Lyric Voice and the Feminine in
Some Ancient and Mediaeval *Frauenlieder*[1]

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In the study of mediaeval European literature, especially that of France and Germany, the terms *chanson de femme* and *Frauenlied* have come to be conventional designations for a distinct type of poem — more broadly defined than a genre: a female-voice love-lyric in a popular rather than a courtly mode.[2] To use the language of Pierre Bec, femininity here is "textual" rather than "genetic."[3] Most of these "women's songs" are attributed to male authors, although there has been a tendency to trace the type back to preliterate songs actually composed by women. Goethe, Jakob Grimm, and others saw in the early German and Balkan *Frauenlieder* and *Frauenstrophen* the traces of "das älteste Volkspoesie."[4] The use of this terminology to designate a lyric in the female *voice* — irrespective of its authorship — goes back to Alfred Jeanroy, at the end of the last century, who defined *chanson de femme* as a woman's monologue, usually sad, relating to love (158).[5] Theodor Frings, whose description of the *Frauenlied* is probably the one that has been the most influential, makes clear that it is a universal, not merely a mediaeval, type. Although he focusses on Middle High German, Provençal, and Old French poetry, he includes examples ranging from Greek to Chinese.[6]

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Whereas the *Frauenlied* used to be regarded as a folk poem, simple in intent and oral in tradition, more recent scholars prefer to emphasize its popular *register*, rather than hypothesizing a popular origin.[7] In this way, we can accommodate compositions that may be aristocratic in origin and complex in intent, if not in form. Ulrich Mölk advocates stripping the concept of its "typologische Vieldeutigkeit" and "Aura romantischer Ursprungstheorien," and categorizing it as "ein Liebeslied des volkstümlichen Registers, in dem die Perspektive der Frau als Monolog, Dialog oder Erzählungsbericht realisiert ist" (88). Though there is some difficulty about the boundaries of the category — whether it *has* to be a monologue, whether poems in the aristocratic mode of *fin'amors* may belong to it[8] — I believe the following essential elements provide a useful working definition:

1. the femininity lies in voice rather than authorship;
2. the utterance is perceived as in some way contrastive to male-voice song;
3. the language and style are simple, or affect simplicity;
4. the subject is the loves, loyalties, and longings of the speaker.

These criteria define a body of poetry whose conventional features show that its composers and performers must have felt it to possess a certain coherence, although they gave it no name.[9]

The idea of women's songs defined by textual rather than genetic femininity runs counter to modern views of the individual, gendered author. But this approach is particularly appropriate to the mediaeval period — and earlier — when many texts are anonymous, the attribution of others is conventional and sometimes dubious,[10] and the persistence of oral delivery and transmission makes the audience often more conscious of performance than authorship.[11] One might compare the approach to modern literature taken by Roland Barthes, who insists upon the autonomy of the text.[12] In preliterate times, composer and singer would have been one. At a later stage, the identity of a male composer might be submerged in that of a female performer. It is, of course, possible that a woman's song might be performed by a man, which would add a dimension of irony. The same would be true if the personality of a known male author intruded. But we should not simply assume a male creation of female otherness.[13] Focussing upon textual femininity, and ignoring insoluble questions of genetic femininity, avoids the biographical fallacy on the one hand — for which Bec takes Meg Bogin's edition of *The Women Troubadours* to task[14] and the nihilism that concludes,

as some recent feminist philosophy has done, that in a system dominated by men there can be no such thing as a woman's voice.[15] Literary depictions of the feminine need not be regarded as inauthentic, even if we find that there is no *vox feminae* or *écriture féminine* in the biological sense.[16] These literary constructs can be examined for what they are, and seen to be significantly related to contemporary attitudes, even though they do not necessarily reflect the real natures of any particular women.

Our understanding of the mediaeval *Frauenlieder* can be increased by a comparison with some "women's songs" from the ancient world, specifically, from archaic Greece. In pointing out the similarities between the two kinds, I am suggesting not so much an influence of the earlier upon the later — such influence was of a very indirect kind — as two manifestations of a probably universal phenomenon, coloured and distinguished by their separate social contexts. The possibility of continuity in women's songs from ancient through mediaeval into modern times is a fascinating topic that I pursue elsewhere.[17] In the present paper, I wish to look at examples of ancient and mediaeval songs, and draw some inferences about their relationship to their respective backgrounds, in the polis of early, pagan, Greece, and in the courts and convents of mediaeval, Catholic, Europe. Although I believe useful generalizations can be made, these do not, of course, deny the individuality of particular authors and poems.[18]

Like their mediaeval analogues, the Greek texts are poems of affection, typically, homoerotic affection in the Greek case. However, unlike the mediaeval works, the Greek songs are usually in some sense occasional poems, whether the occasion is a formal ritual or a more private event — an invocation, or a farewell, for example. In the archaic period, the performance of these songs takes place within a women's group. The Greek women's songs can thus be defined by the first three features listed above for the mediaeval *Frauenlieder*, along with a modified version of the fourth:

4. the subject is the affections and concerns of women within the female thiasos,[19] which also forms the setting for performance.

The early sixth-century monody of Sappho has long been recognized as woman's song, but we can also include in this category the partheneia or "maidens' songs," choral lyrics sung and danced by young girls at religious festivals. Although many partheneia must have been composed,[20] only a few fragments survive, by Alcman, from seventh-century Sparta, and by Pindar, a hundred and fifty years later. Our category does not include all the texts composed by women, some of which, like Corinna's Fragment 654,[21]

a mythological poem on the Contest between Helicon and Cithaeron, are in no way constructed as woman's song.[22]

By drawing together the Sapphic poems and the partheneia, I am identifying a type that the ancients themselves, preoccupied as they were with formal features, did not define, nor, as far as I am aware, is the term "woman's song" in the mediaevalist's sense used by modern classicists.[23] But, like the mediaeval *Frauenlieder*, the Greek songs conform to a recognizable mode, which, as Heinzle would have it (122–25), must have been part of the author's consciousness and influenced her, or his, creative choices.

Both the lyrics of Sappho and, more obviously, the choral partheneia, are rooted in a thiasos — a band (in these cases, of girls and women) performing the rituals of a cult.[24] Alcman 1, the Louvre Partheneion, refers to the chorus of ten girls ($\pi\alpha\acute{\iota}\delta\omega\nu$ $\delta\epsilon\kappa[\acute{\alpha}\varsigma]$, 1.99); Theocritus 18, the Epithalamion for Helen (a Hellenistic imitation of choral woman's song) presents itself as performed by "the first twelve maidens of the city" ($\delta\acute{\omega}\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha$ $\tau\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\pi\rho\hat{\alpha}\tau\alpha\iota$ $\pi\acute{o}\lambda\iota o\varsigma$, 18.3). in Alcman 1, the group seems to be under the supervision of a woman called Ainesimbrota, to whose house the speaker mentions going to get reinforcements (1.73), and a similar supervisory figure, Andaisistrota, is referred to in Pindar Fragment 94b, the Daphnephoricon for Agasicles (lines 71–72).[25] The structure of this small group of adolescents, under the tutelage of an older woman, has been likened to that of the Sapphic group — with the difference that Sappho performed her songs solo, to her audience of girls.[26] The members of these little thiasoi (other, larger, and more heterogeneous groups existed) were bound together by extremely close ties of loyalty and affection. Although Alcman's partheneia are cult songs, not love poems, they use the language of erotic love, as the speaker, an anonymous and representative chorus member, expresses her feeling toward her leader.

