since the notes suggested here are limited to the Roman de Flamenca, only one example is singled out from Professor Schutz's many solutions to problems in Provençal lexicography
and its courtois terminology: his conclusive explanation ¹
of nozol ("night owl") as a "derivative of nocte (*noctula
> *noctiola, etc," in line 2114 of Flamenca. This gives firm
support to his treatment of the same word in line 771 of the
Auzels Cassadors by an author whom Professor Schutz has so
ably rehabilitated, Daude de Pradas.

During the past hundred years, there have been, from time
to time, inklings that medieval French texts can guide more
than one latter-day hopeful down the garden path of en­
chanted—and enchanting—conjecture. Notably, when a poem
has been saved only by a single and defective manuscript, its
wording even now is usually still teeming with unresolved
puzzles: puzzles which, moreover, have not only baffled lead­
ing scholars, but which have also inspired some among them
to rewardingly resonant blunder. My attempt here is no more
than a tentative commentary on five samples of such stab and
stumble as encountered in Flamenca. Not merely in passing, it
will be remembered that, like Aucassin et Nicolette and
Beroul's Tristan, Flamenca is yet another jewel with the
misfortune of having been preserved in only one manuscript and having been sorely mistreated by a copyist still known favorably only for his penmanship.

In line 1540 of *Flamenca*, Oskar Schultz-Gora found Archimbaut, the jealous husband, cursing Flamenca’s handmaidens with a two-fold blight of “asthma and death.” In line 1638, Adolf Tobler saw Guillem, flawless hero in the poem, kicking up to nine feet, only to reach and sample some nasal mucus. While a straightforward proverb (line 2191) says simply that recital of one’s troubles brings only yawns to listeners, the yawns have been interpreted all the way from “dawn song” to “real pleasure”: the latter suggestion coming from Adolf Mussafia. The poet’s intentionally preposterous *digastendonz* in lines 1557 and 2441 has been manhandled by so many experts that some further manhandling on my part may not be amiss. As is also the case with the verb *pas(s)ar* in lines 1540 and 5058–59.

Inasmuch as philologists of the special stature of Tobler, Mussafia, Schultz-Gora, Paul Meyer, and René Lavaud have faltered absurdly over only an occasional word in *Flamenca*, their speculations will always require the most serious attention. It is precisely thanks to their pioneering that anyone today can venture a few inches further into *Flamenca* mysteries. Thus speculation at this time is limited to the five lexicographical problems just listed. My choices have been determined both by the past mistakes of others and by the relative absence of philological grimness required for their rectification.

1. For some five hundred lines prior to line 1540, Archimbaunt has been suffering from baseless jealousy of his bride
Flamenca, whom he has confined to a tower, together with her chirrupy maids-in-waiting, Alis and Margarida. Customarily, when he shepherds the three of them, cautiously and suspiciously, to the thermal baths, he keeps glowering watch at the entrance.

On one occasion he reproaches Flamenca for staying too long, but Margarida tries to assure him that his wife was merely waiting for her and Alis to finish their own ablutions. Archimbaut’s response (according to the reading recommended here, cf. infra):

1540  “Pasa!” fai s’el, — las mas emort, —
     “Mais volés bain que non fan aucas,
     Aitan ben sas grans com sas pauchas;
1543  Mais de vos non es meravilla.”

While the manuscript has *emort* as a single word, the *e* has ever since been treated and edited as a conjunction. But the presence and location of such a conjunction has never yet been satisfactorily explained: a scribal blunder perhaps? In 1926, Lewent proposed a regrouping of the letters (plus alteration of two of them) to make the poet say that Archimbaut was biting his lips: sensible, but somewhat arbitrary. Meyer, Mussafia, Chabaneau, and Hubert agree that the jealous groom is biting or gnawing his hands: the interpretation for which I hope to add new support. The more so, since Archimbaut has some five thousand verses to go before once again recovering normal composure. The Lavaud-Nelli translation ignores the supposed conjunction and has Archimbaut biting his thumbs. The prize suggestion of all, however, dates from 1903 when Schultz-Gora suggested deleting two letters,
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reading asma e mort, and thence crediting Archimbaut with devising the malediction of asthma and death. Solemnly, Schultz-Gora added that “it is not surprising that the Flamenca author knew the word [asthma] or that the copyist knew it not at all.” Up to now, no one has exclaimed at this interpretation, except for Lewent’s charitable notation that it is “brilliant but much too bold.” Now that the experts have been taken to task, what does the present paper have to offer? Two possibilities only: (1) without changing any of the letters as they are given in the manuscript, keep las mas emort; or (2) move the alleged conjunction and read e las mas mort. The first suggestion, which I prefer, calls for an easily and entirely possible emordre (< ex + mordere), while the second requires needless editorial tampering.

