CAPLLETRA
REVISTA INTERNACIONAL DE FILOLOGIA
ISSN 0214-8188
eISSN 2386-7159

INSTITUT INTERUNIVERSITARI DE FILOLOGIA VALENCIANA

VNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA · Universitat d'Alacant · UJI UNIVERSITAT JAUME I

Núm. 79 (Tardor 2025)
ISSN 2386-4753

# The roads to troubadour heritage in Catalan culture: Arnaut Daniel and Dante Alighieri*

## Els camins del patrimoni trobadoresc en la cultura catalana: Arnaut Daniel i Dante Alighieri

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**Data de recepció:** 19/09/2024
**Data d'acceptació:** 16/04/2025
**Data de publicació:** 23/09/2025

**Abstract**

The well-established influence of Dante and that of the troubadours on Catalan culture has given rise to an impressive body of scholarship. However, given the vast scope of both subjects and the complexity of their interaction, some aspects are yet to be analysed or reassessed. This article focuses on a case study, Arnaut Daniel's circulation and reception in Catalonia, from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century, in order to explore how both cultural strands are intertwined and the challenges of researching troubadour reception in Catalan culture. By tracing Arnaut's reception, both the importance of Dante's authority and the fluctuating nature of Arnaut's fame become apparent. Additionally, early research is shown to have taken place in an ideologically charged moment, a cultural context that must be taken into account to fully understand some choices and results that still exert influence today.

**Keywords:** Troubadour reception in Catalan culture; Dante Alighieri; Arnaut Daniel; Troubadour research in Catalonia in the early 20th century

**Resum**

La influència de Dante i dels trobadors en la cultura catalana són fenòmens ben coneguts, que han donat lloc a un conjunt extraordinari d'estudis. No obstant això, atès l'ampli abast dels dos fenòmens i la complexitat de la seva interacció, encara queden per analitzar alguns aspectes, mentre que d'altres demanen una reavaluació. Aquest article se centra en un estudi de cas, la circulació i recepció d'Arnaut Daniel a Catalunya, des de l'edat mitjana fins a principis del segle XX, per tal d'explorar com s'entrellacen ambdues vessants culturals i els reptes de la recerca de la recepció trobadoresca a la cultura catalana. Seguint la recepció d'Arnaut, resulten clares tant la importància

(*) This article is indebted to the support of the project *Cultura escrita cortés en la Corona de Aragón: materialidad, transmisión y recepción* (PID2019-109214GB-I00), the consolidated research group 2021SGR00777 *Grup de Cultura i Literatura a la Baixa Edat Mitjana*, and the distinction ICREA-Acadèmia.

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de l'autoritat de Dante com la naturalesa fluctuant de la fama d'Arnaut. A més, es fa evident que les primeres investigacions es van dut a terme en un moment de gran càrrega ideològica, un context cultural que cal tenir en compte per poder entendre algunes opcions i resultats que encara exerceixen influència avui dia.

**Paraules clau:** recepció dels trobadors a la cultura catalana; Dante Alighieri; Arnaut Daniel; estudis trobadorescos a la Catalunya de principis del segle xx.

**How to cite**: Cabré, Miriam (2025). The roads to troubadour heritage in Catalan culture: Arnaut Daniel and Dante Alighieri. *Caplletra. Revista Internacional de Filologia*, 79, 45-64. https://doi.org/10.7203/caplletra.79.31140

The importance that the reception of both the troubadours and Dante Alighieri had in medieval Catalan culture is hard to overstate. While the same could be said concerning Western culture in general, the singularity of the Catalan case is patent in several regards: its total integration in the troubadour poetic tradition, the duration of this close relationship until the end of the Middle Ages and beyond, as well as the precocity of its reception of Dante Alighieri's works.[1] These two cultural strands, on the other hand, are very much intertwined, as Dante is well known as a reader of the troubadours, whose influence is still felt today as a key factor in troubadour reception and interpretation.

Naturally, the imprint that the troubadours and Dante left in Western culture has not escaped scholarly attention: starting from the earlier stages of Romance studies, the resulting body of publications is imposing. In the Catalan sphere, Manuel Milà i Fontanals authored in 1856 the first study of Dante written in Spain, or more precisely a series of nine articles under the collective title «Dante», for the *Diario de Barcelona* (later collected in Milà i Fontanals, 1892, pp. 472-521). Significantly, Milà also published in 1861 the impressive volume *De los trovadores en España*, which single-handedly provided access to an enormous wealth of information about troubadour activity (following a series of articles appeared since 1843).[2] Thanks to the considerable bulk of studies that followed, ancient and modern, our awareness of troubadour presence in the Crown of Aragon, the adoption of their lyrics as the undisputed poetic model, and Dante's influence in medieval Catalan literature is well established.

Nonetheless, the wide scope of the subjects and the focus on certain aspects deemed essential at different points in the history of their research inevitably means that we still face a number of uncertainties about specific areas of Catalan troubadour heritage, the reception of Dante and the mutual impact of these two cultural phenomena. Furthermore, in a scholarly tradition as long, rich, and consequential as this, as research progresses and new data or new interpretations are made available, a periodic review of the data put forward by our predecessors in the study of these matters becomes imperative, since they were (as we are ourselves) a living link in the chain of reception. In that sense, we must examine previous research, particularly the earliest studies, in the historical context that gives it a specific meaning and allows us to better interpret its results. Especially so, since the subjects that concern us at certain times awoke

1 See overviews of these two subjects in M. Cabré (2013) and Badia (2022), respectively.
2 On the beginnings and scope of Milà's research, Jorba (1984, pp. 110-139).

passions and were clearly connected to the development of contemporary ideological trends that impacted research at the time and had a long-felt reverberation.[3]