The homoerotic element in the Alcmanic chorus emerges clearly from Alcman 1 and 3, the most substantial of his partheneia fragments. Alcman 3 speaks of a girl with tender feet and flowing hair moist with perfume. "She looks at [me] more meltingly than sleep or death ($\tau\alpha\kappa\epsilon\rho\acute{\omega}\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha$ / δ' $\ddot{\upsilon}\pi\nu\omega$ $\kappa\alpha\grave{\iota}$ $\sigma\alpha\nu\acute{\alpha}\tau\omega$ $\pi o\tau\iota\delta\acute{\epsilon}\rho\kappa\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$, 3.61–62). "Not in vain is she sweet!" ($o\dot{\upsilon}\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ $\tau\iota$ $\mu\alpha\psi\iota$-$\delta\acute{\iota}\omega\varsigma$ $\gamma\lambda\upsilon\kappa$– $\acute{\eta}\nu\alpha$, 63). She is both tender and radiant, like a golden sapling or a soft feather ($\chi\rho\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\iota o\nu$ $\ddot{\epsilon}\rho\nu o\varsigma$ $\mathring{\eta}$ $\grave{\alpha}\pi\alpha\lambda\grave{o}[\nu$ $\psi\acute{\iota}\lambda]o\nu$, 68), or a star falling through the brilliant heaven ($\alpha\grave{\iota}\gamma\lambda\acute{\alpha}[\epsilon]\nu\tau o\varsigma$ $\grave{\alpha}\sigma\tau\acute{\eta}\rho$ / $\mathring{\omega}\rho\alpha\nu\hat{\omega}$ $\delta\iota\alpha\iota\pi\epsilon\tau\acute{\eta}\varsigma$, 66–67). This girl must be Astymeloisa (named in lines 64 and 73), of whom the speaker declares, "If she'd take my tender hand, I'd be her suppliant straightaway" (80–81). In Fragment 1, the dance-leaders are race-horses with flying manes that spread out shining like gold (1.50–59). In comparison

with her leader, the speaker is unworthy, a poor maiden whose song is like an owl screeching from the roof-beam (86–87). The girls of her chorus have no need of exquisite ornaments — which the speaker describes, enticingly (64–69). The other, lesser, beauties may look her way, but Hagesichora, her leader, $\mu\epsilon\ \tau\eta\rho\epsilon\bar{\iota}$ or $\tau\epsilon\acute{\iota}\rho\epsilon\iota$; that is, she "watches over me" or "afflicts me with love" — or both (line 77).[27]

It is evident that Alcman was conscious of composing in a specific vein, appropriate to the voice of a young girl, whose world is characterized externally by girlish beauty and ornaments, and internally by a combination of intimacy, admiration, and self-deprecation, in her relation to the lovely chorus-leaders. The suggestiveness of these conventional elements in Alcman is strikingly different from Pindar's mechanical treatment. Whereas Alcman's speaker is passionate, enthralled, Pindar's, in Fragment 94b, is unconvincingly deliberate, announcing her femininity with the appropriate words and phrases: binding up my [woman's] peplos (line 6), taking a laurel sprig in my "tender hands" (7), blooming with garlands on my "maiden head" (11–12), thinking maidenly things and uttering them with my tongue (34–35). Not coincidentally, I think, in this flat presentation the homoerotic dynamic is absent; the speaker expresses formal admiration for the leaders of the daphnephoric procession, male and female, but that is all. The brilliant and magisterial Pindar seems to have difficulty accommodating himself to the mode of woman's song, and much of the poem reads like an epinician in praise of Agasicles and his family.

As in Alcman, and, less successfully, in Pindar, in Sappho too, a feminine world is evoked in terms of characteristic ingredients: beauty, tender feeling, appparently artless simplicity. In Sappho, however, the arrangement of these materials is more complex. Beauty is sometimes displaced, so that the depiction of a scene has erotic implications. Simplicity of persona takes different forms; it can be impulsive, composed, or astringent. Its candour can be designed to disarm scepticism. And limpidity of surface can mask a remarkable selectivity and compression.

In Fragment 96, the description of a moonlit scene where "lovely dew is shed, roses bloom, tender chervil, and flowering sweet-clover" (12–14), the plants — cool, moist, tender, and fragrant — somehow embody the girl who has gone off to Lydia, and is imagined wandering there, thinking of her beloved Atthis. Fragment 16 contrasts a loved girl with the things most people — i.e., most men — admire: a troop of cavalry, or of footsoldiers, or a fleet.[28] What Sappho thinks most beautiful is the radiant face and graceful step of Anactoria. After the priamel of rejected "bests," there is sweeping

simplicity of assertion in ἔγω δὲ κῆν᾽ὄτ– / τω τις ἔραται– "but *I* [say] it's whatever someone loves (16.3–4).[29] This elemental directness seems to proclaim that the speaker is without guile.[30] Sappho uses a similar technique at the opening of Fragment 31: φαίνεταί μοι κῆνος ἴσος θέοισιν, "That man seems to me just like the gods." It is an artfully artless protestation of admiration for the more fortunate person who enjoys the beloved girl's attention, sitting opposite her while she talks and laughs. The poem continues with a description of Sappho's state of physical dysfunction in the loved one's presence: she cannot see, her ears hum, a delicate fire runs under her skin, cold perspiration and trembling seize her, and she becomes paler than (parched) grass. Yet, this outpouring of Sappho's helplessness has a clinical exactness about it: the poet only *seems* to be at the mercy of her symptoms.

In Fragment 94, there is a careful distinction between the silliness of the departing girl (τεθνάκην δ᾽ἀδόλως θέλω — "No kidding, I wish I could die!") and the wise simplicity of the Sappho voice,[31] which consoles her by reminding her of the joy they shared together: when they garlanded themselves with roses and violets, when they celebrated in many a sacred grove, when lying on soft cushions she satisfied her desire. Sometimes Sappho's directness is brusque, as in her tart comment on the uncouth country girl who doesn't even know how to hold her dress above her ankles (οὐκ ἐπισταμένα τὰ βράκε᾽ἔλκην ἐπὶ τὼν σφύρων, Fr. 57). In Fragment 2, the simple words are pregnant with suggestion. Aphrodite is summoned to a grove where the sound of cold water is heard through apple boughs, where the ground is shadowed with roses, and where, through quivering leaves, a deep sleep descends. The language is radically simple, but redolent, as it prepares for the epiphany of the goddess by re-creating a seductive spot that neither mortal nor goddess could resist.[32]

Marilyn Skinner draws a distinction between the "masculine" language of Alcman, and the "feminine" language of Sappho. She finds a "male gaze" in the "sweet naivety" of Alcman's girls (133–34). Yet Sappho's can be as naïve, or as sweet. The "gaze" in Alcman is between girls, and it is powerful. Also, naïveté is attributed to the speaker — by herself — not to her leaders. Sappho's woman's song does indeed differ from Alcman's, but in being more psychologically complex, not in being "open, fluid, and polysemous," and, therefore, "conspicuously nonphallic" (130–31).

