

## Imitation of Form in the Old Provençal Lyric

#### FRANK M. CHAMBERS

THE TROUBADOURS are celebrated for their ingenuity in devising new and complicated verse-forms for their lyrics. The more than 800 rime-schemes listed by Maus<sup>1</sup> bear witness to the fertility of their inventiveness. Add to these the variations introduced by a great diversity of meters, and the total is staggering. Nearly every one of these forms, furthermore, had its own melody, the poet being by definition a composer of music as well as a writer of verse. But among these original (excessively original) poets, there developed also a diametrically opposite practice. In many of their compositions, they deliberately copied the form and borrowed the tune of another poem. And they did this so systematically that it became a recognized literary practice, and was recorded as standard procedure in certain genres: the sirventés, the tenso, the planh, the crusade song, the religious song, and the cobla esparsa. Strict originality was demanded only of the chanso and of a few minor genres such as the alba, the dansa, and the pastorela.

Every student of Provençal poetry, I suppose, finds himself thinking of the troubadour poems as purely literary works. But they were not; they were songs. Music and words were written by one man; they were meant to go together. They were intimately connected in the mind of any contemporary who knew the composition, just as the words and music of the Marseillaise, or of Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott, are intimately connected for us. The writer of an imitative poem, then, merely fitted new words to familiar music, just as My country, 'tis of thee was fitted to the tune of God save the King. The difference is that this sort of imitation was commoner among the troubadours than it is with us, that it was usually limited to certain well-defined types of poems, and that it often involved some influence from the words as well. But it was always primarily a setting of original words to borrowed music. This is shown in at least two cases by the manuscripts of the poems. These manuscripts have preserved for us the music of some 257 poems,<sup>2</sup> most of which are chansos. But some sirventés and other poems are likewise accompanied by the notation of their music. Among these are two poems of Peire Cardenal, Ar mi

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### IMITATION OF FORM IN PROVENÇAL LYRIC

pose eu lauzar d'amor  $(335,7)^3$  and Rics hom que greu ditz vertat e leu men pose eu tauxa de first poem has the same scheme and the same rimes as (335,49). Now, the first poem has the same scheme and the same rimes as (335,49). Itom, Guiraut de Borneill's No posc sofrir qu'a la dolor (242,51), and the second Guiraut do La Guiraut do La Sinilar way to Raimon Jordan's Vas vos soplei, domna, premeiramen (404,11). The music of these poems has likewise been preserved, and we find that in both cases the tunes of model and imitation are identical.

This borrowing of form was never considered obligatory for any genre. Of the poems called *sirventés* by Pillet-Carstens,<sup>4</sup> slightly over a third are certainly not imitated from any other poems that we now have. It may be that in some cases the originals have been lost; that is indeed likely. But it is also likely that a great many of these poems were simply not imitated from others, but were entirely original compositions. And the same is true for tensos, coblas, and the rest.

If, however, one poem is set to the tune of another, it necessarily follows that the two must have the same number of lines in a stanza, and that those lines must be of the same length. We shall consider a few exceptions to this generalization later on, along with various other anomalies; we may assume that they were rare. It is very probable, furthermore, that the rime-scheme will be the same. This is not necessary, of course; a poet could duplicate a meter without copying a rime-scheme. An imitation of this sort would normally pass undetected, because nothing would call it to our attention. But it would be very natural on the part of a poet who is setting new words to a well-known song to follow the rime-scheme of that song as well as its tune. Since this happened so frequently, we may consider it to have been the standard practice.

The imitation might stop at this point. Take, for example, these two sirventés: Bonifaci de Castellana's Ara pos iverns es el fil (102,1) and Bonifaci Calvo's Un nou sirventes ses tardar (101,17). In both, the scheme is aababbc (which is not very common), with lines of eight syllables throughout. In both, c of the first stanza becomes a of the second, while a new b and c are introduced; and so on. Now, the same rime-scheme, with the same pattern of change, combined with lines of the same length, is found in the chanso (213,3) Ar vei q'em vengut als jorns loncs, by Guillem de Cabestaing. It is almost certain, therefore, that both the sirventés are modeled on this poem.

But such assurance is ordinarily not possible for a sirventés written in a Very common rime-scheme and a very common meter, say abbaccdd and lines of ten and a very common meter, say abbaccdd and lines of ten syllables. Even if a troubadour used the tune of a certain chanso, along with its with its metrical pattern, as the model for his poem, nothing would reveal the fact in such fact in such a case; for any one of a dozen other chansos might fit the pattern equally well. As a matter of fact, that is precisely the situation for almost a third of the situation for almost a there poems, often many third of the total number of sirventés: there are other poems, often many

<sup>3</sup>These numbers are the designations applied to the poems in Pillet-Carstens (see <sup>4</sup>See preceding note). 'See note 2.

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other poems, which have precisely the same meter and rime-scheme as a given sirventés; but the relatively simple pattern could easily have been invented by more than one poet, so that indebtedness is by no means obvious. Or perhaps there is more than one chanso which follows the same pattern; even though that pattern may be unusual, so that imitation is likely, how are we to say which of the chansos was the poet's model? For this reason, it is entirely possible that scores of sirventés were imitated from chansos that we still possess, but which we are unable to recognize for the models that they were. And the situation is the same for the other imitative genres.

