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## Old Occitan *far col e cais*

The interpretation of the Old Occitan expression *far col e cais* has had a troubled history in the past century and a half. It got off to a bad start among Romance philologists when Raynouard (1836) twice listed the only instance of it that he knew, first under *cais* attributing it to Raimbaut de Vaqueiras and defining it as 'faire accueil et caresse' and then under *col*, this time assigning it, correctly, to Peire de Bussignac and modifying its meaning slightly to 'faire accolade et caresse'<sup>1</sup>. In a study of the language in *Blandin de Cornouailles*, Alart (1874), who may have been partially misled by Raynouard's spelling of *col* with final *h*, proposed that the word meant 'accueil' rather than 'cou' and that *cais* was a substantivized adverb meaning 'manières, apparences, semblants'<sup>2</sup>. No one, however, took Alart's creative misrepresentation of *col e cais* seriously<sup>3</sup>. Meanwhile, Levy (1894), in his entry for *col*, added a second example to the one cited by Raynouard (this one really by Raimbaut de Vaqueiras) and offered the following explanation of the gesture: «umarmen (eigentlich umhalsen und auf die Backe küssen)»<sup>4</sup>. In an 1897 edition of Folquet de Marseille's 155,24, Zingarelli, who was otherwise very sparing in his notes, called attention to *far col e cais*, which he translated as 'abbracciare'<sup>5</sup>. In a review of Zingarelli's monograph, Jeanroy (1899) chided him for wasting one of his few notes on *far col e cais*, which, he claimed, is not a rare expression. In order to drive home his point, Jeanroy made reference to two new

<sup>1</sup> François Just-Marie Raynouard, *Lexique roman ou dictionnaire de la langue des troubadours* (Paris: 1836) II: 287 and 436.

<sup>2</sup> *Revue des langues romanes* 5 (1874): 296.

<sup>3</sup> Jeanroy, *Romania* 42 (1913) 80 n. 1, explains that the confusion began with Raynouard, who, relying as usual on the spelling of the C-scribe, tried initially to connect *colh* with 'accueil'. He later realized his mistake, but Alart chose to follow the original «piste fâcheuse».

<sup>4</sup> Emil Levy, *Provenzalisches Supplement-Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: 1894) I: 277.

<sup>5</sup> *Atti della Reale Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti* 19 (Naples: 1897-98) 38 n. 23.

examples of it, one from Raimon de Miraval and another from Uc de Saint Circ<sup>6</sup>.

If Zingarelli's interpretation of *far col e cais* did not create much of a stir –after all, he was writing primarily about Dante– Stronski's (1910), in the first complete edition of Folquet de Marseille, did. In a review appearing in 1912, Lewent took the editor to task on this point, arguing that the meaning in this instance must be just the opposite of 'kiss', and advanced that notion that it is «ein abweisendes, feindliches Gebahren», a way of showing that one is angry. In support of his interpretation, Lewent introduced the example from Bertran Carbonel to the growing list of instances of *far col e cais*. He further alluded to the *col e cais* of Bernart de Venzac, which, he admitted, he did not understand<sup>7</sup>.

In 1913, the same year in which his editions of Bertran Carbonel and Uc de Saint Circ appeared, Jeanroy published an article that he undoubtedly thought would settle the issue once and for all. Examining the seven instances of the elusive expression known at that time and discarding two others because they did not contain the verb *far*, he decided that the basic meaning of *far col e cais* is 'minauder en jouant du cou et du visage'<sup>8</sup>. Although he did not specify in that essay what kind of play of neck and face he had in mind, he described it more graphically elsewhere as «mettre la joue sur le cou d'autrui»<sup>9</sup>. Realizing, however, that this definition does not fit every occasion, Jeanroy was forced to conclude that *far col e cais* has two meanings: sometimes we are to read it as 'faire des avances' (four instances); at other times, as 'prendre des airs narquois' (3 instances)<sup>10</sup>. Then in 1925, as though Jeanroy's article had never been written, Kolsen translated a theretofore unknown example by Gauceran as 'umarmen(?)'<sup>11</sup>. A year later, Jeanroy, in reviewing Kolsen, did an unexplained about-face and rendered *col e cais* simply as 'caresses'<sup>12</sup>.

The last contribution to our understanding of *far col e cais* came in 1944, when Lewent, offering a new edition of Raimbaut de Vaqu-

<sup>6</sup> *Annales du Midi* 11 (1899): 220.

<sup>7</sup> *Literaturblatt für germanische und romanische Philologie* 10 (1912): 334.

<sup>8</sup> *Romania* 42 (1913): 79-83.

<sup>9</sup> Alfred Jeanroy and Jean-Jacques Salverda de Grave, *Poésies de Uc de Saint-Circ*, Bibliothèque Méridionale 15 (Toulouse: 1913) 111, 208.

<sup>10</sup> According to my numbering, nos. 2, 7, 9 and 4 belong to Jeanroy's «faire des avances» category, while nos. 6, 1, 8 fall into his «airs narquois» group.

<sup>11</sup> p. 17 n. 16. See complete reference in no. 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Romania* 55 (1926): 383.

airas' 392,12, backed down from his hostile gesture theory of 1912 and proposed 'to try one's wiles on someone'<sup>13</sup>. Since then, Almqvist (1951) has translated it by 'se réjouir'; Linskill (1964), by 'try one's simpering ways on'; and Topsfield (1971), by 'faire des gorges chaudes'<sup>14</sup>.