The voices in the songs that I have been describing appropriate a distinct area of experience, embracing both religious piety and intense sensory awareness. All three poets — Pindar in the most rudimentary way, Sappho in the most developed and complex — evoke an enclosed feminine world that has

its own self-sufficiency, and provides an alternative to the larger world out-side. In one of his odes, Horace neatly sums up the feminine and masculine verse of his two predecessors, Sappho, and her contemporary from Lesbos, Alcaeus: "Aeoliis fidibus querentem / Sappho puellis de popularibus / et te sonantem plenius aureo, / Alcaee, plectro dura navis, / dura fugae mala, dura belli" ("Sappho lamenting the girls of her country on Aeolian strings, and you, Alcaeus, in fuller tones, sounding with golden plectrum shipwrecks, exile, and the pains of war," *Odes* 2.13.24–28).

It is the *combination* of elements that creates the mode of woman's song. Particular details selected by critics as representing the female point of view can easily be parallelled in male-voice song. Thus, Jane Snyder claims that Sappho's love for Anactoria in Fragment 16 is expressed in characteristically "female language" that differs from male sentiment by concentrating on "her activity, not on specific physical characteristics" (21). Mary Lefkowitz makes the same comment on Fragment 31, where it is the girl's talking and laughter that Sappho mentions (66). The charm of a girl's step or her voice can just as easily reflect a male perception. Sappho 31 is appropriated by Catullus, whose translation (Poem 51 Quinn) turns the poem into an expression of his own tormented relationship with Lesbia. Again, one of the most memorable moments in Catullus is Lesbia's graceful step over an adulterous threshold (68.70–72). And Horace, with an ironical reminiscence of Sappho 31, ends a poem in praise of the man of spotless life (*Integer vitae*, *Odes* 1.22 Page) by protesting unswerving devotion to his Lalage ("Prattler"), "dulce riden-tem . . . , / dulce loquentem." However, all three of these Latin poems contain a socio-political element (Catullus adds a tirade against *otium* at the end of Poem 51) which gives the poets' observations about their love-life quite another colouring. Maleness and femaleness are certainly distinguish-able here, but by sets of conventions, rather than individual features, or the biological sex of the authors.

Like the Greek women's songs, the mediaeval texts create feminine voices which present themselves as frank, unpretentious, and spontaneous. These qualities are visible in the two ninth-century Old English *Frauen-lieder*,[33] in the eleventh- and twelfth-century Mozarabic *kharjas* (Spanish codas in a female voice added to Arabic and Hebrew poems), in the Latin *Frauenlieder* from the eleventh-century Cambridge Songs and the thirteenth-century Carmina Burana, in the Provençal poems of the trobairitz, the *chansons de femme* from northern France, and the *Frauenlieder* and *Frauen-strophen* of the Minnesinger, the Portuguese *cantigas d'amigo*, and the late mediaeval English songs in this tradition. More marginal to the mode of

woman's song are the learned verse-epistles that are sometimes used as a vehicle for love poetry. Without attempting a survey of this large field, I want to pick out some characteristic examples in order to show how they illuminate the literary construction of the feminine, and the attitudes that determine it.

It is tempting to see a link between the Greek and mediaeval texts in the poetry of classical Rome, notably Ovid's letters of unhappy women to their lovers. Ovid's poems are not, of course, composed in a popular or simple register. The elaborate self-analysis of his heroines is quite different from the voices of either the Greek or the mediaeval *Frauenlieder*. Nevertheless, the ethos of his poems does have something in common with the latter. Both express heterosexual love, and reflect relationships in which the male enjoys a freedom denied to the female. Although Ovid's poems draw on Greek myth and legend, their world is far removed from that of the archaic lyrics. *Heroides* 15, Sappho's Letter to Phaon, her legendary male lover, presents an abject woman preparing to throw herself off a cliff in an extremity of unrequited passion. Obviously, this is a very different Sappho from the one who appears in her own poems. Also, the Latin writers refer to the tradition of her homosexuality with shades of disapproval. In *Heroides* 15 she speaks of the girls she has loved "non sine crimine" (line 19).[34] Whether the resemblances between the *Heroides* and some of the mediaeval poems are due to actual borrowing it is hard to say. Dronke notes some echoes in the Latin letters, in an amorous vein, between female religious and their male mentors.[35] Poems in a more popular register are less likely to borrow in a specific way — though influence is a possibility.[36] Ovidian echoes have been seen in the poems of the trobairitz, but the resemblances are of a very general kind.[37] In view of these discrepancies and uncertainties, the *Heroides*, which certainly reflect a departure from the archaic milieu, cannot simply be regarded as a stepping stone to the mediaeval.

The earliest recorded examples of mediaeval women's songs are the two Old English *Frauenlieder*. We do have a late eighth-century reference to songs of this type: the prohibition in a capitulary of Charlemagne, forbidding nuns to compose and send *winileodas*, "friend-songs."[38] Although *winileodas* does not mean "love-songs" specifically, in this context the word seems to refer to "songs for a lover."[39] The two Old English texts make an interesting case, because they are to be found in a corpus that is overwhelmingly male in its subjects and ethos, amd which, with the exception of a few bawdy riddles and some bits of proverbial poetry about male-female relationships, simply does not treat the subject of sexual love. For this reason, when modern

Anglo-Saxon studies began in the nineteenth century, *Wulf and Eadwacer*
and *The Wife's Lament* were not recognized as women's songs at all.[40]

In *The Wife's Lament*, the narrator's female identity depends on a cou-
ple of feminine inflections in the first two lines (*geomorre*, *minre sylfre*).[41]
The speaker's theme is her "longing" for the husband who has banished her
(lines 14, 29, 41, 53).[42] She refers to her enforced separation from a "lord"
(*hlaford*, 6), a "people's leader" or "tribal chief" (*leodfruma*, 8). Just like
the typical male Anglo-Saxon exile, she calls herself a "friendless outcast"
(*wineleas wræcca*, 10), announces that she will tell a sad tale about herself
(1–4), and describes the hostile natural environment with which she is sur-
rounded (30–32a). However, she speaks of her "lord" in a highly personal
way; it seems to be him alone that she misses, rather than a band of com-
panions, like her male counterparts. Both the Wanderer, the narrator of an
elegiac "man's song," and the banished Wife lament alone at dawn (see *Wan*
8, *Wife* 35). But the Wife's loneliness becomes specifically sexual when she
compares herself to the friends (that is, lovers) who keep their bed together
(33b–36).

