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Descriptive poetics and the *Arte de trovar* in the *Cancioneiro da Biblioteca Nacional*

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ABSTRACT

Critics have long evaluated the anonymous treatise on versification nestled in the *Cancioneiro da Biblioteca Nacional*—often called the *Arte de trovar*—against the roughly contemporaneous *artes poeticae* composed in *langue d’oc*. While our understanding of the treatise undoubtedly benefits from comparative readings, I argue that its perceived deficiencies, including its sui generis approach to poetic genres, may reflect specific late medieval literary-critical considerations. By emplacing generically, socially, or sonically aberrant compositions within practices of performance, reading, and anthologization, the treatise helps legitimate the *cancioneiro* in which it appears and perhaps the *cancioneril* enterprise writ large. In the appendix, I provide the first full-length translation of the *Arte de trovar* into English.

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Introduction¹

An art of invention, or the invention of an *ars*? A long and distinguished line of Romance philologists elevated the anonymous, untitled, and incomplete treatise on Galician-Portuguese versification, which appears at the beginning of the *Cancioneiro da Biblioteca Nacional* and is the only such text in the medieval language, to the status of a full-fledged troubadour poetics. Little had been known about Galician-Portuguese poetic theory until the recovery of the two extant Italian-copied compilations of Galician-Portuguese troubadour poetry, or *cancioneiros*, in the late nineteenth century. In 1878, the Roman philologist Ernesto Monaci (1844–1918) and his student Enrico Molteni alerted colleagues to “an acephalous fragment of an important treatise concerning medieval Portuguese poetics [...] We have no trace of the excision that is to blame for the fragmentary state in which we have encountered the treatise.”² Implying that the treatise’s missing chapters had been physically removed from its parent songbook, the *Cancioneiro da Biblioteca Nacional*, Molteni contributed to the aura of expectation that has

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¹I am grateful to Jan Ziolkowski and Josiah Blackmore for guiding me through the vast body of criticism on the vernacular *artes*, and for their incisive comments on early drafts. While I was preparing my translation of the *Arte de trovar*, Wayne Redenbarger and Graça Videira Lopes clarified some of the treatise’s most difficult passages. Many thanks are also due to the anonymous reviewers, whose invaluable suggestions helped to rectify gaps in my knowledge of certain editorial and open-access initiatives in *cantigas* scholarship, as well as to improve my translation.

²“un frammento acefalo d’un importante trattato sulla antica poetica portoghese [...] non abbiamo alcuna traccia di mutilazione a cui dar colpa dello stato frammentario nel quale il trattato ci è pervenuto,” Molteni, “Il Secondo Canzoniere,” 191. All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

shrouded the text. In 1886, correcting his disciple's philological errors, Monaci released his annotated critical edition of the treatise, in which he perspicaciously alluded to its relationship to the tradition of vernacular *artes poeticae*, or treatises on poetics, and medieval verse grammars.³ Compared to other vernacular treatises on versification from roughly the same time period, several of them produced on Iberian soil, the *Arte de trovar* has the poorest textual record, possessing a single witness in the *Cancioneiro da Biblioteca Nacional* (which is alternately called the Colocci-Brancuti songbook, reflecting the manuscript's provenance and initial accession history).⁴ Now held at Portugal's National Library (Cod. 10991), the *cancioneiro* was commissioned by the papal secretary and pioneering philologist Angelo Colocci (1467–1549), who heavily annotated the work in his own hand. After the humanist scholar's death, the manuscript's whereabouts remained unknown until its rediscovery in 1875 by Constantino Convisieri, in the library of Count Paolo Brancuti di Cagli, in Ancona, Italy.⁵

The first Portuguese critic to re-edit the treatise, Teófilo Braga (1843–1924), though rejoicing at the discovery of a Galician-Portuguese *ars poetica*, perhaps overstated its affinities with other *artes* written in a Romance vernacular, flattening the treatise's literary and cultural specificity by calling it a “Poética provençal portuguesa” (Portuguese *ars poetica* in the Provençal style).⁶ The term “provençal” was no less fraught than Molteni's “excision,” stirring up expectations of generic taxonomy and literary prescriptivism that would influence future critics' understanding of the Galician-Portuguese treatise's function. In a major 1947 article, Elza Pacheco christened the “fragmentos teorizantes” (theoretic fragments) the *Arte de trovar*. Such a name, she argued, would better reflect the text's nature as a troubadour rulebook.⁷ Adequate or not, the name took, haunting scholars with the specter of prescriptivism. (In the brief section that follows this introduction, we will see just how difficult it has proven for scholars to shed the expectations that arise from the prescriptivist label.) Yet, to approach the *Arte de trovar* as a prescriptive treatise leads us to overlook its most interesting qualities, and to fault the *Arte de trovar* for being something it either never was or was no longer when it was copied, at the behest of Italian humanist Angelo Colocci, in the sixteenth century. In affirming the treatise's status as a prescriptive *ars poetica*—or else dismissing the literary-critical import of its descriptive orientation—are we engaging in the *ex post facto* theorization

³Monaci, “Il trattato,” 423.

⁴For a description of the treatise's early editorial history, see Monaci, “Il trattato,” 417–23.

⁵*Cancioneiro da Biblioteca Nacional*, ii. Published in 1982 by the Imprensa Nacional–Casa Moeda, this facsimile edition of the text includes a short introduction tracing the manuscript's history.

⁶Braga, “Monumentos da litteratura portuguesa IV,” 414. Monaci and Braga date the text, respectively, to the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries, each without specifying whether he is referring to the treatise's archetype. Monaci notes that the language of the treatise indicates that it may have been written while the troubadours were still active, given its lexical and grammatical profile. Scholars now date the Colocci-Brancuti *cancioneiro* to the early sixteenth century.

⁷Pacheco, “‘Arte de Trovar’ portuguesa,” 53: “Intitulamo-los *Arte de Trovar*, nome mais condizente com as regras das cantigas que fazem os *trobadores* do que o de *Poética*, dado por T. Braga, mantido por Monaci e todos os que lhes seguiram na esteira. Lembrará a aura da *Arte de Trovar* do tardio Enrique de Villena (1384–1434) e também ecoará o tratado do mais antigo de Juan Manuel (1282–1348), a perdida *Arte de Trobar*, em que, segundo hipótese michaeliana, se codificariam as terminologias galaico-portuguêsas” (We title the work the *Arte de trovar*, which better evokes the rules to the songs “that troubadours compose” than does the name *Poética*, coined by T. Braga and reproduced by Monaci and all who followed in both men's wake. It evokes something of the aura of the later treatise *Arte de trovar*, by Enrique de Villena (1383–1434) and recalls the earlier treatise, now lost, of Juan Manuel (1283–1348), the *Arte de trobar*. According to the hypothesis of Carolina Vasconcelos de Michaelis, in these treatises was codified an array of Galician-Portuguese troubadour terms).

of a document that is literally circumscribed by a sprawling poetic anthology, of which it occupies only a tiny sliver?

In this article, I will argue that our understanding of the late medieval Galician-Portuguese *cancioneiro* and its poetics stands to gain when we cease to read the *Arte de trovar* as a forward-looking treatise that projected a standard for an epigonic school of poets—or otherwise as an epigonic vernacular *ars* that bungled its prescriptive mission—and begin to read it within its own material and cultural milieu. To that end, I will analyze the *Arte de trovar* in the context of its textual host and in comparison with Latin and major vernacular *artes poeticae*. Though undoubtedly of practical benefit to would-be composers, the treatise—in the form and forum by which it was transmitted us—sooner marks an attempt to emplace a vast body of troubadour lyric within specific practices of performance, reading, and anthologization. In the appendix, I include my translation of the *Arte de trovar*, based on the open-access edition of the text on the FCSH *Cantigas* online portal, in hopes of stimulating a broader conversation about the treatise's unique place among *artes poeticae* written in a Romance vernacular.

The uneasy canonization of the *Arte de trovar*

Scholars have struggled to pinpoint what the *Arte de trovar* is “about,” as it were, probably because the treatise—especially in those of its sections that are complete—departs from the conventions of the prescriptive poetics as embodied by the Provençal *artes*. The early commentators,⁸ and a significant plurality of *cantigas* scholars today,⁹ having intuited the affinity between the Galician-Portuguese treatise and similar *langue d’oc* works, evaluated the *Arte de trovar* against these treatises’ aims and achievements. Prominent voices of this school have expressed particular frustration with the treatise’s lackadaisical division of *cantigas* into hazily defined genres. This line of criticism finds its best-spoken exponent in the Italian philologist Giuseppe Tavani (1924–2019). In the introduction to his 1999 edition of the *Arte de trovar*, Tavani writes that, compared to the Catalan and Provençal *artes poeticae*, the Galician-Portuguese text gives one the unshakable

sensação de que a *Poética* portuguesa terá sido escrita à pressa, por alguém que não se preocupava muito em esclarecer todos os pontos duvidosos dos textos que decidira, por assim dizer, prefaciá-los [...] elaborada [...] por quem não tinha senão um interesse genérico e superficial de leitor por um património literário já não actual, e considerava esse património um acervo muito mais homogéneo e indiferenciado do que é na realidade.

(feeling that the Portuguese *ars poetica* was written in haste, by someone patently uninterested in clarifying the most puzzling elements of the compositions to which he had resolved

⁸Names matter—and, in their writings cited above, Molteni, Monaci, Braga, and Pacheco, either suggest or assert outright the treatise’s prescriptive orientation.