Given that neither Jeanroy nor Lewent, the only two scholars who have worried much about the expression *far col e cais*, succeeded in positing a definition that he could live with, it seems best to start over<sup>15</sup>.

*Col* 'neck' (from Latin COLLU(M)) seems unambiguous enough. *Cais* (from Latin \*CAPSUS 'box, chest') is by itself not much more problematic than *col*. It designates the lower face, or any part of it, including the cheeks, jaws, mouth and chin. Von Wartburg translates by 'Kinnbacke', which is accurate<sup>16</sup>. What is not so obvious, though, is the interplay of neck and lower face in the Old Occitan expression *far col e cais*.

We must try to imagine in concrete terms what the gesture consists of before we can determine what it means. The first thing that we need to ask is whose *col* and whose *cais* we are talking about. Do they belong to the same person or is it one person's *col* and another's *cais*? The answer to this first question comes from Bernart de Venzac (see our no. 11) and Arnaut Daniel (no. 10). In both instances the *col e cais* are members of the same person. In both of these texts that person is a man, but the evidence from two texts is insufficient for asserting that *col e cais* necessarily belong to the male<sup>17</sup>.

The second thing that we must ask ourselves in trying to picture the gesture is: who does it? Again our texts provide what appears to be a consistent answer. In seven of our nine examples of the expression *far col e cais*, a woman is the subject. In two others the poet does not say explicitly whether he is talking about women or men or

<sup>13</sup> *PMLA* 59 (1944): 621.

<sup>14</sup> See complete references in nos. 4, 7, 8.

<sup>15</sup> After all of his efforts to figure out what *col e cais* is, Jeanroy ended up with 'caresses', which is essentially what Raynouard had suggested almost a century earlier. Lewent, for his part, while apparently ready to abandon his original idea about *col e cais* as a sign of hostility, found Jeanroy's multiple solutions unpersuasive. As far as Lewent was concerned, the matter remained unsettled: «Is the beginning of Jeanroy's article: *Cette locution reste énigmatique en dépit des quatre* (now nine) *exemples qui en ont été relevés* still true?» *PMLA* (1944): 621 n. 24.

<sup>16</sup> Walther von Wartburg, *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig-Berlin 1940) II: 316.

<sup>17</sup> Jeanroy (*Romania* 1913, 83 n. 1) discounts both of these examples, inasmuch as they do not contain the verb *far* and «n'ont pas d'intérêt pour nous». In his opinion, these poets linked *col* with *cais* for alliterative effect.

both (nos. 1, 5)<sup>18</sup>. In one instance, birds, as well as women, are doing it (no. 4). But we should not take this last attestation literally, since larks, in contrast to some other feathered creatures, have neither wattles (*cais*) nor necks (*col*) prominent enough to do anything with.

The third thing that we need to establish is whether one does *col e cais* to oneself or to another person. The texts suggest that the agent does it to a second party. In four of our texts, the expression occurs with a non-reflexive indirect object pronoun<sup>19</sup>.

We can reasonably assume, then, that the gesture consists of one person's touching another's lower face and neck. In virtually all of our examples, *col e cais* is performed by a woman on a man, and in every case, as we shall see, it is considered an erotic provocation. While there is no exact English equivalent for *far col e cais*, the sense of it can be conveyed by 'make advances on', 'make erotic overtures to', 'make a pass at', or, more colloquially, 'to put the make on', 'give the come-on signal to'. All of these expressions are essentially synonymous and communicate well enough the meaning of the phrase. None of them, alas, articulates very vividly what the gesture looks like.

I move now to the examination of the various occurrences of *far col e cais* in Old Occitan literature. Although I cannot claim to have discovered any of these examples, no one else has taken all eleven into account or given for each instance enough of a context to make the meaning clear. In an effort to resolve certain linguistic difficulties posed by these texts and to confirm my reading of the expression under consideration, I offer a literal translation for each case. My commentaries serve to refine the definition of *col e cais* and to clarify the situations in which it occurs. On several occasions a previously confusing passage (e.g. nos. 1, 4, 8) takes on new meaning when *far col e cais* is properly understood. I shall treat these excerpts according to their Pillet-Carstens numbers, except that I shall postpone discussion of the two which do not contain *far* until the end.

1.  
Bertran Carbonel: 82,25 *Ara posc be conoisser certamen*  
MSS: APR

<sup>18</sup> Lewent, *PMLA* (1944): 621, assumes that N'At de Mons refers to men doing *col e cais*, but I do not agree. See my Commentary to no. 5.

<sup>19</sup> *m* three times (nos. 3, 4, 7) and *us* once (no. 2).

Edition: A. Jeanroy, «Les ‘Coblas’ de Bertran Carbonel», *Annales du Midi* 25 (1913), *cobla* 12, p. 149.

Aras puesc ben conoisser sertamen  
 Que le segles es vilas e malvais,  
 Car s'om canta ni·s don' alegramen,  
 Cascus fara per despieg col e cais.  
 E tug aquel que sabon coblas faire  
 Son fol tengut; el catieu de mal aire  
 Respondran mi, s'ieu lur vuelh demandar:  
 «Que es vida?» – «Gaug, qui·se sap donar».  
 E diran ver, e doncx es ben folia  
 Qui blayma gauc, la melhor res que sia.

