

Digital Editing and Linguistic Analysis: the First Redaction of the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*

Simone Ventura (King's College London)

Abstract

The Values of French Language and Literature in the European Middle Ages is an ERC-Advanced Grant project focused on Medieval French language and literature.¹ The *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César* (from now on *Histoire ancienne*), an early 13th-c. French prose work, provides us with the core textual tradition and is the case study and testing ground for the project.² The *Histoire ancienne* was compiled in North-Eastern France during the first quarter of the 13th century. It then travelled widely throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. The textual tradition of this prose work encompasses the Outremer territories, Italy, and France. Throughout its first two centuries of life, the *Histoire ancienne* assumed two major textual forms. The so-called first is the original version of this work.³ The second redaction is a structural

¹ While we focus on 13th-c. prose, as we shall see, we understand Old French as stretching from the ninth to the fourteenth century. It goes without saying that 15th-c. manuscripts passing down 13th-c. texts (*recentiores*) are included.

² While the *Histoire ancienne* is considered to be one of the earliest and most important works in Old French prose, there are in fact thirty pieces in octosyllabic couplets. For the most part these are moralizations, i.e. versified 'breaks' in the narrative line in which the narrator 'preaches' on important topics in Christian moral doctrine (fear of death, greed...). The length of the versified passages ranges from 284 verses of the verse prologue (the longest versified passage) to the simple couplet echoing the gnomic form of a proverb. Furthermore the prose itself has rhythmic 'allure': see MORCOS – VENTURA 2018. On the homiletic style of versified passages, see SZKILNIK.

³ The text of the first redaction of the *Histoire ancienne* has been partially edited: COKER JOSLIN (1986) (Genesis); DE VISSER-VAN TERWISGA 1995-1999 (Assirians, Thebes, Minotaurus, Amazons and

and stylistic modification of the first redaction.⁴ In this paper I will consider some of the specific linguistic issues raised by the manuscripts of the first redaction of the *Histoire ancienne*.⁵

In its current form, the first redaction of the *Histoire ancienne* is a universal history, dealing with human events from the creation to Caesar's military campaign in Gaul. The first redaction survives in over eighty manuscripts that have been copied and 'edited' in the Holy Land (Acre), Italy and France. It is in this version that the *Histoire ancienne* became one of the most successful companions to ancient history in the vernacular.⁶

By presenting the text and textual tradition of the *Histoire ancienne* as both a case study and a testing ground, we may make three points. The first is that the *Histoire ancienne* has strong paradigmatic potential. It raises a range of more general issues about the history and purposes of 13th-c. French prose, about the meaning and rhetoric of historical writing in late medieval Europe (and beyond), on the 'values' of French as a historical language and a language for historiography. Secondly, the *Histoire ancienne* poses its own specific editing problems that we have dealt with at three different levels: through digital manuscript editing, through the

Hercules); JUNG 1996 (Troy); LYNDE-RECCHIA (2000) (Thebes); GAULLIER-BOUGASSAS (2012) (Alexander the Great); ROCHEBOUET (2015) (Persia, from Cyrus to Assuerus).

⁴ On the second redaction of the *Histoire ancienne*, see BARBIERI 2005, 8; Id. 2014, 823-48. See also L. Barbieri, *Trois fragments peu connus du Roman de Troie en prose: Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig XIII 3 Porrentruy, Archives de l'ancien Évêché de Bâle, Divers 4 Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 1850*, in « Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes », 23 (2012), pp. 335-75. On the third redaction, see A. Rochebouet, *De la Terre Sainte au Val de Loire: diffusion et remaniement de l'Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César au XV^e siècle*, in « Romania » 134 (2016), pp. 169-203.

⁵ In a work on the notions of linguistic correction and norm under preparation, I will deal with the linguistic features of the second redaction. In a recent seminar, Luca Barbieri has brought up further evidence showing how the Parisian reception of the second redaction of the *Histoire ancienne* entailed a scrupulous refashioning of the linguistic form of the text. In further research work, I will investigate the linguistic nature of these scribal and editorial interventions.