⁹The most recent example can be seen in Berlin, “The Galician-Portuguese *Cantigas*,” 353–54, a nuanced discussion of the treatise. Largely reapplying the prescriptivist label that, as we shall see, Deyermond peeled away in “Genre and Gender,” 50, Berlin notes that the treatise’s prescriptions of mixed masculine and feminine rhyme do not accord with the relative lack of mixed-rhyme songs in the extant *cancioneiros*. Even Deyermond, who elsewhere calls the treatise descriptive, makes much of any mismatch between treatise and songbook tradition, calling the former’s classification scheme partially “incorrect”—a strange charge to level against a descriptive treatise. I will argue that, for the sake of upholding the Iberian songbook’s integrity, the *Arte de trovar* rather contextualized verse oddities than it prescribed verse forms.

to attach a preface, so to speak ... (It was) produced by someone who as a reader possessed only a generic and superficial interest in a literary inheritance by then outmoded, considering its representative texts far more homogenous and indistinct than they were in reality.)¹⁰

Tavani's statements are in the broad strokes representative of the Lusomedievalist consensus.¹¹ A notable trio of scholars has taken a more conciliatory view of the treatise. A leading French scholar of the *cantigas*, Jean-Marie D'Heur writes in the study accompanying his 1975 edition of the *Arte de trovar* that "it is not a work intended for the instruction of troubadours, but rather an informative guide for the lover of songs, suitable as such to introduce the reader to the magnificent collection at hand."¹² With words like these D'Heur is well placed to rescue the treatise from expectations of prescriptivism; my analysis broadly supports the thrust of the preceding citation. D'Heur proceeds unexpectedly to affirm the treatise's prescriptive bent,¹³ however, lavishing attention on the prevalence of *dever* (a verb of obligation) and imputing to the text a doctrinaire quality that foreclosed literary creativity, or as he called it, "true freedom of creation, unbounded by normative constraint."¹⁴ He further remarks that the treatise's varied, if sketchily defined, poetic terminology signaled "a richer, lusher reality [i.e., of verse production], one that was at any rate less 'sanitized,' than the reality that the writer of the *Arte de trovar* endeavored to preserve and present to us."¹⁵ Anna Ferrari's 1979 study of the *Cancioneiro da Biblioteca Nacional* posits, in less charged terms, that "the *ars poetica* was not an integral part of B's archetype but rather an autonomous fragment or an annex, as suggested by the *explicit*, FINIS, at the text's conclusion on f. 4v. In short, an introductory fascicle to which Colocci made constant reference while reading, checking and studying his manuscript."¹⁶ Ferrari does not delve into further detail regarding the treatise's broader literary critical function; her reading, at any rate, does not bear on whether the text was prescriptive, but on whether it was intrinsic to the archetype of the Colocci-Brancuti manuscript.¹⁷ Ferrari's suggestion of an autonomous treatise and her imputation of Colocci's personal motive, though not unreasonable, close off interesting avenues of critical inquiry—namely, that of the *Arte de*

¹⁰Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 26–28, see also 12–15. For a less charged description of the *Arte de trovar*'s differences from the *langue d'oc* treatises, see Tavani, "As artes poéticas," 25–34. In both works Tavani calls the *Arte de trovar* "passive" in its erudition.

¹¹The brief write-up about the *Arte de trovar* on FCSH/Projeto Littera's online portal for the *cantigas* distills the consensus view: "Habitualmente designado como 'Arte de Trovar,' resume brevemente a poética trovadoresca, definindo géneros e regras a que deveria obedecer a arte dos trovadores e jograis" (Generally called the "Arte de trovar," the text sets out troubadour poetics in brief, defining the genres and rules that troubadours and *joglars* must observe), <https://cantigas.fcsh.unl.pt/artedetrotvar.asp>.

¹²"Ce n'est pas un ouvrage destiné à l'instruction des futurs troubadours, mais plutôt le guide informatif de l'amateur de chanson comme tel à introduire la lecture dans le magnifique recueil qu'il vient d'ouvrir," D'Heur, "L'Art de trouver," 380.

¹³It is difficult to square D'Heur's initial suggestion of the text's accessory role with his ultimate determination that the text enforces compositional norms. The dissonance is perhaps resolved by the distinction he draws between aesthetics and ethics, see "L'Art de trouver," 382–87. I read the *Arte de trovar* as less morally fraught, if passingly concerned with the perceived excesses of troubadour rhetoric.

¹⁴"Il n'est jamais et d'ailleurs ne pourrait être une véritable liberté de création, affranchie de la contrainte normative," D'Heur, "L'Art de trouver," 384.

¹⁵"Il faut penser que les désignations conservées traduisent une réalité plus riche et plus luxuriante, moins 'aseptisé' en tout cas, que celle que le rédacteur de l'Art de trouver a tenu à nous conserver et à nous présenter," D'Heur, "L'Art de trouver," 386.

¹⁶"L'Arte poetica non facesse parte integrante dell'exemplar di B, ma fosse un frammento autonomo—magari un annesso—mi sembra suggerito da quell'*explicit*, *finis*, che la conclude a c. 4v. Insomma, un fascicolo introduttivo, al quale Colocci doveva fare costante riferimento durante la lettura, il controllo e lo studio," Ferrari, "Formazione e struttura," 93.

¹⁷Thanks are again due to Jan Ziolkowski, who brought to my attention these nuances of Ferrari's argument in the Italian.

trovar's relevance to the Iberian songbook writ large. Lastly, Alan Deyermond, one of the few scholars to have written at length about the *Arte de trovar* in English, notes that the treatise "is clearly medieval and Iberian in origin. That, however, is the limit of what we can take for granted [...] The greater its age, the more interesting it is, but in any case it is clearly written after the majority of the poems; it is a descriptive, not a prescriptive poetics."¹⁸ Though Deyermond's adumbration of a vernacular-*ars-qua*-descriptive-poetics bolsters my analysis, he enlists the *Arte de trovar* to enforce a "time-honoured" generic "separation"¹⁹ that the treatise does not in fact address—that is, the difference between *cantigas de amigo* and *cantigas de amor*.²⁰ In its extant subchapter dedicated to these genres, as we shall see, the treatise endeavors only to disambiguate dialogued *cantigas* that feature both male and female speakers. Deyermond, however, interprets the definition as upholding gender as the sole criterion that distinguished the *cantigas de amigo* from the *cantigas de amor*,²¹ perhaps to underscore the greater critical sensitivity of his proposed five-part generic scheme for the *cantigas*. For Deyermond, it seems, the *Arte de trovar* was descriptive not by design but rather by defect.²²

In the following analysis, I will triangulate and expand on the schematic theories of D'Heur, Ferrari, and Deyermond regarding the treatise's nature to affirm its pertinence to Iberian songbook formation. As a descriptive poetics embedded within the Lisbon *cancioneiro*, the treatise may have been intended to function more like the "extrinsic" prologue described by Minnis, which delimited subject matter rather than outlining precepts for practical use.²³ By introducing the *modus agendi* (method of procedure/composition) and the *materia libri* (subject matter) of the vast *corpus* of Galician-Portuguese secular lyric, the *Arte de trovar* helped establish the authority of a multigenre songbook.

The *Arte de trovar*'s material and textual history

Descended from the same archetype as the *Cancioneiro da Vaticana* housed at the Vatican Apostolic Library, the Colocci-Brancuti manuscript in which the *Arte de trovar* appears consists of: four flyleaves added at a posterior date; four original flyleaves; a blank leaf with annotations in Colocci's hand; blank leaves; the four folio sides (folios 3 and 4, rv) containing the text of the *Arte de trovar*; an additional ten blank sides (folios 5–9, rv); folios 10–355, which contain 1664 songs spanning three major genres—the *cantigas de amor* (love poems in a man's voice, adapted from

¹⁸Deyermond, "Gender and Genre," 50.

¹⁹Deyermond, "Gender and Genre," 51.

²⁰These two terms are traditionally, albeit reductively, understood as designating man's-voice love poetry (the *cantigas de amor*) and woman's-voice love poetry (the *cantigas de amigo*).

²¹In laying out his scheme for generic classification, Deyermond, "Some Problems of Gender and Genre," 52, proposes "retaining the *amor/amigo* separation of the *Arte de trovar*," despite the text explicitly establishing no such separation.

²²In particular, Deyermond, "Some Problems of Gender and Genre," 50–51, targets the treatise's underdeveloped generic taxonomy: "That, however, does not mean that its classification is necessarily right in all respects. There are poems that do not fit its classification [...] There is an even more serious obstacle to acceptance of the *Arte de trovar* as an authoritative guide to the genres of the Galician-Portuguese lyric: because, understandably, it deals only with the poems in the textual tradition represented in *Vaticana* and *Biblioteca Nacional*, it says nothing of the forty-two Marian lyrics, the *loores*, included in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*." Of the treatise's first chapter on dialogued *cantigas*, Deyermond continues: "This is such a reductive and mechanistic view of the difference between two kinds of *cantiga* [i.e., woman's voice and man's voice] that it would carry little weight, were the two kinds not separated in the manuscript tradition of the *cancioneiros* as far back as the extant witnesses take us."

²³Minnis, *Medieval Theory*, 29–30, 32.

langue d'oc models), the *cantigas de amigo* (love poems in a woman's voice), and the *cantigas d'escarnho e maldizer* (socially satiric poems);²⁴ followed by four additional original flyleaves.

