

Foundations and Foundation Myths of the Troubadours

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ABSTRACT

A review of several origin myths relating to the creation of medieval Occitan lyric poetry. We see a preference for a “great man theory” of origins, though the “great man” may be a fictional woman. Medieval and Renaissance Occitan authors, including Uc de Saint Circ, Guilhem Molinier, and Jean de Nostredame, used differing origin myths to validate literature in a language that was perceived not to carry the prestige of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Latin or fifteenth- and sixteenth-century French.

KEYWORDS

troubadours; Occitan literature; charter myths; foundation myths; Guilhem IX de Peitieu; Uc de Saint Circ; Jean de Nostredame; Guilhem Molinier; Consistori de gaia sciensa; Eble II de Ventadorn; Clémence Isaure

RESUM

Revisió d'alguns mites d'origen referits a la creació de la poesia lírica occitana medieval. Hi veiem una preferència per una “teoria del gran home” d'origen, tot i que el “gran home” també podria ser una dona de ficció. Autors medievals i renaixentistes, incloent-hi Uc de Sant Circ, Guilhme Molinier i Jean de Nostredame, van emprar mites d'origen divergents per a validar la literatura en una llengua que es percebia que no comportava el prestigi del llatí dels segles xii i xiii, o el del francès dels segles xiv i xv.

PARAULES CLAU

trobadors; literatura Occitana; mites justificadors; mites fundacionals; Guilhem IX de Peitieu; Uc de Sant Circ; Jean de Nostredame; Guilhem Molinier; Consistori de la Gaia Ciència; Eble II de Ventadorn; Clémence Isaure



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1 Introduction

This article considers multiple foundation myths of troubadour lyric, as a means of better understanding the myths themselves and in order to consider what their function might be. Even the individual modern scholars consider as the first named troubadour, Guilhem IX, seventh Count of Poitiers,¹ implied in his poetry that he had predecessors. His successors identified other founding poets or patrons, notably Eble of Ventadorn (1086-1155). Later in the history of troubadour lyric, additional foundation myths were created, culminating, one might say, with a late fifteenth-century creation that was truly mythic and totally fictional, the invention of Clémence Isaure as founding sponsor of Occitan lyric. This article will outline this history from Guilhem to Clémence and on to Jean de Nostradame, concluding that the several creation myths relate to the status of Occitan literary creation in the face of linguistic competition from Latin and French.

2 Theoretical Arguments

The terms *foundation myth* and *charter myth* are interchangeable. One definition of such a myth is a tale that, according to Bronislaw Malinowski, “conveys, expresses, and strengthens the fundamental facts of the local unity and of the kinship unity of the group of people” (1954: 116). “It is always made *ad hoc* to fulfill a certain sociological function, to glorify a certain group, or to justify an anomalous status” (Malinowski 1954: 125). Charter myths “express the sense of the social group’s relationship, whether it be with its legendary members and those no longer living, or with the groups that surround it” (Lévy-Bruhl 1999, *apud* Costa 2009: 7).

It is within human nature to establish a story of self, as anthropologists know well. Furthermore, in the realm of language, as Paul Kroskrity summarizes (2009: 73, citing House 2002; Gomez de García et al. 2009; Dorian 1998):

A community’s conceptions of its language are critically influenced by its position in political economic and other relevant cultural systems. Those who have political economic power will rationalize inequality by viewing their language as superior and their linguistic practices as exemplary. Those whose languages do not enjoy the hegemonic support of nation-states must either resist by locating authority in alternative, local sources or submit to dominant views that equate linguistic vitality with linguistic superiority thereby conceding their own linguistic inferiority.

Language communities are capable of creating a myth that explains their origins, an effort to present language and discourse “constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group” (Kroskrity 2009: 72-73). As James Costa has noted (2009: 5), “Language histories can be one of those places where discourse shapes or intends to shape social structures and transforms or seeks to transform power relationships”.

1. Guilhem’s status as first named troubadour dates only from the nineteenth century. This consideration is widespread, as Wikipedia shows (<https://tinyurl.com/y5kogu4>, accessed 02-02-2019). Jean de Nostredame (1522–1576/7) may have considered Jaufré Rudel the first troubadour (see below).

In the case considered here, the myths developed all revolve around a single individual, credited with being the first creator or the founder of a movement. I dub these “great man myths” because the story retold is predicated on a single individual as the origin, most often a male, though the Occitan case presents a female founder with founding myth as well.

3 The First Fathers

Modern scholars identify Guilhem IX (William IX) of Aquitaine (1071-1126) as the first troubadour. Certainly, we have no attributed poetry to any Occitan lyricist from before his time. His poetic skill is so remarkable that it is generally believed he must have had predecessors whose names are lost to us, though, as Gerald Bond observes, “because his is the first poetry to be preserved, it inevitably appears to be *itself* the source of most of the later developments in troubadour poetry” (1982: lvi, my italics). In at least one of Guilhem’s lyrics, “Farai un vers de dreit nien” (PC 183.7), the poet parodies other works, in specific, “the content (a chaste, distant love) and the form (a love-sick lament) of an existing type of love poetry” (Bond ed. 1982: lxix, also Bond ed. 1982: xlvi), implying predecessors. It is worth noting that his *vida*, a biography composed long after Guilhem’s death, makes no mention of his primordial status or his chronological pre-eminence (Boutière-Schutz ed. 1964: 3).

We cannot easily explain why this nobleman composed verse that has come down to us; Gerald Bond suggests that Guilhem benefitted from a socio-political climate in flux: “The count could erect and defend a ‘modern’ and ‘rustic’ poetics which would rapidly raise the value of secular culture – and of the culture of the secular – south of the Loire” (Bond 2017: 122). His avoidance of Latin was, in part, a political statement: citing Bond again, “He sought to avoid subjection by other figures of power, whether papal, royal, or comital” (2017: 128). Latin was the language of the pope, of decrees from the King of France or the King of England, from his French-speaking neighbors north of the Loire. He may have used Occitan to establish himself firmly in his lands and securely as a poet.² However, Guilhem does not figure as an early mythological founder.

The next generation of Occitan poets features Marcabru (flourished circa 1110-circa 1150), who did not describe himself with the term *troubadour*. For him, as for his immediate contemporaries, *troubadour* did not carry positive connotations. As William Paden has demonstrated conclusively (2019: 14-18):

In medieval Occitan, *trobador* was not a technical term. It did not include all the people we call troubadours, at least not originally. As used by the early troubadours, it was judgmental. It referred to other poets whom the speaker scorned, trivial or unworthy poets whom he did not wish to resemble.³

Paden notes that *trobador* is first found in Marcabru’s “Lo vers comens can vei del fau” (PC 293.33, l. 7). In this song, written in the early 1130s, Marcabru describes his competition as *trobador*, people who create petty, silly, or muddled compositions.⁴ Later in his career, Marcabru

2. As Bond observed, “William himself prized and praised above all his formal technique, and twice directly addresses it” (2017: 120).