Translation: Now I know for certain that the world is base and evil, for if someone sings and gives himself cheer, everyone will scornfully start making passes. And all those who compose *coblas* are considered fools; and the bad people of base extraction will answer me, if I should ask them: «What is life?» – «Joy, if you know how to get it». And they are right, and therefore it is indeed folly if someone blames joy, the best thing that there is.

Commentary: I have chosen MS *A*'s reading of the final verse over *Qu'ilh blasmon gaug* preferred by Jeanroy. It was in this *cobla* that Jeanroy translated *fara col e cais* by «lui fera la moue». In order to figure out what Bertran is saying in these verses, we need to establish what he means by *gaug* 'joy'. One of his other *coblas*, Jeanroy's no. 27, makes that quite plain:

Hostes, ab gaug ay volgut veramens  
 Tostemps vieure et ab gaug vuelh estar  
 Tant cant vieurai, car gaug mi fai amar  
 Tal on es gaug e beutatz e jovens;  
 E pus ab gaug soi de mon loc partitz,  
 Por Dieu vos prec c'ab gaug si' aculhitz,  
 C'ostals ses gaug no mi play ni gandida:  
 Doncx dem nos gaug, car ses gaug non es vida.

Obviously joy for Bertran is pure physical pleasure, completely independent of emotional involvement and long-term commitment, the kind of pleasure that can be purchased in certain hotels. The sense of *cobla* 12, then, is that, while poets talk about making love, other people do it. The response of uncultivated people to verses about love is to make passes at one another. I should point out that Bertran Carbonel does not criticize such people for being unappre-

ciative listeners. To the contrary, he maintains that they have the right idea because, after all, as they themselves will tell you, joy is the only thing that counts in life. Anyone who speaks up against this kind of hedonism is a fool because that is the best thing that life has to offer.

2.

Folquet de Marseille: 155,24 *Tostemps si vos sabetz d'amor*  
MSS: *Ra'*

Edition: S. Stronski, *Le Troubadour Folquet de Marseille*, Cracow 1910, poem 15, stanza 3, pp. 68-71; translation, pp. 130-31.

Tostemps, pauc avetz de valor  
si per aital amor es gays  
que, pus dona·us fay col e cays,  
par qe so tengu' a deshonor:  
be·us dic, s'era·l reys sos paire,  
no·us es sos plaitz onratz ni bos;  
mays val sela que·us tem e·us blan  
e·us mostra semblan amoros,  
sitot se vay pueys percassan,  
cant vos non es e·l repayre.

Translation: Tostemps, you have little worth if you are content with such a love that once the lady gives you the come-on signal she holds it for a dishonor: indeed I tell you, even if her father were the king, her cause is not honorable or good for you; the lady who respects you and courts you and gives you indications of her love is worth more, even if she then goes out on the make when you aren't at home.

Commentary: Stronski, despite Lewent's objections, understood the stanza. The only thing that is not perfectly accurate in his interpretation is that *far col e cais* refers not to kissing but to the erotic overtures that precede more intimate contact. In this *tenso*, Folquet initiates the debate by asking his partner whether he prefers a lady who is faithful to him but never gives him any sign of affection or one who loves him and several others openly. Tostemps, with his *senhal* suggestive of constancy, supports the cause of the former. In an amusing reversal of roles at the end, Tostemps confesses that his lady has betrayed him, while Folquet admits that his lady is true to him alone!

3.

Gauceran 167a,1 *Cozin, ab vos voill far tenso*

MSS: *Oa*<sup>1</sup>Edition: A. Kolsen, *Trobadorgedichte*, Halle, 1925, poem 8, stanzas 3 and 4, pp. 17-18.

Cozin, per domna val hom mais  
 E n'es plus cortes e plus gais  
 E·n fai hom guerras et essais,  
 E s'avia d'aver mil fais,  
 A la mort no·il valria.

Ja no m'en fara col ni cais,  
 En Gauseran, q'ieu per mi lais  
 Donc quant eu ai e aurai mais<sup>20</sup>;  
 Qe de l'aver m'en vest e·m pais  
 E meillur chascun dia.

Translation: Cousin, through a lady a man increases in worth and is more courtly and happier because of her and he undertakes wars and bold ventures, and if he had a thousand bundles of money, upon death it would be of no use to him.

Never will she make such advances, Sir Gauceran, that I would, for my part, give up what I have now or in the future. For with money I clothe and feed myself and better my situation every day.

Commentary: Gauceran engages his cousin in a *tenso*, asking him whether he would find it acceptable if a beautiful lady consented to sleep with him on condition that he give up his wealth. The cousin responds without equivocation: «I would rather be the rich man that I am than a silly courtly one». Gauceran, arguing the other side, presents a rather trite account of *fin'amors* as a means of self-improvement and reminds his acquisitive cousin in so many words that «you can't take it with you». The latter replies that he would never give up his wealth for a woman, no matter how much she tried to put the make on him. In a facetious counterpoint to Gauceran's idealistic portrayal of *fin'amors*, his cousin maintains that it is money, not love, which enables him to feed and clothe himself and, in general, improve his situation. The debate ends with an exchange of blistering insults. Gauceran leaves the choice of money to his cousin, insisting that he does not want to have anything to do with riches if it means being without lady; his cousin retorts that all

<sup>20</sup> I take the text for these two verses from Lewent, *PMLA* (1944): 621 n. 25. See also the readings proposed by Jeanroy, *Romania* 55 (1926): 383; Pillet, *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 49 (1929): 364.



of Gauceran's money and equipment would not suffice to persuade any woman to sleep with him and that, because of his poor choice, he will be without both money and lady. The final stanza implies that *fin' amors* is not what it used to be. The man who tries to live up to its ideals will come out empty-handed. The poem ends on a cynical note. The last word is that women, like men, are mostly interested in money.