The touches by which the femininity of this discourse is marked are
slight, but telling. Very small differences in the formulaic and conventional
language applied to male, heroic subjects can have profound effects — which
is why scholars have been tempted to emend them out. Thus, in a key
passage of *Wife*, Matti Rissanen suggests changing a single letter. "Frynd
sind on eorþan / leofe lifgende, leger weardiað" (33b–34), "Friends are on
earth, dear ones living, they keep their bed [lying place]," becomes, if we
change *f* to *c* and make *lifgende* into *licgende*, "Friends are in the ground,
dear ones lying, they keep the grave" (Rissanen 95). We can now tie this
passage in with the Wanderer's regret for his fallen comrades (*Wan* 8–29),
and with the Lament of the Last Survivor in *Beowulf* (2247–66).

Wulf and Eadwacer is even more enigmatic, and was long regarded as
one of the Exeter Book riddles. Hardly surprising for a poem that begins "It
is to my people as if one gave them a gift," and ends, "That is easily separated
which was never joined, our story together." In fact, *Wulf* is another poem of
love-longing like *The Wife's Lament*. Whereas the banished Wife is confined
to a cave under an oak tree in the wilderness, the narrator in *Wulf* is confined
to an island surrounded by fen. While the Wife is surrounded by "bitter
enclosures, grown over with briars" amid dim valleys and steep hills (30–
31), the speaker in *Wulf* sits and weeps as rain falls (10). She laments her
lover Wulf's "seldom comings" (14), for which the embraces of Eadwacer
(husband? gaoler?) are cold comfort, much as the Wife thinks painfully of

"friends" who are happy together. Both women express ambivalent sexual feelings: the Wife condemns the cruelty of a husband who has banished her, even though she still misses him; the speaker in *Wulf* describes the embraces of the "battle-keen one" (11) as a mixture of joy and pain. She says he put his shoulders about her ("mec . . . bogum bilegde," 11), a curiously rough image, which conjures up the front quarters of a quadruped.[43] Although composed in a simple register, this is a very complex and elusive poem.

In the Provençal, as in the Old English women's songs, themes and motifs characteristic of male-voice poetry are adopted and given a different colouring. For both cases, too, the masculine verse is far greater in bulk, and seems to be the dominant mode, although we should not assume that it is in a historical sense prior to woman's song. Peter Dronke comments that the Provençal women poets "have taken the poetic language and conventions of masculine love-lyric as their point of departure, but fused them with . . . more direct and overtly physical language" (*Medieval Lyric* 106). Joan Ferrante, who defines a female rhetoric in this poetry, also finds a greater directness in the women poets. These qualities can be particularly well illustrated from the poems of the late twelfth-century Countess of Dia, the best known of the trobairitz.

In *Estat ai en greu cossirier*, "I have been in great torment,"[44] the speaker addresses her lover in passionate and provocative language. Not only does she imagine holding him in her arms naked (line 10), a conventional image from male troubadour lyric; she wants to be his pillow (12), and she protests that her greatest longing is for him to lie in her husband's place — "but only if you promise to do all I would want" (23–24)![45] The poem uses the same motifs as male lyric — here reversed. Comparisons are made to celebrated lovers of romance, Floris and Blancheflor (13–14), but it is with the male lover, not the female beloved, that Dia compares herself. This discourse fits itself into the dominant courtly mode, but adds a frankness and sensuousness characteristic of *Frauenlieder*.

A chantar m'er de so q'ieu no volria, "It will be mine to sing of that which I would not desire," is another high-spirited poem by the same author, which contains a striking blend of pride and self-abasement before the lover who has betrayed her. "Ni ma beltatz ni mos pretz ni mos sens" (5) — neither her beauty, nor her good name, nor her wit — can help her; why is her fair, gentle friend so cruel: "e vuoill saber, lo meus bels amics gens / per que vos m'etz tant fers ni tant salvatges" (33–34). Again, we find the conventional posture of male-voice lyric (the pleading, the claim to love you

"more than Seguis does Valensa," 10), combined with a distinctive outspoken frankness — here, in the speaker's acknowledgement of her own worth.[46]

The apparent candour that is so characteristic of *Frauenlieder* is also strikingly present in male-authored poetry. The female speaker lamenting her lover's departure on crusade in *A la fontana* by Marcabru (perhaps a generation before the Countess of Dia) is equally urgent and outspoken. She curses King Louis because he gave the orders that brought grief into her heart: "Ay! mala fos reys Lozoicx / que fay los mans e los prezicx / per que·l dols m'es en cor intratz!"[47] The conclusion of another well-known lyric, Walther von der Vogelweide's (early thirteenth-century) *Under der linde*, shows the same apparently artless self-revelation. This poem, unusual among the mediaeval women's songs in being a joyful recollection of gratified love, ends humorously: "Wes er mit mir pflaege, niemer niemen / bevinde daz wan er und ich / und ein kleinez vogellîn, / tandaradei, / daz mac wol getriuwe sin" ["What he did with me no one shall ever know but me and him, and a little bird — who will surely keep faith"].[48]

As the quoted examples show, these poems combine the ardour of a seemingly artless, frank eroticism with the bite of anger or of wit. A similar combination appears in the mediaeval Latin women's songs. The erotic content of *Veni dilectissime* (*Carmina Cantab*. 49) must have offended some early censor, who has attempted to erase it from the manuscript:[49] "Veni dilectissime / gratam me invisere. / In languore pereo, / venerem desidero. / Si cum clave veneris, / mox intrare poteris" ["Come sweetheart, to visit me, your pleasure. In longing I perish; I yearn for love. If you come with your key, you shall straightway enter"]. There are echoes of the voluptuous and suggestive language in the Song of Songs: "Dilectus meus misit manum suam per foramen, et venter meus intremuit ad tactum eius. Surrexi ut aperirem dilecto meo . . . . Adiuro vos . . . ut nuntietis ei quia amore langueo" (*Cantica* 5.4–5 and 8). The eleventh-century *Plangit nonna*[50] is equally sensual, but ironic and irreverent. The speaker is driven to distraction by her ascetic life and begs her young man to take her without delay: "Iuvenis, ne moreris! / faciam quod precipis." Similar to the double-entendre in *Veni dilectissime*, but more heavy-handed, is the closing image in the macaronic German-Latin *Ich was ein chint so wolgetan* (*Carmina Burana* 185):[51] "Er rante mir in daz purgelin / cuspide erecta" ["Into my little fortress he forced his way, spear erect"].