⁶ The second redaction of the *HA* was compiled at the beginning/during the second quarter of the 14th century at the Neapolitan court of the Angevins. The second redaction of the *Histoire ancienne* is characterized by the omission of the Biblical and Alexander sections, while it preserves the 'matters' of Thebes, Aeneas and Rome, which are completed by the insertion of the fifth *mise en prose* of the *Roman de Troie*.

investigation of the textual tradition, and through the analysis of the language.⁷ The third is that the language of the *Histoire ancienne* cannot be disassociated from the ‘individuals’ who used it. This meant for us to approach the study of the language of the *Histoire ancienne* directly in the manuscripts we possess. Our perspective is twofold: as individuals, manuscripts show specific linguistic features that deserve attention *per se*; as elements of a textual and linguistic continuum (tradition), their similarities are taken along the differences that break the continuum down into discrete units.⁸ Each of these three points are taken into account in our division of labor. The relevant aspects of the *Histoire ancienne* are approached from three different angles: digital editing of two manuscripts selected for their inherent relevance and role at the heart of the *Histoire ancienne*’s tradition, the development and implementation of *Alignment*, a digital tool for the thorough study of the textual tradition, and the analysis of the language along the lines that I am going to clarify below.

In what follows I will present my approach to the French of the *Histoire ancienne*. The main research question is about how textual variation is linked to linguistic variation. Put in other terms, what is at stake is how medieval scribes negotiated their position between their own linguistic competence, the perception that they had of the features of the language reflected in their exemplar(s), and the

⁷ As Michele Barbi (1939: x-xi) put it: “ogni testo ha il suo problema critico, ogni problema la sua soluzione, e che quindi le edizioni non si fanno su modello e, per così dire, a macchina”. It is maybe not without irony that, responding precisely to this principle, current digital editions, including ours, are based on digital modelling and workflow development through machine processing.

⁸ See below §2. For the dialectical continuum / parts in linguistic analysis see WEINREICH 1954. As for manuscripts as individuals bearing crucial linguistic information, see FLEISCHMAN 2000, 34-35. In a private gloss to a quotation from Hjelmslev on the objective and independent existence from the individuals of the linguistic system, another medievalist sensitive to language, Franca Brambilla Ageno, argued: “Si potrebbe obiettare che il linguaggio non è un oggetto ma un ‘fare’ (secondo certe regole) e, come qualunque ‘fare’, non ha luogo indipendentemente dagli individui che ‘fanno’. Si potrà ammettere l’esistenza oggettiva (in realtà la conoscenza comune) delle regole di questo ‘fare’”. Ageno’s annotation is on the margins of her own copy of the Italian edition of 1964 Lászlo Antal’s book *Content, Meaning, and Understanding* (see CANOVA 2015, 103).

communicative goals set up by the text that they were transcribing (DE ROBERTO 2014, 494-495). The objectives of this approach are twofold. First, to acquire a better understanding of the language of the manuscripts that we are editing. Secondly, to grasp the link between textual variation and linguistic constraints. Textual variants may obviously respond to a number of linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. With regard to the linguistic level, textual variation takes place within limited linguistic margins. My approach will focus on these margins to clarify its features and 'boundaries'. This may have important implications for our editing practice and could provide us with new evidence about some of the major changes that the French language underwent over the 13th and 14th centuries. To evidence my approach, I will focus on the textual tradition of the first redaction. I will compare some relevant linguistic features of the manuscript of the first redaction that we are editing, Paris, BnF, f. fr. 20125 (= *fr20125*), with those of a sample of manuscripts relevant from the point of view of their mutual textual relationships and of their geographic and historical context of production.⁹

Given the length of the text of the *Histoire ancienne*, the number of manuscripts involved in the first redaction, and the range of potentially interesting linguistic features, I have worked on a restricted corpus of manuscripts and on a limited selection of relevant linguistic features. With regard to the selection of the manuscripts of the *Histoire ancienne*, I relied on previous work on the textual tradition updated with Maria Teresa Rachetta's research undertaken in the framework of the *TVOF* project.¹⁰ In so doing, I selected a number of manuscripts

⁹ For the manuscript references see Table 1 below. For a similar approach, see BURIDANT 2000 and SCHØSLER AND VÖLKER 2014. In an exercise applying current notions of contact linguistics to the Italian and the Catalan-Occitan lyric traditions, ZINELLI 2011 shows up to what extent textual and linguistic traditions are mutually intertwined.

¹⁰ OLTROGGE, JUNG 1996, DE VISSER, ZINELLI 2012, 2015a and 2015b, RACHETTA (forthcoming).

representative of all the acknowledged manuscript families and branches of the textual tradition of the *Histoire ancienne* (see Table 1 below).