The lack of additional textual witnesses leads one to wonder if the theoretic text that Colocci ordered reproduced truly represented the gold—which is to say, prescriptive—standard, in Galician-Portuguese troubadour poetics. The Catalan poet Raimon Vidal's *Razos de trobar*, by way of comparison, survives in nine different textual witnesses, though four of these are *codices descripti*, or copies of other extant manuscripts,²⁵ and it spawned a number of direct adaptations and intellectual descendants in prose and verse. The paucity of the *Arte de trovar* manuscript tradition opens quite the literary-theoretic chasm between the Galician-Portuguese troubadours and the over 1600 texts they authored—a lyrical output nearly sixty-five percent of the size of the Occitan *corpus* (approximately 2500), and roughly eighty-four percent if one counts the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, or songs in the praise of the Virgin, written in Galician-Portuguese and prepared under Alfonso X (r. 1252–1284).²⁶ One could posit a number of explanations for the accentuated imbalance between theory and practice in Galician-Portuguese lyric, perhaps the simplest being the wide-scale loss of other witnesses. Still, when considered in light of the privileged status that Galician-Portuguese enjoyed in the Castilian and Portuguese courts, the lack of even a passing reference to an *ars* in this language by Iberian critics writing in the Middle Ages makes one suspect that few such treatises existed, and that the *Arte de trovar* was of limited renown. Had there been an authoritative treatise of ample diffusion, we might expect to see a more robust textual record, at least in the second degree—say, a mention in the *Proemio e carta al condestable don Pedro de Portugal* written by the First Marquess of Santillana, Íñigo López de Mendoza de la Vega (1398–1458). In his letter, as Pacheco notes, Don Íñigo alludes to Castilian troubadours' usage of the Galician-Portuguese language and also records certain technical terms²⁷ that the *Arte de trovar* omits, such as the *leixa-pren* (when a stanza opens with a line from a previous stanza, usually its last line or two). In his *Arte de trovar* (1417–1428), roughly contemporaneous with the untitled treatise in the Colocci manuscript that has been called by the same name,²⁸ the highly learned Spanish nobleman Enrique de Villena cites Vidal's *Razos*, Berenguer d'Anoia's *Mirall de trobar*, and the *Leys d'amors*.²⁹ Yet he does not mention a treatise on Galician-Portuguese versification. This omission proves all the more confounding when one remembers that Alfonso X (or else poets at his behest) had deftly and prominently wielded the language in a wide array of secular and religious *cantigas*. The Galician-Portuguese troubadours, to the extent that they consulted *artes poeticae*, may have considered sufficient the didactic works of the

²⁴See also the succinct overview of the three principal Galician-Portuguese *cancioneiros* in Jensen, *Earliest Portuguese Lyrics*, 34–40. For analyses of the medieval Galician-Portuguese *cancioneiros'* codicological structure and compilation history, see Ferrari, "Formazione e struttura;" Tavani, "La tradizione manoscritta;" Gonçalves, "Tradição manuscrita e edição dos textos;" Penafiel, "Compilação dos cancioneros galego-portugueses primitivos." My description of the *Cancioneiro da Biblioteca Nacional's* contents is drawn from *Projeto Littera's Cantigas* portal (<https://cantigas.fcsh.unl.pt/manuscritos.asp>), which includes summaries of each manuscript's contents, and digital reproductions of all folios.

²⁵Marshall, *Razos*, xiii.

²⁶Paden, "The Chronology of Genres," 184.

²⁷Pacheco, "'Arte de Trovar' portuguesa," 58.

²⁸The similarity between the two treatises was, in fact, one of the reasons that Pacheco cites for having titled the anonymous treatise in the *Cancioneiro da Biblioteca Nacional*, the *Arte de trovar* (see footnote 7).

²⁹Villena, *Arte de trovar*, 46–50.

langue d'oc poets to their north, whom they acknowledged, albeit anxiously, as their direct poetic predecessors, as in King Dinis's "Proençais soem mui bem trobar" (The Provençal poets sing well) and "Quer'eu em maneira de proençal" (In the Provençal style I wish). There were historically attested intersections between the Galician-Portuguese poets and troubadours within the *langue d'oc* orbit. Perhaps the most influential foreign presence in Galician-Portuguese troubadour circles was that of the early thirteenth-century Italian poet Sordello, alluded to in a *tenção* (poetic dispute).³⁰ Sordello trained under Uc de Saint Circ, who has been tentatively identified as the same person as Uc Faidit,³¹ author of the *Donatz Proensals*, a Provençal grammar (ca. 1240) probably intended for would-be versifiers in Italy, where the work was produced.³² Regardless of whether the poetic lessons Sordello learned abroad and trafficked into Portugal were identical to those that Faidit's treatise would record, the presence of foreign troubadours and *joglars* in Iberian courts no doubt brought the Galician-Portuguese troubadours into contact with certain precepts that the vernacular *artes* written in *langue d'oc* would promulgate. The *cantigas de amigo* (love songs in a woman's voice) are a Galician-Portuguese specialty linked variously to a Roman-Iberian tradition of women's chant and the Ibero-Romance *kharja* (short concluding stanza) of certain *muwashshahat*.³³ Regardless of the form's origins,³⁴ there would have been little need for codifying a lyrical production that evolved from an enduring tradition of popular origin.

As extant in the manuscript, the untitled Galician-Portuguese treatise possesses a measure of internal integrity and is more accurately described as incomplete than as fragmentary. The preceding blank leaves raise the possibility that its scribe(s) planned to produce a complete—or in any case, a fuller-bodied—version of the treatise than the one that ultimately graced the *cancioneiro*'s pages. The first two "chapters"³⁵ are likely subdivisions of a more extensive section that had multiple subsections (as in the treatise's other three chapters) but was never copied in full. The first three subunits of the partial chapter with which the treatise opens differ graphically from the remainder of the text. These initial subunits are preceded by ample empty space and feature wide, variable lineation, corrections, and no ornamentation on subheadings or text-initial letters. Most strikingly, they are written in Colocci's hand. Then the text is brought to a close by an obelus (†) indicating a *lacuna* to be filled. At this point, the hand of scribe A takes over, and the text displays a more even-handed graphic disposition, with narrower lineation, uniformly decorated subheadings, and few corrections or lacunae. It is almost as if Colocci, having waffled over whether to include the treatise and which of its constituent chapters to excerpt, discovered his purpose as soon as he got underway and

³⁰See "Vedes, Picandom, som maravilhado," 1:620.

³¹Janzarik, "Uc de St. Circ," 275.

³²Marshall, *Razos*, 64–65; Lorenzo Gradín, "Las *Razos* gallego-portuguesas," 99.

³³The plural of *muwashshah*, a type of Andalusian poem that includes a recurring rhyme—a kind of refrain—in each of its five or so stanzas. Though these poems were primarily written in classical Arabic or Hebrew, their *kharja* make use of Andalusian Romance or colloquial Arabic.

³⁴The notion of a polyvocal Iberian folk form has a long history, remarked upon by Averroes (1126–1198) in his *Middle Commentary* on Aristotle's *Poetics*, which would win major exposure in the late medieval West through Herman the German's Latin translation. See Hardison et al., *Medieval Literary Criticism*, 90. Interestingly, Averroes' *Poetics*, though possessing a philosophical streak that the Portuguese treatise lacks, exhibits a tendency towards social contextualization that is pronounced in the *Arte de trovar*. Averroes inscribes Aristotle within the hybrid literary culture of the medieval Mediterranean; the *Arte de trovar* helps explicate the Iberian *cancioneiro* as a generic composite.

³⁵As D'Heur, "L'Art de trouver," 373, notes, the treatise seems to conflate *capítulo* (chapter) and *título* (title or heading), e.g., "Capítulo quinto conten dous capitulos."

delegated to his scribe a project that was now literally narrower in scope. To posterity's chagrin, the content of Colocci's expeditionary chapters concerns nothing less than the classification of the three major genres, whose literary-critical quiddities, then as now, may not always have been clear to readers. Only dialogued *cantigas de amigo* and *cantigas de amor* are treated; to judge by the backward-pointing reference "como vos antes disse-mos" (meaning, "as previously mentioned"),³⁶ any concrete delineation of each genre's key characteristics would have taken place in a chapter not copied and now lost. Alternatively, Colocci might not have had the chapter at his disposal. The putative subchapters of this first section, labeled Chapters Five and Six, undertake a similarly ambiguous disambiguation of the two satirical subgenres, the *cantigas d'escarnho* and the *cantigas de maldizer*. Later I will venture possible explanations for these vague definitions of what modern critics believe constituted the beating heart of medieval Galician-Portuguese poetic taxonomy; we must first explore the Latin and vernacular traditions out of which they emerged.

