**From Gynocentrism to Misandry: The Spread of Gynocentric Culture, Courtly Love and the Secular Troubadour Cathar Legacy from Aquitaine to Germany!**

When talking about the Spread of Gynocentric Culture from Aquitaine to Germany, the two groups with whom the Cathars were most often associated and that we should always bear in mind in this context are the Troubadours, Cathars by themselves, as well as the Knights Templar, both of whom had not only a very strong presence in the Languedoc during the 13th century but also highly influential. The Troubadours were wandering poets writing in Occitan, France, who ﬂourished between the 11th and 13th centuries. In Germany, they had fellow travelers in the shape of the Minnesingers. The Troubadours’ main themes were chivalry and courtly love, in which the qualities of a particular lady would be praised by the poet. Sometimes these were literal love songs, often addressed to a woman who was unattainable, while other Troubadour poems and songs were in fact allegories of spiritual development and related to the Divine and Sacred Feminine. Among the most celebrated Troubadours were Peter Vidal, William Figueira and Jaufré Rudel and many others. In the Languedoc, they enjoyed the protection of the same families who protected the Cathars. William de Durfort was an example of such a Troubadour and there were many others. The concept of the Divine Feminine suggests another link between the two movements: Perfects, upon being consoled, were given the title of Theotokos, which means "God Bearer", an assignation usually associated with the Virgin Mary while it is later also found in German theology through the the works of Heinrich Cornellius Agrippa. On the other hand, The Knights Templar were the most powerful military religious order of their day, and were major landowners in the Languedoc. Furthermore, the Minnesinger, composed of aristocratic German poet musicians who flourished from the 12th to the 14th century, were heavily inspired in first place by the French troubadours while later as we will see immediately forming distinct branch of national German courtly love poetry. Thus, the German Minnesang must not be considered a strict copy of troubadour poetry, nor, was it solely dependent upon French origins, for the actual sources seem many and varied. German Minnesang poetry began with Friedrich von Husen (Hausen) and it reached its peak with Walther von der Vogelweide (c.1170 c.1230). In performance, the Minnesinger always accompanied his own songs, and expected no compensation for his services. On the other hand, the "fahrenden Saenger" (wandering minstrel), who formed a link between the nobles and the people, expected to be paid for his efforts. The "Gaukler" or "die Fahrenden" were supported by the courts in a way that adopted both the Mosarabic legacy of the Iberian-peninsula as well as the French heritage of Aquitaine. They also made known the people's songs to the nobles as well as conveying the songs of the Church and Minnesinger to the people. If to use a German phrase, based on the Mosarabic heritage and as a result of Jewish Muslim poetry, the minne-music was a fusion of secular and ecclesiastical elements and the language a mixture of German and Latin in the same way as vernacular languages mixed with Arabic and Hebrew in the Iberian Peninsula. To "die Fahrenden" must also go the credit for preserving the Volkslied (people's song), which found its way into numerous collections published in the first half of the sixteenth century.

Moreover, less than the Templar influence, especially the Troubadour phenomenon and more so their gynocentric lyrics of courtly love poetry and art enjoyed great popularity not only in Occitan and Germany but practically in most parts of Europe. The Provencal influence was such that "even the Latin lyrics show traces of Provencal influence, both in form and spirit. Soon, poets in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Northern France, England as well as Germany resorted to Provencal as their poetic medium. This is important and requires further examination as one of the main roots of the German Courtly love poetry was the path via Italy and Austria as we will see whereas the first works in German were written as we will see actually in Austria not in the mainland of Germany itself. Thus Austrian gynocentrism becomes a crucial link both in terms of establishing German as well as European gynocentrism. In Germany as we will elaborate immediately, the Minnesinger (“love singers”) movement became extremely influential and especially during the golden age of the Hohenstaufen emperors. The minnesingers for the better part of a century raised the statues of noble women in Germany, as can be seen in the words of Walther von der Vogelweide (or “of the Bird-Meadow”) who claimed that, “German Ladies fairs as God’s angels; anyone who defames them lies in his teeth”. They inspired an aristocracy that shaped an ethos more cultured than anything that Germany had known and wouldn't have known again until the introduction of Schiller and Goethe during the 18th and 19th centuries. The House of Aquitaine played a significant role in this development and the distribution of the Provencal culture. In 1137, Eleanor d' Aquitaine, granddaughter of the first troubadour and herself a patroness of poets, married Louis VII of France. Consequently, countless troubadours visited her French court and helped enrich the taste for courtly poetry. Eleanor's two daughters, Marie countess of Champagne and Alix countess of Blois, inherited their mother's literary taste and, likewise, patronized poets. Paradoxically enough, far from sealing the doom of courtly love practices and poetry, the Albigenesian Crusade, which devastated Provence and constituted a heavy blow to the Provencal troubadours, helped spread their manner of poetry to the invaders. The seeds of the new poetry did not die since Provencal, as noted before, had already become a continental language for lyric poetry used by Spaniards, Portuguese, Italian, and Norman poets of the new school of poetry. The wave of troubadour poetry reached Germany, where Minnesingers composed lyrics in imitation of the Provencal troubadours. Similarly, trovadores issued in the Iberian Peninsula and they had the Provencal troubadours as models upon which to draw. In Northern France during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Provencal verse patterns were widely imitated--both in spirit and detail--by the trouveres as the poems of poets such as Guide Couey, Gace Brule, Thibaut IV, Canon de Bethune, and Gautier d' Epinal illustrate.

