

= Trobairitz =

The trobairitz (Occitan pronunciation : [tʁuˈajʁits]) were Occitan female troubadours of the 12th and 13th centuries , active from around 1170 to approximately 1260 . The word trobairitz was first used in the 13th @-@ century romance *Flamenca* . It comes from the Provençal word *trobar* , the literal meaning of which is " to find " , and the technical meaning of which is " to compose " . The word trobairitz is used very rarely in medieval Occitan , as it does not occur in lyrical poetry , grammatical treatises , or in the biographies of the trobairitz or troubadours . Trobairitz composed , wrote verses , and performed for the Occitan noble courts . They are exceptional in musical history as the first known female composers of Western secular music ; all earlier known female composers wrote sacred music . The trobairitz were part of courtly society , as opposed to their lower class counterparts the *joglaressas* . Although troubadours sometimes came from humble origins ? Bernart de Ventadorn may have been the son of a castle 's baker ? the trobairitz were nobly born . The most important trobairitz are Alamanda de Castelnau , Azalais de Porcairagues , Maria de Ventadorn , Tibors , Castelloza , Garsenda de Proença , Gormonda de Monpeslier , and the Comtessa de Diá .

= = Position in medieval society = =

Throughout the 13th century , women of the court were expected to be able to sing , play instruments , and write *jocs partis* , or *partimen* (a debate or dialogue in the form of a poem) . The cultivation of these womanly skills may have led to the writings of the trobairitz .

The trobairitz may also have arisen due the power women held in southern France during the 12th and 13th centuries . Women had far more control over land ownership , and Occitan society was far more accepting of women than were most other societies of the time . During the Crusades many men were away , which left women with more administrative responsibility , and thus , power . Nevertheless , this society was not " feminist " , nor was *fin ' amor* , which exalted women while at the same time circumscribing many aspects of their lives and behavior .

There is difficulty in labeling the trobairitz as either amateurs or professionals . The distinction between these two roles was complicated in the medieval era , since professionals were generally lower class , and amateurs had as much time as professionals to devote to their craft . *Joglaresse* were lower class , professional composers far less respected than the trobairitz .

Both troubadours and trobairitz wrote of *fin ' amors* , or courtly love . Women were generally the subject of the writings of troubadours , however : " No other group of poets give women so exalted a definition within so tightly circumscribed a context of female suppression . " The tension between the suppression of women present in the poetry of the troubadours and similar themes in the poetry of the trobairitz is a major source of discussion for modern commentators . Trobairitz poetry pertaining to love tended to offer a less idealized conception of the subject than the poetry of their male counterparts , with a more conversational and less flourished style of writing intended to more closely emulate a more grounded vision of relationships . The trobairitz wrote in the *canso* (strophic song) and *tenso* (debate poem) genres . Besides *cansos* and *tensos* , trobairitz also wrote *sirventes* (political poems) , *planh* (lament) , *salut d ' amor* (a love letter not in strophic form) , *alba* (dawn songs) , and *balada* (dance songs) . Judging by what survives today , the trobairitz wrote no *pastorelas* or *malmariee* songs , unlike their troubadour counterparts . Furthermore , in keeping with the troubadour tradition , the trobairitz closely linked the action of the singing to the action of loving . Comtessa de Dia demonstrates this in her poem *Fin ioi me don 'alegranssa* , stating that " *Fin ioi me dona alegranssa / per qu 'eu chan plus gaiamen* , " translated as " Happiness brings me pure joy / which makes me sing more cheerfully . "

= = Attribution = =

The number of works attributed to the trobairitz is estimated at thirty @-@ two songs , but ranges anywhere from 23 to 46 . There are a number of reasons why an exact number is not known . In the courtly love tradition it was common for poems to be written as an exchange of letters , or a debate ,

as in a tenso . Some of these may have been originally written by one poet ; however , some were originally an actual exchange of epistles , later gathered together in a manuscript . Some of these were between men , and some were between a man and a woman . Some modern editors attribute these solely to the man who originated the exchange , and some attribute them to both the man and the woman involved . There is a long history of attributing these solely to men , even when all evidence points to the contrary .

Since poetry was highly stylized , it is difficult to determine when a poet speaking as a woman actually was a woman , or a man speaking as a woman . This adds to the difficulty of attribution , especially of anonymous writers . There is some debate as to whether or not the poems by the trobairitz represent genuine feminine voices , since they worked within the highly circumscribed conventions of the troubadours . Matilda Bruckner suggests that the trobairitz " spoke in her own voice as channeled through the voices of many others " . By manipulating the strict constructs of troubadour lyric , the trobairitz were able to create their own " fictions of the female voice " .

There is one notable instance where clear attribution is given to a woman , Bieiris de Romans (also given as Beatritz) , but the subject of the poem is another woman , Na Maria . In the poem " Na Maria " Beatritz expresses her love for Maria in the traditional fin ' amors style , both in terms of physical longing and courtly admiration . This poem , if not clearly marked as by a woman , would be assumed to be by a man . Some controversy surrounds the works of the Bieiris de Romans , as scholars have suggested that her canso expresses " lesbian desire . " The troubadour would typically speak to the domna (woman) ; the fact that the lyrical dialogue takes place exclusively between one woman and another is an extreme rarity .

= = List of trobairitz works = =

= = = Anonymous = = =

Bona domna , un conseil vos deman

= = = Attributed = = =

Alais Iselda and Carenza : Na Carenza al bel cors avinen

Alamanda de Castelnau

Almucs de Castelnau and Iseut de Capio : Domna n ? Almucs , si @-@ us plages

Azalais d 'Altier

Azalais de Porcairagues

Beatriz de Diá

Beatritz de Romans : Na Maria , pretz e fina valors

Castelloza

Clara d 'Anduza

Felipa

Garsenda de Proença : Vos qe ? m semblatz dels corals amadors

Gaudairença : Coblas e dansas (not extant)

Gormonda de Monpeslier

Guillelma de Rosers

Domna H.

Lambarda

Maria de Ventadorn : Gui d 'Uisel , be.m pesa de vos

Tibors de Sarenom

Ysabella