3. Giuseppe Noto has studied the relation between the terms *joglar*, which he finds to refer to a recognized group of people with a certain livelihood (performing songs), and *trobador*, which he finds to refer to one who composes poetic songs, but not for a living (1998).

4. Rossi suggests that Marcabru is targeting Cercamon with these words (2009: 20-22).

will again inveigh against *trobador*:

Trobador a sen d'enfanza
 movon als pros ataina
 e torno a desceplina
 çho que veritaz autreia⁵
 ll. 7–10

('Childish troubadours
 make trouble for the worthy
 and turn into strife
 what truth grants')

(“Per savi teing ses doptanza”, PC 293.37, tr. Simon Gaunt *et al.* ed. 2000)

While he does not call these dubious *trobadors* his predecessors nor attach them to the creation of Occitan lyric, there is clearly, even at this relatively early date in the history of Occitan lyric, a recognition of quality and of aesthetic history.

Regardless of his own disdain for *trobadors*, Marcabru did explain that he had trained at “the school of Cercamon”, words that point to a different founding father. This school of Cercamon is certainly implied in Marcabru’s *vida* as presented in manuscript *A*⁶, which relates “Après estet tant ab un trobador qui avia nom Cercamon” (‘Afterwards he stayed with a troubadour named Cercamon’, Gaunt *et al.* ed. 2000: 37), though Simon Gaunt *et al.* state that “It is not possible to confirm the notion that Marcabru served a period of poetic apprenticeship with Cercamon” (2000: 1).

Even though this *vida* credits Marcabru with having worked with Cercamon, another *vida*, found in manuscript *K*,⁷ gives Marcabru more mythic power, observing: “Trobaire fo dels premiers c’om se recort” (‘He was one of the first troubadours that we remember’, Boutière-Schutz ed. 1964: 10). The language of the *vida* demonstrates that the job title of *trobador* had become a positive by the thirteenth century (see Paden 2019: *passim*). The author of this second *vida* places Marcabru chronologically at the beginning of the literary history, ignoring Cercamon and Guilhem IX. For the mid-thirteenth century author of this *vida*, Marcabru has pre-eminence over his twelfth-century contemporaries. A rubric in manuscript *R*,⁸ copied slightly later, takes things one step further, saying of the lyricist, “Marcabru, que fo lo premier trobador que fos” (‘Marcabru, who was the first troubadour ever’, Boutière-Schutz ed. 1964: 11). We should be careful, however, in how much authority we give to the *vidas*; it is possible that the author of the *vida* is actually implying that Marcabru was the first poet to call himself a *trobador*, though we know he vehemently rejected that job description (see Paden 2019: 15).

There exists another potential “progenitor”, Eble II of Ventadorn (1086–1155) (PC 130). Writing in the second half of the twelfth century, Geoffroy, prior of Vigeois (†1184), described Eble in these terms: “Ebolus ... erat valde graciosus in cantilenis” (*Recueil des historiens* 1877: 445); “usque ad

5. On the date, 1152–54 (?), see Gaunt *et al.* ed. 2000: 465, the only attempt to date this poem cited by BEdT.

6. *A* = Rome, Bibl. Vat. Lat. 5232, late thirteenth or early fourteenth century (Zufferey 1987: 64; Lombardi-Careri 1998: 19).

7. *K* = Paris, B.n.F. fr. 12473, late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, Italian hand (Zufferey 1987: 69; Meliga 2001: 129).

8. *R* = Paris, B.n.F. fr. 22543, composed in the first quarter of the fourteenth century in the Toulousain (Zufferey 1987: 130, 132).

senectam alacritatis carmina dilexit" (*Recueil des historiens* 1877: 424): 'Eble the singer gave a great deal of pleasure with his songs'; 'he loved songs of joy into his old age'.⁹ For years scholars have believed that none of his compositions had survived,¹⁰ though Luciano Rossi has recently suggested that songs attributed to Cercamon may have been composed by Eble (Rossi ed. 67-70; Saverio Guida and Gerardo Larghi dismiss the idea: 2013 s.v. Eble de Ventadorn).¹¹ I quote Roy Rosenstein on this subject: "It seems everyone wants to find the lost Ebles and is stealing from Peter to pay Paul" (2018b). While Cercamon is likely a contemporary of Eble, there is no irrefutable reason to assume poetry attributed to Cercamon was composed by the nobleman from Ventadorn, described by François Pirot as "énigmatique" (1973: 647n). So the myth of Eble as a founder of Occitan lyric, while tempting, is unsupported, beyond the single line in a Latin chronicle.

While we cannot call him a founder, a number of troubadours recognized Eble as a patron and/or model, most notably Bernart de Ventadorn, who mentions a "school of Eble" in "Lo tems vai e ven e vire" (PC 70.30):

Ja mais no serai chantaire
ni de l'escola n'Eblo,
que mos chantars no val gaire
ni mas voutas ni mei so;
(ll. 22-25)

('I will nevermore be a singer nor of the school of Sir Eble, for
my song has no value neither my lyrics nor my melody')

Bernart claims not to be worthy of his master. Luciano Rossi insists on this relationship (2009: 49), "Le maître ne peut être qu'Eble". Roy Rosenstein has argued that Jaufre Rudel also trained at the school of Eble, which Rosenstein calls "la seule école de chant, la seule école vernaculaire contemporaine dans la région des troubadours" (1988: 13).¹² Marcabru also implies a school or poetic practice tied to Eble in "L'iverns vai e-l temps s'aizina" (PC 293.31): "Ja non farai mai plevina, / ieu, per la troba n'Eblo" (ll. 73-74) ('I will nevermore make a pledge on behalf of the compositions [alt. poetic style/poetic practice] of Sir Eble', tr. Gaunt *et al.* ed. 2000).¹³ Vincent Pollina understands "L'iverns vai e-l temps s'aizina" as a "repudiation of Lord Eblo (...) a disavowal of a literary father figure" (1991: 107).

Lastly, Guerau de Cabrera (fl. 1145-1170) speaks of Eble in his *ensenhamen*, *Cabra joglar* (PC

9. The Index rerum of the *Recueil des historiens* offers this summary: "Ebolus II, Vicecomes Ventadorensis, cognomento Cantator, frater Petri de Petra-Bufferia ex Almode matre, usque ad senectam alacritatis carmina dilexit (...) c. adeptus suis cantilenis Guillelmi VII Comitis Pictav. familiaritatem, cum strophis se mutuò circumvenire studerent" (*Recueil des historiens* 1877: 894 s.v. Ebolus II).