The vernacular *ars poetica* and its grammatical inheritance

Before the *vernacular artes* emerged, as Simon Guant and John Marshall have remarked, Provençal troubadour poetry self-theorized mainly on the strength of its living practitioners.³⁷ This changed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with the effusion of Old French and Occitan *artes poeticae*. Uniting these treatises was their common issuance from a tradition of Latin grammatical and rhetorical primers. Only one treatise mentioned above, the *Donatz Proensals*, can be called an Occitan grammar in earnest, working in conjunction with its Latin companion translation to force the square peg of Occitan morphology into the round hole of the *grammaticae* as embodied by the works of Donatus and Priscian.³⁸ In 1323, as the living tradition of troubadour poetry in *langue d'oc* quarters went extinct, a council of seven Toulousian linguistic conservators known as the *Consistori del Gai Saber* took the first steps to reignite that tradition by convening poetic competitions. Such *certamina* necessitated the elaboration of a shared poetic standard; the first text to take up the gauntlet was Guilhem Moliner's *Leys d'amors* (1328–1356), which inscribed this poetic revival within the antique pedagogical frame of Latin rhetoric and grammar. The work was not only poetically retrospective but also linguistically archaizing, documenting *langue d'oc* case flexions that had all but vanished from the spoken language.³⁹ The sole vernacular antecessor to the *Leys* and other treatises in *langue d'oc* was Vidal's *Razos de trobar* (ca. 1190), which evinces the sort of quiet confidence that could stem only from its author's up-close-and-personal contact with an Occitan tradition that, though gasping for air, had not yet expired. One of the *Razo's* distinguishing subgoals was, as Gaunt and Marshall observe, to defend a

³⁶Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 41. All citations of the Galician-Portuguese text are to Tavani's 1999 edition, though the appended translation is based off the open-access version available on the FCSH *Cantigas* online portal.

³⁷Gaunt and Marshall, "Occitan Grammars," 471.

³⁸Marshall, *Donatz Proensals*, 66–69.

³⁹Gaunt and Marshall, "Occitan Grammars," 483–85. The greater pedantry of the *langue d'oc* treatises relative to the *Arte de trovar* may reflect the distinct linguistic reality in *langue d'oc* quarters; these *artes* may have marked attempts to prescribe not only habits of versification but of language use more generally. The literary idiom of the Galician-Portuguese troubadours was, as noted by Paden, "The Chronology of Genres," 184, stable throughout the three major phases of verse production.

vernacular poetics, if not quite the vernacular as in Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*. Vidal at no point champions the use of his native Catalan in poetic production but rather upholds French's poetic utility for writing *pastourelles*, while declaring that Occitan, specifically the Lemosí dialect,⁴⁰ was the only idiom suited to the making of *vers*, *cansos* and *sirventes* (the three primary genres of *langue d'oc* troubadour poetry).

A quick précis of key features in later *langue d'oc* treatises, drawn largely from Gaunt and Marshall's overview of the vernacular *ars* tradition, will help us locate the Provençal texts' literary-critical specificity—and, comparatively, that of the Galician-Portuguese *Arte de trovar*. The *Leys*; the *Regles de trobar* (Jofre de Foixa's late thirteenth-century "lay-person" adaptation of Vidal's text); the *Doctrina de compondre dictats* (late thirteenth century); the Catalan treatises on versification preserved in Ripoll MS 129; and Eustache Deschamps' much later *L'Art de dictier* (1392) all demonstrate an enthusiasm for generic taxonomy that eclipses anything offered in Vidal's broad-based treatise. Perhaps Vidal, breathing deep the air of a living tradition, felt no need to document its subgenres? Generic quibbling was the province not of the troubadours but of the taxidermists of genres in those days. Except for the *Leys* and the *Donatz*, the later treatises share Vidal's heavy emphasis on the citation of prominent troubadours, particularly when exemplifying the finer points of their argument.⁴¹ The grammatical streak in all treatises but the *Donatz* and the third book of the *Leys* is limited to admonishing would-be versifiers over common errors.⁴² Such admonishment was especially understandable in the cultural context of medieval Catalunya, where one can imagine the spoken language (i.e., Catalan) so closely resembled the literary idiom (i.e., "Lemosí" Occitan) as to induce unthinking errors.⁴³

The *artes* composed in *langue d'oc* shared varying quantities of DNA with the Latin verse grammars that had begun to appear in the twelfth century. In his seminal history of medieval rhetoric James Jerome Murphy identifies the six Latin treatises dealing with versification, which he dubbed the preceptive grammars: Matthew of Vendôme's *Ars Versificatoria* (c. 1175); Geoffrey of Visnau's *Poetria nova* (1208–1213) and *Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi* (after 1213); Gervase of Melkley's *Ars versificaria* (c. 1215); John of Garland's *De arte prosayca, metrica et rithmica* (after 1229), and Everardus Alemannus' *Laborintus* (thirteenth century). This sextet of theorists, writes Murphy, attempted to marshal their experience towards the education of future poets, outlining the "precepts" for stages of composition broadly analogous to the canons of classical rhetoric, particularly *inventio* and *dispositio*, that is, respectively, the discovery and organization of arguments. But for all their rhetorical awareness and achievements, the six texts treat exclusively the production of written verse rather than of public oratory—a feature that inscribed the works within the robust tradition of *grammatica*.⁴⁴ Murphy attributes the revolution in the rhetoric of verse-writing to the

⁴⁰Ostensibly related to the Occitan variant spoken in historical Limousin in southwestern France, "Lemosí" is Vidal's capacious term for the *parladuras* distinct from both *langue d'oïl* (Old French) and his native Catalan, another member of the *langue d'oc* group. In Morf, *Vom Ursprung der provenzalischen Schriftsprache*, the philologist argues that Vidal's championing of "Limousin" was linguistically imprecise and perhaps the product of a literary vogue. For a mapping of Vidal's literary vernacular, see Wells, "But Singing Makes It So," especially 37–43.

⁴¹Gaunt and Marshall, "Occitan Grammars," 491.

⁴²Marshall, *Razos*, lxxx–lxxxi.

⁴³Marshall, *Razos*, lxxxiii.

⁴⁴Murphy, "Ars poetriae," 135–36.

dissolution of the Latin grammar, at some time in the twelfth century, into its constituent components. From this wreck emerged the fourfold “sub-arts”: syntax, rhythmic, metrics, and speculative grammar.⁴⁵ R.W. Hunt traces the related emergence, in twelfth-century France, of a novel form of literary prologue, distinct from the *accessus ad auctores*, which endeavored to introduce a specialized craft or science, rather than a book or its author.⁴⁶ Remarkably, through the medieval Latin verse grammars that paved the way for their treatises, our crop of *langue d’oc* writers gained entry to a genre of criticism that was at once radically novel and rooted in antiquity—a living tradition that they would further metamorphose under the spell of their poetic idiom.

The descriptive poetics of the *Arte de trovar*, revisited

Let us dispense momentarily with the usual pieties about drawing conclusions from incomplete witnesses to state the obvious: if the Occitan and Old French *artes* refracted magnificently the preceptive *grammaticae*, then the *Arte de trovar* cast only a watery light on Galician-Portuguese poetics, enclosed either in a *pro forma* accessory gesture or else in a spirit of documentary maximalism. In their opening salvos Vidal burnishes Lemosí prestige; Faidit claims for *vulgar provençal* the mantle of Latin’s *octo partes orationis* (eight parts of speech);⁴⁷ Terramagino da Pisa in his *Doctrina de cort* advises lovers “which language / makes for the most pleasurable singing;”⁴⁸ Jofre de Foixa addresses in the first person those “laymen who don’t know grammar;”⁴⁹ the *Mirall de trobar* serves readers as “mirror” for contemplating the fine features of troubadour poetry;⁵⁰ and the *De doctrina de compondre dictats* sketches the genres it will explicate so that “you shall come to perfect the writing of verses, without error or regret, as you should wish.”⁵¹

The Colocci treatise crash lands *in medias res*. The first subsection provides tips for identifying dialogued love songs as either *cantigas de amigo* (woman’s voice) or *cantigas de amor* (man’s voice), depending on the sequence of speakers: whoever speaks first determines its classification. In laying out how to determine a song’s genre, the treatise writer uses a telling formulation: “Because in some *cantigas* both men and women speak, it is important that you know whether they are *cantigas de amor* or *cantigas de amigo*.”⁵² Yes, we posthumous readers need to know! But why would an aspiring composer particularly stand to benefit from this knowledge? Only fifty-one dialogued Galician-Portuguese love songs are extant,⁵³ the most famous one unfurls as a conversation between woman and tree,⁵⁴ and, when setting a composition to music, a troubadour intuited the alternation of voices or else poetic personae that would best achieve the desired

⁴⁵Murphy, “*Ars poetriae*,” 145.

⁴⁶Hunt, “The Introductions to the ‘Artes,’” 97.

⁴⁷Marshall, *Donatz Proensals*, 89.

⁴⁸“Qals es aycella parladura / Ques ha en chans maior plaiensa,” Marshall, *Razos*, 30.

⁴⁹“homens laichs . . . dels quals no sabon gramatica,” Marshall, *Razos*, 56.

⁵⁰Vidal i Alcover, *Mirall de trobar*, 69.

⁵¹“poras venir a perfeccio de fer aquestes sens errada, ses repredimen, com fer ne volras,” Marshall, *Razos*, 95.

⁵²“E porque algũas cantigas i hã en que falam eles e elas outrossi, por én é bem de entenderdes se som d’amor, se d’amigo,” Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 41.

⁵³According to the FCSH *Cantigas* portal.

⁵⁴I refer to King Dinis’s “Ai flores, ai flores do verde pino,” a composition subject to much scholarly debate, in which the female speaker addresses the trees in a pine forest, whose gender is unknown, and probably immaterial.

effect. What good would it have done a poet to know the generic import of that sequence, except when a patron specifically requested a dialogued *cantiga de amor* or *cantiga de amigo*? Here a comparative reading with the Occitan treatises is particularly enlightening. Although there is no exact equivalent to the dialogued *cantiga de amigo/amor* in the *langue d'oc* tradition, the definitions of the *tenso*, a verse form that played out between two performers, deal with lyrical dialogue in much more straightforwardly technical terms. Even the most compact and open-ended of these—the rapid gloss on the *tenso* in *De doctrina de compondre dictats*—lays out in concrete language what the troubadour wishing to compose in the genre needs to do.⁵⁵

Si vols far tenso, deus l'apondre en algun so qui haia bella nota, e potz seguir les rimes del cantar o no. E potz fer iiij or vi cobres o viii, si-t vols [...] Tenso es dita tenso per ço com se diu contrastan e disputan subtilmen lo un ab l'altre de qualque raho hom vulla cantar.