## 4.

Guillem Ademar: 202,8 *Lanquan vei florir l'espiga*

MSS: *CD<sup>a</sup>EIKRSd*

Edition: K. Almqvist, *Poésies du troubadour Guilhem Adémar*, Uppsala 1951, poem 5, stanzas 1 and 2, pp. 118-123; notes, pp. 202-08.

Lanquan vei florir l'espigua  
 E s'azombra·l vitz e·ill vaisa  
 E flors e fueilla s'afaisa  
 E l'auzels ab sa par chanta,  
 Be·m degr' Amors jauzir hueimais,  
 Mos l'alauza·n **fai col e cais**.

Si·m fara, mas trop m'o trigua  
 Cela don mos cors no·s laisa  
 Ni vas outra no·s biaisa;  
 Pero pueis n'ai vista manta  
 Que·m fora grans honors lor plais,  
 E n'agr' en meins d'un mes trop mais.

Translation: When I see the stalk in bloom and the vine stock and the wild vine overshadowed (with foliage) and the flower and the leaf weigh down (the branch), and the male bird sings to its mate, Love indeed ought to make me happy from now on, since the female lark is making erotic overtures.

And so will she from whom my heart does not withdraw nor does it veer toward another, but she keeps me waiting too long; however, in the meantime, I have seen many whose cause would be a great honor to me and from whom I would get much more in less than a month.

Commentary: Almqvist's translation of *fai col e cais* as «se réjouit» is without philological basis. The bird in the last verse of the first stanza must be taken as female, as most of the scribes seem to have understood (*DIK: la lauza; S: la lauda*). The male bird, like the poet, is singing, while the female is making erotic overtures to him. Only with this interpretation does the beginning of the second

stanza make any sense<sup>21</sup>. *Si·m* (the *R* reading, which I have preferred to *Sis*) *fara* refers to the poet's lady. The subject *Cela* is stated in the following verse. The third stanza (not recorded here) presents another image of the aggressive female. She is likened to a high-spirited horse that makes such lunges that the good knight tumbles off. The poet warns that the next rider will be an unruly man who will treat her/it brutally and put her through her paces as he acts out his sexual fantasies. This *canso* articulates the tension between the restraints imposed by *fin' amors* and the animal lust that drives both men and women. One need not be a psychoanalyst to grasp the meaning of Guillem's metaphors: his lady is a bucking horse and he, an erect tree. An erotic dream in which he enjoys sexual union with his beloved provides some relief to his frustration. By humorously suggesting that animals besides human beings can *far col e cais*, the poet draws our attention to the elemental passion which the gesture can denote.

5.

N'At de Mons: 309, V *Si tot non es enquistz*

MS: *R*

Edition: W. Bernhardt, *Die Werke des Trobadors N'At de Mons*, Heilbronn, 1887, vv. 642-53, pp. 72-3.

D'autres n'i a que so  
entenden e saben,  
que mescaban lor sen  
per erguelh coma fol,  
que **faran cays e col**,  
e non an d'als que far,  
sol que·s puescan parar;  
Ans meton tot lor sen  
E lor cors tener gen,  
E cujan per dever,  
Car son bel, pretz aver,  
Ses autre plazer far.

Translation: There are others who are understanding and knowledgeable who misuse their intelligence through their arrogance like fools who will make erotic advances and not do anything else, only adorn themselves. Rather, they put all of their wits into keeping their bodies nice, and think that, since they are

<sup>21</sup> Although there is considerable variation in the stanza order of this song as it is preserved by different manuscripts, these two stanzas always begin the poem, with the *Si·m fara* stanza coming second every time. See Almqvist, 202.

good-looking, they by right have worth without having to perform any other pleasure.

Commentary: Lewent is incorrect in assuming that this passage refers to men<sup>22</sup>. Although the poet tactfully refrains from employing a feminine pronoun and uses instead the all-inclusive masculine plural, there can be no doubt that he is describing what he sees as a quintessentially feminine failing. He takes it for granted that it is primarily women who are concerned with fixing themselves up (*se parar*) and generally keeping their bodies beautiful. The context makes this one of the more instructive examples. N'At has just explained that the heart makes its will apparent through three means: *semblan*, *parlar* and *faitz*. Significantly, he does not treat *far col e cais* as a *semblan* like laughing or crying but places it in the category of *faitz*. If one were still inclined to accept Jeanroy's interpretation of *far col e cais* as «faire la moue», one would have to abandon it at this point<sup>23</sup>. Those who *fan col e cais* are situated between those who make fun of other people and those who are too judgmental. All three types, seeing themselves as superior, abuse their fellow men. The criticism of this middle group is not so much that they *fan col e cais* but they do nothing beyond that. They give the come-on signal but then are not interested in following through (*ses autre plazer far*). They are totally preoccupied with themselves and how they look. Such women are teases.

6.

Peire de Bussignac: 332,2 *Sirventes e chansos lais*

MSS: *ABCDIKHMR*

Edition: C.A.F. Mahn, *Die Werke der Troubadours*, III, Berlin 1886, poem 107,2, stanza 3, pp. 279-81.