10. As Vincent Pollina observed, "It is one of the great ironies of the manuscript tradition that none of the existing *chansonniers* attributes to [Eble] any of the songs preserved therein" (1991: 101). See Pirot 1973: 657n for a careful summation of the several attempts to assign attribution, up to roughly 1973.

11. If Cercamon mentions Eble in his *planh* for Guilhem X, "Lo planh comenz iradamen" (PC 112.2a), does it make sense that Cercamon is a *nom de plume* for Eble? Rossi thinks Cercamon is sending the work to himself (2009: 36) and develops this idea in detail (2009: 67-70).

12. Rosenstein argues that Jaufre Rudel is at the foundation of the troubadour tradition since he sings of an *amor de lonh* as opposed to the physical love celebrated by Guilhem IX (2019), though Rosenstein has also written, "[the Count of Poitiers] had set the standard for not only vernacular love poetry in general but specifically for the inaccessibility topos that Jaufre popularized with his distant love" (2018a: 101).

13. Ruth Harvey understands this line as speaking of Marcabru's "moral disapproval", of Eble and his followers who fail to distinguish between love and lust (1989: 30).

242a.1). One interest of this pedagogical text is that the author lists all the genres and literary themes a good performer must know. Guerau certainly implies that Eble de Ventadorn is a poet, perhaps with skills on a par with those of Jaufrè Rudel and Marcabru:

Ja vers novel
 bon d'En Rudell
 non cug que.i pas sotz lo guignon
 de Markabrun,
 ni de negun
 ni de N'Anfos ni de N'Eblon
 (ll. 25-30, *apud* Rossi 2009)¹⁴

('I don't think that a good *vers novel* of Sir Rudel ever passes under your moustache [out of your mouth], nor one of Marcabru, nor of anyone, nor of Anfos nor of Eble')

Luciano Rossi concludes, "*L'escola n'Eblo* (...) a éduqué à la poésie les *chantadors* et les *joglars* les plus habiles" (2009: 51), and, more significantly for my thesis: "Il faut attribuer à Cercamon la fondation d'un vrai canon 'courtois,' définissant pour la première fois les *topoi* constitutifs de la *fin'Amors*" (2009: 103). Rossi is not seeking to create a foundation myth, but his conclusions contribute to the mythology of Eble as the founder of Occitan lyric.

4 Uc de Saint Circ and the *vidas*

I have already evoked the *vidas*, semi-fictional biographies of troubadour singer/poets. One opinion, not universally held, is that these texts, that is, *vidas* or lives, were collected or composed largely by thirteenth-century troubadour Uc de Saint Circ, who built on material he had accumulated early in his career (see Elizabeth Wilson Poe 1990 and, following her, Burgwinkle 1997).¹⁵ His own *vida* reports, "Gran ren anparet de l'autrui saber e voluntiers l'enseingnet ad autrui" ('He learned a lot of the wisdom of others and taught it willingly to others', Boutière-Schutz 1964: 240). Importantly, while supposedly training in Montpellier to become a cleric, instead, Uc was learning music and lyric composition, along with "e·ls faich e·ls dich dels valens homes et de la valens domnas que eron al mon, ni eron estat" ('the deeds and words of worthy men and women who were in the world and who had been', Boutière-Schutz 1964: 239). These are the lines that allow Bill Burgwinkle to report that Uc "had the reputation of being the 'historian' of the troubadour tradition" (1997: 121). "As poet, biographer, literary historian and mythographer, Uc must be accorded his rightful place as the 'inventor' (trobador) of 'troubadour poetry' and the ideological trappings with which it came to be associated" (Burgwinkle 1993: 348-349).

Though Burgwinkle calls Uc a mythographer, Burgwinkle's arguments present Uc not as playing with foundation myths so much as creating the myth of the poet and his role in society. For example, we have seen the idea of a school or a following in the foundation myths discussed so far. Uc uses the

14. François Pirot offered a slightly different text (1972, 547): "Ja vers novel / bon d'En Rudell / non cug que·t pas sotz lo guignon, / de Markabrun, / ni de negun / ni d'En Anfos ni d'En Eblon (ll. 25-30).

15. Uc de Saint Circ is, of course, not the sole author of *vidas*; we know that Miquel de la Tor composed the biography of Peire Cardenal (Boutière-Schutz 1964: 335-336) and that the *vidas* in manuscript P, Florence Biblioteca Laurenziana XVI, 42 (completed in 1310) may be by a different author (Boutière-Schutz 1964: xix).

term “school”, *escola*, only once, in the *vida* for Guiraut de Bornelh (see Corradini Bozzi 1982-87: s. v. *escola*), where Uc relates, “E la soa vida si era aitals que tot l’ivern estava en escola et aprendia letras, e tota la estat anava per cortz e menava ab se dos cantadors que cantavon las soas chansons” (‘And his life was such that all winter he was in school teaching letters and all summer he went to courts and brought with him two singers who sang his songs’, Boutière-Schultz eds. 1964: 39). In this passage, Uc is simply describing the employment of one troubadour, not setting Guiraut as a founder, even of the school at which he taught.

Significant for my argument is the reality that Uc used as a model for the *vidas*, the Latin *accessus*, presenting Occitan lyricists in the same format and with the same dignity as their Latin forebears (see chapter 6 in Meneghetti 1984; the Italian scholar presents the modelling well). Uc’s observations were not only chronological, as we observed in the case of Marcabru, but also aesthetic. For example, he gives Peire d’Alvernha critical approbation: Peire “fo lo premiers bons trobair que fon outra mon”¹⁶ (‘was the first good troubadour who lived beyond the hills’, Boutière-Schultz ed. 1964: 263), implying that Peire’s predecessors were mediocre.

I would nuance Burgwinkle’s description of Uc as the inventor of troubadour poetry, not so much because Uc created the myth, but rather because he took the traditions of troubadour lyric to a new place. Burgwinkle states, “The uniquely cynical vision of Uc de Saint Circ sent the lyric spinning in another direction” (1997: 145), one that might not necessarily be followed by a subsequent generation in Occitania.

5 Consistory of Gay Science

In the fourteenth century, a group of Toulouse citizens sought to preserve the traditions of Occitan lyric. In the blunt words of Robert Lafont, “Capitale par le langage, Toulouse avait voulu l’être au début du XIVe siècle. Pour cela avait été créée l’institution du Gai Savoir et écrites les *Leyes d’amors*” (1970: 19). As recounted in fourteenth-century documents, seven men had been meeting regularly to discuss their own poetry. Seeking to expand their audience and to increase participation, they launched a poetic competition at the end of 1323, calling for a May 1324 gathering of poets (Laura Kendrick 2008 offers a good retelling of the historical foundation).