2. Pas(s)ar in lines 1540 and 5058-59. The second part of line 1540 creates only one of the difficulties of interpreting this line, the first two syllables of which are spaced in the manuscript as pas ai. Meyer keeps this reading, but suggests in his variants that it might be emended to a passatz, which Lewent subsequently accepted as an imperative in the sense of vorbeigehen, weitergehen. Hubert-Porter and Lavaud-Nelli also read pas ai, which the latter translate “c’est bon,” and explain literally as “j’ai paix = je ne dis plus rien.” The view that this interpretation seems farfetched will be developed presently.

If the poet intended a form of pasar, should the reading be pasa or passatz? Flamenca has but few indications of Archimbaut’s manner of addressing Alis or Margarida: he uses tu when speaking to Alis in line 6158, but not in lines 6151 and lines 7065-74. Elsewhere, except in line 1540 where he is answering Margarida, Archimbaut never addresses either girl
singly. Consequently, and the more so as emendation of *pasai* to *pasa* is less drastic than to *pasatz*, it is the former which is recommended here.

In support of the verb *pasar* in line 1540, it is essential to examine a certain remark by Guillem, later on in the poem:

5056  Dirai vos o, bel sener Dieus:
Del paradis quem devés dar
Pogras ab mi fort ben passar.

5059  Passar? Ans i faria gietas!

Influenced by *pasa* and *gietas* taken together, various scholars have interpreted the passage as involving a suggestion of compromise. However, what seems unquestionably the correct translation has been recently supplied by Guido Favati: “II paradiso che mi dovete dare potreste anche fare a meno di darmelo. Farne a meno? Lo getterei anzi via!” *Gieta* plainly denotes something to be rejected and thrown away.

In no case is Archimbaut (in line 1540) advising Margarida that he “has peace” or that he “is saying nothing more” (he goes on talking, for three more lines): would he be “having peace” and gnawing his hands, simultaneously? Just as *pasar* in lines 5058–59 indicates that Guillem is asking to be spared any gift of Paradise, so also, in line 1540, Archimbaut is brusquely telling Margarida to spare him her excuses (cf. modern French *passons!*).

3. Guillem is represented as being seven feet tall and, with either foot, readily capable of reaching *una candela o un muquet* (line 1638), “nine feet above floor level.” Mistral’s Provençal dictionary explains *mouquet* as a small candle stub
or candle end (cf. supra, note 3). Meyer cites a further Mistral entry, in which mou (variants: mouc, mouch, mouse) has two meanings: “candle stub,” and “nasal mucus.” While Meyer, in 1901, had no difficulty in making the sensible choice, he seems not to have noticed Mistral’s mouquet. However, in 1866, albeit only thirty-one-years old, Tobler stated categorically that in Flamenca “muquet is undoubtedly identical with modern Provençal mouquet, a word derived from muccus, equivalent to Old Provençal moc ‘sanies naris.’” Less ridiculous, but manifestly still incorrect, and perhaps anachronistic as well, is the meaning “lighted wick,” which turns up in the Lavaud-Nelli translation. By all odds, “candle stub” or “candle end” is the most likely rendering (as if the Flamenca poet particularly cared), but the vague possibility that “candle snuffer” may have been intended should not be overlooked, given etymological connection with the scissor-like instrument known in French today as mouchettes (cf. Godefroy, by the way, for an example as early as the fourteenth century).

4. The proverb in line 2191 specifies, as mentioned supra, that talk about one’s troubles brings only yawns to any listener. While this verse lacks the exegetical glow of asthma or mucus, it does underscore a zest for emendation which all too frequently beguiles editors and critics. The Flamenca manuscript reads “Autrui dol albadallas son,” but in 1901, influenced by Mussafia from decades before, Meyer abandoned his sound 1865 sense and changed the line to “Que l’autrui dol badallas son,” with his new-found badallas rendered as “plaisanteries [cf. Miss Prescott, p. 43], bagatelles, choses dénuées d’importance.” Even the Lavaud-Nelli transla-
tion supports this needless liberty by fastening upon badallas
the unlikely meaning "vaines criailleries."

The frequency, as attested for instance in Mistral, of words
beginning with aba- or ba-interchangeably (cf. also FEW, I, 282: bataculare) should have maintained respect for the
manuscript. Probably, however, the first l in albadallas should
be dropped: it seems to reflect a misplaced anticipation of al
in the third syllable.

