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<1176/c>	only other troubadour known from William IX's time, came from the Limousin, and most of the outstanding song-writers of the next generation - Cercamon, Marcabru, Jaufré Rudel, Bernard de Ventadour - lived and worked within the borders of Aquitaine. When four Poitevin knights were taken prisoner by Richard's Angevin grandfather Count Geoffrey Plantagenet they won their release by composing and singing a song in praise of their captor. In the history of European music the twelfth century is a key period of development, when the unison of Gregorian chant gave ground before polyphony - much to the disgust of conservative intellectuals like John of Salisbury, who complained of "the wanton and effeminate sound produced by caressing, chiming and intertwining melodies, a veritable harmony of sirens". And in twelfth-century music there is no place more famous than the abbey of St Martial's in Limoges. As well as church music many of the earliest troubadour lyrics, with their accompanying melodies, survive in manuscripts from St Martial's. In the visual arts Limoges was the great European centre of enamel work. In sculpture there are the magnificent and intricately carved facades of the church of Notre-Dame-la-Grande in Poitiers and of the cathedral at Angoulême. Perhaps even more revealing are the astonishing carvings which adorn many of the small Romanesque churches of the Saintonge, for whereas the facades of important churches, under the patronage of princes like the Duke of Aquitaine or the Count of Angoulême, may well be the work of internationally famous masters, these village churches make plain the strength of a purely local tradition of superb craftsmanship. The duchy of Aquitaine was not just the most civilized province in France, it was also a region of great wealth - it would have needed to be to support so much fine art. The learned English chronicler Ralph of Diss described its economy in glowing terms: Aquitaine overflows with riches of many kinds, excelling other parts of the western world to such an extent that historians consider it to be one of the most fortunate and flourishing of the provinces of Gaul. Its fields are fertile, its vineyards productive and its forests teem with wild life. From the Pyrenees northwards the entire countryside is irrigated by the River Garonne and other streams; indeed it is from these life-giving waters [aquae] that the province takes its name. Its main exports were salt and wine. Salt, one of the indispensable ingredients of medieval life, was produced along the whole length of the duchy's Atlantic coast. The main varieties were "Bay Salt" from the Bay of Bourgneuf in the north in the marches between Poitou and Brittany, the salt of Brouage, panned on the sheltered shores behind
 <p>Key: Footprint ConEn1 Footprint ConEn2 Footprint ConEn3</p>	<p>the isles of Oléron and Ré</p>
	<p>, and, in the far south, the salt of Bayonne. However, for the twelfth century we are much better informed about the rapidly expanding wine trade. There is plenty of evidence for the planting of new vineyards in the Bordelais and even a Poitevin was prepared to admit that Bordeaux wine was of superb quality, but at this date by far the most important wine-exporting region was further north, in Aunis and Saintonge. A fine white wine was produced around Niort, St Jean d'Angely and La</p>

	<p>Rochelle and then shipped overseas from La Rochelle. This port, founded as late as 1130, very quickly came to enjoy all the characteristics of a boom town. Its modern quays were well suited to accommodate the new large ships, known as cogs, which in the course of the second half of the twelfth century came to dominate the maritime trade of the Baltic, North Sea and Channel coasts. With these ships the merchants of La Rochelle could compete in the markets of England and Flanders with wines produced nearer at hand in the Paris Basin and the Rhineland. So successfully did they break into the English market that they soon put the native vineyards out of business. After all, as one late twelfth-century writer put it, English wine could be drunk only with closed eyes and through clenched teeth. This growing export trade was of great importance to the Duke of Aquitaine. By protecting the producers and merchants and by imposing tolls and customs dues he could profit from it doubly so if he ruled over the English and Norman ports into which the wine was imported. These revenues, unknown and incalculable though they are, helped to make the Duke one of the greatest and most powerful princes in Western Europe. It is misleading to write of Aquitaine as though it were one vast feudal jungle where vassals rebelled against their lords, nephews fought against their uncles, and all done with a passionate ferocity which left little or no room for effective ducal government. Yet this still tends to be the way in which historians do in fact describe Aquitaine. It is easy enough to point to famous feuds such as that between Ebles II of Comborn (in the Limousin) and his uncle Bernard, during the course of which Ebles raped his aunt in front of witnesses and which ended when his uncle castrated and murdered him. But to generalize from such sensational particulars as these is to ignore both commonsense and political geography. It is as nonsensical as measuring the power of English kings solely in the light of unusual incidents occurring in the marches against Scotland. All princes had to face the problems posed by distant and turbulent borderlands. The relatively peaceful and</p>
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