This article will take such a research route with regards to a specific example: the Catalan reception of the troubadour Arnaut Daniel, a case-study that goes far beyond the scope of my preliminary outline. Yet I hope it serves to illustrate the issues at play, to convey the complexity of this research subject and point to several areas worth exploring. Today Arnaut cuts an imposing figure: he is one of the best-known troubadours beyond specialist circles, after being declared *il miglior fabbro* by Dante and inspiring Petrarch; among specialists, the massive edition by Maurizio Perugi (1978), which joined those of Ugo Angelo Canello, René Lavaud, Gianluigi Toja, Mario Eusebi, among others, witness the scholarly attention that he has attracted and the richness of his poetic output.[4] This was not always the case, nor has the trajectory of Arnaut's reception drawn a straight line: by retracing some stages in his reception I intend to illustrate the challenges of researching troubadour reception, particularly in the Crown of Aragon, the potential role of Dante's mediation, and the cultural temperature of some periods that considered the troubadours as models, cultural ancestors or objects of research. After surveying Arnaut's role in medieval Catalan culture, a task greatly eased by the introduction to Martí de Riquer (1994) —an edition that represents another indication of Arnaut's privileged status, at least from the mid-20th century onwards—, my attention will mainly focus on the period at the turn of the 20th century and the first decades that followed, when the basis of modern research was being laid in Catalonia and both Dante and the troubadours were being hailed as foundation stones of a Catalan national culture.

## 1. Did Arnaut visit the Crown of Aragon?

Arnaut Daniel is one of the 96 troubadours whose poetic activity has been linked to the Catalan courts, where, from at least the mid-12th century, troubadour poetry was appropriated as the local own poetic tradition.[5] Irenée Cluzel (1957-1958, p. 325) observed in a note that thanks to René Lavaud (1910, p. 176) «l'on sait que ce troubadour a séjourné en Aragon-Catalogne». The assumption of Arnaut's direct connection with the Crown of Aragon is based on a passage, where he praises the king of Aragon (undisputedly Alfons the Troubadour, who

3 This phenomenon is discussed in M. Cabré (2023) regarding King Jaume the Conqueror and the troubadours and for Dante in the context of 20th-century Catalan culture in Gavagnin (2005).

4 For further details and the full bibliographic references, see BEdT.

5 Mentions of Catalan issues or historical figures can be dated back to Marcabru's time (see new insights in Vera, in press) and there are extant poems by Catalan-born troubadours from the mid-12th century. Catalan courts, particularly that of King Alfons, were important centres of patronage. See also Viñolas (2018) and the project TrobEu preliminary census, represented in a digital map, which can be quantified as follows: 96 troubadours and 218 poems (a conservative estimate that needs extensive revision) are somehow connected to the Crown of Aragon. When adding the cadet branches of the royal lineage, the amount reaches 121 troubadours. 24 of those troubadours were born in the Crown of Aragon, which corroborates the integration of Catalan courts in troubadour circuits and the importance of including non-Catalan troubadours as subjects of study.

reigned 1164-1196) in «L'aur'amara fa·ls bruoills brancutz» (BEdT 29, 13), expressing his readiness to go back to visit him:

> Ara·t para, chanz e condutz
> formir al rei qui te recuelhs,
> quar Pretz, secx sai, lai es doblencx,
> e mantengutz dars e manjars:
> de joi la·t portz. Son anel mir si·l ders,
> qu'anc non estei jorn d'Araguo que·l saut
> no·i volgues ir; mas sai m'a clamat: roma!
> (M. de Riquer, 1994, vv. 36-42)

Additionally, Lavaud (1910, pp. 450-452) agreed with Casello's identification of a reference to a trip «com pelegrins lai on cor en jos Ebres» (v. 28) in «Ans que sim reston de branchas» (BEdT 29, 3), as «l'Ebre en Espagne». It is worth highlighting that the last line of the *tornada* echoes the same word in rhyme position, now emphasising that the river crosses a certain kingdom.[6]

Quite surprisingly the hypothesis that Arnaut had travelled to King Alfons's court (more clearly expressed by Cluzel than by his predecessors) has received little attention. Milà i Fontanals had not detected either of these passages nor, as I will discuss below, did he link Arnaut to the Iberian Peninsula in any way. His appraisal is mostly followed by scholars concerned with troubadour presence in this area, despite the existence of these two rather unquestionable mentions of at least an intended connection with King Alfons's entourage. In the opening pages of the *Història de la literatura catalana*, M. de Riquer (1964, pp. 48-49) briefly notes that Arnaut, «trobador tan admirat per Dante i per Petrarca», had addressed «L'aur'amara fa·ls bruoills brancutz» to King Alfons, «el qual, certament, no era la persona més adequada per a entusiasmar-se amb aquest laberint de rimes sorprenents i els seus recòndits sentits; i recorda amb enyorança el temps que passà a la cort d'Aragó». Yet the introduction to Arnaut Daniel in *Los trovadores* (M. de Riquer, 1975), which opens the scope to the whole of the troubadour tradition, does not comment on the Aragonese allusions nor, uncharacteristically, does Riquer include the relevant poems in the anthology. M. de Riquer (1975, p. 613) does, however, identify an allusion to the king of Navarre, which Alvar (1977, p. 51) corroborates while adding another to the king of León. Neither of them assumes Arnaut visited these courts. Despite this apparent reticence, Arnaut is mentioned as a troubadour somehow connected to King Alfons in most overviews of troubadour activity in the Crown of Aragon, including M. de Riquer (1959), and the hypothesis of an actual stay is reconsidered by Grifoll (2006).[7]

Adding to the exceptionality of scholarly attitude towards Arnaut's reception, Guida & Larghi (2013, pp. 59-60) do not outline a biographical course, as they attempt for many other

6 Canello (1883, pp. 10-11), following Diez (and rebutted by Lavaud 1910, p. 179 and later M. de Riquer, 1994), had seen the name Laura hidden in this song, which he identified with Arnaut's Aragonese beloved.