The meaning of abadalla is suggested by the verb badalhar
("yawn"), which, for modern Provençal, Mistral and von
Wartburg enter as abadalha. The odd translation "aubade"
goes back to Leroux de Lincy in 1842, who recorded a saying
which now appears as No. 214 in Morawski's Proverbes
français: "Autruy deul querelle semble." Conceivably, this
could suggest support for abadalla ("bataille"), except that
the double t in the etymon battualia did not change to d in
either southern or northern France.

5. Digastendonz, the final problem in this paper, appears in
two Flamenca passages:

1557 E tot o fes digastendons
2440 Adoncs venc le fers aversiers
2441 Per digastendonz totz derriers

It will be recalled that, early in the poem, the queen of France
fanned to flame Archimbaut's incipient jealousy regarding his
still innocent bride. His psychopathic self-torture was needless,
as Flamenca had given him no cause. Since soon after his
marriage, says the poet (lines 1550–60), Archimbaut “never bathed, nor did the idea of bathing even cross his mind; he never pared his fingernails nor cut his hair. This way he thought he had done enough to spy upon his wife successfully. No one could have persuaded him to shave: he looked like a Greek or a Slavic prisoner. All this he did digastendons.” And immediately and decisively at this point, Archimbaut added: “My lady will have greater terror of me if she sees me with beard and moustache, and she will think twice before welcoming a lover.”

Except for dourly supervised attendance at Mass and visits to the thermal baths, Flamenca is constantly confined, as noted supra, to the tower chamber, with Alis and Margarida. When Guillem for the first time sees Archimbaut bringing Flamenca to the church, the husband comes in as a monstrous ferocity who lacks only a hunting spear to make him look like a scarecrow fit to frighten off wild boars: in the poet’s words, Archimbaut’s entry is staged per digastendonz. It should be added, in passing, that literal translation of aversiers, line 2440, is more accurately “devil” than “monstrous ferocity,” a point which is developed explicitly in lines 3894–99, but which need not be elaborated here.

Without comment, Meyer, in 1865, gave up entirely on digastendonz, and his reviewers followed suit unanimously, with equally resourceful silence. In 1901, the Flamenca editor was more venturesome, but only three contemporaries took comparable risks. Meyer came forward with what, still today, may be the tempting suggestion that digastendonz might be a popular expression, digas t’en donz, on the order, for instance, of current qu’en-dira-t-on or m’as-tu-vu. Meyer added that this might indicate a state of mind. Years ago, Chabaneau asked if digastendonz could not equally well represent some sort of
physical attitude, and then wondered if the reading could be *gigas t’en donz* ("donne-t’en des jambes"), from which he proceeded by way of "à la course, à la hâte," to conclude that *digastendonz* meant "brusquement"—in his view a reasonably natural extension. More important, however, is Chabaneau’s excellent suspicion that the word could have been something created by the poet himself. In an early incarnation of his Provençal chrestomathy, Carl Appel proposed tentatively that *per digastendonz* means "in order to cause vexation," a rendering retained in all subsequent editions. Following on, soon after Meyer’s *Flamenca* in 1901, Mussafia dismissed (loc. cit., p. 10; cf. note 4, supra) these several hypotheses as "forced and unconvincing." He insisted that "the situation in v. 2441 requires ‘intentionally’ for *per digastendonz*, perhaps with a pejorative connotation, maybe something like ‘maliciously, with secret and evil intention.’ This is especially evident in v. 1557 and tolerably clear in v. 2441." In the *Supplement-Wörterbuch*, Levy supported this opinion, which, actually, is not very different from Appel’s.9

In subsequent years, so far as I know, no critic coped with *digastendonz* until the Lavaud-Nelli translation. As far as it goes, their rather free interpretation is more or less acceptable, but their explanatory note is discouraging. They render the two verses as follows: (line 1557) "Et tout cela il le faisait pour intimider"; (line 2441) "Arriva] après tout le monde, avec son air provocant." Their note, however, treats *digastendonz* as a “familiar” [sic] adverbial locution, to be broken down, as Meyer proposed sixty years ago, into *digas t’en, donz*. However, they translate this latter (literally, as they would have it, and with the intrusive comma after *t’en*) as "dis là-dessus, seigneur," meaning nothing more impressive than their explanatory "qu’as-tu à en dire?" As a possible alternative
to the “seigneur,” they do grant that the final syllable could have represented “donc.” But, “seigneur”!

From line 2441, it is clear that digastendonz is meant as a noun, so that, however reasonably adverbial it may appear in line 1557, the chances are that also in this earlier verse it is already a noun, merely in apposition either with the pronoun o (“cela”) or with Archimbaut as subject.