Table 1 The manuscript corpus for the linguistic analysis

MS	Date	Place	Siglum ¹¹	Group
Paris, BnF, f. fr. 686	13 th c. <i>ex.</i>	Italy	<i>fr686</i>	
Paris, BnF, f. fr. 9682	14 th c. <i>in.</i>	France	<i>fr9682</i> ¹²	Acre Group
Brussels, KBR, MS 10175	13 th c. <i>ex.</i>	Acre	<i>B10175</i>	
Dijon, BM, MS 562	13 th c. <i>ex.</i>	Acre	<i>D562</i>	
London, British Library, Additional MS 15268	13 th c. <i>ex.</i>	Acre	<i>Add15268</i>	
Paris, BnF, f. fr. 20125	13 th c. second ½	North-Eastern France/French Flanders?	<i>fr20125</i>	
Rennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 2331	15 th c.	Brittany	<i>Rennes</i>	
Vienna, ÖNB, MS 2576	14 th c.	Venice	<i>Vienna</i>	
London, British Library, Additional MS 19669	13 th c. second ½	North-Eastern France/French Flanders	<i>Add19669</i>	Abridged Version
The Hague, MS 78D47	13 th c. second ½	North-Eastern France/French Flanders	<i>Hague78</i>	
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, f. fr. 17177	1280-1300	Soissons ¹³	<i>fr17177</i>	

As the following observations on the language of the *Histoire ancienne* are based on these manuscripts and their grouping, I will provide a brief synopsis of the main features of the acknowledged manuscript families and their mutual relationships:¹⁴

- The manuscripts *fr20125* and *Rennes* share a very similar text.¹⁵ For the sections devoted to the Genesis and the Greek *Vienna* has a text close to *fr20125* (and *Rennes*).

¹¹ A different convention in DE VISSER-VAN TERWISGA 12-14. RACHETTA forthcoming clarifies the structure and the nature of the editorial project of the Vienna manuscripts. She designates by *Vienna*¹ the sections of the manuscript closest to *fr20125*.

¹² *fr9682* is an early 14th-c. manuscript most probably copied in France on an Acre exemplar.

¹³ See GIANNINI 2016.

¹⁴ What follows relies on the substantial contribution to the rationalization and knowledge of the textual tradition of the *Histoire ancienne* provided by ZINELLI 2016a (especially with regards to *fr686*) and Maria Taresa RACHETTA forthcoming (especially in relation to the Abridged version and the structure of *Vienna*).

¹⁵ The place of compilation of *fr20125* is still under debate. See ZINELLI 2016a, 110: “Le manuscrit fr. 20125, lui-même, a été considéré comme originaire de Terre sainte, soit (plus probablement), comme copié d’un modèle de Terre sainte”. See also ZINELLI 2013.

- The manuscripts of the Abridged version present a shortened text of the sections Thebes, Greeks and Amazons, Troy, Eneas, Assyrian kings and the first paragraphs of the first part devoted to Roman history.¹⁶
- The manuscripts *fr20125*, *Rennes* and those of the Abridged family share a number of features and, most importantly, a significant error: an inversion in the correct sequence of a series of paragraphs.¹⁷ While this error implies that these manuscripts share a common exemplar, its absence from the manuscripts of the rest of the tradition means that they depend on different manuscript sources.
- The manuscripts of the Acre group were produced Outremer by the end of the 13th century. They show a great deal of common features but they are not without internal differentiation.
- With regard to the contents of the *Histoire ancienne*, the most conservative narrative sections across the tradition are those devoted to the Bible (Genesis up to Jacob) to Mesopotamian and Assyrian history (Orient I) and to Roman republican history (Rome II).¹⁸
- The manuscript *fr686* is an Italian manuscript but its linguistic features show that it was based on an exemplar produced in Acre.¹⁹

¹⁶ This group was formerly identified by Jung (1996) as the β group. RACHETTA (forthcoming)'s work is clarifying the exact nature of the relationships between both the manuscripts of this group and *fr20125* and this group and *Vienna* (see below).

¹⁷ Namely the inversion of *Histoire ancienne* §73-73: see now RACHETTA forthcoming.

¹⁸ See MEYER 1885, JUNG 1996 and TRACHSLER 2013 for the subdivision in parts and the respective labels of the narrative sections of the *Histoire ancienne*.

¹⁹ Crucial for the relations between *fr686* and the Acre tradition is ZINELLI 2016a. With regard to the language of the manuscript see ZINELLI 2016a: 113-114. As for the stemmatic 'position' of *fr686* within the Outremer tradition of the *Histoire ancienne*, see ZINELLI 2016a, 114, n. 163: "Le nombre de cas où *P10* [= *fr686*] coïncide en lacune avec *DBLPa* [= Acre group] pourrait suggérer que le manuscrit soit à placer dans une branche commune à ces manuscrits au sein de laquelle il occuperait une position de supériorité (ce qui donnerait raison de ses quelques coïncidences dans la bonne leçon avec *P* [= *fr20125*]"). The results of the linguistic/syntactic analysis in §2 below seem to confirm Zinelli's picture of this branch of the tradition.