Two other *Frauenlieder* in the Cambridge manuscript express the unfulfilled longing that is a typical theme of their vernacular analogues. In *Nam languens* (interpolated in *Carmina Cantab.* 14), the speaker describes

how she arose at dawn and went barefoot through the snow and cold to scan the melancholy sea for her husband's ship: "Nam languens amore tuo / consurrexi diluculo, / perrexique pedes nuda / per nives et frigora, / atque maria rimabar mesta, / si forte ventivola / vela cernerem / aut frontem navis conspicerem." And in *Levis exsurgit zephirus* (*Carmina Cantab.* 40) the speaker sits alone and pale; if she raises her head, she can neither hear nor see— "Si forte capud sublevo, nec audio, nec video," an affliction like Sappho's. Dronke even suggests a specific connection, but I am sceptical.[52]

In these various Latin poems, as in their vernacular analogues, there is a spectrum of erotic feeling that ranges from imagined gratification to hungering for the beloved to bitterness and resentment. Anne Schotter traces two strains in the mediaeval Latin *Frauenlieder*, one tender, the other cynical; the former derived from a tradition based on the Ovid of the *Heroides* and on the Song of Songs; the latter drawing on the Ovid of the *Amores* and the *Ars Amatoria*, written from a masculine point of view (Schotter 21–24). She finds the cynical tradition more dominant, and argues that the mediaeval *Frauenlieder* in Latin or in macaronic verse were composed by and for men and tend to exploit the ignorance of women (24). Though it is true that women were not usually as competent in Latin as the male clergy, some women—Hrotsvitha and Hildegard are well-known examples—were sufficiently educated to write Latin verse.[53] Schotter may well be right in seeing a male cynicism behind poems like *Ich was ein chint*, but it is hard to draw the line between cynicism and bitterness—and dangerous to make gender attributions on this basis. Also, there are close parallels between Latin lyrics of this kind and vernacular poems. *Plangit nonna*, for example, resembles the little Castilian poem *No quiero ser monja, no*, "I do not wish to be a nun."[54] Schotter quotes also *Huc usque, me miseram* (*Carmina Burana* 126), the song of the girl who loved cleverly until she got caught—now her belly swells: "Res mea tandem patuit, / nam venter intumuit, / partus instat gravide."

The same mixture of cynicism and pathos can be found, handled more subtly, in a group of fifteenth-century English *chansons de délaissée*.[55] In particular, the close of the poem *Jankyn*, which juxtaposes the commonplaces of the Latin mass with intensely personal emotions, tellingly conveys the speaker's shift from infatuation with the charming womanizer to sharp fear for her future: "Benedicamus domino, Crist fro schame me schilde / Deo gracias therto—alas, I go with childe!" This is a song which is clearly in the same tradition as *Ich was ein chint*, but here cynicism is overcome by empathy.[56]

As a learned form, the Latin verse-epistles written by women place them-
selves on the margins of the *Frauenlied* mode. Their language is less "sponta-
neous," but does show some significant affinities with the women's songs we
have been looking at. In the late eleventh-century collection of letters from
girls being educated in a German convent, probably at Regensburg,[57] the
writers are showing their paces in Latin, corresponding with their teacher,
doubtless a cleric, for whose affections they vie. The author of Letter 6 seems
to have a crush on him: "Corrige versiculos tibi quos presento, magister, /
nam tua verba mihi reputo pro lumine Verbi. / Sed nimium doleo, quia pre-
ponas mihi Bertham" ["Correct the brief verses I am sending you, master, for
to me your words are like the light of the Word. But I am very sad because
you prefer Bertha to me"]. Other letters are teasing rather than deferential.
For example, 17: "Quos incesta iuvant, consortia nostra relinquant — / In
quorum numero si converseris, abesto!" ["Let those whom lewdness delights
be banished from our company — if you are one of that sort, stay away!"].
The tone of Letter 31 is similar: a couple of male-voice letters help to fill out
the context; addressed by a man to a woman who, he says, is the seventh of
his amours, these missives (14 and 15) arrange an erotic rendezvous.

Similar relationships — whether real or merely literary — appear in the
correspondence associated with the convent of Le Ronceray, from the same
period. Along with the flirtatious letters by Baudri of Bourgueil to women at
the convent, a reply to him by a young nun, Constance, is preserved, which
combines erotic suggestion with extravagant admiration.[58] More frivolous is
the *Concilium Romarici Montis*, a twelfth-century poem in which the nuns
at the convent of Remiremont in Lorraine hold a church council about the
relative merits of knights and clerks as lovers.[59] The demarcations between
love and friendship, game and earnest are blurred in these convent poems,
and the romantic relationships are framed and conditioned by a setting that
is both celibate and male-dominated. Within these confines, the feminine
voices express deference and defiance by turns. Like the more typical *Frauen-
lieder*, these learned poems show, in varying combinations, a characteristic
mixture of apparently ingenuous frankness and ironic wit. Dronke likens the
Regensburg poems in which the writers playfully assume the dominant rôle
to the poems of the trobairitz — and to the male-authored *Frauenlieder*.[60]

The love that is the subject of mediaeval women's songs is almost always
heterosexual. Sexual relations between women, like those between men, were
condemned, but seem to have figured far less in the public consciousness.[61]
Interestingly, the rare poems that express female homoerotic love do not
adopt the ardent, candid language of the *Frauenlied*. Very possibly, the

women who composed "lesbian" poems to each other saw them only as expressions of intimate affection. Two convent letters in this vein are preserved. They begin, repectively, "To C–, sweeter than honey or honeycomb," "To G–, her one-and-only rose."[62] Like them, the poem from the trobairitz Bieris de Romans to her beloved Maria, is extravagantly sentimental. Because its homoerotic theme is so unusual, scholars, including Bec, have doubted that it is really authored by a woman.[63] The poem's latest editor, Angelica Rieger, denies that Bieris was a lesbian, but admits that in this poem of "tender tone" "the possibility of an element of female jealousy (which might even bear lightly homoerotic characteristics) need not be ruled out entirely."[64] In these three poems, "lesbian" feeling, which even when not condemned outright by mediaeval society is certainly not sanctioned, channels itself into an effusive sentimentality.

A background for both the Greek and the mediaeval *Frauenlieder* can be found in the customs of their respective cultures. Both arise from a male-dominated society, with sharply differentiated gender rôles, the women's largely confined to the domestic sphere. However, in archaic and classical Greece, organized religion provided for Greek women's groups both a certain autonomy and a vital connection with the life of the polis at large. Sometimes, alongside men, women and girls enacted ceremonies like bringing the peplos to Athena, or bearing the basket of holy objects;[65] sometimes they performed exclusively female rites — like the matrons' Thesmophoria at the time of the fall planting, or the girls' Arkteia, a rite with initiatory implications performed in honour of Artemis.[66] Mediaeval society, by contrast, had no female equivalent to its male-enacted rituals. Women's May-Day dances and similar festivities were doubtless the descendants of cult rituals like those performed by Greek women, but their social importance had diminished. In some ways, the convent offers a parallel to the women's thiasos, but convents were dependent on male clerics and were not perceived as essential to the life of the larger community.[67] The chorus-leader in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* recites her distinguished ritual career as evidence not only of her personal accomplishments, but of her service to the state.[68] Although there might be a parallel in structure between the religious communities of the two societies, there is a major divergence in function.

