Kendrick, *The Game of Love: Troubadour Wordplay* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1988); Sarah Kay, *Parrots and Nightingales: Troubadour Quotations and the Development of European Poetry*, 1st ed., The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Jean-Charles Huchet, *L'amour discourtois: la "fin'amors" chez les premiers troubadours*, Bibliothèque historique Privat (Toulouse: Privat, 1987); E. Jane Burns, "Courtly Love: Who Needs It? Recent Feminist Work in the Medieval French Tradition," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27, no. 1 (2001): 23–57; Keith Busby and Christopher Kleinhenz, eds., *Courtly Arts and the Art of Courtliness: Selected Papers from the Eleventh Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 29 July - 4 August 2004* (Cambridge, UK ; Rochester, N.Y.: D.S. Brewer, 2006); Fredric L. Cheyette, "Women, Poets, and Politics in Occitania," in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 138–78; Herbert Moller, "The Meaning of Courtly Love," *The Journal of American Folklore* 73, no. 287 (1960): 39–52.). For studies focused on courtliness as a whole rather than just troubadours see Daniel E. O'Sullivan and Laurie Shepard, eds., *Shaping Courtliness in Medieval France: Essays in Honor of Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner*, Gallica (Boydell & Brewer, 2013).

[30] See, for example, Simon Gaunt's argument about reading adultery in early troubadour lyric in relation to the Church's efforts at exerting great control over marriage in the twelfth century in Simon Gaunt, "Marginal Men, Marcabru and Orthodoxy: The Early Troubadours and Adultery," *Medium Aevum* 59, no. 1 (1990): 55–72.

[31] Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, "Editorial Matter: Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 14.

Though these studies are numerous and the definitions of *fin'amor* nearly endless, and often predicated on individual troubadours if not individual poems, most can agree that troubadour poetry is imbricated with sexuality. Take, for example, the notoriously burlesque Guillaume IX, who inherited the *qiyan* from his father. According to William of Malmesbury:

> …at a certain castle called Niort [Guillaume] built some little houses, almost like monastic huts, and wildly proclaimed that he would found an Abbey of Whores. And he sang that he would establish this girl or that one, whom he named, all from famous brothels, as his abbess, his prioress, and his other officials.[32]

Whether or not this "abbey" actually existed is debatable (Niort being a real place but *ni-ort* also meaning "no place"), and, unfortunately, William of Malmesbury does not provide more details. But the burlesque still served to horrify clergy, particularly as any performances at this mock convent or involving its constituents were likely to feature other young men dressed as women playing the part of the "whores."[33]

The intermingling of courtly culture with a strong undercurrent of sexual desire, with the new poetic emphasis on expressing such desires, was a potent addition to

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[32] "*Denique apud castellum quoddam, Niort, habitacula quaedam, quasi monasteriola, construens, abbatiam pellicum ibi se positurum delirabat; nuncupatim illam et illam, quaecunque famosioris prostibuli esset, abbatissam vel priorem, ceterasve officiales institutorum cantitans,*" William IX, *The Poetry of William VII, Count of Poitiers, IX Duke of Aquitaine*, trans. Gerald A. Bond, Garland Library of Medieval Literature v. 4 (New York: Garland Pub., 1982). Jacques Rossiaud used this passage to suggest that Guillaume had established a public brothel long before the wave of legalized brothels in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries based on the use of the word *prostibuli*. However, Leah Otis-Cour's argument that this passage is meant as an insult, implying the duke had established a type of personal harem, seems far more likely, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 11, 157 n. 12.

[33] For more on this episode see Kendrick, 15-16, 134-139. Reto Bezzola postulates that Guillaume is parodying the abbey at Fontevault established by Robert d'Abrissel, which was known to have reformed sex workers, *Les origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en Occident (500-1200)*, vol. 2, 2 vols., Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études. IVe section, Sciences historiques et philologiques fasc. 286, (Paris: Champion, 1944).

cultural understandings of sex. We might also note the overlap of economic terms and the language of *fin'amor.* As Eugene Vance explains:

> *Merci*, for example…derives from the Latin *merces*, which includes, along with the notion of grace, notions of salary and price; not only is it cognate with merchant but it gave rise to mercerie, or merchandise. The world *talent* derives from the Latin *talentum,* a measure of gold or silver, but took on different meanings in the Middle Ages, among them desire (understood as a lack) and will (understood as an excess)…The words prix and prisier come from pretium in Latin, or worth, value, wages, reward…Finally, the word valor…is surely consonant with the concern prevalent even among the scholastics with the problem of establishing the just price of an object.[34]

Citing Georges Duby, Vance goes on to note that seigneuriage denotes "the privilege of a noble to exact a certain percentage of those coins struck from the precious metals brought to his mints."[35] In Old Occitan, these correspond to: merce, talans, pretz, valor/valer/valens, seignor/seignoratge, and, of course, all of their spelling permutations. These words are prevalent throughout troubadour and trobairitz, the female counterparts of the troubadours, lyrics. Money and desire, money and value, money and mercy or grace, all become conflated, entangling the larger economic system and the system of *fin'amor* described by the troubadours. In his well-known book on materialist readings of troubadour lyric, William Burgwinkle highlights, "the interpenetration of economic and supposedly non-economic fields in order to show just how deeply representation, even of what seems to be the most personal nature, is imbued with issues of profit, marketing, and self-promotion."[36] This literary backdrop, particularly the commodification of love

[34] Eugene Vance, "Love's Concordance: The Poetics of Desire and the Joy of the Text," *Diacritics* 5, no. 1 (1975), 48.

[35] Vance, "Love's Concordance," 48.

[36] Burgwinkle, *Love for Sale*, 11. For a broader discussion of the interplay between economics and French vernacular narratives see Judith Kellogg, *Medieval Artistry and Exchange: Economic Institutions, Society,*

and desire in vernacular literature, is an important cultural aspect of Occitania in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.

Literature, North and South

Given the importance of literature as not only a reflection of culture but a force that shapes culture, the flourishing literary culture of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century will form part of this dissertation. Instead of the Occitan literature of the south though, I will focus on the *romans* and *fabliaux* of the north. While it may seem counterintuitive that this project includes Old French literature rather than Occitan literature, it is important to remember that culture does not adhere to strict boundaries, and the jongleurs this project studies were circulating stories throughout the entirety of France, and, indeed, northern Spain and Italy. Furthermore, the Old French literature contains far more relevant material than the Occitanian tradition. In this section, I will demonstrate the connections between the two literary cultures, specifically examining the influence of Occitanian culture on *Guillaume de Dole* and *Aucassin et Nicolette*. Through these parallels it will become clear that the two literary cultures are intertwined enough such that examining Northern French literature can provide meaningful insight to cultural assumptions of Occitania, in lieu of a greater extant corpus of relevant material.

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and Literary Form in Old French Narrative, American University Studies Series II: Romance Languages and Literature 123 (New York: P. Lang, 1989). For a discussion of economics as it relates to German lyric, see Stephanie Van d'Elden, "Commercial Metaphors in Minnesang," in *Poetics of Love in the Middle Ages: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Moshe Lazar and Norris J. Lacy (Fairfax, Va. : Lanham, Md.: George Mason University Press, 1989), 137-146.

As Catherine Léglu argues, “medieval literature is intercultural in the sense that lyric poetry, Arthurian tales, or *chansons de geste* provided a singularly coherent basis on which many culturally specific variations could be played.”[37] The cultural specificity referenced by Léglu is of paramount importance when interpreting specific iterations of stories. But the interactions of cultures and the way they handle the reinterpretation of shared material is equally important; stories from one culture cannot be viewed as entirely isolated from another nearby culture. This is particularly true when production and reproduction are considered in tandem. Many troubadour *chansonniers* were produced in northern Italy and Catalonia as well as in Occitania. Similarly, many Francophone manuscripts and other Occitan manuscripts were produced or compiled in northern Italy.[38]

This is to say nothing of the manuscripts within which can be found multiple languages. In the opening of her book, Léglu describes a manuscript of Peyre de Paternas’s *Libre de sufficientia et necessitate*, copied by a Breton scribe around the mid-fourteenth century for the papal court in Avignon, which contains Latin, French, and Occitan.[39] But one need not look to such a late date for the intermingling of these languages. Léglu also analyzes a *chanson de geste* titled *Girart de Roussillon*, seemingly written sometime in the second half of the twelfth century. There are five extant manuscripts of *Girart*, though only two are complete or near complete, and the variety of

[37] Catherine Léglu, *Multilingualism and Mother Tongue in Medieval French, Occitan, and Catalan Narratives*, Penn State Romance Studies (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 13.
[38] Léglu, *Multilingualism,* 5, 7.
[39] Léglu, *Multilingualism,* 1-4.

languages in which they are written attests to the fact "that it was composed, or rewritten, for an audience that understood both Occitan and old French."[40] Two of the texts, one in Old Occitan and another in Old French, seem to be a translation of a third manuscript "written in a transitional dialect between Old French and Old Occitan that has been variously identified as Poitevin or Franco-Provençal."[41] The identity and aim of this mixed dialect manuscript remain debated, but the mix of languages in a single text's history attests to the transferal of stories across cultural and linguistic boundaries.[42] The original text being a mixed language could suggest an older, stronger shared literary tradition of which we have few extant examples, or it could point to greater tolerance for mutual influence in the years before tensions over the Cathar heresy reached a boiling point.

Multilingualism was also purposefully embedded in texts such that they were meant to be composed in multiple discernible languages. The late twelfth-century troubadour Raimbaut de Vaquerias, who spent much of his later life in Italian courts, composed a poem in which each stanza was in a different language: Occitan, French, Gascon, Galician-Portuguese, and Tuscan.[43] The very act of composing poetry in

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[40] Léglu, *Multilingualism,* 18.
[41] Léglu, *Multilingualism,* 23.
[42] For example, Simon Gaunt argues it's code mixing, writing a popular French *chanson de geste* in the popular literary language, Occitan, while W. Mary Hackett believes it was an attempt to reach a broader audience. See Simon Gaunt, "Desnaturat son li frances: Language and Identity in the Twelfth-Century Occitan Epic," *Tenso* 17, no. 1 (2002): 10–31, https://doi.org/10.1353/ten.2002.0008; W. Mary Hackett, "Le manuscrit P de *Girart de Roussillon*," in *Mélanges de philologie et de littérature romanes offerts à Jeanne Wathelet-Willem*, ed. Jacques de Caluwé and Marche Romane (Liège: Cahiers de L'ARU, 1978) and "L'Auteur de *Girart de Roussillon*," in *Guillaume d'Orange and the Chanson de Geste*, ed. Wolfgang Van Emden, Philip E. Bennett, and Alexander Kerr (Reading: Société Rencesvals, British Branch, 1984); M. Pfister, "Observations sur la langue de *Girart de Roussillon*," *Revue de linguistique romane* 34, no. 135–136 (1970): 315–25, https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-399479.
[43] Léglu, *Multilingualism,* 9.

multiple languages may also point to the cultural diffusion of literature and literary practices. A century before Raimbaut's poem, in the early twelfth century in al-Andalus, a new form of poetry called the *muwashashahat* emerged, which included sections in Arabic and sections in romance languages, often an early Spanish or Mozarabic. It cannot be proven that Raimbaut knew these songs, but other troubadours surely did. Marcabru, who started his career at the court in Poitiers spent a significant amount of time in the courts of northern Spain and has one poem that seems to borrow the meter and rhyme sounds of a particular *muwashashaha*.[44] As Léglu explains, "A porous borderland has produced striking examples of multilingual interaction, especially between French, Occitan, and Catalan, which I believe are worth exploring in an awareness of cultural differences as well as sociopolitical pressures."[45] This multilingual interaction must inform how we approach literature coming out of one culture or one linguistic tradition, when viewing it in relation to other cultures or linguistic traditions. Thus, while primarily written in Old French and presenting insights into northern French culture, "the geographical and cultural extension of French romance includes works composed in Occitan in the south of France, as well as Anglo-Norman romances circulating in England and on the Continent."[46] This influence was not limited to the romance genre;

[44] Léglu, *Multilingualism,* 10-11. Interestingly, Léglu notes that "the muwashashat were vulgar songs and that their multilingual content associated them with the lowest rank of performers: 'gypsies,' prostitutes, and those who travel and who are paid for their entertainment." For more on the emergence of the *muwashashahat*, its music, and relationship to other music from al-Andalus, see Reynolds, 149-174.
[45] Léglu, *Multilingualism,* 13.
[46] Bruckner, "Shape of Romance," 14.

François Pirot catalogued references to King Arthur in troubadour verse, though he noted the references were often mocking.[47]

No doubt a good deal of this intercultural mingling is also thanks to a longer oral tradition, which remains mostly inaccessible to scholars and obscures the origins of common tropes, frame stories, or motifs in medieval literature. Many of the stories recounted in the romance and fabliaux genres likely circulated orally, changing and adapting before they were written down. Hans-Erich Keller, for example, argues that there was an oral version of the well-known *Roland* story by at least the eleventh century although the written version only emerged in the mid-twelfth century.[48] He then traces the *Roland* story as it existed in multiple languages and cultures throughout the Middle Ages. Occasionally, written versions of a strikingly similar story appear nearly simultaneously in two disparate geographical regions, such as in the case of the story of Stephana in *The Miracles of Our Lady of Rocamadour* and the lai of "Bisclavret" by Marie de France. Both stories were written in the late twelfth century, both feature a woman horribly mutilated by a wolf, and both cast the woman as representative of social ills.[49] However, *The Miracles of Our Lady of Rocamadour* was written in Quercy and the lais of Marie de France, written in the Anglo-Norman French dominant in England, are thought to be of Breton origin. It seems likely that the core details of this story pre-dated

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[47] François Pirot, *Recherches sur les connaissances littéraires des troubadours Occitans et Catalans des XIIe et XIIIe siècles: les "Sirventes-Ensenhamens" de Guerau de Cabrera, Giraut de Calanson et Bertrand de Paris*, Memorias de La Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona, XIV (Barcelona: Real Academia de Buenas Letras, 1972), 441-43.

[48] Hans-Erich Keller, *Autour de Roland: recherches sur la chanson de geste*, Nouvelle bibliothèque du moyen âge 14 (Paris : Genève: Champion ; Slatkine, 1989), 37-75, though the general argument is found throughout the first section of the book.

[49] Katherine Pierpont, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Disability and Deformity in the Writings of Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France," *Le Cygne* 5 (2018): 26-28.

both written versions and circulated widely, resulting in two separate stories but with common characteristics and themes.[50]

Two of the texts addressed in Chapter Three, in particular, evidence the cross-cultural influences between the north of France and Occitania. *The Romance of the Rose*, known more commonly as *Guillaume de Dole* to distinguish it from the celebrated work by Jean Meun, was written sometime between 1204 and 1230 and is credited as the first work to include lyric insertions.[51] The story is written in narrative verse, and intermittently, characters break into lyrical verse that is meant to be sung. These verses are stand-alone works separate from the narrative story around them, and they are often the work of different writers.[52] Of the forty-eight lyric insertions in *Guillaume de Dole*, three are extracts from troubadour poetry.[53] The impetus behind using these extracts is debated, particularly as the extracts are not direct quotations but semi-translations from Occitan to French, and *Guillaume de Dole* is not the only romance to feature adapted

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[50] Jean Rocacher, "Introduction and Additional Notes," in *Les Miracles de Notre-Dame de Rocamadour Au XIIe Siècle*, ed. and trans. Edmond Albe (Toulouse: Le Pérégrinateur, 1996), 299.

[51] Kay, *Parrots,* 91-92; Maureen Barry McCann Boulton, *The Song in the Story: Lyric Insertions in French Narrative Fiction, 1200-1400*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 26. There are a variety of arguments regarding potential historical references for this work. Sarah Kay argues that the attitude expressed towards troubadour lyrics in the lyric insertions would fit well with either 1210, when the Albigensian Crusade was just beginning or 1230, when it was coming to an end. John Baldwin argues for a date closer to the beginning of the thirteenth century in "Jean Renart et le tournoi de Saint-Trond: une conjonction de l'histoire et de la littérature," *Annales : histoire, sciences sociales (French ed.)* 45, no. 3 (1990): 565–88.

[52] This distinguishes the tradition of lyric insertion from use of lyrics as part of the telling of a narrative story. Thus, *Aucassin et Nicolette* is not an example of lyric insertion. The lyrics are part of the larger narrative structure and do not represent a change to the characters within the story; it's simply that sometimes the story is told in prose and sometimes it is told in verse. The story itself, however, cannot be told without both the prose sections and the verse sections. In *Guillaume de Dole*, stand-alone verse is inserted into the narrative story. The effect is that of a movie musical, where the characters break out in song. The songs, though sometimes elaborating on plot points or emotion, are not necessary to make sense of the plot. For more on lyric insertion see Boulton, *The Song in the Story.*

[53] Kay, *Parrots*, 92. For a comprehensive break down of the lyric insertions see Kay, *Parrots*, "Appendix 6," 360-364.

troubadour verses as lyric insertions. Sarah Kay and William Paden both see the use and adaptation of these lyrics as part of the larger cultural landscape surrounding the Albigensian Crusade. Whereas Kay sees it as the assimilation of Occitan poetry into French literature, Paden argues it is the beginning of the diminishing of troubadour influence on French literary culture.[54] Both arguments presuppose that the interaction between the literature of the north and south is not merely a characteristic of *Guillaume de Dole* but, in fact, a central conceit.[55]

What both scholars also make clear is the cultural force Occitan literature exerted on Old French literature throughout the twelfth and early thirteenth century. As Kay says, "perhaps the best way of describing [Occitan] is as a mobile, literary standard."[56] Paden emphasizes that the use of troubadour lyric in French romance narratives shows not only "the admiration for the greatest troubadours from Jaufre Rudel to Bernart Ventadorn and…for lesser troubadours as well" but also "the broader cultural force which spread from the poetry of fin'amor in the language of France, and which betrays Occitan influence in the very word amour and, therefore, in the concept and experience of love."[57] Any literature produced in any area of France was likely to have been influenced by the culture of the troubadours and by extension, the culture of Occitania. This is further borne out in *Guillaume de Dole* when one considers the content of the story. The Emperor

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[54] Kay, *Parrots*, 100-103. William D. Paden, "Old Occitan as a Lyric Language: The Insertions from Occitan in Three Thirteenth-Century French Romances," *Speculum* 68, no. 1 (1993): 36–53, https://doi.org/10.2307/2863833.
[55] See particularly Kay's argument about "The Frenchness of Song in *Guillaume de Dole*," wherein she states that Jean Renart "is concerned…with France's current geographical, political, and linguistic frontiers." Kay, *Parrots*, 100.
[56] Kay, *Parrots*, 10.
[57] Paden, "Old Occitan," 52. For a discussion of the word *amour* see William D. Paden, "Amour Once More," *Romania* 98 (1977), 80-86.

Conrad falls in love with a woman whom he has never met who lives far away and spends most of the romance pining for her. This bears a striking resemblance to the *amor de lonh* or "love from afar" described by the troubadour Jaufre Rudel in many of his poems. *Guillaume de Dole* even includes a character we might term a *lauzengier*, an eavesdropping gossip, who appears in troubadour poetry spreading rumors designed to destroy the love between the troubadour and his lady.[58] Finally, even the lyric insertions that come from French poetry come from the *grands chants*, "the French genre most imitative of the troubadours."[59] The narrative, words, and ideas in *Guillaume de Dole*, as with many other northern French romances, is ultimately inseparable from Occitanian influence.

A second central text in Chapter Three has similarly strong connections to Occitanian culture. *Aucassin et Nicolette,* which survives in only one late thirteenth century manuscript, is believed to have been written in the first half of the thirteenth century. Since the extant text is in Old French with suggestions of a Picard dialect, the manuscript and story are believed to have originated in that area and language.[60] However, the story itself takes place mainly in Beaucaire in Occitania with brief interludes to the seeming fantasy worlds of Torelore and "Cartage," which is most often identified as Cartagena on the southwest coast of Spain. The setting might not be remarkable except that the author exhibits a passable knowledge of the geography and

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[58] Boulton, 26-31.
[59] Kay, *Parrots*, 94.
[60] Glyn S. Burgess, "Introduction," in *The Pilgrimage of Charlemagne and Aucassin and Nicolette*, by Anne Elizabeth Cobby and Glyn S. Burgess, vol. 47, Garland Library of Medieval Literatur (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 93.

landscape Beaucaire, suggesting a familiarity with the location.[61] The historical context, as well, appears to agree with fictionalized elements in the text. At the beginning of the story, Beaucaire is under siege by ten thousand soldiers. In 1216, Simon de Montfort along with ten thousand infantry men laid siege to Beaucaire as part of the Albigensian Crusade. Both the fictional and real conflicts ended in truces. In the story, Aucassin's father, the Count of Beaucaire, dies while he is away at Torelore. Though it is not made clear how long after Aucassin's departure his death occurred, it could be anywhere from several days or weeks to over three years, which is the amount of time Aucassin spent in Torelore. Either way, upon his return Aucassin becomes Count of Beaucaire. Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse, whose son Raymond VII was in charge of Beaucaire while it was under siege, died a few years after the siege of Beaucaire and his son succeeded him. Raymond VII then married the Infanta of Spain; Aucassin marries Nicolette, a princess of "Cartage." Aucassin also states that the war between his father and the rival Count Bougar has been going on for twenty years, the same duration as the Albigensian crusade.[62]

Even Aucassin's flaws and their portrayal feel aligned with southern literary culture. The few extant Occitan romances such as *Jaufre, Flamenca, Blandin de Cornualha,* and more recently *Guilhem de la Barra,* have often been viewed as "ironic

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[61] Kenneth Urwin, "The Setting of 'Aucassin et Nicolette,'" *The Modern Language Review* 31, no. 3 (1936): 403–5, https://doi.org/10.2307/3715056.

[62] Robert Griffin, "*Aucassin et Nicolette* and the Albigensian Crusade," *Modern Language Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (June 1, 1965): 249-250. Griffin also draws parallels between Torelore and Toulouse, noting the satirical contrast between the bloody siege at Toulouse and the food fight of Torelore. See also Burgess, "Introduction," 95.

readings of French models."[63] In some cases, the text clearly mocks at least elements of northern French romance, such as *Jaufre*, whose antagonist Taulat de Rogimon, despite having the first name "table," is the opposite of the expectation of a Round Table knight.[64] Similarly, *Aucassin et Nicolette*, with its passive and often whiny hero, its active and unfeminine heroine, and generally irreverent tone has often been viewed as a comic text and a parody of chivalric literature.[65] Aucassin, in particular, is not the knightly hero one might expect, as the text readily admits:

> He was endowed with so many good qualities that he had no bad qualities, only good ones. But he was so smitten by Love, which overcomes everything, that he did not wish to become a knight, or to take up arms, or to go to tournaments, or to do anything he ought to do.[66]

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[63] Léglu, *Multilingualism,* 36. This forms a core part of the argument in Jean-Charles Huchet, *Le roman médiéval*, 1re éd., Littératures modernes 36 (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1984).

[64] Caroline Jewers, "The Name of the Ruse and the Round Table: Occitan Romance and the Case for Cultural Resistance," *Neophilologus* 81, no. 2 (1997): 187–200, https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1004204312538. Jewers' argument is more nuanced than the basic suggestion that Occitan romance is a satiric response to northern French romance. She posits that the Occitan romance represents a resistance to the increasing dominance of northern French culture, and the nature of Occitan romance points to the different world-view of the Occitanian audience.

[65] For a dated but still useful overview of the arguments around *Aucassin et Nicolette* and parody see Rudy S. Spraycar, "Genre and Convention in 'Aucassin et Nicolette,'" *Romanic Review* 76, no. 1 (January 1, 1985): 94–115. Missing from Spraycar's bibliography is Norris J. Lacy, "Courtliness and Comedy in *Aucassin et Nicolette*," in *Essays in Early French Literature: Presented to Barbara M. Craig*, ed. Jerry C. Nash and Norris J. Lacy (York, S.C.: French Literature Publications, 1982). For more recent work see Imre Szabics, "Amour et prouesse dans Aucassin et Nicolette," in *Et c'est la fin pour quoi sommes ensemble: hommage à Jean Dufournet: littérature, histoire et langue du Moyen Age*, ed. Jean-Claude Aubailly, Nouvelle bibliothèque du Moyen Âge 25 (Paris: Champion, 1993), 1341–49; Louisa Taha-Abdelghany, "*Aucassin et Nicolette* comme parodie de la chanson de geste," *Romance Review* 4, no. 1 (1994): 95–102; Caroline A. Jewers, *Chivalric Fiction and the History of the Novel* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000); Sarah Kay, "Genre, Parody, and Spectacle in Aucassin et Nicolette and Other Short Comic Tales," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 167–80, https://doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521861755.012. This last does not so much make an argument for reading *Aucassin et Nicolette* as a parody, as an argument for understanding that the norms being parodied are created through the parody itself.

[66] *The Pilgrimage of Charlemagne and Aucassin and Nicolette*, eds. and trans. Glyn S. Burgess and Anne Elizabeth Cobby, Garland Library of Medieval Literature 47 (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 120, II, vv. 9-15. (Henceforth *Aucassin*)

In short, he has no flaws except that he refuses to be a good knight. One might equally argue that Eric from Chrétien's *Eric et Enide* is criticized for being too in love with Enid to attend to knightly pursuits. But Eric never argues that Hell is preferable to Paradise because Paradise is "where old priests go, and old cripples, and the maimed who grovel day and night in front of altars and in old crypts," while Hell is where "handsome clerics go, and handsome knights who have died in tournaments and rich wards, and brave men-at-arms and noblemen."[67] Nor did Eric claim a woman's love is "in the nipple of her breast and in her big toe."[68] Suffice to say that Aucassin provides numerous examples of behavior that seem to mock the idea of chivalric culture, and in doing so, resembles the limited corpus of extant Occitanian romances.

If we allow ourselves to be convinced by these parallels, the degree to which the text is sympathetic to Aucassin, who represents the enemy of northern France, is shocking. Aucassin, though deeply flawed, is nevertheless the hero of the story, and his lady love, Nicolette, is the heroine. The reader-listener is meant to root for them to end up happy together. We are left to ask why a northern author would write a story, centered on a southern town, that seems to be sympathetic to an opposing cause and mocks the northern ethos of chivalry. I would suggest that this story being recorded in a Picard dialect in the north of France is only strange if we are willing to believe that northern France and Occitania maintained strongly separated literary cultures.

On the evidence of reading the reference to a "viel antif" in the second line of the story, thought to be a possible reference to the author, as "viel caitif," J.K. Williams

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[67] *Aucassin*, 126, VI, vv. 21-34, trans. Burgess.
[68] *Aucassin*, 138, XIV, vv. 14-18, trans. Burgess.

suggests the seeming contradictions of *Aucassin et Nicolette,* “may be due to some captive minstrel, possibly an Arab, who sang and recited his story in the Picard tongue in the hall of one of the Northern French barons.”[69] As delightfully colorful as this suggestion is, it is difficult to rest such a claim on so little evidence. Williams is on slightly firmer ground with his reference to Arab influence. The mix of prose and verse was common in Arabic romances, and Aucassin’s name not only sounds more Arabic than French but resembles al-Kasim, the name of an eleventh-century Moorish king of Cordova.[70] However, Joan Williamson notably argues that Aucassin and Nicolette are both Provençal names.[71] Far more likely an explanation for the southern flare of the story are the suggestions put forth by Glyn Burgess that the author “may…have been retelling someone else’s tale and simply maintained the place names he encountered in his source” or “he may have picked up the outline of the story as a result of a visit to Provence or Spain.”[72] The latter would complement Burgess’s suggestion that the author may have been “a gifted minstrel,” and hence an individual likely to travel, though, as he acknowledges, there is equally strong evidence for a clerical author.[73] The traces of Occitanian culture throughout the text are strong enough that Robert Griffin uses it to demonstrate the connection between Catharism and troubadour poetry, two Occitanian phenomena, despite the fact that the story is allegedly from the north.[74] Perhaps, as with

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[69] J.K. Williams, “A Disputed Reading in *Aucassin et Nicolette*, I, 2,” *Modern Language Review* 27 (1932), 63.
[70] Burgess also notes that some scholars have derived strange words in the text from Arabic words such as *amuaffle* meaning emir coming from *almodaffer*, XXXVII, 8. Burgess, “Introduction,” 103.
[71] Joan B. Williamson, “Naming as a Source of Irony in Aucassin et Nicolette,” *Studi Francesi* 51, no. XVII, fasc. III (1973): 401–9.
[72] Burgess, “Introduction,” 95.
[73] Burgess, 93.
[74] Griffin, “Aucassin et Nicolette.”

Girart de Roussillon, an earlier version of *Aucassin et Nicolette* existed either in Occitan or in a blended dialect but the manuscript did not survive.

The connection with *Aucassin et Nicolette* says as much about Occitanian romance as it does about *Aucassin et Nicolette*. In order to parody or mock a literary tradition, one must be intimately familiar with that tradition. Details of the at least one of the Occitan romances evidences this interaction as well. Taulat is not only the antagonist in *Jaufre*, but appears briefly in several earlier northern romance texts, particularly Chrétien's *Eric et Enide* and *Lancelot*. The number of examples "suggest the generic quality of a largely positive minor character," but the very usage of a *generic* (related to genre) character in both northern and Occitanian romances shows a shared tradition despite the fact that the character appears very different in *Jaufre*.[75] Moreover, just as Taulat is mentioned in the northern French romances, several of the most famous knights of the roundtable appear in *Jaufre*, such as Gauvain, Lancelot, Tristan, Yvain, Erec, Keu, Perceval, and more.[76] As Caroline Jewers writes, "*Jaufre*, most likely dating from the crucial period of the first quarter of the thirteenth century, is firmly rooted in the Northern French tradition, although ultimately unsympathetic to it in subtle and crucial ways."[77] Léglu finds similar echoes in the early fourteenth century Occitanian text *Guilhem de la Barra*, which she reads as an ironic text modeled on the *chansons de geste* and the French *romans d'aventures*.[78] Thus, while scholars such as Jewers and Paden conclude that "the

[75] Jewers, 191.
[76] Jewers, 189.
[77] Jewers, 188.
[78] Léglu, 37.

literary mistrust of the North by the South was in all likelihood a two-way exchange," there is no doubt that there was meaningful exchange between the two.[79]

Much time has been spent here establishing the connections between northern French and Occitanian romance and troubadour literature, particularly as it relates to specific texts that appear in this project. Nothing has been said about literary cross-pollination in regard to the northern fabliaux, which appear in Chapter Three. This is largely due to the fact that the fabliau is a singular genre. Its closest analogue is the fable with its moralizing and didactic overtone that the fabliau often adopts facetiously. There are only two extant texts from the Occitan tradition that can be said to resemble fabliaux: *Castia Gilos* and *Novas del Papagai*. According to Keith Busby, however, it is less that these are the same as northern fabliaux, at times they more readily echo lyric poetry, than that they fulfill the same role in the Occitan corpus.[80] Jewers, for her part, argues *Jaufre* is more like the fabliaux than the northern French romances because both more readily use economic language to describe social exchanges. She notes particularly the use of the economically charged *comprar* and *vendre* in the introduction to *Jaufre,* which "is all but unthinkable in conventional courtly romance in the North, and would more readily be associated with the less refined mercantile exchange of the fabliau."[81] Jewers also

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[79] Jewers, 196. This quotation is from Jewers, summarizing Paden's point, with which she agrees. She uses Paden's argument that the Albigensian Crusade did contribute to the end of Occitan lyric, though not in the straight-forward way traditionally believed, to argue that the same circumstances may have contributed to the failure of the romance genre in the Occitania.

[80] Keith Busby, "The Occitan Fabliaux and the Linguistic Distribution of Genres," *Neophilologus* 80, no. 1 (1996): 11–23, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00430015. See also Irénée Cruzel, "Le fabliau dans la littérature provençale du moyen âge," *Annales du Midi* 66, no. 28 (1954): 317–26, https://doi.org/10.3406/anami.1954.6011 and Willem Noomen, "Le Castia-Gilos: Du thème au texte," *Neophilologus* 71, no. 3 (July 1, 1987): 358–71, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00211122. *Castia Gilos*, it is worth noting, was written by the same Raimon Vidal, a Catalan poet, cited below.

[81] Jewers, 197. She notes, however, that the episode in Yvain involving the maiden prisoners of *Le chastel del Pesme Avanture*, in which they work in poor conditions for little pay, is an exception.

contends that southern audiences had a greater expectation of and desire for "realism" as shown in fabliaux and hybrid *romans realistes* like *Guillaume de Dole*. In establishing this, she solidifies her argument for why romance was less popular in Occitania, but also provides insight into how fabliaux may have found more success.[82] Either way, neither of the Occitan "fabliaux" nor *Jaufre* contain the crucially important insight on individuals who sell sex, whereas the northern fabliaux present examples of both men and women selling sex. Given the clear connections between these two literary cultures and the paucity of sources depicting the sale of sex acts in general, it feels imperative that a dissertation covering sex work in this area and this time period include the fabliaux.

Finally, there seems to have been a cultural, linguistic bias towards using Occitan for lyric poetry and French for narrative verse. Raimon Vidal, a Catalan, wrote a treatise, *Razos de Trobar*, on how to write verse in Occitan in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. In it he claims

> The French tongue is better and more attractive for composing romances and *pastourelles*, but the one of the Limousin is better for composing *vers*, *cansos,* and *sirventes.* And throughout the lands of our language, the songs of the Limousin tongue have greater authority than any other language.[83]

Raimon defines the "Limousin tongue" as the dialects spoken in Limousin, Provence, Avergene, Quercy, and adjacent provinces.[84] It is impossible to tell if this was truly the case, and Occitan, for some reason, was the preferred language for poetry and French for narrative, or if this idea took root and made itself true. Perhaps it was both. Regardless,

[82] Jewers, 197.
[83] As quoted and translated in Léglu, 9. This quotation appears in nearly every scholarly book or article that addresses Occitan language and romance, including those cited in the previous passages. I have chosen to cite Léglu's translation as she provides the complete original quotation and her own translation, rather than pieces of it.
[84] Léglu, 10.

the belief persisted, and, approximately a century later, Dante presented a slightly modified version of it.

> The language of *oïl* [French] adduces on its own behalf the fact that, because of the greater facility and pleasing quality of its vernacular style, everything that is recounted or invented in vernacular prose belongs to it… the language of *oc* [Occitan], argues in its own favour that eloquent writers in the vernacular first composed poems in this sweeter and more perfect language.[85]

We cannot know the power behind such assertions as a force creating a cultural truth, but what we can and do know is that most extant Occitan literature is lyric poetry rather than narrative verse or prose. There may have been more Occitan narrative works that simply did not survive the various wars that devastated France, particularly the south, starting with the Albigensian Crusade. But it seems that even in its own time, French narrative was better known abroad in places such as Italy, where the flourishing of Occitan poetry would suggest that Occitan narrative verse would have every opportunity to thrive.[86]

The effect of which language has supremacy over which genres is significant in how it effects content and the exploration of that content. Romance and fabliaux provide layers of content bring that troubadour lyric does not and cannot. As Simon Gaunt explains of lyric poetry versus romance, "The stasis of the lyric means lyric poetry can fantasize about specific moments, whereas romance needs to sustain sequential action. Lyric poetry elevates women within discourse and turns a blind eye to the consequences; romance has to portray the reactions of women to courtly rhetoric."[87] Because it is a

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[85] As quoted and translated in Charmaine Lee, "'Versi d'amore e Prose Di Romanzi': The Reception of Occitan Narrative Genres in Italy," *Tenso* 28, no. 1–2 (2013): 18–32, https://doi.org/10.1353/ten.2013.0010. Addition in brackets mine.
[86] Lee, 19.
[87] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, 121.

narrative genre, romance is obligated to explore and explain social situations and reactions, providing more content and context for each moment. For their part, the fabliaux take a particularly unique approach to presenting and assessing society, and this approach is pertinent to engagement with sex and money. According to Richard Spencer, "The majority of the fabliaux concerned with money are also concerned about the state of society. They are poems of wish-fulfilment [sic] which start from a situation close to reality and move through fantasy to a miraculous inversion of reality."[88] This is not to say there is not interesting work to be done on sex work and gender in the study of troubadours, merely that this project is undertaking a study better served by romance and fabliaux. This is best exemplified in how these genres provide content that helps rectify the imbalance between gender representation in each form of sex work noted in the introduction. The romances show women using music to earn a living, albeit only temporarily, and the fabliaux feature men who sell sex. Thus, since there is more relevant material from the Old French literature than the Old Occitan literature and the two literary cultures are deeply intertwined, we may posit that the former reveals some of the same cultural assumptions as the latter would if there were a greater extant corpus.

Economy

While these new forms of literature were changing perspectives on love and desire, the economy in Occitania was experiencing the growing pains of an economic boom coupled with unstable demographics. Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth

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[88] Richard Spencer, "The Role of Money in the Fabliaux," in *Epopée animale, fable, fabliau: actes du IVe colloque de la société internationale renardienne, Evreux, 7-11 septembre 1981*, ed. International Reynard Society (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1984), 573.

centuries, the population in Europe, but particularly in France, was subject to sharp rises and falls. While the population was growing rapidly in the twelfth century, several intermittent droughts, floods, and late or minimal harvests caused mass famines throughout the countryside.[89] Crowded cities facilitated the spread of diseases, many carried by the same pilgrims and merchants forging new travel routes. These fluctuations of the population both responded to and caused changes in the economy: more people required more goods which required more trade but scarcity could drive up costs, led to food speculation, and cause mass death. For example, in Toulouse, the wine trade was booming, craft and trade industries were growing, and, despite the limited evidence, it is clear there was a general expansion of the economy and the town itself.[90] Simultaneously, there was widespread real estate speculation and usury, particularly under the guise of the *mortgage*, an agreement wherein the debtor agreed to hand over the ownership of the land and any profits derived from that land without those profits acting as payment against the principal loan.[91] Once under the hold of a mortgage, the average person was unlikely to ever pay off their debt.

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[89] Michel Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 59-69.

[90] John Mundy, *Society and Government at Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars*, Studies and Texts 129 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1997), 9-26, particularly, 9-12.

[91] Mollat, 67-69; Deborah Shulevitz, “Heresy, Money, and Society in Southern France, 1175-1325” (New York, Columbia University, 2017), 62-63; Mundy, *Society*, 179-184. For a study of real estate investment in England in a slightly later period, but which nonetheless illuminates some of the vagaries of medieval real estate, see Adrian R Bell, Chris Brooks, and Helen Killick, “Medieval Property Investors, ca. 1300-1500,” *Enterprise & Society* 20, no. 3 (2019): 575–612. For a comprehensive study of contracts, including the *mortgage*, in the area around Toulouse see Mireille Castaing-Sicard, *Les contrats dans le très ancien droit toulousain, Xe-XIIIe siècle* (Toulouse: M. Espic, 1959).

The structure of the economy in Occitania was made all the more complicated by the predominant system of inheritance. While much of Europe practiced primogeniture, children in Occitania received equal shares of the inheritance, or, if the eldest son was favored, the younger children received enough to live comfortably.[92] Though this did not always include women, whose inheritance was sometimes implicitly provided in the form of dowry, women could and occasionally did receive their own separate inheritance.[93] The practice of partible inheritance began to deteriorate in the thirteenth century, as ever decreasing amounts of land led to impoverishment and familial conflicts.[94] Roger Aubenas connects this decline to the resurgence of Roman law in Occitanian society in the twelfth century. According to Aubenas, by the time the twelfth century ended, many nobles in Occitania knew they were in trouble, with their lands significantly diminished through being divided every generation. He even cites a document showing nobles so impoverished that they were working the land alongside peasants.[95] Roman law offered a solution to this constant division by emphasizing the will of the testator. Whereas customary law dictated equal division, in Roman law, the will of the testator was of

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[92] Hélène Débax has recently argued that the phenomenon of co-seigneurie, or co-owning/co-inheriting tracts of land or domains, was more widespread than scholars previously thought. Still, she admits that it is most evident and common in Occitania. Hélène Débax, *La seigneurie collective: Pairs, pariers, paratge* (Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012).

[93] Cheyette, *Ermengard,* 28-29. For more on inheritance and dowry, particularly the denial of inheritance for a daughter who had been provided a dowry, see Laurent Mayali, *Droit savant et coutumes: l'exclusion des filles dotées XIIème siècles*, Ius commune. Sonderhefte 33 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1987). See also R. Aubenas, "La famille dans l'ancienne Provence," *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* 8, no. 42 (1936), 525-527 and *Le testament en Provence dans l'ancien droit* (P. Roubaud, 1927), 137-141.

[94] John Mundy notes that the Custom of Toulouse explicitly states that all male issue are a married pairs' heirs. However, several documents do suggest a favoring of older siblings, particularly if the family was not wealthy enough to divide the money. Mundy notes this may also be related to the fact that elder siblings were still expected to care for younger siblings in their minority. Mundy, *Society*, 130-136. Aubenas, "La famille," 523.

[95] Aubenas, "La famille," 524.

paramount importance. Thus the testator could choose to leave the majority of their land to a one child, such as the eldest son, contravening customs but honoring the right of the testator to make that decision.[96]

Though the revival of Roman law happened throughout the twelfth century, the shift from partible inheritance was a slow process, which only truly took off in the thirteenth century.[97] In the intervening years, younger daughters, given dowries, sometimes proved better off than younger sons, who might receive money but often had to work as farm laborers as well.[98] In certain locations in Provence, women maintained control of their dowry even after marriage, and many widows were inheritors in their husbands' wills and given the usufruct of his property. There were certainly limitations, and it would be inaccurate to see women as "liberated" in medieval Occitania, but both scenarios allowed a degree of financial freedom and control over property transactions.[99] Several studies examine noble women who wielded significant power in their own rights. To the north were the courts of Queen Eleanor at Poitiers and of her daughter, Countess Marie of Champagne, supporting writers such as Chrétien de Troyes and Andreas Capellanus; in the south we find the court of Ermengarde of Viscountess of Narbonne and patron of the troubadours.[100]

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[96] Aubenas, "La famille," 524-525. For more on the effects of Roman law on thirteenth century inheritance see Aubenas, *Le testament,* 60-63.
[97] Aubenas, "La famille," 525.
[98] Paterson, 224-226.

[99] Paterson, 227-228.

[100] See for example, Cheyette, *Ermengard*; Theodore Evergates, *Marie of France: Countess of Champagne, 1145-1198*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

The issue of partible inheritance slowly diminishing the size, earning capacity, and production of the lands of noble families, coupled with the population boom and urban growth, led to an increasing reliance on long distance trade. Money, as a mobile signifier of value, became crucial. The monetary system in the twelfth century was based on the silver *denarius* (penny), twelve of which equaled a *solidus* (shilling). However, demand for cash outstripped the availability of silver, a situation worsened by the wear on the silver in circulation, damage done to that currency, and, sometimes, the actions of the mint.[101] Just as political rule of Occitania was fragmented amongst various powers, there were many separate entities with the ability to mint coins. Cities such as Toulouse, Narbonne, Carcassonne, and more had their own mints with their own individual coins, and these coins were not created equal. The proportion of silver varied from coin to coin and depended upon immediate economic circumstances surrounding the minting of coins. With competition for bullion high and the need to churn out more coins, pennies were increasingly debased through the addition of base metals such as copper. Certain coins were known to hold higher value than others and thus exchanges could occur across coinage, but the value of the silver penny generally decreased throughout the twelfth century.[102] At times this was due to specific manipulation by minting authorities either to increase their own income, to make up for the scarcity of silver, or sometimes both.[103] If

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[101] Gaspar Feliu, "Money and Currency," in *Money and Coinage in the Middle Ages*, ed. Rory Naismith (Boston: Brill, 2018), 26-27.

[102] Richard Kelleher, "From the Commercial Revolution to the Black Death (c.1150–1350)," in *Money and Coinage in the Middle Ages*, ed. Rory Naismith (Boston: Brill, 2018), 126-128. For the most comprehensive overview of money in medieval Europe see Peter Spufford, *Money and Its Use in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[103] Feliu, 31.

one mint debased their coins, it could cause competing mints to debase their coins also, to remain a viable alternative.[104]

The consequences of these varied and variable monies were both economic and social. As Gaspar Feliu explains, "'money matters'...Monetary changes are passive neither economically nor socially."[105] While certain modes of accounting favored debtors, who might owe a certain number of pennies based on the previous value the silver penny held, the poor were at the mercy of the mints. Unable to afford "full silver" or gold coins, they relied upon the ever-diminishing silver penny, which not only became less valuable in terms of silver content but was also debased as it related to the higher denomination coins. The rich became richer and the poor became poorer.[106] There is nothing revelatory about noting that the medieval economy was highly dichotomized, with a vast majority of the population having little prospect of financial stability or security. But the stark reality of the scarcity of valuable/valued money has to be considered in terms of its effects on more abstract concepts of value and its desirability. Eugene Vance explains, "By the end of the twelfth century, money had not only become the mediator for all other manifestations of need or desire, but it had finally substituted itself as a primary object of desire."[107] Thus money, as money and for the sake of money,

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[104] Nicholas Mayhew, *Coinage in France from the Dark Ages to Napoleon* (London: Seaby, 1988), 26.
[105] Feliu, 37.

[106] Feliu, 37.

[107] Vance, "Love's Concordance," 44.

was an independent source of wealth, which would come to cause new decrees against usury in the Lateran Council of 1179.[108]

While Vance's portrayal of early medieval concepts of money is perhaps overly primitive, his point regarding money as an object of desire stands. In a world where the economy is more monetized, money is desirable as a means to an end and as a status symbol. Elizabeth Edwards, writing about a broad swath of medieval literature such as Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, Jean Meun's *Roman de la Rose*, various works of Chaucer, and more, explains the symbolism of money in her analysis of the "trope of plenty." She writes, "Money partakes of the logic of distance and absence; money stands in for something not present. It is thus an intrinsic part of the lack that causes war, hoarding, and avarice."[109] We might reconfigure these ideas to posit a simpler idea: those who lack, desire. Edwards connects the meaning of money in medieval literature explicitly to sex noting how often in literature "profits" are sexual and "when money moves, sexual profits accrue."[110] This is particularly true in comical stories and fabliaux, where a character may find themselves paying double or being paid double through a series of tricks. Even in the romance genre, through the effacement of the money economy, gift giving and courting become tied up in desire and "plenty." Edwards cites Marie de France's *Lanval*, in which the protagonist is given endless wealth by a fairy queen, as long as he keeps her existence a secret. Lanval fails to do so and briefly loses

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[108] Vance, "Love's Concordance," 44.

[109] Elizabeth Edwards, "Money and Literature," in *Money and Coinage in the Middle Ages*, ed. Rory Naismith (Boston: Brill, 2018), 268.

[110] Edwards, "Money and Literature," 269.

his love, but, in the end, he is vindicated by her return and proceeds to run away to the fairy realm with her.[111]

There is far more to be said about the commodification of love in even the most "courtly" genres, but suffice to say that Edwards' argument that "it is impossible to talk about the meaning of money in medieval literature without talking about sex" rings true.[112] When we consider this information in the context of the monetary and economic changes happening in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, it's clear that money/commerce and desire/sex are not only deeply entangled but also uniquely positioned at the center of major societal changes. It is perhaps as a result of the centrality of these ideas and issues that sex workers become more visible at the turn of the century through municipal law, such as that of 1201 in Toulouse, forbidding sex workers from plying their trade within the city walls. Commercial sex brings together all of the fluctuating and anxiety-inducing changes happening in the Occitania at the time.

This project does not seek to unpack the complexities of the medieval marketplace or even the economics of commercial sex, though Chapter Four includes an extended discussion of real estate and rent. However, this basic understanding of money, economics, and desire demonstrates the importance of studying sex work in the twelfth century and the intellectual avenues open to scholars willing to tackle such studies in the future. What does it mean to study sex as a commodity in an economic system that so

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[111] Edwards, "Money and Literature," 271.

[112] Edwards, "Money and Literature," 269. In his article, "Love's Concordance," Vance examines the linguistic connection between money and desire, noting how vernacular words describing valor, worth, and more derive from Latin words about money or commerce. See also *Love for Sale*, in which William Burgwinkle examines the corpus of the troubadour razos and the connection between love and commerce.

closely relates money with desire? Moreover, when viewing an economy in transition, one that suddenly requires more trade, more goods, and more money than it did before, how do we understand payment and what constitutes payment? How do we define sex work and what constitutes sex work? Though I have already laid out my working definition in this project, I hope future scholars focusing on sex work in the twelfth century will complicate my straightforward definition. These various permutations and angles from which to approach the question of sex work are what makes this time and place so vital in our attempts to understand medieval sex work and, more broadly, medieval sexuality. And it is why the relative neglect of this time period due to a dearth of sources is so in need of redress.

The Albigensian Crusade

The Albigensian Crusade may appear to be notably absent from this dissertation, but the omission is one of chronology and necessity. It has been my aim throughout this first chapter to show how rapid change in trade, culture, economics, and politics brought about specific circumstances in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries that provide unique insight into medieval concepts of gender and sexuality, particularly as they relate to sex work. But such a precise series of coincidences cannot last for long, and the Albigensian Crusade marks the end of this particular coalescing of circumstances and the beginning of an important new era, one that is markedly different enough to require its own study.

The archival research of this project does extend through the thirteenth century, but beyond noting what these documents can tell us about the social prospects for sex workers in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, I do not attempt to address

anything after the Albigensian Crusade. I leave that to the capable scholars I cite, who focus their studies on the late Middle Ages. The centralization of power, the stabilizing of coinage, the reining in of the powers of towns in Occitania through the rulership of the King of France, not to mention the cultural trauma of a vicious war that divided the city of Toulouse in two, all point to fundamental shifts in people's lived realities. Thus, the focus of this project is the period just before royal leadership truly takes over in 1229 with the Treaty of Paris at Meaux. This timeline includes the occupation of Toulouse by Simon de Montfort between 1215 and 1217, which will be referenced in the archival chapter in relation to two documents, one from 1214 and one from 1215. The vast majority of the documents that compose my original research date from before 1209, when the crusaders first marched south. And while the Cathars, as a cultural force, may have meaningfully affected sex work in late twelfth and early thirteenth century, I do not parse those influences as Cathar influences in particular but as part of a larger culture of Occitania. What can be said about the activities and beliefs of the Cathars is limited, and much of our information comes from antagonistic sources or confessions borne of torture.[113] Until more can be said concretely about who the Cathars were, we cannot

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[113] Malcolm Barber's *The Cathars: Dualist Heretics in Languedoc in the High Middle Ages*, Second edition, Medieval World (New York ; London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), provides a solid foundation for researching the Cathars. Mundy, again, proves an invaluable source. Much of his later oeuvre focuses on the Cathars and their influence. See Mundy, *Men and Women*. Mundy, *Society*; *The Repression of Catharism at Toulouse: The Royal Diploma of 1279*, Studies and Texts 74 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1985); *Studies in the Ecclesiastical and Social History of Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006). See also Heinrich Fichtenau, *Heretics and Scholars in the High Middle Ages, 1000-1200* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998). For a recent volume that presents both sides of the current debate about the existence of the Cathars see Antonio Sennis, ed., *Cathars in Question* (Boydell & Brewer, 2016), https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cathars-in-question/D1F626BFAA21C2B39C06A1F6836BE608. Finally, for an analysis that centers the economic connections amongst individuals identified as Cathars see Deborah Shulevitz, "Following the Money: Cathars, Apostolic Poverty, and the Economy in Languedoc, 1237–1259," *Journal of Medieval Religious*

untangle what their specific role was in shaping sex work in Occitania in the twelfth century.

All of the factors discussed above contribute to the landscape of sex work in Occitania in the High Middle Ages and why the modern scholar cannot be content with only studying later periods that provide greater archival material on sex work. In a medieval world where women could inherit property and patronage of the arts boomed but the economy led many to ruin and religious wars were a mainstay, sex work played a unique role. It sat at the center of discourses on gender, same-sex relationships, love, wealth, and value. The coming chapters will discuss some of these discourses and their effects on individuals and on culture.[114]

Cultures 44, no. 1 (2018): 24–59, https://doi.org/10.5325/jmedirelicult.44.1.0024. This article represents some of the arguments made in Shulevitz's dissertation, "Heresy, Money, and Society," cited above.

[114] All translations my own unless otherwise noted.

Chapter 2: Take me to Church: Theological Attitudes Towards Sex Work

Just because sex work was not explicitly criminalized by the church or secular authorities in the twelfth century does not mean religious writers had uncomplicated views on the issue of sex work. The twelfth century marked an increased interest in classical literature and law, and theologians took on the momentous task of cohering the various conflicting ideas of the Church fathers.[1] The result was often convoluted and highly technical. One of the persisting ideas from late antiquity to the twelfth century was the intertwining of musical performance and selling sex, wherein those who entertained for a living were classified as similar, or even synonymous, to those who sold sex for a living. I argue that theologians defined sex work by lascivious corporeality and both selling sex and musical performance met this definition. This view of musical entertainment as sex work coexisted comfortably with an understanding of *musica* as an important field of philosophical learning due to a carefully constructed and maintained divide between the mathematical and religious understanding of cosmic *musica* and the real, aural experience of musical performances. It is ultimately a focus on artificial divides and boundaries that this chapter aims to illuminate, both between *musica* and musical performance and gendered perceptions of sex workers.

Female sex work, in the eyes of many religious men, was a "lesser evil to be tolerated," as it served as an outlet for men's lust, keeping them from assaulting or having unsanctioned sex with virtuous women – the greater evil. Women sex workers were anti-women while still not being men. They were permitted to exist specifically to protect

[1] John W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes, and Merchants: The Social Views of Peter The Chanter & His Circle*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), I, 47.

society from the excesses of men. Men sought them out to have sex they were not supposed to have with respectable, or ideal, women. Yet there was a prevailing concern that honest women could slip into this other category due to an inherent promiscuity, and to avoid this slippage sex workers had to be further separated from women ideologically and socially. While women engaged in sex work could be tolerated because they were the antithesis of a good woman, male sex workers were unacceptable precisely because they were the antithesis of good men. Because other men made up the majority of individuals purchasing sex, the sale of sexualized performance by men was seen as a sexualized call to other men. The gendering of sex acts in the Middle Ages means that this sexualized call was one that destabilized the performer's gender; the Church, and the rest of society, considered the (figurative and literal) position of any man acting less than manly precarious. Ultimately, the male sex worker's body became a visible space of deviant sex and gender, used by theologians to rail against sexual and gender transgressions and exert control over masculinity as a whole. Both these formulations of sex workers bodies are defined by a disparity between the gender of sex workers and the gender of others.

In order to make an argument about the gender of sex workers, we must first understand the connection being made between performers and individuals who sold sex. Therefore, this chapter must argue for the inclusion of jongleurs under the category of sex worker before it can address broader implications. To this end, I begin by looking at the traditions the Church inherited from Rome and early patristic writers. I then address the seemingly incongruous attitudes towards religious performance and secular performance evident in early Christianity by discussing the definition of *musica* and the importance of genre. Next, I discuss important twelfth century ideas of sex work as it relates to

performance, and I use the folk-dance the *carole* as a form of case study for understanding these connections and their stakes. Finally, with a solid groundwork in place, I discuss the how sex workers fit in, or rather do not fit in, to landscape of sex and gender in the twelfth century as conceived of by theologians.

Foundations from the Church Fathers

The Church fathers inherited a long legal tradition that connected selling sex and selling entertainment. Though both were permitted under Roman law, they came at a price. The legal concept of *infamia,* literally meaning "lacking in reputation," applied to actors, those who sold sex, and gladiators. As Catharine Edwards explains in her study of Roman legal texts, all three "sold their own flesh."[2] Having an "infamous" profession meant you could not be a character witness in a court of law, you could not bring accusations against others, you were debarred from public office, and you could be beaten, mutilated or violated with few to no consequences.[3] Many of these prohibitions would be directly quoted by medieval theologians and used in medieval law. During the Roman Empire, actresses and women who sold sex were considered *humiles abiectaeque personae* (lowly and debased persons).[4] Part of this condition was permanent and inherent to the character of the individual, and the depth of this inferiority of character meant the legal status of *humiles abiectaeque personae* could even be passed on to

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[2] Catharine Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions: Public Performance and Prostitution in Ancient Rome," in *Roman Sexualities*, ed. Judith P. Hallet and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 67.

[3] Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 66-67. The concept of *infamia* is a complicated one and disentangling it does not fall under the purview of this study. Edwards' article provides background, context, and more on what *infamia* is and how it relates to public figures, both of the low and the elite classes.

[4] Dorothea R. French, "Maintaining Boundaries: The Status of Actresses in Early Christian Society," *Vigiliae Christianae* 52 (1998), 296.

offspring.[5] But another part was defined by one's irregular lifestyle and an overt and notorious licentiousness, and, in this too, actresses and musicians were seen as analogous to women who sold sex.[6] Individuals within this legal category were not allowed to marry certain people, specifically those of a higher class, which was the bulk of the population. Free men could not marry harlots, actresses, or loose women and conversely "men who practiced the *ludicri artes* [stage arts] were ineligible to marry women of the senatorial class."[7] Based on their legal status, Edwards explains, "Actors and actresses were regularly assumed to be prostitutes."[8] But Edwards also rightly cautions us from concluding this means that actors and actresses sold sex. Instead, she argues the public nature of their profession, the use of their bodies "as objects of fascination and desire" linked the two professions conceptually.[9] Anne Duncan also draws the parallel of "faking it," in her study of the Roman Comedy stock character of the *meretrix* and Roman clothing conventions. Both professions "operated under the sign of the fictional, the feigned, the fake…the actor is a prostitute, the prostitute is an actor."[10] This line was especially blurred by higher-class sex workers, who were likely to have a host of professional skills, including playing musical instruments, singing, dancing, and acting.[11]

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[5] French, 297.
[6] James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 45.
[7] Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society,* 36-37. Many of these laws would be changed under Justinian, likely due to his own marriage to a former actress, Theodora. For a closer analysis of this legislation, its repeal, and its reinstatement, see French, "Maintaining Boundaries." French concludes that it is unlikely the legal fluctuations had much of an effect on the lower-class women engaged in these professions.
[8] Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 81.
[9] Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 81.
[10] Anne Duncan, "Infamous Performers: Comic Actors and Female Prostitutes in Rome," in *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Laura K. McClure (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 256.
[11] Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society,* 26.

Early Christian writers continued this convention of linking performance and sex work, adding their own tenor of moral outrage to the Roman's legal stipulations. Arnobius, a fourth century convert to Christianity with more passion for defending the faith than knowledge of scripture, wrote a scathing indictment of theatrical entertainment. Though only one copy of his work, *Adversus nationes*, survives, his words provide a powerful starting point for understanding the sinful confluence of dance, music, and sex that Churchmen would inveigh against for centuries.