(Should you wish to compose a *tenso*, you must hook it on the previous melody, whether or not you reproduce the former song's rhymes. You can compose four or six *cobres*, or nine if you wish [...] The *tenso* is so called because in it speakers compare and debate artfully one with the other whatever theme the first should choose to sing about.)⁵⁶

Though one can imagine that the definition above stymied the novice with its latitude, it sets down specific parameters regarding composition in the context of courtly *certamina* or socially situated verse-interactions.

Within the ambit of oral performance, the distinction that the Galician-Portuguese treatise registers would have been of dubious value to listeners. One suspects that a set of musical cues, no less than the sequence of speakers, alerted listeners to whether a song fit into one generic box or another. It is difficult to imagine an audience with a burning need to identify which of two confoundingly similar genres was being performed. The stock construction “algũas cantigas i há” further suggests the writer is treating songs already composed. In the context of performance, then, the *Arte de trovar* description was more plausibly directed towards *joglars*, who might have drawn on a musical repertoire that distinguished between each category of dialogued song. Alternatively and perhaps more convincingly, the definition could have proved useful in explicating the sequence of songs in the *cancioneiro*. As António de Resende Oliveira concludes in his definitive 1994 study of Galician-Portuguese songbook organization, the tradition's first anthologists held as their primary organizational principle the three main genres, a structure inherited by the extant songbooks.⁵⁷ Here, finally, one discerns a solid rationale for the first subsection of the *Arte de trovar*: the exacting reader might question the inclusion of a mixed-gender dialogued *cantiga* in a manuscript segment otherwise dominated by either monogendered *cantigas de amigo* or *cantigas*

⁵⁵The *Arte de trovar*'s definition of the *tenção*, the Iberian spin on the *tenso*, makes for interesting comparative reading: “Outras cantigas fazem os trobadores que cham<am> tenções, porque son feitas per maneiras de razom que um haja contra outro, en que e<l> diga aquilo que por bem tener na prim<eir>a cobra, e o outro responda-lhe na outra dizend<o> o contraio” (Troubadours compose another type of song, called the *tenção* [dispute, related to the Provençal *tenso*] because it consists of contrary lines of argument, in which the first speaker states what he considers to be good in the first stanza and the second responds in the next stanza, arguing the opposite), Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 43. Unlike the *Doctrina* definition, the Galician-Portuguese version does not furnish the aspiring poet with poetic specs; however, in some ways it is more assertive, defining the genre as an airing of contrary views. For readers, such a definition might have explicated the nature and origins of a self-contradictory subgenre.

⁵⁶Marshall, *Razos*, 97–98.

⁵⁷Oliveira, *Espéctaculo trovadoresco*, 227–28.

de amor. The treatise's definition, though denying would-be poets the lyrical nitty-gritty, succinctly contextualizes and reinforces the culturally specific codicological design for which Oliveira convincingly argues.

Immediately following the clarification regarding dual-gender songs, the Galician-Portuguese treatise draws a similarly hazy distinction between the satiric genre's principal subdivisions: the *cantigas d'escarnho* and the *cantigas de maldizer*. These two short texts are the final recorded in Colocci's hand and read thus:

Capítulo V°

Cantigas d'escarneio som aquelas que os trobadores fazem querendo dizer mal d'alguen en elas, e dizen-lho per palavras cobertas que hajan dous entendimentos, pera lhe-lo nom entenderen ... ligeiramente: e estas palavras chamam os clérigos "hequivocatio." E estas cantigas se podem fazer outrossi de meestria ou de refram.

E pero que alguns dizem que há i algũas cantigas de "joguete d'arteiro," estas nom son mais ca d'escarnho, nem ham outro entendimento. Pero er dizem que outras há i "de risabelha": estas ou serám d'escarnho ou de maldizer; e chamam-lhes assi porque riim ende a vezes os homens, mais nom som cousas em que sabedoria nem outro bem haja.

Capítulo VI°

Cantigas de maldizer son aquela<s> que fazem os trobadores <contra alguem> descobertamente: e<m> elas entram palavras e<m> que queren dizer mal e nom aver<ám> outro entendimento se nom aquel que queren dizer chãam<ente>. E outrossi as todas fazen dizer <†>.⁵⁸

Chapter five

Cantigas d'escarnho [lit., "songs of scorn," satirical songs] are the songs that troubadours compose when they want to speak ill of someone and do so in masked words with double meanings, though these are not easily uncovered. Clerics call this technique *equivocatio*. These songs may have refrains or be *cantigas de mestria* [i.e., lacking a refrain].

Although some say there are *cantigas de juguete d'arteiro* [lit., of clever games], these are merely *cantigas d'escarnho*; there is no other meaning. Moreover, some say there are other songs called *cantigas de risabelha* [possibly derived from the Latin "*risibilia*," lit., laughing matters].⁵⁹ These can be *cantigas d'escarnho* or *cantigas de maldizer* [lit., "insult songs," satirical songs that do not make use of *equivocatio*]; they are thus called because sometimes the audience laughs at them, though these songs possess no intellectual or moral value.

Chapter six

Cantigas de maldizer are the songs that troubadours compose to malign someone in the open: here the language is malicious and has no other meaning than that on its face. Likewise, they compose all such songs to convey ... [†].

Though pointing in different directions from the vernacular *artes'* generic explications, this exploration of the satiric genres is no less voluminous than those encountered in many of the *langue d'oc* treatises. Two elements of the Galician-Portuguese text warrant close attention. First, the reference to clerical terminology—particularly when

⁵⁸Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 42–43.

⁵⁹See Liu, "*Risabelha*," 41–48.

read in conjunction with the references to the *joguete d'arteiro* and *risabelha*—suggests that the writer had a particular audience in mind. At first glance the allusion calls to mind Jofre de Foixa's introduction to the *Regles*, in which he vindicates the layman, signaling his commitment to the resolutely non-specialist.⁶⁰ The addressee of the Galician-Portuguese text was clearly not expected to possess inwardly the vocabulary of rhetoric or literary composition—for he himself was *not* a cleric—yet ostensibly brought to his reading of the treatise foreknowledge of the Iberian *risabelha* and *joguete d'arteiro*. Scholars have noted that these two terms likely enjoyed heightened social legibility on the Peninsula, given the link between satiric song and rule of law. Alfonso the Wise, the poet king who authored a number of satirical songs in Galician-Portuguese, ordered that Castilian statutes be codified in his influential *Siete Partidas*. This massive legislative framework encompassed, among other speech acts, the production of satiric *cantigas*,⁶¹ and outlines what constitutes a proper “juego” (game/play) versus morally outrageous speech.⁶² Of course the *risabelha* and *joguete d'arteiro* could be treated in a now-lost section of the work; however, the definitions appear self-contained, accompanied by neither forward- nor backward-pointing references (e.g., the “ante vos dissemos” discussed earlier in this essay). The text seems to suggest the now-arcane terms were in the air,⁶³ so to speak, at the time of the treatise's drafting. A portrait of the Galician-Portuguese text's intended reader begins to emerge: he was an individual not rhetorically inept, but broadly learned and alive to the basics of the Iberian genres. Possessing a superficial knowledge of rhetorical devices such as the *equivocatio* and ill-placed to identify them, our reader likely turned to the treatise to make sense of a recently defunct Iberian poetic tradition with which he identified and of which he had heard tell, yet in which he felt no need or had no opportunity to participate as a composer.

Equally of note in the excerpt above is the treatise writer's reliance on reception for generic classification: the label of *risabelha* does not depend on a poem's theme or structure but rather on the laughter it elicits. The moralizing language around the *cantigas de maldizer* too implies an act of reading or listening: how could the *risabelha* writer know if his jokes would land before debuting them in front of a live audience? What *risabelha* writer would relish knowing his composition-to-be was morally void before even beginning to write it? In the introduction to his exhaustive inventory of the rubrics that precede or follow the *cantigas* compiled by the *cancioneiros*, the Galician philologist Xoán Carlos Lagares notes that nearly all the contextualizing rubrics (as opposed to interpretative or attributive rubrics) come before the socially satiric *cantigas d'escarnho e maldizer*.⁶⁴ Though the rubrics were copied from a missing parent manuscript (since they appear in both the Biblioteca Nacional and Vatican manuscripts), at some point in the *cantigas'* transmission history, compilers anticipated the need to emplace existing troubadour songs within the social context that engendered them. Driven by a similar impulse, the Galician-Portuguese *ars* underscores the satiric genres' fundamentally social quality sooner than it lays out precepts for their production. In a parallel

⁶⁰Marshall, *Razos*, 56.

⁶¹For a sense of how the *cantigas* interacted with the Castilian monarch's statutes, see the Seventh Partida, Title 9, Law 3, in Alfonso, *Las siete partidas*, vol. 3, 576, as well as Benjamin Liu's discussion of the same law in *Joke Poetry*, 19–21.

⁶²Sodré, “Arte de Trovar e o ‘Jugar de palabras,’” 221.

⁶³Liu, “*Risabelha*,” 41–48, has written elegantly on the difficulties of locating historical humor in the *cantigas*.