- *Vienna* is a composite manuscript. According to RACHETTA (forthcoming), this codex underwent different stages of editorial work, including abbreviation and amplification.²⁰

As for the linguistic features, I have not defined a closed set of phenomena. Rather, I have established a twofold flexible criterion. In my approach, a linguistic feature is relevant if 1) it intersects two or more levels of analysis (e.g. graphemics and morpho-syntax; lexicon and syntax, and so on), and 2) if it can be described in terms of its distribution—i.e. through the description of the mutual relations that a certain (phono-morphologic, syntactic, lexical) element entertains with other elements within an environment or a set of environments (see below §2.1).²¹

As for the linguistic features, I have not defined a closed set of phenomena. Rather, I have established a twofold flexible criterion. In my approach, a linguistic feature is relevant if 1) it intersects two or more levels of analysis (e.g. graphemics and morpho-syntax; lexicon and syntax, and so on), and 2) if it can be described in terms of its distribution—i.e. through the description of the mutual relations that a certain (phono-morphologic, syntactic, lexical) element entertains with other elements within an environment or a set of environments (see below §2.1 and §2.2).²²

The contents of the paper are structured as follows. In § 1, I will briefly describe the three main digital outputs of the project as well as the approach and the digital workflow underpinning our editorial project and our analysis of the textual

²⁰ Rachetta's findings may lead to a significant redefinition of the position of *Vienna* in the textual tradition of the *Histoire ancienne*. While waiting for Rachetta's publication of her research, and given the fact that different sections of *Vienna* could need different linguistic treatment according to the editorial stage they mirror and the source(s) they depend upon, I have decided not to include the linguistic data from this manuscript in the examples below.

²¹ I prefer to use the generic term 'environment' rather than textual string or sentence because the analysis can involve both.

²² I prefer to use the generic term 'environment' rather than textual string or sentence because the analysis can involve both.

tradition. In §2, I will draw on two examples taken from edition of the *Histoire ancienne*-tradition to illustrate my approach to language and show how digital editing of one manuscript along with the study of the textual tradition via *Alignment* constitute the backbone of the linguistic study. In the conclusion (§3), I will return to the data presented in §2 to raise some questions that remain unanswered in this paper and that will be at the center of my future work on 13th and 14th-c. French.

1. THE *HISTOIRE ANCIENNE JUSQU'À CÉSAR*: DIGITAL SCHOLARLY OUTPUTS

The Values of French project is producing the following three main digital outputs.

1) Our *Digital edition* of the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César* provides the complete semi-diplomatic and interpretive editions of two of the most important manuscripts passing down the first and second redactions of this work respectively: *fr20125*, and London, British Library, Royal MS 20 D 1.²³ Our editorial work is to provide the first complete text of the first and second redactions of the *Histoire ancienne* this work. At present, only partial editions of this work are available, the text remaining largely unedited and underexplored.²⁴

The *Histoire ancienne* is a very long text: 410,000 words in *fr20125* and ca. 300,000 in MS Royal 20 D 1. Secondly, the textual tradition is complex. Particularly in its first redaction, the *Histoire ancienne* is passed down by a very rich, complex and contaminated tradition. The Parisian manuscript passes down the longest and most complete version of the work, including the over thirty verse moralisations

²³ <http://www.tvof.ac.uk/textviewer/> (last accessed: 06/01/2019)

²⁴ The most comprehensive study of the *HA*'s tradition is still Meyer (1885). For a critical synthesis of the current state of affairs in relation to the *HA*, see Trachsler (2013). For an interpretation of the status of history (and fiction) in the *HA* and in its manuscript tradition, see Gaunt (2016). The text of the *HA* has been partially edited: Coker Joslin (1986) (Genesis); de Visser-van Terwisga 1995-1999 (Assirians, Thebes, Minotaurus, Amazons and Hercules); Jung 1996 (Troy); Lynde-Recchia (2000) (Thebes); Gaullier-Bougassas (2012) (Alexander the Great); Rochebouet (2015) (Persia, from Cyrus to Assuerus).

interspersed in the different sections of the *Histoire ancienne*. This manuscript, which constitutes the *manuscrit de base* of all extant partial editions, will allow us and the scholarly community to have immediate access to the whole text of the first redaction. Most importantly, the *fr20125* is a unique linguistic monument deserving a comprehensive study in its own right (see below).