7 See also Aurell (1981), I. de Riquer (1996), Espadaler (2001), and M. Cabré (2013).

troubadours: they mention Arnaut's presence at the French king Phillipe Auguste III's coronation and its seeming allegiance to Richard the Lionheart, but do not include for instance the possibility of a visit to the Crown of Aragon nor mention other Iberian kings. While this peculiarity might be illuminating regarding the weight of Dante's role as an interpreter of the troubadours, an aspect prominently featured in Arnaut's entry in Guida & Larghi (2013), and a major factor in the value he has been awarded, I am certainly not advocating for an outright assurance that Arnaut's statements should be taken at face value. They should not only be reassessed in view of his trajectory, which is not easy to reconstruct, but also regarding his role within the Catalan poetic milieu during the reign of King Alfons, according to the new data that is allowing a more nuanced, richer picture.[8] Despite being aware of their pervasive presence, we still do not know enough about many particulars of troubadour circulation and influence in later Catalan culture, Arnaut's connection to the Crown of Aragon one among many noticeable gaps in our knowledge of troubadour reception still pending reassessment. In this context, it is necessary to investigate whether troubadour allusions to Catalan affairs or magnates responded to their connection with Catalan courts or were formulated from afar. Were they really sojourning in the Crown of Aragon or were they expressing the views and interests of other milieux? In the case of Arnaut and «L'aur'amara fa·ls bruoills brancutz», for instance, it is necessary to account for the dichotomy between *say*, where *pretz* is impaired, and *lay*, where the king doubles down on merit and liberality, and assess where Arnaut speaks from. One might wonder whether his statements could have some connection with Raimbaut d'Aurenga's contact with the Crown of Aragon. These are all issues that still require further research.

## 2. Arnaut as a medieval authority: Catalan followers, hearsay and songbooks

Thanks to Martí de Riquer's edition in 1994, Arnaut is one of the very few troubadours whose Catalan reception is outlined: both his transmission in Catalan songbooks and his influence in later Catalan literature. His reception by later poets is quite notable (although we cannot be sure of how impressive because we have no solid, extensive data to compare his influence with that of many other troubadours), as he is imitated and clearly presented as a model and a figure of authority.[9]

The earliest traces detected by Riquer regard two 14th-century poetic treatises: one of the quotations that illustrate the anonymous treatise in MS Ripoll 129 (known somehow inappropriately as Cançoneret de Ripoll) corresponds to Arnaut's «Lo ferm voler que·l cor m'intra», his

8 See M. de Riquer (1959), Aurell (1981) and the new insights in Grifoll (2017 and 2019). The issue of Alfons's preferences regarding poetic style, brought up by M. de Riquer (1964, p. 46), should also be reassessed.

9 Grifoll (2006) comments on several instances of Arnaut's reception, and Torró (2014) furthers the details given by Riquer. However, the name index in this 2014 tome of the *Història de la literatura catalana* devoted to 14th-15th century texts shows this imbalance: only other 9 troubadours are mentioned, generally in a single instance compared with Arnaut's 21, which could reflect lack of research rather than lack of troubadour influence.

famous sestina, which is also quoted by Berenguer d'Anoia *Mirall de trobar*, together with an unknown passage from a lost poem attributed to Arnaut. At the turn of the 15th century, the poet Andreu Febrer, author of a verse translation of Dante's *Commedia*, shows unmistakable influence of Arnaut's in several poems, with the sestina playing an important role in «Combas e valhs, puigs, muntanyes e colhs» (RAO 59.4). Isabel Grifoll (2006) as well as Lluís Cabré and Jaume Torró (2015) have added a more detailed analysis, showing more troubadour sources and a deep knowledge of Arnaut's works by Febrer. Cabré and Torró highlight, in particular, how Dante's mediation present in Febrer's troubadour poetic patterns turns him into a major innovator of the Catalan tradition. Riquer also recalls the influence of Arnaut's sestina in Jordi de Sant Jordi's «Jus lo front port vostra bella semblança» (RAO 164.10), and a reference by Gilabert de Proxida to Arnaut's *senhal*.

Beyond the echoes of poetic influence, some 15th-century poets include Arnaut in the corpus of authorities about love in several poems that insert quotations of whole passages in their fabric. Francesc de la Via resorts to the fifth strophe of «Si·m fos Amors» (BEdT 29, 17) in a parodic poem, *Procés de la Corona d'aur contra En Bertran Tudela* (RAO 192.2), where a love dispute is treated as a legal case. The second strophe of the same poem is chosen by Pere Torroella's «Tant mon voler s'es dat a 'mors» (RAO 180.28) to illustrate Arnaut's status as one of the authorities about suffering in love.[10] Additionally, Torroella mentions Arnaut as one of the «doctores» knowledgeable about love, placed between Jean de Meun and Íñigo López, during an epistolary exchange with Pedro de Urrea (Rodríguez Risquete, 2011, II, p. 292).

During the second half of the 15th century Arnaut's reputation is further corroborated by some passing references: in «A mal estrany es la pena estranya» (RAO 94.1), Ausiàs March argues «mas si·ns membram de Arnau Daniell / […] / sabrem Amor vers nós què pot mostrar» (Bohigas, 2000, p. 181),[11] while Bernat Hug Rocabertí in his *Gloria de amor* (RAO 149.2), «todo él resonante de influencias dantescas» (M. de Riquer, 1994, p. 59), affirms that Arnaut Daniel would make a worthy substitution for Ovid. His fame is also echoed by Íñigo López, Marquis of Santillana, in his programmatic *Prohemio e carta*, an important source about poetic activity in the Crown of Aragon. Among those who have composed in Dante's middle style, that is in the vernacular language, specifically in «terçio rimo e aun sonetos», Íñigo includes «Guido Janu(n)çello Boloñés, e Arnaldo Daniel Provençal. E como quier que destos yo no he visto obra alguna» (Gómez Moreno, 1990, pp. 56-57).[12] Other evocations of Arnaut that set him in a literary Catalan canon with debatable data include a speech by Felip de Malla, evoking the fame acquired by Jean de Meun among the French, Dante as Tuscan, and an Arnaut Daniel who «vivit inter nos» (Pujol, 1996, pp. 219-220). Similarly, the prologue to Ferran Valentí's translation of Cicero's *Paradoxa* evokes Dante, Boccaccio and Cecco d'Ascoli, as well as «perquè no oblit los de nostra nació catalana, guarda Arnau Daniel quant és estat subtil e ple de sentència en son rim e prosa vulgar» (Morató, 1959, p. 38). After the medieval period, Arnaut is still

10 See Rodríguez Risquete (2011, I, pp. 140, 362-363), for a textual analysis that accounts for Torroella's alleged mistakes in citing Arnaut.