> Was it for this that he sent souls, that as members of a holy and dignified race they practise here the arts of music and piping, that in blowing on the tibia they puff out their cheeks, that they lead obscene songs, that they raise a great din with the clapping of scabella; under the influence of which a multitude of other lascivious [*lasciviens*] souls abandon themselves to bizarre movements of the body, dancing and singing, forming rings of dancers, and ultimately raising their buttocks and hips to sway with the rippling motion of their loins? Was it for this that he sent souls, that in men they become male prostitutes, and in women harlots, sambucists and harpists.[12]

Although not all early Christian thinkers were as vitriolic as Arnobius, the direct connection he draws between musical performance and sexual promiscuity pervades theological writings throughout the late antique and medieval period. Tertullian, a North African Christian writing in the second century cites Liber and Venus, god of wine, fertility and freedom and goddess of love respectively, as the patrons of the theatrical

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[12] "Idcirco animas misit, ut res sancti atque augustissimi nominis symphoniacas agerent et fistulatorias hic artes, ut inflandis bucculas distenderent tibiis, cantionibus ut praeirent obscoenis numerositer, et scabillorum concrepationibus sonoris, quibus animarum alia lasciviens multitudo incompositos corporum dissolveretur in motus, saltitaret, et cantaret, orbes saltatorios verteret, et ad ultimum clunibus et coxendicibus sublevatis lumborum crispitudine fluctuaret? Idcirco animas misit, ut in maribus exoleti, in feminis fierent meretrices, sambucistriae, psaltriae, venalia ut prosternerent corpora, vilitatem sui populo publicarent, in lupanaribus promptae, in fornicibus obvinctae, nihil pati renuentes, ad oris stuprum paratae?" James McKinnon, ed., *Music in Early Christian Literature*, Cambridge Readings in The Literature of Music (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 49-50, trans. McKinnon. Original text in Arnobius, *Adversus nationes* II, 42 (PL, V, 881-3A).

arts.[13] At times the connection is less overt, and more a matter of proximity; a theologian creates a list of like things and decries their sinfulness. For example, John Chrysostom states that “those who introduce actors, dancers and prostitutes into banquets, also summon there demons and the devil, and fill their homes with every manner of discord.”[14] Thus, although not always overtly equated, this repeated juxtaposition had the effect of entangling the two professions. This close association of singing, dancing, and entertainment with sex played into an overarching rejection of theater and theatrical performance by the Christian church as part of its rejection of pagan ritual and the associated idolatry.[15] But, as James McKinnon points out, a strong thread of moralism, specifically regarding sexual morals, runs throughout the writings of the Church fathers. For these thinkers, “the lewd aspect of theatrical musicians, the coarseness of marriage songs and the dubious profession of the female musicians at banquets,” was just as troubling as the connection between musical practice and pagan cults.[16]

Once the connection between sex and entertainment is established, the direct association of entertainers and people who sell sex is clear, and as Arnobius exemplifies, early Christians were not shy about drawing these parallels. Due to this strong connection, positive portrayals of music, such as that of David playing for Saul, had to be

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[13] McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 43, trans. McKinnon. Original text in Tertullian, *De spectaculis*, x, 8-9 (PL, I, 643).
[14] McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature,* 81, trans. McKinnon. Original text in John Chrysostom, *In psalmum xli*, 2 (PL, LV, 258). Chrysostom also laments that inviting people from the stage and having “diabolical dances” at a wedding will “spoil the modesty of the maiden and make the groom more wanton,” McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 84-85, trans. McKinnon. More examples from various early theologians than it is practical to cover can be found in McKinnon’s book.
[15] Andreas Kramarz, “Christian Reception of the ‘New-Music’ Debate in the Church Fathers and Clement of Alexandria,” *Greek and Roman Musical Studies* 6, no. 2 (August 24, 2018): 359–378, https://doi.org/10.1163/22129758-12341327, here 362-369.
[16] McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 3.

carefully explained. John Arthur Smith explains that much of early Christian literature on musical instruments was either figurative or concrete. Many of the concrete examples echo the negative views already laid out, with Christians being warned away from musical instruments because of their association with pagan ritual. But figurative literature served as a means of understanding Scripture and therefore was almost always positive.[17] Figurative interpretations often functioned through the use of allegory. Different musical instruments could be understood as representing dichotomies such as body/soul, divinity/humanity, and more. Augustine, for example, saw the psaltery and harp of Psalm 57:9 as representing miracles and suffering respectively.[18] Cassiodorus viewed the ten strings of the kithara, an instrument similar to the lyre, as the Ten Commandments and many later writers specifically cite Cassiodorus on this point.[19] A kithara in the hand might even stand for the Holy Spirit, which was at hand to assist Christians in connecting with God.[20] Medieval writers echoed these allegorical interpretations, and medieval images used depictions of instruments to emphasize a distinction between flesh and spirit.[21] Theodoret of Cyrus, a bishop near Antioch who

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[17] John Arthur Smith, *Music in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: Routledge, 2016), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315596808, 169-174. See also Johannes Quasten, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*, NPM Studies in Church Music and Liturgy (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Pastoral Musicians, 1983).
[18] Ruth Mazo Karras, *Thou Art the Man: The Masculinity of David in the Christian and Jewish Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), 137 and 240 n. 8 and n. 9. See also Kramarz 368.
[19] Isabelle Marchesin, "Les images musicales occidentales aux VIIIe et IXe siècles: une exégèse visuelle," in *Biblical Studies in the Early Middle Ages: Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Studies in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Claudio Leonardi and Giovanni Orlandi (Florence: SISMEL, 2005), 263; Karras, *Thou Art the Man*, 241 n. 10.
[20] Smith, 171. Smith provides several examples in 169-171.
[21] Isabelle Marchesin, "Les corps musical dans les miniatures psalmiques carolingiennes et romanes," in *Le geste et les gestes au moyen âge* (Aix-en-Provence: CUERMA, 1998); Martine Clouzot, "Les allégories de la musique dans les livres peints (XIe-XVe siècle): mouvements musicalités et temporalités d'une herméneutique," in *L'allégorie dans l'art du moyen âge* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 257.

commented prolifically on music, explains why musical instruments were allowed in the Old Testament but not the New Testament:

> The Levites employed these instruments…not because God enjoyed their sound but because he accepted the intention of those involved…For since they were fond of play and laughter, and these things took place in the temples of the idols, he permitted them and thereby enticed them, thus avoiding the greater evil by allowing the lesser, and teaching perfect things through the imperfect.[22]

Music, in this case, was a means of luring the Jews away from their sinful idolatry through a means they find familiar. John Chrysostom held a similar view, citing the "slowness of [the Jews'] understanding."[23] Theodoret's stance that a lesser evil is permissible to avoid a greater evil echoes Augustine's roughly contemporary attitude towards selling sex. According to Augustine, individuals who sell sex were a necessary part of society because "if you remove harlots from society, you will disrupt everything because of lust."[24] Augustine worried that without the outlet of sex workers, men would corrupt virtuous women with their sinful desires, in this case, non-reproductive sex. Thus, a lesser evil, commercial sex, was permissible to avoid a greater evil, non-reproductive sex, even if Augustine found practitioners of this lesser evil to be generally abhorrent.

***Musica* and Genre**

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[22] McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 106, trans. McKinnon. For biographical information on Theodoret see McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature,* 104. For further discussion of Church fathers and musical instruments see James McKinnon, "The Meaning of the Patristic Polemic Against Musical Instruments," *Current Musicology* I (1965): 69–82. McKinnon's main conclusions elaborate on the brief explanation laid out in the introduction to his book cited above. Namely that the vitriol against musical instruments was partially due to their association with pagan rites, but more importantly their relationship with sexual immorality. He notes the latter had already appeared in classical literature, and also that Christian opposition to musical instruments came after psalmody was an established tradition in masses.

[23] McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 83, trans. McKinnon.

[24] Translated in James Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society,* 106. Original text in Augustine, *De Ordine* 2.4.12 (PL 32: 1000).

Maintaining the term *musica*, as opposed to the English music, is crucial for understanding how medieval theorists and theologians envisioned secular and religious soundscapes. Music played, and continues to play, a fundamental role in Church ceremonies, yet patristic writers viewed some music and its adjacent activities such as dancing, as sexualized and sinful. This tension, so glaring to the modern reader, is not born of ambivalence but rather an issue of translation. Augustine, for example, defends the singing of hymns and psalms in Church by arguing that it kindles divine love and stirs the soul. Indeed, he explicitly says, "we must nevertheless not shun music because of the superstition of the heathen, if we are able to snatch from it anything useful for the understanding of the Holy Scriptures," but this does not stop him from, in the next breath, warning people against "theatrical frivolities."[25] What Augustine is sparing from total damnation is *musicam*, because it has the potential to help people understand Scripture. The *theatricas nugas* have no such redeeming quality, and, in fact, do not count as *musica* at all.

Augustine, drawing on Platonic tradition, explains the difference between *musica* and the aural experience of music: "Modulation [*modulation*] is thought to pertain to any singer, provided he does not err in the intervals of voice and sound; but good modulation pertains only to that liberal discipline, namely, music [*musica*]."[26] Thus, if a performer, "singing sweetly and dancing beautifully, acts wantonly when the situation demands

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[25] "Nos tamen non propter supersititionem profanorum debemus musicam fugere, si quid inde utile ad intelligendas sanctas Scripturas rapere potuerimus; nec ad illorum theatricas nugas converti," McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature*, 165, trans. McKinnon. Orignial text in Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* II, xviii, 28 (PL XXXIV, 49).

[26] Philipp Jeserich, *Musica Naturalis: Speculative Music Theory and Poetics, from Saint Augustine to the Late Middle Ages in France*, trans. Michael J. Curley and Steven Rendell (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 58.

seriousness…he does not use numerically harmonious modulation,"[27] which is the foundation of *musica.* Anyone can sing and create pleasing notes, but only a philosopher, with a complete understanding of the underlying mathematics, can engage in *musica*. *Musica*, then, is not defined by aural experience. Instead, for Augustine and consequently in the Middle Ages, *musica* was a numerical order which dictated or described the harmony of the universe. As such, it pertained to not only properly modulated sounds but all things that moved in a specific, orderly fashion, including many non-aural phenomena that modern people would not define as music.[28] This concept of cosmic rationality has clear philosophical stakes: understanding *musica* meant understanding the movements of creation and the heavens. As Augustine puts it, "…after delight has been restored to the numbers of reason [*delectation in rationis numeros restituta*], our whole life is turned toward God."[29] The value of *musica* was not rooted in a sensual experience but in transcendence of the sensual, and transcendence required complete understanding.

Along with Augustine the most influential musical theorist of the Middle Ages was Boethius, a sixth century Roman patrician, who wrote in Latin about his Greek education, musing on the philosophies of Plato and commenting extensively on the works of Aristotle.[30] Boethius's highly influential *De institutione musica* was the most widely circulated musical work in the Middle Ages and through the fourteenth century could be

[27] Jeserich, 58.
[28] Jeserich, 55.
[29] Jeserich, 81. See also Calvin M. Bower, "The Transmission of Ancient Music Theory into the Middle Ages," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen, The Cambridge History of Music (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 141.
[30] Calvin M. Bower, "Introduction," in *Fundamentals of Music*, ed. Claude V. Palisca, The Music Theory Translation Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), xix.

found bound in a single codex with Augustine's writings on music.[31] Boethius's explanation of *musica* connected it to the macrocosm of the heavens and the microcosm of the human body.

> There are three [kinds of music]: the first is cosmic, whereas the second is human; the third is that which rests in certain instruments, such as the kithara or the aulos or other instruments which serve melody. The first kind, the cosmic, is discernible especially in those things which are observed in heaven itself or in the combination of elements or the diversity of seasons. For how can it happen that so swift a heavenly machine moves on a mute and silent course? … Whoever penetrates into his own self perceives human music. For what unites the incorporeal nature of reason with the body if not a certain harmony and, as it were, a careful tuning of low and high pitches as though producing one consonance? What other than this unites the parts of the soul, which, according to Aristotle, is composed of the rational and the irrational? What is it that intermingles the elements of the body or holds together the parts of the body in an established order? … The third kind of music is that which is said to rest in various instruments. This music is governed either by tension, as in strings, or by breath, as in the aulos or those instruments activated by water, or by a certain percussion, as in those which are cast concave in brass, and various sounds are produced from these.[32]

Again, *musica* provides a means of superseding the physical to understand the metaphysical. By learning about the numbers that produce the sounds of the universe and the human body, sounds that are imperceptible to the human ear, one can get closer to understanding the cosmos. Though there is much debate about how Boethius envisioned acoustic experience fitting into this concept of *musica*, particularly as it relates to his

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[31] Thomas Christensen, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen, The Cambridge History of Music (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4. See also Bower, "Introduction," xix; Jeserich, 118.

[32] Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, ed. Claude V. Palisca, trans. Calvin M. Bower, The Music Theory Translation Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 9-10.

musica instrumentalis,[33] the importance of quantified mathematical understanding of *musica* necessarily separated the philosophical discipline from the everyday aural experience of music. Just as Augustine explained that a performer could modulate without creating *musica*, Boethius was at pains to distinguish between the *musicus* and the musical practitioner, the former of which "with due reason claims knowledge of singing not in service to the performance but by command of speculation."[34] To this end, *musica* was not classified as a physical science but as a mathematical one, and it formed part of the quadrivium, four of the seven liberal arts to study, which has been credited as an invention of Boethius.[35] These Boethian ideas about music and mathematics would be repeated *ad nauseam* in the Middle Ages. As Jan Herlinger explains, the perpetuation of this separation between music in practice and music in theory means that "one must sometimes ask whether a medieval music theorist discussing a monochord tuning was describing observed musical practice or attesting to a harmonic relationship that ought to be observable."[36]

While this distinction may seem contrived to modern readers, it had very real consequences for how different music and musical practitioners were perceived. The purity of *musica* as a mathematical discipline meant that, in the Middle Ages, it was not associated with singing at banquets, reciting poetry, or any of Augustine's "theatrical

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[33] Boethius himself maintained a level of ambivalence about this, as evidenced by his acknowledgement of instrumental music. See Joseph Dyer, "The Place of Musica in Medieval Classifications of Knowledge," *The Journal of Musicology* 24, no. 1 (2007), 13; Jeserich, 117-154.
[34] Jeserich, 144.
[35] Bower, "The Transmission of Ancient Music Theory," 142.
[36] Jan Herlinger, "Medieval Canonics," in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, The Cambridge History of Music (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 170.

frivolities."[37] The sensual experience of *musica*, the rational ordering of the world, could be experienced through music, particularly religious chanting. The "music" of religious sounds, however, is merely a vehicle; *musica,* the transcendent knowledge is the goal.

The consequence of this definition of *musica,* as a comprehensive series of mathematical ratios meant to help in unraveling the mysteries of the universe, is that we cannot think of music, the sensual, aural experience, as a comprehensive whole that existed in the Middle Ages. There is no overarching term for musical experiences as we think of them in the modern world. Thus, rather than talking about music, one must talk specifically about chanting, plainsong, *caroles*, or *chanson de geste*, which existed as distinct genres of aural experience and did not fall under one larger category. When Augustine defends the singing of hymns and psalms in church, he is speaking of two specific genres that are meant to heighten religious experience. *Ars musica* can be used to "snatch" meaning from the Bible, even as every day "music" can be rejected, especially given how removed *ars musica* was from the actual production of what we consider music.[38] Take, for example, the passage from Ephesians 5:19:

> Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, [19] as you sing [*lalountes* 'uttering'] psalms [*psalmois*] and hymns [*humnois*] and spiritual [*pneumatikais*] songs [*ōdais*] among yourselves, singing [*adontes*] and making melody [*psallontes* 'praising'] to the Lord in your hearts, [20] giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.[39]

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[37] Dyer, 25.
[38] McKinnon, *Music in Early Christian Literature,* 5.
[39] Smith, 175, trans. Smith. Smith provides many more examples of song being presented as prayer in the Bible174-178.

The tenor of this exhortation to song is one of religious prayer. You should sing psalms and hymns as a way of giving thanks to God.

A *carole* on the street has no relation to psalms or hymns. Hence Augustine can extol the latter while denigrating the former, without experiencing any tension between the two. In her discussion of monophony, Judith Peraino explains how this is borne out in terms of subjectivity. She argues that while monophony itself is "mimetic of monologue…the monophony of sacred chant represents the opposite ethos — the joining of many voices into one for the unified praise of God."[40] The context of chant changes the fundamental meaning of the musical expression. This does not mean that religious song and lay song did not influence each other nor that every individual clergy member adhered to so sharp a divide between religious and secular music. Both were subject to outside influence and often responded to the same historical context, and through the Late Middle Ages began to blend together more.[41] However, the prevailing attitude of Christian religious and musical theorists in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries was that the sounds of devotion during the liturgy and the sounds of a jongleur performing a *chanson de geste* were functionally, socially, and morally distinct.

Twelfth-Century Iterations: Peter the Chanter, Thomas Chobham, and Sex Work

These two prongs of patristic and philosophic thinking, the first that each genre of music—using its English meaning—is distinct and the second that non-religious, sensual

[40] Judith A. Peraino, *Giving Voice to Love: Song and Self-Expression from the Troubadours to Guillaume de Machaut* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 28.
[41] For more connections between the two see Susan Boynton, "Religious Soundscapes: Liturgy and Music," in *Christianity in Western Europe, c. 1100-c. 1500*, vol. 4, The Cambridge History of Christianity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

musical entertainment was akin to sex work, provide the foundation for understanding performance and sex work in the High Middle Ages. But medieval theorists interpreted and expanded upon these ideas in their own ways. Before exploring the issues of sexuality and gender in the Church's view of sex work, we must explore those new interpretations in terms of selling sex and selling performance.

Augustine's theory that the presence of women selling sex was necessary for the health and morality of a community, echoed in Theodoret of Cyrus's defense of using song to convert Jewish people, proved particularly pervasive in medieval understandings of selling sex. Leah Otis-Cour argues selling sex was tacitly accepted in the twelfth century Languedoc, based on ideas such as Augustine's and a general resurgence of interest in Roman law.[42] This unspoken allowance of the "lesser evil," however, did not translate into widespread acceptance or integration into mainstream culture. Just because selling sex does not seem to have been explicitly criminalized in the twelfth century does not mean religious authorities had uncomplicated views on the issue of sex work.

Part of these complications came from a culture of misogyny, which, while also not monolithic, was prevalent. Many medievalists trace this back to Saint Jerome's "Against Jovinian."[43] Jerome, a fourth century theologian and ascetic, is best known for translating the Bible into Latin, creating what became known as the Vulgate. This accomplishment, along with his many biblical commentaries, made him one of the most

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[42] Leah Otis-Cour, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 15-24, for Augustine specifically, 12.
[43] For example, see Elizabeth A. Clark, "Dissuading from Marriage: Jerome and the Asceticization of Satire," in *Satiric Advice on Women and Marriage: From Plautus to Chaucer*, ed. Warren S. Smith (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 154–81, specifically 163-164 for discussion of Jerome's misogynistic writings and its link to pagan traditions.

influential Church fathers in the Middle Ages. Jerome's vituperative comments about women in "Against Jovinian," served his own specific purpose and was not meant to suggest women were beyond all hope of salvation.[44] But in quoting him in later centuries, medieval theologians used Jerome's writings on women as the authority they needed to condemn women in whatever way they sought.[45] This antifeminist atmosphere paired with later medieval emphasis on regulating and controlling sex work led Ruth Karras to conclude "the treatment of commercial sex could become a tool to control all women."[46] This idea will be explored more later in this chapter.

Jerome's writings also served as an authority for definitions of sex work in the twelfth century. His emphasis on the promiscuity (*turpitudo*) of the sex worker rather than monetary exchange was cited by numerous medieval scholars, chief among them the twelfth century jurist Gratian in his comprehensive textbook of canon law commonly known as the *Decretum: The Concordance of Discordant Canons*.[47] The *Decretum* became "by medieval standards a best-seller all over Europe," and the go-to canon law textbook soon after it was completed.[48] In this magnum opus, Gratian not only cites Jerome's definition of sex work, but also reinforces the Roman concept that all sex

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[44] As Clark notes, these comments stand in contradiction to his praise of specific women, both Christian and pagan.
[45] Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women*, Studies in the History of Sexuality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 102-103. Karras provides further examples and explanation of this pervasive culture of misogyny in *Common Women*, 102-111.
[46] Karras, *Common Women*, 138.
[47] Written around 1140, the Decretum has 3,823 chapters devoted to "conciliar canons, papal decretals, and citations from the Scriptures, the church fathers, penitentials, Roman law, and other authorities," as well as Gratian's own analysis and commentaries. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 229. Brundage also provides an overview of the scant information to be gleaned about Gratian's personal life, including that he seems to have been a monk, who lived and taught in Bologna, 229-230.
[48] Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 232.

workers were *infames* and subject to all the attendant legal restrictions.[49] In a copy of the *Glossa Ordinaria* to the *Decretum* produced in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but printed in the early seventeenth century, the *Glossa* defines the *meretrix* as "Promiscuous: that is, she copulates indifferently and indiscriminantly [*sic*], as in canine love. Dogs indeed copulate indifferently and indifferently and indiscriminantly [*sic*]."[50] The sex worker's willingness to engage in sex with anyone is her defining feature, and, in this formulation, makes her akin to a dog.

The importance of this abstract "promiscuity" for determining who engaged in sex work and who did not is hard to overstate, and any scholar who addresses commercial sex in the Middle Ages has to contend with the fact that not all "*meretrices*" were women who had sex for money.[51] In fact, canon lawyers could not agree on how many men a woman had to have sex with to be considered a *meretrix*: thousands, hundreds, forty.[52] An intrinsic promiscuity might lead one to label a woman a *meretrix* even if she had not had sex at all. The struggle to define exactly where the line was between promiscuous women and women engaged in commercial sex lies in the fact that there was no category for sexually active single women, and thus, there was no line between promiscuous women and women who sold sex.[53] Married versus unmarried was the meaningful

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[49] Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 248.
[50] Brundage, "Prostitution in the Medieval Canon Law," 827, trans. Brundage.
[51] Karras, *Common Women*, 10-12. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 248. Baldwin, *Masters*, I, 133-134. Otis-Cour, 12-16. It is worth noting that much of the following discussion about individuals who sell sex acts will use "she/her." This is not to suggest there were not men selling sex acts, but rather that they are rare in available sources. The writings being discussed and quoted here refer specifically to *meretrix*, or promiscuous woman, and it is in deference to that that I use she/her for the current discussion. For further discussion of this terminology, see Introduction.
[52] Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 390.
[53] Ruth Mazo Karras and Katherine E. Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others*, Fourth edition.. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2023), 157.

distinction, rather than paid versus unpaid. Though some scholars have recently called this formulation into question, pointing out that there were single women who were sexually active living and working in medieval communities, the overall moral thrust remains: no respectable woman should be a sexually active single woman, even if such women existed.[54] Sexually active single women were the same kind of woman as a *meretrix*: one who has sex outside the auspices of marriage. This idea of course lacks nuance, but therein lies its efficacy as an overriding social more rather than a concrete reality. It is simple and can be applied in any situation when convenient.

The meticulous quality of these debates and definitions can be seen in how twelfth century jurists handle the topic of sex work. Peter the Chanter and his circle prove particularly instructive since Peter, unlike many other theologians of his time, was deeply interested in practical morality. Born sometime in the mid-twelfth century, the details of Peter's early life are sketchy. However, his reputation as a prominent and respected teacher in Paris towards the end of his life is undisputed. In 1183, he was made chanter of Notre-Dame, resulting in the name he is commonly known by now.[55] Peter's scholarly career took place during a period marked by an increased interest in classical literature

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[54] Cordelia Beattie's work stands most directly in contradiction with Karras's. While she convincingly proves there are legal categories created for single women that are separate from *meretrices*, it is not clear that those women were not also sexually suspect or that this obviated the simplified superstructure formula for understanding women's and their sexuality's proper place in the world. Finally, it is worth noting that, as with much scholarship on sex work in the Middle Ages, this work focuses on the later Middle Ages, when sex work was legalized in many places. The creation of official brothels with specific women who were known or registered as official sex workers naturally changed the categorization around sex work, as there were now official institutions that codified it. Some women had the official occupation of sex work and that meant a concrete and knowable profession. In the twelfth century, no such bureaucratic institutions existed as brothels had not been legalized.

[55] John W. Baldwin, *The Language of Sex: Five Voices from Northern France Around 1200* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1-2. Baldwin, *Masters*, I, 3-16, specifically 3-6 for speculations on Peter's early life and arrival in Paris.

and law, and a new emphasis on Platonic and Aristotelian thought. Theology and its practice became an exercise of scholastic logic. Writers such as Peter Abelard, Anselm of Laon, who started work on the *Glossa Ordinaria*, Peter the Lombard, and many others were focused on cohering the various conflicting ideas of the Church Fathers. This move towards scholasticism would solidify in the thirteenth century with the rise of universities.[56]

By and large, Peter and his students agreed with the patristic writers and the *Decretum*: sex work was defined by promiscuity. But in the spirit of trying to solve everyday issues with theological reasoning, Peter and his students focused on sex work as a profession that dealt with money. Thomas Chobham provided the most in-depth categorization, attempting to differentiate the sins of commercial sex by applying *meretrix* to the woman publicly sold sex, as opposed to just committing fornication.

> A meretrix is one who lies open [*patet*] to the lust [*libidini*] of many. However, we should pay attention to the force in this word "patet," because that woman is said to lie open to the lust of many who denies herself to none of the many, and not content with one, exposes herself to many, and just as scripture says: she spreads her legs to all passing by …Moreover, a meretrix is one whose wantonness [*turpitudo*] is publicly for sale.[57]

This emphasis is on monetary exchange is not because money defined sex work but rather that monetary exchanges brought about complicated questions of practicality: Did sex workers have to provide restitution for their ill-gotten gains? What constituted fraud

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[56] This change is discussed in Brundage's *Law, Sex, and Christian Society* cited above through the lens of burgeoning state power. See also John H. Mundy, *Liberty and Political Power in Toulouse, 1050-1230,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954). Mundy explores this same shift in light of the grapplings among the bishop, the count, and the consulate of Toulouse. Of course, ultimately, all three would lose to the king in the second half of the thirteenth century.
[57] Thomas Chobham, *Thomae de Chobham Summa Confessorum*, ed. F. Broomfield, Analecta Mediaevalia Namurcensia 25 (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1968), 346-347. Henceforth *Thomae de Chobham.*

from a sex worker? Could the Church accept alms from them? What religious practices could they partake in?

To answer the first question, the theologians revert again to Roman law, which allows that "one could recover money for an immoral act, but if the giver, or both the giver and the receiver, acted immorally, the money could not be reclaimed."[58] The simple explanation here would be to accept that both the buyer and seller in commercial sex act immorally and therefore the sex worker does not have to provide restitution. But, using an unexpected logic, Roman law stated that only the buyer was guilty of turpitude in this transaction, stating the sex worker, "acts immorally for what she does, but she does not receive money immorally because she is a prostitute."[59] She is not, therefore, expected to do restitution for her ill-gotten gains. This principle was echoed by Peter and his circle, even though it both reaffirms and undermines the definition of sex work as a question of promiscuity. The explanation that what she does is immoral but the money she receives for it is morally neutral reiterates the superfluity of the money as it relates to her status as a meretrix. However, the turpitude falling solely on the man purchasing sex absolves the sex worker of the immoral act and promiscuity that would require her to forfeit her money. The logic at play is dizzying. The conversation is only made more confusing by Thomas Chobham's further assertion that the meretrix was providing labor with her body and was therefore legitimately entitled to her wages. He argues, "*meretrices* are counted among laborers. That is to say, they contract out their bodies to shameful [*turpes*] uses, and yet because they sustain the labor with their own body, it is permitted that they retain

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[58] Baldwin, *Masters*, I, 134.
[59] Baldwin, *Masters*, I, 134, trans. Baldwin.

unto themselves what they receive for such labor."[60] This seemingly progressive stance did not soften his outlook on the moral implications of her work or the religious strictures by which she was bound due to that work. In this same section, he states the profit of the meretrix is the most shameful [*turpissimus*] profit, and it is an abomination to God.[61]

Sex workers were not entitled to their compensation under every circumstance, however. The first exception Thomas notes is if the woman "desires wantonness eagerly [*libidinem*] and contracts out her body so that it satisfies its own lust." In this case, "she does not anymore contract out her own labor, and then she acts shamefully [*turpitur*] and shamefully [*turpitur*] receives payment."[62] Here Thomas is saying intent matters in promiscuity. If her desire to engage in this shameful profession is driven from need, it is still a shameful profession, but it counts in her favor that she does not enjoy that shamefulness. If she engages in sex work in pursuit of pleasure, however, it is a shameful profession, and she is driven by shameful desires. Her sexual desires mean that she is no longer selling labor but seeking gratification. Therefore, she is acting immorally and receiving money through her desire to act immorally. Under these conditions, the meretrix is not permitted to keep her money. Thomas's emphasis on intent will appear again in his writings on entertainment, and what types of entertainment are moral and immoral.

But there are additional circumstances to consider regarding ill-gotten gains for women who sold sex. Peter the Chanter and his students added the stipulation that if

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[60] *Thomae de Chobham*, 296.
[61] *Thomae de Chobham*, 296. According to Thomas, the Bible teaches that the body is a vessel to be guarded and kept sanctified. He cites Timothy, 2:21.
[62] *Thomae de Chobham*, 296.

fraud was involved, the man could be entitled to restitution. According to Peter this fraud might entail using cosmetics to improve her looks, declaring she loves the man, or claiming noble birth. Though the individual instances might be difficult to adjudicate, in such cases, the woman would owe restitution to the man she had deceived. However, adhering to the aforementioned Roman law, if the man was also guilty of fraud in some part of the exchange, she was not required to make restitution.[63] Thomas Chobham offered a half-measure whereby the sex seller owed the buyer the difference between what he did pay and what he would have paid if she had not deceived him: a woman worth a penny with make-up and a half-penny without would be required to restore the extra half-penny to the man.[64] Robert de Courçon instead distinguishes based on the presumed naiveté of the buyer: Is he an undiscerning boy? Then he is owed restitution. Is he a mature man who should know better? Then he is not owed restitution.[65]

All these questions led up to an important question for the Church. Was it permissible to accept alms from a sex worker knowing how she made her money? It's unclear how often sex workers would have been giving alms or how much those alms might amount to. However, it seems that in one case, at least, this posed a significant conundrum. These treatises, and the discussions and lectures they undoubtedly arose from, coincided with the building of Notre Dame in Paris.[66] It was rumored that a group

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[63]J.-A. Dugauquier, ed., *Pierre le Chantre: Summa de Sacramentis et Animae Consiliis*, vol. III, 2A, 5 vols. (Louvain: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1963), III [2a], 171-172. Henceforth, *Pierre le Chantre.*
[64] *Thomae de Chobham*, 296, for the specifics about owing the difference see 352-353.
[65] "…Sicut de meretrice accidit que si infatuat simplicem et indiscretum impuberem tenetur ei restituere que sic rapuit. Si vero discretus sit et maturus quem infatuavit ille sibi imputet nec tenetur ei restituere, quia ut dicit augustinus meretrix peccat non quia accipit sed quia meretrix est." According to Baldwin, de Courçon is mistaken in his attribution of the Roman law to Augustine. de Courçon, *Summa*, I, 43: fol. 17ra, rb as cited in Baldwin, *Masters*, II, 92.
[66] Baldwin, *Masters*, I, 135.

of sex workers wanted to make a donation of chalices and stained glass, a significant gift monetarily and symbolically. In fact, both Peter and Thomas address this rumor directly. It is clear that Peter is describing an unresolved issue, and he suggests the gifts could be accepted discreetly and in private to avoid a scandal.[67] By the time of Thomas's writing, the decision by the bishop of Paris to reject the gift has been made, "lest he appear to approve of the life of those whose money he accepted."[68]

Thomas's explanation that the gift was rejected in this high-profile case in order to avoid the appearance of approving of the life of sex workers is important insofar as it does not say that they bishop *could* not have accepted the gift, merely that he *did* not. In fact, canonists, including Thomas, concluded that yes, the church could accept sex workers' charity. In contrast with usurers, canonists decided that since sex workers' wages could be licitly retained, they were entitled to their wages, and therefore, their alms were legitimate.[69] Peter the Chanter, in fact, insisted that since sex workers were allowed to retain their gains and usurers were not, sex workers *had* to give alms. According to his rather grim logic: "Surely it is worse to commit whoredom publicly…than to commit usury, because a *meretrix* kills two souls and a moneylender one. The *meretrix* sells what she is always bound to deny, the moneylender sells what he always should give…Why then is the moneylender bound to make restitution more strongly than the meretrix?"[70] Thomas Chobham took a more generous view saying that sex workers could donate to charities and pious causes as a form of penance, making the

[67] *Pierre le Chantre,* III [2a], 174-175.
[68] *Thomae de Chobham*, 349.
[69] Baldwin, *Masters*, I, 135.
[70] *Pierre le Chantre*, III [2a], 175.

comparison to Christ accepting ointment from Mary Magdalene.[71] Robert de Courçon counseled that alms could be accepted from sex workers who had not repented their sinful life in the hopes of hastening their repentance.[72]

But if sex workers could give alms to the Church, it was less clear if and how they could participate in Church practices. Peter the Chanter viewed them as excommunicates, who could enter the Church, but who should be kept away from the Eucharist.[73] Thomas Chobham notes that at Notre-Dame sex workers and other women intermixed as candles were brought to the altar for Sunday vespers, but they were never allowed in for mass nor were they allowed near the altar when the Eucharist was being given.[74] Robert de Courçon took the firmest line, arguing that the Church should excommunicate all sex workers "named by legal confession, conviction of witnesses or notoriety of fact."[75] Should this measure prove impossible, they should be expelled from the city, an idea that Robert implemented in 1213 at the council of Paris while serving as a papal legate for France.[76] He was likely influenced by town policies in the south, which will be explored in the next chapter.

The careful attention paid to the legal and moral implications of selling sex was can also be seen in the extensive discussions of selling entertainment. In fact, *histriones*

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[71] *Thomae de Chobham,* 297, for the comparison to Mary Magdalene see 352.
[72] Baldwin points out that these discussions coincide with the construction of Notre Dame and rumored potential gifts of chalices and stained glass from a group of sex workers. The judgment of these theologians was that it would be licit to accept such gifts, but advisable to do so discreetly, which was evidently not a possibility at that time since most everyone reading the theological writings would know what some of these vague allusions were in reference to. Regardless of the reason, these gifts, if they existed, were not accepted. Baldwin, *Masters*, I, 135-136.
[73] *Pierre le Chantre*, III [2a], 239, 242.
[74]*Thomae de Chobham*, 348-349.
[75] Baldwin, *Masters*, I, 136.
[76] Baldwin, *Masters*, I, 136.

and *meretrices* appear alongside each other in many of the discussions about money, fraud, and charity, and Peter specifically presents the two together in opposition to the usurer as an example of ill-gotten gains licitly retained.[77] But they are also put together when Peter discusses accepting money that was immorally acquired,[78] those who receive gifts when they are not in need,[79] and even opens his chapter "Against those who give to actors," by presenting a list of other related professions to be considered in the discussion, and *meretrices* appears first on the list.[80] Peter also uses strikingly similar logic when discussing the profits of actors [*histriones*] as discussing the profits of *meretrices.* Peter argues, in a typical example of scholastic hair-splitting, that giving to a performer is only sacrificing to demons if the money is being used for the individual to *become* a performer.[81] If he is already a performer, then it is within the bounds of Christian charity to give to a poor jongleur. This tempers the adage often repeated in the Middle Ages: "histrionibus dare est demonibus immolare" - to give to *histriones* is to

[77] "Et nota super decreta quod de hiis que acquiruntur ex usura et rapina, ex calumpnia, ex furto, ex symonia non potets fieri helymosina que non transit in dominium accipientis. De hiis que dantur meretricibus est ystrionibus et mathematicis potest fieri helymosina que transit in dominium accipientis," Chanter, *Summa* Abel, MS Paris BN 455, fols 66vb, 67ra. as cited in Baldwin, *Masters*, II, 93, n132. This sentence does not appear in the *Summa* as published in Dugauquier.

[78] "Sed etiam secundum humanas leges: si quis paciscitur cum meretrice, vel advocato et hujusmodi, dare ei decem solidos, a judice civili cogitur ei solvere. Quae ergo acquisita sunt ab histrione, mimo, meretrice, advocato, medico et milite, conditione ludi vel militiae secundum artem; et sine fraude sequente, expendi possunt in pias causas," Peter the Chanter, *Verbum Abbreviatum* caput XLVI (PL 205, 0144C-0144D).

[79] "Ubi turpitudo est ex utraque parte, potior pars est possidentis, quia non competit tibi repetitio, si histrioni, vel meretrici dederis, cum sciens et prudens dederis, quia turpius agis dando, quam illi accipiendo," Peter the Chanter, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, caput XLVIII (PL 205, 0153B-0153C).

[80] "His addendum est de histrionibus, meretricibus, mimis, joculatoribus, magicis, aleatoribus, tyrocinatoribus," Peter the Chanter, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, caput XLIX (PL 205, 0153C-0153D).

[81] "Item Hieronymus: Paria sunt histrionibus dare, et daemonibus immolare, si quia histriones sunt dederis, non quia homines": "Likewise Jerome: It is equal to give to the actors, and to sacrifice to the demons, if because you give them players, not because they are men," Peter the Chanter, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, caput XLIX (PL 205, 0155B-0155C).

sacrifice to demons.[82] It is in these measures dictating the way one can or cannot interact with the larger community that the close association between selling sex and entertaining comes to the fore again. As John Baldwin explains, neither jongleurs nor individuals who sold sex could, "sue in church courts, enter holy orders, or receive the eucharist" and "as virtual excommunicates, entertainers were to be avoided by all clerics."[83]

Much as with those who sell sex though, Peter's nuanced view of the financial legalities does not translate to a wider social acceptance. In a scathing indictment he states no occupation is completely devoid of utility, except acting.[84] He was not alone in this view, and nor was he the first theologian to condemn selling entertainment. Honorius Augustodunensis, writing slightly before Peter and similarly for a lay community, wrote that *ioculatores* have no hope, presumably of salvation, because they are ministers of Satan, who do not know God, and are therefore despised by him.[85] This distaste and distrust of the entertainment profession is reflected in an added condition to Peter's point about giving to those who are already performers: The person giving money to the

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[82] As Christopher Page notes, this quotation is often attributed to St. Jerome but has not been discovered in any of his extant works. Peter and his circle, as well as many others return to this incendiary statement as the basis for their understanding of theatrical performance. See Christopher Page, *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France 1100-1300* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 15-16 and 210, n. 15.
[83] Baldwin, *Masters*, I, 199.
[84] "Nullum genus hominum est, in quo non inveniatur aliquis utilis usus contra necessitates humanas (de quo non possit dici: 'Aliquisque malo fuit usus in illo') praeter hoc genus hominum, quod est monstrum, nulla virtute redemptum a vitiis, necessitatis humanae nulli usui aptum," Peter the Chanter, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, caput XLIX (PL, 205: 155c). Baldwin also cites a different version of the *Verbum Abbreviatum,* which reads: "Item trutanni vel ribaldi sunt portitores onerum mundatores sordium civitatum et huiusmodi. Novarie etiam meretricule necessarie esse videntur propter turpiorem libidem vitandum. Istud solum officium nichil habet utilitatis vel necessitatis, unde de hoc solo non potets dici: alliquisque malo fuit usus in illo," Peter the Chanter, MS V, fol 61va and Ms. Ste-G, fol 73ra as cited in Baldwin, *Masters*, II, 140.
[85] "D. Habent spem joculatores? — M. Nullam: tota namque intentione sunt ministri Satanae, de his dicitur: Deum non cognoverunt; ideo Deus sprevit eos, et Dominus subsannabit eos, quia derisores deridentur," Honorius Augustodunensis, *Elucidarium* (PL 172, 1148C-1148D).

jongleur, even if they are giving it to him as a man instead of as a performer, must not be giving the money in order to obtain any *turpitudinem*.[86] Again an emphasis on Jerome's wantonness [*turpitudo*] and intent create a defining framework for the interaction between seller and buyer. In this case, if the buyer is seeking *turpitudinem*, which can be translated as promiscuity but also as shame, indecency, or, occasionally, nakedness, then they are sacrificing to demons, meaning acting immorally. This obviously aligns the professional entertainer with those who sell sex, but it also suggests that Peter understands the exchange between buyer and seller of entertainment as one that comes dangerously close to an immoral sexual transaction. And crossing that line is wrong to a degree that matches the sinfulness of sacrificing to demons.

When considered in this light, the exceptions to Peter's seeming benevolence require closer attention. Even if he extols the potential benefits of music, citing music's ability to inspire devotion and to alleviate depression, he is far from accepting of the theatrical arts. For example, players of musical instruments (*artifices instrumentorum musicorum*) were considered beneficial so long as they inspire *devotio* and not *lascivia,* the latter again containing multiple potential translations including wantonness and lasciviousness.[87] Within this statement are two exceptions to Peter's acceptance to performers. As Christopher Page notes, entertainers other than instrumentalists are left out, and professional secular musicians are juxtaposed with "entertainers whose activities

[86] "Qui dat aliquid aliquibus ut hystrionoes fiant demonibus immolat, sed qui hystrionibus iam factis dant, non peccant dummodo non dent propter turpitudinem aliquam, credimus quod quandocumque aliqui dant hystrionibus quia hystriones, non quia homines sunt, demonibus immolant," *Pierre le Chantre*, III [2a], 176. Similarly, William of Auxerre says that the image of God can be found in *histriones* and therefore it is not a sin to give alms to them, Page, 198.
[87] Peter the Chanter, *Verbum abbreviatum,* LXXXIV (PL 205, 253C-253D).

pulled down the curtain of modesty…there is a deep and almost morbid hatred…for all bodily movement without the modesty of carriage appropriate to virtue and without the dignity of a useful purpose."[88] Thomas Chobham expresses this hatred clearly in his *Summa Confessorum,* while spotlighting the particularly sexual immorality at play:

> Certain ones [histriones] change shape and change the appearance of their bodies through shameful [*turpes*] dancing or through shameful [*turpes*] gestures or denuding their bodies shamefully [*turpiter*] or putting on awful garments [*loricas*] or demonic masks [*larvas*] and all these ones are damnable unless they relinquish their trades.[89]

Peter similarly warns against performers who make a living through *turpitudine*.

> A small distinction should be made…concerning ioculatores. For certain ones acquire the necessities [of life] with mockery [ludibrio] and shamefulness [turpitudine] of their and disfigure the image of God. Of these ones it is true what we said. But if they sing with instruments or sing about great deeds for the purpose of restoration or perhaps for the purpose of instruction, they can almost be excused.[90]

Page views this as a distinction between musicians and other performers - actors, dancers, contortionists, and acrobats with the former being freed from some of the stigma of their profession and the latter remaining burdened with shame and social stigma. In analyzing Thomas Chobham's painstaking categorization of performers, Page argues there is a hierarchical difference between types of performers, and that ultimately, by allowing performers to sing about the deeds of princes and the lives of saints, Chobham

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[88] Page, 20.
[89] *Thomae de Chobham*, 291. The use of loricas and larvas here are noteworthy for their very specific connotations. Loricas generally refers to chain mail or some kind of armored breastplate, but in this moment may be gesturing more towards a structured undergarment, like a corset, and so could be rendered lingerie. I have opted for the more conservative translation of "garment" given its more common usage. Larvas, in its most basic meaning, refers to an evil spirit such as a demon, goblin, or ghoul. It does also mean mask, but with the particular connotation of a horrific or evil mask.
[90] *Pierre le Chantre*, III [2a], 177.

provides room for entertainers to perform a varied repertoire that would appeal to a many social classes.[91] But Chobham's statement is more limiting than it first appears and the hierarchy is related to more than just the association of instrumentalists and the *chansons de gestes* that Page goes on to explore.[92] Chobham writes:

> There is a third kind of performer [*histriones*] who uses musical instruments to please men, but there are two types of this kind. Certain ones frequent public drinking places and wanton [*lascivas*] gatherings in order to sing [*lascivas*] songs there, in order to stir men to wantonness [*lasciviam*], and those ones are damnable just as all the others. However there are others who are called *ioculatores* who sing of the deeds of kings and lives of saints and who give comfort to men who are sick or in difficulties and [these ones] do not perform excessive indecencies [*turpitudines*] as male and female dancers [*saltatores et saltatrices*] do and as others do who trick [people] through shameful [*inhonestis*] images...if they do not do such things but instead they sing with their instruments deeds of kings and other practical things in order to give comfort to men, such ones can well be tolerated.[93]

Despite Thomas's admission that some instrumentalists can provide positive services, it's clear that this does not mean instrumentalists were exempt from the censure of the Church when they crossed the line into sexual performance. One of these two kinds of instrumentalists is "damnable," and both Peter and Thomas Chobham couch their acceptance of the other kind in conditional terms. Peter says the activities of singing instrumentalists "they can almost be excused" and Thomas says they can "be tolerated."[94] In other words, theoretically, the instrumentalist was acceptable to the Church, but an actual instrumentalist still had to abide by specific modes of public conduct. There are a variety of arguments for why different musical instruments became more prestigious in

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[91] Page, 23-24.
[92] Page, 30-32.
[93] *Thomae de Chobham*, 292.
[94] Peter the Chanter, "vinici sunt excusationi," *Pierre le Chantre*, III [2a], 177 and Thomas Chobham, "Bene possunt sustineri tales," *Thomae de Chobham*, 292.

the later Middle Ages,[95] but in the context of wanton corporeality the answer may be simpler. A body occupied by playing an instrument is less able to gesture or dance, and presumably cannot engage in tumbling and acrobatics at all. The physical presence of the instrument limits the performer's ability to use their body in other ways, and therefore limits their ability to engage in a performance that puts on a sinful, bodily display that shames the performer and entices others to *lascivia,* and in turn, sin. Making money from playing an instrument, theoretically, is more likely to be money earned due to musical prowess whereas those whose hands and bodies were free to dance and perform could be receiving compensation for these other, sexualized aspects of their performance rather than the music itself. If they are being paid more for the physical display, then they are selling their physical body, just as any other sex worker.

Chobham's stipulation about those who entertain at public drinking places and wanton gatherings also presents difficulties when we consider the practicality of musicians' lives. Many scholars have pointed out that jongleurs likely had to support themselves with additional jobs as servants, messengers, clerks, and more.[96] In her study

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[95] Edmund A. Bowles, "Haute and Bas: The Grouping of Musical Instruments in the Middle Ages," *Musica Disciplina* 8 (1954): 115–40; Luc Charles-Dominique, ""Du jongleur au ménétrier: évolution du statut social des instrumentistes médiévaux," in *Instruments à cordes du moyen âge: actes du colloque de Royaumont, 1994* (Grâne: Créaphis, 1999), 29–48; Lawrence Gunshee, Richard Rastall, and David Klausner, "Minstrel," *Grove Music Online*, July 25, 2013, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18748; Morgan Raleigh Jr., "Old French 'Jogleor' and Kindred Terms: Studies in Mediaeval Romance Lexicology," *Romance Philology* 7, no. 4 (1954): 279–325; Walter Salmen, "The Social Status of the Musician in the Middle Ages," in *The Social Status of the Professional Musician from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century*, ed. Walter Salmen, trans. Herbert Kaufman and Barbara Reisner, Sociology of Music 1 (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983). Many of these point to a hierarchy of loud instruments over softer instruments. String-players, however, were likely to benefit from associations with King David. Edmond Faral has a section on jongleurs favored by the Church in *Les Jongleurs En France Au Moyen Âge* (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1987), 44-60.

[96] Carol Symes, *A Common Stage: Theater and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 84; Gretchen Peters, *The Musical Sounds of Medieval French Cities: Players, Patrons, and Politics*, Paperback (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 165-189, particularly 183-189.

of late medieval French musicians, Gretchen Peters cites archival evidence that suggests not only that musicians performed in taverns and at weddings (the latter often crossing into wanton gatherings if patristic writers are to be believed), but also owned taverns and bathhouses.[97] These locations, along with rowdy weddings, are inextricably linked to public entertainment and provide an income opportunity most jongleurs would not be able to pass up. Even those who sang the *chansons de geste* and saints lives surely made appearances in suspect places when financial circumstances demanded it.

Most importantly though, in describing the actions of musicians with words such as *turpitudo* and *lascivia,* Peter, Thomas, and other twelfth-century theologians drew a direct connection between public entertainment and sexual immorality, just as the patristic writers before them. Given these clear connections, it is hard not to conclude there is a real and significant overlap between people selling entertainment and people selling sex. But, while there may have been overlap, the strongest evidence these writings provide is that whether or not people who sold entertainment were also selling sex, theologians clearly ideologically put them in the same category. The twelfth century rise of *fin'amor* and popularity of troubadours and trobairitz, many of whom sang of thinly veiled (or in the case of some, not veiled at all) sexual desires could only have reaffirmed the belief that entertainment was a sexually immoral profession and have heightened the perceived stakes for churchmen. Musicians made money despite producing nothing of use, a quality uncomfortably close to merchants and usurers, and unlike women who sold sex they did not alleviate excessive sexual desire but created it. Any jongleur who

[97] Peters, 165-189, for taverns and bathhouses specifically, 182-83.

engaged in this corporeality was subject to the harsh judgment of the Church, regardless of whether or not he played an instrument.

The *Carole*, a case study:

Figure 2.1: Possible image of a carole.
Ambrogio Lorenzetti, Frescoes of the Good and Bad Government, 1340 1338, Fresco, 1340 1338, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena. Image from Web Gallery of Art created by Emil Krén and Daniel Marx.

Of all the dancing religious men railed against, little excited as much vitriol as the *carole*. The *carole* was a folk dance, though it became popular at courts too, that seems to have been of French origins, given not only its etymology but also its preponderance in French-speaking parts of Europe from the early twelfth century to the fourteenth century.[98] Though the exact choreography of the *carole* is not known, it seems to have been performed in a circle, possibly with a dancer at the center, or as a procession.[99] The

[98] Robert Mullally, *The Carole: A Study of a Medieval Dance* (London: Routledge, 2017), 9-18; John Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance, and Drama, 1050-1350* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 163; E.K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, vol. I, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1903), 163-164.
[99] Page, 114. For a description of a later, English version of the dance, see Judith M. Bennett, “Ventriloquisms: When Maidens Speak in English Songs, c.1300-1550,” in *Medieval Woman’s Song:*

dance would take place in town squares or throughout the streets, with the dancers holding hands and moving in a circular motion with intermittent clapping and stamping of feet. The clapping seems to have provided a call to convene the dance as a leader could call out *a la touche de karoles.* Alternative modes of beginning the dance include a jongleur with a wind instrument or a young girl beating a drum.[100]

In his study of several unpublished sermons and other religious material, Page tracks the displeasure with which churchmen discuss the *carole*, beginning with the physical contact the dance demands. Though the dance seems to have been led primarily by women, men would occasionally participate as well and the clasping of hands by men and women engaged in dance was reason enough for preachers to condemn the dance.[101] But it was not merely the mode of the dance that caused consternation amongst the religious men. Adding insult to injury, the *carole* seemed to be a common activity on saints' days and during other religious events. This was surely reminiscent of the concerns of early Christian writers about the connection between theater and entertainment and pagan cultism. But even with this connection to paganism under consideration, these explanations do not sufficiently account for the level of anxiety these sermons and confessor manuals exhibit about the dance. The culture which grew up around the dance, one that had striking parallels to the problems they confronted when considering sex work and one that often alluded to and invoked sexual sins, also aroused concern.

Cross-Cultural Approaches, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

[100] Page, 114.

[101] Chambers, I, 164. Page, 114-115.

Page reads the playful flirtation of the *carole* and the attendant traditions as a type of marriage market, where young women might find a husband. In this context, the licentious subjects of the songs that accompanied the *carole*, which sometimes spoke of wives taking lovers and made light of adultery, was an ironic nod to the goal of the festivities.[102] But some of the *exempla* and other material Page cites revolve around concerns only tangentially connected to marriage. One exemplum tells the story of a man who loved *carole*-ing so much his parents "were in danger of being brought to poverty."[103] His parents locked him up in his room to keep him from the *carole*, and in his absence the Devil took on his appearance and led the *carole* in his stead. While the story clearly paints the dance as sinful, the monetary concern of the young man's parents is an enigma. If they wanted to keep him from a bad marriage match or a match without their consent the story would make more sense for interpreting the *carole* as a courting ritual. What was occurring in this folk dance to cost them so much money, or any money at all? Contemporary confessors' manuals reveal a potential answer. Concerning pride, one states the confessor should inquire if the penitent has "celebrated *caroles* which may have been done in many ways; in assembling together, in buying fine clothes, in disturbing [*inquietando*] young girls, and in doings of this kind."[104] But the *carole* is found most often under the deadly sin of *luxuria*, and concerning lust, one manual asks if the penitent has "polluted himself with a prostitute, deflowered a virgin or visited a

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[102] Page, 120-125.
[103] Page, 120-122, trans. Page. There are no other versions of this exempla catalogued in Frederic C. Tubach, *Index Exemplorum: A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales*, FF Communications 204 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1969).
[104] Page, 120, trans. Page, addition of Latin in brackets, mine. Original text published in Page, 236, n. 47.

widow" and a few lines later if he "will have taken part in *caroles* much, or in spectacles of this kind, and delighted in others."[105] The precise sins related to *caroles* in these passages are nebulous, but the issue of "disturbing" or, as it might also be translated, "harassing" young girls, the proximity of the *carole* to selling sex, and its presence under the heading of Lust, all point to its direct connection to sexual immorality. The young man from the *exemplum* whose parents find themselves in financial trouble may be concerned about their son spending money on musical and sexual services in his pursuit of pleasure at the *carole.*

The intergenerational nature of the tradition of the *carole,* as suggested by the sources, only heightens the concern of religious men. According to sermons and treatises on the vices and virtues, older women, no longer physically able to participate in the dance, gave their clothes to young women and led them to the *carole*.[106] This grooming is reminiscent of many horror stories that circulated about young women tricked into sex work by older women, who led them to brothels under false pretenses.[107] Although it is hard to know how many, if any, of these stories to believe, there is evidence that more senior sex workers would take over running brothels, and a few even managed to run

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[105] "Si cum meretrice se polluerit vel virginem defloraverit vel viduam frequentaverit…Si choreas vel huiusmodi spectacula secutus fuerit plurimum et in aliis delectatus," Page*,* 115, trans. Page*,* 120. Original text published in Page*,* 236, n. 48.
[106] Page, 115.
[107] Agathe Roby, *La prostitution au moyen âge: le commerce charnel en Midi toulousain du XIIIe au XVIe siècle* (Villemur-sur-Tarn: éditions Loubatières, 2021), 291-297. On how women became sex workers, see Karras, *Common Women*, 48-64, especially 57-64 for cases regarding women potentially being tricked or coerced into sex work. For information on retirement and repentance of sex workers see Otis-Cour, for concerns about older, unemployed sex workers becoming dangers to society see 72-76, for procuring and procurers see 89-99.

them after brothels became municipalized.[108] But even if neither of these reputations are earned, either by the older women at the *caroles* or retired sex workers, the concern that both might lead young women astray preoccupied religious writers. Anxiety over the havoc that could be wreaked by an ignoble older woman no longer able to sell sex led to several religious initiatives helping sex workers leave their profession.[109] In contrast, panderers and bawds were harshly legislated against.[110] The old women in attendance at the *carole* were not subject to the same level of censure, nor were they painted in a flattering light, referred to as "old wrinkled women" who are like soldiers unable to "go personally on a campaign because of illness."[111]

These connections to sex work do not mean Page is incorrect in his argument that *caroles* were culturally important match-making spaces, nor does it mean that every participant in the *carole* was a sex worker. Rather it adds another layer to social boundaries that were crossed when the *carole* was performed.[112] Professional musicians would have been in attendance at these gatherings to provide music, as Page's evidence

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[108] Otis-Cour, 51-55.

[109] At the turn of the thirteenth century, in a general letter, Pope Innocent III stated that saving women from a life of selling sex and marrying repentant sex workers was a good deed that resulted in remission of sins. Thus in the thirteenth century and beyond, religious orders dedicated to Mary Magdalene targeting women who sought to leave sex work flourished. Roby, 297-312. See also previous footnote for Otis-Cour citation. Baldwin, *Masters,* I, 133-137. John Mundy discusses this phenomenon in several of his books, but the most pertinent references are *Men and Women at Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 66-68 and the posthumously published *Studies in the Ecclesiastical and Social History of Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 45-110 and 225-234, in particular 52, 81-82 and 228.

[110] For example, in his *decretum*, Ivo of Chartres encouraged Christian men to marry sex workers as an act of charity and also took a harsh stance against the property rights and legal immunity of anyone running a brothel. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society,* 212. See also previous two footnotes for more citations on panderers and procurers.

[111] Page, 123, trans. Page.

[112] Page views the *carole* as a democratic space, where usually firm boundaries, such as those between classes and those between the city and the country, were blurred as everyone came together to celebrate and participate in the dance. Page, 116-118.

of jongleurs with wind instruments starting the festivities suggests. This was a space where musicians and entertainers could ply their trade while others also danced and sang as part of the communal activity.

Though romance and popular literature is the purview of chapter 4, an example from the thirteenth century romance, *Roman de la Rose* proves instructive here. In one scene, Lady Gladness and Sir Mirth dance a *carole* or several *caroles* in a garden. The narrator describes the scene, with the participants dancing in a circle and singing, and says, "There you might have seen flute-players, minstrels, and jongleurs, one singing a rotruenge…Around and about were many ladies performing admirably with castanets and tambourines, for they kept on throwing the tambourine up in the air and then catching it again on one finger, without ever missing."[113] This is followed by what John Stevens terms a "delicately erotic dance," wherein two maids, "dressed only in their tunics" and "who knew well how to sway in the dance," dance in the center of the ring getting nearer and nearer to each other until "when they were so close together, their lips would touch in such a way that you might have thought they were kissing one another's faces."[114] Whether or not the two maids can be read as representative of reality or allegory in the dream world of the *Roman de la Rose*, the aforementioned tumblers, jugglers, flautists, and jongleurs seem entirely plausible in their presence at the *carole*. Such a community gathering was, and remains, an attractive place for busking and freelance performances.

[113] Guillaume de Loris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, ed. and trans. Frances Horgan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 13, vv. 743-775.
[114] Guillaume de Loris and Jean de Meun, 13, vv. 743-775.