With regard to the second redaction, we have a completely different case. As recently proven by Luca Barbieri, the MS Royal 20 D I, the second codex that we are editing, not only represents the oldest surviving copy of the *Histoire ancienne*, it most probably is the copy on which all the other extant manuscript copies depend. In the stemmatic jargon, the MS Royal 20 D I is a surviving archetype.

2) The second digital output is *Alignment* tool.²⁵ This tool is producing the first complete mapping of the *Histoire ancienne*'s textual contents throughout the tradition. The analysis of the textual tradition is crucial to understand the dynamic and the history of this text. For this purpose, we developed a tool, called *Alignment*, which maps the contents of the manuscripts of the tradition and allows for their comparison at the structural, macro-textual level. It is thanks to this tool that we have made substantial progress in our knowledge of the textual tradition of the *Histoire ancienne*. This work is the basis for our rationalization of the stemmatic relations between the very high number of manuscripts of the first and second redactions of the *Histoire ancienne*. It will provide the basis for further progress on the editorial work on the text of the *Histoire ancienne*.

3) The third major digital output concerns the complete lemmatisation of the text of the manuscripts that we are editing. We are doing this in collaboration with Stephen Dörr and Markus Husar of the *Dictionnaire Étymologique de l'Ancien*

²⁵ <http://www.tvof.ac.uk/histoire-ancienne/alignment> (last accessed: 06/01/2019).

Français (DEAF). We are developing a research tool which will allow searches by lemmas or inflected forms. The lemmas are standardised according to Tobler – Lommatsch (1925-1976) and whenever necessary modified according to the guidelines of the *Dictionnaire Étymologique de l'Ancien Français*.

From a **technical standpoint**, the edition and lemmatization are based on a unique digital workflow. The text of each of the manuscripts that we are editing is saved into multiple XML files. The TEI schema, designed by Paul Caton (King's Digital Lab (KDL), King's College London), semantically captures the way the text physically manifest itself on the page and how it is interpreted by the editor. Working on multiple files helped distribute the editorial work among team members (without risk of clashes) and keeps the files small and manageable. The changes are made offline using an XML editor that validates the format of the files and immediately copies the content to a shared web space. Every two hours a program written by Geoffroy Noël (KDL, King's College London) and running on the web server copies the files from Dropbox, concatenates them into a single large file and expands all the editorial short hands. The project team can then use the Text Viewer on the website to preview their latest changes.²⁶ The Text Viewer is able to retrieve any portion of the text from the aggregated file, convert it to HTML on the fly and render it in the browser. This fragmentation of the text into small chunks not only makes the navigation more comfortable and responsive but also allows anyone to easily share links to any specific location in the text. The key benefit of this workflow is that the preview the researchers use to check their latest changes is totally consistent with the rendering which will eventually be offered to the end-users on the public website. Encoding issues can therefore be corrected early and directly in the source files and

²⁶ <http://www.tvof.ac.uk/textviewer/> (last accessed: 12/09/2018).

workflow bugs reliably reported to a KDL developer for further analysis and resolved without blocking or disrupting the editorial process.

The second part of the automated conversion workflow is related to the lemmatisation of the text. The texts of the two edited manuscripts are fully lemmatised, which is a most relevant contribution to the field of digital editions of medieval French texts. The aggregated files are fully tokenised and a 'keyword in context' (KWIC) is produced from it. The KWIC file is fed into Lemming, the online lemmatisation tool elaborated by Marcus Husar and Stephen Dörr for the *Dictionnaire Étymologique de l'Ancien Français* at Heidelberg. All the lemmatisation information will eventually be exported from Lemming to be incorporated into the text and the Text Viewer and a new search page on the site will let users search the text by lemma or form. Care was taken for this part of the workflow to accept minor changes in the input texts to be reprocessed by Lemming without losing any data.

The availability of the complete text of *fr20125* and the advanced elaboration of both *Alignment* and the lemmatization tools were crucial for the linguistic approach that I adopted and that I will illustrate in the next section: 1) the digital edition of the full text of *fr20125* presents us with the longest and most complete version of the *Histoire ancienne*; 2) the *Alignment* tool gives us a map of the contents of the manuscripts that eases the comparison of the linguistic phenomena across the textual tradition; 3) the lemmatization of the text provides an invaluable source for lexical information.

2. TEXTUAL AND LINGUISTIC VARIATION

In the following subsections I will focus on two linguistic features. In §2.1 I will consider the form and structure of the hypothetical comparative clauses (pattern: Fr.