11 See more details of Arnaut's presence in the poetry of Ausiàs March in Grifoll (1999 and 2006).

12 See L. Cabré (2008) for Santillana's sources for this passage.

mentioned in Catalan literature and later in scholarship, often associated with Catalonia, with a common language, and sometimes even described as Catalan, following the trend illustrated by Felip de Malla and Ferran Valentí. This leads Valsalobre (2002, p. 335) to state that «Arnaut Daniel quedarà més o menys fixat com l'iniciador de la tradició literària catalana antiga, "llemosina", essent-ne Vicent Garcia el darrer representant. Això és així, entre altres, als *Orígenes de la lengua española* de Gregori Maians».[13]

Riquer's survey leaves no doubt that the sestina was one of the keys to Arnaut's model role in later literature. Paolo Di Luca (2022), on the other hand, explores the use of certain elements, such as *mots-rima*, in medieval Catalan poetry, and observes a «progressivo avvicinamento dei poeti catalani all'invenzione di Arnaut Daniel, attraverso l'adozione, prima isolata, poi combinata, di tecniche come la rima irrelata, la rima cara, la parola-rima, la permutazione rimica». While the weight of Dante's approval looms heavily in Arnaut's reception, not all mentions of the sestina, such as those in early poetic treatises, can be attributed to his or Petrarch's appropriation of this poetic form. It is noticeable, in that sense, that Arnaut's reception spreads along the whole medieval chronological arch, showing a range of approaches and of actual awareness of Arnaut's corpus, from Febrer's seemingly intimate familiarity to Torroella's ability to quote him accurately in the mid-15th C, which contrast with some passing mentions, or even more with Santillana's claimed lack of first-hand knowledge, or Valentí's observation about Arnaut's prose, stemming from Dante's *Purgatorio*. The whole of these instances confirm Arnaut's status as an authority, belonging to a prestigious literary canon, while a substantial number of them are heavily influenced by Dante's endorsement.

Manuscript circulation is necessarily fundamental to account for the reception of Arnaut Daniel, and of the troubadours in general, at least for the later medieval period. However, this is an aspect of troubadour culture where our knowledge is clearly insufficient. Before the 15th century, only a handful of Catalan manuscript witnesses featuring troubadours are extant: two songbooks and two fragments, one only recently found. For the 15th century, at least four more songbooks include troubadours in their poetic selection.[14] The manuscript circulation of Arnaut's works is quite substantial within Catalan parameters, but more problematic than assumed by Riquer.[15] His corpus is extant in three songbooks but its presence in the earliest is not due to a Catalan hand: it was added by an Italian scribe when MS V (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Str. App. 11, dated late 13th century - early 14th century) arrived in Italy in the mid-14th century (Zamuner, 2003). Seven poems are copied in MS Sg (Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, 146, mid-14th century) including his famous sestina and «Si·m fos amors». However, despite the direct quotations from the latter in 15th-century poems, MS VeAg (Barcelona,

13 It is a period in the reception of Arnaut's and the troubadours that still needs substantial research.

14 The numbers omit manuscripts primarily devoted to other genres or those transmitting lyrics that have not been included in the troubadour corpus. Massó (1913-1914) offered a pioneering census of manuscripts. See M. Cabré (2011) for an overview of Catalan lyric manuscript tradition, with bibliographic references, and M. Cabré & Martí (2023) about the new witness.

15 Di Luca (2022) also briefly traces the Catalan manuscript transcription of the sestina, as do Grifoll (2006) and L. Cabré (2023).

Biblioteca de Catalunya, 7-8, early 15th century) only transcribes the sestina. None of the later songbooks transmitting the works of Catalan poets, which have scant troubadour presence, includes Arnaut in their selection. It is worth remembering that there is a seemingly substantial anthology of troubadours in the late 15th-century lost songbook from Girona, studied by Beltran (2006), which however does not mention Arnaut either.

Reviewing our knowledge of Arnaut's Catalan manuscript transmission provides the gist of what information is missing about troubadour circulation, which gives rise to some blatant doubts. While his works were clearly known to some Catalan poets well into the mid-15th century, they are not present on any extant manuscript after the first decades of the century, MS VeAg being the last manuscript attestation, and only for the sestina.[16] In what form and to what degree did Arnaut's poems circulate beyond the early 15th century if troubadours are mostly absent from the selection on extant songbooks? This question conflates with another clearly under-researched factor, that is Dante's influence in troubadour reception by medieval Catalan poets, as opposed to their knowledge of a tradition they rightly considered their own. For Arnaut, as seen in Íñigo López's *Prohemio e carta*, Dante's mediation seems a key factor, but in many other cases a direct knowledge of Arnaut's poetry is also evident, and on occasion both factors might be at play. In the absence of an overall study, we might think that Arnaut's Catalan fortune is likely to be more closely linked to Dante than that of other troubadours, but then, probably, we should ask similar questions about each troubadour without preconceptions.

## 3. Dante's «special relationship» and troubadour veneration

I would to like complement this survey of Arnaut Daniel's fortune in medieval Catalan culture with a few examples of Arnaut's reception in the early 20th century, which will necessarily offer an impressionistic vision because they illustrate a field yet to be explored. It is, however, a highly important period for the study of Arnaut's reception, and by extension that of the troubadours', because it has had a significative impact within and beyond academic circles.[17] Within a climate of constructing a national culture in different European domains, the early 20th century saw the consolidation of an academic tradition of historical and philological studies, which are still at the basis of current research. It is also a moment when awareness of Dante's influence in medieval Catalan culture, among other factors, made him be adopted and venerated as a prestigious ancestor, and the focus of intense scholarly attention, on par with the troubadours: if anything, the difficulty in this case has been to discern scholarly interpretation from ideological enthusiasm.

Dante's reception of troubadour lyrics is a boundless scholarly subject that also has, in spite of the quantity and quality of the scholarship, some notable blind spots. For instance, regarding the extent of his exposure to the wider troubadour tradition, and the influence troubadours

16 It is worth noting, however, that Alberni (2011, p. 137) shows the first line of the sestina takes a decasyllabic form similar to contemporary Catalan poetry, for instance Andreu Febrer's.