Era·n **faran colh e cais**,  
 Si·m vau josta lor assire,  
 Las falsas, cui Dieus abais;  
 Et er me vedatz  
 Lo joys e·l solatz,  
 Quar conosc e sai entendre  
 Las lurs malvestatz;  
 Pueys las avols gens  
 Diran entre dens

<sup>22</sup> *PMLA* (1944): 621.

<sup>23</sup> *AdM* 25 (1913): 149.

Qu'ieu sui mal dizens,  
 Et ieu, per mon paire,  
 Cuiava lur traire  
 Lo pel don lur nais  
 Malvestatz, e vey  
 Que per un lur en naisson trey.

Translation: And they will make erotic advances on me if I go over and sit next to them, these false women, may God bring them down; and yet joy and companionship will be denied to me because I recognize and understand their wickedness; then the base people will say under their breath that I am a slanderer, whereas I, by my father, intended to remove the hair from which their wickedness is born, and yet I see that for every one (that I remove), three (new ones) appear.

Commentary: This text is a satiric *contrafactum* of Giraut de Bornelh's *canso* 242,36 *Ges aissi del tot non lais*. Peire opens his song by announcing his intention to give up poetry. He is exasperated because he has always done his utmost to protect his lady from corrupt rich men but to no avail (*mas tot es niens* v. 8); she lets herself be seduced by, or, perhaps more accurately, seeks out (*fai vas si atraire* v. 11) any sort of material wealth –gold, silver, wine, wheat. He laments that tournaments and refined conversation are no longer held in esteem and cynically apprises young men that all of their courtly virtues will be of no use to them if they are not loaded with money. They will lose out in the end to some filthy rich man who stands there ostentatiously fondling his money. In the stanza which concerns us the poet describes the behavior of licentious women who attempt to put the make on any man who comes near them. Peire knows, however, that they will never sleep with him because he has said too many bad things about them. In the last five verses of this stanza he reiterates in stronger terms the futility of his efforts to keep women from acting promiscuously. The appearance of three new hairs for every one that he removes signifies that for every base lover that he persuades his lady to forsake, she comes up with three others. In short, she is incorrigible. In the final stanza of the song, Peire consoles himself that even if he cannot change the nature of women, at least he is getting fat (i.e. making a good living) from speaking ill of them: «Qu'ieu per lur mal dir engrais» (v. 63).

7.

Raimbaut de Vaqueiras: 392,12 *D'una domna m toill e m lais*  
 MSS: CET

Edition: J. Linskill, *The Poems of the Troubadour Raimbaut de Vaqueiras*, The Hague, 1964, poem 23, stanza 3, pp. 253-57.

Ges una pruna d'avais  
 en s'amor non daria,  
 si be·m fai ni col ni cais;  
 per que·us ho celaria?  
 Quan la vei, m'o tenh a fais,  
 s'alre far en podia.  
 Sabes per que?  
 .....e  
 Dieus que·m mante  
 l'en do so que l'en cove.

Translation: Not even a wild plum would I give for her love, although she tries to put the make on me; why should I hide it from you? Whenever I see her, I consider it a burden on me, even if she were able to act differently. Do you know why? ..... May God who maintains me give her in this regard what befits her.

Commentary: Linskill's translation is perfectly adequate except that his rendering of *·m fai ni col ni cais* as 'try her simpering ways on me' is too vague. *Far col e cais* refers to a specific gesture, a sexual provocation. This poem is a *comjat*; the poet takes leave of his lady because she has been too generous with her favors. She has, as he says euphemistically, lent her quiver to anyone who wants to use it, or, as he puts it elsewhere in the text: «quar molt es de gran merce,/ qu'ieu ho sai be/ e d'autres moltz, per ma fe» (vv. 18-20). In the stanza in question we see clearly articulated the expectation that the man will respond to the woman's overtures by giving her something –sex is what she is after, but probably also money. Raimbaut rejects her proposition facetiously, saying that he would not pay her so much as a wild plum for her love. This woman is getting older and has passed the point where make-up can disguise the ravages of time and decadent living: «Ben es tornad' en debais/ la beutat qu'ill avia,/ e no l'en te pro borrais/ ni tefinhos que sia» (vv. 31-34).

8.

Raimon de Miraval: 406,9 *Ara m'agr' ops que m'aizis*

MSS: ADEIKNRa<sup>1</sup>CE

Edition: L.T. Topsfield, *Les poésies du troubadour Raimon de Miraval*, Paris 1971, poem 12, stanza 5, pp. 138-44.

Dompnas an lor dan enquis;  
 Qe l'una l'autr' escarnis,  
 Que de mains janglars savais  
**Rizon e fan col e cais.**  
 Mas pauc val, a ma parvenssa,  
 Solatz q'es d'avol respos,  
 Si de plazers amoros  
 Non fenis e non comensa.

Translation: Ladies who make fun of one another have sought their own harm by laughing at much malicious mockery and giving the come-on signal, for, in my opinion, conversation consisting of a base response is worth little if it does not begin and end with amorous pleasures.