‘comme si’ + (subject +) inflected verb = En. ‘as if’ + (subject +) inflected verb). We will see how the description of this feature depends on an issue concerning how some graphemic-phonological material is ‘transferred’ from one manuscript copy to another.²⁷ In §2.2 the focus will be on the adverbial relativizer *ou ens* and on the alternative strategies of adverbial locative relativization adopted by the manuscripts. The examples in subsections §2.1 and §2.2 guide our understanding of the scribes’ perception of and margins of tolerance to marked linguistic features. An appropriate description of these features may help us in catching a glimpse of the existence or residual survival of discrete linguistic varieties within the Old French continuum. Perception and tolerance move between the scribes’ respect for the exemplar, regardless of the grammaticality of the transcribed form in their own variety, and their conscious adoption of a marked feature to give the text a (stylistically) distinctive form.²⁸

2.1 Graphemics and Syntax

In modern French (like in modern English), the structure of hypothetical-comparative clauses is based on the template: *comme si* + noun phrase or pronoun (Pro) + inflected verb (V) (which corresponds to En. *as if* + Subject + V):

²⁷ While all the members of the team actively contribute to every aspect of the *TVOF*s research agenda, the linguistic seam of the project is under my responsibility.

²⁸ By linguistic variety I mean a discrete unit placed within the Old French continuum. The continuum can be analyzed in varieties sharing a core of “partial similarities” and featuring a smaller but crucial number of “partial differences” (WEINREICH 1954: 395). In Weinreich’s terms, “the more pressing and more troublesome problem [with this approach] is [...] how to break down a continuum into discrete varieties. What criteria should be used for divisions of various kinds?” (WEINREICH 1954: 396). The problem about how to consider and reorder differences within the Old French continuum is a serious one. As stated above, I have adopted an approach whereby textual variants are always analyzed at more than one linguistic level. The common thread, however, is that any variant always involves a morpho-syntactic or syntactic issue. Hence the importance that syntax has in my work on both the *Histoire ancienne* and Old French 13th-c. prose more generally. ‘Grammar’ is more likely to help us in identifying the salient trait of a linguistic variety or sub-variety. For a case whereby syntactic analysis gives us access to typologically different competing varieties in the same texts, see LEDGEWAY AND VENTURA (forthcoming) on the syntax of negation in matrix and subordinate clauses in Old French.

(1)

Il mangeait comme s'il n'avait rien bouffé depuis des journées
[He was eating as if he hadn't had anything to eat for days]

In modern French, both the hypothetical conjunction (*si*) and the pronoun (*il*) need to be expressed. Moreover, both are followed by a verb in the imperfect indicative. This structure is frequently attested in Old French, where the imperfect subjunctive mood is preferred to the indicative:²⁹

(2)

Si se regarde et voit cheüe
Sa mere al pié del pont arriere,
Et jut pasmee en tel maniere
Com s'ele fust cheüe morte.
(*Graal*, 620-623)

In the following examples from the *Histoire ancienne* I will discuss some cases where the comparative constructions do not entirely follow the *comme si* + Pro + V pattern. Contrary to modern French, in Old French it is possible to have elliptic constructions, such as:

(3)

Si par ressemble fiere beste,
com les gens doie corre sus
(Guillaume de Palerne ed. MICHA, 5526-5527)

Notice that in (3) the conjunction and the subject pronoun are not expressed. In this case, moreover, the present subjunctive is preferred to the imperfect of the subjunctive.

In (4) below, which comes from the Rome II section of the *Histoire ancienne*,³⁰ one of the elements of the hypothetical-comparative pattern is also missing.

However, the interpretation of which component of the hypothetical-comparative construction is not present might not be as straightforward as it seems:

²⁹ According to Moignet: 'l'imparfait de l'indicatif, exceptionnel au XII^e siècle, se développe au XIII^e' (248). Gérard Moignet, *Grammaire de l'ancien français: Morphologie – Syntaxe* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1988, 2nd edition).

³⁰ The Rome II section is devoted to the history of the Roman Republic until the end of the civil war.

(4)

Entre les autres merveilles qui avoient adonques en la cité de Rome et en la contree, avint l'an que la cité ot esté fundee ·cccc· et lxxx· ans tot droiturement, une grans merveille qui mout fu perillouse a veir et orible a raconter et a dire. Quar en pluisors lius sorgoit sans des fontaines et corroit toz vermaus aval les ruisseaus ausi **come ce fust aigue clere**. Et avec ceste merveille plovoit lais tos blans des nues et cheoit a grosses gotes si que la terre en estoit arosee ausi come ce fust de pluie. (*Histoire ancienne* §886.02)³¹

In this case, the interpretation of the graphemic and lexical material in the sequence *come ce fust aigue clere* has consequences for the comprehension of the syntax of the hypothetical-comparative structure and, as we will see, of the whole passage.³²

The question about example (4) is whether the form *ce* is an expletive pronoun (En. 'it') or whether it could stand for a conjunction (i.e. *ce* = *se* 'if'). Given what we standardly know about non-V2 word order in embedded clauses, my first hypothesis would be to interpret 'ce' here as an expletive subject (inasmuch as null subjects are not licensed in non-V2 embedded clauses).