Moreover, this example presents us with precisely the scene that the churchmen feared. The two maids who "knew the art of dancing well" are not noted as professional entertainers of any sort, but they are clearly familiar with the *carole,* and as such, they exemplify the slippage theologians feared if moral women mingled too much with sex workers. Since a promiscuous nature, more than the acceptance of money or a multitude of partners, defined a *meretrix;* any woman may be a whore in hiding, liable to give in to her more base desires and become what she has always been. The very justification for sex work in the Middle Ages depends on cultivating a boundary between sexually good and sexually bad women, in that sex work ostensibly protected good women from the immoral sexual desires of their husbands and from the threat of sexual assault by unmarried men.[115] Social and physical separation was important to maintaining the boundary between good women and *meretrices,* because the line was otherwise ill-defined. Many authorities, religious and lay, sought increasingly to isolate women who sold sex from other women throughout the thirteenth century through edicts expelling them from the city proper and later the creation and extreme regulation of brothels.[116] The emphasis on this boundary and maintaining it is what allows for the social control over women's sexuality that forms a central argument of Karras's book.[117]

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[115] Jacques Rossiaud presents compelling evidence from fifteenth century criminal records showing bands of young men traveling the Burgundian countryside and sexually assaulting young women. The women are then forced to resort to sex work while the men escape any censure. This, Rossiaud argues, is part of a "cult of the good time," that emerged after the plague receded but the population remained low enough that resources were abundant.

[116] This is discussed further in Chapter Four. *Medieval Prostitution*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

[117] Karras, *Common Women*, 131-142, particularly 137-138. See also Bennett's description in "Ventriloquisms," where she describes a cautionary tale about a woman who dances with a clerk on midsummer day. They kiss and have intercourse, and later the woman realizes she is pregnant. She laments, "evil yspunne yern, ever it wole out." The article, and the collection of which it's a part, aims to center women's narrative voices. However, it is worth noting that the *carole* is still a dance intrinsically tied to

Understanding the dangers the *carole* presents to a neatly ordered society also brings new meaning to the other preoccupations churchmen had with the *carole*. Preachers rail against the make-up, clothes, and physical pageantry of the women participants, accusing some of making wigs from the hair of dead women. The mid-thirteenth century *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* by Dominican friar William Peraldus discusses the *carole,* berating "women who paint themselves, whose visages are like masks beneath which they conceal their natural faces which God gave them, and which are pallid. The remark of Jerome pertains to these [painted] countenances: 'with what assurance,' he says, 'they raise skywards faces that the Creator does not recognise.'"[118] Sexual misdeeds, ornamentation, and pride in appearance were often connected in criticism leveled against women who sold sex.[119] Tertullian argued that "meretricious attractivenesses of form are invariably conjoined with and appropriate to bodily prostitution." For Tertullian, to dress promiscuously was equivalent to being a prostitute, because it was only appropriate for a prostitute. Thus when Tertullian described an interaction between Thamar and Judah, he explains, "It was the fact that Thamar 'had painted and adorned herself' that led Judah to regard her as a harlot, and thus, because she was hidden beneath her 'veil,' – the quality of her garb belying her as if she had been a harlot, --he judged (her to be one), and addressed and bargained with (her as such)."[120] We also see in this the same misogyny and desire for control over female appearance that

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sex. As Bennett explains, "The dance of the song — as both told and performed — was itself a medieval colloquialism for sexual intercourse." Bennett, 187-189.

[118] Page, 126-128.

[119] Karras, *Common Women,* 109-111.

[120] Tertullian, "On the Apparel of Women," in *Gender and Sexuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. Martha A. Brozyna (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2005), 25.

led Peter the Chanter and his circle to debate what level of cosmetics constituted fraud by a sex worker. Women who adorned themselves so elaborately were suspect and were exhibiting a promiscuous nature. They could not be distinguished from their counterparts in sex work and therefore could not be trusted.

Creating Boundaries: Sex, Gender, and Transgression

This tension between woman and man in the body of the female sex worker, defined by the ways society gendered sexuality and sex acts themselves, would persist into the Middle Ages. In her book, Karras argues that common women, her term for sex workers, were "women out of place" and regulations like sumptuary legislation focused on reasserting a visible social order,[121] a compelling conclusion that seems to be borne out in distress over the *carole*. But they were also women out of place in that society had no clear categorization for understanding them in terms of sexuality or gender. Women sex workers, as outlets for improper male sexuality, were the antithesis of an ideal woman. They inhabited a space within womanhood that was simultaneously opposite of womanhood. In his work on disability, transgender embodiment and sanctity, Blake Gutt refers to these seemingly paradoxical positions as an "'included outside': a section of a system which marks the edges of that system, which, while nominally included, makes manifest what is beyond and outside the system's scope."[122] Gutt uses this framework to understand how holy bodies help in delineating physical normativity, while also gesturing

[121] Karras, *Common Women*, 20.
[122] Blake Gutt, "Holy Queer and Holy Cure: Sanctity, Disability, and Transgender Embodiment in *Tristan de Nanteuil*," in *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. Blake Gutt and Alicia Spencer-Hall, Hagiography Beyond Tradition (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021), 226-227.

to possible embodiments outside that normativity. This is part of a larger "gender transgression," which is not an inherently wrong or negative denotation, but rather "behaviour and perspectives that do not conform to the binary gender roles that are typical… 'transgression' acknowledges that this unusual behaviour contravenes common expectations."[123] In the case of women engaged in sex work, the transgressions were both morally bad but also necessary; this is the fundamental import of Augustine's defense of a *meretrix* as a "lesser evil," preventing a back-up of social sewage.

According to Church teachings, the ideal of womanhood required women to be chaste outside of marriage, and marital sex should adhere to strict conventions, with the man on top and the aim of procreating.[124] As stated in the Introduction, the primary function of sexual organs, the bodily marker of sex difference, from a theological standpoint was to procreate. But men's lustfulness could lead them to give in to base desires, whether those be desires for non-vaginal, non-procreative sex, sex with other men, or sex with beasts. Women who sold sex resolved this tension by becoming the outlets for the violence and desires of men. These sex workers were there to protect respectable women, who should be treated in the ideal way of treating women. But the body of a woman who sold sex did carry its own social obligations; chief among these was her obligation to have sex. Sex workers, while often legally protected against robbery, theft, and assault, were not protected against sexual assault.[125] By virtue of her

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[123] Gutt, "Holy Queer," 204.
[124] See for example William Peraldus's formulation of "sex that was against nature in terms of manner," meaning sex other than man-on-top, and "sex that was against nature in terms of the substance," meaning when semen is spilled somewhere other than the vagina. For this quotation see Karras and Pierpont, 26, for a general discussion of marital sex and reproduction see Karras and Pierpont, 89-103.
[125] Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society,* 394.

profession she had always already consented to sex, and therefore she could not be raped. According to Gratian, it is only *stuprum* if the violence occurs against a virgin.[126] In his work on medieval canon law and sex work, Brundage notes only one attempted rape case, in which a jurist consulted on the matter concludes the man cannot be punished due to the woman's profession.[127] The sex worker's body belonged communally to the men around her, and her "commonness" came not only from her low class and availability, but her status as property common to all men.[128] While the issue could be blurrier in terms of municipal law, in the area of modern day France the rape of a sex worker most often only resulted in a fine from 1 to 100 sous. As Leah Otis-Cour explains, it's hard to know if this law was created to protect sex workers or to protect rapists from exorbitant punishment if found guilty of raping a sex worker. Furthermore, the later enforcement of some of these protections might well have been more commercially driven than personal; rape of a municipal sex worker represented theft from the community.[129]

In the case of honorable women, however, forcible sex with an unwilling victim could be punished in a variety of ways and degrees of gravity.[130] Gratian believed excommunication, a grave punishment at the time, was the correct course in ecclesiastical law.[131] Civil law and common practice, however, could include death for perpetrators of

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[126] Otis-Cour, 68 and 189, n. 55.
[127] Brundage, "Prostitution," 840.
[128] Definitions of "common women" can be found in Karras, *Common Women,* 3 and 138. References to the sexual availability of common women can be found in Karras and Pierpont, 156-163. A more explicit connection is made in Karras, "Prostitution in Medieval Europe," in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York: Routledge, 1996), 251.
[129] Otis-Cour, 68-69.
[130] In this instance, I have clarified "forcible sex with an unwilling victim" not to minimize statutory rape, coercive rape, marital rape, or other forms of assault, but rather to be precise as to the situation I am citing from the theologians, who would not have recognized some of the aforementioned cases as rape at all.
[131] Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 250.

rape. Other punishments might include giving recompense either monetarily, often through giving a dowry to the now defiled woman, or, if the assailant could not afford to pay for their crime, through enslavement of their person.[132] The obligation to have sex no matter the circumstances, and the understanding that sex acts with a sex worker were, by nature, deviant sex acts not to be engaged in with other women, reflected the sex worker's place outside womanhood. Sex workers defined the "edges" of womanhood and permissible sex therein and embody the reality of sexuality outside of that norm. Though in this case, as opposed to Gutt's, the transgression is reprehensible, it is not "wrong" in that it is part of a functioning society. Sex work was deemed vital for the health of the community and therefore licit.

If women sex workers could be tolerated for their function as a protective measure against uncontrollable masculine lust, there was no such allowance for men engaged in sex work. This is particularly clear once we expand our base of knowledge of men's sex work by including sexualized performance as part of medieval commercial sex. As Carol Symes succinctly explains, the only difference between "the unseemliness of [jongleurs'] distortions" and "the tricks of prostitutes" was "that the prostitute's profession was said to be necessary to the sexual health of men and thus to society at large."[133] Men selling sex or sexualized performance engaged in sex work without any social or moral utility. Moreover, since the primary consumers of commercial sex in the Middle Ages were men, men jongleurs were seen as selling sexual performances to other

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[132] Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 313. Brundage points out that in many ways this reinscribes class disparities, as a wealthy noble could pay off his victim, while a poor man was more likely to be killed by a mob or enslaved.

[133] Symes, 81.

men. This doubled the sins at stake. Men sex workers were not only selling their bodies and inciting *lascivia* and *turpitudo*, but they were selling their bodies, through performance, to other men, inviting the comparison to same-sex intercourse and reciprocal condemnation. Same-sex intercourse was sex that was wrong in its acts, since it was necessarily non-vaginal sex, and due to the conceptual overlap sexualized performance by men for men, was sexuality that was wrong in its acts, since it sold or alluded to the idea of same-sex intercourse.

But same-sex intercourse, and by extension sexualized male performance, was also seen as wrong in a fundamental moral quality that theologians had only recently decided upon. In his groundbreaking work, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, John Boswell argues there is no scriptural basis for anti-gay sentiment and that early Christianity, which had developed in a culture that allowed for same-sex eroticism, had not originally singled out same-sex relationships as sinful. He locates the shift from tolerance to persecution as occurring sometime in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. The reasons for this shift, he acknowledges, remain obscure, though he gestures to the rise of absolute governments as part of a "quest for intellectual and institutional uniformity and corporatism."[134]

Though what caused all these factors to converge over the course of half of a century is not clear - as it was surely not only the move to more centralized governments - the actual convergence of events is undeniable. And it was in the early years of this

[134] John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 269-270. I use the term anti-gay here as it is the term used by Boswell.

larger, cultural shift that Peter the Chanter wrote the aforementioned *Verbum abbreviatum*, which includes the chapter *De vitio sodomitico,* On sodomitical sin. Though sodomy could mean many different sexual acts, Peter makes clear he is referring specifically to same-sex intercourse by stating that God created male and female, "as if he were saying, "there will not be consorting of man with man or woman with woman, but only man with woman, and vice versa."[135] That he is referring more specifically to penetration is clear in his ensuing discussion of intersex people, which he defines as "one having an instrument of both sexes, suitable clearly to either acting or receiving," who can choose whether to assume the role of penetrator or penetrated.[136] Peter believed the sin of sodomy ranked with murder in severity as the only two sins which incite a clamor that cries out to God. Both murderers and sodomites, according to Peter, contravened the purpose of creation, which was to multiply mankind. The only fitting punishment for such a sin is death, and rather than delaying punishment until the afterlife, God "punishes them in this life with the fire sent from Heaven, in the end he will finish their punishment through the fire of Hell [*gehenna*]."[137] As his precedent Peter hearkens back to Leviticus 20, citing that man lying with mankind as with womankind is an abomination and anyone who commits such a sin should be put to death. In this diatribe, Peter laments the laxity of the Church towards such behavior, asking why the Church leaves unpunished what the Lord punishes severely.

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[135] The original text of this entire section can be found in Peter the Chanter, *Verbum Abbreviatum*, caput XXXVIII (PL, 0333D-0336A). Boswell also offers a translation of this passage, 375-376.

[136] He concludes that intersex people can choose to either assume the active (male) role or the passive (female) role depending on individual circumstances. But once the decision has been made there can be no switching between the two.

[137] Boswell, of course, provides a different interpretation of Leviticus than Peter's. See Boswell, 91-117.

Towards the end of this section of his work, it becomes clear that Peter was concerned about more than just sexual mores. As mentioned previously, sexuality and gender were even more intimately related in the Middle Ages than they are today. Men who were sexually penetrated by other men inhabited a feminine gender by virtue of that penetration. Peter levels this gendered criticism against male-male intercourse, saying "Spastic, effeminate [enervati] men of this sort are women kept by the Pharoah for his pleasure, who turn themselves from men into women, misusing feminine intercourse. These ones are imitators of Sardanapalus, who was a man more corrupt than any woman."[138] These men selling sex to other men were not just having sinful sex; they were destabilizing the gendering of society by inhabiting a woman's role. In the case of Church attitudes towards male musicians, just as a woman did not need to have sex to have an innately promiscuous nature, male musicians did not have to actively engage in sex with other men to be seen as problematically feminine. The mere suggestion that they were sexually available to other men through their performances was enough to cause concern, evidenced by a preponderance of negative writing around the effeminacy of male performers. Again, there was a clear precedent for medieval authorities to draw on. Tertullian wrote that the theater was:

> the proper home of all unchastity…Its greatest charm is above all contrived by its lewdness— the lewd gestures of the comedian in the farce, the lewd performance

[138] "Hujusmodi homines spastici enervati sunt feminae reservatae a Pharaone ad delicias suas, qui se masculos convertunt in feminas, abutentes coitu feminino. Hi sunt imitatores Sardanapali, qui vir corruptior fuit omni muliere." Sardanapalus was a semi-mythical king of Assyria, who was infamous for dressing as a woman, wearing makeup, and having many concubines of both genders. See Maria de Fátima Rosa, "The Legend of Sardanapalus: From Ancient Assyria to European Stages and Screens," in *Intelligence, Creativity and Fantasy: Proceedings of the 5th International Multidisciplinary Congress (PHI 2019), October 7-9, 2019*, ed. M.S.M. Kong, M.D.R. Monteiro, and M.J. Pereira Neto (London: CRC Press, 2019). Peter seems to invoke his name as a way to criticize excess, particularly in terms of flamboyant style, gender-bending, and sexuality.

> of the actor playing a woman, stamping out all sense of sex and shame, so that they are more likely to blush at home than onstage, and finally the obscene experiences of the pantomime actor, who must suffer sexual humiliation from his youth if he is to become a performer.[139]

We can see in Tertullian's outrage the tangled knot of all the sins leveled at male performers. They sold their sexuality through lewd gestures, they cast off their gender to play the part of a woman without shame, and finally, they were willing to "suffer sexual humiliation" as part of the training of their profession — an allusion to penetration.[140] In more level terms, renowned fourth century theologian Ambrose of Milan viewed theatrical music "as soft, 'female', and melancholic."[141] Boethius argued music "should be temperate, simple, and masculine, rather than effeminate (*effeminata*), violent (*fera*), or fickle (*varia*)."[142] He doesn't accuse men who play music of effeminacy, but by the mid to late twelfth century, when Peter the Chanter and his circle of followers are writing the concern about music emasculating men has become a paranoia. When trying to define actors, which Peter cites as the one exception to the rule that no occupation is completely devoid of utility, he asks if the definition should include those "who without any gesture recite monstrous [*enormia*] or effeminate songs."[143]

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[139] "Privatum consistorium impudicitiae, ubi nihil probatur quam quod alibi non probatur. ita summa gratia eius de spurcitia plurimum concinnata est, quam Atellana gesticulatur, quam mimus etiam per muliebres res repraesentat, sensum sexus et pudoris exterminans, ut facilius domi quam in scaena erubescant, quam denique pantomimus a pueritia patitur ex corpore ut artifex esse possit." Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 79-80, trans. Edwards. Original text also provided in Edwards, 79.

[140] Edwards, "Unspeakable Professions," 80. Edwards notes that Juvenal, as well, found their ability to imitate women objectionable.

[141] Kramarz, 363. Clement of Alexandria also warns of music at banquets that can induce "pleasure that tickles the eyes and ears and effeminates," Kramarz, 394, trans. Kramarz.

[142] *Fundamentals of Music,* 4.

[143] *Pierre le Chantre,* III [2a], 426-427.

In her essay arguing there was a crisis of masculinity in the twelfth century, Jo Ann McNamara asks what it means to be a man in this time: "Can one be a man without deploying the most obvious biological attributes of manhood? If a person does not act like a man, is he a man? And what does it mean to 'act like a man,' except to dominate women?"[144] According to McNamara, the threat to masculinity, arising from increasing numbers of celibate men, was resolved by a re-entrenching of gendered divisions. Women were increasingly pushed out of spheres inhabited by men, particularly ecclesiastical ones, and denied entry to nascent university culture.[145] But this resolution leaves no space for effeminized men. As McNamara explains:

> …they had also fused personhood with manhood, and to defend their manhood they had to become ever more manly. They had to persecute with ever-increasing severity anyone who threatened the uncertain inner core of that image. Women were victimized by their exclusion and male victims — heretics, homosexuals, Jews, any rebels who didn't fit the mold —were turned into women. The image of domination forced men into an endless competition to prove their manhood to one another. This was a tragedy for women and for the notmen, half-men, effeminate men who were the objects of this relentless persecution.[146]

Whether or not one is convinced by McNamara's formulation of a masculine crisis, her assessment of a fragile masculinity dependent on sex acts to stabilize rings true. Failure to dominate, particularly failure to dominate the weaker sex, rendered one less of a man. To further that failure by allowing oneself to be penetrated, or inhabit the role of the weaker sex, was to slide along the scale of gender, landing in a space that cannot be defined by Gutt's "included outside," because they were being systematically

[144] Jo Ann McNamara, "The Herrenfrage: The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050-1150," in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees, Thelma Fenster, and Jo Ann McNamara (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994)," 5.
[145] McNamara, 19.
[146] McNamara, 22.

excluded from manhood. Manliness was domination and a complete absence of femininity, requiring the ideal man to constantly reinforce his own manliness through refutation of all that is not manly. The societal ideal of manhood recedes further and further from grasp in this system and remains unattainable despite its reification as the only formulation of true gender. This is itself a trap for manhood and men that limits their personhood and deprives them of individuality, as McNamara explains.[147] Decisions we might equate with showing personality, such as shaving beards or curling hair, became social signs of effeminacy. There cannot be an "included outside" in a definition which is constantly narrowing itself through its attempts to reinforce its own reality. Instead, we can think of these effeminate individuals as a companion to the "included outside." Instead of standing just inside the boundary of their gender and defining the edges, they are just beyond the limits of their gender. As the circle of what was considered a true man shrank, they remained in place, the edge of the circle passing through them. Perhaps once included in the formulation of men, they became excluded through a reconfiguration of society and a combination of circumstance and sexual activity.[148]

There is no clear causal relationship between sexuality and gender in the perception of male musicians: if they were first considered feminine, which made them susceptible to assuming a feminine role in sex or if they were first presumed to be engaged in same-sex intercourse and therefore criticized for being feminine. Male femininity and same-sex intercourse were both being increasingly criticized and

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[147] McNamara, 22.

[148] Boswell notes that the connection between homosexuality and femininity also seems to be an invention of the second half of the Middle Ages. Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, 23-26, 76-77, and 156-158.

sanctioned and conflating the two gave more credence to the persecution of each individually. In his book, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, R.I. Moore explains, "deliberate and socially sanctioned violence began to be directed, through established governmental, judicial and social institutions, against groups of people defined by general characteristics such as race, religion or way of life; and that membership of such groups in itself came to be regarded as justifying these attacks."[149] While it is unfortunate that this conflation makes it difficult to separate out gender identity and sexual orientation in many sources, most of which take a condemnatory stance on trans identity and same-sex desire, trying to differentiate the two by identifying whether one caused the other may only double down on the erasure of the differences. If we focus instead on the stationary individual, being passed over by an ever-shrinking bubble of modes of masculinity, so they end up on the outside without ever moving, we shift the narrative to one about society and its perceptions, allowing the individual to be who they always were, to inhabit their own self, desires, and performances. Here we see it is rarely, if ever, the existential experience of humanity that changes, but rather society shifting and redefining humanness and those experiences.

Furthermore, the Church did not distinguish between gender transgressions and sexuality transgressions in their condemnations. In Moore's "persecuting society," all that matters is that a transgressive group exists to be added to the other groups of persecuted individuals. Men interested in same-sex intercourse were quickly subsumed in the larger

[149] R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe 950-1250*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 4.

category of common enemy along with Jews, usurers, heretics.[150] I would argue gender nonconformity, which was so closely associated with same-sex intercourse, was simultaneously added to the list of qualities held by undesirables. In this light, the frequent presence of heretics and usurers in Peter's and his followers' discussions of sex work is logical. All these groups are undesirables. The distinctions being drawn by theologians are primarily concerned with money, both for reasons of practicality for the average person, but also to adjudicate whose money the Church could accept. Financial underpinnings drove the desire to separate out the sins rather than questions of depravity. The exception to this is Peter's attitude toward same-sex male intercourse, which is presented with extraordinary fervor, seemingly from a personal bias more than anything else.[151]

What makes sex work unique within this larger cesspool of sins was that it sat at the nexus of several different transgressions. The body of the male sex worker in particular was a visible space of transgressive sex and transgressive gender without the justification of being a "lesser evil." Their bodies, which seemed to elude definition in the fundamental categories of gender and sexuality, were nevertheless perceived as visible in their differences from other men - whether through overt sexual promiscuity, lascivious dancing, or effeminate dress — and this visibility also made them attackable as a group. If we understand female sex work to be an answer to "women out of place" and an

[150] Moore, 88.
[151] As Boswell explains, the Church as an institution had not adopted any particularly harsh stance on same-sex intercourse to this point. It is only after Peter's diatribe that Lateran III of 1179 ruled that a cleric who commits incontinence against nature will be deposed from office or sent to a monastery to do penance, and a layman who commits the same sin will be excommunicated. Lateran IV in 1215 mentions only clerical celibacy and punishments for sodomy and not laymen. Boswell, 277-278.

attempt to control all female sexuality, as Karras has formulated, the connections between same-sex intercourse and effeminacy in the context of male sex work exerts a similar pressure on male gender. Instead of controlling male sexuality, the socio-religious reactions to male sex work helped tighten the stranglehold of hierarchical and heteronormative formulations of manhood on the medieval definition of masculinity.

Chapter Three: Dirty Dancing and Risky Business: Portrayals of Sex Work in Romances and Fabliaux

"Queus hom estes?" … / … "Ge sui fouterres a loier"

("What kind of man are you?" / "I am a fucker for hire")

- "Le Foteor," vv. 171-175

"Un petitet, un mervelleus / En avoient si chamberlenc, / Et s'ert plus tendres d'un herenc."

("A very little one, a marvel / his chamberlains had / and he was more tender than a herring)

- *Guillaume de Dole*, vv. 3389-3391

"Ele fist faire cote et mantel et cemisse et braies, si a'torna a guise de jogleor"

(She had a tunic, cloak, shirt, and breeches made, and disguised herself as a jongleur)

- *Aucassin et Nicolette*, XXXVIII, vv. 13-14

"[Mabel], qui plus savoit barat et guile / que fame nule qui i fust"

([Mabel, who knew more about deception and guile / than any woman who ever was)

- "Boivins de Provins," vv. 22-23

The above quotations exemplify the various types of sex workers that will be encountered in this chapter and the order in which they will be encountered. The tone alone indicates that, just as there was no uniform theological view of sex work, there was

no uniform literary portrayal of sex work. These quotations also show the shift in register and type of sex work from one genre to another. The first and last quotations both come from fabliaux and deal with individuals who sell sex. They are crass and to the point, immediately showing these sex workers as bold, cunning, and deceptive. The second and third quotation come from romances and deal with individuals who sell performance. They demonstrate an elision of the sexuality at hand, either through obscure metaphor or simply by glossing over the time spent as a sex worker. These individuals are tantalizingly hinted at and yet ultimately obscured from view.

I will not repeat here the extended discussion of *romans* and fabliaux as genres discussed in the introduction. But the tendency of the fabliaux to proclaim sexual commerce out loud, whereas the romance genre hides it behind euphemism and silences, informs our understanding of sex work in each genre. Both genres emphatically demonstrate the connection between selling sex and selling performance, even as the inclusion or exclusion of specific types of sex work show that there were important differences between the two. Jongleurs appear in romances and in fabliaux, the high-brow love stories and the low-brow farces. In fabliaux, they appear in all different guises: as dupes, as tricksters, as literary devices, and as unnamed entertainers providing music and dance.[1] But the profession of jonglerie is equally at home in the courts with chivalric and idyllic, though sometimes ill-fated, love.

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[1] Examples of each respectively are "St. Pierre et le jongleur," "Jouglet," "Des .III. bocus menesterels," and "Le dit du buffet."

Those who sell sex, on the other hand, appear in romance only as points of contrast for noble maidens. Thus, Queen Guinevere staunchly proclaims, “I have never offered my body for sale or given it away,” as she denies having an affair with Kay in Chrétien’s *The Knight of the Cart*.[2] Even as the audience knows Guinevere has indeed given her body to Lancelot, the second part of her sentence, reads more as an extension of the definition of *meretrices*, the kind favored by the Church fathers in their emphasis on promiscuity. Similarly, in the thirteenth-century text *The Romance of the Rose* the embodiment of Reason argues “that no good woman would abandon herself in return for a gift, and no man should attach himself to a woman who was willing to sell her flesh.”[3] Such women, let alone men, can hardly even be mentioned in the context of romance. Yet the fabliaux are rife with these same characters. In this ribald and ironic genre it is often the most unprincipled and even unsavory characters who succeed. Tricksters and liars navigate the world easily, using their wits to escape dangerous situations and turn the very narrative to their advantage. As paragons of immorality and deceitfulness in the extratextual world, sex workers of both genders are the pinnacle of the successful fabliaux characters. If, as will be seen in “Boivin de Provins,” a sex worker is to be duped it is only at the hands of another unscrupulous sex worker.

This chapter contains four main arguments. While these arguments are self-contained, it is only through placing them together that one can perceive larger trends. As

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[2] Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, trans. William W. Kibler and Carleton W. Carroll (New York: Penguin, 1991), 267.

[3] Guillaume de Loris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, ed. and trans. Frances Horgan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 70.

John Baldwin has argued, romance and fabliaux "competed so vigorously" with each other "that the two genres must be read together in symbiosis."[4] Though I would not classify the following arguments as indicative of competition per se, they certainly demonstrate the different priorities and mores each genre accepted from the larger culture. I begin by examining two fabliaux. The first of which is "Des putains et des lecheors." This text deals with the creation of mankind, and more specifically, what God does when faced with the "whores and jongleurs" who do not fit into his neatly defined social categories. It therefore provides a powerful framing for the entire chapter as well as an introduction into the genre of the fabliaux. Next, I analyze the fabliaux "The Fucker," which tells the tale of a man selling sex. This text demonstrates the ease with which sex workers exist in the world of the fabliaux, and how they can manipulate the characters around them and the narrative itself. I also argue that "The Fucker" presents the possibility of a socially useful male sex worker, which stands in stark contrast to the understanding of male sex work laid out in Chapter Two. However, this social utility is incidental, as the male sex worker and the fabliaux only prop up hierarchies when it serves their own purposes.

I then turn to the portrayal of male jongleurs in romance, focusing on *Guillaume de Dole* and *The Folie d'Oxford* from the Tristan corpus. Despite the coyness inherent in the romance genre, the jongleurs who appear are nevertheless sexualized, even if that sexuality can never be full expressed. Male performers in these texts are shown as

[4] John W. Baldwin, *The Language of Sex: Five Voices from Northern France Around 1200* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 40.

effeminate and the texts hint at their sexual availability to other men. Rather than understanding this as a statement on the sexuality of the men who seem interested in the male performers, I argue we should read this as an indication of the degree to which male performers were already seen as womanly. Generic constraints exert significant control over the portrayal of women performers in romance as well but for different reasons. Romances seem unable to maintain their own conventions and portray the complex identities of female performers. Through the fluidity provided by the jongleur identity, Fresne, Nicolette, and Josiane from *Galeran de Bretagne, Aucassin and Nicolette,* and *Boeve de Hautome* respectively, explore class, race, and gender identities. Yet if the romances are to end happily, they must adhere to the qualities of the idealized woman, which they cannot do while engaged in jonglerie.

Finally, I return to the fabliaux to bring this chapter to a close. Through an analysis of "Boivin de Provins," with supporting evidence from "Auberee," I argue that women sex workers are seen as evil and deceitful. They emblematize all the fears of what women could be. While many women are evil and deceitful in the fabliaux, women sex workers like Mabel represent the pinnacle of immorality. Yet, Mabel is ultimately unsuccessful in her attempts to rob Boivin, because Boivin, himself, is a deceitful sex worker. In the battle royale of sex worker tricksters, the man emerges victorious, a conclusion which will provide a pivot point into Chapter Four.

By analyzing these texts together, we can see a hierarchy of sex work and morality in the literature. While not all jongleurs had a stable position at court, it is clear that itinerant jongleurs and jongleurs sporadically employed by kings and nobles were not

uncommon at courts. Their presence in romance, a genre often dedicated to ideals and how they are dismantled or sustained through a narrative, suggests that jongleurs are, to a degree, socially acceptable. This is true despite the genderfluidity of jongleurs that appears the texts. Those who sell sex, however, cannot appear in romance. Instead, they appear in fabliaux, where they don't merely exist but succeed above all others. The fact that individuals who sell sex flourish in the fabliaux, however, necessitates their classification as deceitful and immoral. To be at ease and be victorious in the fabliaux requires a willingness to lie, swindle, and seduce others without compunction. Much as jongleurs are accepted despite their gender fluidity, this overarching characterization of individuals selling sex in the fabliaux occurs in spite of the fact that they prove either more socially or more gender conforming within the genre than their real-world counterparts.

Before beginning this chapter, it is worth dwelling on the creation of romances and fabliaux. In a world such as medieval Europe where literacy is limited and books are expensive, most of these stories would have been heard rather than read. This is, of course, always important to keep in mind, but it is even more crucial to remember when reading these stories in an attempt to understand how the larger society viewed jongleurs. Although the stories have come down to us in written form, jongleurs themselves were performing or reciting versions of these stories to a crowd, a court, perhaps even a king. Is any given line or pithy remark a part of the "original" story, if an original can be said to exist? Or was added when the author of the text wrote it down? Or when a subsequent scribe copied the manuscript? What survives today are often interpretations of

interpretation of interpretations. Thus, when jongleurs are mentioned, one must recall that the portrayal is being filtered through several voices, including that of the jongleurs themselves.

Some of these moments seem easier to read, and guess the origins of, than others. One context in which jongleurs commonly appear in stories serves as an example: a knight or king shows his benevolence and joy by giving gifts to various people, including performers. In Marie de France's twelfth century lai, "Lanval," Lanval meets a mysterious woman, who becomes his lover and provides him with wealth. When he returns to court after this meeting he, "gave rich gifts, / Lanval ransomed prisoners, / Lanval clothed minstrels [*jugleürs*], / Lanval did great honor."[5] Likewise, in an anonymous French lai entitled Graelent, likely from the late twelfth century with a similar plot as that of Lanval, the titular character is given wealth by a mysterious lover and in the ensuing evening of delight, Graelent, "gave generous gifts to the harpists, / The prisoners and the jongleurs."[6] In the romance *Floire et Blanchefleur*, from the second half of the twelfth century, after the wedding of an emir, it is noted that even the poorest of

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[5] For information on Marie and the dating of the text see Claire M. Waters, "Introduction," in *The Lais of Marie de France: Text and Translation*, ed. Claire M. Waters, (Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 2018), 9-34. For the quotation with the facing Old French text see Marie de France, *The Lais of Marie de France: Text and Translation*, ed. Claire M. Waters, Bilingual edition (Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press, 2018), 173, vv. 209-212.

[6] "D'eus ennorer est en grant poinne; Assez i ot joie la nuit, Et d'estrumenz et de deduit. La nuit fu Graalant haitiez, / Et richement apareilliez; Granz dons donna as harpeors, As prisons et as jugleors." *French Arthurian Literature IV: Eleven Old French Narrative Lays*, eds. Glyn S. Burgess and Leslie C. Brook, (Boydell & Brewer, 2007), https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt14brskp, 392, vv. 405- 406, trans. Burgess and Brook, 393.

the jongleurs in attendance earned four silver marcs a day and a good horse and coat.[7] Finally, in Chrétien de Troyes' *Eric and Enide*, the day after Eric and Enide's wedding:

> …the minstrels were happy, for all were paid according to their liking. All that was owed to them was paid, and they were given beautiful gifts: clothes of vair [a type of fur] and ermine, of rabbit and rich purple cloth, fur-trimmed scarlet or silk. Those who wanted a horse or money each had a gift according to their wishes, as good as they deserved.[8]

The largesse of such gifts is made clear in a later passage when King Arthur's generosity is described: he did not give mantles made of serge, nor of rabbit or dark-brown wool, but of samite [a rich silk fabric] and ermine, of whole miniver and mottled silk, bordered with orphrey, stiff and rough."[9] Such statements, when put in the context of a jongleur performing for a court or a crowd, serve a dual purpose. The jongleur is complimenting the knight or king in the story for their magnanimity, which speaks to the character in the tale. But it also, in turn, becomes a pitch for the current audience to be similarly magnanimous. Great knights and kings give generously to jongleurs, and this is part of why they have songs sung about them; if you want to be considered a generous individual and have songs extol you, you too should give generously to jongleurs. The inclusion of such lines in texts may have become a trope, but it seems likely it began as a sincere

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[7] *Le conte de Floire et Blanchefleur: nouvelle édition critique du texte du manuscrit A (Paris, BNF, fr. 375)*, eds. Robert d'Orbigny and Jean-Luc Leclanche, Champion classiques. Série "moyen âge" 2 (Paris: Champion, 2003),166-167, vv. 3169-3171. For information about the text and the date of its composition see Robert d'Orbigny and Jean-Luc Leclanche, "Introduction," in *Le conte de Floire et Blanchefleur: nouvelle édition critique du texte du manuscrit A (Paris, BNF, fr. 375)*, ed. Robert d'Orbigny and Jean-Luc Leclanche, Champion classiques. Série "moyen âge" 2 (Paris: Champion, 2003), xv-xviii.

[8] *Arthurian Romances*, 63, trans. Kibler and Carroll.

[9] *Arthurian Romances*, 119, trans. Kibler and Carroll.

request. While they certainly still function as a plot device to show the generosity of kings in the written text, the real power of these lines comes from the multiple levels on which they function when a jongleur is actually reciting them.

The reality of jongleurs performing these texts must always remain in the readers' minds as they read these stories, and this doesn't only relate to orality. The embodied performance, with gestures, movements, and expressions matters, although our knowledge of what these performances looked like is limited. Thus, when we encounter characters such as Nicolette and Josiane later in this chapter and explore the meaning of these textual women dressing as men, we must recall that the characters could be played by women or men. The gender inversions, then, may be doubled or tripled depending on the individual doing the performing. To fully explore the performances of these texts or their reception would constitute a different chapter entirely, but at fruitful moments, I will remind the reader of the complications that actual performance could have brought to some of these texts.

"Fucking" Around in the Fabliaux

A strong example to begin this chapter with, both for its focus on the two primary groups of this dissertation and for its usefulness as a text that has clear implications within the lived performance and for deeper textual analysis, is the fabliau "Des putains et des lecheors" (Whores and Jongleurs). Occasionally known as "Des trois commandemens" (The Three Orders), this fabliau parodies Genesis by showing God create clerics, knights, and peasants, giving each of them a responsibility and a means of

income.[10] The clerics get alms and tithes, the knights own and govern, and the peasants are given farms to work. Considering his work done, God retreats only to be harangued by a horde of *putains* and *lecheors.* Though *lecheors,* at its most basic, means a lewd person or lecher, in this instance it is clearly being used in its more specific function as "a term of abuse applied to loose-living minstrels."[11] *Putains*, of course, continues to be used in modern French as a vulgar term for sex worker, or, more generally, as an insult against any woman. Thus, approaching God are those who sell sex and those who sell entertainment. They want to know what they will be given to live off of. God then asks Saint Peter about these people and who they are, and Saint Peter reminds him that they are God's own creation, "une gens…forfaite," a sinful group or an error.[12] God then decides that the best way to handle the *putains* and *lecheors* is to put the *putains* in the care of the clergy and the *lecheors* in the care of the knights. The fabliau then comically details how well the clergy take care of the *putains*, showering them with gifts and

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[10] The story exists in two manuscripts, one under each title. The two versions are quite similar although one has a few lines of prologue not present in the other. The NRCF lists only the B manuscript version as the G manuscript was not discovered until later. The author is unknown, and the date and location of creation are unknown. Noomen and van den Boogaard tentatively suggest Normandy, Picardy, or potentially Wallonia, all of which maintain distinct sounds for the nasal a and e. They also note that the two-case declension system is mostly intact. Willem Noomen and Nico van den Boogaard, *Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux* (Assen, Pays-Bas: Van Gorcum, 1983), t. 6, 147-148. I follow Nathaniel Dubin's transcription, which comes from the B manuscript, *The Fabliaux*, 1st edition (New York: Liveright, 2013), 9-13. For information about the G manuscript tale and to see the two texts side by side, see Richard E. F. Straub, "Des putains et des lecheors: la version oubliée du manuscrit G," *Vox romanica* 52 (1993): 164-179.

[11] A. Hindley, Frederick William Langley, and B. J. Levy, *Old French-English Dictionary* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 390. Two dictionaries were consulted throughout this chapter, Hindley, Langley, and Levy (a print dictionary), and anglo-norman.net (a web-based dictionary). For more on the etymological connection between "jogleor" and "lecheor" see Raleigh Morgan, "Old French 'Jogleor' and Kindred Terms. Studies in Mediaeval Romance Lexicology," *Romance Philology* 7, no. 4 (1954), 305-306.

[12] In one of the texts, the saint is explicitly identified as Saint Peter, in the other it is merely assumed to be, as God simply asks an unidentified "saint," Straub, 174, v. 31. In the more widely known manuscript B they are "une gent…sorfete," the adjective being the only marginally less negative "immoderate," "gluttonous," or "excessive."

spending all the money of the church on them, while the knights neglect the *lecheors*, who are given only their cast-off clothes and have to wander around barefoot.

The crucial element of the fabliau lies in its final lines:

> Se cis fableaus dist voir dont sont
> de cest commant li clerc sauve
> et tuit li chevalier danne.[13]
>
> If what this fable says is true, by this command the clergy is saved and all the knights are damned.

As Richard Straub explains in his analysis of manuscript G's text of *Des Trois Commandemens,* by qualifying the end of the story as potentially untrue, the jongleur reciting the fabliau gives his audience, perhaps full of knights, a way out. If the story is true, then treating jongleurs poorly leads to the damnation of all knights. The message is "pay me well and you will save your souls."[14] Rhetorically, then, as with the examples above, this story is a reminder and a call-to-action to pay the performer currently performing the piece. In this case, a very overt and potentially threatening reminder that is diffused by acknowledging that the world of the fabliau is different from the real world. The effect of this acknowledgment "brings listeners back to the real world. The threats disappear, the gaiety remains, and it is a good atmosphere conducive to generous gifts, social criticism and complaint being well enveloped in humor and self-irony."[15]

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[13] Text from Straub, 175. The text of manuscript B is slightly different but remains the same in its general meaning and, therefore, usage in this analysis: Se mes fabliaus dit voir donc sont / par cest commant li clerc sauve / et li chevalier sont dampne. *The Fabliaux*, 12, vv. 80-82.

[14] "Payez-moi bien et vous sauverez vos âmes!" Straub, 173.

[15] "Ramène les auditeurs dans le monde réel. Les menaces disparaisent, la gaieté reste, et c'est bien là l'atmosphère propice à des dons généreux, la critique sociale et la complainte étant bien enveloppées d'humour et d'auto-ironie," Straub, 173.

This text clearly works for the jongleur on an extratextual level, comically prodding the audience to pay more generously.

But this story also serves as a powerful entry point to the genre of the fabliau, a genre that elides definition even by the greatest scholars to work on the corpus. Simon Gaunt succinctly explains it by saying, "Here we have a type of text which clearly constitutes a genre, but modern critics have been spectacularly unable to agree on what the genre is."[16] In attempting to supply criteria for the following texts, I follow Gaunt in his reliance on Gabrielle Lyons' *avoir/savoir* formulation, in which "successful characters in the fabliaux…constantly use *savoir*, their wit and ingenuity, to undermine the position of other characters who believe that their *avoir*, their place in a fixed social hierarchy, whether it be as a noble, a clerk or a husband, is god-given and unassailable."[17] This, in turn, means that fabliaux are defined by their vested interest in mocking or upending hierarchies, though Gaunt is careful to point out that this does not mean they seek to *dismantle* those hierarchies.[18] "Des Putains et des lecheors" clearly engages in just this type of problematizing in that the story seeks not to create equity through breaking down the system, but merely to create a chaotic alternative that is titillating in its bold-faced irreverence. Gaunt also points out that this fabliau lays bare the lie that the social order can be divided into such neat categories, effectively calling into question the

[16] Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature*, Cambridge Studies in French (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511519505, 234.

[17] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre,* 235. Lyons thesis has not been made a book so far as I am aware, and it is not in circulation through ILL either in print or digital copy. However, it's influence on the scholarship of the fabliau is obvious given how often the concept of *savoir/avoir* is invoked.

[18] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, 274 for his clearest formulation of this.

categories themselves and the social system ostensibly based on them.[19] Social class, made up of the *avoir* and the *avoir*-nots, proves to be insufficient and unstable, as the *putains* and *lecheors* are left like a mathematical remainder, indivisible into clear, discrete categories.

The messiness of the fabliaux is a fertile ground for examining the complex character of sex workers in the Middle Ages, who themselves elude simple definition. They are crucial to social order, and yet exist outside the social order. They preserve virtue by being virtueless. They are useful precisely because of their gendered bodies, and yet dangerous because those bodies are gendered so differently. In the fabliaux, this chaotic nature is not only shown but indulged in. Countless studies have been done examining how the fabliaux play off of, play into, and play against social norms, including gender.[20] Rather than using gender to make a claim about the fabliaux as a genre, I would like to use the fabliaux to make a claim about gender, specifically as it interacts with sex work. To do this, I follow Gaunt's lead in seeing the fabliaux as a genre of mutability, one that desires always to upend expectations. Equally, however, I follow Lesley Johnson's lead in suggesting that no single fabliau can be used to understand how the corpus of fabliaux presents gender, or in Johnson's formulation, women. The context, both of the genre, in which what is not normal is normal, and of the individual story, which may formulate the "not normal" in a particular way, must dictate the understanding of gender in a given fabliau. And while we cannot export those conclusions to other

[19] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, 237.

[20] See Introduction, notes 69 and 71, for a list of relevant scholarship.

fabliaux, we can glean from them some of the ideas about the gender of sex workers that existed in the Middle Ages.

The fabliaux, more than any other genre, explicitly links male jonglerie with sex work or sexual misdeeds. As the story of "Des putains et des lecheors" shows, the basic concept of a jongleur could be expressed with the word *lecheor*. Throughout the tale, only *lecheor* is used, and yet the fact that the story is referring to jongleurs is indisputable in the way it describes the *lecheors* as being part of the retinue of nobles and getting secondhand clothes and scraps from feasts. The most overt connection made between jonglerie and male sex work is in the simply titled "Le Foteor" (The Fucker). Existing in only two manuscripts, one of which is incomplete, "The Fucker" tells the story of a young man, who arrives in town and asks after the most beautiful woman, claiming to be a minstrel sent by a high-born man.[21] Once he discovers who the woman is, he sets out for her house and introduces himself as a *fouterres*, "a fucker." He proceeds to sleep with the woman's maid and the woman herself, before the master of the house returns to find the young man lounging in a bath. The master is shocked, but the young man does not panic. He merely says that he promised to sleep with the mistress of the house for a sum of money, but he has neither been paid nor done the deed. The master of the house then

[21] In this reading, I again follow the transcription by Nathaniel Dubin, which closely follows manuscript D. Dubin's transcription varies slightly from Noomen and van den Boogaard's, but without any major deviations in the lines quoted in this chapter. It is also worth noting that most of the lines quoted in this chapter have the same general meaning in manuscript B. Two examples where the manuscripts differ on a specific words have been noted in the footnotes. As Noomen and van den Boogaard note, there is very little in the text to allow for a date or location of production. It seems mostly to have a Picard dialect but there are notable exceptions. The two-case declension system is closely observed in ten rhymes. Noomen and van den Boogaard also believe the two manuscripts were created independently of each other. *NRCF*, t. 6, 53-55.

pays the man the same amount not to sleep with his wife, and the *foteor* leaves much richer and goes on to continue making a living this way.

"The Fucker" exemplifies the way transgressive characters are often most at ease in the world of the fabliaux. As other characters scramble or react with outrage, the *foteor* himself remains coolly in control, manipulating those around him and the overall narrative, often by introducing mundanity into a seemingly outlandish situation. But the *foteor* is more than just a cunning character. In abiding by the rules of his textual world, he is able to adhere to extratextual, "real world" sexuality norms. In the fabliaux, women are able to openly purchase sex, which allows the *foteor* to ply his trade without engaging in forbidden male-male sexual interactions. But fabliaux women are often portrayed as dangerously sexually voracious, causing problems with their insatiable desire.[22] The *foteor* exerts control over the women of the story, who are each "misbehaving" in their own way, and reasserts a gendered dominance through sex work. He becomes the mirror of the extratextual female sex worker, immoral and untrustworthy, but nevertheless serving society through sexual commerce. His performance, however, cannot be reduced to a simple reiteration of the gendered hierarchy. While his interactions with the women serve to re-establish social order, his interaction with the husband of the story shows how, as the ultimate character of the fabliau, he continues create chaos.

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[22] See for example, "Cele qui se fist foutre sur la fosse de son mari," "Porcelet," "Les .iv. sohaiz saint Martin," "Les trois dames qui troverent un vit," "Le sohait des vez," "La dame qui aveine demandoit pour morel sa provender avoir." Though her article focuses on masculine desire, Holly A. Crocker, discusses the insatiability of women's desire in "Disfiguring Gender: Masculine Desire in the Old French Fabliau," *Exemplaria* 23, no. 4 (2011): 342–67, https://doi.org/10.1179/175330711X13131907446337.

This *foteor*, first and foremost, fits into Lyons' classification of characters who use *savoir* to undermine *avoir*, as he is initially introduced as a man "qui n'avoit mie grant *avoir*, mais il n'ert mie sanz *savoir.*"[23] Thus from the outset, he can be identified as a character that will inject chaos into the situation at hand and that chaos will have the specific quality of undermining social hierarchy. The reader-listener is also told he is poor but well dressed, handsome like a lord, and "nus mestier faire ne savoit" - he knows no trade.[24] The reader-listener is thus on high alert for an ulterior motive when the man says he is a minstrel, which would require knowing a trade. The following lines only cast further suspicion on the *foteor*, as the reader-listener is told that he goes around well dressed, with a matching cape and coat, new gloves, and a new sword, and he travels from town to town staying in the castles of various knights and vavassors, lodging and eating at their expensive, since he himself has little money. This description would certainly seem to fit a minstrel, particularly given the tradition of paying minstrels in fine clothes rather than coin.[25] And of course a medieval audience would be viewing a minstrel, playing a man, playing a minstrel, both inviting the audience to question where

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[23] A man who does not have much but is never without his good sense. *The Fabliaux,* 838, vv. 7-8, emphasis mine.

[24] *The Fabliaux,* 838, vv. 10-14.

[25] This tradition is well attested to in the literature, as suggested by the quotation from *Erec et Enide*, "Lanval," and "Des putains et des lecheors" above. In "The Knight with the Red Robe" the connection is made explicit and derogatory when a lady tells the knight, "Ce n'apartient mie a vostre oes / d'avoir garnement s'il n'est nues; / c'apartient a ces jougleors / et a ces bons enchanteors, [alt vieleours; autres chanteours]/ que il aient des chevaliers / les robes, que c'est lor mestiers." "It's not fitting for you / To get a garment that isn't new. / It's for jugglers / And those fine mountebanks / To get clothes from knights — / That's their trade," Raymond Eichmann and John DuVal, eds., *The French Fabliau: B.N. Ms. 837*, Garland Library of Medieval Literature v. 16-17 (New York: Garland Pub., 1984), 156-157, vv. 211-216, and page 237 for the alternative words in other manuscripts, trans. Eichmann and DuVal.

performance and reality meet and diverge but also emphasizing the similarities between the *foteor* and the minstrel performing the story.

Whatever his motives or occupation may be, the reader-listener is sure to find out, as the *foteor* proceeds to dine well on "pains & vins & char & poisons / menja la nuit a grant plenté" and tells the innkeeper "cestui escot / paiera teus qui n'en set mot."[26] These opening glimpses of the *foteor* have established him as a comfortable liar and exceedingly confident. He is prepared not only to eat enough to tide him over, but to indulge in a sumptuous meal and spend the night before he has acquired the money to pay for the food and lodging. He must also inspire confidence since the innkeeper feeds him, provides him with shelter, and believes him when the *foteor* says he is a minstrel. Fortuitously, this character with *savoir* is about to be provided with the perfect counterpart with *avoir.* The innkeeper tells him not only that a certain Marjorie is the most beautiful woman in town but offers freely that she is the wife of a generous merchant and she is equally giving. The *foteor* goes to bed full of desire to see the beautiful woman, but the text does not explain if this is a desire to see her for her beauty or her money. Though her beauty may be a draw, his first act in the morning, to offer his sword as collateral to the innkeeper while he goes to seek out Marjorie, suggests that the *foteor* has his sights on settling his debts. His confidence in his errand is such that he is prepared to leave without knowing where Majorie lives, and the innkeeper must remind him to ask before he leaves the inn.

[26] "That night he dined on meat and fish / and bread and wine in quantities," *The Fabliaux,* 840, vv. 22-23, "Someone, good host, will pay my bill… / just *who* will doesn't know it still." *The Fabliaux,* 840 vv. 27-28, both trans. Dubin.

Upon arriving at Marjorie's house, the *foteor* has to wait a while, since, with the master away, the maid has slept in. Once Marjorie and her maid notice the *foteor*, who has been waiting outside the house for a while, the maid immediately surmises he is up to no good, saying thinks he is a *barestere*, a deceiver or troublemaker. But Marjorie, looking at him, feels her *cuer*, which could be translated heart or body, begin to stir, and she sends her maid out to ask him who he is.[27] The *foteor* immediately confirms the maids suspicions; when she asks what kind of man he is, he promptly replies, "Ge sui fouterres, bele suer, que bone joie aiez au cuer" – I am a fucker, my dear, may your *cuer* have pleasure.[28] In his first words to the maid, he has not only made the abrupt declaration that he is a fucker, but added insult to injury by suggesting that her heart/body should have pleasure. The suggestion that he can bring her body pleasure, which seems brash in the moment, foreshadows their later sexual escapade. His confidence, while appearing arrogant, is not misplaced. Initially, however, the maid tells him he should be thrown in a sewer along with his jokes, and, enraged by his effrontery, she returns to the house and her mistress. When her mistress asks about him, the maid says he's a scoundrel (*gloz*) and an evil *lechierre*, ironically connecting the lechery of his claim of being a *fouterres* with his claim to the innkeeper of being a *menestreus*.[29] Marjorie presses for more details, and the maid finally tells her that the man claims he is a fucker. Marjorie, in disbelief, says, "ge i vois *savoir*": she will go out and find out for herself.[30] In another

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[27] "En son cuer a enmer le prist," *The Fabliaux,* 844, v. 110. The pun on cor/cuer or body/heart was common and often used, particularly in the troubadour corpus, to highlight the ways that love and lust can coincide or be at odds.
[28] *The Fabliaux,* 847, vv. 131-132.
[29] *The Fabliaux*, 847, v. 145. In version B instead of *lechierre* the text reads "C'un gloz est de male manière," *NRCF*, 59, v. 142.
[30] *The Fabliaux,* 847, v. 159, emphasis mine.

moment of foreshadowing, the maid responds, "En non Dieu, vos faites *savoir*! Ja en revenrez tote saige."[31] While this literally means, "In the name of God, you act knowledgeably! You will come back all the wiser," it is clear the maid is saying "you will learn your lesson."

The reader-listener knows that even if Marjorie has some *savoir,* she is no match for the *foteor.* The narrator emphasizes this as soon as she approaches the *foteor* noting that, like a young girl, she can't hide her smile and she turns red, not knowing what to say.[32] Even when he experiences setbacks, he remains unshaken and sure in his ability to get what he wants. She repeats her maid's question, asking him what type of man he is, and he again responds, "Ge sui fouterres," but this time adds "a loier," making explicit that he is for rent and this is a financial transaction.[33] She does not believe him, insisting he must be good and asking why he wants to trick people with his guile. He does seem offended by her implication that his occupation is bad or that he is expressly interested in tricking people nor does he argue with either of these assertions. Instead, he emphasizes, "I have well and often performed my duties / by serving women in this manner."[34] Marjorie, in a sudden shift, believes him and turns to questioning the women who have accepted such services, saying they cannot be women of honor and asking if he is paid per day or per job. She says if he services her maid well, the maid would be willing to pay him four *deniers* from her salary. The *foteor*, having far more *savoir* than Marjorie,

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[31] *The Fabliaux,* 849, vv. 160-161.
[32] "Cele, qui com joene feme / ne se pooit tenir de rire / quant el i vint, ne sot que dire, / si que tote s'en vergoigna," *The Fabliaux,* 848, vv. 166-169.
[33] *The Fabliaux,* 848, v. 175.
[34] "Ge ai eu maint bel servise / de servir dames en tel guise," *The Fabliaux,* 848, vv. 183-184.

tells her to consider whether or not she needs his services, because he does not want to wait around. He then turns to walk away, and Marjorie stops him, telling him not to leave yet. He has successfully called her bluff.

This series of exchanges has a trifold function. First, it establishes Marjorie as a baseline for assessing what behavior other characters find odd, namely that a man is not only selling sex to women but also would be so open about his profession to women he has just met. Secondly, it shows that the genre conventions have the power to overcome these norms. In order to keep the story moving, Marjorie, at first disbelieving, must quickly be convinced. Finally, it solidifies the *foteor* as a character designed to thrive in the world of the fabliaux. He understands the conventions of the world in which he lives, a fabliaux world, and he knows that soon he will convince Marjorie not only of his occupation but also that she wants to hire his services. He does not feel the need to defend himself from her accusations of dishonor and trickery, because dishonorable and deceitful as he may be, he is well within the bounds of what is fair in the fabliaux. In fact, in telling her he is a "*fouterres*" after waiting outside her house all morning, he is being more honest with Marjorie about his intentions than he was with the innkeeper. While the decision to engage his services seems to be up to her, the genre demands her participation. The *foteor* risks nothing by threatening to walk away, because, in this textual world, he will always be hired.

With Marjorie now hooked, the *foteor* names his price: a hundred *sous*, or 1,200 *denier*, for a plain woman and less for a pretty woman. Marjorie is surprised at his price, exclaiming that he is not cheap and asking what he would charge her. He brings his price

down to a more reasonable, and flattering, twenty *sous* as long as he also gets a meal and a hot bath. He argues this is no more than he deserves given how good he is at his job. At this point, Marjorie takes him inside, and her maid, seeing them together laments that he will steal the shirt off her back.[35] Marjorie chastises the maid and tells her to draw a bath, but the maid continues to talk back. At this point the *foteor* tells Marjorie that he is not sure if the maid is jealous or just trying to annoy them, but he is sure that she wants to hire him as well. He then offers to sleep with the maid in order to make her more compliant.[36] Regardless of what she said before, the maid jumps on this opportunity, offering to pay him and test his prowess for Marjorie. Marjorie protests, but the *foteor* promises, "Ja n'i avra perte de l'ame! / Ge sai le mestier par usaige: / il n'a el mont oisel volaige, / moineaus ne colons, qui tant oevre / com ge faz quant ge sui en l'uevre."[37] Here, as Nathaniel Dubin suggests, the *foteor* seems to play on the ambiguity of *l'ame* (the soul) and *lame* (the blade). He teases the ladies by suggesting he won't lose his soul (to this profession) nor his sexual prowess (by sleeping with one then the other). He then explains that he knows his trade by experience, and there isn't a bird flying that through their work could equal him in his exertions at his work. He then begins to barter with the maid, saying that while he was only charging her mistress twenty *sous,* he intends to charge her ten *livres*, or two hundred *sous*. Again, his confidence is striking. He does not lie to the maid and suggest he has charged Marjorie a large sum. Instead he tells her what

[35] "Dahez ait il s'il ne vos oste / encui le mantel de cel col," *The Fabliaux,* 850, vv. 220-221.
[36] In their edition Noomen and van den Boogaard note that the explanation behind the offer varies between the two manuscripts. One is a more veiled reference to making the servant pay and the other explicitly says he will amuse himself teaching her to be humble (*debonnaire*). *NCRF*, 325.
[37] *The Fabliaux,* 852, 248-252.

he is charging her employer and then demands she pay him ten times the sum. Although she negotiates his price down, the maid still pays five times what Marjorie is paying to sleep with the *foteor*.

It is here that the *foteor* proves his worth, both professionally and socially. He quickly "turns her over twice," and the maid is immediately appropriately servile.[38] Having been sexually satisfied, she proceeds to go about her household duties with no complaints. She heats the bath for Marjorie and the *foteor* and prepares their meal. The maid has been brought under control and put in her rightful place through the sexual dominance of the *foteor*. Thus he is restoring a normative hierarchical order. But this is only possible, because he exists and thrives in the world of the fabliaux, which subverts hierarchy. His sexual dominance is only possible, because women can purchase sex work. The confidence necessary to pursue Marjorie and the maid after they have both expressed disapproval of his profession only exists because the *foteor* understands that in this world, a dishonorable and immoral *lechierre* often succeeds. Thus only through the conventions of the fabliaux is he able to engage in socially sanctioned sex and render a service to the community.