Furthermore, Chretien de Troyes absorbed and elaborated the troubadour ideas on love in his poetry; so did the composers of the Roman de la Rose and of the other Arthurian romances. In Sicily, where traces of Arabic poetry were still remembered, poets wrote courtly lyrics in the canzone, in imitation of the Provencal troubadours. In Northern Italy, as Ezra Pound puts it, "The poetic art of Provence paved the way for the poetic art of Tuscany; and to this Dante bears sufficient witness in the De Vulgari Eloquio. In fact, Dante reserves praise for Provencal poets in his Divine Comedy. In like manner, the stil dulce nuova poets as well as Petrarch and his imitators acknowledge the mastery and influence of the Provencal troubadours. However, Italian poetry seems to have owed rom the Arabic spring as well. W. J. Courthope corrunents:

***"The evidence pointing to the Arab origin of Italian rhyme architecture is more positive and direct. If Italian poems were called Sicilian, it was doubtless because the examples of the art were derived from Sicily, in other words from the Iu·cdJs. And this presumption is rendered stronger by the names of th1; various kinds of poetry, canzon~, sonno!\_, bal:l\_''.ld, which Dc;\_nte defines, and which all of them join with thee mc;trica.l compoo;ition an accompaniment of singing, music, dancing, or all three combined"***

Thus, the art of the Arabs--whether directly or through the troubadours--became the fountain of European literature. The rapidity with which courtly love’s literary forms spread in the late twelfth century reflects this smooth conformity. The development of the German Minnesang was as rapid and as popular as the development of northern French trouvère love songs. Frederick Barbarossa’s marriage to Beatrice of Burgundy in 1157 may have brought the German imperial court into contact with Occitan love songs for the first time. One of the earliest German Minnesänger, Friedrich von Hausen, was associated with Frederick Barbarossa’s court, traveled to Italy with the future emperor Henry VI in 1186–88, and died on crusade with Frederick Barbarossa in 1190. Friedrich von Hausen’s songs drew on those of the troubadours Bernart de Ventadorn and Folc of Marseilles and the trouvères Gace Brulé and Conon de Béthune.108 Hartmann von Aue, also a knight of the imperial court, penned an early Arthurian tale in 1186. Frederick Barbarossa staged an elaborate dubbing ceremony for his sons in 1184 at Mainz. A tournament planned for the occasion was called off after a violent storm. The event nonetheless gave imperial sanction to the increasingly elaborate rituals of chivalry. As noted before, courtly love conventions were current in urban Jewish communities as well by the end of this period (see "The Making of Romantic Love - William. M. Reddy, pages, 205-206).

Anyway, back to the troubadours and the code of chivalry, the conception of knighthood was of Germanic origin; it was a natural development of the social conditions of the Merovingian and Carlovingian periods. Chivalry, however, first took shape on Latin soil, namely, in Provence, and it developed most rapidly in Northern France. The Crusades brought the " Ritter " or knight to perfection. They gave him that ideal calling for which the early conflicts with the Saracens had paved the way; they raised him from a purely practical existence to a life inspired by higher aims: he became the champion of an unworldly idea. The Crusades revived those old Germanic ideals of loyalty and faithfulness, of manly bearing as well as the exalted status for womanhood, which under the European routine were first balanced and then under the Gynocentric culture of Southern France, in Aquitaine and Languedoc, taken to extremity and spread as we have learned all over Europe and the world. Hence, from the middle of the 12th century onwards a new element, that of chivalry, made its appearance in the lyric; and in the train of chivalry came the literary influence and example of Provence. The cultivation of the lyric now passed over into the hands of the "Minnesingers," an aristocratic class belonging mainly to the ranks of the lower nobility. The fact that the beginnings of this poetry are found in Austria are extremely important. First it might imply that- it sprang up in comparative freedom from foreign influences, but it is more likely that the German Minnesang was in a bi directional way influenced both directly as we will later see down in this discussion by the Provencal lyric as well as the German ties to Eleanor of Aquitaine as well as the second path that we've discussed in our research, first to through the spread to Italy and then over Austria to Germany. We can undoubtedly assume that Austria came into touch with the south of France by way of Italy at an early stage. At the same time, no form of Middle High German literature, not even the national " Volksepos," retained, as we shall see, its Germanic characteristics so completely as the Minnesang. One of the oldest of the German Minnesingers was an Austrian nobleman, a Herr von Kiirenberg, under whose name a number of verses have been preserved, similar to those which are familiar to us from the Nibelungenlied. In simple phrases, often in the direct narrative form of the epic, the " Kiirenberger " calls up lyric scenes and situations of a certain pristine beauty. A lady stands upon her tower and sighs for her lover; she compares him, like Kriemhild in the Nibelungenlied, to a falcon which flies away to a foreign land; the falcon returns with the silk threads and the golden ornaments on his plumage, and the poem closes with the line:

**"got sende si zesamene, die gerne geliebe wellen sin" (Middle Age German)**

**"Gott sende sie zusammen, die gern in Liebe vereint sein mochten.'' (Modern German)**

**"God send those together who with pleasure want to be united" (English Translation)**

The poetry of another Austrian singer, Dietmar von Aist, shows the primitive Minnesang in the process of development. Many of Dietmar's verses are still on the naive level of the Kiirenberger's; others, again, suggest the conventional Minnesang of a later date. Dietmar knows no keener delight than in the passing of winter and the return of the birds and flowers; here, as in the Kiirenberger's poetry, a lady expresses yearning for her absent lover, the latter appearing once more under the guise of a falcon. One poem preserved under Dietmar's name is especially noteworthy as being the oldest example in the German Minnesang of the " Tagelied," the Provencal "alba." The parting of two lovers at daybreak was one of the favourite themes of the early Romance lyric, but so simple are Dietmar's lines that it is hard to believe he was obliged to go to Provencal models for the thought underlying them. A bird on the linden awakens the lovers; the knight must go:

**"Diu frouwe begunde weinen.**

**du rltest hinne und list mich einen.**

**wenne wilt du wider her?**

**owe, du fuerest mine froide dar.** '

**Die Frau begann zu weinen. '**

**Du reitest hin und laesst mich allein.**

**Wann willst du wiederkehren)?**

**O wenn, du fuehrst meine**

**Freude fort (mit dir).'"**

**"The woman began to cry.**

**You ride there and leave me alone.**

**When will you return back?**

**Oh, when you will lead my joy with you?"**

To this early period of the Minnesang belong also two Bavarian singers, the Burggraf von Regensburg and Meinloh von Sevelingen. The few verses by these poets which have been preserved are written in the half-ballad style of the Kiirenberger and Dietmar von Aist. Occasionally, however, Meinloh's verses show the influence of the Minnedienst of a later age. Not only the beginnings of the Minnesang, but also those of a closely allied form of poetry, the " Spruch," may be traced back to the last quarter of the twelfth century. The Spruch in its oldest form was a one-verse poem of a satiric or didactic nature, and in German literature, at least, belongs to the more primitive literary forms. In the oldest collections of the Minnesang are preserved a number of such Sprueche by a Spielmann called Herger; other Sprueche, again, mention as their author "Der Spervogel"; in any case, the older poetry of this class lay exclusively in the hands of the Spielleute. Characteristic of these verses is the pessimism that pervades them; the singer is fond of looking back regretfully upon his own past, and seeing how much might have been otherwise: there is pessimism, too, in the tone in which he sings the praises and virtues of domestic life. These verses form the beginning of a class of poetry which accompanies the Minnesang throughout its Bluetezeit. As knighthood decayed and the middle class rose in importance, the Spruchdichtung made corresponding advances in popular favour, until in the period of the Reformation it became one of the most characteristic forms of literary expression, and a favorite weapon of offence and defense.

The German Minnesang that is the German form of the Courtly Love poetry is based essentially upon a social convention; it gives literary expression to what the German poets called " Frauendienst," (Service of Ladies) a more or less formal worship of Womanhood. This concept was also worked out specifically as one of the most misandrist works even in the pre stage of the proto-feminist era started by another German namely Heinrich Cornellius Agrippa and that was written by the German Knight Ulrich. It fundamentally shows that the German troubadours and minnesingers were the actual place were the older extreme Gynocentrism of the Cathar French Troubadours was blown into a full-fledged misandry. This development can be seen in the fact that the theme of the Minnesingers' poetry is " minne," a word which expresses a much more comprehensive idea than the modern "Liebe" (=Love); to the knight of the 12th and 13th centuries " minne " stood for an entire code of social conventions which regulated the relations of the courtly lover to his lady. There is thus, at the outset, a marked difference in the interpretation of the word " love " on the part of the Provencal Troubadours and the German Minnesingers. To the Romance poets, love was a purely personal affair, and illicit attachments were usually given the preference. Based on the early of the Germanic thought, the German mind, on the other hand, spiritualized the sentiment; the Minnesinger's love for his mistress widened into an all-embracing subjugation for womanhood; "minne" was an ideal attachment, a chivalric devotion to a woman, closely akin to " triuwe," which, as we have seen, was the highest virtue which the German knight could lay at the feet of his liege lord. Absurd as the Minnedienst eventually became, it was in its prime one of the main outlets for the spiritual aspiration of the middle ages. Moreover, to the difference between the Roman and Germanic conceptions of love is mainly due the fact that the German medieval lyric was the most national of all forms of Middle High German poetry. Romance influence notwithstanding, the German Minnesang remained always in the best sense German. In a later development those notion stood as at the basis of the German gynocentrism in the third Reich and the various dynamics that led to its establishment,

Anyway, Ulrich's Frauendienst (Service of Ladies) is the best example for those dynamics. Written in German about 1250, the knight Ulrich von Liechtenstein describes mis-education, delusion, and suffering.  Poets and wise men, the teachers of that time, urged Ulrich to subordinate himself to a woman.  Ulrich recalled:

**This I heard the wise men say:
none can be happy, none can stay
contented in this world but he
who loves and with such loyalty
a noble woman that he’d die
if it would save her from a sigh.
For thus all men have loved who gain
the honor others can’t obtain.**

Men’s lives are thus valued lower than a woman’s sigh.  Only a very brave man would dare to reject that honor.  Ulrich sought it:

**“I’ll give my body, all my mind
and life itself to womankind
and serve them all the best I can.
And when I grow to be a man
I’ll always be their loyal thane:
though I succeed or serve in vain
I’ll not despair and never part
from them,” thus spoke my childish heart.
…
Whoever spoke of women’s praise
I followed, just to hear each phrase,
for it would make my heart so light
and fill me with true delight.
I heard from many a learned tongue
their excellence and honor sung;
they praised one here and praised one there,
they praised the ladies everywhere.**

This is the sort of literature that gave rise to Hitler.  If children were to read Theophrastus’s Golden Book rather than Dr. Theophrastus Seuss’s One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, they would recognize that praise of ladies is a funny thing.  Or at least they would develop a sense of humor lacking today. Ulrich pledged servitude to a lady.  He engaged his aunt to plead his love suit.  The lady replied to the aunt:

**That he excels I’ll take your word
(although it’s more than I have heard)
in every virtue, every skill,
yet for a woman it must still
prevent a close relationship
to see his most unsightly lip.
You must forgive my saying so:
it isn’t pretty, as you know.**

The lady rejected Ulrich for his cleft lip.  Oblivious to the lady’s cruelty, he underwent a painful operation to have his cleft lip joined.  Critical post-structuralists and ananavelist scholars have determined that the lady’s rejection of Ulrich on the grounds of his cleft lip figures and problematizes the prevalence of male genital mutilation in medieval European Christian culture.  More to the point, Ulrich served a heartless lady. Ulrich enacted his loving devotion to his lady in various ridiculous ways.  In one joust, he damaged a finger.  After his lady expressed doubt about the seriousness of his wound, he had his finger cut off.  He sent the cut-off finger to his lady along with a poem praising her.  She responded to his messenger with a message of scorn:

**Go back and tell him my regret;
he’d serve the ladies better yet,
were it not that his hand is shy
a finger. Tell him too that I
shall always keep the finger near,
buried in my dresser here,
that I shall see it every day,
and that I mean just what I say.**

**Tell him from me now, courtly youth:
I’ll keep the finger — not, in truth,
because my heart at last is moved
so that his prospects are improved
by a single hair. Make sure he hears
this: should he serve a thousand years,
the service I would always scorn.
By my constancy I’ve sworn.**

Ulrich was delighted.  He thought that his lady continually viewing his amputated appendage was a sign that she loved him.  But women preoccupied with amputation of men’s appendages do not truly love men. Ulrich sought to please his lady by pretending to be a woman. He dressed himself as a woman, called himself Lady Venus, and traveled around Europe participating in dangerous jousting tournaments.  He was wounded in the chest and took at least one lance blow to the head.  While Ulrich was in a bathtub bathing a wound, an admirer showered him in rose petals. Bodily wounds to men aren’t socially understood to bleed real blood. One day, Ulrich’s lady summoned him to appear before her in secret.  She told him to appear in rags like a leper.  Ulrich raced to his lady to fulfill her summons.  He donned rags and ate with lepers outside his lady’s castle.  His lady forced him to sleep outside the castle overnight in the rough, in the rain.  The next morning he was instructed to wait until the evening.  That evening, as instructed, he laid in hiding outside the castle.  The castle warden making rounds took a long piss on him.  After more misadventures, he was finally pulled up with a bedsheet onto the castle balcony.  Ulrich then declared to his lady:

**Lady, grant me grace.
…
Lady, you’re my chief delight,
may I be favored in your sight,
may your compassion take my part.
Consider the longing of my heart
which constant love for you inspired.
Consider that I have not desired
a thing more beautiful than you,
a lovelier I never knew.**

**You’re dearer far than all that I
have ever seen. If I could lie
with you tonight then I’d possess
all that I’ve dreamed of happiness.
My life will gain by your assent
a lofty spirit and content
more and more until it ends.
It’s you on whom my joy depends.**

That’s a courtly speech by a man drenched in piss.  Ulrich obviously hadn’t learned from Ovid.  His lady refused to lie with him. Exploiting Ulrich’s inferiority in guile, his lady got rid of him with deceptive hand-holding.  She explained that she would do his will if he would re-enact his entrance and give her the opportunity to greet him as a lover.  That meant for him to get on the bedsheet and be lowered down slightly, and then brought up again.  Ulrich rightly was suspicious that she would let him down and never pull him up again.   She offered to hold his hand as a good-faith guarantee.  Ulrich agreed:

**Though worried, I then took my seat
inside the tightly knotted sheet.
They let me down a little ways
to where they were supposed to raise
me up. My sweet continued slyly,
“God knows, I never thought so highly
of any noble in the land
as of the knight that holds my hand.**