The distinctive ethos of the Greek, as compared to the mediaeval, women's songs can be traced to their origin in the thiasos. Its self-sufficiency and its high status within the community are both reflected in the homoerotic element in the songs. The relationships between girls and their

chorus-leaders or chaperones fulfilled both a sexual and a pedagogic function. These homoerotic liaisons were part of the process whereby the young evolved toward integration into society as mature adults. We have less information about women's circles than men's, and we need not assume the highly structured relationship between *erastēs* ("lover") and *erōmenos* ("beloved") which is recorded for male groups in Sparta and Crete.[69] But it seems natural that the educative rôle — as defined by Plato, in the *Symposium*, for example[70] — would apply to women's groups. Plutarch tells us that such was the custom in ancient Sparta, where "noble and good" women took girls as lovers.[71]

Being the product of an intimate female thiasos, the archaic Greek songs are woman-centred, whereas their mediaeval counterparts are man-centred. The thiasos background also has subtler infuences. I believe it is partly because the girls' thiasos valorizes the feminine and possesses a certain autonomy that satisfied love — and gratification more generally — is a much commoner subject in the Greek than in the mediaeval poems. Even when the occasion of a poem is the absence of a loved one, this gratification can come to the fore — as in Sappho 94 and 96. The profusion of flowers and scents, the personal adornments have an engrossing physical presence unparallelled in the mediaeval texts. In the latter, the theme is characteristically — though not exclusively — unfulfilled love, and words for longing recur: *languor* and *languere* in Latin, *longian* and *longað* in Old English.[72] Absence is felt with a sharpness intensified by the recollection or imagination of joy. Again, while the thiasos background gives an official sanction to the feelings described, mediaeval poems arise out of private relationships that assert themselves against the structures of organized society.

Both the bodies of poetry which I have examined represent an alternative to the dominant modes of male song. In both, the feminine is constructed as simple, personal, and candid — perhaps in consequence of a dominant (male) perception of young womanhood. Nevertheless, the adoption of this register is, as Bec says, "un choix typologique" ("Trobairitz" 261), which can be utilized in the pursuit of complex agendas. Other apparent limitations can be turned to advantage. In the mediaeval poems, the restrictions on women's activity intensify the feelings expressed. It is the tension between the speaker's vocal energy and the social restraints under which she moves that gives the poems their charge; denied formal authority, she is richly endowed with eloquence.[73] In both poetries, the seemingly restricted medium of the *Frauenlied* becomes a vehicle for the powerful delineation of women's feelings — of self-sufficient homoerotic love, and of heterosexual longing. The

characteristic differences between the two reflect the perception of women, and the rôle of women's groups, in their respective societies.

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NOTES

[1] Some of the material for this article has been drawn from my thesis, "Women's Songs and their Cultic Background in Archaic Greece." M.A. McGill, 1994.

[2] The classification is retrospective; in most of the European vernaculars there was no such term in the Middle Ages, although the designation *cantiga d'amigo* (in contrast to the male-voice *cantiga d'amor*) begins to appear in Portugal around 1300. See Mölk 64. For the early Germanic word *winileod*, see above, p. 8 and p. 19, n.39, below.

[3] Bec comments on the need to distinguish between "une féminité génétique (avec un auteur dont on sait pertinemment qu'il est une femme), et une féminité textuelle, à savoir une pièce, dans la très grande majorité des cas amoureuse, et dont le 'je' lyrique est une femme (l'auteur pouvant être assez fréquemment un homme)" "Trobairitz" 235–36.

[4] For the history of the term *Frauenlied*, see Mölk 64–67. The early use of the word was applied to female-authored songs.

[5] Bec finds the *chanson de femme* manifested in "un corpus assez varié de genres poétiques globalement caractérisés par un monologue lyrique, à connotation douloureuse, placé dans la bouche d'une femme," *La lyrique française* 1.57. Like others, Bec assumes that the type is of ancient provenance and wide dissemination.

[6] See Frings's 1949 monograph, *Minnesinger und Troubadours*. Other notable contributions are those of Spitzer (1952), which brings in the 11th and 12th century Mozarabic *kharjas*; Malone (1965), which draws the OE *Wife's Lament* and *Wulf and Eadwacer* into this framework; and Dronke, in Chap. 3 of his *Medieval Lyric* (1st ed. 1968). Bec finds *chansons de femme* in the *kharjas*, some of the (Latin) Cambridge Songs, the Spanish *villancicos*, and the Portuguese *cantigas d'amigo* (*La lyrique française* 1.58).

[7] Following Bec, who distinguishes between the *registre aristocratisant* of courtly poetry, and the *registre popularisant* adopted by the genres in which the *chanson de femme* manifests itself (*La lyrique française* 1.59). He stresses that the type is "non seulement pre-courtoise, mais également para-courtoise et post-courtoise" (1.61). Among the OF lyrical genres that embody the *chanson de femme* are the *chanson de délaissée* or *de malmariée*, *chanson de toile* or *d'aventure*, the alba, pastorela, and *Kreuzlied*; the enumeration varies from scholar to scholar. See, for example, Bec 1.60; Peters 41 and 43; Rieger, *Trobairitz* 74–81.

[8] For example, Rieger, in her edition of the women troubadours, excludes the *genres popularisants* which embody the *chanson de femme* (*Trobairitz* 77–81); Dronke includes trobairitz poetry in his *cantigas d'amigo* (*Medieval Lyric*, Chap. 3), but puts it into a somewhat different category, blending aristocratic (male) and popular (female) traditions (105); similarly Bec, "Trobairitz" 261. I include these poems because they show some of the most characteristic features of women's songs.

[9] Although "women's songs" are a category rather than a genre, Heinzle's remarks about genre classification are à propos: while allowing that a classification may be made retrospectively, he insists that a genre which is more than a mere taxonomic convenience should be part of a writer's consciousness and influence his creative choices (122–25).

¹⁰ Peters even raises the possibility that the trobairitz poems were not really composed by women, but, anonymously, by men, and attributed to famous women in "einer vielleicht erst nachträglichen biographischen Konkretisierung" (42).

¹¹ Commenting on the two OE *Frauenlieder*, Desmond urges that anonymous poems with female speakers should be recuperated into the corpus of women's literature because "the gender of the author becomes insignificant . . . , the gender of the speaker . . . all important" (583). Cf. also Belanoff: "Even if our two *frauenlieder* were composed by men, their artfulness is an outgrowth of ancient and popular female-voiced songs" (200). And Bragg, in an article on mediaeval women's love-lyrics, includes as "women's lyrics" poems known to have been composed by men (259).

¹² In his frequently anthologized essay, "La mort de l'auteur." Interestingly, Barthes opens with the construction of the feminine — in a comment by a character in Balzac's *Sarrasine* that a castrato impersonating a woman is truly woman. " Qui parle ainsi?" Barthes asks — and replies that we cannot know. Overing, in her study of *Beowulf*, notes that "the notion of abandonment of presence or self . . . is an audience-participatory extreme of ancient oral tradition as well as a postmodern characteristic" (Introd. xviii).

¹³ As is done by Spitzer, who claims that "woman has in primitive literature a rôle imposed upon her by man, answering him with the very words of longing he has suggested to her" (22), and by Fries, who says of the medieval *Frauenlieder*, "The nature of female otherness in most woman's song is a reflector of the male and male values" (172). Bennewitz comments on the problems of trying to sort out male and female input in given texts: ". . . ist . . . die Frage der weiblichen Verfasserschaft nicht abzutrennen von Einfluss und 'filter' der männlichen Mentoren" (388–89). Jackson points out how similar the songs of the trobairitz can be to the *Frauenstrophen* and *Frauenlieder* among the works of known male *Minnesinger*, and cautions us to beware of "attributing to sexual make-up what may actually be due to tradition" (53).