But the *foteor* is not done; he is still expected to have sex with Marjorie. Yet, much as he ate without paying the night before, he indulges in his payment from Marjorie before rendering the service. He, "who thinks of nothing outside his profit and comfort,"

[38] It's not clear what precisely he does twice that renders her servile. Based on his interaction with Marjorie later, it would seem to suggest that they have intercourse twice. However, on both counts the text is surprisingly opaque for a fabliaux. It merely says, "Par .ii. foiz l'a cil retornee / molt tost & molt isnelement," *The Fabliaux*, 854, vv. 279.

bathes, eats, and drinks, and demands Marjorie pay him in advance.[39] Even then it is only once he has "had his fill" that he steps out of the tub, dries himself off, and gets into bed with the lady and "has his pleasure."[40] But, as opposed to with the maid, he has his pleasure with Marjorie "one time, no more."[41] He then immediately climbs back into the bath. Given that the text specifies "one time, no more," the reader-listener is led to believe Marjorie might argue with this. She is the woman of the house and yet she received less service from this lowly "fucker" than her own maid. The *foteor*, given that he only thinks of his own profit and comfort, would surely have asked for more money if she expected more service.

But this inkling of how the story might show the *foteor* humbling Marjorie never comes to pass, because just at that moment her husband returns home. As though everyone has been waiting for the comeuppance of the *foteor* this whole time, the narrator interjects saying, "Now I believe something bad will occur."[42] Marjorie begins to panic telling the *foteor* to hide himself. He, however, seems undisturbed and merely asks if it is "the cuckold" or someone else. When she confirms it is her husband, he says "Then it is fine."[43] Marjorie begs him to leave quickly saying she cannot have her husband find him there. But the *foteor* refuses, saying he will get out when he wants and

[39] "& cil, a qui de riens ne manbre / fors de son preu & de son aise," *The Fabliaux,* 854, vv. 286-287.
[40] "fait son plain," *The Fabliaux,* 854, v. 298, and "fist son delit / de la dame," *The Fabliaux*, 854, v. 302-301.
[41] Again, the assumption is that he is being paid to have intercourse with these women. Taking his delight would seem to refer to penetrative sex. However, the text only explains the sexual action as "having his pleasure."
[42] "Lors croi que mal soit avenu!" *The Fabliaux,* 856, v. 308.
[43] *The Fabliaux,* 856, vv. 314-317.

that she should get back in bed, where they will have their "delight" again later.[44] She curses him and begs one more time for him to leave, and then her husband enters the chamber. In terror, Marjorie flees. Though not explicitly through his sexual actions, but instead as a result of them, Marjorie is brought to heel. Whereas the maid needed to be humbled and learn to listen to her mistress, Marjorie needs to be taught to fear the consequences of her sexual appetite and infidelity. She runs away before she can be chastised, but the reader-listener is left feeling as though she has indeed learned her lesson as her maid suggested she would. Unlike so many fabliaux women, she has not cleverly escaped discovery or convinced her husband he is wrong in his sus.[45] Through the convoluted logic of the fabliaux, adultery with the *foteor* may have made Marjorie a better wife by teaching her to fear the consequences of adultery.

The apocalyptic confrontation that the narrator and Marjorie fear, however, does not occur. Instead the *foteor* again shows his skill at remaining calm under pressure. Instead of panicking, he welcomes the husband: "Bien viegnoiz, bel oste."[46] The husband, shocked, proceeds to take off his cloak and ask the *foteor*, "Who are you, friend, who is in my bedroom bathing?"[47] In a role reversal, the *foteor* acts affronted and chastises the husband for not greeting him with civility. He then explains that he is a master fucker,

[44] "Dame, foi que ge doi mon cors, ge n'en istrai ore ne ore, / ainz me vueil ci deduire encore; / mais recouchiez en vostre lit, / s'alons faire nostre délit," *The Fabliaux,* 856, vv. 322-326.
[45] Examples of fabliaux where clever women escape discovery include "Le Plicon," "Les Tresces," "Le chevalier qui fist sa fame confesse," "La dame qui fist .iii. tors entor le moustier," and "Des braies au cordelier." "Berengiar au lonc cul," does not quite fit into this genre as the wife does get caught with her lover, but it is through her cleverness that she leaves her husband in a situation where he must accept her infidelity.
[46] "Welcome, good host!" *The Fabliaux*, 856, v. 335.
[47] "Qui estes vos, amis, / qui en ma chanbre vos baigniez?" *The Fabliaux*, 856, vv. 338-339.

proclaiming his sexual prowess, and says he is being hired to serve the mistress of the house for twenty *sous*. He then claims that he has not yet been paid nor has he "served" the mistress, but that it is time for him to start. He then tells the husband to help him get her into bed so he can start his revelry.[48] The husband tells the *foteor* that he will instead pay him 20 *sous not* to sleep with his wife. The *foteor* accepts, steps out of the bathtub, and receiving the second payment, leaves far richer. Either in anger or in a newfound timidity, perhaps both, Marjorie refuses to see him off.[49]

The interaction between the *foteor* and Marjorie's husband represents the culmination in the fabliaux but not in the way of typical fabliaux, which usually feature a fantastic escape or a violent beating. Instead, this is almost an anti-climax that nevertheless serves to demonstrate how certain characters are able to capitalize on the strange and, at times, unpredictable rules of the fabliaux world. The *foteor,* rather than acting as though he is guilty, chooses to act as though his presence is entirely ordinary. And, indeed, in the world of the fabliaux it is. But he has rewritten the rules by acknowledging this to Marjorie's husband. The husband, who does not have the *savoir* of the *foteor*, seems to be helplessly forced to play out the confrontation that the *foteor* is writing. In a genre where misrule is the rule, if a stranger in your bathtub criticizes you for being rude, you adjust your behavior to the new calibration of "normal." By embracing the ludicrous nature of the fabliaux and heightening the absurdity even more, the *foteor* asserts control over the other characters and even the narrative. For most of this story, his control has the effect of

[48] "Molt tost la me faites coschier, si irai faire mon revel," *The Fabliaux,* 858, vv. 354-355. Manuscript B refers to "mon iornel" instead of "mon revel," *NCRF*, 64, v. 348.
[49] "N'a cure de li convoier / la dame quant cil s'en ala," *The Fabliaux,* 858, vv. 364-365.

looking like he is supporting a normative hierarchy of class and gender. He does, after all, put the maid and Marjorie back in their places so to speak.

But just as Gaunt warns that we cannot assume the fabliaux seek to dismantle hierarchy, we cannot take this as evidence that the *foteor* wants to reestablish hierarchy. As the text repeatedly tells us, he is only concerned for his pleasure; reasserting a social order is a side effect in his hedonistic pursuits. Ironically, he is both a chaotic force that upends and controls all the situations he encounters and also a mechanism through which social order is reinforced. This contradiction should not surprise us when his very occupation is one that can only follow norms of sex and gender in the nonnormative world of the fabliaux. His interaction with Marjorie's husband shows him rewriting the rules to suit himself, and this interaction does not help to prop up the hierarchy as his other actions have. A man paying for his own cuckolding is a clear upending of social structure but a commonplace for the fabliaux. The *foteor* both reinforces and subverts hierarchies as he moves through the world.

The fabliau concludes by saying that the *foteor* made a living by serving women in this way, rising from poverty to great wealth. But it also acknowledges that he is unusual in this capacity, noting that a hundred others could try to do what he does and would not succeed.[50] The qualities that would make him transgressive in the real world, such as being a male sex worker, allow him to flourish in the unusual world of the fabliaux. In abiding by the rules of his own world, the *foteor* is better positioned to enact gender as it is meant to be enacted in the extratextual world, because he can sell sex to women. In

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[50] "Mais tel .c. meller s'en peüssent / qui en la fin honiz en fussent," *The Fabliaux,* 860, vv. 378-379.

turn, this gives him a societal purpose that male sex workers in the "real" world do not have; he helps "put women in their place" through his professional prowess. In fabliaux, where women are sexually insatiable and body parts are bought and sold, the *foteor* is able to exhaust the desire of the maid, rendering her compliant. He then humbles the woman of the house by only having sex with her once and refusing to hide from her husband when he arrives home. But while these acts reassert the gendered hierarchy, he proves able to create order and chaos within a single narrative, as he proceeds to undermine the cuckolded husband, who, rather than enacting violent revenge, pays a second time for his own cuckolding.

Men in the romances

The portrayal of male sex work in the romances stands in stark contrast to the portrayal of male sex work in the fabliaux. The *foteor* loudly proclaims his profession and handily takes charge of the narrative. But the male sex workers in the romances, notably all jongleurs rather than individuals selling sex, are shrouded in euphemism, appearing only briefly. As will be shown, each time one of these men is mentioned there is an undeniable element of sexuality to his presentation, but it is never fully expressed enough to interrupt the plot, let alone to allow the sex worker to take charge of the plot. The allusions abound in the descriptions of jongleurs in the thirteenth century text *Guillaume de Dole*. The interactions between two characters in particular, an emperor named Conrad and a jongleur named Jouglet, are fraught with sexuality that never rises above the level of subtext.

The text makes clear that Jouglet is a confidant and favorite companion of both Conrad and the eponymous knight Guillaume, and his position is a privileged one, where gifts are exchanged out of mutual respect and a sense of reciprocity. He is not merely an itinerant performer, playing to the desires of the crowd in a market square. As a court entertainer, he has steady employment and a respectable position. This is not the case for two other jongleurs in the story, who each appear only once, briefly: a boy named Cupelin and a man named Hugh. Conrad's interactions with Cupelin and Hugh clearly gesture at sexual intimacy, but also show how jongleurs were effeminized as part of their sexualization. This puts Conrad's sexuality into new relief. If Cupelin and Hugh, and perhaps even Jouglet, are presented as womanly then Conrad is not transgressing sexual mores; they are transgressing gender norms. To reinforce this reading, I present a new reading of a passage from the *Folie d'Oxford* of the Tristan corpus that has long perplexed scholars. I argue that while Tristan, who is pursuing Iseult, uses innuendos under the guise of a male jongleur in pursuit of a woman, his speech still indicates the sexual availability of male jongleurs for other men.

Guillaume de Dole, which exists in only one manuscript dated from the first half of the thirteenth century, tells the story of Emperor Conrad, a young knight named Guillaume, and his sister Lienor.[51] Emperor Conrad is popular but unmarried knight, who

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[51] There remains much debate about the dating of the manuscript, but most agree it was composed somewhere between 1204 and 1228. The only extant manuscript, however, comes from the late thirteenth century. Very little is known about the author, Jean Renart, except that he seems to have authored two other works as well: a romance called *L'escoufle* and a lai called *Le lai de l'ombre*. Throughout this section, I base my translations on the 1893 transcription of the text by Gustave Servois and Gaston Paris, Jean Renart, *Le roman de la rose ou de Guillaume de Dole*, eds. Gustave Servois and Gaston Paris, Société des anciens textes Français (Paris: Firmin Didot et cie, 1893), https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001201488. When the title is presented in French, with a page number and a line number, it is referring to this 1893

hears about a noble knight named Guillaume and his beautiful sister Lienor. Wanting to meet this exemplar of courtly behavior and already in love with his sister from her mere description, Conrad calls Guillaume to court. Guillaume arrives and quickly endears himself to Conrad, who falls increasingly in love with Lienor based on what he hears about her. Conrad's seneschal becomes jealous of Guillaume's popularity and contrives to besmirch Lienor's name. He visits Guillaume and Lienor's mother, who tells him about her daughter, including a rose shaped birthmark on her inner thigh. The seneschal tells Conrad he has slept with Lienor and uses his knowledge of her birthmark as proof. Conrad is heartbroken since he cannot marry the unchaste Lienor. Guillaume, for his part, is furious with his sister. Lienor, through her own elaborate ruse, proves in court that the seneschal is lying. Conrad and Lienor get married, Guillaume maintains an esteemed place at court, and the seneschal is sent away to join a Crusade.

Our first introduction to Jouglet occurs after a bored Conrad sends a messenger to find him and bring him back to court. Conrad accuses Jouglet of avoiding him and says, "a curse on whoever taught you such manners, myself excluded, of course."[52] Conrad then takes hold of the bridle of Jouglet's horse, and they "both depart from the path," as

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edition unless otherwise noted. There is also 1936 edition by Rita Lejeune, Jean Renart, *Le roman de la rose ou de Guillaume de Dole*, ed. Rita Lejeune (Paris: E. Droz, 1936) and a 1962 edition by Félix Lecoy, Jean Renart, *Le roman de la rose ou de Guillaume de Dole*, ed. Felix Lecoy (Paris: Librairie Honore Champion, 1963). While, as Patricia Terry and Nancy Vine Durling suggest, the translation of the text is difficult as it is the unique source for many words and idioms, the transcription seems to present fewer problems, "Introduction," *The Romance of the Rose, or, Guillaume de Dole*, trans. Patricia Terry and Nancy Vine Durling, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 12. According to Lecoy, the manuscript is done in a neat hand with little decoration, "Introduction," *Le roman de la rose ou de Guillaume de Dole*, ed. Felix Lecoy (Paris: Librairie Honore Champion, 1963), iii.

[52] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose, or, Guillaume de Dole*, trans. Patricia Terry and Nancy Vine Durling, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 27, trans. Terry and Durling.

Conrad asks for a story, putting his arm around Jouglet's shoulder.[53] In their introduction to the text, Patricia Terry and Nancy Vine Durling note that this greeting strikes an unusually familiar tone for two men of such different social standing.[54] It immediately establishes an intimacy between Jouglet and Conrad that pervades all of their interactions, an intimacy driven by Conrad. Jouglet does not respond to Conrad's suggestion that he has been avoiding the court, setting the tone for his knowing indifference towards Conrad's overly familiar behavior and suggestions.

This knowing is immediately established as Jouglet tells Conrad a story that leads to Conrad wishing he knew a noble knight with a beautiful sister he could marry. Jouglet reveals that he knows just such a knight and woman: Guillaume de Dole and Lienor. Conrad falls in love with Lienor merely from Jouglet's description and decides he will send someone out in the morning to find Guillaume and tell him "[a] cui ge me doig et destin / por servir de *cuer* et de *cors,*" meaning "I give my body and my heart for his service." Jouglet, "who was wise and thoughtful," wastes no time exploiting the readily available pun. He laughs and says, "Truly, your body will be enough for him. He is not so greedy. And the golden-haired Lienor will have your heart, believe me."[55] Jouglet's response, the text informs the reader-listener, is both perceptive and perhaps irreverent given that he is described as wise but laughing. This prompts Conrad to call him "gars provez," or "naughty boy." Were the exchange to end there, it would merely seem to be a

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[53] Jean Renart, *Le roman de la rose*, 21, vv. 648-655.

[54] Terry and Durling, "Introduction," 5.
[55] Jean Renart, *Le roman de la rose*, 29. 26, vv. 820-827.

play on words to entertain the audience. However, Conrad goes on to say “En mon roiaume n’en m’onor / N’afferroit pas q’el fust m’amie / Mès por ce qu’el n’i porroit mie / Avenir, I voel ge penser,” which Terry and Durling translate as, “she won’t be suitable, either for me or for my kingdom; but I’ll enjoy thinking about her nevertheless.”[56] More specifically, *afferroit* suggests she won’t be valuable enough for his kingdom or his honor since she comes from a lower status family without much wealth. In the context of the conversation however, his out of hand rejection of Lienor as unsuitable or not valuable enough suggests that she herself, along with all the other women he has chosen not to marry, is inadequate for some reason. Though the reader-listener may still be unsure of the reason, Jouglet’s knowing pun seems to suggest that Conrad’s sexual interest lies with men.

Conrad’s general refusal to marry has already been made known to the reader-listener by the time he comments that Lienor would be unsuitable. The narrator explains, “the claims of youth were much more pressing,”[57] despite the fact that Conrad “without even trying, had no end of success” and “was a very charming man and knew all the tricks of love.”[58] And opportunities for such love abounded, as we are told that Conrad hosted parties in the summertime, setting up tents in the meadows and woods and “within

[56] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose,* 29. Jean Renart, *Le roman de la rose,* 26, vv. 818-835.

[57] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose*, 20, trans. Terry and Durling. “Mes genvrece qui en lui regne / Ne l’I lessoit pas acorder, / Ainz fet les granz trez encorder,” Jean Renart, *Le roman de la rose*, 5, vv. 136-138. Literally, “But the youth that was in the king would not allow him to settle/agree with them, but had him bound more tightly.”

[58] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose,* 20, trans. Terry and Durling. “Or sachiez qu’il n’I faudra mie / Qu’il ne l’ait, por riens qu’il puist fere, / Li bons rois, li frans debonere. / Il savoit toz les tors d’amors,” Jean Renart, *Le roman de la rose*, 6, vv. 158-161.

three or four days' ride there wasn't a count or countess, a chatelaine, duchess, or lady who hadn't been sent for, nor a vassal within seven-day ride."[59] The parties are described as luxurious, with bountiful food and wine, expensive clothes, games, music, and dancing. The author explains, "I really don't expect ever again to see people have such a wonderful time."[60] Conrad himself "didn't care how much he spent as long as everything was done to his liking and would be talked about when he was dead and gone."[61] The author's initial assertion that "no one could ever accuse [Conrad] of excess," is now shown for the tongue-in-cheek remark it is; Conrad is clearly a man who indulges in sensual pleasure: good food, good wine, good company.

John Baldwin views Conrad's "youthful indiscretions," in a purely heterosexual light, noting that during the festivities in the woods participants are often only in light underclothes.[62] One demoiselle even goes so far as to exchange a ribbon from her chemise with a belt from the emperor.[63] Baldwin argues that despite these flirtations once Conrad hears about Lienor he is entirely focused on marrying her, and he "submits his sexuality to the discipline of matrimony."[64] Baldwin's argument, however, remains on a literal textual level, a technique he employs consciously in his book given the breadth of texts he covers.[65] But this literal reading, which allows him to present many diverse

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[59] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose*, 20, trans. Terry and Durling.

[60] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose*, 20-25, for description of the party; 21, for the quotation, trans. Terry and Durling.

[61] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose*, 20, trans. Terry and Durling.

[62] Baldwin, *Language of Sex,* 73, 101-102.
[63] Baldwin, *Language of Sex,* 101.
[64] Baldwin, *Language of Sex,* 73.
[65] Baldwin, *Language of Sex,* xxiv-xxvi.

discourses simultaneously, masks subtleties in individual texts. In the case of Conrad, it leads him astray. Conrad's interactions with other men are laden with sexual subtext. One might also point out that while "Jean Renart was totally silent on genital activity between the same sex," he is equally silent about genital activity between opposite sexes, with the exception of a veiled allusion to Conrad and Lienor's wedding night.[66] Thus the literal textual level reading has led to seeing heterosexuality and not homosexuality at the expense of analyzing subtextual instances of same-sex desire rather than cross-sex desire.

Though never explicit enough to disrupt the narrative of the story, hints of sexual desire or relationships between Conrad and other male characters pervade the story. Such undertones are not limited to same-sex desire but rather seem to be an important staple of Jean Renart's writing. In examining the feminine sexuality of Lienor's rose Sarah Kay explains, "Jean Renart's deft, ironic narrative voice weaves around these moments of indecency, highlighting them but also ultimately avoiding them, in a spectacular combination of knowingness with understatement."[67] This tension between knowing silence and sexuality is evident in the numerous moments of intimacy between Jouglet and Conrad. For example, after hearing about Guillaume and Lienor, in the evening "when everyone had left" and he "went to get ready for bed," Conrad has Jouglet summon a scribe to write a letter to Guillaume. The three go into a dressing room and Jouglet, "who already had Conrad's cloak, stripped him of his tunic as well, while the

[66] Baldwin, *Language of Sex,* 46.
[67] Sarah Kay, *Parrots and Nightingales: Troubadour Quotations and the Development of European Poetry*, 1st ed.., The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 96.

scribe busied himself writing down what the king dictated."[68] The implication seems to be that Jouglet is undressing Conrad to get him ready for bed, an act that would not be unusual for a servant but strikes a strange tone when one considers that Jouglet is not a servant. Nor is he a consistent presence at court as shown by Conrad's accusation that Jouglet has been avoiding him. So why is Jouglet, rather than a servant, doing this task? It is not clear. Jouglet's presence is also unexplained, particularly given that Jouglet does not talk or otherwise act in this scene and thus is not necessary to advance the plot. In examining the Old French it is clear that they are in Conrad's private quarters, the *garderobe*, rather than a more public space. But beyond that the original does not provide much clarity.[69] What Terry and Durling have translated as "stripped" might be taken as to literally "de-robe" and may perhaps play on the second meaning of "robe" to rob or plunder, though the construction of this sentence does not allow for that as a direct translation. It may even suggest *robe* in its meaning as clothing that is given in payment. But none of these provide a socially normative reason for Jouglet to be *de robe*-ing Conrad. He is either undressing him, a job that should be handled by a servant of the court; or he is taking his clothing in a more mercenary way, which only seems to increase the sexual undertones of the reading; or there is an implication that this is payment from Conrad to Jouglet, in which case what is being paid for and why is this exchange happening in the *garderobe*?

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[68] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose*, 30, trans. Terry and Durling

[69] "Jouglez de sa cote le robe / Dont il avoit ja le mantel," Jean Renart, *Le roman de la rose*, 27, vv. 872-878.

One may argue that Jouglet, as the one who tells Conrad about Lienor and Guillaume, is present merely because he is an important figure in the tale. And it is just such a plausible and yet unsatisfying conclusion that allows the author to continue the tale without explaining Conrad's behavior, a formula that is repeated throughout the story. Later in the story when Jouglet appears in an expensive ermine cloak, Conrad exclaims, "Mout avez tost trové .i. fol," / Fet l'empereres, "biaus amis. / Cil est fors de sa robe mis." To which Jouglet replies, "einsi doit on fere; / Autant li vaut cele vert vaire, / Et ceste me ravra mestier."[70] Durling and Terry translate this, "My dear friend! … Some madman must have stripped himself naked for you," and Jouglet's reply as "And right he was! He looks fine in his fur-lined green, and this cloak is just what I needed."[71] This translation catches the spirit of the exchange, particularly the force of Conrad's words. But it elides the transactional nature being described, and in doing so makes the call back to the scene in the *garderobe* more tenuous. While *robe* can mean clothing in general it carries the additional connotation of clothing in exchange of services. Paired with Jouglet's assertion "me ravra mestier," that he is acting in accordance with his occupation, it links removal of clothing and payment with minstrel performance. While paying minstrels with items of clothing does require the removal of said clothing, this is the second time not just the clothes, but their removal was emphasized. Conrad is not saying that Jouglet got a madman to give him clothes; he is saying that Jouglet got a fool to remove his clothes for him. The verbal exchange here between Jouglet and Conrad

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[70] Jean Renart, *Le roman de la rose*, 58, vv. 1905-1912.

[71] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose*, 44, trans. Terry and Durling.

effectively describes the moment they had in the *garderobe*, again highlighting the intimacy. The exchange, or occupational transaction, becomes one that entangles disrobing, performance, folly, and intimate settings.

A reader, or audience member, may pass over all these odd moments between Jouglet and Conrad. But the atmosphere and interactions they establish between Conrad and performers, sets the reader-listener up for the final and most suggestive scene between Conrad and a minstrel. While staying in his castle and hunting with his knights, Conrad "at bedtime...often called for a minstrel. His chamberlains had a marvelous little one, good enough to eat, called Cupelin."[72] What is here translated as "good enough to eat" comes from the Old French "plus tendres d'un herenc": more tender than a herring. Its meaning is unknown and has been rendered several different ways from "aussi fluet qu'un hareng" (supple and quick as a herring) to "petit and fluet" (small and supple).[73] No matter how it is translated, however, the phrase brings out sexual undertones. Henrik Van der Werf notes that Cupelin is the only character in the story explicitly designated as a professional performer (he is called *menestereuls*), "but the emperor's interest in him appears primarily to concern qualities other than musical ones."[74] Though Van der Werf does not expand on this, his meaning, as well as the text's, is clear: there is something sexually attractive about Cupelin to Conrad. Given that Conrad calls for him at bedtime,

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[72] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose*, 65, trans. Terry and Durling.

[73] Patricia Terry and Nancy Vine Durling, "Notes," in *The Romance of the Rose, or, Guillaume de Dole*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 99, n. 63. Jean Renart, *Le Roman de la Rose,* 102-103, v. 3387.

[74] Henrik Van der Werf, "Jean Renart and Medieval Song," in *Jean Renart and the Art of Romance: Essays on Guillaume de Dole*, ed. Nancy Vine Durling (Orlando: University Press of Florida, 1997), 177.

and Cupelin sings every morning, it is clear that Cupelin spends the night with Conrad and leaves during the day. As with the interactions with Jouglet, this, in itself, would not be damning, but given the description of Cupelin and Conrad's pattern of behavior, his request for a minstrel appears to be, in fact, a request for a male sex worker. In this light the song Cupelin sings every morning, which tells of giving a woman gifts and having her choose another man, ending with the line "To me that shepherdess no pleasure brought," drives home an entirely different point that the one it might otherwise.[75] Kay, again in reference to cross-sex sexuality, notes that "we can see moments of song as points where the text becomes dense with sexual or social affect without necessarily assigning it meaning."[76] Rather than just being a song about women's duplicity, it is a wink and a nod to the audience, who now prove to be just as knowing as Jouglet — no shepherdess, the paragon of sexually available lower class women for noble men, pleased Conrad; instead it was this boy.[77] The text concludes this exchange with the line, "The king loved this boy very much."[78]

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[75] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose*, 65.

[76] Kay, *The Parrot*, 96.

[77] The sexual availability of shepherdesses for upper class men as a trope appears mostly in the troubadour pastourelle literature. See William D. Paden, "Rape in the Pastourelle," Romantic Review 80, no. 3 (1989): 331–49; Kathryn Gravdal, "The Game of Rape: Sexual Violence and Social Class in the Pastourelle," in *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval French Literature and Law* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 104–21, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fhdm5.8; Geri L. Smith, *The Medieval French Pastourelle Tradition: Poetic Motivations and Generic Transformations* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), 17-69; Carissa M. Harris, "Rape Narratives, Courtly Critique, and the Pedagogy of Sexual Negotiation in the Middle English Pastourelle," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 46, no. 2 (May 1, 2016): 263–87, https://doi.org/10.1215/10829636-3491798 and "Pastourelle Fictionalities," *New Literary History* 51, no. 1 (2020): 239–42, https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2020.0012; Lisa Colton, "'Going All the Way with Marot': Empowerment in the Pastourelle Motet L'autrier m'esbatoie/Demenant Grant Joie/MANERE," in *Female-Voice Song and Women's Musical Agency in the Middle Ages*, ed. Anna Kathryn Grau and Lisa Colton (Brill, 2022), 271–96, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004517035_012.

[78] "Mout ama li rois le garçon," Jean Renart, *Le roman de la rose*, 102, v. 3398.

Complications arise when we attempt to parse what this means for the positionality of the minstrel. That money or goods are being exchanged for services, which have sexual undertones at least, is evident. But the role the minstrel is filling, or how he might be perceived by society at this moment is less clear. It is, of course, possible that Conrad is primarily interested in sex with men. However, given that, as discussed in the introduction, sexuality was not predicated on gender of the desired object, we must also consider that medieval people would view it as the minstrel crossing gender lines rather than Conrad crossing sexuality lines. If, as the description of Cupelin as little and as a "garçon" suggests, the minstrel is a young boy, it would be seen as more socially acceptable. This perhaps explains why Jean Renart felt able to be so explicit in this particular example of Conrad's behavior; because an older man having sex with a younger boy was not uncommon. While not technically sanctioned, it would not have been condemned as strongly as an adult man playing the passive role in sex.[79] The boy is slightly androgynous, since he is not yet a man.

The issue of gender immediately comes to the foreground as the text continues. Another minstrel that Conrad likes to call for before bed is Hugh, "who came to the court from Brasseuse, near Ognon. The emperor insisted that he teach him a French dance performed by girls under the elms at Rumilly, known for its delightful parties."[80] Here,

[79] See, for example, Michael Rocke's findings in the Florence "Office of the Night" archives in *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence*, Studies in the History of Sexuality (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). See also Ruth Mazo Karras and Katherine E. Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others*, fourth edition. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2023), 189-236.

[80] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose*, 65, trans. Terry and Durling.

there is less overt sexuality. In fact, if not for the weight of the previous few lines, the description of Conrad and Hugh might not evoke sexuality at all. However, given the preceding description, these lines are read through the lens of Conrad's overall behavior. But here, instead of the emphasis being on Hugh as a desirable, young boy, the stress is on Conrad's insistence (*tint mout cort*) on having Hugh teach him this feminine dance. On the heels of this, Conrad asks Hugh to play the vielle and sing "cest vers de bele Marguerite, qui si bel se paie et aquite / de la chançonete novele."[81] Terry and Durling note the ambiguity of this line, which they have opted to translate as singing the song "*about* the lovely Marguerite, who performs the new songs so well."[82] It can, however, be read as singing the songs "by the lovely Marguerite, who performs the new songs so well," and it should be noted that *paier* and *aquiter* both carry the meaning of paying or settling a debt, alongside the meanings of "to please," "to acquit oneself," and, indeed, "to perform." When translated this way, Hugh is instructing Conrad in how to perform the dance of the girls at Trumilly and then performing a female minstrel's song for Conrad.

If Hugh is fulfilling this female role, both in performance and perhaps sexually, and Cupelin, as a boy is feminized as well, then it is not Conrad's identity that is fluctuating but theirs. Conrad is still behaving as a man and performing the active role in sex, and, without the lens of sexuality defined by gendered attraction, this is all that matters. His sexuality is based on his role in the sexual interaction, and his masculinity

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[81] Jean Renart, *Le Romance de la Rose*, 102-103, v. 3387.

[82] Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose*, 65.

remains intact if he is the one performing the active role. Furthermore, if the occupation of a musician was already one that denoted a womanish bearing or quality, then Conrad's requests and overall actions no longer appear strange at all. He is asking the jongleur to take on a role that the performer already half inhabits.

We might consider an analogously opaque line from the *Folie Tristan d'Oxford.*[83] This poem, dating from the late thirteenth century, but drawing on the longer tradition of Thomas's Tristan poem from the twelfth century, Tristan returns from exile and dresses as a fool to see Iseult.[84] After aptly playing the part of a madman, including claiming his mother was a whale and recounting his various adventures with Iseult, Tristan states:

> Quant veng arere a mun ostel,
> Dunc sai ben eskermir de pel;
> Nul ne se cuvrerat tant ben,
> Ke il ne ait aukes del men.
> *[E] ben sai partir les tisuns*
> *Entrë esquïers e garsunz.*
> Ben sai tenprer harpë e rote
> E chanter apres a la note.
> Riche raïne sai amer,
> Si n'at sus cel amand mun per.
> Od cultel sai doler cospels,
> Jeter les puis par ces rusels.
> Reis, ne sui je bon menestrel?
>
> Back at home, / I know how to fence with a pike; / no one can dodge / my thrusts and strikes forever. / *I also know how to divide clubs / between squires and grooms.* / I know how to play the harp and the rota / and can sing on pitch. / So

[83] I am grateful to Ian Short for providing his own thoughts on this particular line, which has caused so much debate, and I am especially grateful to Glyn Burgess for his help in parsing these lines and for his suggestions of avenues of research to support my reading.

[84] For more about the Tristan tradition, this manuscript and how it fits into the tradition, see Tony Hunt and Geoffrey Bromiley, "The Tristan Legend in Old French Verse," in *The Arthur of the French: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval French and Occitan Literature*, Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages 4 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006).

> well do I know how to love a great queen / that no lover on earth can do better. / I can carve wood chips with a knife / and toss them into brooks. / King, am I not a fine entertainer?[85]

Coming after a long excursus on hunting and a variety of nonsensical statements by Tristan, this passage is often read as more of Tristan's inventive lunatic ravings. This has permitted many to elide the difficulty of the italicized line, with even the celebrated Old French expert Joseph Bédier saying, "I don't know what the fool means to say here. There is nothing, I believe in the various poems relating to Tristan, which can explain it."[86] In the above quoted translation, Sam Rosenberg says, "it is not clear what is meant by the statement about their distribution among subordinates."[87] However, if we accept Tristan's assertion here that he is a "bon menestrel" and take into account the sexual suggestions surrounding other male court entertainers, we open the door to a new interpretation. *Tisuns*, here being translated as "club," can equally be translated as a "fire-brand" or "torch." This usage of *tisun* seems equally as popular as "club." For example, in *The Treatise of Walter Bibbesworth*, a thirteenth century text written specifically to help English children learn French, *tisun* appears in the sentence "Les asteles fetes anlumer / Par un tysoun de fu enpris / Ki de la quisine serra pris," meaning, "Light the

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[85] Original text and translation from "Les Folies Tristan," ed. and trans. Samuel N. Rosenberg in *Early French Tristan Poems*, ed. Norris J. Lacy, Arthurian Archives 1-2 (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK ; Rochester, N.Y.: D.S. Brewer, 1998), 280-281, vv. 515-527, emphasis mine.

[86] "Je ne sais ce que le fou veut dire ici. Il n'y a rien, je crois, dans les divers poèmes relatifs à tristan qui puisse l'expliquer," Joseph Bédier, *Les deux poèmes de la folie Tristan*, Société des anciens textes Français (Paris: Firmin-Didot et cie, 1907), https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002636939, 36.

[87] Samuel Rosenberg, "Notes," in *Early French Tristan Poems*, ed. Norris J. Lacy, Arthurian Archives 1-2 (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK ; Rochester, N.Y.: D.S. Brewer, 1998), 310.

kindling / With a burning brand fetched from the kitchen."[88] Similarly, Jordan Fantosme's twelfth century *Chronicle*, possibly though not conclusively linked with the Provençal area, states, "Astrent tut Berewic a flambe e tisun," or "They burn Berwick to the ground with flame and fire-brand."[89] Based on the *NRCF*'s glossaries, a form of *tisun* appears four times in the fabliaux. Three of those times, it is used in a physical confrontation of some sort, suggesting the meaning "club."[90] However, it appears as a verb in *La dame qui aveine demandoit pour morel sa provende avoir*, and its usage is clearly sexual: "Tant qu'a une autre nuit revint, / Que cele mout le *tisonna* / Et durement le tagonna"[91]: Until another night came, that she *inflamed* him greatly and teased him fiercely.

If we return to the Tristan text with the versatility of *tisun* in mind, alongside the established sexual availability of male jongleurs, "dividing the *tisuns* between squires and boys," is more legible. It functions as a strange but plausible statement of dividing jousting equipment among subordinates, but it works equally well as sexual punning. Using another meaning of *partir*, Tristan could be saying he knows well how to share the fire brand between squires and boys, with *esquïers* and *garsunz* working both to indicate subordinates but also the sexually available youths who might also be "plus tendre d'un herenc." Cast in this light, we might reconsider the surrounding lines as well. Tristan

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[88] Walter Bibbesworth, *The Treatise of Walter of Bibbesworth: Introduction*, trans. Andrew Dalby, (Devon: Prospect Books, 2012), 132-133,vv. 1002-1004 , trans. Dalby.

[89] Jordan Fantosme, *Jordan Fantosme's Chronicle*, ed. Ronald Carlyle Johnston, (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1981), 60-61, trans. Johnstson.

[90] *NRCF*, t. 2, no. 7, v. 297; t. 7, no. 81, v. 53; t. 9, no. 106, v. 40.

[91] *NRCF*, t. 9, no. 108, vv. 280-283, emphasis mine.

boasts that he can “eskermir de pel,” which Rosenberg translates as “fence with a pike.” This already evokes the type of sexual metaphor that the fabliaux genre revels in, but it works particularly well when one considers that there is a different word *pel* that means “flesh.” It is no wonder that Tristan, after boasting that he can fence with a wooden pole/flesh so well that no one can dodge his thrusts, claims he knows how to love a great queen. What initially seems like an abrupt shift in topic is actually an acknowledgment of an extended sexual metaphor. By claiming himself a minstrel, he marks himself as sexually available, and the preceding lines function to suggest his engagement with courtly activities like fencing but also to highlight his sexual prowess. It is this prowess that he believes makes him able to love a great queen better than any lover on earth. The question of whom he is having sex with shifts in this moment, but that is not surprising. Tristan, in his guise as a fool, is trying to barter King Mark for Iseult. The fool-minstrel exists in the nebulous world of male-male sexual interactions, but Tristan himself is laying claim to Iseult. His disguise is imperfect as he tries to relate the two forms of sexuality to each other, because while he is trying to play off the minstrel character, he is doing so only in an attempt to win Iseult for himself, the “real” Tristan. Whereas it is ties between femininity and sexuality that make male minstrels suspect in the first place, Tristan, being focused on Iseult, does not see the logical gap between feminized minstrel promiscuity and masculine sexual conquest of a great queen.

Neither *Guillaume de Dole* nor the *Folie Tristan d’Oxford* are primarily concerned with showing same-sex intimacy between male jongleurs and other men. But this is precisely why they prove such fruitful grounds for examining it. Any text

attempting to discuss such a topic would invariably demonize it given the prevailing attitudes towards same-sex attractions, particularly when one considers that texts were written by the literate, many of whom were men trained in the clerical tradition. But examining specific lines within a larger tale, can show what preconceptions were taken for granted and how subjects too taboo for their own explicit examination, might appear in regular interactions. By working through implication and innuendo, these references to male jongleurs show clearly the connection between male jongleur performance and sexual availability to other men. This need not mean that all jongleurs were also selling sex, nor even that any jongleurs were selling sex, but rather that part of performing jonglerie for money was being perceived as sexually available to other men. If these same-sex attractions or relationships were made more normal by the precarious gender performance of jongleurs, theologian's paranoia and determination to both categorize and regulate the jongleur's body and actions seen in Chapter 2 makes more sense. In a time when "sodomy" was a dire sin, it was morally dangerous to accept men whose occupation made them feminine.

Women in the Romances

In this section, I will analyze musical performance by women in four different romances, each of which includes the women using a jongleur disguise to some degree. With each subsequent text explored, the layers of disguise become deeper, starting with the musical prowess of Fresne in *Galeran de Bretagne*, followed by the jongleur disguises of Nicolette in *Aucassin et Nicolette* and Josiane in *Boeve de Haumtone*. What these texts ultimately show is not only the way musical performance is related to sex

work, but how engaging in jonglerie provides a space to explore identity. As Marilyn Lawrence explains in her analysis of the various signs and descriptions authors use in minstrel disguises in the Tristan corpus, "the minstrel character is potentially the combination of elements from any character and is potentially no character in particular; he is everyone and no one at once."[92] It is precisely this essence of the jongleur as an individual shifting from act to act and identity to identity that allows for the exploration of multivalent identities, which are otherwise impermissible in highly stylized genres such as the romance. The very qualities explored in Chapter Two that make the jongleur an *infame,* such as an itinerant lifestyle and odd working hours, make the jongleur disguise a useful space for characters, particularly women characters, to test the boundaries of their prescribed identities, be it a gender identity, religious identity, or ethnic identity. Carol Symes perhaps says it best: "the itinerant's mobility and rootlessness translated, very often, into personal mobility and classlessness. Jugglers – jongleurs – crossed all boundaries, territorial and political, cultural and social." But medieval people understood that identity could be complicated for any number of individuals and looks could be deceiving.[93] But recognizing that binaries such as

[92] Marilyn Lawrence, "The Protean Performer: Defining Minstrel Identity in Tristan Narratives," in *Cultural Performances in Medieval France: Essays in Honor of Nancy Freeman Regalado*, ed. E. Jane Burns, Eglal Doss-Quinby, and Roberta L. Krueger (Boydell & Brewer, 2007), 109–20, https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cultural-performances-in-medieval-france/protean-performer-defining-minstrel-identity-in-tristan-narratives/A7754FDFC3369FCCFBA03BDBB8E16BF1, 113. Lawrence also has an unpublished dissertation on minstrel disguise, which provides more analysis of several other texts, along with a longer analysis of the Tristan texts cited here. Marilyn Lawrence, "Minstrel Disguise in Medieval French Narrative: Identity, Performance, Authorship" (Ph.D., United States, New York, New York University), accessed March 4, 2023, https://www.proquest.com/docview/304708190/abstract/670F5AFF839B41F7PQ/1.

[93] María Rosa Menocal, "Signs of the Times: Self, Other and History in 'Aucassin et Nicolette'," *Romanic Review* 80, no. 4 (November 1, 1989): 497–511.

man/woman, Christian/Saracen, Black/White could be insufficient does not mean they felt people shouldn't try to abide by those binaries.

The shucking of the disguise and adoption of a single identity by Fresne, Nicolette, Josiane, and Silence, in order to provide a happy ending for the story reflects the historical social impetus to provide clarity and stability in the hierarchical social structure. Fresne, who is minimally disguised by using an assumed name, confronts questions of class. She does not disguise herself as a man, but she grapples with how to make money as a woman without being viewed as sexually suspect. She is excellent at music and embroidery, but she is extremely careful to emphasize her honor, which includes emphasizing that she does not make money from playing music. The irony is that Fresne is of noble birth but unaware of it. This nobility changes what could be viewed at as occupations necessary for making money, such as embroidery and music, into characteristics of a noble lady. Nicolette and Josiane, both women of "Saracen" origin who are also seen as more active and masculine than generally acceptable for courtly ladies, disguise themselves by blackening their skin and dressing as men. These "disguises," however, point to real parts of both women's identities. Throughout their respective texts, both women are coded as masculine, and they were both born "Saracens." Although they cannot *express* these identities and live happily ever after with their good, Christian husbands, that does not mean they do not contain those identities. In the case of Nicolette and Josiane the most compelling disguise is, in fact, one that reveals parts of their identities.

The romance *Galeran de Bretagne,* tells the story of Fresne, a girl found abandoned in an ash tree (*fraisne*). Fresne's mother, who slandered a woman for having twins, saying twins can only be the result of two different fathers, ends up giving birth to twins of her own. She has a servant take one of the twins away, and he hides the baby in an ash tree at an abbey. There, a kindly chaplain named Lohier finds the baby and names her Fresne. Fresne grows up in the playing with the abbess's nephew, Galeran, whose father is a count. Fresne and Galeran eventually fall in love despite their apparent class differences. They are repeatedly separated in an attempt to break up their love, and eventually, while Galeran is away, the accusations of impropriety lead Fresne to leave the abbey, take up an assumed name, and make a living as an embroiderer in a nearby town. Galeran is eventually betrothed to Fresne's twin sister Fleurie, at which point Fresne travels to see Galeran on the wedding the day. She plays the song he composed for her, which they had vowed to keep secret, and he recognizes her. Luckily, shortly thereafter, her mother also recognizes her and confesses to her prior misdeed. Galeran and Fresne are reunited and married, and Fleurie, devastated at the loss, goes into a convent.

Throughout the story, Fresne's unknown origins are repeatedly emphasized, representing the biggest barrier to a happy life between her and Galeran. Although the audience knows that Fresne's talents are an indication of her noble birth, in the story those talents are cast in light of potential occupations. Her appearance as a working-class woman also often coincides with suggestions of sexual availability, a connection which culminates in a conflict between Fresne and the abbess, in which the abbess calls her "garce" several times, a word, which can be translated as "filthy commoner" but carries

the connotation of "slut" or "tart."[94] This leads Fresne to leave the abbey and make her own way in the world. Opting not to disguise herself as a man, Fresne's class status as a single, lower-class woman makes her sexually suspect, despite her assertions that she is a respectable woman. She is careful to guard her honor when it comes to how she makes money, with the text consistently reminding the audience that she takes money for embroidery but not for musical performance. Despite Fresne's self-assured and assertive nature, her gender is not at stake in her disguise. Ironically, because she does not disguise herself as a man, she must instead contend with concerns of class and the implications class has on one's sexual availability.

It's important to note that musical performance by upper class women was common in the Middle Ages. In fact, musical accomplishment was seen as a good attribute for a noble woman and is noted as such in the conduct literature. In Garin lo Brun's *Ensenhamen de la Donzela,* written in 1200, he says a hostess should try and memorize new compositions and songs that she hears. He believes that "on many occasions, it is convenient…and appropriate" for a hostess to recite a song.[95] In many twelfth century romances such as the ones to be discussed below, women sing nearly as

[94] Beston translates this "filthy commoner" in Jean Renaut, *An English Translation of Jean Renaut's* Galeran de Bretagne*, a Thirteenth-Century French Romance,* ed. and trans. John Beston, (Queenston, Ontario: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008), 86. N.B. I do not give line numbers for Beston's translation. Beston translates the story in blocks of prose that he creates his sections for. He then gives the line numbers encompassed in each section. In this case, line numbers seem less meaningful. Leah Otis-Cour finds the term *garce* used to describe women who sell sex in financial documents of Toulouse, Albi, and Montpellier regarding brothel farming (for more see Chapter Four). Leah Otis-Cour, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 50 and 179 n. 17.

[95] Garin lo Brun, *L'ensegnamen alla dama*, ed. Laura Regina Bruno (Archivio Guido Izzi, 1996), 90-91, 527-540.

frequently as men. This evidence, along with close analysis of *Guillaume de Dole* led Henrik Van der Werf to conclude that many people of all classes sang all kinds of songs.[96] He is likely right, but he doesn't distinguish the meaning of that singing based on whether it was a professional pursuit or for pleasure.

Early in the story, Fresne is established as a talented embroiderer and musician. According to the text, "There was not a worker like her for skill with the needle as far as Apulia in Italy. She knew how to make pieces of many kinds: lace, embroideries, almoners[97] and embroideries in silk and gold thread, works that were worth a treasure…She could play the harp also: her good godfather taught her lays and songs, and how to ripple her hands across the strings and play Saracen airs, songs from Gascony and France and Lorraine, and Breton lays with their words and music — she knew well their form and method of composition."[98] Of the women characters examined in this section, she is the only one who the reader-listener is repeatedly reminded is a good musician from the very beginning of the text, before the issue of disguise ever arises. At one point in the story, when Fresne sends Galeran a sleeve as a token of her love, it has an image of her with her harp embroidered on it, further signifying the ties between her identity and music.

The significance of this musical prowess functions on different levels for the audience and the characters in the story. The audience knows there is truth in Fresne's

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[96] Henrik Van der Werf, "Jean Renart and Medieval Song," in *Jean Renart and the Art of Romance: Essays on Guillaume de Dole*, ed. Nancy Vine Durling (Orlando: University Press of Florida, 1997), 177.

[97] A purse for alms.

[98] Jean Renaut, 37, trans. Beston.

claim that "such inclinations come from an essential nobility of nature."[99] The other characters in the story, on the other hand, understand these skills as potential sources of income. Even Fresne herself, unaware of her noble birth, says to her godfather Lohier, "You have brought me up and taught me all that I know in order that I can improve myself and earn a living."[100] When Galeran waxes poetic about loving Fresne, she reminds him: "Since I am poor and of low background, I should not associate with you and I should certainly not dare to love you."[101] Despite the hints that Fresne came from a noble family, the ornate cradle she was found in, along with a beautiful cloth embroidered by her birth mother and an expensive pillow, the unknown circumstances surrounding her birth are paramount.

Once Galeran and Fresne are old enough for others to start gossiping about their friendship, Fresne's class status becomes entangled with questions of promiscuity. This begins with Lohier accusing her of behaving dishonorably and becoming pregnant.[102] She denies this vehemently but ends up confessing her love for Galeran leading Lohier to lament "that he could not be sure that she [Fresne] would ever have the good fortune to be taken by Galeran as wife: either Galeran would not want to incline so low or else his father would not allow him."[103] But the suspicions have moved far outside the abbey walls. Most concerning of all to Galeran's subjects is that this sexual impropriety is

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[99] Jean Renaut, 85, trans. Beston.

[100] Jean Renaut, 41, trans. Beston.

[101] Jean Renaut, 55, trans. Beston.

[102] Jean Renaut, 42, trans. Beston.

[103] Jean Renaut, 45, trans. Beston.

happening with a lower class woman: "The fact that he has set his heart on a girl [*garce*] with no money and of unknown origin can damage our country as well as upset his friends and relatives."[104] The abbess, who is both Galeran's aunt and Fresne's godmother, explains it most succinctly in saying, "A man who was lord of a land is disgraced if he takes a mistress of no standing, she said: if he wanted to do that, he should at least choose someone of distinction."[105] Notably absent from the abbess's concerns is the question of marriage. Even the various people mentioning Galeran and Fresne dishonoring each other don't mention the possibility of marriage.[106] The idea that Galeran would marry a woman of such status is inconceivable. The concern is that a woman of such status also has loose morals and will damage Galeran's reputation by becoming his mistress. He can have a mistress, but not a mistress that is of non-noble origins. However, if Fresne was of noble birth, her chastity is far less likely to have been called into question in the first place.

The abbess takes the hardest line against the relationship between Galeran and Fresne saying, "Instead of associating with good companions he has taken up with an ordinary girl…my own honor will be impaired if he is made to fall by a common girl [*garce*]…I would rather have torn her breasts from her chest if that would have made him

[104] Jean Renaut, 68, trans. Beston.

[105] Jean Renaut, 69, trans. Beston.

[106] They refer only to him setting his heart on a poor, strange girl, with strange possibly meaning foreign or unknown as Beston's translation suggests. "Quant il a si tout son cuer mis/ En une garce povre estrange." Jean Renart [Renaut], *Galeran de Bretagne: roman du XIIIe siècle*, ed. and trans. Lucien Foulet, Classiques Français du moyen âge 37 (Paris: É. Champion, 1925), https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001640961, 90, vv. 2934-2935. I will use "Jean Renart and Foulet" when citing this edition since that is the name used when the book was published and to distinguish it from citations of Jean Renart who wrote *Guillaume de Dole.* The theory that Jean Renart and Jean Renaut are the same individual has been thoroughly debunked.

turn away from her, even if I am her godmother."[107] She confronts Galeran with his behavior and berates him for having no sense and loving "a silly common girl."[108] It is worth noting here the specific language used by the abbess in speaking about Fresne. The words Beston has translated as "ordinary girl," "common girl," and "silly common girl," are *garce souzprins*, *garce*, and *garce folle* respectively. *Souzprins*, likely coming from *sous pris*, would most literally mean lower worth or, in this case, lower-class. *Fol*, the masculine of *folle,* is commonly translated as fool or foolish, though it can mean anything from crazy to frivolous to wicked. As a feminine noun, however, *folle* carries the strong sense of sexual misdeeds.[109] It is not just a silly woman, but a wanton woman or a woman of loose morals.

Given that *garce* more readily has an innocuous meaning than *folle*, aligning it specifically with Fresne and promiscuity requires a closer look at its usage in this specific text. In the only extant manuscript of *Galeran de Bretagne*, the word *garce* is used seven times. Six of those times it is used specifically in reference to Fresne, and of those six, five are voiced by the abbess. The one time it is used to refer to Fresne by someone other than the abbess is when the author gives examples of Galeran's people gossiping, saying Fresne is a "girl with no money." The only other time *garce* is used is by the narrator to disparagingly refer to the girl who told the abbess that Fresne and Galeran were

[107] Jean Renaut, 69, trans. Beston.

[108] Jean Renaut, 70, trans. Beston.

[109] It is sometimes explicitly connected with dancing. See Walter Bibbesworth, 92-94, vv. 623-625: "Si lerreint dunc les braceroles / E les foles les karoles, / E eschureint les blaces foles."

exchanging letters.[110] In comparison, *meschine,* a common synonym, is used three times to refer to a girl or young girl and once to refer to a servant girl, and *pucele*, another common synonym, is used thirty-eight times, thirty-two of which refer to a young girl or damoisel, one of which seems to imply a virgin, and five of which refer to a girl in some sort of service.[111] This includes Galeran, Fresne herself, and Fresne's companion Rose all referring to Fresne as a *pucele* rather than as a *garce.*[112]

All of these usages of *garce* are decidedly negative in their connotations. The abbess's main concern is the ruin of Galeran, and by association herself, through Galeran's presumed sexual activity with Fresne and that sexual activity is concerning primarily due to Fresne's precarious class status. The dual meaning of the word *garce* in the abbess's use of it is brought to the fore in the aftermath of the abbess discovering that Galeran and Fresne have been exchanging messages secretly while Galeran is away. She calls Fresne a "filthy beggar" and says she is greatly distressed "to learn that Galeran, who is lord of these marches, is your lover."[113] The abbess puts an end to the communication between Galeran and Fresne, but shortly thereafter the two begin a heated

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[110] Jean Renart and Foulet, for the gossips, see 90, v. 2935, for all the abbess's usage see 90-91, vv. 2981, 2986, 3011 and 118-120, vv. 3857, 3919, for the reference to the other girl, see 126, v. 4132.

[111] For uses of *meschine*, see Lucien Foulet, "Glossaire," in *Galeran de Bretagne: roman du XIIIe siècle*, by Jean Renart, ed. Lucien Foulet, Classiques français du moyen âge 37 (Paris: É. Champion, 1925), https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001640961, 276, for *pucele*, 280. *Pucele* can also be used ironically to refer to promiscuous women, inverting its normal meaning of "virgin," but it's ubiquity in this text versus the specific usages of *garce* suggest to me that *pucele* her is meant to be the standard word for girl or young woman against which *garce* is juxtaposed.

[112] For Galeran see Jean Renat and Foulet, 97, v. 3163, for Fresne herself saying it, 128 v. 4189, for Rose, 129, v. 4245.

[113] Jean Renaut, 81, trans. Beston. Jean Renart and Foulet, "ordre truande," 112, v. 3668.

exchange that marks a major turning point in the story. The abbess accuses Fresne of "pursuing your own ruin like a woman given over to shameless and loose ways…if you expect to be the wife of a count you are expecting a good deal in return for your dishonor…you will be combing someone else's wool for your bread and cleaning latrines for a mere pittance."[114] Here again, the abbess directly connects sexual promiscuity with working for a living, and conflates Fresne's identity as a lower class woman with sexual dishonor. Once again she uses the word *garce,* but this time she leaves no doubt as to the connections she is drawing. By modifying *garce* with *baude* and *lecheresse,* she is emphasizing her belief that Fresne is promiscuous and underscoring for the reader-listener the connotation of the word *garce* that the abbess has been relying on to characterize Fresne this whole time.

Fresne for her part, maintains the connection but inverts its relationship to her. She responds:

> And if I am poor and weak and wretched now, I am not of base inclinations; it is the baseness of a common heart that makes a woman disreputable…My heart, madam prompts me not to engage in any work other than reading my psalter every day, embroidering in silk and gold thread, listening to tales of Thebes and Troy, playing lays on my harp, mating others at chess, and feeding my bird on my wrist.[115]

Though unaware of her noble birth, she has faith in her own good character and therefore faith that she is not a disreputable woman. It is at this moment that the abbess calls Fresne

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[114] Jean Renaut, 85, trans. Beston.

[115] Jean Renaut, 85, trans. Beston.

"vieus garce, chïoche covee" or "filthy commoner, offspring of a tree trunk."[116] *Vieus*, coming from *vil*, suggests a low born person, or someone shameful, humble, or base. Beston's "filthy commoner" translation effectively gets at the disparaging nature of *vieus* but does nothing to address the gendered and sexualized *garce*. Given the abbess's repeated condemnations of Fresne as a *garce*, clearly meant to signify a loose or promiscuous woman, the import here might be better represented as "filthy slut" or "common whore." *Vieus garce* effectively represents in two words the intersection of class and sexuality as it is weaponized against Fresne in the story. As an unmarried woman, who will need to make a living in the world, she is sexually suspect. Yet as a sexually suspect woman she cannot marry; Fresne is trapped by circular logic.

But what we see in the confrontation with the abbess is twofold. On the one hand, Fresne is being slighted by the abbess and defined as both sexually promiscuous and low class. But Fresne also proves to be a bold character. She does not shrink from the abbess's attacks but responds with conviction and part of that conviction betrays her inner nobility. All of the pursuits she lists in her defense of herself are ones suitable to a noble lady, albeit with perhaps a touch of pride in that she specifies "mating others at chess." When the abbess delivers her final insult, Fresne, rather than meekly retreating, decides to leave the abbey on her own. She tells her friend and supporter the prioress, "I have no choice but to go away. I would stay except that there is not a maidservant or servant-boy here, even the lowest of them, who could not call me a servant or a vagabond or a foundling if they wanted to, and I would be much more hurt by that from them than

[116] Jean Renart and Foulet, 120, v. 3919. Jean Renaut, 86, trans. Beston.

from a lady like you or some other lady."[117] Here the class issue once again arises, but Fresne again inverts it by suggesting it is not the insult but rather who delivers it. A low-class individual insulting her would be unbearable in a way that a lady saying it would not be. What may appear as pride to anyone seeing Fresne as the foundling of the abbey, the audience recognizes as a solid sense of self and self-assuredness that is in keeping with Fresne's true nobility. Thus when she sets out without a male companion saying, "a poor woman may become wealthy before she dies,"[118] it is not folly but a hint of what is to come. Fresne, who is actually a high-born lady, has the ability to become wealthy and marry well, and having been raised to understand her talents as sources of income, she also has the ability to thrive in the world.

Once on her own it is not a question of "if" but rather "how" Fresne survives. Not all occupations carry the same stigma of sexual availability, despite the lack of nuance in the abbess's views. The crucial role of money in determining the class of a woman performing music created a trope where women in literature make a point of saying they are not accepting money for their music. Judith Cohen cites two examples from Iberian romances. One in the *Libro de Apolonio*, when Tarsiana, a noble woman temporarily forced to resort to sing for money in the marketplace, tells everyone, "'no so joglaresa de las de buen mercado' (I'm not one of those joglaressas who can be bought)." Tarsiana is telling everyone that she hasn't resorted to selling sex for money. In the *Libro de Alexandre,* Queen Calcetrix explains, "'non vin' ganar haberes, ca no soe joglaresa (I'm

[117] Jean Renaut, 88, trans. Beston.

[118] Jean Renaut, 86, trans. Beston.

not here to earn any money; I'm no joglaressa)."[119] Thus the narrator is careful to specify it is through embroidery that Fresne is able to increase her status and make money.[120]

While Fresne pointedly takes her harp with her on her journey, she never earns money playing the harp. Instead, the author is careful to mention, "The harp that she carried often allowed her to take comfortable lodging: it entertained her hosts so much that she was often charged little or nothing at all."[121] Rather than using music to make money to pay for her rooms, she plays music that is so beautiful that she is not even charged in the first place. Money is entirely removed from the equation, and she avoids being too closely associated with professional musicians. Even so, in order to secure lodgings with the widow Blanche and her daughter Rose, Fresne has to provide the disclaimer:

> I know little other than how to read my psalter and sing lays to my harp. I can also claim a good knowledge of chess and backgammon. There is not a woman from here to Alsace, however, who can embroider in silk and gold thread better than I can. And I do not doubt that wherever I am I can take care of myself honorably. I have no inclination to loose behavior. I have no husband and seek no companion except Almighty God. There is no cunning or guile in me.[122]

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[119] Judith Cohen, "Ca No Soe Joglaresa: Women and Music in Medieval Spain's Three Cultures," in *Medieval Woman's Songs: Cross-Cultural Approaches*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 68, trans. Cohen.

[120] "Tant en retient et met s'entente / Que bien euvre de soie et d'or, / Dont elle assemble bon tresor / Qui moult mielx li vault de sa terre," Renart and Foulet, 131, v. 4282. And "Leans gaaigne grant avoir / En draps qu'elle euvre et qu'elle vent," Jean Renart and Foulet, 131, vv. 4296-4297.