**“My friend,” she spoke, “be welcome so.
We both are freed from care and woe
and I can now invite you in.”
While speaking thus, she raised my chin
and said, “Dear one, give me a kiss.”
I was so overjoyed with this
I let her hand go free and I
quite soon had cause to grieve thereby.**

They dropped Ulrich down and pulled the sheet back up over the wall.  Ulrich was in deep despair.  If not for his comrade’s intervention, he would have drowned himself in a dark lake. Ulrich von Liechtenstein’s Service of Ladies is far more than a playful game.  Like the thirteenth-century Old French nouvelle The Three Knights and the Chainse, Service of Ladies represents the social construction of male disposability.  Men will not achieve gender equality until men reject a life of service to ladies.

As the centuries moved on, and the epic developed into the novel, the Minnesang into the modern lyric, and the feeling for nature awakened, national peculiarities became more emphasised. The relation, for instance, in which French prose fiction stands to German is only in a higher degree that in which Crestien de Troyes stood to Wolfram von Eschenbach. The German novelist of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries deals with feelings and thoughts rather than with actions and events; This shows that the more the German culture moved forward from the proto-feminist era in became more and more gynocentric in adopting not only female point of views but in fact also in adopting female characteristic in art as well as a personal skill; his aim, to which allelse is sacrificed, is to follow out, in all its details, the growth of an individual; and his pen is at the service of subjective and personal ideas which he enforces with an insistence that often outsteps the bounds of esthetic licence. It is interesting to note that from the very early beginning and on the very threshold of the German Minnesang poetesses not only influenced male minnesinger, not only that there were female minstrels but in fact they themselves wrote love letter or notes. So, it underlies the above characteristic and dynamics. Here we find an example of a Latin love-letter from a lady to a monk, half-a-dozen lines of simple charm which might well be analogous to the Carlovingian winileod. I will translate the love letter from the old German to modern English:

**" Du bist min, ih bin din : You are mine; I am yours**

**des solt du gewis sin. In this you should be sure**

**du bist beslozzen You are engraved (literally closed)**

**in mlnem herzen : In my heart**

**verlorn ist daz sliizzelin : Lost is the Key**

**du muost immer drinne stn." You must always stay inside**

And here is the letter in modern German (Hoch Deutsch)

**"Du bist mein, ich bin dein.**

**Dessen sollst du gewiss sein.**

**Du bist eingeschlossen in meinem Herzen;**

**verloren ist das Schluesselein ;**

**du must immer darinnen sein"**

The interesting thing here is also the inversion of the forbidden types of love. While based on the Muslim Sufi heritage especially that of Rumi for the minnesinger and the troubadour infidelity bears a powerful metaphor for the divine love in the female version the divine love is achieved through the betrayal of the divine and complete via the mundane and secular. In fact, those are the two sides that form the one and the same coin.

Moreover, one of the earliest German Minnesänger, Friedrich von Hausen, was associated with Frederick Barbarossa’s court, traveled to Italy with the future emperor Henry VI in 1186–88, and died on crusade with Frederick Barbarossa in 1190. Friedrich von Hausen’s songs drew on those of the troubadours Bernart de Ventadorn and Folc of Marseilles and the trouvères Gace Brulé and Conon de Béthune.108 Hartmann von Aue, also a knight of the imperial court, penned an early Arthurian tale in 1186. Frederick Barbarossa staged an elaborate dubbing ceremony for his sons in 1184 at Mainz. A tournament planned for the occasion was called off after a violent storm. The event nonetheless gave imperial sanction to the increasingly elaborate rituals of chivalry. As noted before, courtly love conventions were current in urban Jewish communities as well by the end of this period. The kind of love that William IX wrote about and the genre of song he employed in praising the beloved—usually referred to as a canso— enjoyed a growing popularity, first in southern France, spreading from there to Iberia, Italy, and most of western and central Europe. The earliest songwriters in the new style can be linked to his court or the court of his son, William X (ruled 1126–37) and his wife Aénor (Maubergeonne’s daughter): Eble II, lord of Ventadorn; Marcabru and Cercamon; Jaufre Rudel, lord of Blaye (active 1130–50).4 Bernart de Ventadorn (ca. 1150–ca. 1195) grew up at Eble’s court; his mother was, according to later legend, a serf who worked as a cook in Eble’s castle. These songwriters all wrote in a language of southern France sometimes called Provençal but more recently referred to as Occitan. In that language, a male songwriter was called a troubadour—literally a “finder,” someone who found the words and melody of a song. Women songwriters were known by the female version of the same word, trobairitz. When Eleanor of Aquitaine, William IX’s granddaughter, went north to marry the French king Louis VII (ruled 1131–80) in 1137, at the age of fifteen, she may have brought troubadours in her train; some scholars would locate Bernart de Ventadorn and Marcabru at her court. This is most evident development in the German troubadour history of the Minnesingers. Furthermore, Eleanor of Aquitaine (and subsequently the troubadour roots through her great-grandfather William IX) can be also traced to the formation of the Minnesinger tradition: as early as 1147, it is recorded that King Louis VII of France and his wife, Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine assembled an army near Metz and travelled down to Regensburg, in Germany, en route to participate in the Second Crusade. Among these participants was one of the early troubadours, Jaufre Rudel, 146 whose exposure in Germany would influence the Minnesinger traditions development (The Making of Romantic Love, Page 108)