The essential elements of the issue at stake are as follows. **First**, the graphemic oscillation between <c> and <s> followed by a mid front vowel (e) is frequent in *fr20125*, and we can find it both in Picard and Outremer documents (MINERVINI 2010, ROCHEBOUET 2015). Both *ce/se* as a pronoun or hypothetical conjunction ('if') are attested in Old French.³³

Second, two other instances of *ausi come ce* + V are attested in the same Rome II section.³⁴ The first occurs a few lines after the passage quoted above:

³¹ The references to the passages of the *Histoire ancienne* come from our edition, available at the following page: <<http://www.tvof.ac.uk/textviewer/>> (last accessed: 31/12/18).

³² With regard to the word *aigue*, its occurrences in texts from the Middle East and interpretation, see MINERVINI 2010, and ZINELLI 2016.

³³ Cf. occurrences in *DEAFél*. The form *se* for *si* is frequently attested in Old French: see the examples in *TL* 9,277,35 and 9,613,20ss.

³⁴ A third case, another rain based simile, can be found in the Rome II section: "ains traioient [et] lansoient [et] dune part [et] dautre si espesement a la uolee come ce fust pluie menuete ou prim tans dauril a la matinee." (§1124.4).

(5)

Et avec ceste merveille, plovoit lais tous blanc des nues et chiot a grosses gotes si que la terre en estoit arosee ausi **come ce fust de pluie**. (*Histoire ancienne* §886.02)

The second occurrence can be found a bit later in the same section:

(6)

[et] que li pluisor furent si agrevé de famine que li vif mangoient les mors [et] devoiroient **ausi come ce fussent bestes** sauvages dervees (*Histoire ancienne* §1058.2).

Notice that all the examples to date involve the copula être ‘be’.

Finally, the manuscripts of the main groups have the ‘standard’ structure:

(7a) [= (4)]

<i>Histoire ancienne</i> §886.02	<i>fr686</i> f. 304vb and <i>Acre</i> family (<i>Add15268</i> f. 230rb)	Abridged family (<i>Hague78D47</i> f. 136ra)
Quar en pluisors lius sorgoit sans des fontaines et corroit toz vermaus aval les ruisseaus ausi come ce fust aigue clere .	com se ce fust aigue clere com se ce fust aigue clere	einsi [com] se ce fust eue clere

There are some important exceptions, as in the following manuscript of the Abridged family:

(7b) [= (4)]

<i>Histoire ancienne</i> §886.02	<i>Add19669</i> f. 172vb
Quar en pluisors lius sorgoit sans des fontaines et corroit toz vermaus aval les ruisseaus ausi come ce fust aigue clere .	ensi com ce fust eue clere-

Add19669 is a 13th-c. manuscript of the Abridged family. On the basis of the illustrative cycle, it has been associated with other manuscripts. In this instance, however, *Add19669* reads differently from the manuscripts of the Abridged family.³⁵

Hague78D47 does not read like *Add19669* in either example (4) or (5):

(7c)

<i>Hague78D47</i> f. 136ra [= (4)]	<i>Hague78D47</i> f. 136ra [= (5)]	<i>Hague78D47</i> f. 166rb [=
------------------------------------	------------------------------------	-------------------------------

³⁵ Paragraphs §886 and §1058 are missing from *fr17177*. But §1124 is present: “com se ce fust pluie menuete” (f. 176va).

		(6)]
einsi [com]se ce fust eue clere	ausi [com] se ce fust de pluie	ausi [com]sece fussent bestes sauuages des uees-

If we come back to examples (4) – (6), examples like the following from the *Quatre livres des Rois*, seem to prove that the form *ce* in hypothetical-comparative clauses was perceived as a pronoun:³⁶

(8)
Absalom out fait un cunvivie **si cume çó fust** le cunvívie le réi (*Quatre livres des rois*, 82)³⁷

Also relevant here is the opposite order ‘si comme’, rather than ‘comme si’. This example may not exclude other interpretations of *ce*. There is evidence that in the *Histoire ancienne*’s tradition *ce* could stand for *se* (‘if’) in hypothetical clauses, albeit not in comparative structures. See the following unambiguous case in *Add19669*:

(9)
Mais sachiez q[ue] | **ce ne fust** la grant force de hercules que eles [*the Amazons*] | eussent mal mene les grezois- (*Add19668*, f. 76ra)³⁸

In both *fr20125* and the *Acre* family the sequence is *se ne*:

...**se ne fust** la grant force... (*fr20125* §509.08, *Add15268* f. 104ra, *D562* f. 87vb ecc.)