The poets, however, often carried their imitation one step further. Not only did they adopt the tune, the meter, and the rime-scheme of their model: they adopted the actual rime-sounds as well. When two poems have all these things in common, one is almost forced to the conclusion that some sort of imitation is involved. And if one poem is a chanso and the other a sirventés. tenso, cobla, or the like, then we can be relatively sure that the former served as model for the latter. This type of imitation is very common in Provencal. Of the something over 500 poems called *sirventés* by Pillet-Carstens, nearly 200 have the same metrical form, the same rime-scheme, and the same rimesounds as certain chansos. The relative number of definitely imitative tensos, coblas, etc., would probably be equally great. When we consider that many Provençal poems have doubtless perished, we may well marvel that this number is so large. One reason is, of course, that the poets imitated the most popular songs, and that the most popular songs would naturally be among those preserved in the anthologies. Confirmation of this reasoning (if confirmation is needed) is afforded by a consideration of the tunes which have come down to us. Of the thousands of Provençal poems that we know, some 257, as we have seen, are accompanied in the manuscripts by the music to which they were sung. Now, of these 257, at least 68, and probably a good many more, served as models for other poems. Or, to look at it another way, of the 182 poems which certainly served as models, 68 (over a third) are preserved along with their tunes.

Since, under most circumstances, only the identity of rime-sounds can actually prove imitation of form, this is the type of imitation with which we shall be most concerned. Frequently, the rimes of the first stanza are carried throughout a Provençal poem. By way of illustration, take the chanso (234,3) Aisi cum es bela cil de cui chan, by Guillem de Saint Leidier. The rime-scheme is ababccdd, and the rimes, respectively, -an, -el, -es, -on. This means that, in every stanza, a will be -an, b will be -el, etc. When a poet follows such a model, he also will usually keep the same rimes throughout. This is what Bertran de Born did in his sirventés (80,34) Quan la novela flors par el verjan, which likewise has the rimes -an, -el, -es, -on throughout, arranged in the same scheme ababccdd. It goes without saying that the lines are also of the same length (ten syllables). And eight other poems follow the same chanso

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Sometimes, instead of carrying one set of rimes through an entire poem, the writer will change them for every new stanza, or every two stanzas, or the writer will devise some system of alternation (whereby, for instance, a and b simply change places from stanza to stanza), or some pattern that retains one or more rimes and changes the rest. The possible combinations are too numerous to mention. Now, in imitating a poem of this sort, the troubadours felt free either to follow their model in all the changes, or to disregard the changes and to use the same rimes throughout which the other poet had used in only one or two stanzas. We can illustrate both practices. Guillem Figueira wrote a sirventés (217,2) D'un sirventes far, with the rime scheme abababcccbc, where a and c have five syllables, b six. The rimes change for every new stanza: cof the first stanza becomes a of the second, and two new rimes are introduced. So we have (1) -ar, -ensa, -es, (2) -es, -erra, -itz, (3) -itz, -ana, -ecs, and so on. This poem of Guillem's is a bitter attack on Rome. Now, a certain lady named Gormonda came to the defense of Rome in a sirventés (177,1) which begins Greu m'es a durar. This poem follows Guillem's meter and rime-scheme, and, beginning with the same rime-sounds in the first stanza, it reproduces every change and every new rime used by Guillem. And it might be pointed out that these poems are far longer than the average, running to some twenty stanzas each.

The other practice (continuing throughout a sirventés the set of rimes that was used in one or two stanzas of the model, and disregarding the rest) is illustrated by Bertran de Born's poem D'un sirventes no m cal far loignor ganda (80,13). This has the scheme aaaaabab, with a ten syllables, the first bfour, and the second six. The rimes are -anda and -atz, all the way through the poem. But the model changes rime a every two stanzas. It is the (fictitious?) tenso of Guiraut de Borneill and Alamanda (242,69), beginning S'ie us quier conseill, bel' amig' Alamanda. There is no doubt which way the imitation went, because Bertran's poem contains the admission that it was written el so de n'Alamanda. Such admissions, by the way, are found in a number of Provençal poems, as we shall see later.

Once in a while, a poet will adopt the rimes of the first stanza of his model, then introduce new rimes in a system of his own. That is what Bertolome Zorzi does when he follows the metrical scheme of Bertran de Born's chanso (80,9) Chazutz sui de mal en pena. The rime-scheme is aabbaabbaaba, and Bertran's rimes in the first two stanzas are -ena and -ais; then he changes to -ia and -os. But Bertolome, in his poem Si tot m'estauc en cadena (74,17), has a rather different system. He follows Bertran's rime-scheme, to be sure, and his 5 his first rimes are those with which Bertran begins, -ena and -ais. But he drops them at the end of the first stanza, and brings in a new pair with every subsequent stanza: (2) -atge, -ar, (3) -ura, -ir. These correspond to nothing in the model poem, but are of Bertolome's own choice.

It might seem that a poet had gone about as far as he could go in the borrowing of form when he took meter, rime-scheme, and rime-sounds from

another poet. But occasionally the troubadours took one more step, and used the actual rime-words of their model, keeping even the order of those words intact. Naturally (and fortunately) this type of imitation is rare. One example will suffice. In the poem *En amor trob tantz de mals seignoratges* (16,13), Albertet indirectly praises various ladies by saying that even they could not overcome his aversion to love. Aimeric de Belenoi, in the poem *Tant es d'amor onratz sos seignoratges* (9,21), professes to take Albertet seriously, and answers his accusations against love point by point. In so doing, he makes use of every one of Albertet's rime-words (for the first stanza: *seignoratges, usatges, salvatges, lor, messatges, valor, dampnatges, amor*), much to the detriment of any poetic value or originality his own poem might otherwise have had.

On the basis of certain statements in the Provençal grammars, some scholars have maintained that if a poem follows the tune and metrical form of another poem, it must also have the same number of stanzas as its model. This is simply false. Levy (in his edition of Guillem Figueira, pp. 18–19) went to some pains to show that it was not true. Since, however, not everyone is convinced, it may be well to add some further documentation.