The Toulouse burghers founded what came to be called a “Consistory of Gay Science”, “consistory” in the sense of “gathering, meeting”.¹⁷ After several years of competition, they asked Guilhem Molinier¹⁸ to compose a *Leyes d’amors*, a handbook or rulebook, in order to perpetuate poetry in their community. In this work, Guilhem presented rules and models for poetic composition (though his effort is of uneven utility for medieval poets and modern scholars, see Pfeffer 1986) and helped create a new foundation myth. In this case, the foundation myth emerges from a largely bourgeois group of amateur poets who seek to justify their existence. They may also have sought to elevate their efforts and the status of their city and its language.

The *Leyes d’amors* exists in multiple versions, one long in prose, composed between 1324 and 1335

16. The precise meaning of the last two words is subject to debate, see Boutière-Schultz ed. 1964: 265n.

17. Anglade notes that the founders of the Consistory were probably using the University of Toulouse as a model for the structures and rewards of their corporation (Anglade ed. 1919: 4, 33-37, citing Pio Rajna 1927); as Marisa Galvez observes, “The Consistory borrows both the governing and scholastic procedures of the University in order to ensure the institution’s legitimacy” (2011: 44). Passerat (2000: 450) understands this development as occurring more slowly than does Galvez.

18. Guilhem Molinier reports that he was assisted by Bortholmieu Marc (Anglade ed. 1919: 1, 14).

–it might be considered a good first draft, in five books (often referred to as *Las Flors*, I will call this version *Leyss A*, Bibliothèque municipale de Toulouse 2884, edited by Adolphe-Félix Gatién-Arnoult [1841]; Brunel 1935: #263).¹⁹ It was followed by a second, shorter, prose version, in three books, composed between 1355 and 1356, when this version was promulgated (Anglade ed. 1919: 4, 31 and 4, 126) – we might dub this a final version (*Leyss C*, Bibliothèque municipale de Toulouse 2883, Anglade ed. 1919; Brunel 1935: #264). There is also a version in octosyllabic couplets, entitled the *Flors del gay saber* (*Leyss B*, 7616 lines), composed during the second quarter of the fourteenth century, extant in two manuscripts (Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya 239 – Brunel 1935: # 37 – and Madrid, Biblioteca nacional 13405, Anglade ed. 1926; Brunel 1935: #45).²⁰

In the 1356 prose version (*Leyss C*), the author relates this foundation story:

En lo temps passat, foron en la reyal nobla ciutat de Tholoza . VII. valen, savi, subtil e discret senhor, lical hagro bon dezirier e gran affectio de trobar aquesta nobbla, excellen, meravilloza e vertuoza dona Sciensa, per que lor des e lor aministes lo gay saber de dictar, per saber far bos dictatz en romans

(Anglade ed. 1919: 1, 8)

(‘In days of yore, there were in the royal, noble city of Toulouse, seven distinguished, wise, clever individuals of discretion, who had the desire and wish to find/sing about this noble, excellent, marvelous and virtuous lady Knowledge, so that she would give them and furnish them with *gay saber* – pleasant wisdom – for composing good words in the Occitan language’)

Then follows what can be dubbed a call for papers, reportedly issued in 1323,²¹ less a call than an invitation to compete for a prize to be awarded at the beginning of May 1324, a violet made of gold (“una violeta / de fin aur, en senhal d’onor”, ‘a violet of fine gold, as a sign of honor’, Anglade ed. 1919: 1, 11). However, the judges recognized that they were playing without a rulebook, which they asked Guilhem to assemble: “Quar li dit .VII. senhor jutjavan ses ley e ses reglas (...) Et adonc comezero de bocca a mestre Guilhem Molinier, savi en dreg, que el fes e compiles las ditas reglas” (‘For the said seven men were judging without rules or regulations (...) And so they requested, orally, of Master Guilhem Molinier, wise in law, that he make and compile said rules’, Anglade ed. 1919: 1, 14-15), rules that would be called *Leyss d’amors*, intended to be public: “per los savis e discretz mantenedors del Gai Saber de l’an .M.CCC.LV. (...) ordenero que degus dictatz no fos sagelatz” (‘the wise and discrete counselors of Gay Saber of the year 1355 ordains that no poetry will be under seal’, Anglade ed. 1919: 1, 15; see also Anglade ed. 1919: 4, 25).

19. A version of the *Leyss* in at least five books certainly existed by 1341, when it was mentioned by Joan de Castelnou (Anglade ed. 1919: 4 122). There exists a slightly abbreviated and Catalanized prose version of *Leyss A* in Barcelona (Archivo del la Corona de Aragón, S. Cugat del Vallés 13, Brunel 1935: #33) (Zufferey 1981: xxxv). See also Fedi 1999. Each editor of the *Leyss* has set his own set of sigla (see Zufferey 1981: xxxvii); I have dubbed the versions A, B, and C, based on chronology, as did Georges Passerat (2000: 452-53).

20. Chabaneau posited this development, “L’oeuvre de Molinier a passé évidemment par trois états: 1^o rédaction antérieure à 1341, aujourd’hui perdue (?), & sur laquelle se fondent les deux ouvrages de [Joan de] Castelnou [*Compendi*, and commentary to Cornet’s *Doctrinal de trobar*] (...) 2^o notre ms. B, qui développe, complète & ordonne, à l’usage du public, cette première rédaction [Gatién-Arnoult 1841]; 3^o notre ms. A, à la fois exposé historique & recueil de documents, de lois & de préceptes, à l’usage particulier des membres du gai consistoire [Anglade ed. 1919]” (1885: 184n).

21. “Donadas foron el vergier / Del dit [dic] loc, al pe d’un laurier, / El barri de las Augustinas / De Tholoza, nostras vezinas. / Dimars, quar no.s poc far enans, / Aprop la festa de Totz Santz, [Sans] / En l’an de l’Encarnacio / De Crist, nostra redemptio, / M. e .CCC. e .XX. e tres” (Anglade ed. 1919: 1, 12; readings in square brackets from Chabaneau 1885: 183).

In his second book of *Leys C*, Guilhem explains why he composed the *Leys*:

Aquestas Leys fam per so qu'era dispers, rescost, escur, compilar, manifestar e declarar e may per jutjar, punir e remunerar, so es gazardonar, et per refrenar los dezonests movemens e vas deziriers dels fols enamoratz

(f^o 66r, Anglade ed. 1919: 2, 14)

(‘We make these rules to compile, publicize and declare what had been dispersed, hidden and obscure, and (even) more to judge, punish and remunerate, that is to reward, and to restrain dishonest movements and the desires of foolish lovers’)

This statement references only contemporary poets, with no explicit reminder of those who had come before.