[121] Jean Renaut, 90, trans. Beston.

[122] Jean Renaut, 91, trans. Beston. "Je ne sçay fors tenir mon livre / Et en ma harpe laiz chanter; / Et des eschés me puis vanter / Et des tables qu'assés en sçay; / Ne n'a juque ou pays d'Ausay / Femme ouvrant mieulx d'or et de soye, / Ne je ne doubt ou que je soye / Que ne me garisse a hounour. / Fole ne suis ne n'ay seigneur / Ne poursuite de compaignon / se la de Dieu le puissant non; / Ne n'an en moy barat ne guille," Foulet and Renart, 128, vv. 4191-4203.

What Beston has translated as "I have no inclination to loose behavior," is in fact the far more straight forward "fole ne suis": I am not a loose woman. She follows this by saying "ne n'ay seigneur / Ne poursuite de compaignon," which, read alongside a clear denial of being a loose woman, could translate to I have no husband and seek no companions, but could also simply mean that not only is she not a loose woman, that she has no "master" and is not seeking sexual companions or to consort with men. This reading seems to be corroborated by Rose's description of Fresne. After Madame Blanch still rejects Fresne, Rose pleads no her behalf saying, "Elle n'est ne povre ne nue / Ne ne semble fame mauvaise."[123] Beston's translation again elides some of the nuance in the words, rather than translating "povre ne nue" as "neither poor nor naked," he opts to combine the two as "destitute," a plausible translation but one that seems insufficient given the following clause that "does not seem to a *fame mauvaise*."[124] *Fame mauvaise,* translated by Beston as "bad woman," closely resembles late medieval terms used for sex worker: *femmes lubriques, femmes deshonnetes, femmes dissolues*.[125] Both Fresne and Rose are working hard to convince Madam Blanche that Fresne, an unaccompanied, single woman who needs to earn her living, is not a sex worker. Madam Blanche has no reason to believe Fresne engages in commercial sex other than her sudden appearance as a single, low-class woman. Yet, despite Blanche being impressed by Fresne's words, it takes a plea

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[123] Jean Renart and Foulet, 130, vv. 4248-4249.

[124] Jean Renaut, 92, trans. Beston.

[125] Otis-Cour, 50.

from Rose on the soul of her father to get her mother to trust that Fresne is not a *fame mauvaise* and to take her in.[126] For a year and a half Fresne lives with Blanche and Rose making money through her embroidery and living "free from any accusation of dishonor or blameworthy conduct."[127]

It is at this point that Fresne hears about Galeran's upcoming wedding and laments that she "would have been wiser if I had sought to love my equal."[128] This concern about class does not stop her, however, from deciding to attend the wedding to confront Galeran. After getting Blanche to agree to let Rose come with her, saying that she "will not suffer any disgrace or injury in my company,"[129] the two pack to leave. Fresne specifically packs her rich ermine because "she did not want anyone to think she was poor," and Rose carries her harp. Then the two of them, dressed as pilgrims set off.[130] Unlike the other women in this chapter, Fresne opts not to dress as a man, instead depending on her pilgrim outfit to protect her on the road. Fresne's choice of outfit when she confronts Galeran is equally intriguing. She wears a dress she made of the embroidered cloth given to her by her birth mother, the cloth which will eventually identify her, along with an embroidered belt with sapphires and rubies, the links of which are gold. Even the clasp fastening her dress, a gift from Galeran, is described as "neither

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[126] Jean Renaut, 91-92, trans. Beston.

[127] Jean Renaut, 93, trans. Beston. "Sans villanie et sans desroy / Est ainsi plus d'an et demy," Jean Renart and Foulet, 132, vv. 4324-4325.

[128] Jean Renaut, 133, trans. Beston.

[129] Jean Renaut, 135, trans. Beston. "N'y avra honte ne domage," Jean Renart and Foulet, 202, v. 6639.

[130] Jean Renaut, 136, trans. Beston.

cheap nor tiny," with various gem stones in it. Finally, she wears a wimple and covers her nose and face to avoid recognition.[131] When they reach the palace, Fresne takes her harp from Rose and holds her ornate pillow against her chest before she walks in. But Fresne is not disguised as a jongleur. In fact, Fresne is not disguised at all. She covers her face and nose precisely because she has adopted every form of identification she has. She is wearing the cloth and holding the pillow that tie her to her birth mother, she is wearing a clasp from Galeran, and she is holding her harp, the ultimate signifier of her identity. As Lawrence argues, "unmasking does not entail casting off another's identity indicators, so much as revealing the signs by which one's true self is identified"[132]; Fresne, in this moment, is recouping her identity. Thus when the crowd watching her walk in says, "Galeran will be out of his senses if he does not get her to entertain the company before she leaves the court," it is not because they think she is a performer for hire. To the contrary, it is because they recognize her for who she truly is, a noble woman gifted in music, a "maiden who should have as her beloved a king who owned the whole world!"[133] The distance between her and the professional musicians is emphasized again when she begins to play a song, presumably of her own composition, and she played so sweetly "that the minstrels quickly put down their own instruments; all their songs and all their skill compared with hers were like the howling of a wolf compared with the melody

[131] Jean Renaut, 141, trans. Beston.

[132] Marilyn Lawrence, "Minstrel Disguise," 6.
[133] Jean Renaut, 141, trans. Beston.

of a vielle, and they were all struck dumb."[134] All the minstrels, a group of which Fresne is not a part, put down their instruments and were struck dumb, and Fresne keeps playing.

Galeran, at this point, still has not recognized Fresne, and so she plays the lai he taught her that only the two of them know. At the sound of this private song Galeran's face goes pale. Seeing his shock Fresne asks:

> Is it gout that has a grip on you, or is it fear or stinginess - Is it because I might want a fur wrap or a cloak from you? God be thanked, I have enough money of my own, so do not look so downcast. Look at him, he thinks I see through him when I speak of gifts. Is the blow that has darkened your brow from a sword or a lance of *ash*.[135]

This announcement is the fullest acknowledgment of her own identity by Fresne, and Galeran immediately recognizes her. Although taking place in a public forum, a scene where Fresne plays music for an enraptured Galeran could describe a scene in the beginning of the story. Her playing music is as integral a part of her identity as the truth behind her birth and playing a song about her love for and with Galeran is the final piece of Fresne's presentation as her fully realized self. As part of this, she must establish a line between herself and jongleuses, who play for money. For Fresne, this distinction is about denying the implications of sexual availability that come with public performance. But the reader-listener recognizes that her talent for music is part of her innate nobility, and thus Fresne is also, unwittingly, refusing the low-class status that does not accurately reflect her birth. Though Fresne is telling Galeran that she does not want money for her

[134] Jean Renaut, 142, trans. Beston.

[135] Jean Renaut, 143, trans. Beston, emphasis Beston's.

performance, the reader-listener recognizes that she also does not, and never did, need his money or status. This powerful dual speak is capped off by Fresne's pun on her own name, wherein she suggests he has been harmed by a lance of *fraisne* but also a lance of Fresne.

Later, when talking to her birth mother, Fresne makes a point of saying that what most upset her about what the abbess said was that "she accused me of shameful behaviour, whereas I assure you absolutely that in all that has happened I have never been guilty of lechery. So I left her and supported myself very honorably in Rouen."[136] Here again Fresne emphasizes her honorable nature. The reader-listener, who knows the truth from the beginning of the story, sees each of these moments as a potential turn in the story when the other characters will finally realize what Fresne's inner character has made evident the whole time. When her mother finally tells Fresne the truth, explaining how she ended up in the ash tree, Fresne weeps but is not surprised. Instead she says, "Nature has not died in me either, for it is coming to life in me again even now, and my heart has learned within a short time what it never knew before."[137] When Fresne's father is told the whole story, "there was nothing that he failed to recognize, nothing that he did not accept."[138]

[136] Jean Renaut, 147, trans. Beston. "Mai ce me desconfit et tue / Qu'elle me reprova ma honte. / En la fin vous dy de mon conte / Qu'en moy n'ot oncques lecherie / Li laissai. Si m'en suis garie / A Rouen puis a grant honnour. / Or vouldroie trover seigneur / Ou dame entour cui j'estuïsse, / Qui par hounour servier puïsse," Jean Renart and Foulet, 220, vv. 7238-7246.

[137] Jean Renaut, 148, trans. Beston.

[138] Jean Renaut, 151, trans. Beston.

Although no one in the story knew the truth of Fresne, their discovery of her birth awakens what is "natural" and immediately "recognizable." The truth has always been there. Fresne's disparate worlds come together in one, neat conclusion when her father tells Galeran that Fresne is his daughter, and they should be wed. Fresne then marries Galeran that same day, wearing the dress made of cloth from her mother that she created when she still considered herself a professional seamstress. Now that her real status as a noble is known, none of her previously suspect past times are a concern. With the stabilizing of her class, she is no longer sexually suspect. The abbess, for her part, "freely acknowledged the fact that anyone who insults someone he does not thoroughly know does wrong and puts himself in jeopardy," and asks for forgiveness, which is readily granted.[139] Ironically, the story does not mention Fresne playing music at any point after her identity is revealed, as though that has fallen away. More likely, I would suggest, that activity has passed into the private realm, out of sight of the reader-listener since the remaining scenes are public ones, where a noble lady would not be expected to entertain.

The end of the story is ultimately an unraveling of the struggles Fresne faced; what was at stake in her contentions with class and sexuality were never really a danger. Her struggle to be perceived as chaste, while working for a living reflects a reality for many, such as Rose, whom Fresne ensures marries a noble as recompense for her good deeds. But the concern of class and sexuality was never truly Fresne's to worry about, as evidenced by her identity on display throughout the story. Yet, only through combining disguise with music, a staple of her identity, could Fresne herself discover the truth. This

[139] Jean Renaut, 156, trans. Beston.

truth is uncomplicated and satisfying for a medieval and modern audience. Fresne is allowed to be herself and marry Galeran. But this is only because her identity proves to be less complicated and less problematic than it seems. She is a beautiful, white, Christian, noblewoman; she is a perfect match for Galeran. Her disguise and the discovery of her full identity *helps* Fresne in her pursuits rather than hinders, because it turns out she is exactly who she needs to be to marry Galeran, no more and no less.

This portrayal of Fresne stands in stark contrast to the depiction of Nicolette and Josiane, two heroines from other French romances who also play music to survive. Whereas Fresne's identity in its entirety ends up being precisely what is needed to marry Galeran, Nicolette and Josiane have more complicated relationships to Christianity, class, gender, and whiteness. Consequently, although Fresne ends up fully inhabiting her original identity by the end of the story, Nicolette and Josiane must choose aspects of their identities in order to live happily with their spouses. Before doing so, however, both women spend a period of time in disguise, allowing them to indulge in an exploration of their identities, which do not fit neatly into the binaries of the medieval world like Fresne's do. Both Nicolette and Josiane dress as men, blacken their faces, and perform music during a period of separation from their male counterparts. As two heroines of "Saracen" origins, whose exhibit masculine tendencies throughout their stories, these disguises feel like more than just subterfuge. They are performances in both senses, as an act for which they make money and as a performance of identity, or in this case partial or possible identities.

María Rosa Menocal argues rightly for reading *Aucassin et Nicolette* in its historical context, "a medieval Europe with a frontier at the Pyrenees and dark foreigners."[140] Menocal sees this as a moment when the neatness of the distinction between the French Self and Saracen Other collapses: "It is the complexity of the issue — and its irreducibility to either of these two postures — that constitutes the dramatic thematization of the no doubt dramatic and difficult process of radical cultural assimilation that dominated the European scene in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries."[141] She is correct, of course, in highlighting the importance of the historical backdrop of a post-First Crusade Europe, wherein not only were more people moving between Occitania and the north of Spain but the ill-defined border itself was in flux. However, where Menocal sees Nicolette's final transformation back to her white, Christianized self as an act of assimilation, embracing the new generation's move towards cultural union, I argue that both Nicolette and Josiane must sacrifice the nuances of their ethnic and gender identities in order to uphold the existing social structure and assuage cultural anxieties. While in reality it may have been impossible to categorize people by orderly binaries, in the world of *romans*, a space of ideology, where good, Christian ladies marry good, Christian knights, complex characters like Nicolette and Josiane must be reduced to one identity or the other. It is the very real messiness of reality, in fact, that makes it so crucial that *romans* reassert a comforting binary structure, in which Saracen/Christian, black/white, Self/Other are easily recognizable.

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[140] Menocal, "Sign of the Times," 502.

[141] Menocal, "Sign of the Times," 509.

Like Fresne, Nicolette, of *Aucassin and Nicolette*, grows up believing she is of a lower class than she actually is. As a child she was sold to the Viscount of Beaucaire, who raises her as a Christian lady, although she can never shake the stigma of having been bought. Aucassin, son of the Count of Beaucaire, loves Nicolette so much that he refuses to fight for his father until his father promises that if he fights he can kiss Nicolette. Aucassin captures the count's enemy, but when the count reneges on their deal, Aucassin releases his prisoner, making the man promise he will wage war on the count for the rest of his life. The count orders the viscount to send Nicolette away, but instead he locks her in a tower in his palace while Aucassin's father locks him up as well. Nicolette escapes her prison and is able to briefly sing to Aucassin at his window before fleeing into the woods and leaving a trail for Aucassin. When Aucassin is eventually released, he finds Nicolette and the two decide to run away together. Their ship is caught in a storm at sea and they end up in the strange land of Torelore, where women wage war using food as weapons and the king lies in bed giving birth. They remain there for three years before being captured by Saracens and separated. Aucassin ends up back at Beaucaire, but Nicolette ends up in "Cartage" where she discovers the truth of her birth. She is the daughter of the king of Cartage, a Saracen princess. When her father wants to marry her to another Saracen king, she dons her jongleur disguise and travels back to Beaucaire. There she performs in her disguise for Aucassin and sings about their love and her journey since they were separated. Aucassin, not recognizing her, asks if she knows where the woman of whom she sings is. Nicolette says she will bring the woman to him, and after spending eight days at her aunt's house undoing her disguise, she reveals herself to Aucassin and the two wed.

Unlike Fresne, the exposure of whose identity represents the resolution to the problem of her class, Nicolette's only presents another complication. She may be a princess, but she is a Saracen princess. It is her Saracen identity, along with her class, of which Aucassin's parents so strongly disapprove. They even present their objections in almost the exact same words. His father says, "Leave Nicolette be, for she is a slave girl who was brought from a foreign land, and the viscount of this town purchased her from the Saracens…If you wish to have a wife, I shall give you the daughter of a king or a count. No man *in France* is so rich that, if you wanted his daughter, you could not have her."[142] Similarly his mother tells him, "Nicolette is elegant and gracious. / She was taken by force from Carthage / and bought from a Saracen. / If you want to take a wife, / marry a Woman of high lineage."[143] However, the crux of the objections is the same: Nicolette is not just a captive but a Saracen captive; if you want to marry choose someone from France of noble birth.

Thus learning she is a Saracen princess does not fix the situation Nicolette faces. Rather than being happy, Nicolette seems horrified by her own family, lamenting, "How sad to be of noble birth, / Daughter of the King of Carthage, / Cousin of the Emir," when she discovers who she is.[144] She now must contend with her own noble family that wants

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[142] *The Pilgrimage of Charlemagne and Aucassin and Nicolette*, eds. and trans. Glyn S. Burgess and Anne Elizabeth Cobby, vol. 47, Garland Library of Medieval Literature (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 120-22, II, vv. 24-31, trans. Burgess. *Aucassin et Nicolette* is told in alternating sections of prose and poetry, which Burgess has numbered using roman numerals. Since the line numbering restarts at the beginning of every section, I have included the section number along with the line numbers to avoid any confusion when two sections appear on the same page

[143] *Aucassin,* 122, III, vv. 8-12, trans. Burgess.

[144] *Aucassin,* 166, XXXVII, vv. 6-8, trans. Burgess.

to marry her off to someone from her own class and religion, much as Aucassin's family wishes to do with him. In anticipation of needing a means of escape from her family, Nicolette decides to acquire a viol and learn to play it. This choice is somewhat ironic as, not only she does not play music or sing in the early parts of the story, but she told the king and court of Torelore that when Aucassin embraces her, "it gives me such pleasure that / No dance or jig or round, / No harp, fiddle or violin, / No game or pastime / Would be worth so much."[145] For Nicolette, music holds no special power; it is worthless compared to the power of her love. Nor is she characterized as a musician before she adopts the guise of the jongleur. Music is simply a practical means of escaping her family and returning to Aucassin.

But when Nicolette does eventually disguise herself as a jongleur, she makes two transformations that seem far more critical to her identity:

> She stole away at night, made her way to the port, took lodgings with a poor woman on the seashore, took a herb and rubbed her head and face with it until she was completely black and swarthy. She had a smock, cloak, shirt, and breeches made, and disguised herself as a jongleur…[she] took her viol and played it throughout the land until she arrived at the castle of Beaucaire where Aucassin was.[146]

Here we see her blacken her skin and dress as a male jongleur, and both actions reflect aspects of Nicolette's identity. Nicolette darkening her face is integral to understanding her transformation as a form of experimental identity. In the story, Nicolette is described

[145] *Aucassin,* 162, XXXIII, vv. 6-10, trans. Burgess.

[146] *Aucassin,* 166, XXXVIII, vv.14-21, trans. Burgess.

as so fair that the daisies “were quite black in comparison with her feet and legs.”[147] Yet Nicolette’s whiteness and beauty are not enough to change the reality of her status as an enslaved woman and a woman of “pagan” birth. One could therefore view her musical performance as part of her “otherness,” with the blackening of her face emphasizing her connection to a tradition that started with the dancing slave women rumored to have been brought back from Barbastro. This is undoubtedly a factor, as Nicolette is sexualized throughout the story. Nathaniel Smith effectively demonstrates this in his article “The Uncourtliness of Nicolette.” He notes the number of times *cors* appears in connection with Nicolette, along with the focus on her bright face (*cler vis* or *face clere*). When describing her form, the narrator starts with her “firm breasts” and then switches to the second person to describe her waist which “you could enclose with two hands.” Smith further points out that when Nicolette escapes the tower she is scantily clad and not for the first time, as she is known to have healed a pilgrim with the sight of her leg. Solidifying her as a sexualized character, and one perhaps especially equipped to take on the disguise of jongleur, which has been shown to be so laden with sexual meaning, is Smith’s analysis of a passage containing repeated word play and double entendre that focus specifically on *jeu d’amor* (game of love) and *bordel*.[148]

But as Jacqueline de Weever points out, interpreting Nicolette blackening her face with only negative connotations for her class and identity requires some disingenuous

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[147] *Aucassin,* 136, XII, v. 22, trans. Burgess.

[148] Nathaniel B. Smith, “The Uncourtliness of Nicolette,” in *Voices of Conscience: Essays on Medieval and Modern French Literature in Memory of James D. Powell and Rosemary Hodgins*, ed. Raymond J. Cormier (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1977), 171-174.

translations. The verb used to describe Nicolette putting the herb on her face is *oinst*, to anoint. Therefore, Nicolette *anoints* herself black.[149] For de Weever, this act is "a ritual of both self-reclamation and 'self-healing'…By painting on the herb juice and donning male clothing, Nicolette reveals her true inner identity, as Saracen by the new skin color, and as assertive being in the male clothing."[150] This is a remarkably positive and persuasive view of Nicolette's actions, especially considering that, as de Weever notes, Nicolette chooses to blacken her face after she discovers her identity as a Saracen princess. Through this lens, Nicolette traveling as a black, male jongleur, becomes an act of claiming her identity. She does not need to blacken her skin to be safe, since she is already dressed as a man. She chooses to do so because she identifies with other dark-skinned Saracens in Cartage.[151] Menocal adopts a similar argument, saying, "to affect [sic] the necessary reunion at the end, Nicolette must appropriate the *appearances* of things she *really is* but does not, perhaps cannot, on the surface appear to be: Arab, manipulative, authoritative."[152]

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[149] Jacqueline de Weever, "Nicolette's 'Blackness' - Lost in Translation," *Romance Notes* 34, no. 3 (1994), 319-321.

[150] de Weever, 321.

[151] de Weever, 321-322. De Weever opts to interpret Cartage as part of Spain, presumably from Cartagena. However, others have interpreted it as Carthage, suggesting North Africa. For more on the geography of *Aucassin et Nicolette* see Burgess's, "Glyn S. Burgess, "Introduction," in *The Pilgrimage of Charlemagne and Aucassin and Nicolette*, ed. Anne Elizabeth Cobby and Glyn S. Burgess, vol. 47, Garland Library of Medieval Literatur (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988) and Kenneth Urwin, "The Setting of 'Aucassin et Nicolette,'" *The Modern Language Review* 31, no. 3 (1936): 403–5, https://doi.org/10.2307/3715056. Robert Sturges takes a less literal approach to the geography of the text "Beaucaire, 'Cartage,' Torelore: The Imaginary Mediterranean's Queer Carnival in Aucassin et Nicolette," in *Queering the Medieval Mediterranean: Transcultural Sea of Sex, Gender, Identity, and Culture* (Brill, 2021), 155–74, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004465329_009.

[152] Menocal, "Sign of the Times," 506, italics Menocal's.

However, we are left with a crucial question: if this transformation is a positive identity reclamation, as de Weever suggests, or an example of cultural assimilation as Menocal suggests, why does Nicolette transform entirely back into her white feminine self at the end of the story. When she is finally going to reunite with Aucassin at the end of the story, the first thing Nicolette does to transform back to herself is to wash and bathe and then "she took a herb called celandine and rubbed it on her and she was just as beautiful as she had ever been at any time."[153] Why does she suddenly cease to embrace her new identity or why does she suddenly return to the *appearance* of uncomplicated identity? Neither de Weever nor Menocal provide satisfying explanations for this. De Weever suggests that once Nicolette knows who she is "the outward trappings do not matter" and she "sacrifices new-found identity to love."[154] Menocal, for her part, sees Nicolette as embracing her hybridness to ensure the happy ending to the story, which constitutes the cultural assimilation.[155] But her wholesale abandonment of her birth family, the fact that she does not reveal herself to Aucassin until she has transformed back, and even then never tells him it was her playing music, suggests that Nicolette's mixed identity was not a positive and miraculous coup of the existing order. As Jane Gilbert says, her very horror at her own heritage belies de Weever's argument that Nicolette is claiming "I am one of you" to other Spanish Saracens.[156] Gilbert points out

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[153] *Aucassin,* 170, XL, vv. 29-30, trans. Burgess.

[154] de Weever, 321 and 322.

[155] Menocal, "Sign of the Times," 510.

[156] Jane Gilbert, "The Practice of Gender in Aucassin et Nicolette," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* XXXIII, no. 3 (1997): 217–28, https://doi.org/10.1093/fmls/XXXIII.3.217, 224. For more on the bele sarrasine see Norman Daniel, *Heroes and Saracens: An Interpretation of the Chansons de Geste*

that Nicolette's episode as a jongleur is an expression of the Belle Sarrasine trope, in which the beautiful Saracen women are "sexually forward, clever and crafty, cross-dressers and betrayers of husbands or fathers," and "the fact that the Belle Sarrasine is only another western stereotype masquerading as foreign should alert us to the dangers of viewing it as an authentic expression of otherness."[157] Gilbert instead suggests Nicolette is caught between the stereotype of the Belle Sarrasine and the Good Christian Girl, one of which she needs to use to return to Aucassin, but the other of which she must be in order to marry Aucassin. The ultimate problem is "neither of the two gender stereotypes, Belle Sarrasine and Good Christian Girl, is entirely accurate or truly liberating for Nicolette," and "both her conformism [to the Good Christian Girl stereotype] and her resistance [to the Belle Sarrasine Stereotype] are severely compromised by the contradictions which run deep within her characterisation."[158]

Gilbert is right to trouble a straightforward reading of Nicolette's episode as a jongleur as a positive expression of a fully realized identity, just as de Weever was right to complicate readings her blackening her face. Nicolette, after all, was raised as a good Christian girl, with a wealthy adoptive father. To follow the pattern of Fresne, Nicolette's existing identity, good Christian girl, would need to be reinforced by the exposure of her innate nature as evidenced by parentage, good Christian parents. But Nicolette's heritage contradicts how she has been raised, and the only ways in which it reinforces aspects of

(Edinburgh: University Press, 1983) and Paul Bancourt, *Les musulmans dans les chansons de geste du cycle du roi* (Aix en Provence: Université de Provence, 1982), Chapters 8 and 9.

[157] Gilbert, 222 and 224.

[158] Gilbert, 225.

Nicolette's character are, as Gilbert shows, problematically stereotypical. But Gilbert's argument that Nicolette "seems to prefer to act in the Christian way wherever possible"[159] rings equally hollow. Particularly since, although Gilbert situates her argument as one that takes seriously Nicolette's own words,[160] she does not consider that all we know about Nicolette's travels in her disguise is that she convinces a mariner to let her board his ship, and they sail until they reach Provence. Then Nicolette disembarks with her viol and "vielant par le païs tant qu'ele vint au castel de Biaucaire, la u Aucassins estoit": played the viol through the country until she came to the castle of Beaucaire, where Aucassin was.[161] The actual time Nicolette spent as a black-skinned male jongleur is hidden from the reader-listener. In many ways, the invisibility of this time renders a discussion of Nicolette's identity futile, because the moment in which she most meaningfully engages in different expressions of her identity is lost to us. Perhaps oral performances of the piece included more details or provided a physical performance that helped the reader-listener envisage her adventures; we cannot know.

What we do know is that Nicolette has an identity not easily defined. As Menocal suggests, it is her hybridity and polyvalent perspective that allow her to be such an active character, who is successful at getting what they want. As de Weever shows, Nicolette's disguise is clearly more than just "smearing" or "staining" her face to improve her disguise and increase her safety. Given that she knows her full heritage, she is, in some

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[159] Gilbert, 225.

[160] Gilbert, 223.

[161] *Aucassin*, 165, XXXVIII vv. 17-18.

way, engaging with her Saracen identity. And as Gilbert argues, Nicolette's identity is irreducible to the binary tropes available to her. I am, thus, not arguing for a resolution to any of the quandaries put forth about what Nicolette may truly feel. Instead I want to reframe the facts these scholars have elucidated to think about how jongleur disguise helps Nicolette explore her non-binary, here used in its most basic sense, identity and the impossibility of maintaining that complexity in the world of the *romans.* Cast in this light, the invisibility of her time as a jongleur makes sense. The *romans* cannot explore Nicolette's identity with her, because the intricacy and nuance of it is too contradictory for the genre. Nicolette is instead relegated to the margins, exploring gender and ethnicity extratextually as she exceeds the boundaries of the *romans.*

If we adopt a tack that focuses on exploration of identity rather than re/claiming or choosing identity, then we can resolve the conflict between these arguments. Nicolette blackening her face *after* she discovers she is a Saracen princess cannot be ignored as an experiment in identity, even if she is not happy to learn about her parentage. Moreover, the use of "anoint" in the text suggests a rebaptism, one which cancels out her earlier baptism as a Christian by her adoptive father. But it is not Nicolette whose immortal soul is at stake in this decision. Because she does this as part of a disguise, and part of a jongleur disguise, she can distance herself from the realities and consequences of such an identity. She can play the part of a black-skinned Saracen, just as any jongleur can play any part. Jongleur disguise is a safe space for adopting and adapting identities, and perhaps precisely because she is unhappy to learn she is a Saracen princess, Nicolette must explore this identity and try it on. She must discover what this identity means in her

life. Equally important, however, is the shucking of this identity skin. If as Menocal says, she must adopt the appearances of what she is to effect the ending, she must also discard those appearances to take part in the ending she has brought about. Aucassin cannot marry her as a black, male jongleur. He must marry the beautiful, white Nicolette. Therefore she reverses her baptism again, "anointing" herself with the herb celandine and returning to him as a courtly lady dressed in expensive silks.

This lens helps untangle the issue of gender at the heart of Nicolette's performance. Just as she is trying on being a Saracen, via her jongleur clothing, she is trying on being a man. Throughout the romance, Nicolette proves to be the more active and innovative character as opposed to Aucassin. The story, which vacillates between sincerity and satire, often reverses the gender roles of the two lovers. For example, it is Nicolette who sings at the window of Aucassin's prison when he is being held against his will by his father. Consequently, the *alba*, or dawn song that is traditionally sung by a faithful watchman to the troubadour lover to warn him of his beloved's husbands impending return, is sung by a farmer to Nicolette.[162] This establishes her as the troubadour lover and Aucassin as her imprisoned lady love. Her disguise as a man is just a further expression of an already established character, one who is masculine regardless of the activity at hand. She is exploring the masculine aspect of her identity. This does not mean that she resolves the conflict of who she is versus how prescribed gender dictates she behave. It merely means that in the safety of jongleur disguise she can experiment with masculinity by pretending to be a man in a way that is inaccessible in

[162] *Aucassin,* 139-140, XV.

her everyday life. This resolves the contradictions that countless scholars have pointed out. For example, Gilbert explains that "one of the most striking things about Nicolette is that, whereas full of activity, she invariably represents herself as passive, as one who has things done to her, as object of and subject to actions."[163] In the situations she crafts, she positions herself as the waiting lady, such as at the end of the story, when she makes Aucassin come to her for their reunion. In an analysis of grammar, Kevin Brownlee notes that Nicolette repeatedly makes herself grammatically feminine, but the narrator uses the masculine pronoun for her twice.[164] The role reversal between Nicolette and Aucassin, as well as Nicolette's repeated vacillation between masculine and feminine need not be reconciled, however. We can instead accept that, just as many people today find their identities difficult to articulate, particularly in relation to binary oppositions, there is no resolution to Nicolette's gender or identity.

And it is precisely this inability to reduce Nicolette's gender and ethnic identity that requires her to choose a singular identity in order to marry Aucassin and live happily with him. Just as important as anointing herself by removing the blackening herb, Nicolette must take off her masculine garb. To reassert herself as a marriage prospect for Aucassin, Nicolette "dressed in garments of costly silk" and sat down "on a silken counterpane."[165] Here we may see a nod to eastern cultures and perhaps the Saracen identity that Nicolette has left behind; as Jane Burns argues, the silk material adorning

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[163] Gilbert, 222-223.

[164] Kevin Brownlee, "Discourse as *Proueces* in Aucassin et Nicolette," *Yale French Studies* 70, no. 70 (1986), https://doi.org/10.2307/2929854, 171-175.

[165] *Aucassin,* 170, XL, vv. 30-32, trans. Burgess.

many ladies of courtly literature points to yet another collapsed binary as the material goods of the east "become intrinsic markers of ostensibly western identities."[166] But of the utmost importance is the supremacy of the "ostensibly western" and entirely female identity that Nicolette ends up adopting without any hint of the other realities that lurk within her. Gilbert argues this is particularly important as regards Aucassin, who rebels against the older generation but believes in the value of gender and class hierarchy, and "if he were to become aware of her actions, then he could not value her as a woman."[167] Such a world view, reflective of the stereotypical *romans*, has no space for complex identities; Aucassin's world has no space for a multivalent Nicolette.

The jongleur disguise is not a statement of what Nicolette wishes she truly was nor is her removal of it a refusal of alternative identities. It is instead a disguise, a performance, a mode of externalizing internal dichotomies that do not lend themselves to neat answers. And it is to this layer that we add another level of complexity. Having considered the face blackening and the male clothing, we must consider the question of profession. As this section has been arguing, the jongleur, as an adaptable entertainer used to shifting between modes of performance and playing to audiences, is a perfect disguise for the exploration of identity. But with this disguise comes the stigma of what such a literal shiftiness means socially. Thus Fresne refuses to make money off her music. Nicolette, however, has no such qualms. She uses the viol to make her way

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[166] E. Jane Burns, *Courtly Love Undressed: Reading Through Clothes in Medieval French Culture* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7zw6zx,10-11.

[167] Gilbert, 223. Gilbert cites various moments in the text where Aucassin upholds traditional gender and class hierarchies, such as his assertion that women cannot love as much as men and his indignation when the herdsman seems not to recognize him.

throughout the country, presumably performing for money. Whereas Galeran, used to seeing Fresne perform music, recognizes Fresne, Nicolette's disguise and adoption of alternative identities is so complete that Aucassin does not recognize her. She is fully inhabiting the role of jongleur. This is confirmed by the small and tantalizing detail that when, in disguise, she promises Aucassin that she will retrieve Nicolette, he gives her 20 *livres*.[168] In this moment, all of the various aspects of Nicolette's identities collide: the exoticized and sexually available black male jongleur and the chaste, yet highly sexualized white enslaved former Saracen woman. By accepting the money, Nicolette is receiving payment to produce her self and body for Aucassin, and yet, in the story, Nicolette can do nothing other than to accept the money. The reader-listener recognizes the paradox Nicolette faces: She must either reveal herself to Aucassin in her unrecognizable alternative identities thus acknowledging them or she must accept the money that reinforces the identity that cannot coexist with what she must be in order to marry Aucassin.

As if in recognition of the impossibility of resolution, the text of the *romans* itself breaks down. Immediately after he gives her the money the text reads, "Ele se part de lui, et il pleure por le douçor de Nicolete"[169]: she departed from him, and he cried for the sweetness of Nicolette. Yet in the next moment the text states that when she saw him crying, Nicolette comforted him by saying that she would soon bring Nicolette to him.[170]

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[168] A monetary unit we might consider analogous to the pound.

[169] *Aucassin*, 169, XL, vv 18-19.

[170] *Aucassin*, 169, XL, vv.19-21.

Nicolette has both departed and remained. It is as though the white, courtly lady Nicolette has separated from the jongleur Nicolette, and as the former goes to restore her body to its recognizable form, the latter has remained to comfort Aucassin. The ideology of a *romans* cannot have the two identities coexist. There are too many fraught moments where what is appropriate for one identity, such as accepting money, is antithetical to the other. The text cannot sustain a coalescence of Nicolette's being, and, in a textual slip, she is divided. Yet this split itself gestures to the intertwined nature of Nicolette's irreconcilable identities. Jongleur Nicolette never tells Aucassin that Lady Nicolette has returned from Cartage. When "ele se part," the white Nicolette has returned, in the mind of Aucassin, to Cartage, leaving only the black Nicolette in Beaucaire. To resolve this and to maintain the form of a *romans*, Nicolette must be made whole again, but only in a singular form. She retreats to the home of her adoptive father, where she spends a full week. She washes, bathes, and then undoes her disguise in two pointed, separate process. First she takes a new herb, anoints herself, and becomes "just as beautiful as she had ever been at any time."[171] In a second discrete process, she dresses in the "garments of costly silk," re-attiring herself as a woman.

Once Nicolette has reverted to an uncomplicated, easily defined version of herself, the text moves quickly to its inevitable conclusion. The two kiss, but leave it at

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[171] *Aucassin*, 170, XL, v. 29-30, trans. Burgess. Though the text does not explicitly say she lightened her skin, the text calls the herb *esclaire*, perhaps playing on esclairer, meaning to lighten or make clear. Burgess also points out that it was used as a remedy for jaundice, making it an herb that fits both in the verb it evokes and in its ability to affect skin color. See Glyn Burgess, "Notes," in *The Pilgrimage of Charlemagne and Aucassin and Nicolette*, eds. and trans. Glyn S. Burgess and Anne Elizabeth Cobby, vol. 47, Garland Library of Medieval Literature (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988), 183, note on XL, 27.

that, remaining chaste, until they marry the next day. They spend many happy years together, with Aucassin presumably remaining ignorant of the actions Nicolette took to return to him. Nicolette, who does not speak after she comforts Aucassin at the moment of her identity split, is reduced to the silent, beautiful lady Aucassin desires and which the text demands. Nicolette's assimilation means the match is no longer problematic. While the modern reader may feel some uneasiness of dissatisfaction at this conclusion, it effectively assuages any textual anxieties about a formerly enslaved, Saracen princess marrying a count of Beaucaire.

Like Nicolette, Josiane, the heroine in *Boeve de Haumtone,* a romance from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, is of high birth but her class status is compromised by her Saracen heritage. Josiane is the daughter of a king of Egypt, and though she ultimately converts to Christianity to marry Boeve, she begins the tale as a Saracen, who believes in "Mahomet."[172] Unlike in the previous two stories, her noble birth is immediately known. Yet, there is no doubt that being a Saracen affects the way the hero, Boeve, perceives her. From the time he first arrives at the King of Egypt's court, Boeve establishes the stakes of Josiane's appearance and religion. He declares, "ke pur tut la tere ke est en paenie / ne pur ta file ov tut, ke taunt est colorie, / ne vodrai reneier Jhesu, le fiz Marie"[173]: "Not for all the land in pagan parts nor for your daughter with it, who is of

[172] *Boeve de Haumtone and Gui De Warewic: Two Anglo-Norman Romances,* trans. Judith Weiss, (Tempe, Ariz, 2008), 33. Henceforth *Boeve.* Similarly to Beston, Weiss does not use discrete line numbers, because she translates the text as prose.

[173] *Der Anglonormannische Boeve de Haumtone*, ed. Albert Stimming, Bibliotheca Normannica 7 (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1899), https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001636119, 17, vv. 400-403. Henceforth *Anglonormannische*

such complexion, would I agree to renounce Jesus, son of Mary." By his own pronouncement, Boeve has made clear that he values Josiane's complexion, which, as with Nicolette, is highlighted by repeated references to Josiane as "Josiane o le vis cler" or "le cler vis,"[174] and, according to the narrator, "no rose in the shade had a more lovely colouring" than Josiane.[175] Boeve also values her noble status, which would supply him with land, but neither of those make up for her Saracen heritage. Therefore, once Josiane is established as Boeve's love interest, the reader-listener knows she must convert and become the idealized courtly, Christian lady. But just as Nicolette's identity cannot be summarized in these binary oppositions, Josiane's identity refuses straightforward narratives. Thus even after her conversion to Christianity and her marriage to Boeve, she explores alternative identities through jongleur disguise, both as a means of survival and self-expression. And although she ultimately subsumes her non-binary identity to stabilize the social structure in the narrative, the duration of her time in disguise results in a small moment where she reverts, providing, perhaps, a modicum of hope to the modern reader.

The narrative of *Boeve de Hautome* is a complicated one, possibly owing to a change in author part way through the story.[176] This summary, therefore, will focus on

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[174] Literally, "Josiane characterised by the bright-face," or as it is more commonly translated, bright-faced Josiane. *Anglonormannische*, 55, v. 1371; 62, v. 1602; 94, v. 2689; 96, v. 2741; 96, v. 2752; 100, v. 2883; 111, v. 3255. Similarly, 19, v. 482, where she is described as the girl "ke avoit cler le vis" and 23, v. 612, where she is called "Josiane a cler vis." It is perhaps worth noting that Boeve's duplicitous mother is the only other lady described as having a "cler vis" 6, v. 83.

[175] *Boeve*, 32.

[176] *Boeve*, 3-4.

the characters and incidents most germane to the topic at hand. It begins with Boeve, whose father is a count and whose mother is the daughter of the king of Scotland. Boeve's mother plots to kill Boeve's father to replace him with another man. As part of her plot, she tries to murder Boeve. However, his faithful tutor, Sabaoth, saves him, leading his mother to sell Boeve to Saracen merchants. Through these merchants Boeve ends up at the court of King Hermine of Egypt, whose daughter is Josiane. Josiane falls in love with Boeve, but he refuses to marry her until she says she will convert to Christianity. Through a variety of circumstances, however, the two are separated. After seven years in a prison, Boeve escapes and finds Josiane, who has been married off but managed to stay chaste through magic. The two run away together to England, during which time Josiane is baptized. They also encounter various adventures en route, including one where Josiane is forcibly married to another count named Miles. Eventually, they are married by the king of England and Boeve's father's land is restored to him. After Boeve has a falling out with the king though, the two are banished. In exile, Josiane gives birth to twin sons, but is abducted by Saracen shortly thereafter. Sabaoth has a dream warning him that he must help Boeve, who has lost Josiane. Sabaoth manages to find Josiane, and it is at this point that Josiane disguises herself by blackening her face and dressing as a man. Sabaoth, however, falls ill, and for seven years Josiane supports both of them through singing. Eventually, Boeve finds Josiane, and the two live out their lives happy, though they never return to England.

As already stated, Josiane's identity as a Saracen is marked as a problem to be overcome from the beginning of the narrative. Like Nicolette, the fact that she is a

princess does not change her unsuitability as a marriage prospect for Boeve, and while the fact that the two reside in her father's kingdom should give her the upper hand, it is clear that Boeve holds the place of superiority. When Josiane first confesses her love for Boeve, he says it's utterly ridiculous that the daughter of a king would marry a lowly knight like him. But his rejection of her shows his implicit privilege. He does not deny her with the usual courtesies of a knight in a romance, but with brutal honesty, insulting the very idea. In response, Josiane yells at him saying, "you've refused me like a depraved peasant,"[177] suggesting she feels, regardless of his stated reasons, that he is treating her as an inferior. When she sends a messenger to ask Boeve to come speak with her, he refuses. It is only when she goes to him, begging forgiveness and promising to convert that Boeve agrees "willingly and with pleasure," and they kiss; his first acknowledgment that he loves her back.[178]

This scene also provides the first glimpse of Josiane's masculine nature. When he refuses her, she flies into a rage telling him he would "be better off mending ditches and rubbing down saddled horses with straw and running basely on foot like an errand-boy." She concludes by telling him, "Go back to your own land, base good-for-nothing that you clearly are; Mahomet who made us all, destroy you!"[179] Then, after he sends the messenger away, she refuses to let him ignore her. She decides, "since he won't come

[177] *Boeve*, 37.

[178] *Boeve*, 38.

[179] *Boeve*, 37.

talk to me, I shall go to him, no matter whom it offends."[180] She proceeds to enter his bedroom, where he is pretending to be asleep, with no sense that this would be either improper or unfeminine. These impulsive and head-strong tendencies continue throughout the story and include indications of great physical strength. In one instance, she holds a lion back from attacking Boeve. He tries to demand she release it, but she does not want to, insisting that he kill the other lion attacking him first. Boeve refuses to so saying, "if I were in England, my kingdom, and I boasted before my barons that I had killed two lions, you would come forward and swear by God that the truth was that you held one of them until I had killed the other." He then threatens to leave Josiane if she does not let the lion go.[181] Boeve's complaint here is twofold. As a sign of his honor and masculinity, he wants to defeat both lions and to allow his wife to hold one back while he killed the other would diminish that feat. But his other complaint suggests that he knows Josiane to be assertive to the point that she would undermine his masculinity. In doing so, she would be placing herself alongside him in his chivalrous deed, rendering herself a hero as well.

Josiane also shows herself capable of extreme violence, as when she is forced into a second, unwanted marriage. On the wedding night, her new husband, Miles, sits down by the bed and begins to disrobe. The narrator states, "he was in a great hurry to dishonour her." Yet Josiane's response is cavalier; she "saw him and sighed."[182] One

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[180] *Boeve*, 38.

[181] *Boeve*, 57-58.

[182] *Boeve*, 64.

might think this reaction signals a comedic moment. Josiane has been here before, and she knows magic that can protect her from unwanted sexual advances. When her "expensive silk girdle" is mentioned, it seems she will again resort to a magic chastity belt. But the text quickly turns as she makes the girdle into a noose, "as she knew how," indicating that the violence to come is part of her repertoire of skills. Before Miles can even enter his bed, "Josiane the beautiful took her girdle and threw it around Miles's neck, no doubt about it. The bed in which he slept was high and he sat on one side of it; the girl jumped on the other side, pulled him to her, and broke his neck."[183] The casual violence is shocking from a heroine of a *romans*, who are often passive and nearly always described as gentle and loving. Moreover, the detail of how she broke his neck suggests a measured and logical approach to this violence; Josiane uses an impromptu lever to help her hoist Miles to his death. Yet even with the pulley, the murder would take a great deal of strength. She does not strangle him, but breaks his neck, suggesting a sudden and powerful exertion of force. Even for a Bele Sarrasine, Josiane is particularly masculine, impetuous, and violent, and, at this point in the narrative, she has already been baptized, an event which does not elicit much comment from the narrator or characters.[184]

It is when Josiane finds herself, now a married, Christian woman, in the lands of enemy Saracens without a way to pass through undetected that she dons her jongleur disguise. It is Sabaoth who first suggests she dress as a man to escape, but it is Josiane

[183] *Boeve*, 64-65.

[184] She is baptized in a single line: "Josian la bele est pus baptisez," *Anglonormannische*, 72, v. 1955.

herself who buys an herb and dyes her body and her face.[185] This decision is highlighted by three mentions of "Josian o le cler vis" in the span of the preceding 100 lines, including twice in the span of 40 lines.[186] This is another moment where the effect of orality should be remembered. The effect of the repetition would be stronger when heard aloud, particularly as "o cler vis" ends the line, meaning "vis" creates the rhyme sound that will be repeated in the following line, creating extra emphasis on both the sounds of the words and the concept of her "cler vis" by association. This is contrasted by her dying her body and face, with the line again ending in "vis" to remind reader-listeners of the recently "cler vis" that has now been dyed. This constitutes the entirety of her disguise. Josiane does not intend to disguise herself as a jongleur or make money off her music. Instead, it is merely by chance that "one day [she] became pensive, and began to sing about Boeve. And lords came from distant lands, giving her horses and clothing, with which to buy what might be needed."[187] Through these profits Josiane is able to take "good care of Sabaoth the warrior for a full seven years and three months."[188]

For nearly a decade, Josiane with her face darkened and dressed as a man, earns her keep and Sabaoth's as a jongleur. Yet just as with Nicolette, this time in Josiane's life is hidden from the reader-listener. Despite the duration of time, there is no further information given, and the text turns instead to Boeve. Again, the *romans* must turn away

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[185] "Un herbe achata…Tent son cors e son vis," *Anglonormannische*, 97, vv. 2779-2780. Whereas Nicolette "anoints" her face, the verb used for Josiane does literally mean "to dye."

[186] *Anglonormannische*, 94, v. 2689; 96, vv. 2741 and 2752.

[187] *Boeve*, 77.

[188] *Boeve*, 77.

from the complexity of Josiane as she no longer fits into any familiar trope. There is no formula for dealing with such a character beyond the turning away. But the implications of seven years inhabiting a disguise cannot be ignored. As Marilyn Lawrence asks, "What, for instance, is the distinction between adopting minstrel identity and becoming a minstrel?"[189] At what point does Josiane stop pretending to be the man, with the dyed face performing for money and simply become him? With this in mind, it no longer matters that it was not her idea originally to don masculine clothing or sing to support herself and Sabaoth. She is living as this jongleur for longer than she lived with Boeve as his Christian wife at this point. And the identity seems to fit comfortably given Josiane's assertive and defiant nature. One can imagine that she would protect herself just as effectively from thieves as from unwanted sexual advances; it is not hard to envision Josiane in the jongleur lifestyle. Blackening her fact renders her unrecognizable, but as with Nicolette, cannot but be an exploration of the other identity she left behind.

We are not privy to the all the steps of Josiane's reversal of this identity back into her white feminine self as we are with Nicolette. But again the text is markedly convoluted surrounding the moment of transformation. Sabaoth and Boeve encounter each other accidentally after all these years of searching. Boeve then asks for news of Josiane and Sabaoth tells them, "Ches un prodome *ele* es herbergez"[190]: *She* is staying at the home of an esteemed man. At this point, there is no reason that Josiane should know that Sabaoth and Boeve have found each other. They met in the street and Josiane is back

[189] Lawrence, "Minstrel Disguise," 3.

[190] *Anglonormannische*, 103 v. 2996, emphasis mine.

at the home of this esteemed man. Yet, the text says, "A tant dementres s'est alé defroter / de memes cele herbe ke il out achaté"[191]: "Meanwhile [she] went to rub off that herb which he had bought."[192] This suggests either that Josiane was there or that she had already planned to rub off the herb, neither of which make sense in the context of the story. Again, there seems to be a suggestion that Josiane, like Nicolette, is both there and not there. In fact, the idea of Josiane "o le cler vis," is there but only in the mind of Boeve; she does not exist in the real world. But Boeve had made a promise, just over 100 lines earlier, that he would marry another maiden if "josian ne repeyre, o le vis cler, / en se set ans"[193]: if the bright-faced Josiane does not return in seven years. The maiden grants him an additional 4 months. Boeve needs bright-faced Josiane to return, because he is running out of time. Thus, for him, she has returned at the moment that Sabaoth says she is safely lodged with an esteemed man. He does not realize what Sabaoth learned in his dream that led him to help Boeve by seeking out Josiane: Boeve "ad perdeu Josian o le cler vis."[194] He has *lost* bright-faced Josiane in every sense. While Boeve imagines he has now found Josiane in every sense, in actuality, Josiane the jongleur with the dyed face must hurry to rub off the herb to return in time to meet the deadline. The two are split apart into the binary identities that the *romans* can comprehend. Josiane is found

[191] *Anglonormannische*, 103, vv. 2997-2998.

[192] *Boeve*, 80.

[193] *Anglonormannische*, 100, v. 2883.

[194] *Anglonormannische*, 96, v. 2742.

geographically, but she must return to the identity Boeve is seeking, the bright-faced Josiane he lost.

There is however, another gesture towards the deterioration of the binaries, evidenced by a breakdown of the text even as Josiane seeks to reinhabit the identity that will assure her Boeve's love. Sabaoth uses the feminine pronoun, *ele*, to refer to Josiane. But the only pronoun in the second sentence is a masculine pronoun, *il*, and the reader-listener is left to supply the pronoun for the first clause of the sentence. This is not only confusing in its ambiguity, but narratively as well. The text implies it is Josiane who buys the herb initially. After Sabaoth dresses her as a man, they both go to the market. And then an again unspecified subject buys the herb, but that same subject is the one who dyes Josiane's body and face. The intimacy of such an act, particularly the dyeing of the body, leads one to believe it is Josiane who purchased the herb. If this is the case, then the "il" in the second clause of the sentence where the herb is being removed refers to Josiane her/himself. The implied subject for the first part of the sentence is then the same. Josiane leaves to rub off the herb that he bought. We may interpret it as Sabaoth who rubs off the herb that he bought, but again the intimacy of such an act, especially given that *defroter* literally means to rub off, suggests it is not. Additionally, the act has to happen while Sabaoth is talking to Boeve, and while there is every reason to believe that Josiane's character can be metaphorically split between the two scenes, there is no indication that such would be the case of Sabaoth. The only logical conclusion is that the text genders Josiane male as she is removing the herb, echoing and yet adapting the undefined gender for the initial act of applying the herb. Whereas Josiane is androgynous in the moment of

application, when she has newly been dressed as a man, when she removes it, she has been a man for seven years. The text itself is no longer clear on how to gender such a character.

But the norm is quickly reasserted once the dye is removed and Boeve and Josiane are physically reunited. Boeve presents "la dame," referring to Josiane, to the other woman who wished to marry him. The woman immediately sees Josiane "bele e colurez," reasserting the value of Josiane's recuperated complexion.[195] The woman realizes this is Boeve's wife and gives up her suit of him, accepting marriage to his close companion Sabaoth's son Terri, instead. Josiane is silent throughout this exchange. Indeed despite the fact that there are nearly 1,000 more lines of the story, Josiane speaks only four more times.[196] This is reminiscent of the silencing of Nicolette at the end of *Aucassin et Nicolette*, which indicated an upholding of the social structure at the cost of Nicolette's complete identity. But in regard to Josiane, there is perhaps more room for hope. Though Josiane's direct speech is limited for the remainder of the story, hints of the identity she discarded appear. At Terri's wedding, for example, after dinner the jongleurs sing, and then "Josiane tuned her fiddle and played three songs for the love of Terri."[197] Josiane, who was not portrayed as singing before her seven years with Sabaoth, now sings publicly at a wedding where "you can be sure that there was a great crowd."[198]

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[195] *Anglonormannische*, 103, v. 3001.

[196] Once to confirm her father and Boeve have reconciled, Weiss, 82. Once to warn the men that Saracens are coming, *Boeve*, 89. And twice while on her deathbed: to tell Boeve she will not live long and then to call him to her before she dies, *Boeve*, 94-95.

[197] *Boeve*, 81.

[198] *Boeve*, 81.

Singing in front of what is specified as a large crowd, after the minstrels, creating a connection between their performance and Josiane's, clearly calls back to her time as a jongleur. But the ability to play the *viele* is new as well; her initial foray into music only describes her as singing. Here, the reader-listener sees her engaging in multiple forms of musical entertainment in a common setting for jongleur performance, a wedding.

But that is not the only musical skill Josiane displays. In another scene shortly after the wedding, Josiane "entered her own chamber, took out a *rote* … and composed three lays before ceasing."[199] Here is a second musical instrument at which Josiane appears to be adept. Moreover, she composes three lays herself, showing not only her talent in playing music but creating original compositions. The proximity of the scenes call attention to what each one highlights. In one, Josiane sings and plays viele for a crowd at a wedding. For a noble woman this is unusual, but for someone who spent seven years as a male jongleur earning her living, it is in keeping with their character. In the other scene, Josiane is in "sa chambre," her own chamber, in private. Here, she plays a different instrument and composes lays. This is perfectly acceptable for a noble lady and would have reminded reader-listeners of the well-known trobairitz. It was well within the bounds of propriety for Josiane to enjoy such pursuits in her own quarters. These two scenes of musical performance are the only hint we have that Josiane perhaps has not entirely given up her complex identity. After seven years spent existing as a male jongleur, Josiane is unable to completely deny the alternative parts of her identity, even if they are not in keeping with her current status. Given her limited actions in the remainder

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[199] *Boeve*, 82, italics hers.

of the story, the resonance of this glimmer of hope may have been small for a medieval audience. But for the modern reader, it gestures at the recognition of complexity, of identity not easily defined, and perhaps at the reality facing many medieval people: the difference between male/female, upper class/lower class, Saracen/Christian were not as stable as many pretended.

What Josiane and Nicolette demonstrate is that jongleur disguise is a space that permits fluidity and non-binary identities. It is not that either character wanted to be a man, but rather that they had in their nature attributes and feelings that were at odds with being a woman. This masculinity could not be easily contained in the casings of a good, Christian woman. Particularly since both women belonged to exoticized religious and ethnic groups. Part of their identities were good, Christian women, but part of their identities still contained their Saracen pasts and heritages and their masculine impulses. Their identities cannot be contained in a generic, in the literal and metaphorical sense, courtly lady. They were able to explore these identities only by adopting the disguise of the ultimate chameleon, the performer of many talents who adapts to each new situation and who already inhabits an ill-defined space in society: the jongleur. But these identities are culturally at odds with the narrative arc of the *romans* and its ideological construction of the perfect courtly world. The texts themselves break down when confronted by the messy, realistic complexity of the two women. Nicolette and Josiane have to be the generic courtly lady to marry the men they love, and so their more complex identities are subsumed under the good, white, Christian woman identity.

As Menocal argues, these texts cannot be read without reference to their historical moment, a time when people were increasingly unable to easily define Self and Other. Menocal takes what Eugene Vance refers to as the "negotiability of [*Aucassin et Nicolette's*] oppositions,"[200] and suggests that very negotiability points to "the impossibility (or at least undesirability of) radical rupture."[201] For Menocal this means that *Aucassin and Nicolette*, through the character of Nicolette, shows the assimilation over time of the Saracen Other through repeated economic and cultural exchange. But, as I have shown, Nicolette and Josiane do not merely emblematize the complexity of assimilation, mirroring a real world shift that people in medieval France would have recognized. They also show the deep anxiety many real people had about assimilation and what it means for identity. There is a need to resolve the complexity and reassert a simplified world, where everyone is sure of their place. The *romans* genre is designed to uphold these idealized superstructures that insist on boundaries between people and binaries that are instantly legible, and thus these stories work to assuage anxieties by delivering the happy ending only once Nicolette and Josiane have been reduced to singular identities. The messiness of reality found its counterpoint in the neat conclusions of the *romans*.

Battle of the Genders in the Fabliaux

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[200] Eugene Vance, "Aucassin et Nicolette as a Medieval Comedy of Signification and Exchange," in *The Nature of Medieval Narrative*, ed. Minette Grunmann-Goudet and Robin F. Jones (Lexington: French Forum, 1980), 57–76, as qtd in Menocal, "Sign of the Times," 508.

[201] Menocal, "Sign of the Times," 508.

Despite the preponderance of sex in the fabliaux, women who explicitly sell sex are somewhat rare. There are no fabliaux that center a woman who boldly proclaims like the *foteor* that she is a fucker for hire. The closest one comes to a story that centers a woman who sells sex is in the tale "Boivin de Provins." This story, extant in two manuscripts that seem to stem from a common source, features a character named Mabel, who owns an *ostel* or *maison* (inn or house) on *la rue aus putains*, the street of the whores.[202] A *lechierre* named Boivin, perhaps a jongleur's sobriquet as it means wine-drinker (*boi vin*), comes to town one apparently set on enjoying himself.[203] He sits on a stoop outside the house owned by Mabel and loudly counts money, although he has far less money than what he is pretending to count. Two pimps (*houlier)* from the house overhear him and call Mabel over. Boivin meanwhile is saying he would give all his money to his long-lost niece if only he could find her. Mabel goes out and pretends to be his niece, then takes him in to the house, giving him a sumptuous feast. She then offers for him to have sex with a woman named Ysane. Ysane is meant to cut the strings of Boivin's purse while they are having sex, but Boivin cuts off his purse first, hiding it by his chest. When he finishes having sex with Ysane, he cries out that his purse has been cut. Mabel throws him out thinking she was victorious. Upon finding out that Ysane does

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[202] *NCRF*, t. 2, 84, vv. 20-21 and 24-25. Manuscript A generally contains fewer errors and repairs, while developing the story more fully, though Noomen and Boogaard argue that at times the lessons or morals of P are more satisfying. I follow the edition by Raymond Eichmann and John DuVal of manuscript A, but with close reference to manuscript P for any salient differences. The stories diverge the most on the ending, which is made up of the same content but expressed differently. Eichmann and DuVal print both endings successively to demonstrate. The texts are anonymous and generally maintain the two-case declension system. *The French Fabliau: B.N. Ms. 837*, eds. Raymond Eichmann and John DuVal, v. 1, Garland Library of Medieval Literature v. 16-17 (New York: Garland Pub., 1984).
[203] *NCRF*, t. 2, 369. Noomen and Boogard spend a long time writing about the name and when it appears in the two stories and he thinks that P or perhaps both manuscripts come from a longer tradition of stories about this character

not have the purse, she accuses Ysane of lying and then beats her up. A melee between Mabel, Ysane, and the pimps ensue, while Boivin goes to the town magistrate and recounts the entire story. The magistrate finds the story hilarious and in one version he gives Boivin money, in the other he feeds and takes care of him for several days.