Commentary: It is not, as Topsfield assumes, *far col e cais de*. Only the verb *rizon* governs the complement *de mains janglars savais*. For the next-to-the-last verse, I have chosen the *DEIK* reading *d'avol respos* over *d'avols sermos*, which Topsfield preferred. In this *canço*, Raimon would have us think that he and his lady are the only two moral creatures left. All other men are *lauzengiers*, and all other women are either frigid, if they refuse to grant their favors for fear of the rumors that the *lauzengiers* will spread about them, or sluts, if they act in such a way as to prove the *lauzengiers* right. Raimon assures his audience that if ladies will simply stand firm in their good conduct, rumors cannot hurt them; most women, however, laugh at such gossip and give the come-on signal indiscriminately. Raimon condemns these advances for being empty gestures. If the women who make them would actually accord the sexual pleasures that they claim to be ready to give, their company would at least be worth something.

9.

Uc de Saint Circ: 457,26a *Passada es la sasos*

MS: *H*

Edition: A. Jeanroy and J.-J. Salverda de Grave, *Poésies de Uc de Saint-Circ*, Toulouse 1913, poem 33, p. 111.

Passada es la sasos  
**Que fatias col e cais**<sup>24</sup>,

<sup>24</sup> The MS has *cols*, which Jeanroy emended to *col*. Since many men have many necks (and many faces too, for that matter, but *cais* is invariable, therefore could be construed as a plural) and since we are to assume that this old woman in her heyday performed the gesture again and again, the plural is quite acceptable.

Et ja no·us gensera mais  
 Lo blanques ni·l vermeillos  
 Ni·l gluz ni·l estefinos,  
 Qe la cara·us ru' e fraing,  
 Qe no po[t] penre color;  
 Ni no·n po[t] traire douzor  
 Nuill hom c'ab vos s'acompaign,  
 Ni mais de vos non venra alegriers  
 A vostre drut, si no·ill davas deniers.

Translation: Gone are the days when you used to allure men by making erotic overtures, and nevermore will you be beautified by skin whitener or rouge or creams or lotions, for your skin is wrinkled and broken to the point where it cannot take on color, nor will any man derive sweetness from intercourse with you, nor will any happiness come to your lover from you unless you were to give him money.

Commentary: In a clumsy attempt to translate *fatias col e cais* as literally as possible (*vous mettiez la joue sur le cou [d'autrui]*), Jeanroy reveals that he never did understand the image. What he proposes is a strange contortion indeed. We know from other instances that the *cais* as well as the *col* belong to the same person. Besides, if the gesture had been as Jeanroy imagined it, it would more likely have been described as *far cais al col*. The allusions to make-up and money in this *cobla* are even more fully developed than in the Raimbaut de Vaqueiras piece. The old woman whom Uc satirizes in such devastating terms may well have been a prostitute, who used to receive money for her services, but who could not even pay anybody to sleep with her now.

10.

Arnaut Daniel: 29,15 *Pos en Raimons e'n Turcs Malecs*

MSS: *DHIKCRA*

Edition: M. Perugi, *Le canzoni di Arnaut Daniel*, 2 vols., Milan-Naples 1978, poem 1, stanza 3, ll: 31-58.

Pro·i agra d'autres assais  
 de plus beus, que valgron mais,  
 E si·n Bernartz s'en estrais,  
 per Crist, anc no·i fes que savais  
 car l'en pres paors e esglais  
 que, si·l vengues d'amon lo rais,  
 tot ll'echaufera·l col e·l cais,

e no cove que domna bais  
selh que corna so corn putnais.

Translation: Numerous are the other pleasanter, worthier tests (of a man's obedience or virility) and if Sir Bernart has shied away from this one, for Christ's sake, he didn't act like an uncultivated man, for fear and horror overtook him that if the trickle came down on him from above, it would get his neck and chin all hot, and it is not appropriate for a lady to kiss the one who blows into her stinking horn.

Commentary: This poem by Arnaut Daniel, which, judging from the manuscript tradition, was popular in both Southern France and Italy, is one of several troubadour songs dealing with the unsavory theme of whether a lover has to obey his lady even if she requires that he blow with his mouth into her anus. This example of *col e cais*, which, as Jeanroy says, presents no linguistic difficulty, is more pertinent than he is willing to acknowledge, for although it does not contain the verb *far*, it is unmistakably a humorous allusion to the normally provocative gesture whereby one partner touches the other's neck and lower face<sup>25</sup>. In this instance, though, it is not with her hand but with a stream of her urine that the woman makes contact with the man's *col e cais* and thus gets him hot. Despite its strictly playful intent, this passage is informative to the extent that it points out that the next step after a lady does *col e cais* to a man is for her to give him a kiss. This poem makes a mockery not only of the unreasonable, sometimes distasteful demands of *fin' amors* but also of the erotic connotations of *col e cais*.

11.

Bernart de Venzac: 71,3 *Pos vei lo temps fer frevoluc*  
MS: C

Edition: M.P. Simonelli, *Lirica moralistica nell'Occitania del XII secolo: Bernart de Venzac*, Modena 1974, poem 2, stanza 4, pp. 219-26.

Quan lo vis mont' al folh el suc,  
luxuria en luy si banha  
e fai li far don gavanha  
lialtat e creys marrimens;  
pueys rema·l crims, mals e cozens,  
sobre·ls savays,  
qu'an tal pel entre·l col e·l cays  
que per totz temps cuelh qui·lh sensa.

<sup>25</sup> *Romania* 42 (1913): 83 n. 1.



Translation: When I see the wine go to the head of the fool, luxury bathes in him and makes him do that which causes loyalty to deteriorate and sadness to grow; then evil, scathing rumor hangs over the vulgar ones who have such hair between their neck and their chin that it will always be true that anyone who pays its price will get something.