Guilhem Molinier’s earlier prose text, *Leys A*, made clear that he and the members of the Consistory saw themselves in an extended tradition; they sought, “De far leys d’amors, segon los bos anticz trobadors” (‘to make the laws of love (i.e. poetry), according to the good troubadours of olden days’, Gatién-Arnoult 1841: 1, 2; see Anglade ed. 1919: 4, 90-91). With this idea in mind, Guilhem cited two lines of Arnaut Daniel’s sestina, “Lo ferm voler qu’el cor m’intra” (PC 29,14) with attribution in *Leys A* (Gatién-Arnoult 1841: 3, 330), though Arnaut does not appear by name in the subsequent versions. As Catherine Leglu has posited, Toulousains “had a sense of regional identity embedded in history” (2016: 144), and references such as this reflect that sentiment. Though Guilhem names no names in his introduction, though his examples are, in truth, only rarely from the twelfth century, he did see his work in a tradition that went back in time.²²

In the earliest version (*Leys A*) and in the verse text (*Leys B*), we have a longer direct quotation of an earlier poet, when Guilhem cites twelfth-century Raimbaut de Vaqueiras by name, before using the troubadour’s renowned multilingual lyric, “Eras quan vey verdeyar” (PC 392,4) as an example of the *cobla partida*. In the first version, the stanza is introduced with these words, “Cobla partida es can conte dos o motz diverses lengatges segon quom pot vezer en esta cobla que fe en Riambaut [*sic*]” (‘A *cobla partida* is when there are two or more languages as you can see in this stanza by Raimbaut’) (Gatién-Arnoult 1841: 1, 334). The *tornada* of “Eras quan vey verdeyar” follows. In *Leys B*, the verse version, the example is presented in this fashion:

Cobla partida veiats ara,
la qal mot lengatges empara;
fatxa fon per En Rambaut,
un Cavaller pros ez asaut.
De cobla partida
Bells Cavallers, tan es grans
le vostre grans senyoratges
quez un jorn me n’es mocho.
Oy me, laso! que faro?
Si cella que j’ay pus chiera

22. Anglade says that Guilhem cites a line of Peire Vidal’s without attribution and that he knows the names of Arnaut Daniel and Raimbaut de Vaqueiras (1919: 2, 91). In a later article, Anglade posits that Guilhem knew the works of numerous troubadours, including Giraut de Bornelh and those cited in Matfre Ermengaud’s *Breviari d’amor* (Anglade 1927: 383). Anglade mentions Guilhem’s quoting of at least two other poets, Rigaut de Berbezilh and, outside of Occitan, Thibaut de Champagne (cited several times in the *Breviari*, see Ricketts 1976: 32). Each of these poets has an incipit cited by Guilhem (Anglade 1917-18: 269-70).

Me tua no say por quoi.
 Ma dauna, he que diot a bos
 Ni peu cap sancta Qiteyra,
 Lo coraso m'avetz touto
 E mou dousamen furtado.

(ll. 3047-3053, as published by Ricketts 2005;
 compare Anglade ed. 1926: 60 ll. 3051-3060)

(‘You will now see about the *cobla partida*, which involves using multiple languages: One was composed by Sir Raimbaut de Vaqueiras, a worthy and savvy knight. *Of the cobla partida*. Fair Knight, so great is your great lordship that one day I cry a lot. Alas, I despair of what to do, if she whom I hold most dear kills me, though I don’t know why. My lady, source of all good things and by the head of Saint Quiteria, you have taken my heart and stolen my sweetness’).²³

The shorter, final version (*Leyz C*) also cites this stanza as an example of the *cobla partida*, but without attribution.²⁴ In truth, however, as I myself noted, “Guilhem Molinier (...) preferred to describe verses of his own creation than to comment on the lyrics of his predecessors” (Pfeffer 1986: 209).

Georges Passerat described Guilhem Molinier as the “artisan d’un renouveau de l’occitan” (2000: 466); Sarah Kay has noted that *Leyz C*, specifically, has a number of elements that mark it as a new beginning (2013: 179):

The use of troubadour quotations is transformed (...) All the excerpts from the twelfth and early thirteenth-century poets are either dropped (...) or rendered anonymous by eliminating the attributions (...). Consequently, the only troubadours referred to by name in this new redaction are At de Mons and Molinier himself (...). Unlike all the earlier treatises, including its own earlier incarnation, this new version of the *Leyz* is not about continuing the troubadour tradition. Instead, it erases their names and begins again, in Toulouse, in the late thirteenth century.

A new, fourteenth-century myth is established, allowing the Consistory to “substitut[e] linguistic resistance for the religious and political conflicts that lay behind and around it” (Leglu 2016: 150), a myth that establishes Guilhem Molinier and his colleagues as the new founders.

It must be added that at some time between 1323, date of the call for submissions, and 1356, date of the final version of the *Leyz* (*Leyz C*), the governing body of Toulouse, the *Capitouls*, became financial sponsors of the competition, allowing it to take place in City Hall and paying the cost of the prize, the gold violet (see Gélis 1912: 22 and 35;²⁵ Kendrick 2008: 23).

23. The text of Raimbaut’s concluding *cobla*, which mixes all the languages of his song, is as follows: “Belhs Cavaliers, tant es car / lo vostr’ onratz senhoratges / que cada jorno m’esglaiò. / Oi me lasso! que farò / si sele que j’ai plus chiere / me tue, ne sai por quoi? / Ma dauna, he que dey bos / ni peu cap santa Quitera, / mon corasso m’avetz treito / e mot gen favlan furtado” (‘Fair Knight, so precious to me is your noble sovereignty that each day I am dismayed. Ah me! What shall I do, if she whom I cherish most slays me, I know not why. My lady, by the faith I owe you and by the head of Saint Quiteria, you have wrested my heart from me and stolen it with your most sweet discourse’, ed. and trans. Linskill 1964: 192-193).

24. The stanza is introduced with these words: “Cobbla parrtida conte dos o motz diverses langatges, segon qu’on pot vezer en esta cobbla” (Anglade ed. 1919: 2, 172).

25. “L’idée de la création de la Gaie Science appartient aux sept associés de 1334. Eux seuls en eurent l’initiative,”

6 The Sixteenth Century

The story set by Guilhem Molinier appears to have been insufficient in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, when Toulouse was moving firmly into the French linguistic orbit. One element in this pivot was the re-establishment of the Consistory under a new name: the Collège d'Art et Science de la Rhétorique. It is not insignificant that the city of Toulouse was creating a foundation myth for itself at roughly the same time (Courouau 2008: 371; Escudé 2017: 74-75, 181). Occitan was being replaced by French; the Consistory turned Collège postulated new rules; a new supporter of the poetic tradition was needed and, ergo, invented – Clémence Isaure. Her creation is a creation myth in itself (see Gélis 1912: 260-266, summarizing the conclusions of Roschach 1896 or Gélis 1912: 268-269 for another summation of Roschach's argument).