17 Regarding the troubadours, see an illustrative example in analysis in M. Cabré (2023).

had in his poetic practice rather than in his theoretical writings.[18] Catalan scholarship, however, has followed quite different routes so that, to my knowledge, Dante's role in troubadour reception within the Catalan domain has been studied only in very specific instances. Conversely, Dante's reception in Catalan literature has been well noticed, as Catalan authors were influenced by Dante from the last decades of the 14th century, a reception that continued during the 15th century.[19] Arnaut's case, although maybe atypical, draws light to the role of Dante in troubadour reception in Catalan culture and particularly to the way scholarly trends have led us to our present starting point.

Half a century after Milà's ground-breaking article on Dante, Catalonia was enthusiastically commemorating the 6th centenary of Dante's death in 1921. Ramon d'Alòs (1921-1926, p. 370) commented on the extraordinary scope of the events in his account for the chronicle of the *Anuari de l'Institut d'Estudis Catalans*:

> Catalunya prengué part en la universal celebració del VIè Centenari dantesc amb inusitada solemnitat, tants foren els actes que s'hi organitzaren i tantes les publicacions que commemoraren aquell esdeveniment. Del nostre temps, no recordem cap altre centenari que hagi tingut a casa nostra una celebració més intensa.

He added a complimentary comment on some publications that resulted from the celebration, which he directly connects to Milà's pioneering work:

> Hi abunda, és clar, l'article periodístic de circumstàncies, el treball improvisat; també hi trobariem veritables monstruositats i escrits sectaris relatius al Dant, cosa ben freqüent quan es tracta de les grans figures del pensament humà, les quals han ocupat innombrables denigradors i seguidors tan nocius com aquells; no manquen, però, treballs ben apreciables que vénen a reanusar la tradició de Milà i Fontanals, primer dantista de la renaixença catalana. La nostra missió en aquest punt és la de passar revista únicament a allò que estigui relacionat directament amb la història literària de Catalunya. (Alòs, 1921-1926, p. 370)

Along with the reflection of the extraordinary interest on Dante in connection to Catalan culture, which spurred this range of activities, it is worth highlighting Alòs's comment on certain biased positions, a clear sign of clashing interpretations of Dante as a figure, the mention of the abundance of press articles touching on this subject, and the way he explicitly connects Dante to the cultural «rebirthing» of Catalan, in naming Milà as «primer dantista de la Renaixença catalana». It is not an isolated case. Even before the publication of Milà's article on Dante in 1856 and his volume on the troubadours in 1861, the poet and historian Joaquim Rubió i Ors (1841, v-vi), another pillar of the *renaixença*, already hailed them as glorious figures at the origins of Catalan literature, albeit with very imprecise data. The troubadours, in particular, to whom Dante and Petrarch are rightly deemed to be indebted, feature prominently:

18 This subject is central to Wells (2109).

19 For discussion of the most notable examples and some cases awaiting research, Badia (2022). See also L. Cabré (2022).

> ¿No tenim una col·lecció de crónicas tan abundant y variada com la puga possehir qualsevol altre poble, y una galeria immensa de trobadors, pares de la poesia vulgar moderna y als quals son deutors de moltas de sas bellesas lo enamorat Petrarca y hasta lo terrible Dante, mes rica que cap altre nació del mon?

Even though Rubió does not mention Arnaut in his speech, it is clear that his reception at this time takes place in a context of elevating the troubadours to a fundamental element in the origins of a national culture, and the (re)discovery of the poems and certain details of some revered authors about whom, for centuries, very little had been known —and still was at this stage— other than perhaps their name. It is also a moment when the veneration of Dante's figure is being consolidated, as the celebration in Catalonia of the centenary of his death will attest to a few decades later. The Catalan appropriation of, and at some points infatuation with, Dante is masterfully analysed by Gabriella Gavagnin (2005, p. 206):

> Per una banda, el procés de creació d'una historiografia literària nacional impulsa una primera i important tasca de recerca per a una història del dantisme català, amb la finalitat de mostrar la seva especificitat en l'àmbit ibèric segons una perspectiva coherent amb l'ideal classicista. Per l'altra, les aspiracions nacionalistes advertides i propagades amb intensitat creixent (en sintonia amb el clima polític europeu dels anys vint) afavorien la consagració del Dante patriota, en el doble vessant de creador de la llengua literària italiana i de model d'integritat i fermesa política. Finalment, va ser el component religiós el que va contribuir de manera decisiva a despertar una mena de culte dantesc.

Because of their abundance, noted by Alòs, and their interest in such matters, contemporary press articles are privileged witnesses to the extraordinary range of activities during the 1921 celebration. They are also an informative guide to map the reception and interpretation of Arnaut Daniel from Milà's times to 1935 (and later), which does not evolve in a single direction. They show the conflicting interpretations that Alòs observed, while confirming the blatant appropriations that Gavagnin analyses. The article signed X. in *D'Ací d'Allà*, 8 (1921, p. 796) is just an example of such a total appropriation of Dante as a Catalan glory:

> La celebració del Sisè Centenari ha tingut tan vasta i colpidora eficiència, perquè Dant ens el sentim com a poeta plenament nostre, i ens adscrivim a la seva glòria com a glòria dels nostres capdavanters del segle d'or.

## 4. Catalan glory and the Catalan-Provençal connection

When, as mentioned earlier, in 1841 Joaquim Rubió contributed to enthrone the troubadours as Catalan prestigious ancestors, he did not cite Arnaut among the troubadours evoked in conjunction with Catalan medieval poets (as an indistinct group). Not even Dante's mention as owing a cultural debt to the troubadours brings Arnaut's name into a canon consisting of Guilhem IX, Ramon Vidal de Besalú, Guillem de Cabestany, Bertran de Born, together with Richard the Lionheart, several Aragonese kings, and (as mentioned) a list of medieval Catalan poets, culminating with «Ausias March, en fi, lo Petrarca Valenciá».