The Minnesang tradition underwent various stages of development: its early stages recall minimal romance roots, and begin around the time of Rudel’s Crusade travel to Germany, indicating the first instance of the travelling “Minnesang” (not yet a fully developed tradition) who were few in number, lacking the support of noble patrons. The second stage of Minnesingers had an increased emphasis on romanticism, particularly the troubadour “courtly love” idealization, thus establishing the court Minnesang. While the classic troubadours seemed to have reached their full potential with regard to new poetic themes and possibilities, Walther von der Vogelweide is credited as developing a third stage of Minnesinger, characterized by his compositions that went beyond the standard conventions associated with troubadour roots. Further, Vogelweide is acknowledged as being one of the first Minnesingers whose art was his sole profession, and came from ordinary lineage, whereas prior Minnesingers were noted as being part of nobility;148 His position in society and tolerant perception was a likely influence in choosing the content for his works. His “new” form of Minnesinger is linked to the type of expression he developed in his compositions:

***He created a new type of poetic diction, in which the formal concepts of courtly love were expressed in a language that was stripped of its traditional formality. By this means he achieved a unique degree of immediacy by making possible an identification of poetic images with items of common experience. The figures of his poems are no longer the formal abstractions “lady” and “knight,” but assume individual, human shape as girls and lovers. Moreover, the figures as well as their actions are part of the poetic environment, which is itself active.***

His works therefore must have resonated with the general public through the use of colloquial images and descriptions, as opposed to works composed solely for royal courts. It is evident that Jaufre Rudel’s piece, Lanquan li jorn son long en Mai, inspired Walther von der Vogelweide to create "Allererst lebe ich mir werde", which is often categorized as a crusade song. Also referred to as Palästinalied, the piece affirms the troubadour traditions expansion beyond the limits of France. Written during the timeframe of the Fifth Crusade (between 1217-21), the piece demonstrates a similar voice regarding crusading efforts as compared to the songs of the troubadours, while retaining and seamlessly blending the unique voice that Vogelweide developed:

**Life’s true worth at last beginneth,**

**Now my sinful eyes behold**

**The holy land, the earth that winneth**

**Fame for glories manifold. I have won my lifelong prayer:**

**I am in the country where God in human shape did fare.**

**Lands, the greatest, goodliest, fairest,**

**Many such mine eyes have seen;**

**O’er them all the crown thou bearest.**

**Think what wonders here have been! From a Maid a babe did spring,**

**O’er the angel hosts a king;**

**Was not that a wondrous thing?**

**Here He was baptized with water,**

**That men might be pure as He.**

**Here He let them sell Him later,**

**That we thralls might so be free.**

**We had else been lost, I wis.**

**Spear, Cross, thorn, your praise it is! Heathens,**

**woe! ye rage at this.**

**Down to hell the Son descended**

**From the grave wherein he lay.**

**Him the Father still attended**

**And the Ghost, whom no man may E’er disjoin;**

**the three are one: Shaft so smooth and straight there’s none,**

**As to Abraham it was shown.**

**When He quelled the fiend and ended**

**Such a fight as king ne’er fought,**

**Here to earth He reascended.**

**Sorrow to the Jews it brought;**

**Through their guard He broke amain;**

**Living was He seen again,**

**Whom their hands had pierced and slain.**

**Here a day of dreadful summons**

**He appointed for this land.**

**Orphan’s wrongs and widowed woman’s**

**Shall be righted by His hand.**

**Then the poor man may declare**

**All the violence he must bear.**

**Penance here brings blessing there!**

**That this land they do inherit**

**Christians, Jews, and heathens claim.**

**God adjudge it where the merit Lieth,**

**in His threefold name!**

**All the world strives here, we see;**

**Yet we hold the rightful plea: God will grant it rightfully**

Written in 1224, the poem recounts opinions surrounding the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II, forming an army for a crusade after Pope Innocent III, once again, ignited action in 1215 for the new Northern Crusades (right before the Pope's death in 1216). In Germany, there was minimal support for a new crusade, however Vogelweide’s piece does not express discontent, considering that it was written when the crusade was well underway, and showing promising success. The piece itself is famous for being a chanson de croisade, and it is the only piece of Vogelweide’s that has a surviving melodic counterpart.1