¹⁴ Bogin sees the trobairitz poems as "a vehicle of self-expression," "a valuable record of the feelings of historical women" (68–69). Bec comments critically on these rather naïve assumptions ("Trobairitz" 247).

¹⁵ Thus Irigaray speaks of "cette aporie du discours quant au sexe féminin," and concludes that "Il fallait donc recourir à d'autres langages . . . et même accepter la condition du silence . . . , pour que quelque chose du féminin comme limite du philosophique puisse enfin s'entendre" (146).

¹⁶ Cf. Peters: "nur die [Ebene] der Frauenbilder der ideologischen Produktion programmatischer Vorstellungen über Frauen" (50).

¹⁷ In "The Continuity of Woman's Song: Sappho and Her Daughters," paper presented to the Society of Canadian Medievalists, Montreal, May 1995, and article in progress. A continuous line of development from the ancient Near East and Greece into mediaeval Europe through Spain has been argued by Elícegui, "Poesía griega 'de amigo' y poesía arabigo–española."

¹⁸ Bruckner cautions us about the dangers of generalization in regard to the woman troubadours, noting that women do not always want or say the same thing (891).

¹⁹ I use the word "thiasos" in the sense of a group which joins together in religious celebrations. The group need not be formed expressly for this purpose, although it may be. See θίασος, sense II, in Liddell-Scott-Jones.

²⁰ Plato knew of partheneia composed by Alcman, Pindar, Simonides, and Bacchylides. See Pseudo-Plutarch, *De musica* 17, 1136f. Quoted in D. Campbell 2.348.

21 Except where other editions are specified, citations of the lyric poets are taken from *Poetae Melici Graeci*, ed. Page. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

22 Other works are tangentially related to women's songs as a type. Erinna's lament for her friend Baucis is feminine in theme, but not a thiasos poem, nor formally a lyric. Anacreon 385 is a line uttered by a woman bringing the washing from the river — a poem in the tradition of work songs, not songs of affection. Carmina Popularia 869 (Page, *PMG*), which Thales heard a woman singing about the tyrant Pittacus "grinding" like her mill, is probably satirical. English translations of all the extant Greek poetry by (named) women are included in Rayor.

Theocritus 2, like his *Idyll* 18, is a literary version of a traditional oral form: Simaitha recites a charm and resorts to magic in order to win back her lover. The poem is cited by Frings (*Minnesinger* 47) as an ancient example of a woman's love-lament, but it is at several removes from its popular models. For Theocritus's poems, see Edmonds.

23 Greek genre theory, which classified poems by occasion, mode of performance, and metre, was developed by Hellenistic scholars. Gentili characterises it as "the bookish work of a literate age" (37). Kirkwood notes that the conventional division into choral and monodic poetry, which he himself regards as of major importance, is "nowhere in the ancient classifications" (9–10).

24 It is not clear that Sappho's entourage was created specifically for this purpose, though some scholars think it was. Thus Latte: "Es sollte deutlich sein, dass der Vortrag von Liedern bei rituellen Gelegenheiten der wesentlich Zweck dieser Thiasoi war" (36) — mentioning the partheneia of Alcman and Pindar in connection with Sappho.

25 Pindar citations are taken from Snell-Maehler. For the classification, see Proclus, as summarised by Photius: $τὰ\ δὲ\ λεγόμενα\ παρθένια\ χορο͂ις\ παρθένων\ 'ενεγράφετο.$ $οἷς\ καὶ\ τὰ\ δαφνηφόρικὰ\ 'ως\ ε'ις\ γένος\ πίπτει$ ["Those called partheneia were written for choruses of maidens. The daphnephorica [hymns for laurel-bearers] also fall into the same category," *Bibliotheca* 321a]. Text in Henry. Fr. 94b is the only really clear example of a partheneion in Pindar. Fr. 94a, also dedicated to Agasicles, is in the voice of the poet, and the other remaining fragments are too exiguous for us to make much of them.

26 See especially Calame 1.367–72.

27 The word $τείρει$ has an established association with the power of love. Calame 2.89, n.2 gives a long list of examples. He notes that most editors print $τηρεῖ$ ["takes care of, preserves"]. For Alcman the two words would have been homophones or near homophones, and a double meaning is entirely appropriate.

28 Winkler reads some of Sappho's poems as rewritings of passages in Homer — in the case of Fragment 16, the Teichoskopia, where Helen describes the Greek heroes from the wall (*Iliad* 3.121–244). See Winkler 166–78.

29 Citations from Sappho are taken from Voigt.

30 Cf. Kirkwood's comment on Sappho's use of commonplace words in Fr. 1, an appeal to Aphrodite to come to her rescue in love: "they [the words] are part of the naïveté of diction and syntax that characterizes all her poetry and that suggests simplicity, candor, and earnestness of attitude" (112).

31 There is disagreement about whether the opening line should be assigned to Sappho or to the girl. Like Burnett (292–93), I find the exaggerated protestation in line 1 precisely consonant with the girl's tone in lines 4–5 ("We've suffered such awful things!"), and not at all consistent with the unruffled Sappho who speaks later.

32 Burnett notes that "Sappho's sacred spot within a flowery border is strongly reminiscent of the antique landscape of female sexuality" (266).

[33] The dating of these poems is actually very uncertain. The *terminus ad quem* is the date of the manuscript, in the later tenth century. See Klinck, *Elegies* 20–21.

[34] *Heroides* and *Amores* cited from Showerman.

[35] In particular, he comments on the letter of Constance to Baudri: she pines at night for her absent lover like Ovid's Laodamia or Ariadne; she will write her feelings on wax, which cannot blush, as Phaedra writes what she is embarrassed to utter (*Her.* 4.10); her "Expectate, veni . . . sepe vocate, veni" echoes Penelope's "ipse veni" (*Her.* 1.2); her "seva noverca" (i.e. Mother Superior) echoes Medea's phrase (*Her.* 6.126). See *Women Writers* 84–96, esp. 88–90; also p. 15 and n.57, below.

[36] *Wulf and Eadwacer* offers some interesting parallels with *Heroides* 11, the letter of Canace to Macareus: the tyrannical guardian-figure, the illicit love, the infant carried off to the woods to be torn asunder by wild beasts — although there appears to be no incest in the Old English poem. See Klinck, *Elegies* 238.

[37] Riquer describes the Countess of Dia's *A chantar m'er de so q'ieu no volria* as a composition written in epistolary form, and comparable to the *Heroides* (2.800). Of her *Estat ai en greu cossirier* 9–12 he observes that the sentiment is reminiscent of *Amores* 2.18.9, "Implicuitque suos circum mea colla lacertos" (2.798). Blakeslee suggests that it was the influence of the *Heroides* that created the hybrid of popular *chanson de délaissée* and aristocratic *canso* in the poetry of the trobairitz (74).

[38] *Capitulare generale anni 789*, section 3; in Pertz 68.