One of the poems which the troubadours imitated most frequently is Guiraut de Borneill's No posc sofrir c'a la dolor (242,51). No fewer than five sirventés follow the meter and rimes of this chanso, as well as one mieg-sirventés ("half-sirventés"), one tenso, one cobla, and one chanso. Now, the original poem has seven stanzas and two tornadas, the first of these with four lines, the second two. One of the imitated poems, a sirventés (242,52), is likewise attributed to Guiraut (probably by mistake); it has five stanzas and two tornadas, one of six lines and one of three. Another of the imitations (80,8a) has five stanzas and one tornada (three lines); another (437,25) has five stanzas and one tornada (five lines); another (156,11) has six stanzas and two tornadas (both of six lines); another (216,1) has five stanzas and one tornada (five lines); another (335,7) has five stanzas and one tornada (three lines). The mieg-sirventés, and of course the cobla, are, by definition, shorter; the former has three stanzas and one tornada (three lines). Thus, of the nine poems that imitate this chanso, not one has either the same number of stanzas, or the same number of tornadas with the same number of lines, as the model. We may, therefore, say categorically that poets did not feel impelled to follow their models in these matters.

In studying the earliest poems that may properly be called *sirventés*, one is led to the conclusion that the idea of formal imitation was not inherent in the genre from the beginning, but that it developed by degrees. Let us examine briefly the *sirventés* that were (or may have been) composed during the twelfth century, and see what they suggest.

In the first place, all the *sirventés* composed by a number of early poets (Cercamon, Alegret, Marcoat, Gavaudan, Perdigo, Raimon Jordan, Peire de la Cavarana, Peire Raimon de Toloza) are unique in their combination of winch are en words: Al so words: Al so is singing "in case, either the ing a tune to mean someth Levy (Petit that his tune so described.

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rime-scheme and meter. After what has been said about the nature of the imitation in question, we may assume that these poems are at least not modeled on any other compositions which are still extant. The same reasoning will apply to the numerous unica of other poets, and will be taken for granted in the following paragraphs. Naturally, the absence of a model cannot be taken as proof that none ever existed; but we must be guided by the materials we now have, not by materials postulated to support our hypotheses.

Of the 31 sirventés now ascribed to Marcabru, 25 are unica, like those mentioned above. Four of the remaining six are earlier than the other extant poems of the same metrical form, and could not have been imitated from them. Only two are left. One of these, Emperaire, per vostre pretz (293,23), has the same rime-scheme (aaab) and the same octosyllabic meter as William IX's Pos de chantar m'es pres talens (183,10). In both, furthermore, a changes for every new stanza, while b remains. Did Marcabru imitate William's poem? It is possible, but one can scarcely take it for granted. The rimes are different, and the metrical pattern is so easy that coincidence is quite possible: moreover, Marcabru was rather fond of these simple rime-schemes, and used them often in other sirventés where the question of imitation does not arise. His one remaining sirventés (293,43), Seigner n'Audric, is undoubtedly written in a borrowed form. It is a reply to the Tot a estru (16b,1) of Aldric del Vilar, and has precisely the same metrical form *aabccb*, *ac* 4, *b* 8, though not the same rimes. Under the circumstances, there can be no doubt that Marcabru imitated Aldric. But notice that this is a very special case: the poet had before him or in his mind not a famous chanso whose tune he wished to use, but a sirventés addressed to him, and which he wanted to answer. To use the same form in this situation need not imply that one would do so otherwise. We shall have occasion to notice other such cases later on, and to call particular attention to their importance in the history of the genre.

One phrase used by Marcabru calls for comment here. Among his sirventés which are entirely unique in form, one (293,5, aabbca) begins with these words: Al so desviat chantaire. This has been taken to mean that Marcabru is singing "in a borrowed tune" (so desviat). It may mean just that; in which case, either the original song has been lost, or Marcabru understood borrowing a tune to involve only the meter, and not the rime-scheme. Or it may mean something else. Desviar means, basically, 'to turn aside'; for desviat, Levy (Petit dictionnaire) gives 'dévié, égaré.' Could Marcabru have meant that his tune was 'disordered, distracted, wandering'? A melody might be <sup>so</sup> described. The word cannot, I feel, be taken as proof that this poem was written to an already existing tune.

With Peire d'Alvergne, seven out of ten sirventés are unique in their precise combination of meter and rime-scheme. The other three share the form of certain earlier or contemporary poems. Be m'es plazen (323,10) has the same <sup>rime-scheme</sup> and meter as the *sirventés* of Marcabru and Aldric which we Were just discussing. It is quite possible that Peire consciously imitated the

form of his predecessors, but we have no proof that it is so. This poem, by the way, is ascribed to Peire in only one of the two MSS which preserve it, the other one giving it to Raïmbaut de Vaqueiras, a somewhat later poet; the poem itself contains nothing that would suggest a date. So we cannot lean very heavily on it for proof of anything. A second poem, Bela m'es la flors d'aguilen (323,5), whether by Peire or not, has been dated c. 1147; and it has the same form as a chanso of Cercamon. The scheme is simple enough (ababcd, with lines of eight syllables), but not very common; so imitation is not to be ruled out, even though the rimes are not the same; but neither can it be taken as proved. Peire's third poem is the famous satire on his fellow. troubadours (323,11; date, c. 1170). This has the rime-scheme aabaab and lines of eight syllables. Marcabru has a poem of the same pattern (293,15); but in his poem both rimes are constant, while Peire has a new a for every stanza. Imitation, therefore, is doubtful.

Bernart Marti, another early poet, has left us three sirventés. Two are unica. The third, Farai un vers ab so novel (63,7), has the same metrical form (ababab) as Raïmbaut d'Aurenga's No sai que s'es (389,28). Imitation is conceivable, but not very likely. First, it is not certain which is the earlier: in the second place, Raïmbaut adds a few lines of prose after each stanza (a distinctive feature of the poem), while Bernart does nothing of the sort; and, in the third place, Bernart says at the beginning that he is making a poem with a new tune (so novel), which would mean that there was no intentional imitation.

