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Eliza Zingesser, *Stolen Song: How the Troubadours Became French*. Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2020. xv + 258 pp. 10 black-and-white figures. \$34.95 U.S. ISBN 978-1-5017-4757-1; \$22.99 U.S. (eb). ISBN 9781501747632.

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*Stolen Song* tells the story of what happened to Occitan lyric poetry when thirteenth-century Francophone authors, scribes and compilers became interested in the troubadours. Eliza Zingesser approaches her carefully designed corpus through a persuasive combination of historical apprehension, manuscript expertise, close reading, and theory. She skilfully guides her readers through a vast amount of data with a clear, always elegant style. Her starting point is Manfred Raupach and Margret Raupach's *Französierte Trobadorlyrik: zur Überlieferung provenzalischer Lieder in französischen Handschriften*.<sup>[1]</sup> Zingesser completes the corpus established by the Raupachs, "including both songs mostly identifiable as Occitan because of their transmission elsewhere and songs previously treated as unconvincing pastiches of Occitan by other critics" (p. 20). Table 0.1 shows the precise contours of a corpus of roughly one hundred pieces.

Zingesser reminds us that "the compilation and quotation of troubadour song...represents the most concrete trace of contact between Francophone audiences and Occitan lyric" (p. 9). She describes this relation as a twofold, complementary move. First, reframed as it is in the Francophone context, troubadour poetry connotes "Occitan more than [it] actually [reproduces] it" (p. 128). Secondly, while French is promoted as the language of the highest lyric registers, Occitan is relegated to the bawdy, rustic styles of the lower, popular poetic genres. The book mirrors this twofold structure. Chapters one through four explore how troubadour songs were assimilated to make them "*appear* as part of a francophone cultural space or tradition" (p. 169, my emphasis). Chapter five deals with the opposite: a corpus where French songs are Occitanized and subsumed as a "subset of francophone lyric" (pp. 24-25).

For her corpus, Zingesser deals with two kinds of sources: "French" manuscript songbooks containing Occitan songs; and "original" works that quote the troubadours, namely: Jean Renart's *Guillaume de Dole*, Gerbert de Montreuil's *Roman de la Violette* and Richard de Fournival's *Bestiaire d'amour*. Zingesser is not so much interested in the well-explored issue of how the troubadours influenced (or not) the French *trouvères*. Rather she pays a sensitive look at extant texts and, most crucially, manuscript sources. Zingesser asks fundamental questions about differences and similarities between the process of (mis)appropriation of Occitan poetry taking place in francophone territories and what was happening elsewhere, most notably in Italy and

Catalonia, where scribes and authors displayed an analogous cult for the poetry of the troubadours.

While focusing on a relatively circumscribed corpus, Zingesser is aware of the wider implications of her work. She shows how French *chansonniers* linguistically camouflage Occitan poetry out of a desire to absorb and integrate it into their own corpus. Zingesser concludes that "Occitan poetry is not a separate corpus but rather a *linguistic coloring* used within French poetry to artistic effect" (pp. 169-170, my emphasis). This attitude is neatly distinct from what was happening at the same time both in Italy and Catalonia. There, the troubadours are copied in a context where the dominant language is not Occitan, but Italian and Catalan respectively. But Italian compilers of Occitan songbooks deploy a philological attention unheard of in the francophone domains and characterized by, among other elements, a high number of attributive rubrics; an extraordinary prose apparatus introducing both authors and texts; and a varied, but continuous attention to the quality of the texts.

Among the mechanisms obscuring Occitan poetry in French songbooks, Zingesser includes Gallicization and geographical remapping. I will comment on these two aspects below. On a third mechanism, anonymisation, I will briefly say something now. The number of anonymous pieces in French songbooks is much higher than in the *chansonniers* of the troubadours. However, as Zingesser points out, the removal of the names of the troubadours, which often situate the poets in a recognisable geography, makes their songs more easily and consistently readable as an integral part of the French repertoire.

To begin with geography, *Stolen Song* revolves around "the songbooks from francophone territories that compile troubadour song and the narratives that quote them" (p. 11). Zingesser gives a territorial and pragmatic definition of Francophone: "any territory in which a dialect of *langue d'oïl* was spoken (and not just used as a literary language)" (p. 19). In her approach to language, Zingesser embraces the French-speaking domains, including England and the territories of the Holy Roman Empire. Other territories, such as Angevin Naples or the Crusader States, seem to be excluded. Recent major collaborative research projects and publications are promoting a centrifugal notion of medieval French as a global language, with important implications for both historical linguistics and literary history.[2] Zingesser's work echoes Fabio Zinelli's in some interesting ways, even as she uses a very different approach from him.