Mabel, like the *foteor,* is clearly comfortable within the confines of the fabliau genre. She is willing to lie and break rules to get what she wants. She is quick to devise a plan and a master manipulator. But in this tale she is up against an equally cunning sex worker in Boivin, and she does not like to lose. She shows that in addition to being deceitful and manipulative throughout the story, she will resort to violence if she thinks others are deceiving her. She is the pinnacle of an immoral and dangerous woman. But the reader-listener is left feeling that they have not seen the full extent of Mabel's capacity for immorality, because she is ultimately bested by Boivin. This tale does not have a character with *avoir* who is duped, just two characters with *savoir* trying to best one another. To provide an example of a story where Mabel might have succeeded as the character with the most *savoir*, I examine the story of "Auberee," where the titular older woman serves as a go-between for a man and the woman he loves, who is married to another man. Her plan, while complex and ingenious, ultimately relies on the young man raping the woman he allegedly loves. Like Mabel, Auberee, represents the worst of women, who are dangers not only to other women but, more importantly, to the hierarchy of society. One could see how, in a story like Auberee's, where the other characters are not also tricksters, Mabel would prove equally successful. Unfortunately for Mabel, however, she is up against Boivin, and he proves more akin to the *foteor* than Mabel in

his ability to remain calm and control the narrative of the story and in the way that he puts Mabel in her place and restores order through trickery.

As Raymond Eichmann and John DuVal write in their notes to “Boivin de Provins,” the first lines introducing Boivin and Mabel, “warn us that two master trickers will be confronting each other.”[204] Boivin is described as “molt de barat sot,” or knowing much about deception, and Mabel is introduced as “plus savoit barat et guile / que fame nule qui i fust”: knowing more about deception and guile than any woman who ever was.[205] With the opponents established, the story begins as Boivin takes twelve *deniers* and proceeds to count them over and over again pretending to do large sums aloud and recounting his success at the recent fair. When the pimps hear this and call Mabel over, they want her to immediately call Boivin in so they can take the money, presumably by force. But Mabel does not need to use force to dupe others, and she is supremely confident in this. She tells them to leave him alone and let him keep counting his money, “because he won’t be able to escape me.”[206] She goes even further, saying they will get all the money and the pimps can “gouge [her] eyes out,” if he has a single cent left when she is done with him.[207] Her confidence is reminiscent of the confidence of the foteor. But the narrator warns, “But the game will be different / which she does not know, it seems to me.”[208]

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[204] John DuVal and Raymond Eichmann, “Textual and Translation Notes,” in *The French Fabliau: B.N. Ms. 837*, ed. Raymond Eichmann and John DuVal, Garland Library of Medieval Literature v. 16-17 (New York: Garland Pub., 1984), 226.
[205] *French Fabliaux*, 62, vv. 12 and 22-23.
[206] “Qu’il ne me peut eschaper mes,” *French Fabliaux*, 64, vv. 92.
[207] “Les iex me crevez,” *French Fabliaux*, 66, vv. 94-95.
[208] “mes autrement ira li geus / qu’ele ne cuide, ce me samble,” *French Fabliaux*, 66, vv. 96-97.

Since the reader-listener knows Boivin is pretending to be a dupe, it is easy to forget just how cruel Mabel's plan actually is. If we view it from Mabel's perspective, she hears a peasant outside her window counting his recently earned money. He complains that he has already been used by a neighbor, who helped him sell his oxen and took a larger cut of his earnings than Boivin thought was fair. He struggles with adding all of the sums of money and wishes he had beans or peas to help him count. He then goes on to lament that he does not know where his closest surviving relative, a long-lost niece, is. His wife and three children are dead and "his heart will never have joy" until he finds his niece, at which point he would leave all his possessions to her and become a monk.[209] He then devolves into weeping. Were all of this information true, Mabel has chosen a victim who is in a sad state indeed. Rather than feeling sympathy, however, she only sees an opportunity to take advantage of him.

Mabel emerges from the house to sit beside the weeping peasant and asks him his name. He replies that it is Fouchier de la Brouce and tells her that she looks just like his niece, at which point she feigns fainting. When she gets up, she acts out an overjoyed reunion, kissing and embracing him such that she "never seemed to be satisfied."[210] He confirms that she is his niece and says that he's been very worried about her and hugs her tightly and kisses her. During their joyful celebrations, the pimps come out and join them. This represents one of several moments where Mabel might feasibly end her ruse and steal from Boivin without deceiving him further. She could do as the pimps initially

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[209] "Mon cuer n'avrai joie," *French Fabliaux*, 66, vv. 117-123.
[210] "Que ja n'en samble ester saoule," *French Fabliaux*, 66, v. 135.

suggested and draw him inside so they could take his money from him. This would be mercenary, but perhaps less cruel than stringing along what she believes to be a grieving peasant. The reader-listener may assume that she does not do so because she plans to steal from him without him knowing it was her who stole. But, in the end, Mabel's plan leaves no doubt that it is she who does the stealing. Her only reason for the extended deceit then seems to be that she enjoys playing this cruel game.

She tells the pimps that he is her uncle, and, following her lead, they put themselves at his disposal. They lead him into the house, and Mabel tells them buy geese and capons. When they say they don't have the money for such extravagance, Mabel tells them to pawn blankets and coats or do whatever they have to, because the peasant will ultimately pay for the feast. The pimps run off to do so, and when they return they prepare the meal. Meanwhile, Mabel asks about Boivin's wife and cousins, who, as far as she knows, are tragically all dead. He tells her of their deaths and says his grief almost killed him as well, but now she will provide him comfort. Mabel not only pretends to be grief-stricken as well, but claims to have seen "this thing," presumably their deaths or knowledge of their deaths, in her sleep last night. Again, the reader-listener is truck by Mabel's desire to indulge in the most devastating details of this peasant's story. She not only asks after the family members she already believes are dead, which may be seen as a necessary nicety, but fakes a deep connection with them such that she dreamed of their deaths.

When the meal is ready, Boivin and Mabel eat and drink their fill. Indeed, the inhabitants of the house are trying to get Boivin drunk to make him an easier target.

During the meal, Boivin reaches into his cloak to bring out money to pay for the meal. Upon first reading-hearing the story, one might assume this was Mabel's plan all along. She would wine and dine him and then price-gouge him. It is yet another moment, where Mabel might reasonably take her trickery in a different direction, one that seems somewhat less heartless. But she refuses to accept the money, in a show of her hospitality and love her uncle. Yet, while she believes her refusal of the money is a clever moment that deepens her deception, it is Boivin who proves slyer. To offer the money in the first place, he either had to be ready to lose a large chunk of the twelve deniers he has, or he expected her to refuse the money in order to draw out her deception. Given that he is a master trickster, one could reasonably assume it to be the latter.

Finally, Mabel moves to the last part of her plan and asks Boivin if he has been with a woman since his wife died. He says it has been seven years since he has slept with a woman and he has no desire for it. Then Mabel offers up Ysane to Boivin, saying that she has "greatly sinned," because she "tricked" Ysane's parents, presumably by taking Ysane away under false pretenses. She then says that just by keeping Ysane a virgin, she could turn a substantial profit, implying that she would sell Ysane's virginity to the highest bidder. While the reader-listener is well aware that Ysane is not a virgin, this scenario does not seem out of Mabel's capabilities and capacity for wrongdoing. To this point, she has been deceitful and cruel, but claiming that she has deceived a girl's parents in order to profit off of her virginity is a new level of immorality. It echoes the concerns of theologians seen in Chapter Two about old women leading or tricking younger women into immoral lives. In this way, the uncontrolled greed and immorality of the bawd

regenerates itself by producing new sex workers; it is a reproduction that is antithetical to licit, marital reproduction. Ysane, as though to demonstrate the infectious nature of Mabel's wickedness, goes beyond merely submitting to Boivin. She instead "earnestly prayed to Sir Fouchier, in God's name, not to hurt her."[211] The reader-listener knows Ysane's entreaty is a mere mockery of what a scared young girl might actually say, and it seems to show how Ysane could in the future become as cruel as Mabel herself.

But of course Boivin is not fooled by any of this. He has already cut his purse off and hidden it by his chest. He proceeds to have sex with Ysane as she searches for the purse. While the sexual encounter might not elicit much reaction in most fabliaux, it is worth noting that Boivin does not heed Ysane's plea at all. Instead, while she searches his body for the purse, he "puts [his penis] in her cunt up to his balls, / then beats and thrashes her ass / so that, it seems to me, he fucked her."[212] One assumes Boivin knows he is in a brothel and that Ysane is not a virgin, but this perhaps hints at Boivin's own capacity for cruelty. The text does not specify Ysane's reaction through any of this, and merely concludes the scene with Boivin pulling up his britches.

At this point, Boivin "sees" that his purse strings are cut and yells at Ysane for stealing from him. Mabel runs in, believing Ysane to have the purse, and yells at Boivin to get out. When he asks for his purse back she tells him she'll give him "the noose to hang himself," and threatens to get a stick if he doesn't get out.[213] She then takes a cane in her two hands, and Boivin flees. Then Mabel asks Ysane to give her the purse, but

[211] "Et molt priar a dant Fouchier / pour Dieu que il ne la bleçast," *French Fabliaux*, 72, vv. 270-271.
[212] *French Fabliaux*, 72, vv. 279-281.
[213] "Je vous baudrai la hart a pendre!" *French Fabliaux*, 72, v. 294.

Ysane says she does not have it. Mabel, not believing her, threatens Ysane saying, "I am about to break all your teeth, you old whore."[214] When Ysane denies having the purse again, Mabel begins to beat her. She grabs her hair and throws her to the floor (*la terre l'abat*), beats her with her feet and fists (*aus piez et aus poins la debat*) to the point that Ysane begins to defecate and flatulate.[215] Ysane says she will try to find it if Mabel lets her go, and so Mabel does. Mabel turns over the bed looking for the purse. Ysane again swears she has never seen the purse, and if she's lying Mabel can kill her. Mabel then says, "By God, whore, you'll die," and grabs her hair and her clothes to resume beating her.[216] Ysane calls for help, which makes one of the pimps, who seems to be Ysane's lover, come running to help. The other pimp comes in to defend Mabel, and from there the scene devolves into a melee that merchants gather around to watch. The violence of the brawl, "which was very rough," leaves them all bloody and battered, and leaves the reader-listener with no doubt that Mabel and her cohorts represent the most brutish, cruel, and immoral dregs of society.[217]

Once the reader-listener knows that Boivin will dupe Mabel, the hints throughout the fabliau are clear. There is of course the narrator's line suggesting the story will end differently than Mabel suggests, in which the narrator seems to revel in presaging her lose to Boivin. But there is also the qualification that Mabel knows more about deception than *any woman* that ever was, suggesting she can be beaten by a man. Moreover, Boivin

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[214] "Par un poi que je ne te brise, pute orde viex, toutes les danz," *French Fabliaux*, 74, vv. 310-311.
[215] It is of note here that, instead of causing the comical flatulence and defecation, manuscript P says that Mabel beat Ysane almost to death. "si l'a tant frapee et batue, par un petit qu'el(le) ne la tue," *French Fabliaux*, 76 vv. 8-9.
[216] "Par Dieu, pute, tu i morras!" *French Fabliaux*, 74, v. 335.
[217] "Que molt i ot dure meslee," *French Fabliaux*, 76, vv. 364.

seems to have prepared in advance for his encounter with Mabel. The text specifies that he grows his beard out for a month and carries a stick in his hand in order to look more like a peasant. He specifically buys "a large purse," suggesting it is meant to be easily spotted and stolen from.[218] He then goes straight to *rue aus putains* and sits in front of Mabel's house and counts his money while lamenting the loss of his niece, whose name he says is Mabel.[219] He apparently knows this is Mabel's house and is setting a trap she cannot resist. He even seems to be mocking her with the name he gives: Fouchier de la Brouce. While La Brosse is a nearby town, it might also be translated to mean "to dig about in the undergrowth." Manuscript P suggests "Bource," which translates to "purse."[220] The former certainly evokes the image of a lecherous man looking under a woman's skirt. While the latter could also suggest that it seems most effect as a veiled dare to Mabel to try to rob him. Either way, it is clear from the beginning that Boivin is in command of the narrative and is able to joke with the reader-listener over the heads of the other characters.

Before turning to the import of Boivin's victory over Mabel, a brief examination of another dangerous woman, who facilitates sexual liaisons, proves instructive. The fabliau "Auberee" has a complex plot, not least due to the machinations of the titular character. Simplified to the greatest extent possible, it tells the story of a young man who loves a woman that his father will not let him marry. The young woman marries another man, and the first young man turns to Auberee, the woman's neighbor, for help. She

[218] "Une borse grant acheta," *French Fabliaux*, 62, v. 17.
[219] *French Fabliaux*, 66, v. 112, for the name.
[220] *NRCF*, t. 2, 87, v. 103.

takes his surcoat, hides it in the woman's house, and then, when the woman's husband finds it and is outraged, Auberee gives the woman refuge in her own home. She then invites the young man to her house and encourages him to rape the young woman, which he does, and in doing so, convinces the woman to be his lover. The next morning the Auberee takes the woman to a church and has her lie down among many candles and stay there until she returns. Auberee returns with the woman's husband, saying that the woman has been here all night lost in prayer, because her husband is upset with her. The husband, seeing his wife on the floor of the church, believes Auberee and takes the wife home, no longer angry at her. Then Auberee tells the husband she has lost an expensive surcoat she was supposed to mend, and she believes it may have been left at his house. The husband now believes that the surcoat was there by accident, clearing his wife of all wrongdoing. The fabliau concludes by saying that Auberee is paid for her work and all three other characters are happier for her intervention.

"Auberee" suggests possibilities of an alternative narrative for Mabel. While the two characters are different, one can imagine that if Mabel had not encountered Boivin, she, too, would find success with equally convoluted schemes. Furthermore, while Auberee is not explicitly called a bawd, the text says, "there was no wife so well locked up that she could not draw her away with a string."[221] The man also offers to pay Auberee to facilitate his liaison with the young woman. Though he may not intend to do so, he is essentially asking Auberee to play the role of procurer. Auberee enthusiastically, and with the same confidence as the other sex worker characters, replies "That fool may

[221] I again follow Dubin's edition of the text. *The Fabliaux,* 282, vv. 114-115.

guard her well," but soon the man will "see her between your body and the ground." Auberee immediately devises a plan and goes to the woman's house. Like Mabel, she pretends to have had a close relationship with a now deceased person, this time the first wife of the young woman's husband. She then asks if the husband is treating her well, and while the wife does not directly answer, she leads Auberee into the bedroom, showing her dresses and a large, luxurious bed with quilts. It seems clear that this woman lives a decent life, or at least the text offers no reason for her to be unhappy with her husband.

Yet Auberee has no problem disturbing her domestic bliss by leaving the surcoat under the quilt, knowing it will result in the husband fighting with his wife. Adding to the reader-listener's sense of injustice is the kindness of the wife to Auberee. She supplies Auberee with a jug of win, a loaf of bread, a portion of bacon, and a generous number of peas. Auberee seemingly feels no remorse as she takes the food and leaves. When the husband returns and finds the surcoat, the idea of his wife and her lover haunt him all night. The next morning he throws his wife out onto the street, while she has no idea what she has done to receive such treatment. It is at this point that Auberee commits her most heinous act. She tells the woman not to go home to her father who will surely yell at her, assuming she's been unfaithful and deserves her husband's ire. Instead she offers to take the woman to her house, going so far as to say the woman showed foresight in giving her the wine, peas, bread, and meat, because now Auberee can "give back double the reward and double the service."[222] She takes the woman back to a room where, "not a

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[222] "Jel te rendre a double pois / le guerredon & le servise," *The Fabliaux,* 294, vv. 300-301.

soul will know" she's there.[223] Much as with Mabel, the particular cruelty of Auberee saying she will pay the woman back double for her kindness while knowing she is setting her up to be assaulted feels exceptionally evil.

Auberee, like Mabel, seems to feel no guilt. When she retrieves the man and brings him to her house, he expresses his concern that the woman will start screaming. Auberee tells him, "Go get in bed and if she fights against you and becomes upset and yells, you yell twice as loud, lift her clothes and enter her. Immediately, as she feels you, things will be different. Then she will be silent, and you will be able to do as you please."[224] The man goes in and proceeds to lie next to the woman, when she threatens to scream, he tells her it will only bring them both shame. Seeing no other option, she gives in to him to save her reputation. Though, in a not uncommon trope, the woman ends up enjoying sex with the young man, the modern reader-listener is left feeling as though a horrible deed was just enacted. While it is not so clear that medieval people would have the same reaction, the context matters. A man pressuring and coercing a woman into sex may not have been much cause for alarm. But a married woman who has been all but kidnapped by an older woman and then left to be raped by another man would have been seen as immoral. The issue is not so much one of the woman not consenting, but of her husband being cuckolded. As a wife, the woman should be under the purview and control of her husband, and the household unit's stability and honor, to an extent, depends on the husband's ability to retain control over the household, including the wife. By subjecting

[223] "En une chanbre a recelee, / que ja ame ne t'i savra," *The Fabliaux,* 294, v. 306-307.
[224] "Va, si te couche, / & se point vers toi se corouche / & ele crie, & tu .ii. tans / lieve la robe, si entre ens. / Si tost come el te sentira / autrement la besoigne ira. / Meintenant la verras tesir, / s'en porras fere ton plesir," *The Fabliaux,* 296, vv. 361-368.

this woman to assault by another man, Auberee is undermining the authority of the patriarchal husband. Just like the *foteor*, she is disrupting the hierarchy even though, by ignoring the wishes of the woman, she is clearly not dismantling it.

This emblematizes the concern of women beyond the control of men. It is not just the usurping of the husband's rights. It is also Auberee, a deceitful woman trickster, a glorified bawd, who has a reputation for leading wives astray. Much as Ysane seems to represent a future iteration of Mabel, the young woman, while initially opposed, comes around to adultery. Auberee, like Mabel, creates chaos that reproduces itself through corrupting young women. Thus, the fabliaux have more in common with theological concerns about sex work than it may initially seem. Both genres perceive and express the dangers of older women sex workers and their role in disrupting societal hierarchies by facilitating extramarital sex, which can turn initially faithful wives into nascent *meretrices*. But whereas the theologians express anxiety and denounce such women, authors of the fabliaux take a different tack based on the story. Auberee succeeds, and the text states that all three characters are better for it, but Mabel is bested at her own game.

It is this danger of duplicitous women that makes Boivin's defeat of Mabel so important. He humbles Mabel like the *foteor* humbled Marjorie and her maid. But he does not only put Mabel in her place through his trickery. His final act, to tell the magistrate the whole story, symbolizes the ultimate reassertion of the hierarchy. The magistrate, upon hearing all the details, finds the story funny and wonderful, and according to Manuscript A, made Boivin tell the story several times to his friends and his relatives. The magistrate then hosts Boivin for three days and pays him ten *sous*.

Manuscript P relates much the same details, but the magistrate does not have Boivin repeat the story for others. Instead the manuscript details Mabel's humiliation, saying that she was made fun of throughout Provins and would have preferred to be in Cologne than have had these events happen to her.

One can only imagine that if Mabel was indeed a successful trickster before Boivin arrived then the whole town of Provins was rejoicing at her defeat, particularly since it seems only a trickster of the caliber of Boivin, or perhaps the *foteor,* could trick deceive Mabel. As seen in the story of Auberee, left with other characters, characters who are defined by their *avoir* rather than *savoir,* these immoral women will win out. A master trickster can only be duped by another master trickster, and a woman who sells sex will seemingly only be duped by a man who sells performance. Boivin's victory is dually defined by both his gender and the type of sex work in which he engages. He is a *lechierre* and a talented one, since the text states that he made a name for himself at the Provins fair.[225] And his ability to dupe Mabel seems to stem from a mixture of cleverness and convincing performance. But both emphasize that no woman could have tricked Mabel. Manuscript P even suggests that Mabel is humiliated precisely because "she believed she knew (*savoir*) more about cheating and deceiving men, through deception and through betrayal than any woman or any man."[226] This manuscript thus ends on Mabel's shortcoming as merely the trickiest of women rather than the trickiest of people and emphasizes her hubris in believing she was the latter rather than the former.

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[225] *French Fabliaux,* 62, vv. 3-5.

[226] "Pour ce qu'el(le) cuidoit plus savoir / d'omme trichier et decevoir / par barat et par traison / que nulle fame ne nulz hon," *The Fabliaux,* 78 vv. 58-59.

Conclusion

By bringing attention to the nuances of gender and type of sex work, "Boivin de Provins" brings together several of the major conclusions we can draw by viewing these texts in a group context. They clearly demonstrate a hierarchy of sex work and morality in the literature. Textually, we only see this in "Boivin de Provins," but the types of literature in which the different types of sex work appear suggest that this hierarchy exists extratextually. Jongleurs, while they were sex workers, did not have the same degree of stigma as individuals who sold sex. They can be represented in romance, a genre that seeks to hold up ideals of what court and court participants should act like. Their actual presence at courts is also attested to in later archival records.[227] While there does seem to be an imbalance in the ability of the romance genre to sustain representation of jongleurs across genders, jongleurs of both genders can be found and studied. This representation comes despite the fact that the jongleurs, of both genders, arouse societal anxieties about genderfluidity and its consequences.

Individuals who sell sex, however, are only rarely alluded to in the romance, used as an example against which noble women can be juxtaposed. Baldwin notes that "courtly and aristocratic literature is remarkable for the absence of women clearly

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[227] See for example the household account of Louis VIII of France, which includes payments of twenty *sous* in February 1213 to an *istrio* named Tornebeffe and ten *livres* to "Gace Brulez." Robert Fawtier, "Un fragment du compte de l'hotel du prince Louis de France pour le terme de la Purification 1213," *Le moyen âge*, 3ème série, 4 (1933), 243, nos. 67, 77, and "Thibaut de Champagne et Gace Brule," *Romania* 59 (1933), 83-92, as cited in John W. Baldwin, "The Image of the Jongleur in Northern France Around 1200," *Speculum* 72, no. 3 (1997): 635–63, https://doi.org/10.2307/3040757. For a more thorough discussion of minstrels at royal courts, but one which focuses on England in the early fourteenth century see Constance Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum Multitudo: Minstrels at a Royal Feast* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1978).

identifiable as prostitutes"[228]; this is because they *cannot* appear in the romance genre given its conventions. Instead they appear in fabliaux, where they are often the most savvy and capable characters. They are still shown as deceptive and immoral, but those qualities allow them to thrive in the fabliaux in a way other characters do not. Indeed, they must be characterized as evil and deceitful to succeed in their endeavors. Ironically, this inversion of the norm allows men who sell sex to provide a social service by satisfying the sexual desires of women or otherwise putting them in their place. Women who sell sex, who are dangerous but provide a social service in the real world, are instead merely dangerous in the fabliaux. They may provide an outlet for men's lust, but most of the individuals selling sex are actually bawds selling other women. By supplying women to the sexual use of men, these older sex workers are reproducing themselves in younger women, adding to the number of immoral and deceptive sex workers.

Finally, when the two groups meet in the fabliaux, the man who sells performance can be seen to overcome the trickery of the woman who sells sex. In doing so, Boivin not only humbles Mabel, but reasserts hierarchy and, in the end, profits off that hierarchy through the magistrate. Though a single fabliaux seems a slender thread upon which to rest an argument, this dynamic will play out through centuries of archival evidence in Chapter Four.

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[228] Baldwin, *Language of Sex*, 79.

Chapter Four: Sex (Work) in the City: Social Mobility, Sex Work, and Gender in Medieval Toulouse

Figure 4.1: Map of medieval Toulouse by John Mundy. This map appears in the introduction of all of Mundy's books on Toulouse, though it is mislabeled in the posthumously published Studies in the Ecclesiastical and Social History of Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars. *This image specifically was taken from Mundy's* Men and Women at Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars *and is roughly oriented on a north-south axis. I have added the transparent square to identify the location being discussed. The key explaining the numbered locations, also made by Mundy, appears on the following two pages.*

1 Lascrosses Gate
2 Arnaud-Bernard Gate
3 Saint-Julien church in the parish of Saint-Sernin
4 The Bazacle, site of the famous mills, a small castle and probably the head of the Bazacle Bridge
5 Saint-Sernin, the basilica of the canons-regular and a parish church
6 Pousonville Gate
7 Saint-Pierre-des-Cuisines, a parish church and priory of the Benedictines of Saint-Pierre of Moissac
8 Matabiau Gate
9 The Franciscans
10 The Taur, a parish under the patronage of Saint-Sernin
11 Saint-Nicholas, a parish under the patronage of the Daurade
12 The Dominicans
13 The Portaria, having, to its east a block away, the "Palatium" or Town Hall (the later Capitole), and, on its west, the church of Saint-Quentin under the patronage of Saint-Sernin. The Portaria was named after a Roman gate that stood in this place during the middle ages. The gate was part of a dismantled wall that divided the City from the Bourg called the Saracen Wall, remnants of which may be seen in Saguet.
14 The New or Daurade Bridge constructed in the twelfth century
15 The Bourguet-Nau
16 Saint-Pierre-Saint-Martin in the parish of the Daurade
17 The Villeneuve Gate in the quarter of the same name in the Bourg
18 The Daurade, a parish church, monastery and priory of the Benedictines of Saint-Pierre of Moissac
19 Saint-Roman, a church in the parish of Saint-Étienne, given to the Dominicans in 1216
20 The Montardy Square
21 The Old Bridge
22 The square and market of La Pierre and the church of Saint-Pierre-Saint-Géraud in the parish of Saint-Étienne
23 The square and market of Montaygon and the church of Saint-Georges in the parish of Saint-Étienne

24 The Neuve Gate
25 The Dalbade parish church under the patronage of the Daurade
26 The street of Joutx-Aigues on which the synagogue was located
27 The church of Saint-Victor in the parish of Saint-Étienne and the square called Rouaix
28 The Baragnon Cross
29 The Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem and church of Saint-Remy (Remésy)
30 The cathedral and parish church of Saint-Étienne, and, across the cloister to the south, the church of Saint-Jacques
31 The Templars
32 The Carmelites
33 Saint-Barthélemy of the parish of Saint-Étienne, once called Sainte-Marie of the Palace
34 The Narbonne Castle (Château Narbonnais) or "Palatium"
35 Montgaillard Gate
36 Montoulieu Gate
37 Saint-Michel, a church in the parish of Saint-Étienne that derived its dedication from the chapel of the Château Narbonnais, and gave its name to the "barri" or quarter in which it was located. Saint-Michel's church was not built until 1331.

La ville rose: Toulouse in the Twelfth Century

Though this project covers a large region in an attempt to bring together enough sources to form a meaningful conclusion, the bulk of its archival innovation comes from close study of the archives of Toulouse. As one of the largest medieval cities, located in the heart of Occitania, Toulouse has a rich history and a wealth of archival sources. The Basilica of St. Sernin made Toulouse a popular stop for pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela and other travelers, ensuring it was a lucrative place to ply a trade and a center of cultural exchange. In the twelfth century, the city of Toulouse, while still technically under the control of the Count of Toulouse, was becoming increasingly independent from the county. Wealthy families formed an elite local leadership, which dictated most of the regulations, and ultimately cohered into a consulate in the late twelfth century.[1] It became renowned for its university, founded in 1229, and later the Consistori del Gay Saber, a poetic society founded in 1323 to preserve and perpetuate troubadour lyric, both of which speak to the cultural richness of the city. The city's time under local leadership also provides insight into local conflicts, concerns and interests. The history of Toulouse itself has already been extensively documented by several accomplished historians, and I will not endeavor to rewrite it here.[2] It will suffice to recount a few significant details about the town.

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[1] John Hine Mundy, *Liberty and Political Power in Toulouse, 1050-1230,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), 43-74.

[2] See the works of John Mundy and Phillip Wolff in the bibliography of this project. Both men provide comprehensive overviews of the political and economic situations in Toulouse from the High to Late Middle Ages. In his *Commerces et Marchands*, Wolff also deals with the geography of Toulouse. Philippe Wolff, *Commerces et Marchands de Toulouse, Vers 1350 — Vers 1450* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1954).

Toulouse is situated fortuitously amidst a confluence of rivers, with the most prominent, the Garonne, running through the modern-day city, though in the twelfth century only the areas to the east of the river were fortified. Nearby rivers connected the city with other towns in the region and eventually both the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, as well as providing a route northward. Forests like the Bouconne, which lay not far outside the city limits, began to be cleared for cultivation and the plains provided lands for growing crops.[3] The old Roman walls provided protection, with the additional fortification of the Chateau Narbonnais falling within the boundaries of the walls.[4] Estimates of the town population vary, with Philippe Wolff suggesting there were around 32,000 people in the fourteenth century based on his extensive study of tax figures.[5] But, using Wolff's research, Jean-Noël Biraben argues for a higher number, between 45,000 and 50,000.[6] As John Mundy suggests, what this means for the twelfth century is not entirely clear. It was likely a slightly smaller population, and the thirteenth century undoubtedly saw a demographic dip due to the Albigensian Crusade.[7]

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[3] Paul Ourliac, "Les villages de la région toulousaine au XIIe siècle," *Annales : histoire, sciences sociales (French ed.)* 4, no. 3 (1949): 268–77. Though not directly about the Toulouse countryside, Constance Berman addresses land clearing and cultivation in her book *Medieval Agriculture, the Southern French Countryside, and the Early Cistercians: A Study of Forty-Three Monasteries*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society v. 76, Pt. 5 (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1986). See also Constance H. Berman, "Land Acquisition and the Use of the Mortgage Contract by the Cistercians of Berdoues," *Speculum* 57, no. 2 (1982): 250–66.

[4] Mundy, *Liberty*, 3-5. Wolff, *Commerces*, 4-5.

[5] Philippe Wolff, *Les "Estimes" toulousaines des 14e et 15e siècles*, Bibliothèque de l'Association Marc Bloch de Toulouse. Documents d'histoire méridionale (Toulouse: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1956), 54-55.

[6] Jean-Noël Biraben, "La Population de Toulouse au XIVe et au XVe siècles," *Journal des savants* 4, no. 1 (1964): 284–300.

[7] Mundy, *Society*, 9-10.

One of the key factors in the history of Toulouse was its division into two parts: the City and the Bourg.[8] The City was established first and the Bourg seems to have grown up as an extension to it. Precisely when the Bourg could be considered its own entity is not clear, but it was well established by the second half of the eleventh century.[9] Though comparatively little is known about the Bourg, it is overrepresented in the archival record. This is not due to a wealth of documents so much as the various fires and wars that destroyed several of the institutions which would have housed documents regarding the City. The persistence of the monastery and cathedral of Saint-Sernin means there is rich evidence for this area of the Bourg, though its other central area, Saint-Pierre-des-Cuisines, was not so fortunate.[10] The uneven distribution of the extant records, particularly as regards specific areas of the City, is crucial to understanding some of the anomalies discussed in this chapter.

Many historians have tried to discern what separated inhabitants of the City from inhabitants of the Bourg. Philippe Wolff suggests that the Cathar heresy was more robust in the Bourg since the Black confraternity was formed in the Bourg to assist the count of Toulouse against the crusaders in the thirteenth century.[11] Mundy argues against Wolff

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[8] When referring to the area of the Toulouse, the c in City will be capitalized (the City). When referring to Toulouse as a whole, the c will be lowercase (the city).

[9] Wolff, *Commerces*, 16-17.

[10] Mundy, John H. Mundy, *Men and Women at Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 13-14.

[11] Philippe Wolff, "Civitas et Burgus: L'exemple de Toulouse," in *Die Stadt in Der Europäischen Geschichte. Festschrift Edith Ennen*, ed. Werner Besch (Bonn, 1977).

on this point, suggesting there is no clear documentation showing this to be the case.[12] Mundy initially believed that the Bourg represented the new rich and the City the patrician or knightly class. However, he later came to reject and disprove his earlier conclusion by showing clear examples of the "nouveau riche" in the City.[13] Most scholars are agreed that the population and wealth was greater in the City than in the Bourg, and this seems to be due to a higher concentration of artisans and professionals in the City. The notable exception to this was a small artisan district with a concentration of leather workers in the area of Saint-Pierre-des-Cuisines, grouped near the river for convenience.[14]

Although the cartulary of Saint-Sernin is a rich resource, the bulk of the archival research for this project comes from the City. This seems to be a function of population density. Sometime before 1141, the count of Toulouse created a *salvetat* in the southwest part of the city from the Chateau Narbonnais to the Dalbade Church, extending to the riverbank.[15] *Salvetats*, zones in which residents were provided with certain tax exemptions, were meant to encourage growth in less populated areas. It seems this particular *salvetat*, with imposts on salt and wine never having been collected and fees for tradesmen perhaps as much as halved, was extremely successful at drawing new

[12] Mundy, *Society*, 25-26.

[13] Mundy, *Society*, 24-25

[14] Mundy, *Society*, 24-25. Wolff, *Commerces*, 10, 18. Walter L. Wakefield, *Heresy, Crusade and Inquisition in Southern France, 1100-1250* (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, G. Allen & Unwin, 1974), 60-61.

[15] As John Mundy explains, the only existing documentation of the boundaries of this salvetat come from the 1195 confirmatory act by Raymond VI. *Liberty*, 7.

inhabitants.[16] Wolff suggests that significant town planning problems, such as regulating water flow into the Garonne, arose from the population boom.[17] Sex work occurs right around this area with its dense population and cheaper wine. Women selling sex can be found here, close to the river, although once expelled from the town proper, they appear across the river in the nascent suburb of Saint Cyprien.[18] The *Rue de Jongleurs* is farther east, away from the riverbank, and there are documents showing several jongleurs living around that area. Though there is evidence that at least two jongleurs, one in the early twelfth century and one early thirteenth century, lived in the Bourg, the preponderance of evidence points to jongleurs residing in the City. This does not mean sex work was not happening in the Bourg, merely that there is no documentation showing it.[19] Regardless, it seems likely that the City, as the wealthier, older, and more populous area, housed the majority of the commercial sex in Toulouse at least before the rise of municipalized brothels.[20] The importance of the areas where sex work occurred and how the physical landscape of sex work changes over time will be discussed more in Chapter Four.

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[16] Mundy, *Liberty,* 27-28 and 245 n18.

[17] Wolff, *Commerces*, 9.

[18] Agathe Roby, *La Prostitution Au Moyen Age: Le Commerce Charnel En Midi Toulousain Du XIII Au XVI Siecle* (Villemur-sur-Tarn: éditions Loubatières, 2021), 137-138. Roby discusses the exclusion of women selling sex from specific areas based on thirteenth documents, which are aimed at expelling them from those areas. Were there not already sex work happening there, there would be no need to expel these women.

[19] There is more research to be done on the archival holdings related to the Bourg, but there are no readily identifiable jongleurs in the cartulary of Saint-Sernin, which was published in 1999 and, helpfully, includes an index of proper names and places. I have cross-referenced the names of individuals found living near jongleurs with this index where possible (at times names are too common or there are no identifying descriptions of the individual) and this still yielded no useful information.

[20] Roby does discuss fifteenth century documents expelling women selling sex from streets in the City. By this time, sex work was legalized and could only happen in specifically sanctioned brothels. However, she also discusses an official brothel in the Bourg in the sixteenth century that was moved to the City. When

Whatever the reason for their continuing distinction, one which, as suggested above, became clear and violent during the campaigns of the Albigensian Crusade, in the twelfth century "the measure of unity achieved by the City and Bourg undoubtedly helped the town to win self-government or freedom from the count."[21] This unity was partially achieved by the consulate, a group of prominent, male citizens who exerted increasing control over Toulouse from the mid-twelfth century through the early-thirteenth century. In its political dimension, Toulouse can be understood as a microcosm of Occitania; many groups attempted to lay claim to it and powers were variably dispersed throughout these groups in the High Middle Ages. Due to the Gregorian reform, the ecclesiastical authorities had diminished in their secular power, rendering the bishop and his various vicars less powerful than before. The count of Toulouse, Raymond VI for the majority of this study, officially claimed jurisdiction over the city. However, the lay aristocracy was slowly eroding his power in this time period, until a patrician elite, in the form of a city consulate, held most of the privileges and judicial powers in the city. This consulate was the predominant authority at the end of the twelfth century, and it was surprisingly evenly split in its membership between the Bourg and the City despite the population and wealth disparity. Mundy convincingly argues that in the thirteenth century, this consulate became less patrician and more democratic, though the reasons for

repairs are being made on the wall in the area near the brothel it needs to be torn down and moved. Although other places in the Bourg are discussed as possible new locations, the brothel is ultimately reestablished in the City. See Roby, 168-173 and 151-161 respectively.

[21] Mundy, *Society*, 26.

this are unclear.[22] The intricate functioning of this consulate is complex, and would be the subject of other study, but two factors bear noting here. One is the self-styling of the consulate as *probihomines*, or Good Men, not in itself unusual in this time period. However, the function of referring to the consulate and the men who compose it as "good men" has a rhetorical potency when these men are railing against the behavior of women selling sex. One cannot help but think of outraged cries of "Not in my backyard!" But in seeming contradiction to this, one might ask oneself whether a system of decriminalized sex work could function long under a strong central power, such as the count, or a strong ecclesiastical power, such as the bishop. In the decades and centuries after the authority of the count, under the jurisdiction of the king, was restored, there was a sharp decline of freedoms, particularly for women selling sex through the municipalization of brothels.

It's a Long Way to the Top: The Menestrel Brothers

In 1371, two brothers with the last name Menestrel sold two houses on the *rue du Mont-Carmel* for 140 gold florins to the Calvet brothers.[23] The Menestrel brothers are noted as the sons of Jean Menestrel, who was a bourgeois of the Croix-Baragnon, and the Calvet brothers are listed as merchants. According to the sale document, the houses had been rented for 29 years to an R. de Rivals, a butcher, and a Jacques Barbasol, a cobbler,

[22] The preceding summary lays out, more or less, the trajectory of John Mundy's *Liberty and Political Power*, which remains the foundational text on the political changes of twelfth and thirteenth century Toulouse.

[23] When describing the individual documents, I will default to the spelling provided by the document for transparency of argument. When discussing the family in general, however, I will standardize the spelling to Menestrel.

for 15 gold florins, a pound of pepper, and a half a pound of ginger per year.[24] But these two houses were not the only property the Menestrels owned. In 1381, Pierre Menestralh, we can only assume one of the aforementioned sons, along with a Germain de Gontault, approved the sale of a vineyard of 5 mezalhades. Again, Pierre is mentioned as a bourgeois, presumably with property rights over the vineyard, which sold for 85 gold francs.[25]

Considering my argument that jongleurs are sex workers, a family with the last name Menestrel, who are labeled as bourgeois selling multiple properties seems counterintuitive. Given these inconsistencies, we must ask if we can connect this late fourteenth century Menestrel family to jonglerie at all. The answer can be found in an even later document: the 1401 rental agreement between B. Calvet and Pierre Gathie, a tanner. According to the document, Calvet had bought the house from the late Pierre Menestrel, bourgeois, who had an agreement to rent the house for twenty-nine years to a Manaud de Na Riqua starting in 1380. This house was located on the main square of the tanners, which happened to be at the crossroads of *rue Bouquieres* and *rue des Jongleurs*.[26] The *rue des Jongleurs*, which has been identified as the current *rue du Canard*, was near the center of the old city.[27] Surely a bustling place, perpendicular on

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[24] Archives municipales de Toulouse (henceforth AMT), II, 23.6.

[25] AMT, II 55.

[26] AMT, II 23.18.

[27] Pierre Salies, *Dictionnaire Des Rues de Toulouse: Voies Publiques, Quartiers, Lieux-Dits, Enseignes, Organisation Urbaine*, Editions Milan, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Toulouse: Milan, 1989), 218.

one side to the *rue des Affachayres,* street of the tanners,[28] and on the other by the *rue des Filatiers*, street of the spinners, the location placed the jongleurs in an area where they were likely to make money busking in front of the various buyers and sellers passing through.[29] The single location meant they would be easy to find and hire by those who were hosting a banquet, throwing a party, or having a wedding.

A closer look at the geography hinted at in the 1371 document reveals a similar connection between the Menestrels and *jonglerie*. According to maps created by the Toulouse historian John Mundy, the *rue du Mont-Carmel*, corresponds to the present-day street *La place des Carmes*.[30] The name of the street points to its history as a religiously contested space. As Mundy notes, in the mid-thirteenth century, "prompted by a desire to be in the center of things and also by anti-Jewish sentiments the [Carmelite] order moved into the City, finding a location in the heart of the Jewish part of town in the present

[28] Translation of tanners is based on Philippe Wolfe's translation, though it is strange to see this profession located so far from the river front. Philippe Wolff, *Commerces et Marchands de Toulouse, Vers 1350 — Vers 1450* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1954), 673.
[29] For a map reproduction of fourteenth century Toulouse, see Jean Catalo and Henri Molet, "Portrait Général," in *Toulouse Au Moyen Âge: 1000 Ans d'histoire Urbaine* (Portet-sur-Garonne: Loubatières éditions, 2010) 140-141. I am inclined to believe that this early in the city development, the street names would reflect the occupation of most of the inhabitants. Given that there were no official street names, street signs, or house numbers at this time, it makes sense that the easiest way to designate a street was by its inhabitants. This would then contribute to more people of that profession remaining in the area at least in the immediate future, as potential buyers would go to the well-known location for the service they required. For more on street names and street signs see Jean-Pierre Leguay, *La Rue Au Moyen Age* (Rennes: Éditions Ouest-France, 1984), 92-123. Additionally, many cities had *rues des jongleurs* at this time with records of jongleurs living there, including Paris. For one example see Maria Coldwell, "Jougleresses and Trobairitz: Secular Musicians in Medieval France," in *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950,* ed. Jane M. Bowers and Judith Tick, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 46.

[30] The John Hine Mundy Collection, at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, at the University of Toronto, M07. The base map Mundy uses is from Yves Dossat, "Les Juifs a Toulouse: Un Demi-Siècle d'histoire Communautaire," *Juifs et Judaïsme de Languedoc : XIIIe Siècle-Début XIVe Siècle*, 1977, 139.

Place des Carmes."[31] The *rue des Jongleurs* was just down the street from *La place de Carmes*.

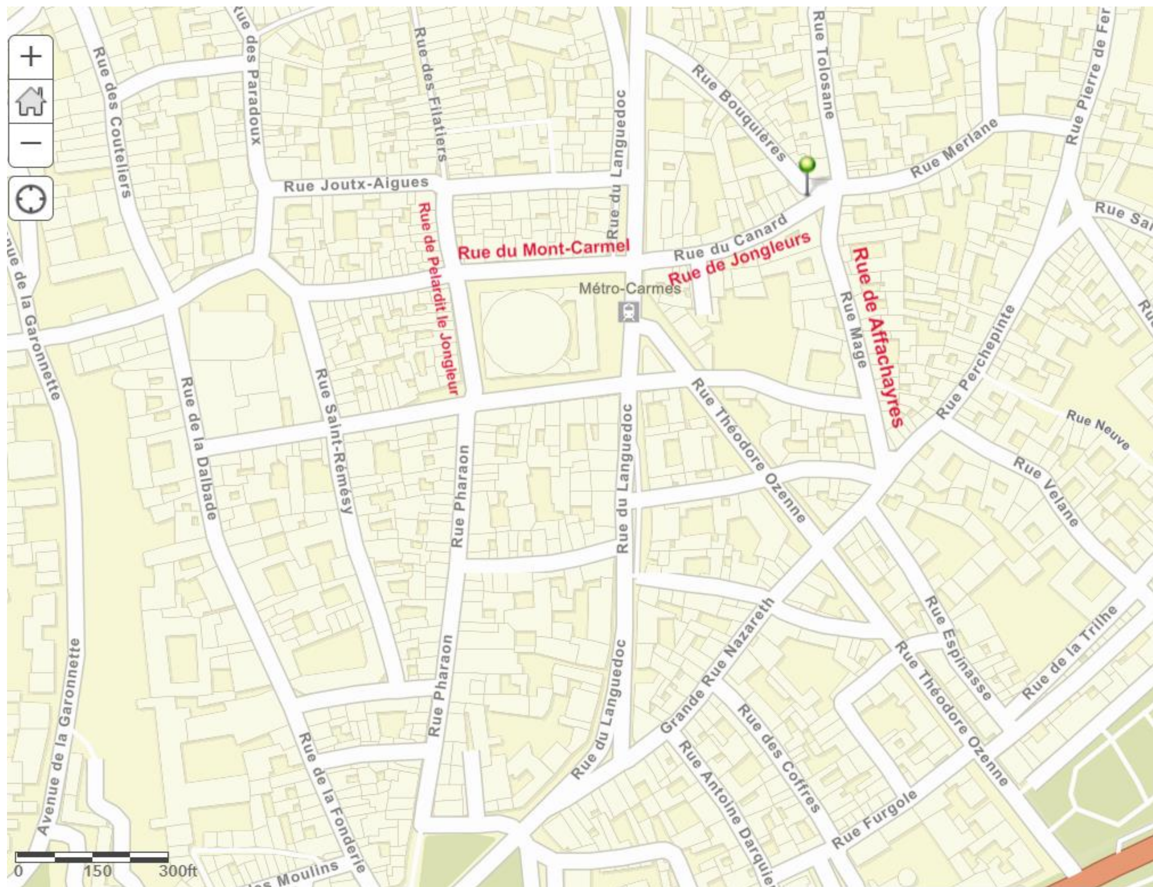

Figure 4.2: Close up of La place des Carmes and rue des Jongleurs

The amount of property rights, even partial property rights, that the Menestrels had by the late fourteenth century points to their wealth and status, but it also points to their connection with the physical space of the city. A family by the name of Menestrel, with a property on the *rue des Jongleurs*, strongly suggests that these brothers, and their

[31] John H. Mundy, *Studies in the Ecclesiastical and Social History of Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 210-211.

father Jean, now a bourgeois, or property owning, well-to-do citizen, were descendants of a family of jongleurs. This area, though central to the town, was likely not a desirable place to live. The tanneries just down the street would have emitted a foul odor almost constantly, and this also happened to be the location of the Jewish Quarter at the time. But in the twelfth century, the *rue des Jongleurs* would have been a lively street in the heart of the town, full of Jews, laborers, and artisans making their living on the streets and in their homes. The street was also near the aforementioned *salvetat* confirmed by Raymond VI in 1195, which exempted inhabitants from a wine tax.[32] Though the *rue des Jongleurs* was not located in the *salvetat* itself, it was just adjacent to it and many of the jongleurs in this chapter lived in the area of the *salvetat*.

[32] Mundy, *Liberty and Political Power*, 222 n9.

Figure 4.3: Zoomed out image with the salvetat of Toulouse highlighted

Yet, if the Menestrel brothers are renting the house out by 1380 and selling multiple other properties in 1371, it would seem that by the time Jean and his sons came around, the family was wealthy enough to abandon their previous profession. Indeed, we do not find them in any other records listed as town criers, trumpeters, or any other more legitimate version of the profession. Casting a wider net to the national archives, however, we find a document attesting to the 1341 ennoblement of a Jean Ministral of

Toulouse.[33] The fourteenth century was kind to the Menestrel family. But they are not the only family whom we might connect with jonglerie who seemed to flourish in the later Middle Ages. As early as 1236, a Petrus Joculator was a consul in Narbonne.[34] In 1345, Jacques Joglar, consul of Narbonne, appears in a document being paid assurances.[35] And in 1375, a Jean Jouglar is listed as a clerk of the diocese in Toulouse.[36] What does this say about the socioeconomic prospects of those engaged in jonglerie? How does that compare to the prospects of those who sold sex?

When we ask where one lives and works, we are ultimately asking, how does one fit in society? As Keith Lilley explains, "Townscapes...functioned as 'texts' and from them a moralised social order and identity could be read by those who lived and worked within them."[37] Charles-Dominique believes that, due to jongleurs' indigent lifestyle and its attendant complications, "the jongleur is located from the outset on the social periphery,"[38] an observation which is contradicted by the physical topography of the city described above. However, there is a clear social and geographical marginalization of individuals selling sex. This marginalization only increased throughout the thirteenth century as urban laws went from dictating where sex work could and could not ply their

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[33] Paris Archives Nationales (henceforth PAN), JJ 72 f. 202v, doc no. 278.

[34] PAN J, 311, Toulouse, V, 55.

[35] Archives Municipales de Narbonne, DD 1020.

[36] AMT, II 24.5

[37] Keith Lilley, *Urban Life in the Middle Ages: 1000-1450* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 247.

[38] "Le *jongleur* est situé d'emblée à la périphérie sociale." Luc Charles-Dominique, "Du jongleur au ménétrier: évolution du statut social des instrumentistes médiévaux," in *Instruments à cordes du moyen âge: actes du colloque de Royaumont, 1994*, (Grâne: Créaphis, 1999), 32-33.

trade, to sanctioning municipalized brothels that confined sex workers to specific locations even when they were not working. In this chapter, I explore urban statutes and property records to show the social prospects available to different types of sex workers in the Middle Ages. The ascent of the Menestrel family reflects an overall upward social mobility of jongleurs during the latter half of the Middle Ages. At the same time, those who engaged in paid sex were suffering decreased profits and fewer rights with the rise of official, legal brothels in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.[39] Yet, despite the appearance of divergent social possibilities, a gender divide characterizes the new social opportunities for jonglerie. The professionalization of jonglerie, while it led to a greater social mobility for men in the profession, led to the exclusion of women, who did not have access to these new prospects. Similarly, legalization of sex work created a "masculinization" of the brothel, leading to the exclusion of women as brothel owners and increased legislation and control over the bodies of women selling sex. Thus, while men engaged in some forms of sex work rose in status in the later Middle Ages, women engaged in sex work, selling sex or performance, were left behind by the professionalization of entertainment and the legalization of selling sex.

The Sources of the Problem/The Problem of the Sources

As the records of the Menestrel family indicate, there did seem to be a central, concentrated location where jongleurs lived in the High Middle Ages. But archival

[39] For a complete analysis of the progression from acceptance, to municipalization, to prosecution see Leah Otis-Cour, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985).

records of individual jongleurs in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries are rare, and the task of finding these records is made more difficult by the fact that these records are not located in a single archival designation, collection, or even archive. Given the scarcity of records from the twelfth and early thirteenth century, it is perhaps unsurprising that most of the archival records where jongleurs can be found are property records, often ones involving churches or religious orders. Yet even this is an inexact science. This chapter's analysis relies on understanding that there is a connection between family surnames and professions, but these surnames often denote professions and not familial lineage until late in the thirteenth century.

Given the long chronological view, there is also a shift in the evidence used partway through the chapter. A large portion of this analysis relies on twelfth century property records of jongleurs, which provide glimmers of community within the geography of the city of Toulouse. These jongleurs, it bears noting, are all men; I have found no contemporaneous documents about women jongleurs. Alongside the property records are small, scattered references to the geographical distribution of sex work in the early thirteenth century. Out of this I attempt to craft a vision of the sex work in the city of Toulouse in the High Middle Ages. By contrast, the later Middle Ages have more documentation, but it is documentation of a different type. Ordinances expelling women who sell sex from different areas and information about where brothels were located still provide a rough idea of the geography of sex work. However, there is also information about the regulations women who worked in brothels or lived in reform houses had to abide by and sources regarding the organizing and running of brothel farms. I also

include the voices of modern sex workers in an attempt to not only provide points of comparison but also to lift up the voices of the women who, thus far in this study, have mostly existed as the objects of discourse. The parallels between the women, medieval and modern, are striking and mutually informative.

If at times this discussion seems winding, it is because the extant archives on this topic do not want to tell us about gender. In the absence of more information, the historian is left to wring every lead from the sources at hand. The picture of sex work as it shifts from High to late Middle Ages, from property records to regulations, is an incomplete one. But it is nevertheless one that reveals meaningful truths about the lives of sex workers and their place in society.

What's in a name?: Parsing familial connection in twelfth century documents

As with all cultural changes, the move to adopt familial surnames did not happen in a single moment but morphed into a norm over time. Thus, in one of the documents sited below a man is designated "Raimund faber, cultellario," or cutler, in the first two acts of the scroll and simply "Raimund cultellarius" in the third. To further illustrate the complications, his brother Willelmus coltellarius, is mentioned in the third act as well, but the last name Faber is not used for him. Is this merely because Faber was not used for either of them in the third act? Or did Willelmus have a different surname?[40] Since capitalization is not standardized, it is difficult to know when a name is a name and when it is a profession or descriptor. As late as the 1243 Oath to Maintain the Peace of Meaux-

[40] Archives départementales de la Haute-Garonne (henceforth ADHG), H Malte Toulouse 3, 147.

Paris, in which 1028 male citizens of Toulouse swore to uphold the Peace of Paris, which ended the Albigensian Crusade, John Mundy notes that just over 16% of people were identified using a Christian name and a craft or trade designation.[41] These vary between the two versions presented above, with either a surname and a craft title, or just a craft title. By the mid-thirteenth century things had perhaps become overcomplicated, as some names were solidified familial surnames and others were not.

In the twelfth century the application of some basic logic clarifies the issues. Individuals were most often identified by their place, or their family's place, of origin – de Noerio, de Sancto Cypriano, de Castelnau – presented with the particule or sometimes in the genitive.[42] For prestigious families these quickly became familial surnames, such that a clan with the rather generic name "de Tolosa" is readily identifiable in the late twelfth century.[43] Secondarily, individuals would be identified by a second name, sometimes the name of their father in the genitive, such as Raimundus Bernardi, but other times merely a second name. These too could become familial surnames though they are harder to identify at such an early period given the popularity of some of the names.[44] Although Mundy believes "ioculatores," the Latin for jongleur, could just as easily have been a family surname there is not much in the archive to suggest it had made that

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[41] 167 persons. John Mundy, *Society and Government at Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars*, Studies and Texts 129 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1997), 165. Mundy does not include the consuls in his count of 1028.

[42] Mundy, *Society and Government*, 163-164. Mundy speculates that the Tolosa were originally part of a well-known rural family and the use of "de Tolosa" was to separate the branch of the family living in the city from the branch that remand in the countryside.

[43] See Mundy's history of the Tolosa family in John Mundy, *The Repression of Catharism at Toulouse: The Royal Diploma of 1279*, Studies and Texts 74 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1985), 268-283.

[44] Mundy, *Society and Government*, 164.

transition at the turn of the thirteenth century. Indeed, it seems not to have made the transition at all. By the time that family names were being solidified, the term *ioculator* was being replaced by *menestrel*.

We do not see clear, robust family lines amongst people with craft titles appended to a first name in the documents of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. Of the 9 "ioculatores" in the archival records, over the span of 120 years, with the vast majority of them occurring between 1172 and 1218, none of them are identified as having any familial relationship with another.[45] While it's true that not all documents identify individuals by naming members of their families, to have a dozen extant documents about several different individuals, all living within the same city around the same time, with none of the documents connecting the individuals seems unlikely. Even Jordanus ioculator, who is mentioned in six of the documents, is never identified by a familial relation to another ioculator or anyone else. This point is made even more compelling when one considers how many of them seem to move in the same circles, or even the same 5 block radius. Another craft designation that appears in the following geography, *ortolanus*, meaning gardener, appears in very few documents as a stand-alone identifier. We do, however, see individuals with other last names, who are identified as "ortolanus," leading to the conclusion that it is likely a vocational title rather than a surname. Particularly since, as Mundy notes, the appending of a craft title often replaced a surname, unless used to distinguish between two individuals with the same first name and

[45] This does not include Pelardit, discussed later in this chapter and explicitly identified as "le jongleur."

craft or, if the same first name and surname, a craft could distinguish them.[46] Additionally, the grouping of the ioculatores with other individuals with craft appellations lends credence to viewing all of the surnames as professions rather than familial names at this early stage.

Ioculators in the Bourg

At this point the astute reader will recognize that, even without locating the properties in the cityscape, the combination of property records and onomastics already provides a path to understanding new and crucial details about the twelfth century jongleur. The earliest reference to a joculator is in 1131, when a Joquetus ioculator witnesses the sale at fief from a Bertrannus Robertus, Augerius, and Raimundus Petrus Turrensis to Arnaldus Agilis and the inhabitants of the hospital of Saint-Raimon.[47] The sale at fief, or "ad fevum," acted much as a rental contract, giving the recipients the right to reside on and reap the profits from a given piece of land without giving them the right of domain, or actual ownership of the land. The fief could be held for payment in money or in kind and any sale of the fief required the approval of the lord, who held the right of domain, and often a mutation fee paid to said lord.[48] In this case, with Joquetus as merely

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[46] Mundy, *Society and Government*, 165-166.

[47] Pierre Gérard and Thérèse Gérard, eds., *Cartulaire de Saint-Sernin de Toulouse*, 2 vols. (Toulouse: Amis des archives de la Haute-Garonne, 1999), Tome 2, Vol. 3, Act 564, p. 1484. Given that a father's name in the genitive became a surname in some cases, all second names will be left in the case in which they appear in the original document. If there is an example of the name in the nominative, it will be put into the nominative. If it only appears as, for example Arnaldi Raimundi, it will appear as Arnaldus Raimundi in my discussion.

[48] The following pages do not contain many footnotes mentioning secondary sources, but in order to understand the contractual primary sources, I had to learn how to read them. The following is a non-comprehensive list of the pieces that were most helpful to me in understanding the forms and functions of contracts in medieval Toulouse. There are additional sources on real estate listed in the bibliography. Hubert Richardot, "Le fief roturier à Toulouse aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles," *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* 14, no. 2 (1935): 307–59; Philippe Amblard Larolphie, "Le crédit à Toulouse et dans le

a witness rather than a participant in the sale, we are limited in the conclusions we can draw. The other participants in the act seem to have wealth, with the Turrensis seeming to own the right to domain over the land and perhaps being early progenitors of the later well-known and prosperous Turribus family and the Hospital of Saint-Raymond being an appendage of the well-established monastery of Saint-Sernin.[49] The property itself is not described in depth, but the document does say it is "in burgo Sancti Saturnini, in termino de Quoquinis," placing the property in the Bourg of Toulouse, somewhere between the St. Sernin basilica and the church of St. Pierre-des-Cuisines.

Toulousain," A*nnales du midi: revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale* 106, no. 205 (1994): 5–23; Kathryn Reyerson, "Lands, Houses and Real Estate Investment in Montpellier: A Study of the Notarial Property Transactions, 1293-1348," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 6 (Old Series, v. 16) (1983): 37–112; Mireille Castaing, "Le prêt à intérêt à Toulouse aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles," *Bulletin historique et philologique* 1954 (1953): 273–78 and *Les contrats dans le très ancien droit Toulousain, Xe-XIIIe siècle* (Toulouse: M. Espic, 1959); Shulevitz, Deborah. "Heresy, Money, and Society in Southern France, 1175-1325." Columbia University, 2017.

[49] See Mundy's history of the Turribus family in *Society and Government,* 345-356, in which he explains the connection between the Turrensis and the Turribus groups. For information on the Hospital of St. Raymond, see Mundy, *Ecclesiastical and Social History,* 49-50. Saint-Raymond also received various tax benefits from the count and bishop of Toulouse and a tithe right from Saint-Sernin. In the thirteenth century an inventory of its properties and possessions shows it to be one of Toulouse's largest hospitals.