Rubió i Ors was not alone in highlighting the Catalan and the troubadour tradition were one and the same, or in describing Catalan and Provence in terms of a common culture and a kindred spirit. The intellectual and politician Víctor Balaguer leant very much in that direction in his speeches and writings, using Arnaut's example more than once, and was also sensible to Arnaut's prestigious association with Dante: «en son *Tractat d'Elocuencia* vulgar […] citant com á modelos de *cansós* las d'Arnau Daniel, Folquet de Marsella y Aymeric de Peguilhá» (Balaguer, 1878, p. 75). Convinced of Arnaut's importance, he defines him as a *caposcuola*: «Por lo demás, no hay otra cosa que decir de Rimbaldo de Orange sino que perteneció á la escuela de Arnaldo Daniel» (Balaguer, 1895, p. 254).

Two press columns illustrate the range of political, or at least ideological, issues that, some decades later, could still bring Arnaut to be mentioned in terms of a Catalan-Provençal brotherhood. By underlining the association with Dante, Josep Aladern (1903, p. 74) stresses the Catalan connection with troubadour culture, in order to rebut some hypothesis that considered Castilian as a linguistic ancestor of Catalan:

> El Dant mateix, segons consigna Marc Monnier en son estudi *De Dante á Luther*, dubtà seriament si escriure sa *Commedia* en toscá o llemosi; el llemosi era la llengua literaria de l'época, el toscá no s'havia cultivat encara, peró era la llengua qu'havia mamat de sa mare y ab molt bon sentit se decidí per ella. No obstant, al escriure'l *Purgatori*, al colocar en ell al trovador Arnaut Daniel, el fa parlar en sa propia llengua, podentnos enorgullir aixis de comptar al gran florentí entre'ls cultivadors de la nostra parla.

Also intending to prove the Catalan connection to Provençal culture, in this case to support the Allied cause during the First World War, Romà Jori (1915, p. 6) invokes Arnaut Daniel and Peire Vidal, validated by Petrarch's *Triomfi* (and continues his argument with an elaborate rhetorical connection of General Joffre's name with the hero of the Occitan narrative *Jaufre*):

> Y así, consagrando el triunfo de Arnaldo Daniel y de Pedro Vidal, del señor de Auvernia, amante de la Condesa de Urgell, por la que compuso tan bellas canciones, hace imperecedera Petrarca esa unión de dos pueblos que afianzaran después en nuestros días con sus cantos Mistral y Maragall, los dos poetas pulcros, benditas almas inmaculadas, y que robustecerá aun, por una singular selección, el nombre bien catalán, de rancio abolengo que ostenta el caudillo que dirige la gran guerra, la mayor que han visto los siglos y que contarán los hombres.

## 5. Two pillars of troubadour research: Manuel Milà and the Cançoner Gil

However, these quotations are only a small, not wholly representative part of the story. Despite Arnaut's apparent prestige in Balaguer's writings, he seems to be perpetuating a notion of a Catalan Arnaut divulged by late medieval and early modern authors that suited his ideological arguments, but was not supported by the facts gathered by Milà, as we have seen. Jaume

Massó i Torrents's review of Balaguer's troubadour writings in the first volume of *Repertori de la literatura catalana* (1932, p. 108) deems him uninformed in a series of points and dependant on indiscriminate, antiquated sources, sharply pointing «mai no hem entès com, disset anys després de la publicació d'un llibre tan remarcable com el d'en Milà, Víctor Balaguer va atrevir-se a donar al públic la seva obra».[20]

The importance of Milà's *De los trovadores en España* (1861) hardly needs stressing:[21] it represented an undisputed advance in the knowledge of troubadour culture and helped increase an academic interest in the troubadours based on more specific data, which then permeated other fields. As mentioned, Milà allocates very little importance to Arnaut in his study: only in passing he is referred to as one of the troubadours cited by Dante, and also quoted by medieval Catalan authors (1861, pp. 215, 516), specifically Rocabertí. Milà is more sceptical about March's direct knowledge of Arnaut's. Despite these two factors, he is in no way deemed a major influence in Catalan (or Spanish) literature, nor does he seem to meet Milà's literary standards:

> Los dos Arnaldos, el de Maruelh y Daniel, poetizaron en las dos últimas décadas del siglo, llamado el primero *il men famoso* y el segundo *gran maestro d'amor* por Petrarca: la posteridad da la preferencia al primero por hallar sus poesías tan sentidas, como artificiosas son las que de Daniel se han conservado, si bien es cierto que debe haberse perdido alguna composición considerable del último (Milà, 1861, p. 41)

In spite of his tepid assessment, Milà's correspondence reveals that he was involved in the final stages of Canello's 1883 edition.[22] In a letter dated 3 December 1880 Canello contacts Milà after reading in his description of MS Sg (Milà, 1876) that some poems by Arnaut Daniel were copied in this manuscript witness, unknow to him, and requests his aid to obtain a transcription for his forthcoming edition. From the second letter, dated 28 December 1880, we learn that Milà had promised Canello a transcription of the sestina copied in MS VeAg (which the Italian scholar never received according to what he says in his edition) and had acted unsuccessfully as a mediator so that Canello could have access to MS Sg. Also known as Cançoner Gil o de Saragossa, as mentioned above, MS Sg is the only other Catalan witness to Arnaut's poetry. This handsome codex was at the time in the library of Pablo Gil, a collector and a professor in the University of Zaragoza, who was very reluctant to let researchers consult it. Canello affirms:

> Dietro il suo consiglio ho inviato le prove delia mia edizione d'A. Daniel a D. Pablo Gil, e spero che non avrò picchiato invano.
>
> Gradirò poi, se si potrà avere, la collazione ch'Ella mi fa sperare per *Lo ferm voler*.

20 Molas (1985, p. 15) also comments briefly on the contrast between Balaguer's and Milà's methodology.

21 See M. de Riquer (1985) for an assessment of Milà's troubadour studies.

22 Nicolau (1922-1994, II, pp. 241-242, 251): letters 394 and 403 contain the two only mentions of Arnaut in Milà's published correspondence.