Commentary: Both Appel and Simonelli changed the MS reading in the final verse from *per* to *pes*, which the former interpreted as a verb form 'I think' and the latter understood as a noun 'sorrow'. In my view, no emendation is required. Appel suggested that *sensa* is to be equated with OF *censar* 'to pay a fee'<sup>26</sup>. Bernart de Venzac is a moralist who takes himself very seriously. In this poem he wonders that any sunlight manages to shine on him, he is surrounded by so much mud. Like a fire-and-brimstone preacher, he lambastes one by one those guilty of the cardinal sins of lust, pride, envy and greed. It is in the stanza on *luxuria*, or the gratification of the appetites, whereby he limits himself to wine and women, that he speaks of the hair between the *col* and the *cais* of the self-indulgent fool<sup>27</sup>. Bernart warns that one should approach the immoderate man only if one really means business because such a person is always ready to have intercourse, on terms that he sets. The pertinence of this example to our study is that it spells out that *col e cais* refers to that part of a man's anatomy where the beard grows and demonstrates that mere allusion to a man's lower face and neck had become in certain circles evocative of debauchery.

The meaning of *far col e cais* is consistent throughout our eleven texts. A specific form of *mostrar semblan amors* (no. 2), *far col e cais* is the first step in procuring joy (no. 1) and is typically followed up by a kiss (no. 10). Though a distinctly human gesture, it is expressive of bestial passion (no. 4), or, Zin extreme cases, lechery (no. 11). The woman who does *col e cais* to a man does not always end up by having sexual intercourse with him, either because he rejects her offer (nos. 3, 7, 9) or because she is interested only in leading him on (nos. 5, 6, 8).

Everything that I have posited for the verbal expression of the gesture is corroborated by evidence from the visual arts. The action, described with reasonable accuracy by art historians as putting one's

<sup>26</sup> Carl Appel, *Provenzalische Inedita aus Pariser Handschriften* (Leipzig: 1890) 53 n. 32; 344.

<sup>27</sup> Simonelli reads *col e cais* as a metaphor for beard and sees this as a biblical allusion (107).

hand under the chin of another, is a common iconographical motif throughout the Middle Ages<sup>28</sup>. It occurs on capitals, ivories, in manuscript miniatures and initials, as well as in later book illustrations. It is a sign of affection, and, while virtually anyone can do it to anyone else, the nature and intensity of the feeling expressed varies according to the people involved and their intentions. Clearly, when the lecherous King Herod places his hand under the chin of the beautiful young Salome, the meaning is not the same as when the Virgin Mary does it to the baby Jesus<sup>29</sup>. Most typically the gesture signifies the respectable love between a man and a woman, whether in courtship or marriage, but it can also illustrate lust.

Two examples drawn from the 13th-century *Bible moralisée* will suffice to show that, according to the conventions of medieval iconography, touching someone else's lower face and neck can indicate sexual desire<sup>30</sup>. In the first instance (Plate 1) the sensuous woman of the Song of Songs, whose aromatic breasts are described in the accompanying verse as smelling better than wine, has her hand on her lover's face. The halo around the man's head only confirms the blatantly erotic implications of this seduction, which medieval exegetes and illustrators tried to gloss over with allegory. In the second scene (Plate 2) the same gesture serves to demonstrate homosexual passion. On the left it is a king who is touching the lower face of a youth, while on the right we can discern only that an old man is doing the same thing to a younger one. In both cases the person who is the object of the advance responds by embracing his seducer. The verse recorded to the left of the picture speaks of young men who squander their days by indulging in unchaste activities. What matters to us here is not so much that the illustrator considered homosexual conduct to be an irrefutable example of an abuse of

<sup>28</sup> This discussion and all of the examples cited here are taken from François Garnier, *Le Langage de l'image au Moyen Age II: Grammaire des gestes* (1982), 120-26; 330-31; 406-07.

<sup>29</sup> This depiction of Herod and Salome is found on a 12th-century capital from l'Église Saint Etienne, now in the Musée des Augustins in Toulouse. Such an image of Virgin and Child can be found in a 13th-century psalter now housed at the Bibliothèque Municipale of Besançon (MS 54, fol. 7v). Both of these examples are cited by Garnier.

<sup>30</sup> All three plates presented here are slight enlargements of medallions from the facsimile edition of *La Bible moralisée illustrée conservée à Oxford, Paris et Londres. Reproduction intégrale du manuscrit du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle accompagnée de planches tirées de Bibles similaires et d'une notice par Le Comte A. de Laborde, 4 Vols., Vol. 1: fols. 1-187; Vol. 2: fols. 188-379; Vol. 3: fols. 380-566. Société Française de Reproductions de Manuscrits à Peintures: Paris 1911, 1912, 1915.*

one's life, but, rather, that he chose this particular gesture as an immediately recognizable means of depicting erotic attraction.