⁶⁴Lagares, *E por esto fez este cantar*, 85.

interpretation, through the formulation “alguns dizem” (some say), the treatise writer suggests that he himself finds no utility in adopting the labels of *risabelha* or *joguete d’arteiro*, compacting the rumored subgenres under the broad—and morally freighted—category of the *cantiga d’escarnho*, perhaps so as to defend the completeness and sound design of any number of poetic anthologies. Though the Colocci text may have touched on the precepts of these obscure subgenres in a section now lost, the generic descriptions encountered so far are completely compatible with the goal of introducing a multigenre anthology of previously performed poems, many of which had issued from a distant and by then distasteful social context, to readers with varying points of entry into the Galician-Portuguese troubadour tradition.

After this first foray into generic breakdown comes a series of subchapters detailing certain technical terms of the Galician-Portuguese repertoire, mostly corresponding to subgenres or verse-features on import from Provence (e.g., *tenção*, *mestria*) as well as a poorly attested Galician-Portuguese subgenre called the *vilão*⁶⁵ and compositional vocabulary such as the *cantigas ateúdas* (uninterrupted discourse across strophes), *finda* (envoi), *dobre* (a term repeated in the same strophe) and *mozdobre* (a repeated verb with different temporal flexions). The treatise’s descriptions of rhyme in Chapter IV—which surely merits a study all its own—are quite unlike those found in the Occitan *artes*, more concerned with the sequence, rather than the quality, of rhymes, as Tavani notes.⁶⁶ This perhaps accords with the treatise’s broader preoccupation with explicating moments of divergence within a tradition better understood as a collective movement than as an amalgamation of individual authors; Berlin notes that the description of mixing masculine and feminine rhyme only applies to a third of the *cantigas de amigo* with mixed rhyme.⁶⁷ Here we do not have space enough to explore this and all remaining definitions vis-à-vis the Occitan *artes* or the *cantigas* themselves. A rapid survey of the Galician-Portuguese text’s most noteworthy elements will nonetheless bring its *raison d’être*—as if it needs one!—into sharper focus.

In Chapter IV.iii–iv, the treatise twice registers an interesting temporal slippage, switching from the present tense to the preterit: “Outrosi fezerom os trobadores algunas cantigas a que desinarom ateudas”⁶⁸; “As findas som cousa que os trobadores sempre usaron de poer en acabamento de sas cantigas.”⁶⁹ Both passages quickly take back up the present tense, adding, respectively, “E toda a cantiga assi deve de ir até a finda” and “E esta finda podem fazer de ùa ou de duas ou de três ou de quatro palavras.”⁷⁰ We must take care not to make too much of the treatise’s occasional temporal shifts. A

⁶⁵Tavani *Arte de trovar*, 1,3, takes the *Arte de trovar* to task for calling attention to this poetic genre “não representado nos cancioneros e ao qual se faz apenas alusão nas duas rubricas que precedem e, respectivamente, seguem a cantiga de João Gaia *Vosso pai na rua*” (unrepresented in the *cancioneiros* and merely alluded to in the rubrics flanking João de Gaia’s song “Your father on the street”). That the treatise would gloss a rare or arcane genre—much like the rubrics to Gaia’s poem—obtains if one reads the Galician-Portuguese text as either a descriptive poetics or an anthological accessory.

⁶⁶Tavani, “As artes poéticas hispánicas,” 31.

⁶⁷Berlin, “The Galician-Portuguese *Cantigas*,” 353.

⁶⁸“Troubadours have also composed certain songs which they called *ateúdas* [lit., sustained or continuous] and these may equally be *cantigas de mestria* [i.e., without a refrain] or refrained *cantigas*.” The Galician-Portuguese text has been drawn from Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 48.

⁶⁹“*Findas* [i.e., envois or concluding stanzas] are a resource that troubadours have long used to bring their songs to a close and better conclude the discourse they develop throughout their song, calling it the *finda* because such a term designates the conclusion of an argument,” Tavani, *Arte de Trovar*, 48.

⁷⁰“The whole song should proceed in this manner until the *finda*,” “The *finda* may consist of one, two, three, or four verses,” Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 48.

sequence of tenses needn't be dutifully observed; the text's author regularly wavers between *nos* and *eu*; and the second example, in particular, reads like a preterite of custom, present-perfective in its sense. Yet the *lapsus* only amplifies a feeling of grammatical angst that manifests at the treatise's open: the divide between the readerly *vos* that digests the treatise⁷¹ and the writerly *eles* that composes songs (e.g., "os trovadores fazem").⁷² For modern readers of the treatise, the *cantigas* seem nearly to write themselves, in quasi-aorist fashion, due to the treatise writer's etiolated syntax, e.g., "fazen-as das outras rimas," "pero podem-no meter no mozdobre,"⁷³ in which the implied subject (*dous homens*, *trovadores*) is located at a distance of eighteen and twelve lines, respectively. True, the source of the Colocci text may have been corrupt, and its rigorously ambiguous constructions were at any rate lawful within the then-unregulated territory of medieval Portuguese. Yet the treatise writer's often unmarked constructions seem to illustrate Nicole Zeeman's point that, in the medieval text, "language can signify and, more important, comment on itself."⁷⁴ Perhaps the *Arte de trovar* acknowledged and preempted the medieval songbook's self-authorizing qualities through its attempt to emplace its most striking features within a large verse anthology. Let us briefly return to the matter of the treatise's grammar: the *Arte de trovar* is unique among the troubadour *artes* in its mostly third-personal pointedness; the Occitan texts are fairly uniform in their use of the second-person *vos*. Grammatically opposing readers of the treatise ("vos") with practicing troubadours ("eles"), was the *Arte de trovar* more self-acceptingly epigonic, unwilling to affirm its own utility as a prescriptive poetics? More poorly written? Less pedantic?

"So many and various are the errors that a troubadour can make when writing verse, that I am unable to describe them all at length," writes our author at the start of the treatise's third full chapter. "However, it is appropriate that I should name a few of these many," he adds, sheepishly.⁷⁵ Here, as elsewhere in the treatise, we cannot ascribe the Galician-Portuguese treatise's schematic descriptions to its incomplete or fragmentary status; the brevity is built in and alluded to upfront. The treatise, even so, fails to function as the most basic forward-looking corrective. To the prospective Galician-Portuguese composer, the anonymous writer offers only a brief warning on the dangers of writing filthy-sounding lines, in VI.ii:

Erro acharam os trovadores que era ùa palavra a que chamarom "caçefetom", que se nom deve meter na cantiga, que é tanto come palavra fea, e sôa mal na boca. E algumas vezes tange em ela caçorria ou lixo, que nom convem de ser metudo em boa cantiga.⁷⁶

[Troubadours consider it improper to use terms they call *cacemphaton*, which should not be set in verse, because it is equally a foul word and sounds filthy in the mouth. Sometimes it smacks of ridicule or trash-talk, so it shouldn't be used in a good song.]

⁷¹Take, for instance, the quote at the heart of discussion on pp. 10–11: "É bem de entenderdes se som d'amor, se d'amigo" (Because in some *cantigas* both men and women speak, it is important that you know whether they are *cantigas de amor* or *cantigas de amigo*), Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 41.

⁷²"Troubadours compose," Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 42.

⁷³"[Troubadours] craft their verses using different rhyme schemes;" "[Troubadours] may do so in the *mozdobre*," Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 45, 51.

⁷⁴Zeeman, "Imaginative Theory," 226.

⁷⁵"Os erros som tantos e de tantas maneiras que os homens podem fazer no trovar, que nom posso falar em todos tam compridamente. Pero convém que vos tanto ende alguns [diga]," Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 53.

⁷⁶Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 53.

Treated extensively by Quintilian in his *Institutio Oratoria*, where the term mostly encompassed unintended double entendre,⁷⁷ *cacemphaton* is, like the *equivocatio* before it, a rhetorical term that our author glosses for the benefit of those undaunted by, yet not steeped in, medieval grammar. It is hard to believe these lines—comprising as they do one of only two “errors” our author treats—would have aided would-be versifiers in any meaningful sense. Presumably the aspiring troubadour opted *into*, not out of, morally outrageous cacophony. Yet this cryptic admonition does accord within the context of a songbook that included satiric songs known and appreciated for their ribaldry and that, per Alfonso’s *Siete Partidas*, sometimes ran afoul of the Peninsula’s legal and moral order. The marked sensuality and intense vituperation of the satirical songs were highly stylized according to compositional norms and the social conventions of the court where they were conceived and performed. The satirical occasion provided songwriters and performers with an opportunity to demonstrate before peers their mastery of the bawdy and invective, in much the same way that composers and singers of the *cantigas de amigo* strove to produce lexically austere lines of parallelistic verse that conversed profitability with the thematic and affective tropes characteristic of medieval Galician-Portuguese woman’s-voice poetry. Yet the codification of satirical songs via poetic anthologies necessarily subjected compositions that had fallen within the bounds of acceptable courtly discourse to the scrutiny—and even the sanctimony—of a readership that could not engage with poems on their own terms, given its social and temporal remove from their performance. Thus, intended rather to explicate apparent poor taste than to forestall it, the Galician-Portuguese *ars* provided readers with a way to make sense of the sex, scorn, and proverbial screeching they were bound to encounter in the Galician-Portuguese tradition.