In addition, it is widely accepted that Eleanor of Aquitaine supported certain authors of early Arthurian romances. Thus numerous trobairitz and troubadours, and soon northern trouvères (men and women who wrote love songs in Old French rather than Occitan) and Minnesänger (those who wrote love songs in Middle High German), as well as authors of lengthy narrative romances, passed through the door William IX had opened, and they furnished the space he discovered with carefully crafted conventions and doctrines. Like him, they distinguished their love, which they came to call in Occitan fin’amors (refi ned love), from concupiscence. Like him, they idealized their beloveds. For them, as for William IX, spiritually transforming love inhabited that space of silence within aristocratic speech where de facto possession could be quietly enjoyed but not openly claimed. Like him, they loved without reference to marital status. In their view, when a lady and her knight came together in fin’amors, adultery was no sin (The Making of Romantic Love, pages 108-109). The intense relations between the Minne singers (cantors of the idyllic love) of Germany, France, and Occitania is anything else but surprising. For example, under the pseudonym of Sembelis, Bertran de Born sang to Princess Laina de Plantagenet, sister of Richard the Lionheart. He remained in contact with his domina even after she became Duchess of Saxony, if you recognize as sufficient proof the Provencalpoems that he sent her, which have since been found in Germany. Some have even come to the conclusion that Frederick Barbarossa, sovereign of the Kingdom of Aries from 1178, composed poems in Provencal on the banks of the Verdon River. Whatever the case, multiple links certainly united the chivalrous and loving poetry of the North with the South, and they influenced each other. We will never know if the "true legend "came to Wolfram through the person of Guyot or from others reading from a manuscript of his Parsifal, which may allow us to forgive Wolfram's confusion of "Provins" for "Provenza."33 Along with the love poems already mentioned, "conjectural poems" appeared. It was the custom that a patron would entrust a troubadour with the composition of poetry that praised his grandeur or expressed in poetic form thanks for his hospitality and protection. For this reason, it is not strange that Guyot de Provins would have celebrated in Parsifal (lines that have not survived) his Maecenas, Raimundo of Toulouse, his daughter Adelaide de Carcassonne, her granddaughter Esclarmonde de Foix, and the King of Aragon, the cousin of Roger Taillefer (Adelaide's husband) And that is the way it happened King Alfonso II of Aragon and Catalonia, better known as Alfonso "The Chaste," is Wolfram's "Castis" who was promised to Herzeloyde. To Wolfram, Herzeloyde was the mother of Parsifal; to Guyot de Provins [Wolfram's source], Herzeloyde is the Viscountess Adelaide de Carcassonne, the domina of Alfonso the Chaste. The son of Adelaide is Trencavel, a name that Wolfram translated as "piercethrough- the-heart," the name of Parsifal. Raimon Roger, the Trencavel, served as Wolfram and Guyot's model for Parsifal. As we will see, this deduction does not imply any violence. The "Court of Love" of the Viscountess of Carcassonne was renowned throughout Occitania. From Barcelona to Florence and Paris there was no lady more celebrated than she. Her court was the center of poetry, heroism, and chivalrous courtesy, and at the same time, as the troubadour Arnaut de Mareulh said, "the most chaste and full of grace, because the scepter was in Adelaide's hands." (Crusade against the Grail, Otto Rahn))

Moreover, while we now know that the development of the world of the Minne in Germany closely followed its evolution in Occitan, as we will see through those various stages it merged and developed into a full-fledged misandry not only on the secular but especially on the religious level. Here we should remember that according to the Mosaic dogma of Genesis, which was also adopted from Kabbalistic Jewish concepts by Henrich Cornellius Agrippa Yahweh who was himself at the transcendental level androgynous emanated those energies down to the realm of the mundane world. Moreover, through the various stages of the process the Jewish mystical tradition of the Kaballah attempts to tackle the personal God (also described in the bible) only as the emanation of the transcendental God which is called the Ein Sof meaning the un-endles and in a way that reminds a lot of the Hindu and Brahmanic religions. It depicts the process through something that is similar to the tree of life where god is described and seen in human terms through the process of emanation and where his head is part of the transcendental ein sof and the feet is in this material world. In this emanation most elements are female such as Binah, intelligence; Chochma, wisdom; Daat, understanding; while Keter, the crown, the transcendent god, has no gender, it is Androgynous. Another aspect speaks of the female body of "God". Historically, the Knesset (not the Israeli parliament) but the highest religious entity is considered female, the Shabath (I mentioned above) is female (queen and bride) and even the Torah (the Jewish Bible – the old testament) is considered female and a bride too. The most holy concepts are therefore almost all considered female and pure. In the Kabbalah this is not only abstract but is understood in sexual terms. And this explains us not only how Agrippa came to his conclusion but how both traditions beginning with Eleanor, Ulrich's Frauendienst and others fit together.

So, for example in the Shabath ceremony according to the Qabbalah it is not only understood as the reunion of the divine groom (God) and the Bride (Shabath) but also the earthly husband and wife reunite in Shabath (the idea of one flesh but in androgynous term also into one "soul" or mind). It is the legal duty of the husband to provide and sexually satisfy the wife at this day if she wishes so but it is not a female legal obligation. In Judaism the woman is seen as inherently morally and emotionally pure and superior while the man is kind of evil and predator. According to this idea the woman gives the husband sex just so that he does not become more evil and predator. The wife itself doesn't need it so much and if so it is for a good reason while the man wants the sex for a bad one (which does not differ a lot from the Christian image of men and an attitude that is found a lot in even in modern society). Moreover, because the woman is seen as more of purer and superior she is not required to do a lot of obligation a man is required. The marriage is actually a place to tame and re-educate the man, a kind of a camp to work on himself. This is the basic misandric idea of man in ALL religions, poly and monotheistic, namely him serving as PPP – provider, protector, procreation – which basically makes him a slave. This creation myth was not received very well in the Cathar teachings of Occitan which went to adopt a more misandrist type of the creation myth,