Fabio Zinelli is applying the most current sociolinguistic approaches to specific cases of medieval linguistic contact, most notably Franco-Italian and Occitan-Catalan. He convincingly made the case for considering Mediterranean French a reliable, internally consistent and identifiable variety of *langue d'oïl*, a coherent system useful in a wide range of applications (literary, commercial, administrative, and legal), including lyric poetry. According to Zinelli, these features allow us to consider "Outremer one of the linguistic regions of the *langue d'oïl*." [3]

As Zingesser points out, none of the four main manuscript songbooks compiling a mixed French and Occitan repertoire were produced in Paris (for sigla, see p. xiii). There is a consensus about the crucial role played by thirteenth-century *scriptoria* located somewhere in the eastern or northeastern domains (their exact location is unknown). From a teleologic perspective, if one assumes Paris is the most prestigious centre for the *francophonie*, these manuscripts are "marginal" artifacts. However, the widespread diffusion of francophone literary culture throughout the Mediterranean challenges this image of marginality projected onto Franco-

Occitan *chansonniers*. The movement of people between the Latin East and the continent was incessant. This movement involved intellectuals and literary professionals, including several *trouvères*.<sup>[4]</sup> Indeed, Angevin Naples has been recently defined as a melting pot, where French and Italian scribes and artists worked together on various extant manuscripts.<sup>[5]</sup> In this broader perspective, *Chansonnier M*, also known as the *Chansonnier du roi* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, f. fr. 844), is exemplary. As Zingesser points out, while the sources of the codex point towards northeastern France (especially Arras), this manuscript has been attached to Naples, where the codex was provided with several later additions. This is yet more evidence for what could be thought of as a pan-Mediterranean appropriation of the French language.<sup>[6]</sup>

Zingesser defines “Gallicisation,” the second mechanism, as “the set of linguistic procedures that brought the Occitan sound system closer to French in the francophone dissemination of Occitan texts” (p. 25). The Occitan texts underwent a process of Gallicisation whereby distinct linguistic processes (especially, albeit not exclusively, graphic and phonetic neutralisation) may at least in part correspond to a linguistic strategy or technique aimed at assimilating and subsuming the Occitan to the French. In the words of John Marshall, “[w]here copyists were unable to find an O[ld] F[rench] etymological equivalent for an O[ld] P[rovençal] form, they produced either total misreadings or meaningless alterations or else substitutions lending some kind of plausible sense.”<sup>[7]</sup> Zingesser revisits Franco-Occitan texts and their form, arguing that “misreadings” and “meaningless alterations” mirror “a predilection for the *sound* of the original songs over their sense” (p. 26, Zingesser’s emphasis).

Zingesser does not approach her corpus from a philological perspective. Still, recent philological and linguistic research on Franco-Occitan poetry tends to support her main claims. In a paper not included in the book’s bibliography, Maria Sofia Lannutti makes a strong case for the four northeastern *chansonniers* with Occitan sections sharing a tendency to homologate and assimilate the Occitan texts to the French corpus.<sup>[8]</sup> Evidence from philological analysis of the textual tradition suggests that this strategic move toward neutralisation might have started at an early stage.

The French songbooks *U* (Paris, BnF, f. fr. 20050) and *C* (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 389) are the sole manuscripts to pass down the *pastourelle* “L’autrier m’iere levaz” (*BeDT* 461.148 and RS 963). Both songbooks *U* and *C* recodify “L’autrier m’iere levaz” in an idiosyncratic, hybrid language, the features of which partially differ from one chansonnier to the other. Zingesser focuses at length on the version of the text preserved in *chansonnier U*. “Lautrier m’iere levatz” is one of the rare cases where a poem is included in the main bibliographic repertoires of both *oc* and *oïl* traditions (Pillet and Carstens, and Raynaud and Spanke, respectively).<sup>[9]</sup> This best illustrates the extent to which philologists and literary scholars at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries struggled with artefacts difficult to situate within the boundaries of pure linguistic systems. In her literary analysis of the *pastourelle*, Zingesser reverses any purist consideration on the language of this poem: “the piece refuses to construct a clear boundary between French and Occitan identity by supplying clear representatives of each” (p. 191).