The second and final “error” that our writer exposes—before the Colocci scribe, having exhausted his material or else reproducing his textual witness’s abrupt end, scrawled F I N I S—takes as its subject the five vowels. The section briefly seems poised to offer its spin on a mainstay of the vernacular verse *artes*, reading as follows:

Outrossi erro é meter <n>a palavra vogal depós vogal. Nom entendades <mal>, que se entende vogal depós vogal se as vogaes som de senhas naturas, mais nom se deve [de] meter duas vezes, ùa após outra, se ùa vogal é maior. Meta-se dela duas vezes, <se> quiserem fazer sílaba: pero alguns as metem na cantiga, dando ao “o” e ao “e” duas consoanças a cada ùa desta<s> vogaes. E assi podem meter cada ùa dela[s] duas vezes.

E nom vos posso esto mais declarar, senom como o cada um filhar em seu entendimento.

As leteras vogaes som estas [e] aquestas som: A, E, I, O, U.⁷⁸

[It is likewise incorrect to put one vowel after another in a verse. “Vowel after vowel” is not to be understood as referring to vowels of the same quality; rather, two vowels should not be used consecutively, one after the other, if the first vowel is a tense vowel. Two vowels may be used consecutively if one wishes to form a single syllable; however in their songs some troubadours use “o” and “e” in adjacent positions, attributing to each of these their own syllabic weight. Thus it is possible to use either of these vowels twice in succession.

⁷⁷For an overview of *cacemphaton*, see Ziolkowski, “Obscenity,” 49–51.

⁷⁸Tavani, *Arte de trovar*, 54.

I cannot shed any additional light on this matter; instead, it is up to each to apply the above to the best of his understanding.

The vowels are these and these alone: A, E, I, O, U.]

The treatise's abortive attempt to abort mission, the broad phonetic license it ultimately grants, the difficult reading for which it makes—these and other aspects of this final section are begging to be analyzed at length. Here, however, I will limit myself to only two general observations. First, the treatise comes to a close precisely when the would-be poet's mouth begins to open, that is, immediately following the enumeration of the vowels. In other vernacular treatises, we find far more robust accounts of vocalic quality.⁷⁹ The treatise's writer or copyist, though it is impossible to say which, seems to have brought the work to its conclusion upon remembering that a dying tradition with little hope of revival was beyond reproach and, in a certain sense, unpronounceable. Even the most vigorously preceptive Occitan grammars, Marshall reminds us, emerged from the rubble of tradition.⁸⁰ Perhaps the Galician-Portuguese treatise responds differently in the face of cultural decline, or, as seems likely, it responds to a cultural decline that is different in kind. The cessation of the Galician-Portuguese troubadours' activity came far more swiftly, as Paden observes, than that of their *langue d'oc* counterparts, with little in the way of an epigonic phase.⁸¹ Between the appearance of Vidal's *Razos* in the late twelfth century and the crater in Galician-Portuguese verse production after Dinis's death, in 1325, prescriptivists would have had a relatively narrow opening to stimulate a literary renaissance. The Galician-Portuguese text strikes us as being more interested in conditioning the *cantigas*' reception with all the details it could muster than in propagating that tradition's second wave.⁸²

This brings us to my final note on the *Arte de trovar*'s final section. The treatise's penultimate line amounts to either an incredible authorizing gesture, granting its readers considerable freedom to make meaning of the text they face, or else an acknowledgment of the "hermeneutic self" for whom Dom Duarte would prescribe reading strategies in his late medieval "ABC" of courtly values, *Leal conselheiro*.⁸³ Again we must ask: was the Colocci manuscript text truly intended as a prescriptive poetics? The term *entendimento*, used elsewhere in the treatise to signify "the meaning of a poem," is etymologically and semantically linked to the medieval Latin *intentio*, gesturing towards what Mary Carruthers has called the cognitive "adaption process, which is the work of interpretive commentary and meditative reading" that "crucially makes the public, the authorized text."⁸⁴ The term was equally implicated in medieval memory-making as mediated by Avicennan thought, whereby *intentio* stood for the personal and affective reactions

⁷⁹See in particular Deschamps, *L'art de dictier*, 65–67.

⁸⁰Marshall, *Razos*, xcvi.

⁸¹Paden, "The Chronology of Genres," 193.

⁸²It is worth noting that the Colocci-Brancuti manuscript (and thus the copy of the Galician-Portuguese *ars* that it contains) is roughly contemporary with the *Cancionero de Juan Alfonso de Baena*, an epigonic extension of the Galician-Portuguese school that adapted its primary genres, particularly the satiric ones, into Castilian. By and large failing to reproduce the Galician-Portuguese *cancioneiros*' heady blend of social humor, advanced technique, and lexical austerity, the Castilian songbook would only vindicate one's sense that the *AT*'s writer was treating a poetic tradition that had entered its final days.

⁸³See Berlin, "Willing Reader," esp. 210–11.

⁸⁴Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 235.

that conferred on sense-images their mental staying power.⁸⁵ Perhaps we are in the presence of a vernacular art of intention, in that word's medieval usage? Though as a prescriptive poetics the so-called *Arte de trovar* indeed falls short, it very well could have facilitated the canonization of the Galician-Portuguese *cancioneiros*, securing their place in the collective memory. Indeed, in this regard the treatise has already succeeded. For proof of this, one need only open to any page in the 2016 edition of the entire Galician-Portuguese secular lyrical *corpus*, published by the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal.⁸⁶ Its margins brim with generic, subgeneric, and technical terms like *cantiga de amor*, *tenção*, *ateuda*, *mestria*, *finda*, *dobre*, *mozdobre* and so on. Fueling *cantigas* criticism for nearly two centuries, many of these terms have been derived from the anonymous treatise that too many critics have considered second-class.

New directions in *cantigas* scholarship

From the dissolution of the Latin *grammatica*—as I previously glossed, citing Murphy—there emerged a host of theoretic genres, among these the preceptive grammar, which itself sired a tradition of vernacular *artes poeticae* in the lands of *langue d'oc*. Comparative and close readings of the Galician-Portuguese treatise may lead one reasonably to conclude that, at least as excerpted and embedded in the Colocci-Brancuti songbook, the *Arte de trovar* boasts an iconoclastic streak all its own, grafting its preoccupations with reception and codicological unity onto its vernacular *ars poetica* host and thereby participating in the glorious dialectic of generic dilution and distillation that has powered literary cultures since time immemorial. The revolution was quiet, barely vocalized by the treatise writer himself, as we see in the work's concluding section. So quiet that it was drowned out by the nineteenth- and twentieth-century philologists who, though producing excellent scholarship of the Galician-Portuguese *cancioneiros*, had approached the *Arte de trovar* as a faulty *ars*. Recent years have seen a much-welcome adjustment to the literary critical posture whereby scholars have striven to hold tight to first- and second-wave philological rigor while dispensing with that past criticism's aesthetic censure, in an embrace of diplomatics and *dissensus*. This trend has materialized most spectacularly in the numerous open-access editorial initiatives of recent years, including Projeto Littera's highly informative online *cantigas* portal; the Universidade da Coruña's Universo Cantigas project, which currently features critical readings of over a thousand *cantigas*, along with paleographic transcriptions and scholarly apparatus; and the Centro Ramón Piñeiro's MedDB Base de datos da Lírica Profana Galego-Portuguesa, a searchable *corpus* of all the Galician-Portuguese *cantigas* that includes transcriptions of Colocci's notes. By presenting the *cantigas* tradition in and on its own terms, this new school enters into sympathy with a treatise that affirms a kind of unity within the multivocal Iberian songbook.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

⁸⁵Carruthers, *Memory*, 65.

⁸⁶Videira Lopes, *Cantigas medievais galego-portuguesas*.

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Appendix: An English translation of the Colocci-Brancuti MS treatise⁸⁷

Chapter four⁸⁸

Since in some *cantigas* [songs] men and women speak, it is important that you know whether they are *cantigas de amor* [i.e., love songs in a man’s voice] or *cantigas de amigo* [love songs in a woman’s voice]: if the men speak in the first stanza [*cobra*], and the women in the following, it is a *cantiga de amor* since it develops according to the man’s discourse, as previously mentioned; and if the women speak in the first stanza, likewise it is a *cantiga de amigo*; and if they both speak in the same stanza, then it goes according to whoever speaks first in the stanza.

Chapter five

Cantigas d’escarnho [lit., “songs of scorn,” satirical songs] are the songs that troubadours compose when they want to speak ill of someone and do so in masked words with double meanings, though these are not easily uncovered. Clerics call this technique *equivocatio*. These songs may have refrains or be *cantigas de mestria* [i.e., lacking a refrain].

Although some say there are *cantigas de jogoete d’arteiro* [lit., of clever games], these are merely *cantigas d’escarnho*; there is no other meaning. Moreover, some say there are other songs called *cantigas de risabelha* [possibly derived from the Latin “*risibilia*,” lit., laughing matters].⁸⁹ These can be *cantigas d’escarnho* or *cantigas de maldizer* [lit., “insult songs,” satirical songs that do not make use of *equivocatio*]; they are thus called because sometimes the audience laughs at them, though these songs possess no intellectual or moral value.

Chapter six

Cantigas de maldizer are the songs that troubadours compose to malign someone in the open: here the language is malicious and has no other meaning than that on its face. Likewise, they compose all such songs to convey ... [†].