As François de Gélis describes the transformation,

Le *Gai Consistoire* est devenu le *Collège de la Science et Art de Rhétorique*, (...) et tout ce qu'on écrit, prose ou vers, appartient désormais à la langue du Nord. On trouve encore, au début du *Livre Rouge*, quelques échantillons de poésie romane, mais ils disparaissent dans la première moitié du seizième siècle". (Gélis 1912: 73)

Jean-François Courouau and Pierre Escudé second the observation that the *Livre rouge*, begun in 1550 and collecting the prize-winning poems composed between 1513 and 1641, shows the movement away from Occitan. The last Occitan lyric included dates from 1513 (Courouau 2008: 383-384; Escudé 2017: 74n). The new College, now functioning in French rather than Occitan,²⁶ was ready for a new founding story, of a different sort; one was soon created.

A woman by the name of Clémence is documented in late fifteenth-century Toulouse – her name shows up in the accounts of the city for 1489, where she appears in these terms (Gélis 1912: 191-192): "Item e pagat a Jaemes Mostier, pintre, per far le pitaffle del portal de la gran porta e le pitaphle de la Dama Clamenssa, come apar per lo mandament que monta X sols" [Item, paid to Jaemes Mostier, painter, to make the banner of the large gate and the banner of Lady Clémence, as seen in the order for ten sous]. François de Gélis interprets this passage as suggesting that Clémence was already associated with the poetic contest known as the *Jocs florals* or Jeux floraux (as the festive distribution of poetic prizes is called) by the end of the fifteenth century (1912: 192).²⁷

The *Livre rouge* of the Académie des jeux floraux for the years 1513-1583 has these words at its opening (Gélis 1912: 351):

Ce présent registre des délibérations et autres actes faictes au collège intitulé de l'art et science de la rhétorique, autrement dit de la Gaye Science, fondé en Tholoze par feu Dame Clémence de bonne mémoire, a esté commencé à mettre en oeuvre au moys de mars mil cinq cens cinquante.²⁸

Here, Lady Clémence is evoked as a founder of the society. Furthermore, the speeches pronounced during the awards ceremony uniformly praised Lady Clémence, at the same as they demonstrated the linguistic transition of the Jeux floraux – from discourses in Latin (in 1487) to speeches in

mais, dès le premier jour, ils s'associèrent avec les Capitouls et convinrent avec ceux-ci de porter les fleurs au *compte du budget communal*" (Gélis 1912: 35, his italics).

26. Jean-François Courouau dates the linguistic shift specifically to the years 1513-1519; he suggests that Blaise d'Auriol (1475?-1540), a Mainteneur in 1520, is the likely agent (2008: 384-385).

27. Pio Rajna understands "pitaffle" as referring to text rather than images, thus explaining the relatively low price for the painter's work (1927: 219-220).

28. The Register records the date of 1550 here, but recounts earlier history as well.

French by 1528.²⁹

In 1522-1524, a dispute arose between the Capitouls, who govern the city of Toulouse, and the Mainteneurs of the Jeux floraux.³⁰ There were charges of money being stolen, the implication being that it was the bequest of Clémence that had been misused. The year of 1524 is important, because this is when a reference (though not the first mention³¹) to a last will and testament appears in the vernacular record.³² To paraphrase the words of the Capitouls,

Pour l'entretienement de la fondation de dame Clémence, qui a laissé par légat à la Ville lès revenus de la Place de la Pierre, la moitié du Pontanage de la rivière de Garonne, le Pain du Gorp et autres biens qui ne sont ni deniers communs, ni dons ou octrois du Roi, ains patriimoine laissé à la Ville par ladite dame, à la charge de fournir pour les fleurs, etc. (Gélis 1912: 84)

Four years later, Clémence appears in what had been, up until 1527, simply a Latin speech of thanks. 1528 marks the first appearance of our heroine in the "Sermon des fleurs" presented by Antoine Vinhalibus (Gélis 1912: 104).³³ This marks the first recognition in poetry of Clémence as patron of the Jeux floraux (Gélis 1912: 198).³⁴

29. "L'Oraison à Dame Clémence, respectée par le temps et la tradition, est devenue l'*Eloge de Clémence Isaure*, qu'on prononce encore aujourd'hui, dans les mêmes circonstances et à la même date. Mais tandis que l'orateur moderne peut varier son langage et donner libre cours à sa fantaisie, le poète d'autrefois devait, par respect pour la forme et les souvenirs classiques, parler toujours en latin" (Gélis 1912: 78).

30. Gélis offers these details on local politics (1912: 80n): "On a parlé aussi de la rivalité qui naquit entre les Jeux floraux et l'Université, mais on l'a fort exagérée. Les Docteurs et Bacheliers du Gai-Savoir ne pouvaient logiquement rompre en visière avec des confrères auxquels ils avaient emprunté leurs titres et leurs statuts, et même à l'époque la plus intransigeante de notre histoire, lorsque les magistrats parlementaires eurent fait du Collège de Rhétorique leur domaine à peu près exclusif où vit les Docteurs-régents de l'Université s'asseoir au milieu d'eux. La véritable querelle était ailleurs: entre le pouvoir consenti et le pouvoir électif, entre les hommes chargés d'appliquer les lois d'intérêt général et les hommes chargés de défendre les intérêts particuliers de la cité. Ces deux autorités qui se battent ont, malheureusement, pris le terrain de la Gaie Science pour lice et pour champ clos".

31. Jean-François Courouau (2008: 387) points to Guillaume Benoît's 1523 (new style) publication where we can read: "Ubi glosa dicit quòd etiam pro ludis in civitate anno quolibet faciendis relinqui potest, prout illustris mulier illa fecit domina Clementia ditissima civis Tholosana: quae ad juvenes incitandum ornatè cultoque sermone loqui, nonnullos reliquit civitati redditus, et quibus anno quolibet tres fiunt argentei flores scilicet angentina, violeta, & gaudium deaurata [*sic*], tertia die Maii, in capitolio urbis praesente senatu tribus juvenibus per cancellarium artis illius magistrorum conferendum, qui subtilius die prima mensis praedicti & ornatius dictaverint. Qui demum magno cum equitatu & pompa die ascensionis dominicae vehuntur per civitatem jocundè cum triumpho & ingenti gaudio. Ex quo plures ad bene recteque loquendum, scribendum, & legendum vires susceperunt" I cite a later edition (Benoît 1544: Secunda pars, Tractatus fideicommissariae substitutione, §12 f. 71v.).