In my opinion, a linguistic analysis of this text supports Zingesser’s conclusions. Both songbooks *U* and *C* show traces of resistance to linguistic differentiation.<sup>[9]</sup> We can see an example of such a resistance in the analysis of the rhyme pattern of the *pastourelle*. Both manuscripts preserve the verb form *creanterie* (last vers of stanza IV, v. 52) in rhyme position. This form combines the lexical basis of the Old French verb *creanter* (*assurer*, *garantir*, *promettre*) with an idiosyncratic

form for the morpheme for the 1SG of the conditional (-ie). This morpheme has been most likely modelled on Old Occitan conditionals in -ia rather than on the Old French -ei (i.e. *creanterei*).<sup>[10]</sup> The rhyme position of this verbal form excludes scribal mistake and suggests that *chansonniers* *U* and *C* inherited it from their common sources. This linguistic detail may have interesting implications. On the one hand, the complementary processes that make French look like Occitan and subsume Occitan poetry as a subset of French lyric may depend on the behaviour of an inward-looking scribal community, loyal to their own linguistic inventory.<sup>[11]</sup> On the other hand, we can see these Franco-Occitan mixed repertoires as a laboratory for literary, linguistic, and “sonic experimentation” (p. 71; n. 29), featured by a kind of graphemic and grammatical freedom.<sup>[12]</sup>

Zingesser reminds us of the extent to which “French audiences were interested in music” (p. 71). Of the four relevant *chansonniers* with mixed French and Occitan repertoires, three, namely French *M* = Occitan *W* (Paris, BnF, f. fr. 844), French *T* = Occitan  $\delta$  (Paris, BnF, f. fr. 12615), French *U* = Occitan *X* (Paris, BnF, f. fr. 20050), have music notation, and one, French *C* = Occitan  $\zeta$  (Bern, Burgerbibliothek Hs. 389), has the staves but no notation.<sup>[13]</sup> This is in contrast to the Italian and Catalan textual tradition of the Occitan troubadours, where we do not find music notation (or staves). In the French-speaking domains, song and performance became ways for disseminating an ideologically and aesthetically oriented poetic repertoire.<sup>[14]</sup>

Zingesser points out that Occitan songs “are rarely flagged in any way as foreign in origin, and the occasional geographical label that does accompany them situates them not in Occitania but instead farther north, either within or on the edge of *oïl* territory” (pp. 33-34). In songbook *C* (= Occitan  $\zeta$ ), the rubric “Forkes de Mersaille sor Poetevin” labels the song “Tuit demandon qu'es devengud'amors” (by Rigaut de Berbezilh – *BdT* 421.10). The same label, *son poitevin*, appears in *chansonnier k* (Paris, BnF, f. fr. 12786), designating, this time, not an Occitan poem, but a French one, “Puis qu'en moi a recovrée seignorie” (RS 1208) attributed to Gautier d'Épinal. The label *son poitevin* also appears in the narratives quoting the troubadours. The narrator in *Guillaume de Dole* makes an anonymous knight *du parage de Dammartin* start singing a *son poitevin* (v. 5211), preventing another singer from finishing Bernart de Ventadorn's big hit, “Can vei la lauzeta mover” (*BdT* 70.43). Finally, in manuscript *A* (Paris, BnF, f. fr. 1533) of the *Roman de la Violette*, this same song, Bernart de Ventadorn's “Can vei la lauzeta mover,” is also labelled *son poitevin* (the other manuscripts designate it as a *son provençal*).<sup>[15]</sup> According to Zingesser, *son poitevin* is a tag that “facilitate[s] a view of these texts as French, albeit of a sometimes garbled variety” (p. 34). In relation to the *Roman de la Violette*, she asks whether the designation of Poitou, “a hotly contested territory in the years leading up to the composition of the *Violette*,” had some political valence (p. 132). Zingesser is, of course, well aware that alternative readings of the label are possible. Lannutti, for instance, believes that *son poitevin*, when used in connection with Foulquet de Marseille in the rubric in songbook *C*, indicates a regional depiction of the melodies associated with the poems. According to Lannutti, *son poitevin* might refer to the type of melody with which those songs were usually performed. It may also have emphasised the exceptional nature of a non-Northern melody for a song of a *trouvère*, Gautier d'Épinal, who was of Lorraine origin.<sup>[16]</sup>

Zingesser also makes a strong case for this attention to music as a “part of a broader interest in sound” (p. 71). She relates medieval theories of sound to current sound studies. Most notably, Zingesser explores birdsong and traditional associations of troubadour singing with birdsong “as a locus of sonic experimentation blurring the divide between meaningful and meaningless *vox*, and thus between the human and the avian” (p. 71; n. 29). In *Stolen Song*, medieval lyric

poetry is first and foremost about hearing, a sonic experience that may, in some cases, “[prioritize] sound over sense” (p. 71). The interpretation of two rubrics concerning Occitan songs in the old table of *chansonnièr M* (= Occitan *W*) is pivotal to Zingesser’s broader argument about sound.