Figure 4.4: Map of Toulouse with St-Pierre-des-Cuisines Church and the basilica of St-Sernin highlighted

Joquetus, therefore, likely lived in the Bourg, as witnesses were often neighbors or members of a shared community. Close connections were likely to witness more than one act for a given individual. This is a matter of practicality, as neighbors were always close on hand, and a matter of trust, as one trusts a friend or family member to assist with or witness important decisions today as well. The Bourg at this time was more sparsely populated and less wealthy than the city. It developed partially as a response to the overcrowding and urban planning problems in the Cité, where population growth was overwhelming the space available. Nevertheless, the Bourg was home to various crafts, such as a village of leather craftsmen near the Garonne, who used the river for their work. The area around Saint-Pierre-des-Cuisines, in fact, would come to be seen as the artisanal

district in a largely ecclesiastical center.[50] In the early twelfth century, one imagines there was more cheap land to be had, though why a joculator would live farther away from the city center is unclear.

Joquetus is not the only joculator to be found in the Bourg, however. In 1218 a Petrus ioculator of Belleperche, a small area about thirty miles north of Toulouse, is mentioned having rented property right next to the cemetery of St. Pierre-des-Cuisines.[51] Petrus, deceased by 1218 according to the document, lived by Bernardus Dayde, a gardener, and Petrus "comitis," likely a soldier of some sort. Other nearby fief holders, Petrus Gaucelmi, Poncius Gaulaubus, Willelmus de Sancto Paulo, and Arnaldi Perreri, do not have identified professions. However, the overall document, an entry in the cartulary of the Capdenier family documenting the sale of domain of the land to Pons Capitedenario, reiterates the terms of many leases that are affected by the sale providing the names of various fief holders.[52] Among these are multiple gardeners, bakers (*furnerii*), porters (*baiulii*), a cloth-seller (*draperius*), a shoemaker (*sutor*), a granary overseer, a tile-maker (*tegulerius*) and a pelterer (*pellicerius*). There are also several *magisterii*, which could refer to a teacher, an expert at a given craft, or a cleric who had gotten a master's degree, a doctor (*medicus*), the descendent of a cook (*pueri coquinarium*), and two *fabrii*, which could simply be the last name Faber, the generic

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[50] Wolff, *Commerces et Marchands*, 9-10.

[51] ADHG, D St. Bernard 138, 181v – 188r for the entire sale to Pons Capitedenario, 185r - 186r for the specific references to Petrus ioculator.

[52] It was customary when a fief changed hands or the right of domain changed hands for the new tenant or new lord to reiterate the terms of the fief to demonstrate that they agreed to the terms even if the terms remained the same.

term for artisan, or specifically a carpenter.[53] There are also a few individuals who seem to come from well-to-do, or at least readily recognizable, families in this milieu as well: Stephanus Astro, Arnaldus Willelmus Pilistortus, Raimundus Baranonus, and Petrus and Bon Puer Maurandus.[54] The rest of the individuals listed have surnames or appellations that are too generic to be categorized, such as “de Carcasona” or simply don’t appear frequently enough in the archive to provide background information without further extensive research, such as “Esforciatus.”

It is not surprising to find wealthy individuals rubbing shoulders with artisans and trade workers given the intimacy of medieval cities, but the presence of both makes it harder to strictly categorize Petrus ioculator as of wealthy or modest means. Given that most of the individuals in this record are of modest to middling means, and that he is surrounded by other craftsmen, I believe we can safely categorize him as being on the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum represented. A further piece of evidence supports this conclusion: the *oblies*, or fixed rents due on the properties mentioned. The fixed rent, due once a year, tended to be far lower than the actual rent of a piece of property, the *premium*. However, the extant records rarely note the *premium* because they are not related to the basic dues of the fief, set when the land was first enfeoffed, which

[53] All words have been spelled here as they are spelled in the document for transparency. Thus, one may see that the document term is *pellicerius* rather than the correct spelling of pelterer, *pelliciarius*, similarly, the term *furnerius* rather than *furnarius*. I find such a shift in spelling, particularly around vowels, to be within the bounds of the evolution of Latin and its interaction with vernaculars, especially when one considers that the scribes are likely being told the crafts names in the vernacular and translating them into Latin as they go.

[54] Mundy has traced the family records of all of these families. For Baranonus and Maurandus see *Repression of Catharism*, 127-130 and 229-241 respectively. For Astro see *John H. Mundy, Men and Women at Toulouse in the Age of the Cathars (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990)*, 173-182. The history of the Pilistortus family is not published but can be found in his notes in the Mundy Collection, H 192.

take precedence due to the formula of the charters.[55] Thus, we cannot use the fixed rent to understand the real price of a piece of property; we can only view it in relation to other fixed rents mentioned in the document (comparing it to other locations, in other years would be misleading). There is no property listing or *oblie* for Petrus, since he was deceased at the time of the charter's writing. However, the *oblies* for those around him are listed. Willelmus de Sancto Paulo, Pons Galaubus, and Petrus Comes, all owed 3 *oboli*, or half-pennies. Bernardus Dayde owed 6 *oboli,* and, the outlier, Bernarda, wife of Petrus Gaucelmi, owed 9 *denarii*, or pennies.[56] The 3 *oboli* owed by Willemus, Pons, and Petrus were on the low end of the *oblies* seen in the document. Most payments were made in *denarii*, and those who paid in *oboli* mostly lived in the area immediately adjacent or surrounding the properties closest to Petrus ioculator. Bernarda's 9 *denarii* was a high *oblies* but not a radical outlier within the larger document. For the wealthy individuals mentioned 9 *denarii* was near the lower limit of *oblies* owed. Stephanus Astro owed 6 *denarii* on 9 *denarii oblies*, suggesting perhaps that he owned the right to collect the 9 *oblies* and had to pay 6 of those to Pons de Capitedenario, the overall property owner. Arnaldus Willelmus Pilistortus owed 12 *denarii* on an incredible 18 *denarii oblies*. Raymond Baranonus owed 12 *denarii oblies*, and Petrus and Bon Puer Maurandus both owed 15 *denarii oblies*. The land that Petrus ioculator lived on and near seems to have been some of the cheapest in this rather large parcel that was sold to Pons

[55] Mundy, *Society and Government*, 149.
[56] All coinage is Toulouse coinage unless otherwise noted. The relative values of each coin comes from Peter Spufford, *Money and Its Use in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 400.

Capitedenario, and Petrus's surrounding neighbors paid the least even amongst the other artisans.

While the Bourg had come far in its development in the 87 years between Joquetus and Petrus, it seems clear that Petrus lived by meager means amongst lower-income artisans and laborers. Joquetus, who lived there in the early years of the Bourg's development, perhaps even lived near the same land by St. Pierre-des-Cuisines that Petrus lived on, remains more of a mystery. If the others present in the charter for which Joquetus was a witness are any indication of community, he was perhaps better off than Petrus. Without more charters connecting the two, it is not possible to know if Joquetus's connection to the Turrensis brothers was merely one of proximity or if it spoke to a friendly relationship. The others in the act are all connected to the Hospital of St. Raimon providing no real purchase for further analysis. But given the availability of land and a growing population for an audience, and the evidence pertaining to other joculators, I am inclined to believe that Joquetus, too, made a modest living.[57]

Welcome to the Jongle: Twelfth Century Community

A close proximity to the craftsman community is a common thread clear through all the archival records of ioculatores. In 1172, an Arnoldus ioculator is seen owning property next to a cutler.[58] In 1190, Jordan ioculator is seen living next to an Arnaldus

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[57] John Mundy espouses the same belief that ioculators could be classed with artisans, as well as notaries and lower burghers though it seems he was not aware of the Joquetus document or several others in the passages to follow. Mundy, *Ecclesiastical and Social History*, 186-194.

[58] ADHG, Grandselve 1.

ortolanus and a Willelmus *fustarius* (carpenter), with a Raimundus *porquerius* (a swineherd, or perhaps butcher) serving as a witness in several acts. Jordanus also married a Maria, who was the widow of the above-mentioned Raimundus Faber *cultellarius*, who himself was a witness in several acts where Jordan is mentioned. In 1200, a Galaubetus ioculator is seen purchasing a house from Willelma, the wife of William John Auriollus *textor* (weaver).[59] All of these individuals will be explored in greater depth throughout the chapter. In the above mentioned 1243 Oath to Maintain the Peace of Meaux-Paris a Bernardus ioculator is listed between Bernardus *parator* (fuller), Ramundus *magister*; these would have been the individuals he stood next to during the oath taking.[60] But situating ioculatores in the context of artisans and craftsmen still leaves plenty of questions about who these entertainers were and how they fit into the world around them. Happily, in this case, the documents bear fruit, and the picture that emerges is not just one of geography and economics, but of community.

In 1172, Petrus Rubeus, in his sickness, gave to his niece Garsenda and her husband Dominicus *cultellarius* a *casal*, which was a generic term for a complex of buildings and land that could include a house, workshops, attachments, or lots.[61] Petrus held this *casal* in fief, receiving it from Petrona and her son Petrus Agobertus, and it is described as being between the *honorem* of Arnaldi ioculatoris, the *honorem* of a

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[59] ADHG, E 510.

[60] Mundy, *Society and Government*, 368 and 377.

[61] ADHG Grandselve 1. By 1172, the use of the phrase "casal cum omnibus illis hedificiis et bastimentis" was standard in describing property transactions regardless of their size. While we cannot be sure of the size of the property, based on where I believe it was situated, calling it a *casal* was likely more a function of formulaic language than an indication that this was an expansive estate. For a discussion of terminology in these documents see Mundy, *Society and Government*, 144-145.

Stephanus who had died, the *honorem* of Aldiarde, who was the wife of Bernardi Vitalis Dazerii, and another *honorem* of Dominicus and Garsenda, which was owned by Poncius Umberti, *honor* having become the standard synonym for a *feodum*. The description of the property's location concludes by adding that it is "inter eorum carrarolam eiusdem Dominici eius uxoris et eorum ordinii." The designation of "their street" undoubtedly refers not to the family's ownership of the street – they do not even have a family name – but the *carraria cultelleriorum*, or the street of the cutlers, a street whose name has barely changed in the intervening eight and a half centuries. The modern *rue des couteliers* is a two-block span between the *rue de Metz* and the church *Notre-Dame de la Dalbade*. Once the street crosses in front of the Dalbade, it becomes *rue de la Dalbade*. As Figure 3 shows, the *carraria cultelleriorum* was a few blocks west and slightly north of the *rue des jongleurs*, placing Arnaldi ioculator near the street of his profession though not on it.

Figure 4.5: Carraria Cultelleriorum and Rue des Jongleurs highlighted

Strangely, the area around the Dalbade church seems not to have been an uncommon area for ioculators to live, and *cultellarii* not uncommon company for them to keep. Almost 20 years later, in February of 1187, having seemingly recovered from whatever ailed him, Petrus Rubeus is seen holding an *honor* near a Bertrandus de Cunfaverio, who was selling his own fief to Raimundus Faber *coltellarius*, encountered several times above.[62] Petrus must have died shortly thereafter, because in the next act of

[62] ADHG, H Malte Toulouse 3, 147.

this strange document, dated later that month, he is referred to as deceased. This second act concerns the marriage of Raimundus Faber to Maria, who receives 150 solidos of Toulose to do with as she will, secured by the property Raimundus had bought from Bertrandus. The marriage did not last, however, as Raimundus himself fell ill only 2 years later as explained in the third act, in which Raimundus divides his worldly goods. His brother, Willelmus *coltellarius* was his heir and was to receive his property. However, Raimundus bequeathed 200 solidos of Toulose to Maria secured by the property, along with two mattresses and a variety of cloth goods. By 1192, Maria had remarried Jordan ioculator, and the two had taken a house, or perhaps the entire *casal*, in lieu of cash, because the fourth act details the sale of the property by Maria and Jordan to a Petrus *bovario* (dairyman or cowherd).[63] The final document details the sale of the property by Petrus *bovarius* to Arnaldus de Tolosa, *magister* of the Templar house in Toulouse in 1223.

[63] It is possible that they sell the entire *casal* as the document says, "Maria cum consilio et voluntate Jordani ioculatoris mariti sui et in eius presentia vendidit et soluit et reliquit Petro Bovario et omni suo ordinio totam illam domum et casalem cum omni hedficio et bastimento," but the document is not clear on this point. See chart below for summary of each act with dates and details.

Table 4.1: Summary of Acts and Witnesses in ADHG 3, 147

Act #	Act 1	Act 2	Act 3	Act 4	Act 5
Year	1187 Copied in 1223	1187 Copied in 1223	1189 Copied in 1223	1192 Copied in 1223	1223
Contractual Arrangement	Bertrandus de Cunfaverio sells fief to Raimundus Faber *coltellarius*	Raimundus Faber *coltellarius* gives his wife Maria 150 solidos Toulouse, secured by the property	Raimundus Faber *coltellarius*, in his sickness, bequeaths the property to his brother Willelmus *coltellarius*, and gives his wife Maria 200 solidos Toulouse, secured by the property along with various mobile goods.	Maria, with the consent of her husband Jordanus ioculator, sells the house, which she received in lieu of cash from her deceased husband's estate, to Petrus *bovarius*	Petrus *bovarius* sells the fief to Arnaldus de Tolosa, *magister* of the house of the military temple of Toulouse (Templars)
Property owner	Sarracena de Nuer	Not listed	Not listed	Arnaldus Barravus holds property in mortgage	Poncius Arnaldus de Noerio and his mother Sarracena
Witnesses to original act	1187: Raimundus Faber *crosolerius,* Raimundus Martinus, Arnaldus de Castilone *ganterius,* Willelmus Raimundi *coltellarius,* Willelmus Oliarius, Guillemus	1187: Poncius de Mailaco, Arnaldus Johannes de Lantosuilla, Willelmus Oliarius, Raimundus Faber *crosolarius*, Guillemus	1189: Willelmus *pensator,* Stephanus de Cunfaver and Aicius his brother, Willelmus *coltellarius,* Guillemus	1192: Bernardus de Podio Siurano, Arnaldus *ortolanus,* Pillus Ardid, Raimundus *porquerius,* Raimundus Martinius, Petrus d'Audiuilla	1223 : Bernardus Aimericus, Phillippus Gaitapodium *publici notarii*, Bernardus de Samatano

Witnesses to 1223 copying of act	1223: Bernardus Aimericus, Phillippus Gaitapodium *publici notarii*, Bernardus de Samatano	1223: Bernardus Aimericus, Phillippus Gaitapodium *publici notarii*, Bernardus de Samatano	1223: Bernardus Aimericus, Phillippus Gaitapodium *publici notarii*, Bernardus de Samatano	1223: Bernardus Aimericus, Phillippus Gaitapodium *publici notarii*, Bernardus de Samatano	

With two ioculatores, two *cultellarii*, and a Petrus Rubeus in both documents, the two properties would seem to have clear links despite the twenty-year gap between the sale mentioning Arnaldus ioculator and Jordanus ioculator. But the final act, and the document's inclusion in the archival collection of the Order of Malta in Toulouse, connect the property both to the Templars and the Hospitallers in Toulouse, whose houses were near each other in Toulouse.[64] With the dissolution of the Templars in the fourteenth century, the property mentioned likely fell into the hands of the Hospitallers, resulting in this document appearing in their archives. The property is also described as being adjacent to the *honor* of Aiscius de Cunfaverio and his brother. It extends from the public road to the banks of the Garonne. The Temple and Hospital were by the Dalbade Church and a property anywhere along the *rue de la Dalbade* or *carraria cultelleriorum* would fit the description of being between a major public road and the banks of the Garonne. Finally, the 1195 act confirming the borders of the *salvetat* specifically mentions a "fevaliter de domina Sarracena," which provides one of the boundaries. Given

[64] Jean Coppolani, *Toulouse: Étude de Géographie Urbaine* (Toulouse: Privat, 1954), fig. 7.

that this fief is owned by a Sarracena de Noerio, a singular name, it is possible that this is the fief that was being used to delimit the *salvetat*.

A series of documents from 1188 to 1190 or 1191[65] further the connection of Jordanus, Maria, and Raimundus Faber to this area, and provide a surprisingly clear picture of a close-knit community living and working in the heart of medieval Toulouse. The earliest reference to Jordanus ioculator is in 1188 when an Arnaldus Bonus Homo sells two arpents of land to Willelmus Raimundus, prior of the Hospital of Saint-John of Jerusalem.[66] This hospital was the main house in Toulouse of the Hospitallers, formerly the hospital of Saint-Rémézy, and was located next to the Church of Saint-Rémézy, which was right by the Dalbade – they are 29 and 25 respectively in the map used above.[67] The charter states the plot of land being sold is between other holdings of the Hospitallers and extending from the brook of the "Cagalone" to the public road. Though the "Cagalone" remains unidentified the description of the land as, "duos arpentos infra terram mailolem scilicet unum arpentum de terra et aliud arpentum mailole cum terra in quam est" suggests a sizable plot outside of the city.[68]

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[65] The 3 documents dated from 1190 happen in January (ADHG H Malte Toulouse 3, 105), March (ADHG H Malte Toulouse 3, 106), and September (ADHG H Malte Toulouse 8, 16). However, for reasons that will be explained below, the document from September must predate the documents from January and March. The most likely explanation is that one of the scribes – all three documents are by different scribes – dated the start of a new year differently than the others (perhaps at Easter rather than Christmas or January 1st or vice versa). It is not clear which of them may have done so, however, and thus we cannot be sure if the September document should be dated from 1189 or if the other two documents should be dated from 1191.
[66] ADHG, H Malte Toulouse 3, 103.
[67] Mundy, *Ecclesiastical and Social History,* 51.
[68] ADHG H Malte Toulouse 3, 103: "Two arpents below (or south of) new vineyard land, namely, one arpent of earth and another arpent of new vineyard with the earth in which it is." Mundy notes "what was once a new vineyard was still called a 'malol' even when it had become old." Mundy, *Men and Women,* 132.

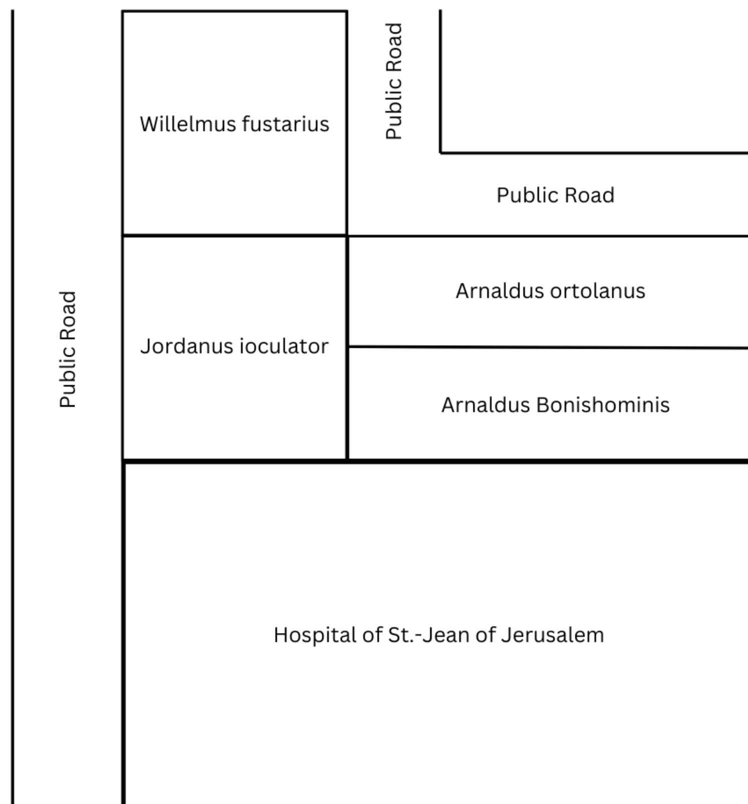
The witnesses to this act provide a basis for seeing connections through several different, seemingly purely transactional documents: Poncius *capellanus* (chaplain, though at this point it is also used as a last name), Arnaldus Gaucerandus, Petrus Vasco Pairolerius, Willelmus *fustarius* (carpenter), and Jordanus ioculator, Raimundus *porquerius* (swineherd or butcher), Raimundus Faber, Bernardus de Podio Siurano, and Guillelmus (who wrote the charter). Not only does this document again highlight the connection with trade workers, but it also connects Jordanus to Raimundus Faber. While a very common name, it seems likely that this is either Raimundus Faber *coltellarius*, whose widow Jordanus married, or Raimundus Faber *crosolerius*,[69] who witnessed the first two acts of the above five-act document. Either way, it begins to show a web of interactions, in which a circle of individuals repeatedly appears either buying or selling property or witnessing the transactions. Jordanus's appearance in the five-act document coincides with the appearance of several witnesses who appear throughout this series of documents, specifically Bernardus de Podio Siurano,[70] Arnaldus *ortolanus,* Pillus Ardid, and Raimundus *porquerius*. Two other witnesses seen in this 1188 document, Arnaldus Gaucerandus and Willelmus *fustarius*, also appear more than once in the following documents.

The next three documents in this series all deal with the same set of properties, held in fief by mostly the same set of individuals.[71] The below illustration is not meant to

[69] I have not been able to find a translation for *crosolerius*, but Mundy suggests it might mean "refiner." Mundy, *Society and Government,* 167.
[70] It is worth noting that given the frequency with which Bernardus de Podio Siurano appears in documents as a witness, it seems likely that he was a notary of some sort.
[71] The exception being a piece that is passed on from a father to daughter when he is ill.

be a definitive representation of the properties, but rather to provide the reader a simple visual image to refer to that shows how these properties may have been situated in relation to one another. I center Jordanus's property both in accordance with the focus of this work and because acts concerning his property provide the most information about surrounding properties.

Figure 4.6: Properties mentioned in HMT 3, 105; HMT 3, 106; HMT 8, 16



The first act chronologically is the sale at fief of a piece of property by the same prior Willelmus Raimundus of the hospital, to Jordanus ioculator.[72] The property is described as being among the *honor* of Willelmus *fustarius*, Arnaldus Bonihominis, Arnaldus *ortularii* (*ortolanus* in other documents), and another holding of the Hospital. Witnessing the act are Arnaldus Gaucerandus, Poncius *capellanus*, Raimundus Poncius de Triuilla, Johannes Gaita Podium and his brother Arnaldus Gaita Podium, Petrus Senerellus, Geraldus Pilus Arditus, Willelmus *fustarius*, Bernardus de Podio Siurano, and Guillelmus, who again served as the scribe. Here, we see not only several of the same names that appeared in the act of 1188, but we also learn that Jordanus lives in the immediate vicinity of Arnaldus Bonishominis, whose sale he witnessed, and Willelmus *fustarius*, who witnessed both sales.

Furthermore, the appearance of Arnaldus Bonishominis allows us to place these properties in the larger cityscape. An 1177 document mentions a Bonishominis de Dalbada, who can readily be identified as Arnaldus. The *condamina*, or farm, being sold is described as being "ubi uocant ad cagalonum" near land held by the Hospital and next to vines that belonged to Bonishominis.[73] Some of the witnesses of this sale include Arnaldus Gaucerandus and Poncius *capellanus* of Saint-Rémézy. In 1183, there is mention of an Arnaldis Bonihominis living in the *parrochiam* of the Dalbade Church, and one of the witnesses is Willelmus *fusterius*.[74] The commonness of the name and occupation makes it difficult to be sure that this is the same Willelmus *fusterius*. But a

[72] ADHG, H Malte Toulouse 8, 16.
[73] ADHG, H Malte Toulouse 3, 64.
[74] ADHG, E 579.

second 1183 document, which details the sale of the property Maria and Raymond, and later Maria and Jordan, would come to own, mentions a Willelmus *fusterius* as a witness.[75] With only five years between these documents and the next time he appears, and given the geographical focus of the properties mentioned, I believe this demonstrates a long tenure in this area and community by the same Willelmus *fusterius* and Arnaldus Bonishominis.

Placing Arnaldis Bonishominis in the area of the Dalbade, specifically identifying him as "of the Dalbade," suggests his primary residence is in the area surrounding the Dalbade Church. His property on the outskirts of town may bring in revenue, but the land in town is his home. Given the number of properties mentioned, the fact that *honores* and *domi* are being mentioned rather than *mailoles* and *arpentes*, and that the people living in the surrounding properties are craftsmen, it seems likely that the property next to Jordanus is the property in the city proper near the Dalbade. Perhaps Jordanus, Arnaldus and the rest live on the property between the church of Saint-Rémézy and the main entrance of the Hospital, which is described as having seven workshops. Though there is not sufficient evidence to prove this conjecture.[76]

In the next document in this series, Dominicus des Felgario and his wife Petrona, who was the daughter of Willelmus *fustarius*, give their holding to Guillelmus Raimundus (a common spelling variation for the above Willelmus) and Poncius

[75] ADHG, H Malte Toulouse 3, 143.

[76] This property is described in H Malte Toulouse 1, 89, H Malte Toulouse 8, 46, and H Malte Toulouse 8, 47. Guillelmus Raimundus gave the right to own and receive profits from this property and two others for the duration of their lives. In exchange, when they died or when they opted to take the habit or live in the Hospital, the land and its profits would go to the Hospital.

capellanus, here identified as the preceptor of the Hospital and all of the brothers of the Hospital of Saint-John of Jerusalem.[77] This property is described as being near the *honor* of Jordanus ioculator and "both public streets," as well as other holdings of the Hospital. It is more than the connection to Willelmus *fustarius* that integrates Dominicus into this group, however. In 1192, he is also referred to as the brother-in-law of Bernardus Bonushomo, who seems to have been a brother or son of Arnaldus. Both Dominicus and Bernardus are mentioned in the will of Petrus Arnaldus as well, with Dominicus being Petrus's godson and Bernardus being a *sponderi,* or executor, of the will and custodian of Petrus's minor children.[78] There is no explanation of what the connection is that makes Dominicus an "in-law," but nevertheless, we see once a maze of connections within this social group.

To add to this intricate web, Dominicus and Petrona sold Willelmus *fustarius*'s property with the counsel and consent of Vitales, chaplain of the Church of the Dalbade, Raimundus Faber, Arnaldus *ortolanus*, and Raimundus *porcarius*, who were the *sponderii* of Willelmus *fustarius*'s will.[79] The witnesses were Raimundus Arcmandus, Willelmus *pensator* (a money weight measurer perhaps), Bernadus de Podiosiurano, and

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[77] ADHG, H Malte Toulouse 3, 105.

[78] ADHG, E 2. Dominicus may be an early scion of the later Falgario family as well, though there is no concrete connection. The clearest lineage emerges in the mid-thirteenth century. See Mundy, *Society and Government*, 318-323 for the Falgario family history. As for Bernardus Bonushomo, the name Bonushomo is not as common as one would guess. Bernardus is seen in more documents and to a later date than Arnaldus, with the former appearing through 1226 (H Malte Toulouse 116, 25) and the latter appearing in only one document not mentioned here, dated 1209 (H Malte Toulouse 17, 14 and H Malte Toulouse 21, 89, which are copies of the same document). But Bernardus owned property as early as 1198, meaning it cannot be ruled out that they were brothers albeit a father/son relationship seems more likely.

[79] Thus, while this is dated January of 1190, and the previous document is dated September of 1190, this document must postdate the sale by Willelmus Raimundus to Jordanus ioculator or Willelmus *fustarius* would not have been alive to witness it. That it is the same Willelmus *fustarius* seems clear, as his property is mentioned, and when naming him the scribe has not included "qui fuit" to designate him as deceased.

Petrus de Audiuilla, who wrote the charter. This is the last document in which the Raimundus Faber clearly identifiable as a part of this social circle appears, lending credence to the idea that this could indeed be the Raimundus Faber *cultellarius*, who married Maria.[80] His disappearance from these archival records coincides with his sickness in 1189 and his death presumably shortly thereafter, as Maria was remarried by 1192.

The next act may give an even clearer timeline of when Raimundus Faber died. In March of 1190, Jordanus ioculator sells his fief back to Willelmus Raimundus and the Hospital. The surrounding properties identified, those of Arnaldus Bonihominis, Arnaldus *ortolanus*, Willelmus *fusterius*, and the Hospital, confirm that this is the same property that Willelmus Raimundus had sold to Jordanus only shortly before.[81] This document's place in the chronology of events, however, is hard to determine. As Willelmus *fustarius* is listed as deceased when his property is mentioned it must postdate the January 1190 document. Thus we can be sure this is a transaction where Jordanus bought a fief and then sold it shortly thereafter, rather than the other way around. However, the property is still identified by its connection to Willelmus, instead of by its new ownership either Willelmus *fustarius's* heir Petrona or the Hospital. This may just be a matter of convenience, given how recently deceased he was, and how many holdings the hospital itself had. It would be easier to identify the property as that having belonged

[80] There is a Raimundus Faber who acts as a witness in a 1202. H Malte Toulouse 8, 1. However, he is not clearly identifiable as part of this group or as Raimundus *crosolerius* (Raimundus *coltellarius* has to have passed by 1192 when Maria is married to Jordanus and selling the property). The gap in time, as well as geography (the 1202 sale deals with land to the southeast, some distance outside the city proper), and the commonness of the name lead me to believe this is an altogether separate Raimundus Faber.
[81] ADHG, H Malte Toulouse 3, 106.

to Willelmus *fustarius*, presumably for at least several years given how involved he was in the social circle, rather than as one of many potential properties of the Hospital or as property owned by Willelmus's daughter for a matter of months to a year. If read that way, this document makes sense as the third in the series due to other evidence. If the Raimundus Faber above was indeed Raimundus Faber *coltellarious*, it is possible that he had passed away by this point, as his sickness in the five-act document and disappearance from the community suggests. If Jordanus had then married Maria by the time of this document, then Jordanus's sale of the property would have coincided with the new couple co-habitating in the home Maria received upon her husband's death. Then in two years, for reasons we may never know, they sold that property as well.

The witnesses to this third document are also different form the others. Bernardus de Podio Siura is surely the same Bernardus de Podio Siurano seen above, and Pilisardiz is the Geraldus Pilus Arditus in the first document in the series. There is also a Forto de Devesa, Raimundus Vitales, Arnaldus de Hospitale, and Arnaldus Ferrucius, the last being the scribe. Given that scribes participate in the creation of many documents necessarily, Arnaldus Ferrucius provides no leads for dating this document. Arnaldus de Hospitale is nearly impossible to identify without an accompanying document that is clearly linked. Adding "de Hospitale" was a way to identify either a member of the order, or more often, a member of a well-known family, who had the same name as another member of that family. The two would be separated by where they lived or their

affiliation with a particular institution.[82] In the absence of more and explicit references to Arnaldus de Hospitale connecting him to a family, there is no way to identify him. Forto de Devesa provides slightly more information, in that he appears in several documents between 1183 and 1192 but mostly as a witness.[83] In a few of the documents other witnesses include familiar figures: Bernardus de Podio Siurano, Arnaldus Gaucerandus, and Poncius *capellanus*, though whether the last of these is the same individual is difficult to say.[84] Forto received land in 1186 that is near land held by the hospital, but it was a *condamina* and thus not likely in the immediate vicinity of the property at hand.[85] Ultimately, he sheds no further light on the details or chronology of this document. In the absence of more evidence, and perhaps out of an abundance of optimism, the timeline I propose above seems to me the most compelling.

The final document in which Jordanus appears is from 1198, where he is once again seen returning a fief to the Hospital.[86] But the prior at this time is Sancio Garsie, and the *honor* is between the public street and the *honor* of the child of Willelmus Socha, who is noted as deceased, and another holding of the Hospital. The witnesses are Bernardus Aimericus, a Brother Willelmus the Hospitaler, Willelmus Raimundus de Insula, Bernardus Poncius, son of Jacobi, Bernardus Podiosiurano and his son Bernardus,

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[82] See the Barravus de Hospitale as opposed to the Barravus de Ponte in the Barravus family history in Mundy, *Repression of Catharism*, 136-154.
[83] See E 506, H Malte Toulouse 1 74, H Malte Toulouse 1, 76, H Malte Toulouse 1, 80, and H Malte Toulouse 1, 13, as listed in Mundy's family histories in the Mundy Collection, H 145.
[84] See E 506, H Malte Toulouse 1, 76, H Malte Toulouse 1, 80 for Bernardus de Podio Siurano and Arnaldus Gaucerandus, see H Malte Toulouse 1, 13 for Bernardus de Podio Siurano and Poncius Capellanus.
[85] H Malte Toulouse 116, 10. In his files on the Devesia Family history, Mundy also notes that Forto de Devesa was a consul in 1227/1228, but he does not note the document in which he finds this information.
[86] H Malte Toulouse 3, 122.

Bernardus de Veteri Tolosa, Petrus Poncius, and Guillelmus, who wrote the charter. At this point, nearly a decade later, gone are the familiar individuals, even the leadership of the Hospital has changed. When and why Jordanus purchased this property, and whether or not Maria was still around and married to him, is not clear. But it is clear that things looked rather different in 1198 from 1188. It is my belief that Jordanus would have purchased land in the same area where he lived before, for professional reasons, but also likely for personal reasons – people become attached to familiar streets and landmarks. But there is little to corroborate this in the document. It is near holdings of the Hospital and public streets, which points to the same area but could describe several places. A reference to the sale including "clausuris ibi pertinentibus" suggests enclosures around the property. This recalls the property he and Maria sold, where they owned half of the enclosures on either side. But again, this is not a unique identifier. If that property had gone into Jordanus's hands again, that sale would surely have appeared in the five-act document, which provides a provenance of the property for its 1223 purchase by the Templars. Still, I believe the professional community and the power of nostalgia would be enough to draw a man who likely had to actively work all his life, but without more evidence, nothing firmer than a "hunch" can be put forth

Geraldus the Fiery-haired Jongleur

Before shifting away from these records, there is one more enigma lurking behind this series of documents: a repeated witness, listed as "Geraldus Pilus Arditus" in the first 1190 document, Pilisardiz in the third 1190 document, "Pillus Ardid" in the five-act document of 1192. Though not expressly called a jongleur in the document, Pillus Ardid,

or Pelardit once vernacularized, was admired enough by his fellow citizens to have a street named after him in the heart of Toulouse. Several documents from the thirteenth century refer to a street known as Pelardit le Jongleur. In 1274, a Marie de Monte Carmelo sold houses near the church of the Carmelites on a street "vulgarly called Pilarditi joculatoris."[87] The reference to the church of the Carmelites helps situate the street in the same area as the *rue des Jongleurs*. As mentioned above, the Carmelites moved into the Jewish quarter, near *rue des Jongleurs* as a way of displacing the Jews in the area. In fact, one reference to the *rue de Pelardit* from 1307, documents a Jew named Bon Mancip from l'Isle de Jourdain selling his house on the street "Pilar diti Joculatoris" to Etienne Bergougnan.[88] Two years later, this same Bon Mancip had a second property sold, this one on the rue des jongleurs, to Guilhem le Don de Castelgarric.[89] Though two different locations, both near the *rue des Jongleurs*, have been proposed for the *carraria Pilarditi ioculatoris,* Elisabeth Chauvin's dissertation, *L'evolution de la rue des filatiers*, wherein she tracks the history of the modern *rue des Filatiers,* puts this debate to rest. Using cadastral records from the municipal archives of Toulouse, she shows the name *rue de Pelardit* being used for the section of the *rue des Filatiers* between the *rue des Carmes* and the *rue Joutx-Aigues*, as late as the 18th century.

[87] PAN, J 327 4 xiii.

[88] PAN, JJ 44 f.18r, doc no. 31, which begins on f.17v. This sale was likely part of a larger project to rid Toulouse of Jews by purchasing their property. For more information on the Jewish community in Toulouse at this time and this attempt at expulsion see Yves Dossat, "Les Juifs."

[89] PAN, JJ 40 f. 89v, doc no. 172.

Figure 4.7: Rue de Pelardit le Jongleur

The *rue de Pelardit* then, was a section of one of the largest streets in the central area of the Cité of Toulouse. But the knowledge of who Geraldus Pilus Arditus was and what made him so esteemed amongst his fellow Toulousains that they named this street after him is sadly lost to time.[90] We have no extant copies of his work, if indeed he composed any songs versus primarily performing, and only one contemporary literary

[90] Though Pilus Arditus is discussed John Mundy, gestured to by Pierre Salies, and receives passing mention in multiple other pieces of scholarship, until my archival trip to France in November of 2021, there were only two known documents to mention the man himself (as opposed to the street). It was only once I unearthed H Malte Toulouse 3, 106 and H Malte Toulouse 8, 16 that his connection to Jordanus became clearer, and H M Toulouse 8, 16 remains the only known document to record his first name, Geraldus, which was previously unknown. Knowing that Geraldus is his first name, and "pilus arditus" is merely an appellation to identify him leads me to a small, yet intimate conclusion about this mysterious figure – He was a redhead (pilus meaning hair or pelt and arditus meaning fiery), which would have been a specific, unique characteristic by which to identify him among the many other Geralduses.

reference to him. A minor troubadour named Uc de Lescura (or l'Escura) lists several of his contemporaries in his only extant song, a sirvente. He says he does not fear Peire Vidal for his vocabulary, nor Albertet for his enunciation, nor Perdigon for his sad song, presumably citing each performers' strength or greatest feat. This list continues and eventually he says, "nor Pelardit for his imitations."[91] This scant reference to a talent for mimicry is all we know of Pelardit's performance prowess.

Other than the three documents in which he serves as a witness, only one archival document attests to the life of Pelardit. A document from 1203 shows him holding a plot of land Lardenne by Saint-Cyprien.[92] One could speculate that the existence of the "Casse Lardit" district in Saint-Cyprien is a remnant of the famous jongleur who once lived there.[93] Lardenne is a large area outside of Toulouse, where there were vineyards in the twelfth and thirteenth century.

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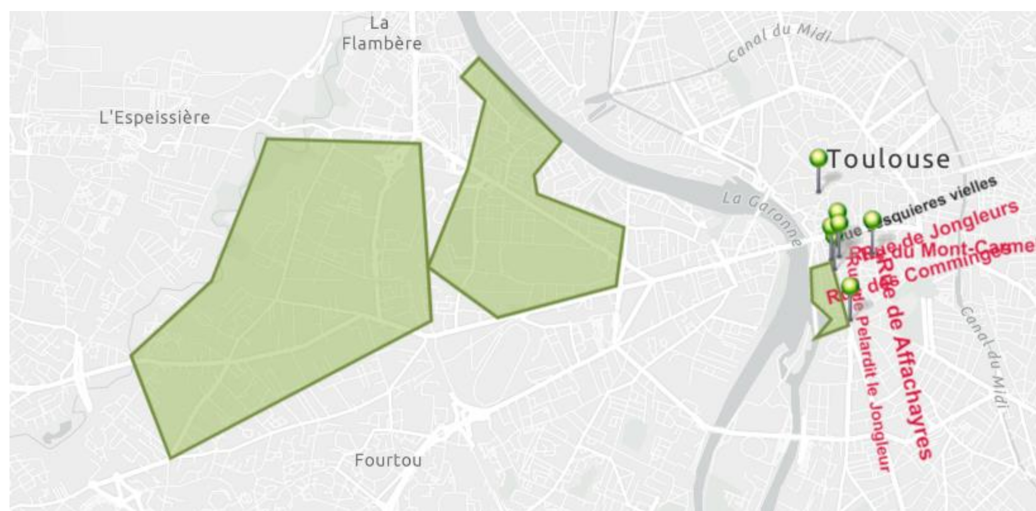
[91] *De mots ricos no tem Peire Vidal*, *ni N'Albertet de sa votz a ben dir / ni·N Perdigon de greu sonet bastir, / ni·N Pegulhan de chansos metr'en sal, / ni de gabar sos chans N'Arnaut Romieu, / ni de lausar Fonsalada son fieu, / ni·N Pelardit de contrafar la gen, / ni·N Gaulaubet de viular coyndamen.* Published in Martín de Riquer, *Los Trovadores: Historia, Literaria Y Textos*, vol. II, II vols. (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1975), 927-930. Of the listed performers, only Peire Vidal is well-known to us, though there will be a Galaubet discussed later in this chapter.

[92] ADHG, Daurade 149.

[93] Chalande gestures to the etymology of Casse Lardit as coming from Pelardit, but assiduously avoids connecting the name Pelardit to an individual, let alone a jongleur. He argues that "jaculatorum" is a translation rather than the original word, and gestures to the late medieval and early modern Joglars and Jouglars to argue that this cannot be taken to mean that there was an individual named Pelardit who was a jongleur in twelfth century Toulouse. Jules Chalande, *Histoire Des Rues de Toulouse : Monuments, Institutions, Habitants*, Editions des régionalismes, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Editions des Régionalismes & PRNG Editions, 2018), ebook location 4653. Given the archival evidence that has since surfaced through Mundy's research and my own, I think that Chalande's argument against the existence of Pelardit the jongleur can be sufficiently countered.

Figure 4.8: To the left is the modern-day area of Lardenne, to the right the modern-day area of Casselardit



Unfortunately, the beginning of this document has various rips and holes, making it difficult to be sure what the exact relationships are among the plots of land. However, a nearby piece of land is owned by an Arnaldus Barravus, likely the same one that held the mortgage on the land that Jordanus and Maria sold together.[94] Given that he lends his name to a street near the *rue des Jongleurs* and that this land outside of town seems to be mostly vineyards and farming property, it seems likely that this was an additional property Pelardit owned as a source of revenue. Pelardit's presence as a witness to multiple property transactions by Jordanus probably points to a close neighborly and collegial relationship between the two performances. The logical conclusion is that Pelardit lived on the street which was named after him, close to his professional community and near his closest attested to associate, Jordanus.

[94] No other Arnaldus Barravus is attested to in this well-known family, and the timeline, economics, and social groupings align.

However fleeting a glance, the above documents paint a clear picture of a close community, where individuals lived and worked together, bearing witness, literally, to each other's life events. By and the large the individuals in this community were craft workers, living in the heart of Toulouse in one of the oldest parts of the city. They bought and sold property, but almost exclusively at fief, likely being too poor to own the land outright. But this did not stop them from striving, and at times maybe thriving. If we choose to be optimistic, we may even read the story of Jordanus and Maria's marriage after the death of her husband, perhaps a friend of Jordanus's, as a story of comforting a friend or acquaintance in a time of grief, particularly since Maria was financially provided for as a widow. The substantial property and money at stake belonged to Maria, with Jordan being a happy beneficiary of marrying well.

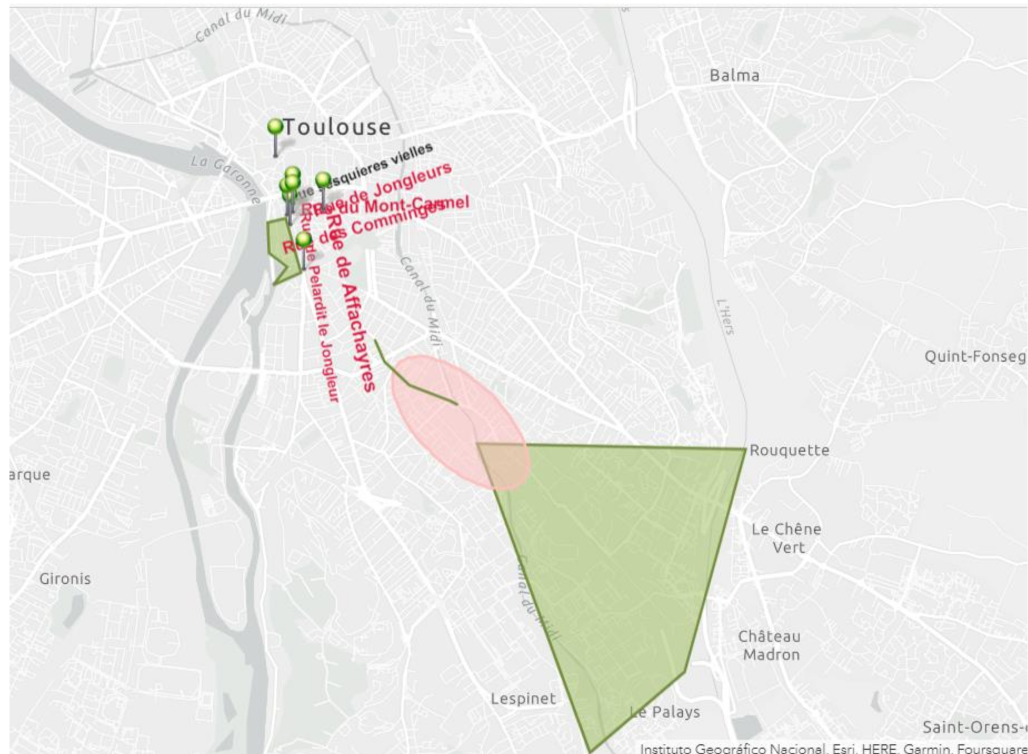
On the Outskirts: Meloni, Tholosanus, Galaubetus, and Tolosanus

Though Pelardit marks the end of the clearly demarcated social circle in the area of the Dalbade Church, records a handful of other ioculators exist, some of which have possible, though tenuous connections to community seen above. For example, in 1202 a Bertrandus de Sancto Lo gave in fief to Aimericus, prior of the Hospital, two arpents of new earth as well as two arpents of new vineyards and the land they are on. The arpents of new earth are in a place called *campum ferranum* between the *honor* of Willelmi de Vadigia, Meloni ioculator, Stephani de Rouer and holding from the *vallo de Sauzato* up to the public road.[95] Though precisely what the *Sauzato* was, a hand dug canal or a small stream off shoot from the Hers river, is debated, its location is not. The former *rue du*

[95] ADHG, H Malte Toulouse 3, 189.

Sauzat, now *rue du Midi*, and the *rue des Trente-six-ponts*, now *rue Leo-Legrange*, made up at least part of the area that ran along water of the *Sauzat*.[96] Mundy identified *campum ferranum* through multiple documents as being near modern-day Montaudran,[97] allowing us to approximate, albeit broadly, where the properties being discussed were located.

Figure 4.9: Rue du Sauzat and rue des Trente-six-ponts, stemming from the Canal du Midi, with the Hers River far to the right. In green is approximate area of modern-day Montaudran and in red is the most likely location for the property discussed in HMT 3 189.



Though this property is far afield from the group by the Dalbade Church, familiar names appear. There is a Willelmus *pensator* and Bernardus Bonihominis who act as a

[96] Salies argues that the river was, in fact, a hand dug canal, and the names of the streets in the area where it once was attest to that. Along with rue du *Sauzat* and *rue des Trente-six-ponts* there is the *rue de la Restanque*, the last of these being evocative of a reservoir or dam. He theorizes that this canal would have had to coincide with the path of the current *Canal du Midi*, explaining why there is so little archaeological evidence to be had concerning the *Sauzat*. Salies, II, 495.

[97] Mundy, *Society and Government*, 346.

witness, as well as a Poncius Rubei and Petrus *bovarii* holding land nearby. Ultimately, we cannot be sure that ten years later this is the same Willelmus *pensator* or Petrus *bovarii* or that this Poncius Rubei or Bernardus Bonihominis bear any relationship to the individuals above, though the latter is a particular enough name to make a compelling case. Yet, however tenuous the connections, they are there to be made, and much as with Pelardit, it seems unlikely that Meloni lived this far from town. Perhaps he was a successful performer as well who was able to purchase additional land for its revenue. A modicum of evidence for this conclusion appears in an 1189 document about the litigation between Tholosanus ioculator and his stepdaughter Sclarmunda over the rights to a *casal*, which Tholosanus and Sclarmunda's mother, Petrona, had received from Tholosanus's brother. Ultimately, Tholosanus was granted the use of the *casal* for life and half was his for eventual disposition while the other half was reserved for Petrona's heirs.[98] This slice of life tells us little about Tholosanus or ioculators, except that the *casal* mentioned is between a *casalem Meloni* and *casalem Aldoyni*. Again, the gap of over a decade causes doubt as to whether this is the same Meloni. However, given that Meloni is an uncommon name and the frequency with which members of the same profession lived near each other, it seems plausible that this is the same Meloni. Two appearances in the record ten years apart might also gesture to a long, successful career, resulting in Meloni having the financial capacity to purchase extra land.

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[98] PAN, JJ 21, fold. 86r-87v, published in *Histoire générale de Languedoc*, ed. Claude de Vic and Joseph Vaissette, 16 vols. (Toulouse: Privat, 1872-92), VIII, no. 65. - Check

A Galaubetus ioculator appears in a document from 1200, purchasing land from Willelmi Iohannis Aurioli *textoris* (weaver). Though there are no familiar surrounding individuals in this document, two possibilities arise to connect Galaubetus to our larger network of performers, neither of which can be definitively proven. The first relies on the assumption that Willelmi Iohannis Aurioli lived on or near the *rue de Auriol*. If the property being sold was on the *rue de Auriol,* present day *rue d'Aristote*, that would place a property belonging to Galaubetus near the property owned by Meloni in *campum ferrannum.*[99]

Figure 4.10: Rue de Auriol highlighted in green, branching off of the rue de Sauzat

[99] Salies, 58 and 78. Making this conclusion more unsure is that Salies does not date the earliest reference to the *rue de Auriol,* simply that it is the "ancien nom" of *rue d'Aristote.* Given the distance from the city, it is harder to take this at face value as having existed in the twelfth century, when small rural roads were underdeveloped.

However, unlike most rural property transactions seen in this period, the document does not refer to arpents of *terra* or *mailoles.* Instead, it refers to a *casal* and the *domus* and *edificiis* therein, which is commonly seen in urban property. This does not preclude the possibility of a rural estate with many buildings and enclosures, but it does temper any cognitive leaps one may be tempted to make. A final conjecture about Galaubetus is that he may have been the Gaulaubetus mentioned in Uc de Lescura's song. Uc mentions more than one Toulousan entertainer, and Galaubetus was not a popular name. In fact, Galaubetus seemed so unlikely a name that in writing about him, John Mundy corrected the spelling to Galaubertus, still an unusual name but following more familiar conventions.[100] The shift from "a" to "au" would be a smaller deviation given the frequent interchanging of vowels in Latin and Occitan in this time period. If this is the same Galaubetus referenced by Uc, then he was surely somewhat popular in his time, and to his dossier of attributes we can add that he was a "graceful fiddler."[101]

A man about whom we can say even less is the Tolosanus ioculator who appears in 1214 in a document that indicates there was a rent strike against the Hospital.[102] Based on the document, he lived with an Albiam and his siblings Raimundus de Tabula and Johannam, Lumbardam de Carcassonna, Bernardum Escuderium, Raimundus *pelliparius*,

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[100] Mundy lists him as Galaubertus in *Ecclesiastical and Social History*, 194. In the transcription of the document in his notes Mundy includes the parenthetical "obvios [sic] Galaubert" emphasis his, Mundy Collection F77.

[101] Riquer, 927-930.

[102] ADHG, H Malta Toulouse 1, 21. It is possible though it seems unlikely that it is the same Tolosanus as above though it seems unlikely given the popularity of the name Tolosanus. If the Tholosanus above had a stepdaughter old enough to advocate for herself in 1189, he was likely already somewhat older, perhaps in his late 30s or early 40s. Another twenty-five years would put him in his mid-sixties. Though a lot can happen in that amount of time, it does not seem to me to be likely that after being granted the use of a *casal* for life in what was then middle-age that Tholosanus would give up that home and security for any reason.

and Sabdam, the wife of Raimundi Garrigue, none of whom provide a foothold in the archives. The document also does not provide any of the answers one would want as to why and how a rent strike was happening. The property in which they lived belonged to the deceased Pons David, who made the Hospital his heir. Pons was a well-to-do businessman from a family that owned several shares of the Toulouse mint. In 1180, Pons surrenders his right to most of his family's properties to his brother, Bertrand, retaining only land around modern day Pechdavid and the waterfront of the Garonne and a third part of the family share of the mint.[103] The vagueness of these descriptions and the quantity of land the David family owned makes it impossible to locate the house Tolosanus lived in. We might suppose, given the involvement of the Hospital and a ioculator, that the property is in the area of the Dalbade. But there are limited possibilities for this, as Pons specifically surrenders his right to the family property in the *salvetat*.

[103] ADHG, H Malte Toulouse 1, 100.

Figure 4.11: Zoomed in image of the salvetat of Toulouse highlighted in green.

Though we do not know where the property of the rent strike is located, there is perhaps an explanation for the rent strike itself. Pons David seems to have been a well-known moneylender and usurer. Mundy suggests that the tenants were hoping to get restitution for usury. Given that this was the year before Simon de Montfort took over the city of Toulouse in the early years of the Albigensian Crusade and the close association between heresy and usury, it is possible the tenants thought mounting pressures might lead the Hospital to make restitution. In 1215, the bishop's court on usury required the Hospital, as Pons's heir, to pay restitution to a knight named Boson, who had borrowed money from Pons.[104] Boson's claim comes in 1215, when Simon de Montfort has already taken the city. This might be why his claim was more successful than that of Tolosanus

[104] ADHG, E 508, transcription published in Mundy, *Liberty and Political Power*, 208-209. For further details see David family history in Mundy, *Repression of Catharism,* 203-208.

and those he was living with. Interestingly, Pons did provide for Raimundus *pelliparius* in his will, dated 1208. He gave Raimundus and his wife and daughter a vineyard in *clausu de Restacano,* related to the *rue de la Restanque*, near Lespinet, and thus in the area of the *Sauzat* shown above.[105] Perhaps the Hospital had not yet paid its restitution, which could sometimes take years, and Raimundus was trying to press the issue. Unfortunately, it did not work, as not only did the court decide in favor of the Hospital in this case, ordering the tenants to pay their rent, but they also ordered Raimundus to leave the house.[106]

The final attestation of a ioculator owning a fief is in 1253, when Willelmus ioculator is seen holding property near Arnaldus Columbi, Petrus de Caercino, Arnaldus de Castro Novo, Bocabruni, and Johannes Fabri Sabaterii. Due to the late date of this document it is unsurprising that there are no repeated individuals from earlier acts, though the Castro Novos were a large Toulouse family.[107] There is also a Petrus Guilabertus who witnesses the act, perhaps related to the Arnaldus Guilabertus who witnesses the act involving Meloni ioculator. This may lead us to tentatively posit that Willelmi lived or owned property on the outskirts of town. However, not only does this document discuss *casales* and *domi* rather than *terra* and *mailol*, but there is also a Marchus de Coquinis. "De Coquinis" refers to the area of the Bourg near St. Pierre-des-Cuisines mentioned earlier where a group of leather craftsmen lived and worked, and hence could just as easily pull us in the opposite direction. The only landmark mentioned

[105] ADHG, H Malte Toulouse 1, 17.
[106] Perhaps, though it is impossible to know, this is the same Raimundus *pelliparius* seen near St.-Pierre-des-Cuisines in 1218.
[107] See the Castronovo family history in Mundy, *Repression of Catharism,* 178-190.

in the sale is a well, though there is no indication as to where this well was. Overall, to locate Willelmi more precisely one would need to unearth more archival documents from the mid-thirteenth century involving some of the same individuals.

Hello, is it me you're looking for?: Absences in the Sources

This careful inventory of the records of ioculators is almost as curious in what it lacks as what it contains. Notably absent are any ioculators who can be clearly identified as living on the *rue des jongleurs*, a curious fact which I can only explain as an effect of "survivorship bias."[108] The ioculators represented in the record do not represent all the ioculators there were in Toulouse in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. Moreover, the ioculators seen must have had some level of financial success to be able to buy and sell fiefs, and in some cases additional properties as well. These records were all also preserved by religious institutions, because the properties being discussed were at one time owned by the institutions. Thus, it is no surprise that the community of ioculators that we do find are located in the area surrounding religious institutions. The *rue des jongleurs* is slightly farther west and as discussed above, sandwiched between the Jewish quarter and the street of the tanners. The former would preclude religious

[108] The most common example used to demonstrate survivorship bias is damaged plans that have returned safely from missions, common attributed to Abraham Wald's World War II study. According to the narrative, Wald suggested adding armor to future planes in the places that had the fewest bullet holes in the damaged plane. Though it seems counterintuitive, Wald explained that the areas riddled with bullet holes in surviving planes showed that the planes could survive damage in those areas and return safely. Planes hit in the areas least represented by the surviving planes were the least likely to return home safely, meaning that they were the most vulnerable. Thus inferring the unseen data of the planes that did not survive to be studied in the first place. There is debate as to whether or not Wald actually made these arguments, but it remains a useful example of the phenomenon. See Bill Casselman, "The Legend of Abraham Wald," *American Mathematical Society*, 2022, sec. Feature Column, http://www.ams.org/publicoutreach/feature-column/fc-2016-06 and Marc Mangel and Francisco J. Samaniego, "Abraham Wald's Work on Aircraft Survivability," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 79, no. 386 (1984): 259–67.

institutions until the Carmelites took over the space in the mid-thirteenth century; the latter would simply lower the value and desirability of the land overall.

The second notable absence is *ioculatrices*, or women performers. The women mentioned in these documents are mothers, sisters, cousins, or wives. Many likely had professions but they remain unidentified, rendering them invisible for our purposes. There surely were women performers, but the compounding factors of class, wealth, and gender bar them from the archival record. The exclusion of ioculatrices from legitimizing spaces, such as the historical record, will continue to pervade this chapter's narrative of community and social status. As the renown of Pelardit suggests, even at that time and even with the stigma of their profession, male jongleurs were able to reach a level of fame and renown that their female counterparts, both those selling performance and those selling sex, did not.

Go sister, flow sister: Expelling Sex Workers from the City

Locating individuals selling sex in the twelfth century is an even more difficult task than finding entertainers, as there is no known archival documentation of commercial sex in Occitania prior to the thirteenth century. The earliest record, a custom from Toulouse from 1201, however, does specify a location that citizens claimed was particularly rife with sex workers. According to Bernard Raymond and the good men (*probi homines*) of the *rue de Comminges*, "public harlots" (*meretrices publice*) were causing "great evil and damage" (*magnum malum et dampnum*), day and night to all the

residents.[109] The good men argued that an existing law stated that *meretrices publice* should not live within the walls of the city.[110] As such, they requested the consuls expel these women from the town, and the consuls did so, ruling, "no *meretrices publice* shall stay nor live in any way or for any time within the walls of the city of Toulouse or in its suburbs."[111] The consuls further ruled that should any *meretrix publica* violate this custom the good citizens should notify the vicar. If the vicar failed to immediately expel the woman from the town, the good men themselves could remove her without fear of punishment.[112]

This act was the first many relegating sex workers outside the walls of cities. But before examining the rule being put in place, it is worth noting the information this provides on where sex work was happening. The *rue de Comminges*, known today as the *rue des Moulins*, was right by the waterfront, less than half a mile from the *rue des Jongleurs*, intersecting with *the rue de la Dalbade*.[113]

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[109] AM Toulouse AA 1, no. 27, fol. 37v-38. Translation by Otis Cour, 17.