⁸⁷The following translation has been made from the edition of the *Arte de trovar* available on the FCSH *Cantigas* portal, <https://cantigas.fcsh.unl.pt/artedetrovar.asp>. Although I have cited Tavani’s excellent 1999 edition throughout the preceding analysis, I have chosen the FCSH digital edition for its legibility and accessibility. A difficult text on many levels, the *Arte de trovar* poses formidable challenges for the translator, including its sole witness’s numerous textual lacunae and certain of its technical terms and descriptions. In preparing my translation, I have attempted to produce a fluent English text, while resisting the urge to smooth over the ambiguities present in the Galician-Portuguese. My translation reproduces the conjectural readings indicated by brackets in the FCSH edition; however, it does not distinguish such text graphically. Those lacunae for which the modern editors have not supplied conjectural readings are marked by a dagger (†). The clarifications set aside in brackets—and, of course, any errors in the translation—are entirely my own.

⁸⁸The Galician-Portuguese text does not distinguish between chapter and subchapter, referring to both with the term *capítulo* (chapter). Additionally, the first six sections of the text, “chapters” 4–9, appear to be fragments of a larger chapter, potentially the treatise’s third.

⁸⁹See Liu, “*Risabelha*,” 41–48.

Chapter seven

Troubadours compose another type of song, called the *tenção* [dispute, related to the Provençal *tenso*] because it consists of contrary lines of argument, in which the first speaker states what he considers to be good in the first stanza and the second responds in the next stanza, arguing the opposite.

These may be composed as *cantigas de amor*, *cantigas de amigo*, *cantigas d'escarnho* or *cantigas de maldizer*, although they must be of *mestria* [i.e., lacking a refrain]. They may consist of as many stanzas as are desired, there being composed for every additional stanza its mate. Should the song include a *finda* [envoi], both troubadours compose one of their own, or two each, since one speaker must not compose more stanzas than the other.

Chapter eight

Troubadours also compose songs which they call *cantigas de vilãos* [lit., villager songs]. These songs <†>, absent of foul language, are in no other respect blameworthy, because they level insults at nothing and no one. As with other types of *cantiga*, these may be of any verse-design [*talho*] whatsoever.

Chapter nine

There is another manner of song in which two troubadours participate, and is called the *cantiga de seguir* [follow-on song, a type of *contrafactum*]. It is thus called because each *cantiga* must follow another in melody, lyrics, or both. A song can follow another in three ways. The first is to hook the second song onto the first one's music, composing new lyrics, equal in measure to the previous ones, so they fit the same music. This method is less technically advanced, since it does not take up any of the words from the song it follows.

There is another way of making *cantigas de seguir*, called verse for verse, and this is because he who wishes to follow in this way must reproduce the end rhymes⁹⁰ of the song he follows, using the same verse-structure [*talho*] and the same number of syllables, so that the new song fits the same music.

There is still another way of following in which the second song does not reproduce entirely the first song's rhyme scheme but rather keys its rhymes to the same measure [i.e., prosody] such that it fits the same melody; alternatively, it might play on the previous song's verses, expressing a similar meaning in other words. So as to demonstrate a composer's superior skill, *cantigas de seguir* may reproduce word-for-word the refrain, giving it a new meaning. This is the best way to compose a *cantiga de seguir*, because it lends the refrain a new meaning while using the very same words, and brings the verses of the stanza into accord with it.

Chapter four, containing six chapters

Chapter one

Troubadours have always composed their songs according to a regular verse-structure [*talho*] and in whatever manner [*maneira*] they wish and consider apposite. However, the majority of *cantigas de mestria* is composed according to the following verse-structure: a stanza of five lines. Anyone who wishes to compose a song must ensure that successive stanzas match, setting down either this

⁹⁰The sections on the *cantigas de seguir* are some of the treatise's most difficult owing to the polysemy of the medieval Galician-Portuguese *talho* and *palavra* as well as to the lack of readily identifiable *cantigas de seguir* in the extant song-books. I have interpreted these passages as setting out three manners of producing poetic *contrafacta*, in order of increasing difficulty: reproducing the first song's music, the first song's end rhymes, and, finally, the first song's prosody (while optionally taking up its refrain, though lending it a different meaning).

many [i.e., five] or a few more verses in a stanza using the same number of syllables in the stanza as he fancied in the one before it.

There exist songs in which the stanzas may have more syllables than those stanzas mentioned above, though all stanzas should match each other in number of lines and all other respects if multiple verse structures [i.e., a variety of strophes] in one song are desired; indeed they should match the first stanzas of this new design and proceed consistently, as in other types of *cantiga*, and the stanzas should match each other in rhyme, including rhyme stress, as otherwise the stanzas will fit no music whatsoever. Troubadours may compose songs of four, six, eight or more stanzas, if they wish. But these are indeed the best verse-structures for presenting discourse so as not to bore the audience.

These stanzas, as I have already told you, may be composed in any number and according to any verse-design [*talho*]. If a song has only three stanzas, the strophic design must be the same throughout or monorhyme. A song of four stanzas or more may be of a single strophic design.

Chapter two

To demonstrate superior skill, some troubadours include in the song they compose a word that does not rhyme with the others, which they call the *palavra perduda* [stray word or missing rhyme]. A troubadour may place this at the beginning, middle, or end of a stanza, in whichever location he desires. However, wherever he places it in one stanza, he should place it in the others. This line of verse should demonstrate great prowess; likewise, he can put the aberrant verse in each stanza, so that these rhyme with one another, or else if he prefers in each stanza that uses the same rhyme scheme. In the above manner troubadours may also insert a *palavra perduda* twice in the same stanza.

Chapter three

Troubadours have also composed certain songs which they called *ateúdas* [lit., sustained or continuous] and these may equally be *cantigas de mestria* [i.e., without a refrain] or refrained *cantigas*. They called them *ateúdas* because in them the last word of the stanza must not completely finish the thought; rather the first word of the following stanza will explicate and conclude it. The whole song should be enjambed in this manner until the *finda* [see next chapter], at which point it should bring to a complete close the discourse that the previous stanzas left open.

Chapter four

Findas [i.e., envois or concluding stanzas] are a resource that troubadours have long used to bring their songs to a close and better conclude the discourse they develop throughout their song, calling it the *finda* because such a term designates the conclusion of an argument.

The *finda* may consist of one, two, three, or four verses. In a *cantiga de mestria*, the *finda* must rhyme with the final stanza; if it is a refrained *cantiga*, it should rhyme with the refrain. Although some say a song ought to have a single *finda*, nevertheless others compose songs with two or three, each according to his preference. Still others compose songs without *findas*, even though the *finda* makes for a more complete song.

Chapter five

We now wish to demonstrate the meaning of *dobre* [lit., double]. *Dobre* means to say the same word twice or more in each stanza, so it should be very deliberately placed within the song. As placed in one stanza, thus should it be placed in all the others. If the *dobre* in one stanza is reproduced in another, it may be placed in different lines of verse but always in keeping with the same verse-structure [*talho*] and in the same manner as in the first occurrence. The *dobre* too should figure in the *finda*.

Chapter six

Mozdobre is like the *dobre* in its basic sense, but the words do not match because the verb tenses change. As I have told you of the *dobre*, so too the *mozdobre* should be used in the same fashion as in the first *stanza* throughout the other stanzas and in the *finda*, for the sake of completeness.

Chapter five, containing two chapters

Chapter one

Tense is the term that troubadours use to refer to when they sing in the past, the present in which they find themselves, or in the future. Troubadours cannot compose a song without speaking in one, two, or all three of these tenses, for it is necessary to use at least some of these tenses when addressing oneself or another. If at the outset of their song they sing in one tense, it is best that they not use another tense while developing their discourse and its meaning, unless they are introducing a new argument or sense, for otherwise the lyrics and the meaning of the song would not be in agreement. However, as I have already told you, troubadours may mix tenses in the *mozdobre*, whereby they assign to each tense a distinct meaning.

Chapter two

Cantigas, as I have mentioned, may be composed in masculine or feminine rhymes, or in a mixture of both. It is therefore appropriate that we should show you which rhymes are masculine and which feminine; however, we cannot document these rhymes exhaustively, since they are numerous and of numerous guises. It is worth knowing nonetheless that the following rhymes ending in these terminal vowels are considered masculine: those ending in “a,” or in “o” after “a,” or in “o” after “e,” or any vowels in the verse-final syllable that are themselves accented. Considered feminine are all other rhymes ending in lax vowels. A troubadour who wishes to compose should end his song on the same type of syllable with which it started, masculine or feminine; however, he may use a mixture of these in a stanza so long as he deploys the rhymes in the same manner across stanzas. No matter how he arranges them, he should rhyme masculine with masculine and feminine with feminine.

Chapter six, containing three chapters

Chapter one

So many and various are the errors that a troubadour can make when writing verse, that I am unable to describe them all at length. However, it is appropriate that I should name a few of these many.

Chapter two

Troubadours consider it improper to use terms they call *cacemphaton*, which should not be set in verse, because it is equally a foul word and sounds filthy in the mouth. Sometimes it smacks of ridicule or trash-talk, so it shouldn't be used in a good song.

Chapter three

It is likewise incorrect to put one vowel after another in a verse. “Vowel after vowel” is not to be understood as referring to vowels of the same quality; rather, two vowels should not be used consecutively, one after the other, if the first vowel is a tense vowel. Two vowels may be used consecutively if one wishes to form a single syllable; however in their songs some troubadours use “o” and “e” in adjacent positions, attributing to each of these their own syllabic weight. Thus it is possible to use either of these vowels twice in succession.

I cannot shed any additional light on this matter; instead, it is up to each to apply the above to the best of his understanding.

The vowels are these and these alone: A, E, I, O, U.