This songbook preserves sixty troubadour poems. Only a few of them are provided with rubrics. Two of these rubrics copied in the ancient table of the codex are rather opaque: “i oseaus tarduis” (although, in the body of the manuscript, the rubric reads “iossiames faidius”); and “li sons derves des home sauvage.” According to Zingesser, these rubrics connect the poetry of the troubadours with, respectively, “a bird and a wild man”: “[t]roubadour song is thus reduced to the level of nonsemantic noise, of the sort one would expect from creatures capable of something akin but not identical to human language” (p. 49). I wonder whether reading it as “I oseaus *tardius*” instead of *tarduis* in the first rubric might strengthen Zingesser’s argument. From a palaeographic standpoint, both readings (*tarduis*/*tardius*) are possible. The adjective *tardiu* has the advantage of being a form attested in Old Occitan: *DOM* translates *tardius* as *lent*, *tardif*.<sup>[17]</sup> I also wonder whether the first long <I> in the manuscript might be an <L>. If this is the case we would have *[l]oseaus tardius*, “the belated bird.” There are, of course, issues that make this reading problematic. To begin with, a couple of lines later in the same column of the old table, we have a perfectly identifiable capital <L> (within “*Li son derue*”) which is different from the long <I> in “I oseaus.”

Zingesser deals with the “texts’ moments of semantic opacity,” commenting on the quotations in both *Guillaume de Dole* and *Roman de la violette* where, “like inarticulate birdsong, often likened in medieval thought to a foreign language, [the quoted Occitan pieces] occasionally veer toward the unintelligible” (p. 115). It is not always easy to distinguish between what does and what does not make sense in medieval texts. In the first place, while we need to refer to some sort of standard to make linguistic deviations surface, we know all too well that definitions of medieval languages are based on criteria of normativity that are different from ours. Any “normal” linguistic code in the Middle Ages may greatly fluctuate over the extension of its linguistic domain. Over the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, neither francophone nor Occitan domains had a centre that could set the standard for the entire linguistic territories.

In the final part of this review, I will suggest potential alternative readings to the difficult passages commented upon by Zingesser. Daude de Pradas’ couplet in “*Belha m’es la votz autana*” (*BdT* 124.5) reads: “quan fuelh’ es vertz e blanca flor / nays et l’erbet’ en la sanha”. These lines are quoted in *Guillaume de Dole*’s manuscript as follows (I quote from Zingesser’s transcription and English translation in Table 2.2, p. 95): “q[ue] foelle est verz blanche flor & lerbe nest en la sane.” Zingesser translates these lines leaving out *sane*, the meaning of which remains unclear: “leaf is green, flower white and the grass is born [or: is not] in the *sane*”. A possible solution could come from considering the ambivalence of medieval *scripta*. Both in Old French and Old Occitan *scripta*, grapheme <n> may alternate with other graphemes such as <nn> ~ <gn> (in Occitan and Catalan we would have: <n>, <nn>, <nh>, <ny>, <yn>). In this case, we could think of *sane* as an alternative form for *sagne* or *saigne*, which we find attested in Old French with the meaning of *marais*, *terrain marécageux*.<sup>[18]</sup>

Quotations from the troubadours in both *Guillaume de Dole* and *Roman de la Violette* may be very difficult to make sense of. Zingesser comments on the quotation of stanza IV from Bernart de Ventadorn’s “*Ab joi mou lo vers*” (*BdT* 70.1) in manuscript A of *Roman de la Violette*. The lines

“Chascuns se velt de son mestier / garir” are hesitantly translated “Everyone wants to [?] his needs [?]” (125). The verb *garir* has also the meaning of ‘être délivré d’un mal, d’une maladie...’ (see *TL* and *DMF s.v.*). I wonder whether in this case *garir de mestier* could mean something like “délivrer quelcun de sa besogne, nécessité.” The lyric quotation from Bernart de Ventadorn in manuscript *A* is replaced in manuscripts *B*, *C* and *D* with an otherwise unknown stanza. I wonder whether it is possible to clarify the following line in manuscript *B*, based on a different word segmentation and deciphering of single graphemes in the manuscript:

en igual tans que neuer dausir bois. 7

This manuscript sequence could be edited and glossed as follows:

en igual tans qu’eu ever dausir bois *et* (in that time that-I ascertain sweeten woods).

I read <u> instead of <n> in the sequence “que neuer” > “qu’eu ever.” I am assuming that there is a finite form of a verb governing the infinitive *dausir*. This form might be *ever*, 1SG present indicative, based on either Fr. *averer* and Oc. *averar* ‘ascertain’ or on Fr./Oc. *averir*. The use of <e-> instead of <a-> might suggest a non-accentuated [ə]. The sense would be here “to ascertain,” in the sense of “making sure to the mind” or “realising.”