32. Ernest Roschach presents this text (Archives de la Ville, BB 158, 71), as evidence of the evocation of Clémence in the early 1520's (1896: 234): "De par Messieurs de Capitoulz, Chancelier, Conseillers et Mainteneurs de la Gaye Science. L'on faict assavoir à toute manière de gens tant escolliers, bourgeois, marchans et aultres, que, le premier jour du moys de may prochain venant, qui voudrait soy trouver à la Maison Commune de Tholose – ainsin qu'est de bonne coustume, là où funda Dame Clémence dont Dieu ayt l'ame et voulut que l'on donnast trois fleurs d'or et d'argent composées au mieulx disant touchant l'art de la Rhétorique, mais que l'on n'y mette point d'infamyté ny villainie en quelque langage que ce soit, – sera receu. Et pour ce venez en paix et sans noyse faire. XVIIe jour d'avril mil cinq cens XXIII. SALAMONIS". This document evokes the foundation by Lady Clémence of the various prizes awarded at the Jeux floraux, specifically the flowers sculpted in precious metals (awarded to this day). However, Clémence's testamentary document has remained invisible (see Boyer 2010: 32). Following Gélis and others, I would suggest that such a document never existed.

33. Gélis supports this statement with this documentation: "Lagane avait déjà relevé cette note dans les comptes de l'Hôtel de ville: 'Payé à Antoine Vinhalibus, bachelier es droitz, pour avoir fait le Sermon de Dame Clémence, le jour des Fleurs, qui était le jour de Sainte-Croix: 2 livres.' (Mandement du 26 mai 1528)". See also Gélis 1912: 199 n. 1.

34. According to Gélis, "A partir de 1540, il [le Chancelier des Jeux floraux] ajoute cette formule: '*car telle est la*

The myth of Clémence was firmly in place, and she had acquired the family name of Isaure (Gélis 1912: 234). By 1540, the leaders of the Consistory evoked Clémence in order to obtain funds from the city (see Gélis 1912: 115n). As François de Gélis reports (1912: 84):

Les Mainteneurs de 1540 invoquèrent le testament d'une certaine dame Clémence, de mémoire incertaine et d'existence problématique. Elle avait, disaient-ils, légué de grands biens à la Ville, à charge pour celle-ci de célébrer annuellement la Fête des fleurs et de pourvoir à toutes les dépenses qui en résulteraient.

At roughly the same, time, that is, by the 1540s and 1550s, the church of Notre Dame de la Daurade had become associated with Lady Clémence (Gélis 1912: 208).³⁵ In 1549, a *gisant*, probably that of Bertrande Ysalguier, who had died in 1348, was transported from the church of Notre Dame de la Daurade to the Toulouse city hall (see Roschach 1892: 131-134).³⁶ Bertrande became a physical representation of Clémence, celebrated in verse at the time of the move.

The Wars of Religion were significant factors in Toulouse history, interrupting the ceremonies of the Jeux floraux. In 1573, prizes were again awarded; the reports of the meeting of this year mentioned, for the first time, a Lady Clémence de Ysalguy, combining the first name we have followed here with the family name of Ysalguier, i.e. that of Bertrande. It is possible that Bertrande, the source of the *gisant*, was related to Bartholi Ysalguier, one of the judges of the fourteenth-century Consistory.³⁷

By the second half of the sixteenth century, the myth was set. I would add that at no point in the growth of the Clémence myth were any twelfth- or thirteenth-century troubadours evoked; needed was a more recent and more firmly local, founding story. Moreover, the myth of major donor, in the person of Clémence, is a marked departure from the earlier founding tales, predicated on individual poets. In the economy of sixteenth century Toulouse, literature needed funding, so a generous benefactor – who could serve as model for others – was invented.

One additional explanation of the myth creation, in the case of Clémence Isaure, is that she provided a visual representation of Occitan lyric, an image that could be copied and distributed, posted in public places. Clémence adorns a good number of public buildings in Toulouse to this day; a street in Toulouse has been named for her, as have any number of institutions.³⁸

We cannot know the motivations of those who invoked Clémence Isaure as the individual who endowed the Consistory with funds to award prizes for poetry. It seems certain that no woman by this name ever left such a legacy in her will; we know, too, that not all Toulousains accepted the myth. For example, Guillaume Catel (1560-1626) affirms, in his *Mémoire de l'histoire du Languedoc*, that “jamais Dame Clémence que l'on dit fondatrice de ces Jeux n'a esté au monde” (1633: 398).

Volonté de dame Clémence, de bonne mémoire, el la disposition inscrite dans son testament. Et l'on comprend tout ce que ce testament que personne n'a jamais vu, mais que les Mainteneurs invoquent avec une gratitude émue, ajoute de force à leur réquisition” (1912: 74).

35. Jean Bodin appears to be the first to designate the church as the site of her tomb, echoing popular tradition (Gélis 1912: 208).

36. See the description in Gélis 1912: 236.

37. Zufferey records an Odet Izalguier who may have been a *mainteneur* of the Jeux floraux in 1461 (1981: 39) and a Peire Izalguier who served as a *mainteneur* in 1460 (1981: 41). Their dates align neither with the century of Bertrande nor with period when Clémence acquired a family name.

38. Toulouse boasts a daycare center, a middle school, a high school, and an addiction treatment center all named for Clémence, according to Google Maps <<http://tinyurl.com/y39u9vsj>> (accessed 24-02-2019); there is also a médiathèque in the Toulouse suburb of Villeneuve-Tolosane that carries her name. Her image has also been subverted by contemporary Occitan authors, such as Joan Bodon, who turned her into a prostitute in his lyric “Tolosa” (1975).

7 Jean de Nostredame (1522–76/7)

While I am not convinced that Jean de Nostredame sought explicitly to create a foundation myth for troubadour lyric, his *Vies des plus célèbres et anciens poètes provençaux* can be interpreted in that fashion and certainly was used to that end.³⁹ The author claimed to have written his history of regional poetry to keep alive the names of authors and families now forgotten,

J'ay eu un singulier et (comme je croy) louable desir de les communiquer et mettre en lumiere (...) à ce que les noms, familles et qualités de tels excellens poètes soyent cognus et esendus tant plus loin et en divers endroits, esquels leur renommée pourroit estre parvenue. (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 3-4)

He reminds his readers that “nostre Provence” was called “la boutiqua dels Trobadours (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 7); readers today know that Nostredame sought to glorify his native region by incorporating into it any and all troubadours he could.