We encounter two problems when we try to match our literary evidence of the gesture against its representation in medieval art. The first is that *cais* is not exactly the chin. When we examine the images themselves, however, and not just what the art historians say about them, we begin to suspect that this discrepancy is merely semantic. Both modern English and French lack a word comparable to Old Occitan *cais*, which can designate the whole lower face or any part of it. French has 'machoire' and 'mandibule', both of which denote jaw and are too specific. Meanwhile, the English word 'jowl', while having the right basic meaning, is not suitable because it has, in the course of time, accumulated so many secondary associations with swine, cattle and fowl that one tends to apply it to human beings only in derision. For want of a better term, art historians have settled on the chin, but, in fact, in some instances, the contact is more properly speaking with the cheek. Moreover, in virtually all of the visual renderings of the gesture of which I am aware, there is touching not only of part of the face but of the upper neck as well. Thus, Romance philologists could argue that *far col e cais* is a more accurate characterization of the signal than that devised by art historians. In defense of the latter, however, the identification of the gesture as contact between one person's hand and another's chin is supported by at least one Latin source, namely the Vulgate. In Jerome's translation of II Kings 20, 9f, *MENTUM* 'chin' is used in describing Joab's disingenuous sign of goodwill toward Amasa. Our Plate 3 reproduces the 13th-century illustration of this passage in the *Bible moralisée*. Deceived by the apparent friendliness of Joab, who holds him by the chin with one hand, Amasa fails to notice the sword in his other hand and thus facilitates his own slaying. The corresponding Latin text spells out exactly what Joab did to win Amasa's trust: «tenuit manu dextera mentum ejus quasi osculans eum» (He held the other's chin with his right hand as though he were about to kiss him). Despite the fact that, semantically speaking, *mentum* is not interchangeable with *col e cais*, it seems obvious that the gesture as it occurs in eleven Old Occitan poems is identical with the one so prevalent in various forms of medieval art.

The second problem is that while the iconographical instances prove that anybody, of either sex and of any age, can *far col e cais* to anybody else and that it is, if anything, more common for the

male to make the gesture, the eleven literary attestations of it might lead us to believe that it is primarily, if not exclusively, a gesture made by a woman, and a young one at that. It is at this point that we need to take into account the kind of poems with which we are dealing. All of them fall into the general category of moralistic/parodistic literature. Although ranging widely in tone from the self-righteous indignation of Bernart de Venzac to the gratuitous obscenity of Arnaut Daniel, they share two fundamental characteristics: not a single one of them is a celebration of *fin' amors* and every one of them has a decidedly misogynistic slant. The restriction of the expression *far col e cais* to poems that are not love songs is easily explained. It would have been inconsistent with the role assigned by male poets to the exalted and aloof *dompna* of the *fin' amors* paradigm for her to compromise her position of power by giving any overt sign of interest in sex. Meanwhile, the troubadour who sought her favor knew that, for his part, he had to rely on his voice, not his hands, to express his love. Those were the rules of the game. The texts cited here, however, fall outside the realm of *fin' amors*, where the rules no longer hold. The women in our examples are not courtly ladies. They are manipulative hussies, and everyone knows, or knew back then, what it meant when that kind of woman reached out and put her hand on a man's *col e cais*.

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Plate 1 - Meliora sunt ubera tua vino flagrantia unguentis optimis. Cf. Vulgate, Song of Songs 4:10. Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 11560, fol. 66 = Bible moralisée, Vol. 2, Pl. 290.

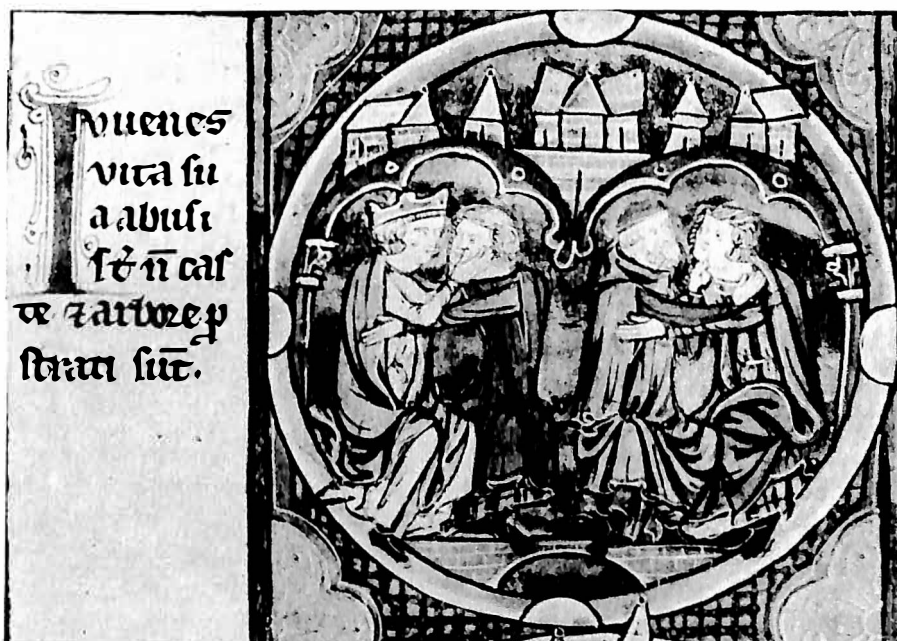


Plate 2 - Iuvenes vita sua abusi sunt non caste et arbore prostrati sunt. Cf. Vulgate, Lamentations 5:13. Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 11560, fol. 182 = Bible moralisée, Vol. 3, Pl. 406.



Plate 3 - Salutavit Joab filius Sarvie Amasam et tenuit manu dextera mentum eius quasi osculans eum et percussit eum gladio et mortuus est. Cf. Vulgate, II Kings 20:9-10. Oxford, Bodl. 270<sup>b</sup>, fol. 159<sup>v</sup> = Bible moralisée, Vol. 1, Pl. 159<sup>v</sup>.