Arnaut Daniel's one sirventés (29,15) is the third of a series, the other two being by Raimon de Durfort (397,1) and Turc Malec (447,1). Despite some disagreement among the texts that have come down to us, it seems highly probable that all three poems were meant to have the same metrical form: monorime stanzas of nine octosyllables, with a new rime for each stanza. Since no other poems exist with precisely the same form, no ultimate model is to be sought. One of the poets began the discussion, and the other two continued it in the form that he had used.

The single sirventés of Peire Rogier (356,7) which serves as the model for Raïmbaut d'Aurenga's answer (389,34), has the same meter and rimescheme as an earlier poem (262,1) by Jaufre Rudel. As the pattern is simple and not uncommon (abbaccd, octosyllables), all we can say is that imitation is possible, not certain. Nor can we be more categorical about the sirventés of Pistoleta, Guillem Ademar, Peire Vidal, and Uc Brunet. Some are unica, and some have the same metrical form (not the same rimes), as other poems; but there is no proof of conscious imitation.

The sirventés of Guiraut de Luc and the Monk of Montaudon fall into rather special categories. One of Guiraut's two, a unicum, calls for no comment; but the other (245,1) contains the admission that it was written el son Boves d'Antona, which is not too clear. Boves d'Antona figures in the epic Daurel et Beton, and of course gives his name to an Old French epic.

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111 The present poem, though divided into stanzas of six lines, actually has only one rime (-ona) throughout, and really does suggest a laisse of an epic. Beyond that, we cannot go. The Monk of Montaudon's poem, Pos Peire d'Alyond that, 1 os Feire a'Al-vergn' a chantat (305,16), contains in its first line a hint that it owes something to Peire d'Alvergne. And it has, in fact, precisely the same metrical scheme as Peire's satire on contemporary poets (323,11), which we have already mentioned. What the Monk of Montaudon is doing is to bring that satire up to date by a similar satire on poets of his own day. Under these circumstances, imitation of form was natural enough.

So far, we have found only six clear cases of formal imitation. One, the noem of Guiraut de Luc, admits an indebtedness which we cannot trace; furthermore, the poem itself can hardly be dated with any certainty, and we can prove nothing from it. Another, that of the Monk of Montaudon, imitates not only the form, but also the subject, of an earlier sirventés. The rest are all replies to sirventés of other poets, whose metrical form they follow. In every instance, the imitating poet has followed only the rime-scheme of his model, devising new rime-sounds of his own. If we admit indebtedness in those cases we have called doubtful, we shall have a number of poems for which the model was a chanso. But even here, the imitation still goes no further than the rime-SCHEME; the SOUNDS are different.

But certain twelfth-century poets understood imitation to include more than this, at least occasionally. Take, for instance, Guiraut de Borneill. Of his sirventés, seventeen are unique in their combination of meter and rimescheme. Another (242,52a), though it probably served as model for a poem by Sordello (437,10), was apparently original with Guiraut. Three, however, of the sirventés ascribed to Guiraut are unquestionably imitations of certain chansos, preserving not only the rime-schemes, but also the rime-sounds of their models. Two of these sirventés (242,38 and 52) have been denied to Guiraut by various scholars, and may belong to later poets. But the remaining one (242,77), which seems to be genuine, has the form and the rimes of a chanso by Peirol (366,19); this poem evidently served as a model for Guiraut's. Sirventés by Raïmbaut de Vaqueiras (392,8 and 22), Uc de Mataplana (454,1), Raimon de Miraval (406,1, 29, and 30), Dalfi d'Alvergne (119,8), Dalfinet (120,1), Torcafol (443,2, 4, and 5), and Garin d'Apchier (162,8) are modeled in a similar fashion on other poems. And a poem (167,3) by Gaucelm Faidit, which its author calls a sirventés, though it is more like a chanso, has the same form and the same rimes (abbaccdd, abc 8, d 10) as a chanso (132,8) attributed to Elias de Barjols. The fact that Gaucelm calls his poem a sirventés would lead to the assumption that he imitated the other poem; but his first line, Ab nou cor et ab novel so, seems to deny that assumption tion. And, since the poems have not been dated accurately, chronology is of no help in establishing priority.

In the work of another poet, we come to imitation on a thick grander scale than anything we have yet seen. That poet is Bertran de Born Fourteen -X

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of his sirventés, it is true, are unica, and some others, though sharing the rime-scheme of other poems, may or may not be imitations. One of these latter (80,16) has the same form and rimes as a sirventés of Raïmbaut d'Aurenga (389,5); another (80,39) has the same form and practically the same rimes as a sirventés (210,11) of Guillem de Berguedan. But in each case the chronology is too vague to allow us to be certain which (if either) of the two poets invented the form. It is quite clear, however, that eleven of Bertran's sirventés are modeled on other poems; they are numbers 80,2, 3, 5, 8, 8a, 13, 18, 28, 29, 31, and 34.

A few of the poems listed above cannot, unfortunately, be dated with any certainty. This is true of the poems of Gaucelm Faidit, Uc de Mataplana. Raimon de Miraval, Dalfinet, Torcafol, and Garin d'Apchier. We have already seen that, for Gaucelm Faidit, this is not important, since in his case it cannot be established which poet was the imitator. There remain Guirant de Borneill, Raïmbaut de Vaqueiras, Dalfi d'Alvergne, and Bertran de Born Guiraut's sirventés (242,77) has been dated by Kolsen in 1187; one of Raimbaut de Vaqueiras's sirventés (392,22) c. 1184; that of Dalfi d'Alvergne (119.8) in 1195-96; those of Bertran de Born from 1183 to 1194 (or, if we admit 80,18 as genuine, to 1197). The earliest date that can be fixed for this sort of imitation, involving the use of the same rime-sounds, is therefore 1183. It is possible that some of the undated poems are earlier, but not much earlier, because the floruit of most of these poets seems not to reach much further back into the twelfth century. And it is not impossible that the earliest sirventés in which imitation was so conceived were the two poems of Bertran de Born D'un sirventes no m cal far loignor ganda (80,13) and Quan la novela flors par el verjan (80,34). Of these, the first imitates Guiraut de Borneill, the second Guillem de Saint Leidier.