[39] Some scholars use the word in this sense. Thus Dronke, *Medieval Lyric* 26, 91–92, 96, 106 — where he gives it much the same meaning as *Frauenlied*, or *chanson de femme* — or his Chap. 3 title, *cantigas de amigo*. Bec understands the word as "early Germanic woman's song," and mentions a *winileod* in a 10th century manuscript — apparently *Wulf and Eadwacer*, described in this way in Dronke 26. See *La lyrique française* 1.57–58. Charlemagne's capitulary is not the only early source for this word: it also appears in OHG glosses to *plebeios psalmos* in Canon 59 of the Council of Laodicea. Ehrismann argues, persuasively, that *winileodas* means "Volkslieder, im Gegensatz zu den lateinischen Lieder," and adds, "Der Inhalt kann verschiedener Art sein, episch und balladesk, gewiss auch erotisch." See Ehrismann 1.22–24, under *winileod*.

[40] For early interpetations of these poems, see Klinck, *Elegies* 47 and 177.

[41] The speaker uses the masculine *ana* ("alone") to refer to herself in line 35. This form is emphatic, and can be used instead of the feminine where a feminine identity has already been established. See A. Campbell, section 683.

[42] Citations of OE poetry refer to Krapp and Dobbie.

[43] *Bog* is sometimes understood as "branch" here. The *OE Dictionary* gives "upper arm . . . sometimes regarded as . . . [involving] a euphemism for sexual intercourse," but notes the other translation. See Cameron. Apart from its appearance here, *bog* occurs in the sense of "shoulder" as a gloss on *lacertus* and *armus*, and with specific reference to a ram, horse, ox, or beast for slaughter — but not to a human being. The use in *Wulf* fits into a pattern of animal terminology applied to the male figures in the poem. See Klinck, "Animal Imagery" 9 and *Elegies* 173.

[44] Citations are taken from Rieger, *Trobairitz*.

[45] Some scholars have understood these words to be an imposition of restraint upon the lover. Thus Kasten supposes that the speaker envisages no more than "Umarmungen und Küsse" (142). But, as Rieger points out, to read "faire tout ce que je voudrai" as "ne faire que ce que je voudrai" is twisting the text, which is more naturally interpreted as a reference to sexual fulfilment (*Trobairitz* 624–25).

[46] Paterson makes a distinction between this language, which "laments the lack of correlation between a set of values that have public sanction and . . . [Dia's] own experience" and the language of the trobairitz Castelloza, which draws on the stereotype of the passionate woman found in the alba and the *chanson de mal mariée* (i.e., in the *chansons de femme*). See Paterson 262–63.

[47] Text as in Goldin. This *chanson de croisade* or *chanson d'aventure* quotes the woman's voice in a narrative context, and is, therefore, naturally excluded by Rieger in her trobairitz collection, though she observes that it "allgemein als 'Frauenlied' charakterisiert wird" (75).

[48] Text in Schaefer. Frings discusses *Under der linde* and *A la fontana* as his first examples of *Frauenlieder*. See *Minnesinger* 3–4.

[49] See Strecker's edition for the Cambridge Songs. In this particular case I give the text as reconstructed by Dronke, *Medieval Latin* 1.274.

[50] Text in Dronke, *Medieval Latin* 2.357.

[51] Carmina Burana texts as in Hilke and Schumann.

[52] These stanzas "take their departure" from Sappho 2 [= Sappho 31 Voigt] as translated in Catullus 51, according to Dronke (*Medieval Latin* 1.275).

[53] Grundmann sees noblewomen and nuns as occupying a midway position "zwischen dem unliterarischen Laientum und dem lateinkundigen Klerus" (139).

[54] 238 Wilhelm (in translation). He includes this in his "Selections from *Songbooks* of the 1400s and later, but showing a much earlier folk element" (253).

[55] These are printed together in Luria and Hoffman 82–89.

[56] Deyermond questions Schotter's theory that lyrics of this type reflect male cynicism. Somewhat surprisingly, he finds sympathy for the girl's plight in *Ich was ein chint*, but not in *Jankyn* (143–47).

[57] Texts and translations of these letters are taken from Dronke, *Medieval Latin* 2.422–47. He discusses the letters in 1.221–29, dating them between 1056 and 1098 (1.221).

[58] Text in Hilbert; discussion in Dronke, *Medieval Latin* 1.216–20, and *Women Writers* 84–91. See also p. 8 and n.35, above.

[59] Text in Meyer; discussion in Dronke, *Medieval Latin* 1.229–30.

[60] See *Women Writers* 92 and 98. Dronke sees in Poems 17 and 31 of the Regensburg collection the imposition by women of the values of *amour courtois* on the clerics with whom they were in contact (*Medieval Latin* 1.226), but Frings and Lea question this, preferring to relate the speakers' assertiveness to a popular, rather than a courtly, tradition.

[61] Boswell, in his study of medieval homosexuality, notes that explicit inclusion of female offences in penal codes is rare (290).

[62] Text and translation from Dronke, *Medieval Latin*. The preceding piece (Dronke 2.476–77) may be another poem of "lesbian" love.

[63] See Bec, "Trobairitz" 242–43; also *Burlesque* 198, where he claims that if the poem is by a woman, it is "un contre-texte particulièrement séditieux, ou plus simplement ludique." Dronke seems not to question female authorship, but observes that "Bieris's diction and outlook are hard to distinguish from those of men's love-poetry" (*Women Writers* 98).

[64] See "Was Bieris de Romans Lesbian?" 92; also *Trobairitz* 513–17.

[65] These ceremonies are well documented in Greek literature and art. See Parke 22–23, 40–41, and Plates 11 and 12, for presentation of the peplos on the Parthenon frieze, and vase-painting of a procession led by a *kanēphoros* (basket-bearer).

[66] See Brumfield 70–103 on the Thesmophoria, and Kahil's articles on Artemis and the Arkteia. Sourvinou-Inwood notes that "the tangible expression of women's citizenship was . . . their . . . participation in cult" (112).

[67] Davidson links the copying of the Old English *Frauenlieder* and the Cambridge Songs (originating in Germany) to women's circles and a women's culture in late Anglo-Saxon England (455). And Kahil implies a parallel between Greek and later European custom when she refers to the "couvent" of Brauron (the location of the Arkteia— "L'Artémis de Brauron" 239).

[68] *Lysistrata* 638–47. Text in Henderson. She avers that she is qualified to make ethical pronouncements to all the citizens because of this distinguished record of public service.

[69] For Sparta, see Plutarch's *Lycurgus*, Books 16–18 (in Perrin); for Crete, Ephorus's account as reproduced in Strabo 10.4.21 (in Jones).

[70] "The former [the lover] having the power to contribute to wisdom and distinction, and the latter [the favourite] needing to acquire education and accomplishment," 184e. See Lamb's Loeb edition — my own translation of this passage.

[71] ὥστε καὶ τῶν παρθένων ἐρᾶν τὰς καλὰς καὶ ἀγαθὰς γυναῖκας, *Lycurgus* 18.4.

[72] In *Nam languens* and *Levis exsurgit zephirus*, quoted above, and in *Wife* 14, 29, 41, 53.

[73] Straus observes that the speaker in *Wife* "shows us how female strength goes beyond endurance and how women act by using words as weapons" (281).

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