These final observations are not meant in any way to distract future readers from the strong case made in the book about and against Francophone “usurpation” of Occitan poetry. Rather they are meant to join forces with the author of *Stolen Song* in paying attention and homage to a body of texts that has often been dismissed as marginal by modern scholars and that, as Zingesser demonstrates, invites us all to engage in a renewed reflection on medieval textuality, performance, and poetics.

## NOTES

[1] Manfred Raupach and Margret Raupach, *Französierte Trobadorlyrik: zur Überlieferung provenzalischer Lieder in französischen Handschriften* (Tübingen: Verlag, 1979).

[2] See: Medieval Francophone Literary Culture Outside France <<http://www.medievalfrancophone.ac.uk/>> (last access: 12/08/2021) and The Values of French Language and Literature in the European Middle Ages <<https://tvof.ac.uk/>> (last access: 12/08/2021).

[3] Fabio Zinelli. “Traditions manuscrites d’Outremer (*Tresor, Sidrac, Histoire ancienne jusqu’à César*,” in Fabio Zinelli and Sylvie Lefèvre, eds., *En français hors de France. Textes, livres, collections du Moyen âge* (Strasbourg: Éditions de Linguistique et de Philologie, 2021), p. 99.

[4] Zinelli, “Traditions manuscrites d’Outremer,” p. 98.

[5] Fabio Zinelli, “De la France-Italie à l’Italo-France (ou de l’histoire littéraire comme délocalisation),” in Roberto Antonelli, Joëlle Ducos, Claudio Galderisi, Arianna Punzi, eds., *Transferts culturels franco-italiens au Moyen Âge / Trasferimenti culturali italo francesi* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), p. 196.

[5] Zinelli, “De la France-Italie à l’Italo-France,” p. 196.

[6] As Zinelli argued: “ce n'est pas la France qui a donné le français au monde médiéval mais plutôt celui-ci qui se l'est approprié à son propre compte.” Zinelli, “De la France-Italie à l’Italo-France,” p. 199.

[7] John Marshall, “Review of Raupach & Raupach 1979,” *Romance Philology* 36/1 (1982): 83-93.

[8] M. S. Lannutti 2011, “Sulle raccolte miste della lirica gallo-romanza,” in Lino Leonardi, ed., *La tradizione della lirica nel medioevo romanzo: problemi di filologia formale* (Firenze: Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2011), p. 156.

[9] Alfred Pillet and Henry Carstens, *Bibliographie der Troubadours* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1933); Hans Spanke and G. Raynauds, *Bibliographie des altfranzösischen Liedes* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1955).

[9] In sociolinguistics, “attrite” is the term used to describe resistance to linguistic erosion or a shift in contexts where a L1 speaker lives in a L2 context for a long time. For an application of such a notion to medieval Romance texts, see Fabio Zinelli, “Attrito, resistenza e fluidità nella ricodificazione linguistica dei testi romanzi (con particolare attenzione per le tradizioni in contatto),” in S. Resconi, D. Battagliola, S. De Santis, eds., *Innovazione linguistica e storia della tradizione. Casi di studio romanzi medievali* (Milan: Mimesi, 2020), pp. 67-106.

[10] See Zingesser, p. 189 and n. 29, and Lannutti, “Sulle raccolte miste della lirica gallo-romanza,” pp. 157-158 and n. 9.

[11] Lannutti, “Sulle raccolte miste della lirica gallo-romanza,” p. 160.

[12] See Zinelli, “De la France-Italie à l’Italo-France,” p. 179.

[13] See the “Table of the MSS” and sigla, p. xiii.

[14] Lannutti, “Sulle raccolte miste della lirica gallo-romanza,” p. 163.

[15] See also *Stolen Song*, p. 130, Table 3.2.

[16] Lannutti, “Sulle raccolte miste della lirica gallo-romanza,” pp. 166-167.

[17] See <<http://www.dom-en-ligne.de/dom.php?lhid=7znmkOMdAazigqDje4D6Xz>> (last access: 09 August 2021).

[18] See *TL s. v. saigne* in Adolf Tobler and Eherard Lommatzsch, eds., *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*, 11 vols (Berlin: Weidmann; Stuttgart-Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1915-2002); *DMF s.v. saigne* in Robert Martin, ed., *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* (ATILF-CNRS/Nancy Université), <<http://www.atilf.fr/dmf>>); *FEW s.v. \*sagna* in Walther Von Wartburg, ed., *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 25 vols. (Bonn: Klopp and Basel: Zbinden, 1928-2002).

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