From the facts we have examined, it appears that imitation in the sirventés may well have originated in the practice of answering another sirventés in its own form. Once the idea of imitation was thoroughly connected with the genre, it would be easy to extend it in two directions—to imitation of a totally unrelated poem, and to the later custom of adopting the rime-SOUNDS as well as the rime-SCHEME and meter of the model. It may be that Bertran de Born is responsible for both innovations.

The other imitative genres need not detain us so long. Judging from the lists in Jeanroy's *Poésie lyrique des troubadours* (II,331-333; these are borrowed from Lewent and Springer), the earliest imitative crusade song is *Lo senher que formet lo tro* (323,22), wrongly ascribed to Peire d'Alvergne, and the earliest imitative planh is Bertran de Born's lament for the Young King, *Mon chan fenisc ab dol et ab maltraire* (80,26). The first (imitated from Pons de Capdoill, 375,19) belongs to 1213-14, the second (imitated from Peire Raimon de Toloza, 355,9) to the year 1183. We have just seen that the two earliest sirventés which borrow the rime-sounds of other poems belong to the same year (1183), and are the work of the same poet, Bertran de Born.

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IMITATION OF FORM IN PROVENÇAL LYRIC 113 The earliest tensos (in the broad sense, including partimens) which we know, from an identity of rime-sounds, to have been modeled on other poems, were written in the circles of Dalfi d'Alvergne and the poets of Ussel. They are the work of Peire Pelissier and Dalfi d'Alvergne (353,1; model, Peire Vidal, 364,4), and Eble and Gui d'Ussel (two poems: 129,2; model, Pons de Capdoill, 375,10; and 129,3; model, Cadenet, 106,5). Five more tensos from the same circles have the same form and rime-sounds as other poems; but since these other poems are themselves tensos or sirventés or coblas, the direction of the imitation is uncertain. It is quite possible that all were modeled on chansos which we no longer possess. The same may be said for the threesided debate between Raïmbaut de Vaqueiras, Ademar, and Perdigo (392,15), which has the same rimes as a sirventés (80,25) of Bertran de Born and three other poems. All these tensos can hardly be dated more definitely than by our general knowledge of the *floruit* of their authors, and this takes us to the

last years of the twelfth century (see Jeanroy, Poésie lyrique, II, 247ff.). Jeanroy, in the same work (II, 275, note 1) gives a list of the "plus anciennes coblas susceptibles d'une datation (souvent approximative)." The earliest (around 1190) is by Folquet de Marseille (155,25). This poem does not have the same rime-sounds as any other, but its form (aaaaaa, lines of twelve syllables) is unusual enough to make me think it was probably imitated from a chanso (234,16) of Guillem de Saint Leidier. The next two (1195), exchanges of coblas between Lanza and Peire Vidal (285,1) and between Raïmbaut de Vaqueiras and Guillem del Baus (392,31, 209,1, and 392,15a), are clearly imitated from chansos (364,40 and 392,10). The cobla, then, apparently a late-comer among the genres, was conceived as an imitative form even from the start. With it, however, as with the sirventés, the tenso, and the rest, this imitation was always optional. We have coblas that are entirely unique in their form, and others which share their form only with the answers they provoked.

This is perhaps the place to mention that even the chanso is not entirely free from imitation. Most of the imitative chansos are the work of late, obscure poets, who fell back on the melodies of their greater predecessors to supply their own lack of inventiveness. But there are a few examples which seem to belong not much later than the year 1200. A song by Gaucelm Faidit (167,62) and one by Aimeric de Peguillan (10,4) have the same metrical pattern and the same rimes in common. As the two poets were contemporaries, one can hardly decide which song is the original, which the imitation. Another case, which seems easier to decide, is this: Peirol, in his chanso (366,19) Tuit mei consir son d'amor e de chan, uses the rime-scheme abbcddc, with lines of ten syllables, and the rimes -an, -es, -ansa, -ens. Two later poets, Bertran d'Alamano and Ramon Bistort, composed chansos (76,21 and 416,5, respectively), with the same form and the same rimes; it is obvious that they were imitating Peirol. But a contemporary of Peirol, the same Gaucelm Faidit - 1 the set of chansos we Faidit who was paired with Aimeric de Peguillan in the set of chansos we

just mentioned, appears here too. Now, his poem differs from that of Peirol in two respects: it has the rime *-is* (not *-es*) for *b*, and it has an introductory stanza of a slightly different form (though this may be due to faulty transmission). Nevertheless, it is close enough to Peirol's pattern to prove an imitation in one direction or the other. And since Peirol's chanso was sufficiently known and liked to serve as the model for later poems, we may assume that it served as the model for Gaucelm's as well.

To summarize this discussion, we may say that the imitation of form probably began with the *sirventés*, in particular with the case in which one *sirventés* was written in answer to another, and in the same pattern; that it was conceived as involving the actual rime-sounds no earlier than the time of Bertran de Born, and perhaps in the first place by him, since the earliest datable examples (all from the year 1183) are his work; that it spread to the related genres, the *planh*, the crusade-song (and these two are only specialized *sirventés*), the *tenso*, and the *cobla*; that, around the turn of the century, it made some slight incursions into the domain of the *chanso* as well; and that it was never considered obligatory in any genre.