It is not unknown that the Flamenca poet had a gift for vivid meridional vehemence, and that he was a firm enough Latinist to give himself additionally handsome dividends, wherever available. But what is vivid or vehemment about juxtaposition of colorless digas and zestless t’en with an adverb as anodine as donc? If, as Chabaneau momentarily—and so well—suspected, the poet was fabricating something, even if only along dis-t’en donc lines, surely he would have sought something at least as energetic as, for example, the initial word in Raymond Queneau’s Zazie dans le Métro (Paris, 1959), a novel which begins with the portentous point which follows: “Doukipudonktan, se demanda Gabriel excédé. Pas possible, ils se nettoient jamais.” Although outright proof is lacking either way, it seems difficult not to expect something more energetic than mere dire or donc within a word as strenuous as digastendonz.

Nonce-words have been a prerogative of countless authors over the centuries, and well before Rabelais. In his Persa, Plautus perpetrated numquampostreddonides “one who never will return anything”; in the final moments for Troilus before his first operative meeting with Criseyde, Chaucer has him in a kankerdort, a word of baffling origin, but of unmistakable meaning; T. H. White refines American hooey into hoolarium; the American language has taken to itself innum-
erable items such as discombobulate (and its offshoot discombooberate), boondoggle, gobbledygook, foofaraw, hornswoogle, disirregardless, H. Caen's beatnik, and so on indefinitely. Is the creation of digastendonz anything more than a matter of thirteenth-century fancy?

Just as many nonce-words are readily explained in terms of etymological contrivings or in terms of contemporaneous distortions involving only the language in which such nonce-words arise, digastendonz lends itself to similarly ready explanation. It is inconceivable that the Flamenca poet was unaware of his own Provençal g(u)astar, of Latin (de)vastare, of pejorative implication in suffix -on(s), of Provençal dons ("lady"). Did he, then, take pedestrian pause and consciously assemble these ingredients in order to contrive a new word tailored, the while, to the firmest traditions of a Meyer-Lübke or a von Wartburg? It may be suspected that he subjected himself to no such rule-bound philological process.

Even for anyone non-Provençal, the sound-effects of digastendonz harmonize excellently with the style "stiff and strong" which infects the description of Archimbaut's jealous vagaries in both of the passages where the word occurs. Surely, the poet hit upon digastendonz by way of the kind of casual flash which brings on the creation of any new and successful syllabic concatenation. In any case, however consciously or otherwise, he arrived at this particular devising, it is interwoven with elements which pinpoint a literal meaning more specifically than anything suggested hitherto. Therefore, why not, to etymological windward of digastendonz, something on the order of devastante plus dominas which, in both passages, can yield the meaning "terrifier of ladies"? As already mentioned, in line 1558 immediately following digastendons, Archimbaut
says that his grisly appearance will make Flamenca cringe only the more. The incidental factor that dominas and donz do not match inflectionally is of no concern in a fanciful nonce-word: after all, note the commonplace mi donz ("my lady") in line 1558, just as anywhere else in medieval Provençal. Incidentally, Professor H. E. Keller has reminded me that digastendonaz is not listed in FEW, XIV, 202–7 (s. v. vastare).

A final word about digas t'en donz as the earlier, and still possible, explanation. While this fits perfectly in terms of letter-by-letter derivation, it is not only colorless in the context, but also s'en dire merits little if any acceptance or support per se: so far as I know, medieval examples are lacking, either in southern or northern France. Furthermore, the question always remains: what, in lines 1557 and 2441, would be the point of a digas t'en done ("say to yourself in the matter")? Racked with jealousy, would not a hirsute Archimbaut, unwashed, unbarbered, and unshaven, deserve better from the pen of his author-creator? With digastendonaz in the sense of "terror to women," the Flamenca poet discharges a literary debt to his Archimbaut, resoundingly.

1. Modern Language Notes, LXIV (1949), 468–70.
3. Cf. his 1866 critique, reprinted in Vermischte Beiträge, V, 280; Miss Prescott (op. cit., p. 32) renders muquet by "candle end."
4. For this and other mentions in this paper, cf. Mussafia's elaborate notes in the Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie, CXLV, No. 10 (1902). Cf. also Camille Chabaneau, Revue des Langues Romanes, XLV (1902), 5–43.


9. Lewent (*Bruchstücke*, p. 62) suggested that *digastendons* (line 1557) may be an adverb meaning "deliberately." Miss Prescott (p. 31) rendered line 1557: "and all this for pride and spite"; and lines 2440-2441 (p. 48): "last of all, in came the Adversary—a perfect scarecrow."

10. Cf. also Hubert and Porter, p. 436.