According to Occitan creation story which followed the heretic and Gnostic creation myth the first man – a female – was in a way a consequence of this cosmic struggle between good and evil; the being thus created in a female form was meant to bring solace into the lives of sentient beings, using her love in order to appease the aggression planted in the world by the destructive forces. In retaliation, the destructive force collected body parts from the most ferocious of animals, and fashioned out of them a being outwardly resembling the woman, but endowed with the male demonic qualities of its maker and compelled by its sex drive. Here we can already see most of the attributes of modern feminist as well as general misandry. The demonic depiction of the obsessive male sexuality, the description of men as ugly animals, the allegedly inherent evil and violence of men and many more, Moreover, the union of the first woman who according to this misandrist creation myth is raped and also “descends” to lust which brings another two crucial elements of the modern misandrist and feminist environment namely the fallacy of rape culture, the feminist ideas of all men as being nothing but rapists as well as pure nature of the woman as an asexual being who does this only to tame the demonic male. Further in this creation myth the first man whose savage breast is soothed by the woman’s influence produced modern men, in whom the two elements (divine and demonic) gradually became so thoroughly commingled that they lost their bearings in the world of value. Spiritual clear-sightedness was supposed to be restored by Priest Bogomil, who preached the idea that people could be saved by rejecting the allegedly objectification of women which another yet powerful analogy to modern day feminism. This is the way of thefemale divine love to be first of all reborn in women’s hearts and to restore the world to original harmony and save it from men. In the last analogy is also the conceptual basis for the chivalric ideal of a male subjugation to a woman as a part of ending suffering. So, in the Occitan creation myth Eve was not equal to Adam rather, she is his domina, because, like their ancestors in the Iberians and Celts, the Occitan Cathars saw in womankind something prophetic, superior, pre-emonent and divine. The Jewish Eve although more dominant was still saw in a more balance gynocentric way as a more dominant factor yet not completely superior.

To sum it up: As we can see Troubadour & Minnesinger poetry reflects both religious but mainly secular Cathar doctrine. The first troubadours William IX, Marcabru, and Jaufre Rudel, cultivated a distinct style of lyricism for their compositions, eventually influencing later regional variations of the Troubadour tradition, as exemplified by the emergence of the Trouvères in Northern France, and the Minnesingers in Germany. The territorial range of these composers gave them access to a 79 breadth of social attitudes that allowed them to comprehensively record the history of the Crusades. One would assume that the secular and personal sentiments conveyed in their work would vary depending on place of origin, and regional religious and political convictions; however, the compositions demonstrate the opposite—more often than not, the Troubadours, Trouvères, and Minnesingers, shared similar views and provided common historical accounts. The troubadour’s freedom from external influence did not make them free of bias, as their Western European perspective is reflected in their lack of sympathy for the Saracens and Islamic forces, “true” opponents of the Cross. However, their fluid social status and romantic ideals meant that the values of crusading forces, such as of the Holy Roman Empire or of the Papacy, were not always shared. At times, certain troubadours fervently opposed the violent actions they observed, most evident during the Albigensian Crusade. The religious persecution of the Cathars challenged the very existence of the troubadour tradition; with the dispossession of their beneficiaries, the troubadours were noted as facing an extinctive period. Further, the main force behind troubadour-ism, fin d’amour, was criticized due to its similarities to Cathar beliefs. Since the art form was appreciated by many, the essence of the troubadour tradition was preserved in the various evolutionary forms that followed. Further, the oppression of the Cathars demonstrates that acts of religious “righteousness” were not as valid as religious leaders had suggested. Their unique social standing, and independence from dogmatic constraints, provided a platform for a more liberal capacity to speak, making it possible to demonstrate secular opinions that would have been considered controversial. Their historic commentary grants the modern reader a greater understanding of the social and religious conditions surrounding the Crusades, rather than merely the glorified instances recorded by those with inherent biases, such as those of clergymen and nobility. 80 During a period plagued by physical and spiritual suffering, this analysis of vernacular troubadour compositions is significant not only because it provides uncommon historical accounts, but also reveals a dismal mood felt throughout society during a period of intercultural and interfaith transgressions. It is my hope that the reader has gained a sense of medieval social reality, while also understanding instances of religious hypocrisy in crusade campaigns launched with intent to eradicate Christians deemed to be “heretics,” rather than defending Christendom from actual religious opponents, as well as the antithetical nature of crusade barbarism. Further, it is my hope that through the numerous compositions provided, the reader gains a greater insight and understanding of late medieval religious attitudes and convictions as they pertained to the Crusades. Ultimately, the troubadours were successful in capturing the tensions underlying the crusades, and their unique vantage point allows for an understanding of the Crusades as not solely being religious in nature, but as socio-political wars affecting all spheres of life, from the physical, to the metaphysical.

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