> Le difficoltà delia mia impresa sono tante, che è naturale mi ajuti ciascuno que può. (Nicolau, 1922-1994, II, p. 251)

In 1908, after Gil's death, the songbook was acquired by the Biblioteca de Catalunya and became accessible to scholars, including many international specialists in Romance studies who had previously shown an interest. Jaume Massó, one of the factotums in the acquisition, and one of the first scholars to study it and publish his results, also contributed to publicise the new treasure of the Biblioteca de Catalunya in the press.[23] In 1910, several journals reproduce an article where he describes the importance of the songbook and the lengthy list of scholars that have shown their interest (Cabré, 2021). This new manuscript witness gave further impulse to the interest in the troubadours, and in particular in Cerverí de Girona, who opens the extant manuscript with a massive corpus, and was clearly identified as a Catalan-born troubadour. From some papers in the 1r Congrés d'història de la Corona d'Aragó (including Massó's) to the publications and public talks that follow in subsequent years, the research on troubadour poetry and in particular on the troubadours deemed Catalan visibly increases. In this new context, for instance, when Josep M. López Picó (1911, p. 754) complains about Catalan culture having been left out of an article about Spanish literature, he invokes the troubadours among Catalan assets with a very different canon than that of Rubió's in 1841: «y los *trovadors antics*, Guillem de Cavestany, Uc de Mataplana, Vidal de Besalú y el delicioso Cerverí de Girona».

In the period 1835-1938, more than 90 press articles mention Cerverí, while Arnaut, whose poems are also present in the Cançoner Gil, appears in less than 30.[24] Even in this climate of renewed interest in the troubadours, when Arnaut is mentioned in the press it mostly takes the form of a passing reference to his inclusion in Alfons Serra-Baldó (1934), a celebrated troubadour anthology. Following Milà's steps, it is worth noting that Serra-Baldó does not propose Arnaut had a direct connection to the Crown of Aragon nor does he cite Lavaud's hypothesis, but he includes «L'aur'amara fa·ls bruoills brancutz», that is the poem addressed to King Alfons the Troubadour, together with the sestina. None of the many reviews of Serra-Baldó's volume comments on the criteria that lead to Arnaut's inclusion, but they often acknowledge Milà's study as a model. This is the case of Lluís Santamaria (1934), who also remarks on the recent work by Jaume Massó and Lluís Nicolau d'Olwer stimulated by the notoriety of the Cançoner Gil:

> Ací, a Catalunya, són ben rars els treballs dedicats als trobadors provençals, tot i que sovint es parla de relacions culturals amb les terres de la vella *Provincia* romana. Llevat del gran estudi de Milà i Fontanals *Los trovadores en España* i de la constància exemplar d'en Massó i Torrents, cap altra contribució no podem assenyalar si no és l'excel·lent i concisa exposició de Nicolau d'Olwer «Els trobadors catalans» (apareguda dins els *Paisatges de la nostra historia*). Darrerament, l'Editorial Barcino ha volgut donar [...] un bell volum dedicat als trobadors.

23 See Fontanals and Losantos (2007) for an account of the acquisition.

24 Results yielded by search in ARCA. For an analysis on the articles concerning Cerverí, M. Cabré (2021).

It might be worth observing that the study Santamaria mentions by Lluís Nicolau d'Olwer (1929) cites Arnaut Daniel only as «el preferit dels Trecentistes italians».

The review by Agustí Esclasans (1934) confirms Milà's status as *caposcuola* and the lack of emphasis on Arnaut's presence in the anthology, while highlighting an Occitan-Catalan cultural communion:

> Heus ací un llibre ben fet, petit miracle d'harmonia i elegància, que fa desfilar davant els nostres ulls, com una galeria d'estàtues màgicament policromades, les figures i les obres dels grans trobadors provençals: Guillem de Poitiers, Marcabrú, Jofre Rudel, Bernat de Ventadorn, Bertran de Born, Guillem de Berguedà, Arnau Daniel, Beatriu de Dia, Guerau de Bornell, Guillem de Cabestany, Pere Vidal, Rimbaut de Vaqueires, Folquet de Marsella, Pere Cardinal, Cerverí de Girona i Guerau Riquier. De Manuel Milà i Fontanals en els seus *Trobadores* [*sic*] *en España* ençà no haviem llegit mai una compilació tan completa de l'obra i els fragments de poesies dels trobadors. Per elles revivim les intimes relacions de la nostra Catalunya medieval amb les terres occitàniques.

## 6. The grudging acceptance of Dante's troubadour

Together with the reviews of Serra-Baldó's anthology, the other major factor in Arnaut's mention in newspaper articles is clearly his association with Dante, and «els Trecentistes italians», as it has already cropped up. Press articles focusing on Dante are not hard to come by in the cultural climate evoked above, particularly in the period around the celebration of his centenary, but even in earlier years Arnaut is largely cited as part of Dante's background, for instance, in J. M. Capdevila (1920), a review of Joaquim Folguera's new poetic volume:

> La vida del poeta florentí era agitada de passions politiques; volia omplir-se de filosofia, de teologia i de ciéncia: i els seus poetes, el seu Guido, el seu Arnau Daniel, el seu Virgili, i «la gloria della lingua», eren una passió més, més suau i tranquila, vora les altres.

It is clearly noticeable that, despite's Dante's endorsement, Arnaut's poetry does not appear to be highly valued. Even when commended in connection to Dante, Arnaut's works are not extensively discussed nor they seem to have been well known and carefully read. When the Catalan press praises Arnaut as one of «Dante's troubadours» it echo above all the veneration for Dante that represented a first-rate cultural factor, but is also reflecting the literary tastes at the time. In a long survey of troubadour lyrics during the year when the press's interest in Dante was at its apex, Maria d'Abadal (1929, p. 300) makes it explicit that Dante's choice is perplexing to the early 20th-century literary judgment:

> És curiós, per això, que En Dant prefereixi l'*Arnau Daniel* a Guerau de Bornell, quan diu explícitament que l'Arnau és el millor trobador, mentre ara, en els temps actuals, preferim molt més En Bornell.