The poem that served as model was nearly always a *chanso*. This is easy to understand, for the *chanso* was always the great genre, the type of poem to which the poet devoted his best effort, and which would be likely to have the best music; also, the *chansos* were far more numerous than poems of any other sort. But not all the models were *chansos*.

We have already spoken of *sirventés* which served as models for answering *sirventés*. The later poets often followed the practice, here as well as elsewhere, of making such imitations follow the rime-sounds of the original; cf. the *sirventés* of Peire de Gavaret (343,1) and Peire de Durban (340,1; ababccdd, ab 7, cd 10), both of which have the rimes -es, -ir, -or, -ia.

A sirventés could serve, furthermore, as a model for a poem that was in no way an answer to it. This MAY be the case in a number of groups of poems with the same rimes. In some, it seems very likely, either because of priority in time or because of apparent verbal borrowings. Maus noted several such cases, in which Peire Cardenal was involved. I suggest the following list as almost definitely proved: Bertran de Born (80,25; 80,37; 80,20); Peire Vidal (364,17; 364,14); Guiraut de Borneill (242,47; 242,45); Pistoleta (372,3); Guillem de Berguedan (210,1). Of these, 80,25 is a mieg-sirventés, and 80,37, 242,47, and 364,17 are sirventés-chansos. To illustrate the sort of confirmation of indebtedness that one finds, I shall use still another poem, because it will serve to illustrate another point as well. The poem is Bertran de Born's sirventés (80,28) Mout m'es deissendre carcol. There can be little doubt that it served as model for Aimeric de Peguillan's Li fol e·l put e·l fillol (10,32), likewise a simulta Constraint of the line likewise a sirventés. Compare these phrases, the first in every case from Bertran, the second from Aimeric: de cui m'es bel, e no m'es bel; qui que m n'esquerna, qui los n'esquerna. De qui los n'esquerna; Be puose far cine et ilh terna, Non pot far cine ni sieis terno

(reading somewhat doubtful); cui bos pretz governa, si Dieus no·ls governa; (reading Tuit venran a vida eterna, Dieus lor done vita eterna. Such similarities show pretty clearly that Aimeric had Bertran's poem in mind when he was writing his own. Now, the further point I wish to make here is this: Bertran's sirventés is itself modeled on another poem, a chanso of Peire Vidal (364,25), which begins La lauzet' e'l rossignol; but Aimeric imitated, not the original poem, but the imitation. It is quite likely that many of the other imitations in Provençal verse were similarly made at second-hand.

One sirventés served as model for another poem under most exceptional, though most natural, circumstances. When Pons Santolh came to write his planh (380,1) on the death of Guillem de Montaignagol, he conceived the rather touching idea of doing so in one of the dead poet's own meters, and borrowed form and rimes from Guillem's sirventés (225,12) Per lo mon fan l'un dels autres rancura.

Tensos likewise were used as models, though the statement must be made with reservations, as the three pertinent examples will show. The exchange of coblas En Pelizier, cauzetz de tres lairos (97,3), between Blacatz and Pelizier, is based on the tenso of Raïmbaut de Vaqueiras, Ademar, and Perdigo which begins Seigner n'Aimar, cauzetz de tres baros (392,15); but even the first line makes it clear that the intention of these two men was to parody the earlier poem, not to imitate it seriously. And the poem of Peirol, Quant amors trobet partit (366,29), which served as a model for a debate between Cavaire and Bonafos (111,1), is a tenso only in form; the fact that the poet's interlocutor is Love makes it obvious that Peirol alone is the author of the entire poem. The third case is not so clear. It is the poem S'ie us quier conseill, bel' amig' Alamanda (242,69), upon which is modeled a sirventés (80,13) of Bertran de Born. Some scholars see in the Alamanda whom Guiraut de Borneill addresses in this tenso a real individual, who is the author of the stanzas ascribed to her. Others (among them Jeanroy, Poésie lyrique, II, 257) believe that Guiraut is the sole author of the poem, and that this Alamanda is simply introduced to give Guiraut an excuse for airing his grievances against his lady. If Alamanda really wrote part of the poem, then this is the only genuine tenso in Provençal literature that we know to have served as a serious model for another poem. About the indebtedness itself, there can be no doubt, for (as we have seen) Bertran de Born admits it explicitly in his sirventés; he is writing, he says, el so de n'Alamanda.

According to Stroński, in his edition of Elias de Barjols (p. 85), that poet's chanso (132,6) Bon' aventura don Dieus was written in imitation of a cobla (95,3) by the Bishop of Clermont, which he dates (1215–16) some three years before Elias's chanso. If this is correct, the case is unique, as far as I know, in the whole literature. With this one exception (and I should be inclined to look for some other explanation even here), a cobla served as model only for an answering cobla.

There are a few cases in which poems of other genres were used as models.

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Sordello's planh (437,24) on the death of Blacatz called forth two other poems on the same death; but these are in the nature of answers to Sordello's poem. And Bertran de Born's crusade song Ara sai eu de pretz quals l'a plus gran (80,4) would seem to be the model for the same poet's "sirventés joglaresc" which begins Foilleta, pos mi pregatz que eu chan (80,17); at least, the first poem was better known and more popular than the second, for it appears in a number of MSS, while the sirventés is found in only one, and incomplete there. It may be, of course, that both poems were modeled on a chanso which is now lost.

There are other instances, however, in which a poet can be said (with varying degrees of probability) to have imitated one of his own poems. A chanso (335,11) and a sirventés (335,12) of Peire Cardenal have in common the same rather complicated metrical form (otherwise unique) and at least partly identical rimes. And there is complete identity of form and rimesounds between these pairs of poems: a chanso (297,4) and a sirventés (297,8) of Matfre Ermengau; part of a chanso (80,1) and a sirventés (80,31) of Bertran de Born; a chanso (434a,60) and a poem called "aniversari" (434a,38) of Cerveri de Girona; a chanso (82,2) and a sirventés (82,12) of Bertran Carbonel; a chanso (457,40) and a cobla (457,43) of Uc de Saint Circ; a chanso (457,15) and a second chanso (457,34), again by Uc de Saint Circ. This last pair is particularly interesting, and the imitation could hardly be more obvious, for both poems have not only the same rime-sounds, but even the same rime-words, throughout.