[110] While the extant documents refer to this law as a "constitutio," or formal law, I am inclined to agree with John Mundy that the original wording was more likely consuetudo, indicating a custom. See Mundy, *Men and Women*, 67.

[111] AM Toulouse AA 1, no. 27, fol. 37v-38. Translation by Otis Cour, 17.

"… quod nulla meretrix publica in predicta carraria nec infra muros urbis Tolose et suburbii non permaneret nec ullo modo aliquo tempore habitaret." Published in R. Limouzin-Lamothe, *La Commune de Toulouse et les Sources de son Histoire (1120-1249): Étude Historique et Critique Suivie de l'Édition du Cartulaire du Consulat*, vol. XXVI, Bibliothèque Méridionale 2 (Toulouse: Privat, 1932), 316-317.

[112] Otis Cour, 17.

[113] Mundy, *Men and Women,* 66 and Salies, 1, 305.

Figure 4.12: Location of rue de Comminges

Though there are no extant records of the earlier law referred to in the 1201 document, if the good men of the *rue de Comminges* are to be believed, the presence of sex work in the city was nothing new, and nor were the attempts to get rid of it. The success of those previous attempts could only be, at best, mixed since women were still selling sex on the *rue de Comminges*. There is no way to tell what year the referred to law is from, but if there were sex workers present in abundance enough to wreak the havoc the good men accuse them of, it seems likely that sex work had been occurring on the *rue de*

Comminges for some time. This supports Leah Otis-Cour's argument that sex work was tacitly accepted by authorities in the twelfth century and provides a starting location for the movement, geographical and social, of women selling sex over the course of the later Middle Ages. Here we see women selling sex within the city walls, positioned between the heart of town and the waterfront.[114]

[114] Ironically, the waterfront was likely not the most lucrative source of business for these women. The Garonne was a notoriously unpredictable river, with its greatest volume coming in the spring when ocean rains and melted snow from the Pyrenees flowed into it, while during the summer it could be quite sluggish. The rains from the mountains combined with the steep slopes of the upper Garonne valley also meant that the river flooded frequently, sometimes with great speed and huge volumes of water. The area where these women lived was likely not valued as much as other lands, because houses, crops, and lives could be lost in these floods. For more on the topography of this area and the Garonne river's flow see Wolfe, *Commerces et Marchands*, 4 specifically, 3-6 more generally. The second factor working against commerce on the Garonne was the increasing number of tolls levied on it throughout the twelfth and thirteenth century, deincentivizing riverine trade. There is evidence of wood, stone, wheat, wine and more traveling along the Garonne, but never in the great quantities one might expect. See Wolff, *Commerces et Marchands*, 15-16, 451-452 and Charles Higounet, "Un Mémoire Sur Les Péages de La Garonne Au Début Du XIVe Siècle," *Annales Du Midi* 61, no. 5–6 (1949): 320–24.

Figure 4.13: Close up of rue de Comminges in relation to rue des Jongleurs

The 1201 Toulouse document also brings up the perennial historical question: to what degree was a given law or custom enforced? The answer, as always, is complicated. In 1271, sex workers again found themselves forbidden to ply their trade in a certain area, when a particularly vitriolic rule was passed regarding their habitation in Saint-Cyprien, an unfortified suburb west of the Garonne. Documentation for the existence and development of the Saint-Cyprien area during the Middle Ages is sparse, but it seems most of the early development was in the area between the Pont Vieux, which was the old aqueduct, and the Pont Neuf de la Daurade.[115] Once again, residents had complained of

[115] Catalo and Cazes, 151-153.

the behavior of the women selling sex on their street, and this time, the vicar intervened to authorize the citizens living on the named streets, near the Pont Neuf de la Daurade and the Pont Vieux, to chase the women "to the gravel" at the edge of the Garonne River.[116] As Otis-Cour notes, the act of 1271 has a more violent tenor than the act of 1201. It gives the citizens the right not only to expel the women from the neighborhood, but to strip them and lead them clothed or nude to the vicar for punishment.[117] A concentration of sex workers in Saint-Cyprien, again enough to raise the ire of neighbors, located right across the river from the *rue de Comminges*, would seem to suggest a measure of success to the 1201 custom. The women moved across the river, to the unfortified part of town, and began anew there.

[116] AM Toulouse II 77/3, 29 avril 1271, "…quod de cetero nulla meretrix publica audeat stare vel essere vel apararire publice seu facere suum pecatum seu pecata seu fornicari vel se permitere cognosci carnaliter ab aliquo in tot illo gravairollo seu loco ubi vocatur ad gravairollum Sancti Subrani quod est ultra Garronam inter flumine Garrone et stratam de Saxcis nec in aliquo alio loco apud Sanctum Subrarum," as cited in Agathe Roby, *La Prostitution Au Moyen Age: Le Commerce Charnel En Midi Toulousain Du XIII Au XVI Siecle* (Villemur-sur-Tarn: éditions Loubatières, 2021), 138.

[117] AM Toulouse, II 77/3, 29 avril 1271, "possint eam vel eas sua propria auctoritate expeller inde et denudare et ipsas ad dictum dominum vicarium vel ejus successorem vel successores adducere nudas vel indutas puniendas ad arbitrium ipsius domini vicarii vel ejus successorum." Otis-Cour, 21.

Figure 4.14: Map showing Pont Neuf de la Daurade and Pont Vieux, 14 and 21 respectively

A 1296 commentary on the customs of Toulouse, however, suggests the 1201 custom was not wholly successful. The commentary poses the question: is a man guilty of adultery if he goes into a house where there are "women for money" and sleeps with a woman he believes to be unmarried, but who is actually married? As an example, the

commentary cites a "house of Madame Cagarafes in *carriera Bertrandi David*."[118] The street of *Bertrandi David* was just a few blocks north of the *rue des Jongleurs* in the heart of town, near the stone market and grain market.[119] Clearly the consuls were not successful in eradicating all commercial sex from inside the city walls. There are no documents suggesting this was an officially sanctioned brothel, but it is clearly a functioning brothel that escaped, or ignored, the expulsion act. Yet, unlike the other earlier documents, this reference points to a specific house, rather than a group of women selling sex on the street. The class difference between street-walking and working in a brothel is not clear at this time and seems unlikely to follow any explicit rules, but Mundy's assertion that this may be a more upscale establishment based on its ability to persist seems sound.[120]

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[118] "Item queritur si conjugatus accedat ad solutam an committat adulterium. Respondeo non per legem et ita vidi observari in causa Arnaldi Ramundi qui fuit absolutus per sentenciam, qui erat conjugatus et fuerat inventus cum soluta. Item queritur si conjugatus accedat ad domum ubi communiter reperiuntur mulieres pro peccunia ut puta in domo de Nag.Cagarafes in carriera Bertrandi David, credens hebere rem cum soluta et erat uxorata, an committat adulterium. Respondeo non, quia locus ipsum excusat argumento legis." Published in Henri Gilles, *Les Coutumes de Toulouse (1286) et Leur Premier Commentaire (1296)* (Toulouse: Imprimerie M. Espic, 1969), 255-256.

[119] The *carraria Bertrandi David* no longer exists today, having been replaced by the much larger and longer *Rue de Metz,* which extends and cuts across several blocks that the older street did not. Salies, 146. Chalande, II, 28-29. This Bertrand David is also the older brother of Pons David, discussed earlier in the chapter. See Mundy's David family history in Mundy, *Repression of Catharism,* 203-208.

[120] Mundy, *Men and Women*, 68.

Figure 4.15: Carraria de Bertrandi David highlighted in red

Cobbling together the available evidence, we find jongleurs and sex workers working and living near each other in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. The existence of the *rue des Jongleurs* and the extant archival records suggest a community of entertainers and other artisans that lived in the heart of the city in the latter half of the twelfth century. Close to the *rue des jongleurs* and even closer to the Jordanus ioculator and his cohorts, on the *rue de Comminges*, enough women were selling sex in the late twelfth century to elicit a new custom demanding their removal from the street in 1201. Though the evidence is limited, what is available suggests that all types of sex workers were frequenting similar areas in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. Though this

confluence may have been thriving for many years, the visibility of it in the archives is short lived. In the later thirteenth century, we find women selling sex being censured, this time in the Saint-Cyprien region, between the new and old bridge, in the areas of early development of the suburb. The one brothel seen in the city proper, the house of Madame Cagarafes, farthest afield from the main locus of activity but just a short walk from the *rue des Jongleurs*, was an exclusive establishment of a different ilk than those the sex work seen on the *rue de Comminges*. This dual movement, into specific houses or out of the town altogether would come to define the experience of those selling sex in the south of France in the later Middle Ages.

I'm your private dancer, a dancer for money: Social shifts in the status of musicians

Language shows the change in social status of performers starting in the second half of the thirteenth century as the word *menestrel* begins to be employed and the term *jongleur* or ioculator, slowly disappears. *Menestrel*, coming from the Latin word *ministrellus*, meaning "little officer," denoted a skilled musician who was part of the court staff or employed by the civic government.[121] Using civic employment records from an array of towns in the south of France, Gretchen Peters argues that music and musicians in the late Middle Ages became an important battleground for urban governments to demonstrate their independence and prestige, and that "the emblematic use of musicians by city governments during the end of the Middle Ages resulted in an

[121] Charles-Dominique, 33.

increase in status for musicians."[122] As Luc Charles-Dominique puts it: "They act as sound coats of arms."[123] In the twelfth to the mid-thirteenth century, according to Charles-Dominique, *jonglerie* was characterized by informal, verbal arrangements, and there was no professional organization on a large scale. While there were court entertainers who maintained steady and lucrative employment, the average jongleur performing on the street was employed on a short-term basis. But as city governments began to employ musicians on a regular basis the musical profession began to transform into a more regular and legitimate form of employment.

Coinciding with this new and more legitimate form of employment was the proliferation of confraternities and guilds for musicians. Though it is not possible to date the precise beginnings of these groups, the earliest attested to record is of the Saint-Julien of Minstrels in Paris in 1321. Many of the confraternities were professional and religious organizations. Thus, as part of their written rules, members must be of a "good and honest life" and meet certain religious obligations and duties to the larger community. Codified in the existence of the groups, therefore, is a moral code of conduct as well as a professional code of conduct.[124] There is also, of course, a dialectic at play, as the profession begins to be more prestigious, it draws in people from higher social classes, as

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[122] Gretchen Peters, *The Musical Sounds of Medieval French Cities: Players, Patrons, and Politics, Paperback (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016),* specifically 218-219. In "Du Jongleur," Charles-Dominique also argues that these changes are part of a larger political change and tensions between the urban elite and the royal government.

[123] "Ils font office de blasons sonores." - Charles-Dominique, 34.

[124] Charles-Dominique, 35. See Carol Symes, *A Common Stage: Theater and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007) for more on early confraternities in France.

well as lower social classes, and as the profession begins to be populated with those of higher social classes alongside those of lower social classes, it becomes more prestigious.

Again, terminology bears out the specific social connotations of these changes. Twelfth century performers often played *bas*, or “soft” instruments, such as the lyre, the viol, and other string instruments. Those in the confraternities and those hired to play in civic rituals were masters of *haut* instruments, sometimes translated as “loud” or “hard” instruments, and consisting of horns, trumpets, drums, oboes, and others. The “loudness” of these instruments was part of their appeal as status symbols for the urban governments. But the translations “hard” and “soft” do not capture the social implications of designating instruments as “haut” and “bas,” literally meaning “high” and “low.” As Charles-Dominique explains *haut* is synonymous with nobility and *bas* with lower classes. For example, the two words designate which chapels are to be used by nobility versus servants in royal residences, as well as a hierarchy of instruments.[125]

But where were performers geographically during this time of increased status? In the twelfth century, we are able to track performers through their professional appellations in the archival record. But the means of tracking performers in the twelfth century are obsolete by the fourteenth century. Whereas the ioculatores of the twelfth century are clearly a grouping of individuals bound by profession rather than family, Jean Menestrel and his sons are just as clearly a family unit that no longer engages in the menestrel profession. In the entirety of Peters’ comprehensive archival study of

[125] Charles-Dominique, 34.

musicians in French cities in the late Middle Ages, there are only two musicians with names that point to a historical familial engagement with performance: an Anthoni Trompeta, who was an official trumpeter for Toulouse in 1485 and a Jehan le Menestrey, hired for Advent in 1421 in Dijon.[126] Even these point to the shift in the musical community, as the latter is a "Menestrey" instead of a Joculator, and the former is a "Trompeta" pointing to the increased specialization within performance and the specific use of certain instruments for civic festivities.[127] This further proves that those traditionally engaged in jonglerie had moved into a new social class with new occupations. Where they can be found in the fourteenth century, they are far removed from performance, civic and otherwise.[128] Like the Menestrels, and the Jouglars and Joglars mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, they are consuls, clerks, and land-owning bourgeois.

A lack of evidence again stymies any attempts to draw firm conclusions. There are few extant tax records and property listings for people employed as musicians until the fourteenth century."[129] However, there are some records available. In his study of regulations of various professinos, André Gouron argues that, as in the twelfth century, in the later Middle Ages, members of a given profession tended to live in a particular

[126] Peters, 50 and 115.

[127] Charles-Dominique, 34. Lawrence Gunshee, Richard Rastall, and David Klausner, "Minstrel," *Grove Music Online*, July 25, 2013, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.18748.

[128] Many thanks to Gretchen Peters, without whom many aspects of this chapter would not be possible. Her willingness to discuss with me her research into musicians in France in the later Middle Ages allows me to assert observations such as the above, which rely on an encyclopedic knowledge of the archival evidence available beyond the thirteenth century.

[129] Peters, 219.

quarter or street of the city.[130] Peters notes that in Montpellier, musicians can be found gathered in two main areas, and the benefits remain the same as those noted above for Toulouse; it made it easy to connect musicians to employers when the musicians were grouped in specific locations. The two areas, Saint Paul and Saint Anne, place musicians "in the middle of the economic spread in Montpellier," as they "were respectively third and fourth in overall wealth among the seven quarters of town."[131] These two areas also happened to have a high concentration of hotels, brothels, and bathhouses, which Peters says may have provided additional sources of employment for the musicians.[132] This suggests that musicians may still have occupied a socioeconomic position akin to their status in the High Middle Ages, particularly as it relates to their proximity to places of commercial sex. Although minstrels inhabited a more privileged position than jongleurs, they still performed on streets, in squares, in taverns, in private homes, and "despite their ubiquitous nature, they were often pressed to the margins of a city's social structure. This paradox reflects the complex way in which musical entertainers fit into medieval society."[133]

The situation does indeed prove complicated. Peters shows that the area where the musicians lived was close to the consulate, the meeting place of the city council, where

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[130] André Gouron, "La Règlementation Des Métiers En Languedoc." (Paris: Libraire Minard, 1958), 69 and 115.

[131] Peters, 240.

[132] Peters, 240-24.

[133] Peters attributes this paradox largely to the bias of the sources most abundantly available, those from the Church and literature, suggesting that musicians were not as reviled in everyday life as the written record would lead us to believe. Peters, 218.

the civic musicians would often be required to play. This placement follows a straightforward logic. The placing of brothels, on the other hand, could prove to be extremely contentious. Several factors had to be accounted for when picking a location for a brothel, including proximity to churches and other religious institutions, places of education, and "good" or "beautiful" neighborhoods and streets. In fact, a mid-thirteenth century document from Marseille prohibits women selling sex from staying near churches or among "good men" (*probos homines et honestos*).[134] There are no records of any other municipal customs containing this provision, but it seems to have nevertheless affected local thinking about where to place brothels.[135] When a brothel was created in Montpellier in 1285, the central concern regarding its creation was where to put it. Various places had been assigned in the past, but the residents, both citizens and clergy, had ejected the women from each space. Eventually a commission had to be created to decide where to place the brothel.[136] Agathe Roby recounts a case in Toulouse in the sixteenth century, wherein several different locations are proposed for the establishment of the brothel, and various members of the consulate find them objectionable due a nearby edifice or district that they did not want sullied by the presence of sex work.[137] Despite the late date, this example provides the culminating evidence for one of Roby's

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[134] H. Mireur, La Prostitution à Marseille, Histoire, Administration et Police, Higiène (Paris, 1882), 365-67.
[135] Otis Cour, 20-21. Otis-Cour convincingly demonstrates that this was based on a royal ordinance of 1256, wherein no brothels are to be placed near holy places. She mentions that the document is revised for the final time sometime between 1253 and 1257.

[136] Otis-Cour, 25-26.

[137] Roby, 143-160.

larger points: the placement of a municipal brothel in the late Middle Ages was often a matter of compromise after much debate.

This does not mean that Peters is wrong in her belief that the spatial relationship between brothels and performers' quarters suggests a relationship between the professions. On the contrary, the fact that it is deemed permissible for a brothel to end up in an area where performers live speaks to the fact that performers were not living in the "good" and "beautiful" neighborhoods and were not seen as citizens that needed to be protected from the contaminating influence of a brothel. It is simply that the geographical requirements are more complex than the consideration of what makes sense for sex workers. Whether the two groups benefited from being next to each other, performers and those selling sex end up in the same neighborhood because it was the only appropriate and acceptable option. Once all other factors had been considered, they could only end up together and marginalized in that togetherness.

The status shift of the performer in the late Middle Ages is a complex nexus of factors. It is clear from the available evidence that families engaged in jonglerie in the High Middle Ages move beyond their humble origins. However, Peters demonstrates that musicians in the late Middle Ages still likely had a number of jobs and occupied a middling wealth class,[138] and, geographically, musicians still lived near brothels, generally deemed less "good" or less "beautiful" locations, suggesting a continued

[138] Peters, 165-189.

connection. But the opportunity to make money and move out of these locations and change social class set the performers apart from those selling sex.

Bad Girls, you ask yourself who they are: Selling Sex in the late Middle Ages

The status of those who sold sex, by contrast, declined in the second half of the thirteenth century and the early fourteenth century. The 1201 ordinance in Toulouse declaring that women selling sex had to leave the *rue de Comminges* and live outside the city was merely the first of several such regulations throughout the south of France. The other early example of such a statute is the 105 article of the customs of Carcassonne, which has been tentatively dated as from 1209.[139] As with the statute from Toulouse, the contents are brief and to the point: "*Meretrices publica* are to be cast outside the walls of Carcassonne."[140] In the mid-thirteenth century though, the tone of these statutes became more aggressive, as with the above cited Toulouse custom of 1271, allowing citizens in Saint-Cyprien to chase women selling sex to the edge of the Garonne. In Arles in the 1240s a statute, which survives only in its last revised form, states:

> We statute that no *meretrix publica* or procurer dare stay in Arles in a street of *proborum hominum* and if by chance they be found in such places, that anyone of

[139] Otis-Cour explains these cannot be from before 1205, as they are based in part on customs of Montpellier from 1204 and another Montpellier custom from 1205. Otis-Cour, 160 n7. Based on evidence in the document, André Gouron believes it to be from just after 1209. André Gouron, "*Libertas hominum montispessulani:* redaction et diffusion des coutumes de Montpellier," *Annales du Midi* 90 (1978): 302-4.

[140] "Meretrices public foras muros carcassonne emittantur." The original document says "heretrices" rather than "meretrices." However, Alexandre Teulet explains this particularly document is full of scribal errors, and in a later article, the document states that "heretrices" should be driven from the region, leading Teulet to believe this stipulation about the being outside the walls was made regarding "meretrices." A. Teulet, *Layettes Du Trésor Des Chartes*, vol. I (Paris, 1863), 272-281. There is a similar law passed in the statutes of Pamiers in 1212, which seem to echo the custom of Carcassonne. However, it was passed by Simon of Montfort after his victory over the Albigensians, and it is unclear if Simon is copying customs from the other French towns or if it is an attempt to impose northern customs on the south. Otis-Cour, 22.

> that area or neighborhood have the power to expel them from the neighborhood, on his own authority, without punishment or contradiction of the court.[141]

Again, the citizens are given the power to punish the sex workers without fear of legal repercussions from city authorities. Otis-Cour cites customs such as these as the end of the municipal liberties that had previously characterized Provence. The end of these liberties, which most benefited the urban elite, was marked by the new influence of the pious Louis IX on urban politics and policies.[142] This change can be seen in the harsher customs relating to sex work, gaming, and other aspects of public morality. A royal ordinance from 1254 states:

> Public prostitutes are to be expelled from the fields as well as from the towns, and once these warnings or prohibitions are made, their goods are to be seized by the judges of the localities, or taken, by their own authority, by anyone else, unto the tunic and robe. Who knowingly rents a house to a public prostitute, we wish that that house fall to the lord [king], by whom it is to be held in feudal commission.[143]

The explicit mention of "de campis" as well as "de villis," unlike the statutes from Carcassonne, Toulouse, and Arles, shows a rejection of sex work altogether. There was no place for these individuals in the town or outside of it. The extremity of the 1254 document was walked back in the subsequent ordinance in 1256, mentioned above for its statement banning brothels from being placed near churches or cemeteries. In the 1256 document, individuals merely had to be expelled from the streets in the heart (*cuer*) of

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[141] Otis-Cour, 16. Translation Otis-Cour's. "Statuimus quod nulla meretrix publica vel leno audeat morari in Arelate in carreria proborum hominum, et si forte invenirentur in dictis locis, quod quilibet illius contrate vel vicinie habeat potestatem expellendi de vicinia, sua auctoritate, et sine pena et contradictione curie." As printed in Otis-Cour, 161, n15.

[142] Otis-Cour, 19.

[143] Royal Ordinance 1:74. Translation Otis-Cour's, 19.

town and put outside the walls.[144] The severity of the 1254 ordinance, however, does seem to have had an effect. Echoes of the language allowing citizens to strip sex workers "unto the tunic and robe" can be seen in the 1271 document from Toulouse which permitted citizens to strip sex workers and lead them naked to the vicar.[145] In some places, this was compounded by denying sex workers the right to bring suits in court. For example, in 1256, the residents of Arles complained to the officers of Charles of Anjou, requesting that accusations brought by sex workers no longer be accepted, denying women who sell sex any legal recourse for their complaints.[146]

Although, as Otis-Cour argues, this increased intervention from authorities may have provided the foundation for the later establishment of legalized and municipalized sex work,[147] this "interventionism," was far from a gentle push towards organizing and integrating sex work into society at large. Using the cityscape as a metric allows us to see how women selling sex continued to be marginalized despite the legalization of

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[144] Royal Ordinance, 1:79.

[145] Otis-Cour, 19-21. Otis-Cour also notes that the contrast between the two documents appears in other policies. In 1254, royal officers are to abstain from "fornication and taverns," but in 1256 they are to avoid "brothels and taverns." The latter suggests an acceptance of the existence of brothels that the former does not acknowledge. Otis-Cour, 162, n28.

[146] Archives Municipales Arles, FF 4. "Quod meretrices et persone infamate accusant, et recipiuntur earum accusationes, quod fieri non deberet." "Quod Robinus de Lis, qui se appellat Regem Ribaudorum, accipit de singulis meretricibus, que morantur in villa, xii denarios, et de illis que morantur in campus, vi denarios….predicti domini responderunt precipientes quod expellatur ribaudus, et de meretricibus servetur statutum." As printed in Otis-Cour, 20-21.

[147] Otis-Cour, 24. I have chosen not to focus on the statutes from Avignon as the papal presence in the city created its own unique culture, which must be recognized when engaging in a study of social perceptions. The sociopolitical landscape of Avignon was greatly affected by the installation of the pope there, and it cannot be seen as typical of the rest of Occitania. Similarly, the 1285 redlight district in Montpellier must be viewed in light of Majorcan rule. As Otis-Cour points out, a red-light district prior to the fourteenth century was unlikely under Capetian rule. As a Majorcan territory, Montpellier experienced even more Iberian and Arabic influence than the rest of the Midi. Otis-Cour, 26.

commercial sex. In her careful survey of the locations of brothels in the later Middle Ages, Agathe Roby shows there was a clear, consistent policy of exclusion of sex work from the interior of the city. She maps official brothels in six different cities, Lacaune (1336), Castres (1375). Foix (1402), Pamiers (from the fifteenth century), Albi (1366, 1390, ca. 1504), and Toulouse, which had several brothels (the first in 1425, and three in the sixteenth century), and shows that all the locations are on the peripheries of the cities. She also maps an area authorized for commercial sex though not an official brothel in Montauban (1470s), which is at the site of castle ruins next to the Tarn river. In the cases of a few, such as in Castres, in Albi intermittently, and in Toulouse in 1425, the brothels are just outside the city in the suburbs.[148]

The proposals for a brothel in Albi effectively demonstrate the limitations of consuls' sympathy or acceptance of sex workers. In 1383, the bishop proposes two brothels be created, one outside the town walls for working hours, and a second brothel inside the walls where sex workers could be housed at night for security.[149] Indeed, in the late fourteenth century it would have been dangerous for anyone outside of a city's walls given the wars, diseases, and economic downturns that had displaced many and led to ruffians and refugees alike wandering the countryside. The council agrees to the bishop's plan, but it is never completed. Instead, in 1389, the first entry showing the consuls paying for the housing of public women goes to a William Rossinhol, to shelter them for

[148] Roby, 140-165.

[149] Printed in Auguste Vidal, "Les Délibérations Du Conseil Communal d'Albi de 1372 a 1388," *Revue Des Langues Romanes* Series 5, no. 8 (1905), 421.

an undefined period.[150] It is not until 1393 that a municipal brothel appears in the records, and it is located outside of the New Gate beyond the city walls.[151] As Otis-Cour suggests, it seems that protecting the sex workers was too expensive.[152] Where the sex workers of Albi resided or what protection was given to them in the years between these decisions or the years after the brothel was created outside the city walls is unclear.

But the geographical marginalization of the brothel appears negligible when compared to the confinement of sex workers in the space of the brothel. Residence in the brothel was mandatory for medieval sex workers. A document attesting to an official red-light district in Nîmes states:

> Item, it is mandated by the said court that no woman who gives herself for money should be so bold [*sit ausa*] as to stay within the city of Nîmes nor outside, unless in the public *postribulum* of Nîmes...under pain of losing her dress and being beaten throughout the town.[153]

Here we see again the violent tone of late thirteenth century expulsion statutes, wherein the woman could be stripped and physically harmed. In this case, however, she had to remain in a specific location. She could not be in the city nor outside of it (*infra civitatem Nemausi nec extra*). Where she was must be known and controlled at all times; leaving her to manage herself and her residence outside the city proper was no longer enough. Furthermore, the language used has a firmness that goes beyond a question of

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[150] AM Albi, CC 434, 89r, as cited in Otis-Cour, 34.

[151] AM Albi, CC 435, as cited in Otis-Cour, 34.

[152] Placing them outside the city for working hours, as well, was likely a measure to keep out suspect characters who might frequent the brothel. Otis-Cour, 34.

[153] AM Nîmes, FF 1, no. 4.Translation by Otis-Cour, 28. Item mandatus dicta curia quod nulla mulier que pro pecunia se dimitat sit ausa stare infra civitatem Nemausi nec extra, nisi in postribulo publico Nemausi...sub pena perdendi raubam et fustigandi per villam. As printed in Otis-Cour, 168, n21.

convenience; no woman involved in commercial sex should be so daring (*sit ausa*) as to stay in the town unless they are in the brothel. This is not couched as a "privilege," as Otis-Cour argues residence in the Montpellier street was.[154] Nor was it a suggestion, but a law with moral force behind it, wherein to disobey was a "bold" or "daring" violation. The creation of official brothels, both private and municipal, was not an acceptance of sex work or sex workers, but a system of control, and this control was exercised over every aspect of the lives of the women subject to it.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argues that "in every society, the body was in the grip of very strict powers, which imposed on it constraints, prohibitions, or obligations."[155] The medieval sex worker's body was clearly subject to constraint and prohibition, demonstrated both in previous chapters and in the above restrictions on where she could live and work. Demanding the entire community uproot itself and move to a new location, one farther from the center of town, where the group was physically and socially marginalized was an act of social control. Roby poses the question "Le bordel: lieu de tolérance ou espace carcéral?"[156] Her extensive evidence and careful research provide the answer: "le bordel n'est accepté que s'il demeure invisible et que les prostituées y restent cloîtrées, afin d'éviter tout contact avec le reste de la population urbaine."[157] The creation of official brothels provided a way for city elites, lay and

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[154] Otis-Cour, 26.

[155] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 136.

[156] Roby, 243.

[157] Roby, 243.

religious, to control every aspect of commercial sex and the lives of sex workers. This does not represent a positive policy shift, but merely a new form of exclusion and marginalization, one that began with simple expulsion and morphed into a meticulous control.

The adoption of a policy of wherein brothels were not only allowed but actively created represented greater social limitations on women who sold sex than mere expulsion from town centers did. Foucault again proves useful in understanding that "meticulousness of regulations, the fussiness of inspections, the supervision of the smallest fragment of life and body will soon provide…laicized content…or rationality for this mystical calculus of the infinitesimal and the infinite."[158] And indeed the police regulations creating brothels did concern themselves with "the smallest fragments of life." Several police regulations from Castelnaudary from 1333 exemplify the depth and detail of control exercised over sex workers' bodies during the time of official brothels. A custom from that year forbids sex workers and procurers from eating in taverns or hotels, stating that they can only eat on the street or they will be fined. The same document requires women selling sex to wear a cord belt to make them easily and publicly identifiable.[159] The latter mandate was part of a long tradition of creating dress-codes for

[158] Foucault, 140.

[159] "20. Item que degu alcavot ni femna publica de segle no ause beure ni manjar dins taverna ni dins hostal, mays a la carrera publica, en pena de V s. tolzas. […] 97. Item que degu alcavot ni femna de segle no ause remandre per jazer al Castelnau d'una nueyt enant en pena de V s. tolzas." AM Castelnaudary AA I 10r-41r as cited in Roby, 138.

sex workers, and echoes of such rules can be seen in Marseille, Nîmes, Bagnols, Beaucaire, and Castres.[160]

Language, again, signaled this change as the terminology moved from referring to a street (*carreria*) or a single house of sex work (*domus postribularis, domus lupanaris*, *bordel/bordellum*, etc.)[161] signifying the shrinking of the area of movement and residence for sex workers. A statute from Uzés in Gard says that all women must stay in a specific house of sex work, situated outside the Gate Stephan in the street Naquintuna. The women are not to "circulate or install themselves [*ire nec se ponare*] in any other place, under pain of confiscation of their clothing and corporal punishment."[162] In 1377 in Lacaune, three women, judged to be of an immoral life, were told they could no longer live in the town unless it was with the public women on the street of France. Luckily for these women, their only punishment for contravening this rule was a fine.[163] Otis-Cour recognizes the way that municipal brothels in particular are intimately connected with control when she says, "Smaller in scale and more intimately linked to the public authorities, the late-fourteenth-century municipally owned public house was more easily

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[160] Montpellier also restricts sex workers from frequenting taverns, see Otis-Cour, 81. There are several other examples of rules against sex workers eating in taverns from later periods as well. Otis-Cour, 53 for example from sixteenth century Nîmes, 74.

[161] Otis-Cour argues that *lupanar* and *postribulum* referred to entire districts of sex work. She cites two documents from late medieval Arles where a *lupanar* and *postribulum* are described as containing several independent structures. This combined with the fact that later documents specify a single *domus lupanaris* points to a difference between the domus and the larger collection of buildings contained within a *lupanar* or *postribulum* Otis-Cour, 49-50. Should the reader not be convinced by such an argument the shift from the widely used *carraria* to *domus,* both of which have generally agreed upon definitions, serves to emphasize the same point.

[162] AM Uzes BB I, 3V as cited in Otis-Cour, 28-29,

[163] Otis-Cour, 29.

policed and controlled than a whole street of privately run brothels."[164] But the rules laid out above do more than just confine criminality to a manageable area; these rules remove women selling sex from society. They are no longer inhabitants of the city, with an area or open space, such as a street, where they can ply their trade. Instead, they are residents of a specific and finite space within the city, kept to one location to eat, sleep, work, and live. In his study of Pamiers, Francois Baby says the brothel in the rue de Sainte-Hélène and rue Neuve represents a prostitution ghetto.[165] But in reality, the space available is even smaller; it's not a ghetto but a prison. Roby points out this was often reflected in the way brothels were physically structured; often consuls demanded they have high walls and only one entrance or exit.[166]

Even in leaving sex work, these women were physically restricted. Marriage or a convent represented the only viable options for leaving sex work. For the former, public and religious institutions gave incentives for men to marry former sex workers to keep them off the streets. Innocent the III, in a letter dated 1198, offers remission of sins for any man who marries a repentant sex worker.[167] Jacques Rossiaud mentions several examples of charitable associations and city authorities helping make marriages for repentant sex workers, often by raising dowries.[168] But if a former sex worker did not

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[164] Otis-Cour, 38.

[165] François Baby, *Histoire de Pamiers* (Pamiers: Syndicat d'initiatives, 1981), 207

[166] Roby, 163.

[167] PL 214:102, 29 April 1198.

[168] Jacques Rossiaud, *Medieval Prostitution*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 37.

find someone to marry, the alternative was to accept a cloistered existence within the confines of a house of Magdalenes and by the late thirteenth century, communities for repentant sex workers were commonplace in southern French towns. There is little evidence attesting to what life was like in these houses, and the two with the most documentation available come from the singular towns of Avignon and Montpellier, the convent of the former being exceptionally restrictive and that of the latter a less restricted social community. But even in Montpellier, after a year, women were theoretically no longer allowed to leave the convent. The departures noted in the record for women who had been there over a year are to serve prison sentences or are because of expulsion due to disobedience. In these convents, women were required to confess once a month, with potential punishments for infringements. Unsurprisingly, these punishments were most harsh in regard to sins of the flesh.[169] Given that it seems likely most houses for repentant women fall somewhere in between these two examples, these houses of repentance continue the isolation and social control of the sex worker's body that she would have experienced in a municipal brothel. And indeed these repentant orders were often also municipal institutions.[170] Sex workers, it seems, were accepted when they were viewed as financially useful but never socially integrated or accepted. Even if their material circumstances improved, their social prospects and social status remained restricted and contingent on the goodwill of the community at large and the favorable conditions of the world around them.

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[169] Otis-Cour, 73-74.

[170] Otis-Cour, 75.

Their material improvement, as well, was highly contingent and perhaps even more limited than the above information would seem to indicate, as the women were subject to extreme exploitation. Some evidence suggests that the late Middle Ages saw what has been termed "masculinization of brothel management." In Toulouse, throughout the fifteenth century, there is a shift from women, often workers in the brothel, running the public house, to men and women jointly running it, to management becoming an almost exclusively male venture.[171] Exclusively male management, often by men of greater wealth and status than the women working in the brothel led to abuses and exploitation. In a rare record of the voices of sex workers themselves, a 1462 document records the complaints brought before the Parlement of Toulouse by the women working in the public house against the municipality. The women asserted that the man running the brothel, referred to derisively as the abbot, was nothing more than a procurer, bent on extorting everything he could from the women. This, they claimed, led to illicit intercourse and a proliferation of vice, all of which was the fault of the municipality for their decision to farm the house out annually to a man. Prior to this, an abbess, or older sex worker of the house, would have run the brothel, and the women's lawyer argued that in previous times such a system of exploitation "would not have been tolerated." The women instead propose a solution wherein they could contribute to a communal fund that would be used to maintain and furnish the house, they would be supervised by "maistre

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[171] Otis-Cour, 60.

des heures" appointed by the king, and the oldest of the women would be in charge of the daily business of the house.[172]

It is clear that for the municipality, management of the official brothel was a matter of making money, both for wealthy individuals and the municipality itself. Costs had to be mitigated to achieve "maximally efficient exploitation of the financial possibilities of prostitution," a system that was critiqued in its own time by sex workers and towns people alike, who were wary of the ill-gotten profits of the consuls and other authorities.[173] In 1425, the municipal brothel of Toulouse was put under royal safeguard, after damages to the house and abuses suffered by the women working there necessitated royal intervention. The consuls themselves had requested the royal safeguard "when the substantial profit realized on farming the house had diminished, due to attacks by procurers and other malevolent people (*ribalidi, lenones et malevoli*)."[174] Again, this move by the crown and consul to protect sex workers from abuses was not an act of altruism but an attempt to protect their own profits, both by punishing those who damaged municipal brothels and by eliminating the illicit competition.[175] Ultimately, protection of sex workers was second to cost-effective measures and the protection of the morally upright citizens living in the town.

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[172] Peut chacun scavoir, que si au temps passé la matière fust venue en jugement comme maintenant, non fuisset tolleratum." AM Toulouse, CC 2334, no. 68 as cited in Otis-Cour, 61.

[173] Otis-Cour, 61-62.

[174] AA 5, no. 371, as cited in Otis-Cour, 37.

[175] Otis-Cour, 91.

I want to break free: Modern Parallels of Exploitation

The financial and sexual exploitation of the fifteenth century sex workers of Toulouse at the hands of local authorities is shockingly analogous to the complaints made by modern day sex workers against the system of legalized brothels and the abuses they incite. Thus a brief analysis of this modern state of affairs provides greater insight into the experiences of women working in commercial sex under a policy of legalization. After the outbreak of World War II, tensions came to a head over what had been a legal, flourishing sex trade in Hawaii. Prior to the war, women worked twelve to fourteen-hour days, rendering rules that they live only in the brothel superfluous; they had no time to live elsewhere. But in 1942, the sex workers went on strike demanding the opportunity to live away from the public houses when off-duty. The war had brought more men, but not more money, as the women were unable to raise brothel fees they received from $3 to $5. With the brothels opening early and closing at noon to give way to the bars, the restrictions the women had lived with for so long became unsustainable. In addition to mandatory and invasive health inspects regulations included, a ban on having a boyfriend, owning property or a car, marrying service personnel, going to dances, sending money to the mainland, calling the mainland without the madam's permission, going to theaters, bowling alleys, golf courses, bars, or better-class cafes, restrictions of what beaches they could visit, and a requirement to remain in the brothel after 10:30 at night.[176] Allowing for the updated technology and medical expertise, the restrictions they faced and fought against closely parallel the conditions sex workers of the late Middle

[176] Richard Greer, "Dousing Honolulu's Red Lights," *The Hawaiin Journal of History* 34 (2000), 189-192.

Ages were confronting. It was only after a twenty-two day strike that the sex workers of Honolulu were able to obtain permission to live outside the brothels and the authorities agreed to open up more areas for them to reside in.[177]

But one need not look back half a century to see women fighting against what has come to be known as "legalization" of sex work. A lively debate rages on the best model for dealing with commercial sex: criminalization (where commercial sex is illegal), decriminalization (commercial sex is legal and subject to the same regulations as other businesses), and legalization (commercial sex is legal and subject to many additional regulations, such as only occurring in an official brothel). Many opponents of the legalized system fear the same abuses faced by brothel-workers in the Middle Ages, including masculinization of the industry and its attendant abuses.[178] In Nevada, where sex work is legalized in counties of fewer than 700,000 inhabitants, sex workers are required to work at an official brothel or else face criminal charges if caught.[179] In addition, they must submit to weekly STD testing, cease and desist sex work immediately if certain STD tests come back positive, use condoms for all sexual encounters, and the

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[177] Greer, 192.

[178] These points are most often made via social media, which has provided a place of connection not only for sex workers and clients but for sex workers and a larger community. Consequently, many grassroots movements begin there. In a tweet from March of 2021, Elle Stanger responds to concerns about male brothel ownership by advocating for decriminalization and not legalization. She summarizes the point as, "we don't want to give white/men the power to own venues." There were also charges brought against Dennis Hof before his death in 2018. The owner of several legal brothels in Nevada, Hof was accused of assault and rape by several sex workers in his employ. Dennis Romero and Andrew Blankstein, "Nevada Brothel Owner Dennis Hof Being Investigated for Sexual Assault," *NBC News*, September 5, 2018, sec. U.S. News, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/nevada-brothel-owner-dennis-hof-being-investigated-sexual-assault-n906936.

[179] Engaging in Prostitution or Solicitation, Nevada Revised Statutes Section 201.354 (2017).

brothel itself must post a health notice in a place readily visible to all potential clients.[180] While some of these may appear to be basic health and safety measures, much as in the Middle Ages, the brothels and local government receive significant financial benefits from some of the measures. In at least one brothel, workers said they "kept half their earnings, with the house keeping the other half, but they also have to pay rent, food, transportation, and other costs associated with brothel operations."[181] Placing the onus of paying for the brothel on the women is reminiscent not only of the solution offered by the brothel workers of Toulouse in 1462, but also rules governing sex workers in Castres in 1398, when any sex workers wanting to reside in the town proper could do so, but only by residing in a house to be financed by the residents, in this case, the sex workers.[182] This allowed the small town the ability to have an official brothel without footing the entire bill. In Nevada, however, the list of the expenses is even longer. The workers pay for their own weekly STD testing, and they are required to purchase sex worker registration cards, the price of which varies by county. In one county, sex workers were charged $150 each quarter, plus another $150 annually. In one year, the same county made $141,779 from sex worker registration fees and brothel licensing fees alone, even though there were fewer than 100 sex workers in the county. Brothel licensing fees vary

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[180] Communicable Diseases, Excerpts from the Nevada Administrative Code Chapter 441A (2017).

[181] It is also worth noting that the brothel workers are defined as independent contractors and thus receive no health benefits, vacation pay, or retirement plans. Michelle Rindels, "How Legal Prostitution Works in Nevada," *The Nevada Independent*, May 27, 2018, sec. Indy Explains, https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/the-indy-explains-how-legal-prostitution-works-in-nevada.

[182] AM Castres, BB 8, 67r. Item que per esquerar a evitar maiors perilhs, volgro totz que las femnas venals que volran venir per estar en esta vila design la vila puescan venir a estar design vila en I hostal alor assignada en la partida que ordenaran los senhors a dispense de las filhas que venran.

by county and brothel size but range from $2,300 per quarter to $46,900.[183] This money, of course, is paid for partially by the portion of the workers' wages that the house keeps.

With such a clear parallel between the modern discourse around legalization and its complications, hearing what those who sell sex think about brothels and regulations might provide some insight, however tenuous, to the thoughts of sex workers of the past. A 2009 study focused on surveying marginalized or high-risk sex workers from San Francisco to discover their thoughts on legislation to decriminalize sex work. Most were in favor of some form of the decriminalization model, with 71% agreeing or strongly agreeing that courts should do away with laws making sex work illegal. Many had negative comments about legalization, even if they were not explicitly pro-decriminalization. For example, one woman said:

> I like that it is illegal. And one of the reasons that I like that it is illegal is that I am not heavily regulated. And I don't have somebody sticking me with needles, you know, once every couple of months and checking my pussy to see if it's clean. And I can take care of my own health and pay attention to my own health and do what seems right to me, and not be prodded and examined all the time. Which I've heard from people working in...Nevada. They say that they are just so sick of all the exams and hoops that they have to jump through, and paperwork that they have to fill out, and that it is very laborious.[184]

Another opined, "I worked in a legal prostitution setting in Nevada. I did that for a couple of weeks to see what it was like. The amount of controls and the lack of freedom was horrendous...I think decriminalization gives us the most freedom."[185] One sex worker,

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[183] Rindels, "How Legal Prostitution Works."

[184] Alexandra Lutnick and Deborah Cohan, "Criminalization, Legalization or Decriminalization of Sex Work: What Female Sex Workers Say in San Francisco, USA," *Reproductive Health Matters An International Journal on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights* 17, no. 34 (2009), 40.

[185] Lutnick and Cohan, 41.

who goes by Mistress Matisse and has a strong online, activist presence, told the New York Times of her time in a Nevada brothel, "In Nevada, you had to be in the brothel 24/7. It was like a cross between summer camp and a women's prison."[186]

Although there is no clear consensus on how to deal with sex work among groups of sex workers, clearly many are dissatisfied with the model Nevada has created, one which closely parallels the late medieval model of municipalization. Given the social and financial pressures put on sex workers under a system of legalization as well as under a system of criminalization, it would be wrong to view past models of invasive regulations and labor exploitation as a positive policy on commercial sex simply because it is no longer criminalized.

Meanwhile, sex workers still struggle to be "employable" after sex work. One woman in the San Francisco study said, "one of my fears is that I will not get through the process of getting successful enough in real estate to be able to support myself before I get nailed for something and can't have a licence anymore and then I have to start working on a different exit plan."[187] As with the Middle Ages, the "exit" options remain incredibly limited, even for those who aren't out publicly as sex workers or haven't been

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[186] Emily Bazelon, "Should Prostitution Be a Crime?," *The New York Times*, May 5, 2016, sec. Feature, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/08/magazine/should-prostitution-be-a-crime.html.

[187] Lutnick and Cohan, 41.

arrested. Lack of education and gaps in employment, perhaps while they used sex work as a means of employment, all create barriers to "real" jobs.[188]

Conclusions

What the modern discourse and medieval sources make clear is there are a variety of models for how to control and disempower individuals who sell sex. While the expulsion of the High Middle Ages represented moves towards further marginalizing or criminalizing sex work, it seems as though in the twelfth century a system akin to decriminalization existed. That is not to say that no sociocultural stigma existed, but rather that authorities seemed to tacitly accept the existence of commercial sex. After a proliferation of expulsion customs, however, a new system starts to arise, one of legalization. This legalization, far from being a positive policy, represents an extreme form of control, a carceral space both physically and socially for individuals who sell sex. Simultaneously, *jonglerie*, which had occupied a similar cultural space as commercial sex, became a more legitimate profession in the later Middle Ages. Confraternities, guilds, and steady employment, often as musical municipal officers (or *minstrels*) provided opportunities for social mobility for the medieval musician that was not available to those who sold sex.

Before concluding that this shows how performance sex work as opposed to commercial sex presented a final conundrum must be addressed. Although the divide

[188] Laura LeMoon, "I'm a Sex Worker and I Can't Get a Mainstream Job Because of My Past," *HuffPost*, May 20, 2021, sec. HuffPost Personal, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sex-work-mainstream-job-employment_n_60a3f040e4b09092480941fc.

appears to be simply between selling performance and selling sex acts, in reality, gender determines who could engage in this social mobility and who was left behind by professionalization. As explained previously, studying men who sold sex for money in the Middle Ages is a nearly impossible task. Men were the only ones who could openly purchase extra marital sex, and same-sex relations, particularly between men, were forbidden, by Church and state. Thus, the brothel workers discussed up to this point were, as far as we know, women. When tracking the decrease of profits and limitations of rights for brothel workers or the masculinization of brothel ownership, we are tracking, more specifically, the decrease of profits and rights for women selling sex or running public houses. Similarly, combing through the documents on minstrels, one finds a distinct dearth of women musicians. None of the municipal musicians listed in Gretchen Peters' book have women's names. Whereas the feminized form of jongleur, joglaressa or jongleuse, was rare but present in a handful of twelfth and thirteenth century documents, the feminized form of minstrel is non-existent.[189] Many scholars have noted that the professionalization of an industry often leads to women being pushed out of the industry, and jonglerie appears to be no different.[190] The corporatization of jonglerie, as Charles-Dominique calls it, is also a masculinization and leaves no room for women performers. Guilds and confraternities often sought exclusively male membership unless it was a

[189] Archives Municipales Toulouse AA1, 52. Partial transcription in Mundy, *Liberty and Political Power,* 318, n29. Again, I relied on Gretchen Peters' guidance and extensive knowledge of the archives to discuss what terms she did and did not find in the later documents.

[190] For example, Monica Green, *Making Women's Medicine Masculine: The Rise of Male Authority in Pre-Modern Gynaecology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) and Judith M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

guild for women's work, and while some female musicians can be found in later musicians' guilds, their numbers are few.[191]

The rise of *ménetrandise* and municipal employment for musicians created a privileged group within the framework of jonglerie. Perhaps women musicians also experienced more social mobility than women who sold sex in the late Middle Ages, but we cannot know. The only available documentation, and the only people who seem to be moving up in the world, achieving status, making money, playing *haut* instruments, are men. What is left to the women is busking, gig work, side hustles, and the *bas* instruments. This problem would surely have only compounded itself over time as guilds required members to be masters of *haut* instruments and civic ceremonies only employed those who played *haut* instruments, and women, lacking access to either could find no foothold for learning the instruments they needed to gain acceptance into the groups who could teach them the use of those very same instruments. Thus, when we find musicians continuing to live in proximity to women who sold sex, we also must ask ourselves which musicians were living there, how were they employed, and how did their gender affect the degree to which the profession of entertainment overlapped with commercial sex.[192] Considering all these factors, it is unsurprising that sex sellers in Bagnols were banned from singing or chanting to entice customers.[193]

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[191] Coldwell, 46-47.

[192] Denise Filios explores the relationship between fictionalized *soldaderas* and *panaderas,* bread sellers who were believed to casually engage in sex work, and real individuals in her book Denise K. Filios, *Performing Women in the Middle Ages: Sex, Gender and the Medieval Iberian Lyric*, 1st ed.., New Middle Ages (Palgrave Macmillan (Firm)) (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[193] Peters, 223.

The evidence available in urban statutes and property records shows that those selling sex and those selling sexualized entertainment experienced markedly different social prospects from the High Middle Ages to the Early Modern period. However, this evidence only reveals part of the story. While it is true that different types of sex work presented different opportunities for social mobility, this divide is re-entrenched by the gender divide. Men engaged in musical performance were to reach renown and become bourgeois; women selling sex were not. The evidence for women performing musically or otherwise and men selling sex is so scarce in the later Middle Ages that it is nearly impossible to know what their experiences were. What we can surmise is that with the double stigmatization of same-sex intercourse and selling sex, men engaged in commercial sex likely did not have much chance at upward social mobility. Given the continued crossover geographically and the continued legislation against women selling sex and performing music, along with the exclusion of women that often comes with professionalization, it seems as though women who performed for money would also have very few prospects. Male performers then, were a privileged category within a privileged category, both engaged in a more acceptable form of sex work and permitted into the professional organizations that characterize the later Middle Ages.

Conclusion

"Change is the thing that most of us hope for, especially when we are suffering, but it's not something we necessarily have come to expect…And we've been taught that the way things are today is pretty much the way they've always been – dog eat dog.
But that's a damn lie!"

- Leslie Feinberg, *Transgender Warriors*, 121.

"I'm just a musical prostitute, my dear."

- Freddie Mercury

Currently, lawmakers across the United States are proposing and, in some cases, passing laws banning gender-affirming care, excluding trans women from sports, and criminalizing drag performances.[1] Many of the politicians behind these laws argue for the validity of such legislation based on vague concepts of "grooming" and the argument that gender is immutable.[2] According to these politicians, this is the traditional view of gender, one that is based in biological reality, stemming from a long history of clear divisions between men and women. But as Leslie Feinberg argues, this is "a damn lie." Gender and its performance have always been inexact, with a confused relationship to biology and cultural circumstances; they have always been both contentious and contested.

The study of sex work in the Middle Ages shows exactly how complicated gender could be and how, at times, hierarchical structures contributed to the blurring of gender

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[1] "Here Are the Restrictions on Transgender People That Are Moving Forward in US Statehouses," AP NEWS, May 18, 2023, https://apnews.com/article/restrictions-targeting-transgender-people-legislative-updates-df66b5a86be47b03dd5a50449d239275. "House Approves Trans Athlete Ban for Girls and Women's Teams," AP NEWS, April 20, 2023, https://apnews.com/article/congress-transgender-women-sports-ban-athletes-1c58c20cac2b191e323e4376d7949a2d. "Drag Performers on What Tennessee's Ban on Public Performances Means to Them," PBS NewsHour, March 31, 2023, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/drag-performers-on-what-tennessees-ban-on-public-performances-means-to-them. Suzanne Nossel, "The Drag Show Bans Sweeping the US Are a Chilling Attack on Free Speech," *The Guardian*, March 10, 2023, sec. Culture, https://www.theguardian.com/culture/commentisfree/2023/mar/10/drag-show-bans-tennessee-lgbtq-rights.

[2] I will not platform these voices by citing them here.

boundaries for their own ends. For theologians like Peter the Chanter, female sex workers served an important function by providing an outlet for nonprocreative sex, extramarital sex. But precisely because these women could be used for purposes one would not turn to a moral woman for, women sex workers had to be understood as a distinct group, antithetical to the ideal, moral woman. Male sex workers, on the other hand, posed a danger through their perceived sex and gender transgressions. By emphasizing the immorality of effeminacy and same-sex relationships between men, which were seen as closely connected, theologians attempted to control the construction of masculinity.

We can only reach such conclusions, however, by recognizing that the landscape of sexual commerce in the Middle Ages was both broader and more nuanced than scholars have previously thought. Selling sex was certainly part of sexual commerce, but it was not the only part. When Freddie Mercury proclaimed himself a "musical prostitute" in 1984, everyone understood he did not mean he was selling sex but that in selling performance he, too, was selling his body. When we look at porn work, camming, and erotic dancing, we understand that these things are distinct from selling sex acts, and yet, they are part and parcel of a sex industry. Medieval people also understood that selling sex acts was not the only way that sex sells, so to speak. Other occupations resulted in forms of embodiment, characterized by a lascivious corporeality, that counted as sex work. Chief among these occupations was jonglerie. Once we are willing to expand sex work to include jongleurs, our ability to draw meaningful conclusions about the existence of sex workers, both male and female, also expands.

The connections between selling sex and selling performance is equally evident in vernacular literature of the time. In the courtly world of Old French romances the taboo

of selling sex is assiduously avoided. However, the representations of selling performance by male jongleurs are often highly charged with innuendo, portraying these men as both effeminate and sexually available. The portrayal of jongleuses demonstrates that jongleur disguise is a powerful place to explore gender fluidity, but also other aspects of identity, even though the romances try to elide these questions. In the fabliaux, male sex workers prove socially useful in their ability to satiate the ravenous desires of women, thus putting them back in their place. Meanwhile, women sex workers represent the epitome of the worst potential characteristics of women, and they are a danger to society in the way they reproduce themselves in other women. The difference in the type of sex work represented in the literature gestures at a hierarchy in sex work itself, as selling sex cannot exist in an idealized world.

The gendered stakes of such a hierarchy that begin to emerge when reading the fabliaux "Boivin de Provins," are apparent in the archival evidence from Toulouse. In the fabliaux, the male selling sexual performance bests the female selling sex, in doing so he puts her back in her place in the social order and reasserts his hierarchical dominance as a man, albeit a morally suspect one. In property records of twelfth century Toulouse, one can clearly see a community of just such male performers, living and work near other artisans such as weavers, cutlers, and gardeners. This community is a stone's throw away from a street where women were selling sex. In 1201, the city of Toulouse expelled the women from the city, and later they were again pushed out of another street. Eventually, when sex work was municipalized, they were allowed back into the city walls but only at the cost of their freedom to move about. Yet, as these women were facing more and more regulation, with their bodies and personal lives increasingly become a sight of public

debate, jonglerie was becoming increasingly professionalized through guilds and corporations. Male jongleurs benefitted from the new status of their work, and we can find descendants of jongleurs moving up in social class over time. Jongleuses, however, disappear from the records, excluded from this new, legitimate form of their profession. Thus, despite the genderfluidity of individual sex workers in the twelfth century, we see the influence of the mechanism of gender in the overall social hierarchy over time.

Individuals engaged in sex work in the Middle Ages existed at the nexus of questions about gender, sexuality, bodies, community, identity, and more. And despite the scarcity of sources in general, within the discourse of medieval sex work, there is a cacophony of different voices. We can, however, identify a throughline within these voices: sex workers "did" gender differently. How that difference was categorized and portrayed depends upon the voice you listen to. I hope my work is only the starting point of research into sex work in the High Middle Ages. As I stated at the start of this project, there are a number of new questions and issues that arise from this work. Where are the women jongleurs in twelfth century records? If they are unidentifiable in property records, where else might we find them? Similarly, where are the men who sell sex in the late Middle Ages? If we cannot find new archival sources for these people, how might we begin telling their stories? What terms and concepts might we amend to broaden our understanding of the Middle Ages and medieval ideas of embodiment?

At the heart of this dissertation is my believe that it is imperative that we examine the relationship between sex work and gender both for historical study and to address modern concerns. As Heather Berg argues in her study of modern porn work, sex workers are often the canary in the coal mine for "straight work": "Where scholars of once secure

forms of straight work lament the turn to the gig economy, for instance, they frame as new a way of working that porn workers have long navigated. I am less interested in arguing that such thinkers have left porn workers out than in making clear that they have lost crucial insights in doing so."[3] While the chronological development of such trends is harder to trace in the late Middle Ages, Otis-Cour notes that the dismantling of brothels and outlawing of sex work "was part of a comprehensive program for strengthening the criminal law undertaken by the secular rulers of the sixteenth century," and "hostility toward prostitutes was but one manifestation of the misogynous spirit of the sixteenth century."[4] I am not proposing that we ignore any historical specificity in order to prop up simplistic parallels between the past and the present. Rather, it seems apparent that sex work, as a form of marginalization, is uniquely positioned to tell us about the movements of society; it is, as Smith and Mac aruge in the quotation that began this dissertation, a lightning rod for questions of individual identity and society. Its particular implications for gender abound, and by taking seriously sex work as a subject of study and also as a profession in which real people engage, we can uplift the voices of some of society's most vulnerable people. Valentina Mia begins her "Sex Worker Manifesto" by saying:

> Transgender women, especially transgender women of color, are made into whores by our nation which, in turn, subjects us to inhumane conditions from which there exists no foreseeable escape. In response to the material conditions to which I am subject by virtue of my assemblage of identities as a transgender woman of color, I advocate for the full decriminalization of sex work to enable me to have access to the legal structures that have, so far, only precluded me from recourse for the times I have been assaulted, raped, robbed, harassed, and

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[3] Heather Berg, *Porn Work: Sex, Labor and Late Capitalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, The University of North Carolina Press, 2021), 26.

[4] Leah Otis-Cour, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 42-43.

stalked.[5]

My forays into the modern in this dissertation are meant less as definitive statements on the nature of modern sex work than as moments of poignant comparison that I have identified that may help us elucidate medieval sex work while also probing our own prejudices and prohibitions around sex work and gender. As Leslie Feinberg's quotation suggests, one of the great hopes offered by history is that of alterity. Things as they are now, have not always been and need not always be in the future. But the past also contains deep resonances that connect people across time, even if these resonances are unknowingly evoked, as in Freddie Mercury's quotation. The job of the historian is to acknowledge both while maintaining a commitment to represent the evidence fully and accurately. We cannot ignore the ways that history refuses to be categorized as either alterity or resonance; we must resist the urge to see the world and the past through such binaries. That does not mean we should not look to the past to help us envision how we might live differently, and we might begin by exploring downright medieval attitudes.

[5] Valentina Mia, "The Failures of SESTA/FOSTA: A Sex Worker Manifesto," *TSQ : Transgender Studies Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (2020): 237–39, https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-8143393, 237.

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