Catalans were not alone in their distaste for Arnaut Daniel or their baffled reaction to Dante's endorsement. The Catalan press is also witness to some international reactions, such as the talk Karl Vossler (1929, p. 84) gave at the Ateneu Barcelonès, where he lamented that «el preciosista Arnaut Daniel ha tingut més èxit internacional que la genialitat de Bernard de Vertadorn». We are not far from the opinion quite clearly phrased by Milà in *De los trovadores en España*, as we have seen above. Less judgmental, but following the general gist, Arnaut is sparsely defined as «sobtil e escur» along with the usual association with Dante by Jean Mouzat (1927), who at the time was Joseph Anglade's student:

> Bertran de Born, gran senhor que dis enèrgicament la gei de la guerra feudala; en Peiregord, chantan los borgés coma Arnaut de Marueilh e lo sobtil e escur Arnaut Daniel, l'analista amat pel Dante; chanta també lo paubre chavalier Giraut de Bornelh, lo moralista crestià poeta de la drechura.

In this sense, Catalan scholars and intellectuals were perfectly attuned to the assessments by contemporary authors. This is abundantly clear in the brief survey of Arnaut's appraisal by scholars between 1881 and 1956, offered by Pietro G. Beltrami (2004). He highlights that Arnaut's current appreciation «è espressione di un gusto relativamente recente, che deve probabilmente molto ai fasti novecenteschi della poesia formale». In that sense he recalls Gaston Paris's (1881, pp. 478-479) strong-worded opinion about the «maître du *trobar clus*», a genre «qui nous paraît rebutant et puéril». Beltrami's survey gives ample proof that despite being the recipient of Dante's admiration, literary critics and scholars in this period (Ezra Pound excepted) and in some cases well until the 1950s deplored Dante's taste in troubadours and defined Arnaut as puerile, hermetic and unpleasant. Catalan intellectuals heartily agreed with the aesthetic appreciation of their European counterparts despite living in the Catalan climate of devotion to Dante. They would probably have subscribed to Gaston Paris's opinion:

> [Dante] le déclare bien supérieur à Guiraut de Borneil, que lui préfère la vaine opinion du vulgaire. Nous sommes aujourd'hui de l'avis du vulgaire, et le jugement de Dante a surpris tous les critiques modernes.

## 7. Closing the circle

As observed at the beginning of this article, in his *Història de la literatura catalana* and his edition of Arnaut's poetry, Martí de Riquer offers the most complete outline of troubadour presence and influence in Catalan literature. However, it is in *Los trovadores* that he adds some interesting comments about an intellectual context that has impacted Arnaut's reception and his study. He describes the effects of an aesthetic judgement I just showed to be prevalent in the early 20th century, and which he does not share:

> La educación y el gusto literario de los primeros romanistas no podían aceptar el estilo de Arnaut Daniel, incomprensible para los formados en la preceptiva neoclásica y en el espíritu francés tradicional. Por esta razón es muy de admirar el noble esfuerzo del provenzalista italiano U. A. Canello, que en 1883 publicó una edición

> crítica de las poesías de Arnaut Daniel y ejerció sobre ellas una seria labor crítica y de interpretación digna de todo encomio. El camino quedó así desbrozado, y por él René Lavaud emprendió, en 1910, una nueva edición de las obras del trovador, llena de conocimientos, de sensatez, de ingenio y de buen gusto. Lavaud salió a la defensa de la acusación de oscuridad que, como sobre Góngora, pesaba sobre Arnaut Daniel desde que sus contemporáneos empezaron a opinar sobre su poesía. Es admirable esta actitud de Lavaud, pues años después de su gran esfuerzo todavía ilustres maestros del provenzalismo enjuiciaban a Arnaut Daniel peyorativamente y se esforzaban en averiguar por qué extrañas razones este trovador provenzal fue tan admirado por Dante y Petrarca, sin percatarse de que la explicación es muy sencilla: Dante y Petrarca entendían en poesía, y Arnaut Daniel es un buen poeta. Las tres poesías de Arnaut Daniel que publicó y tradujo André Berry en su *Florilege des troubadours* y su breve nota preliminar consiguieron, en 1930, interesar por Arnaut Daniel a un selecto público de buenos gustadores de poesía. Finalmente, la gran edición crítica que Gianluigi Toja publicó en 1960 ha cubierto una necesidad urgente de la filología provenzal. (M. de Riquer, 1975, pp. 614-615)

Riquer attributes to others an international turning of the tide but, as a young scholar with new ideas, he was also part of the road I have been tracing to understand Arnaut's reception in Catalan culture.[25] For instance, using and updating Milà's work, Riquer mentioned Arnaut in several press articles intending to make the Catalan public aware of their cultural heritage.[26] In Riquer (1935), for example, he describes Arnaut's role in an article about Rocabertí's *Glòria d'amor*: He participates in a new appreciation of Arnaut's role in Catalan culture and of his poetic value, the product of a new aesthetic sensitivity that would eventually open the door to his becoming a poetic model worth rehearsing in the 20th century. The same role that Riquer attributes to Berry, in Catalonia might have been played by Serra-Baldó's anthology. This closes the circle of a route through Arnaut's reception that is interesting in all its stages, and which would be worth retracing in more detail, and worth applying to the whole of the Catalan reception of the troubadours.

Other young readers would follow, but Arnaut Daniel's reception by contemporary poets is still difficult to ascertain, since other than the brief coda to the survey in M. de Riquer (1994) and the analysis of the fortune of the sestina in Lluís Cabré (2023), there is no data systematically collected. For Brossa and Gil de Biedma, Cabré traces two very different roads to reach the sestina. In all other cases, from the 1930s onwards, Dante's influence in the mid-20th-century Catalan readers of the troubadours is another unknown quantity: would they know Arnaut as a poet belonging to a Catalan medieval poetic tradition or more likely as *il miglior fabbro*? Or did the road further bifurcate?

25 One instance of the early turning of this tide by European intellectuals, might be found in Di Girolamo (2024, p. 82): he recalls Louis Aragon's approval of Arnaut's *art fermée* in a 1941 article for the Resistance revue *Fontaine*, as a sort of coded language that suited poetry under Nazi occupation. See also pp. 129-139 for an overview of troubadour reception.

26 See an annotated list of such articles in Badia, Cabré & Coll-Vinent (2014).

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