Nostredame recognized the role patronage played in the survival of troubadour lyric, “defaillans des Mecenas, defaillirent aussi les poètes” (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 8), a line that may also have been a pitch for himself. He reported his source as a manuscript in the hands of the Count of Sault (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 9), a volume no longer extant, though Camille Chabaneau and Joseph Anglade succeeded in reconstructing it in their “Essai de reconstitution” (1911). Nostredame described the evolution of Provençal as a serious decline “nostre langue provensalle s’est tellement avallée et embastardie que à peine est elle de nous” (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 12). In an effort to save the language and its literature, Nostredame reports that he had “mis les vies de nos poètes provensaux en avant, lesquelles m’ont semblé dignes de n’estre ignorées” (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 13).

Nostredame states that lyric composition in Occitan began in 1162 (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 8), a date whose choice is hard to explain, unless related to the first poet in his collection, Jaufré Rudel († circa 1147), whom the Renaissance author makes a contemporary of Geoffrey II of Brittany (1158–1186) (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 15–18). As part of his effort to adopt as Provençaux as many troubadours as possible, Nostredame makes Jaufré lord of Blieux en Provence (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence), rather than of Blaye (Gironde) near the Atlantic coast. The sixteenth-century author presents a poet who found refuge at Sault (Vaucluse), where he met Geoffrey of Brittany, who was passing through the neighborhood. Geoffrey took Jaufré into his retinue, but then Jaufré heard of the countess of Tripoli; now Nostredame incorporates elements found in Jaufré’s *vida*, that semi-fictional document, to relate the end of his life. Amplifying his material, Nostredame tells us that the countess of Tripoli had a sepulcher made for Jaufré, complete with an Arabic inscription and the date 1162 (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 16).⁴⁰ At no point in his discussion of Jaufré does Nostredame say explicitly that Jaufré was the first troubadour, though Roy Rosenstein states that the sixteenth-century author “placed Jaufré Rudel at the onset of the troubadour tradition” (2018a: 103). We can make this inference only because Jaufré is the first poet discussed in the *Vies*.

If we accept Nostredame’s statement that his raw material came, at least in part, from the lost *Chansonier de Sault*, then we must ask where Jaufré appeared in that songbook. According to Camille Chabaneau and Joseph Anglade, the manuscript opened, folio 1, with lyrics by Giraut de

39. César de Nostredame (1553–1629), Jean de Nostredame’s nephew, worked consciously to establish a filiation between the medieval troubadours and his own period in his *L’Histoire et chronique de Provence*, published in 1614 (see Escudé 2017, 229).

40. The edition reads “1562” with a note (16n) correcting the printer’s error.

Bornelh (1911: 252), who is very often the first poet in troubadour song collections. Jaufre's position in the reconstructed manuscript would have been on folio 108 (Chabaneau and Anglade 1911: 267), well into the anthology. Nostredame pulled Jaufre out of the middle to put him first, a clear indication of Nostredame's interest in the poet.

The second individual described by Nostredame is Frederick I Barbarossa (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 19-20), whose presence in the *Vies* is somewhat curious. We read his praises and a description of how he acquired lands in Provence for the Empire in 1162 (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 20). In response to "plusieurs beaux chants en langue provensalle", praises sung to him, the emperor responded, according to Nostredame, with gifts and "un epigramme en langue provensale, à la louange de toutes les nations qu'il avoit suivies en ses victoires, auquel epigramme il loue la langue provensale" (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 20). Then follow ten lines of verse.⁴¹ Nostredame points his reader to Saint Cezari (i.e. Uc de Saint Circ), one of his sources for the *Vies*, and to the Monge des Isles d'Or, an individual scholars now recognize as Nostredame himself. We can safely dismiss Frederick Barbarossa as an Occitan poet; his placement by Nostredame as second individual discussed in the *Vies* serves to elevate the status of troubadour lyric (and the Occitan language), another element of mythmaking, by making the emperor a poet himself.

8 Conclusion

To this point, I have considered several foundations and foundation myths for one linguistic and poetic tradition, all from the medieval and Renaissance periods, most often tales based on a founding individual. The question must be asked, why did the Occitan literary heritage need and create, during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, so many foundation stories, real and mythical? I would suggest that what was perceived as the comparatively tenuous literary status of Occitan, against Latin in the early twelfth century, against French in the fourteenth and again in the sixteenth century, explains the repeated efforts to validate Occitan legitimacy and originality. During the fourteenth century, Catherine Leglu reminds us, "Vernacular expression was still presented as something that was subordinate to Latin" (2008: 385). As the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski reminds us, "Myth is (...) constantly regenerated; every historical change creates its mythology which is, however, but indirectly related to historical fact" (1954: 146). To this end, early lyricists pointed to noble forebears, such as Eble de Ventadorn, to justify composition in the local vernacular, as opposed to Latin. The fourteenth-century founders of the *Consistori del gai saber* needed to validate their position as judges of poetry, so they presented a different foundation myth to justify their activities. The fifteenth- and sixteenth-century myth of Clémence Isaure emerged as Toulouse moved firmly into the French linguistic realm, as a means of maintaining linguistic and, more importantly, literary independence by justifying local and long-standing popular support. Jean de Nostredame invoked noble initial poets, one more attempt to glorify the literary and linguistic heritage of Occitan.

Add to this collection of foundation tales the multiple suggested etymologies for the Occitan word for poetic composition, *trobar*, which gives us the occupational name of troubadour (see Paden 2019).

James Costa has observed, speaking of Scots language and literary history, that "history is seen

41. The lyric is not particularly inventive: "Plus my cavalier Frances, / E la donna Catallana, / E l'onrar del Gynoés, / E a cour de Kastellana, / Lou kantar Provensalles, / E la dansa Trivyzana, / E lou corps Aragonnés, / E a parle Julliana, / Las mans e kara d'Anglés / E lou donzel de Thuscana" (Chabaneau-Anglade ed. 1913: 20).

as a way to give existence to Scots (...) as well as to legitimise both its presence on the public scene and that cultural movement that foregrounds it" (2009: 6). The same logic holds for Occitan language and literature, from the thirteenth century to the sixteenth. I must add that the creation of foundation myths for Occitan literature has continued into the present, seen, *inter alia*, in the works of Antoine Fabre d'Olivet (1767-1825), Claude Fauriel (1772-1844) and Robert Lafont (1923-2009).

Every society creates founding mythologies as a means of self-justification in order to rationalize its origins or establish an independent identity. What is interesting about the Occitan case is the number of differing, though not necessarily conflicting mythologies invented over the course of about four hundred years. Each myth served the purpose of defending Occitan lyric and/or language in the face of detractors, real and imagined; each myth offers a different angle from which to observe lyric and the society that enjoyed it.

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