Slightly different is the relation between Raïmbaut de Vagueiras's chanso (392,10) and a cobla (392,31) of the same poet. For this cobla provoked an answer from Guillem del Baus (209,1), and Raïmbaut replied with still another cobla (392,15a). Whether Raïmbaut's first cobla was really the first of the series is somewhat open to question; it may be that an introductory cobla by Guillem has been lost. It would have been politely flattering of Guillem to open the debate in one of his opponent's own meters, and several cases are known in which this was done. For example, when Lanza begins his exchange of coblas (285,1) with Peire Vidal, he borrows for his poem the form and the rimes of Peire's chanso (364,40) Quan hom onratz torna en gran paubreira. Similarly, Uc de Mataplana addresses a sirventés (454,1) to Raimon de Miraval in the form and rimes of the latter's chanso (406,14) Ben aja'l cortes esciens; and Raimon replies (406,30) in the same form and rimes. It is possible, furthermore, that Aldric's sirventés (16b,1) to Marcabru was written in imitation of a vanto (293,16) by Marcabru himself; the rimes are different, it is true, but the meter and the rime-scheme are the same. If we could really be sure that Aldric did copy Marcabru's metrical pattern, we should have here a most important landmark in the history of imitation in Provençal poetry; unfortunately, the pattern is hardly uncommon enough to make such assurance possible, and the relative dates of the two poems have not been fixed.

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# IMITATION OF FORM IN PROVENÇAL LYRIC



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There are a few special cases of imitation (other than those we have already mentioned in passing) which demand some attention here. First, and perhaps most curious of all, is that provided by the poem of Bertran de Paris de Roergue which begins Gordo, ie us fatz un sol sirventes l'an (85,1). This composition, though the author seems to call it a sirventés, is more like an ensenhamen for a minstrel. The odd thing about it is that it imitates not one, but three, other poems. The first, fourth, fifth, and sixth stanzas have the rime-scheme ababccdd; and they reproduce the meter and the rime-sounds of Guillem de Saint Leidier's chanso (234,3) Aissi com es bela cil de cui chan. The third, seventh, and ninth stanzas, with the rime-scheme abbaccdd, are modeled in the same way on Pons de Capdoill's chanso (375,1) Aissi m'es pres cum celui que cercan. The eighth and tenth stanzas (likewise abbaccdd) have the metrical form and the rimes of Aimeric de Peguillan's D'avinen sap enganar e trair (10,18). And, finally, the second stanza (also abbaccdd) has rimes that do not occur in any other extant poem. What are we to make of all this? I hope to publish in the near future a critical edition and a brief study of this poem which will attempt to answer some of the questions it raises.

Two Provençal poems, while not exactly modeled on other compositions, have this curious feature that they contain quotations from other poems, arranged according to a definite pattern. The first is Bertolome Zorzi's "dimeichant" (74,9) Mout fai sobreira folia; each stanza of this poem has, for its last four lines, the first four lines of the corresponding stanza of Peire Vidal's Quant hom es en autrui poder (364,39). And, in a similar fashion, the Monk of Foissan (Jaufre de Foixa), in his Be m'a lonc temps menat a guiza d'aura (304,1), quotes as the last line of each stanza the first line of a famous poem. Seven poems are so quoted: two by Arnaut de Maroill (30,16 and 23), two by Perdigo (370,3 and 8), and one each by Folquet de Marseille (155,1), Gaucelm Faidit (167,37), and Pons de Capdoill (375,10).

We said above that an imitative poem will ordinarily have the same meter and rime-scheme as its model; and the examples confirm this statement. But Maus (*Peire Cardenals Strophenbau*) and J. Storost (*Ursprung und Entwicklung des provenzalischen Sirventes*) point to a few examples which seem to prove that a somewhat freer imitation was possible. An *enueg* (305,10) of the Monk of Montaudo contains the admission that it was written *el so de la Rassa*. Now, this would seem to refer to Bertran de Born's *Rassa, tan creis e mont' e poja* (80, 37). And both poems have lines of eight syllables, and the schemes are similar. But the *enueg* has fewer lines in a stanza than Bertran's *sirventés*, the schemes are, respectively, *aaaabbbbb* and *aaaaaabbbbb*. The rimesounds also are different. Fortunately, the music for both pieces has been preserved, and J. B. Beck (*Die Melodien der Troubadours*, p. 54) says that they both have the same tune. He does not explain the discrepancy in length; presumably the Monk shortened Bertran's tune by omitting the musical phrases that accompanied two of the lines riming in *a*.

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Likewise, the cobla (293a,1) Be for' ab lui aunit lo ric barnatge, ascribed to Marcabru, but surely not the work of the famous Marcabru, has the rimescheme abababcccb, lines of ten syllables, and the rimes -atge, -ia, -en. No other poem has the same rime-scheme, but under the scheme ababcccb we find ten poems, also decasyllabic, with the same rimes. Some sort of imitation is clearly indicated. If the cobla is correct as we have it, we must suppose that its author simply stretched the tune of his model by repeating two of its phrases. I am inclined, however, to suspect that the manuscript tradition is faulty here (the cobla appears in only one manuscript), and that the poem in its original form had the same compas as its model.

Sometimes, a poet would imitate another poem, even to the point of adopting some of its rimes, but would change the other rimes sufficiently to give his work a different rime-scheme from its model. For example, in his sirventés (335, 18) De sirventes voill servir, there is little doubt that Peire Cardenal was imitating the chanso of Raimon Jordan which begins Lo clar temps vei brunezir (404, 4). The rather unusual meter is the same: 777777357. and the rimes are similar: -ir, -ut, -os for Peire Cardenal, and -ir, -utz, -os, -is for Raimon Jordan. But notice that Peire has only three rimes, so that his scheme is abbaaccaa, while Raimon's scheme is abbaaccdd. Peire has simply reduced Raimon's two rimes -ir and -is to one, -ir. We find the same reduction in at least two other cases. Two poems, both anonymous (461, 215 and 14) have the scheme abbaccbb and the rimes -ens, -os, -ensa. They are surely modeled on Arnaut de Maroill's chanso (30, 16) La grans beutatz e l fis enseignamens; but this poem has the rimes -ens, -ors, -ensa, -os, and therefore the scheme abbaccdd. And the same confusion of -ors and -os is evident in a number of poems modeled on Per qual forfait o per qual faillimen (404, 6), of Raimon Jordan. But because the model distinguishes -ors and -os, it has the rimescheme abcadeff, while some of its imitations have the scheme abbacdee, because they reduce the two rimes to one, -os.

There is a rather more complicated case of a similar sort. Bertran de Born's sirventés (80, 33) Pos Ventadorns e Comborns ab Segur has the scheme ababeded, and, in the first stanza, the rimes -ur, -o, -eta, -ar; these change, in the second stanza, to -ol, -or, -eta, -or; in the third, to -os, -as, -asa, -os; and so on. Notice that there is a doubling-up of the rimes here, and that the scheme of the second stanza is really ababebeb, that of the third ababeaea. Now, under the scheme ababebe we find six poems with the same meter (ten syllables), three of which have rimes that suggest some connection with this sirventés of Bertran's. They are: a sirventés of Peire Cardenal, Las amairitz, qui encolpar las vol (335, 30), with the rimes -ol, -i, -eta; a tenso between Raimon Gaucelm and Joan Miralhas, Joan Miralhas, si Dieus vos gart de dol (401, 6), with the rimes -ol, -o, -eta; and a crusade song by Guillem de Mur, D'un sirventes far mi sia Deus guitz (226, 2), with the rimes -itz, -o, -eta. The unusual rime -eta is common to all the poems, and all but the last also have the rime -ol. It is

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fairly obvious that Bertran's sirventés served as model for the other three, or fairly out of the other three, or that all four poems have a common model (which I have been unable to discover).

A problem of a different sort is presented by the two poems which have the rime-scheme abbaabbaccdd. One, a chanso by Gausbert de Poicibot (173, (173, 11) has six syllables in the a and b lines, and in the last four lines 7, 10, 8, and 8 syllables; the rimes are -ans, -ors, -er, -al. The second poem, a planh by Joan Esteve (266, 1), has exactly the same rimes, and, except for the last two lines, the same meter; but those last two lines here have ten syllables, not eight. It seems hard to believe that faulty transmission could account for such a discrepancy, which is maintained throughout the poem. Yet it is even harder to believe that the planh was not modeled on the chanso. Until some other explanation is offered, we must therefore accept the fact that in the second poem, two lines of ten syllables were sung to a melody which, in the first poem, accompanied lines of only eight syllables.

We have seen that, in several imitative poems, the authors admit their indebtedness by some reference to their models: they are singing el so de la Rassa, el so de n'Alamanda, el so Boves d'Antona. These all refer to some person mentioned in the poem; for the Boves d'Antona, though it has not been explained, obviously is an allusion of this sort. But in some other poems, the imitator names the POET whose work is serving as his model. So Uc de Saint Circ, in his Messonget, un sirventes (457, 21), says that he is writing el son d'en Arnaut Plagues. The reference is to the one poem, a chanso, by Arnaut Plagues, Be volgra midons saubes (32, 1), which also served as model for two other poems. But there are two cases in which a reference of this sort is puzzling: Un sirventes voill far en aquest so d'en Gui (457, 42), by Uc de Saint Circ, and Un vers voill comensar el so de messer Gui (330, 20), by Peire Bremon Ricas Novas. The model alluded to would seem to be the same in both cases. For not only is the author's name the same; the two imitative poems have much in common. Both consist of monorime stanzas, the first of which has the rime -i throughout (actually, Peire Bremon's poem, a cobla, has only one stanza). Both, furthermore, are written in lines of twelve syllables, which are very unusual among the troubadours. The difficulty is that the stanzas are not of the same length. That of Uc's poem has eight lines, while Peire Bremon's cobla has fourteen. It might be pointed out that another poem by Peire Bremon, a sirventés (330, 6), has the same metrical pattern as Uc's poem, monorime stanzas of eight Alexandrine lines. What the solution is, I do not know. The "Gui" in question is surely Gui de Cavaillo, for he answers Peire Bremon's cobla in a cobla of his own (192, 1), of the same dimensions, and likewise riming in -i. But none of the extant poems of this  $O_{i}$  is  $O_{i}$  and  $O_{i}$ this Gui (or of any other) have either eight or fourteen monorime Alexandrines to the stanza. The nearest approach (suggested by Pillet-Carstens, under 330 200 in the stanza. <sup>330</sup>, 20) is Gui de Cavaillo's fictitious tenso with his cloak, Mantel vil de croi

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fil, a mon dan vos comprei (192, 3). This poem, if we count about half the rimes as internal, has stanzas of six monorime Alexandrines (it should be noted that none of the imitations has internal rimes); and this is perhaps satisfactory as a model. Zingarelli (Intorno a due trovatori in Italia, pp. 15-16) says that these long verses, like those of the epics, were all set to one melody. which could be repeated any number of times, so an exact correspondence in the number of lines is not necessary. This may be so, but it is anything but a lyrical practice. Still, I have nothing better to suggest.

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