The oscillation <c>/<s> is not an uncommon graphemic trait in early Picard manuscripts. This oscillation could have produced a polymorphism whereby the scribes could have had //ce ~ se// as an alternative for ‘it’ and ‘if’. I wonder whether

³⁶ Cf. *TL* 2,83, 16 and most notably 23, where Tobler considers *ce* as the subject of athematic verbs (*estre* and so-called impersonal verbs): “als Subjekt unpersönlicher Verba” (cf. aussi BURIDANT 2000, §108) and “als Subjekt des unpersönlichen *estre* mit prädicativem Substantiv oder Adjektiv”.

³⁷ “Fecitque Absalom convivium quasi convivium regis” (II Sam. 13,27). In *Quatre livres de rois* this construction is well attested: I have counted xxx occurrences in the first xxx pages of Curtius’s edition.

³⁸ I understand this passage as follows: But be sure that, if it were not for the great strength of Hercules, they would have tormented the Greeks. Comparing *Add19669* with *Hague78D47*, we observe that the latter rephrases (9): “Mes sachiez ne fust la | g[ra]nt force hercules q[ue] eles eussent mal mene | les grezois” (*Hague78D47* f. 62rb).

this is the situation mirrored by *fr686*, an Italian manuscript copied from an Acre exemplar.³⁹ As regards (5), *fr686* reads:

(10)
aussi come **se** fust de pluie (*fr686* f. 304vb)⁴⁰

The hesitation as for whether the scribe of *fr686* could have interpreted *se* as a hypothetical conjunction rather than as a pronoun written with an <s> is confirmed by how *fr686* reads for (6):

(11)
aussi co[m] | se fussent bestes sauuaiges desuees (*fr686* f. 366va)

Since we know that in language in general two homophonous elements are often not tolerated, I wonder whether the copyist would have tolerated the ambiguity in *se* (= ‘if’ / ‘it’?) on a double basis: as said, the frequent <c>/<s> graphemic oscillation for [s], and the similarity between this French construct with the Italian equivalent *come se* + inflected verb structure.⁴¹

We can try to represent the presence of the (4), (5), and (6), where the hypothetical-comparative in asyndeton/polisyndeton (with or without the conjunction), in tabula form representing the textual tradition of the *Histoire ancienne*:

(12)

	Acre	fr686	fr20125, Rennes	Abridged fam.
<i>com se + ce + V</i>	+	+	+	+

	Acre	fr686	fr20125	Rennes	Add19669	Hague78D47
<i>come se/ce + V</i>	-	+	+	-	+	-

³⁹ See ZINELLI 2015.

⁴⁰ The Acre tradition has the standard structure: “aussi come **se ce** fust de pluie” (Add. 15268 230va).

⁴¹ See the following examples from Dante’s *Vita Nuova*: “E che io dica di lui **come se fosse corpo**, ancora sì come se fosse uomo, appare tre cose chi dico di lui” (VN XXV); “e detto che molti accidenti parlano, **sì come se fossero sustanzie e uomini**” (VN XXV). Note that (literary) Italian also allows ‘quasi’ in place of ‘come se’.

The two tables indicate that the unmarked structure (*comme se + ce + V*) is present in all the MSS. However, traces of the marked syntactic structure are present only in single manuscripts of all the known groups of MSS of the *Histoire ancienne*.

Exceptions are the manuscripts of the Acre family, *Rennes* and a few manuscripts of the Abridged family. Since, for reasons of economy, it is the rarest and oldest structure that is the most likely to be levelled in the tradition and not the reverse.⁴²

The fact that the marked structure is present in witnesses of all the groups and the respective branches of the tradition makes it likely for this structure to be present in the oldest stages of the tradition. On the other hand, the manuscripts of the Acre family and most of the manuscripts of the Abridged family show a lower degree of tolerance to the elliptic hypothetical-comparative structure that, by the end of the 13th century, must have been considered a diachronically marked ('archaic') feature. On the other hand, the tolerance of some of the manuscripts of the *Histoire ancienne*, namely *fr20125*, *fr686* and some MSS of the Abridged Version, to this form singles out the shape of the 'version' of the work passed down by these manuscripts.

In the next section, I will consider the use in the *Histoire ancienne* of the adverbial subordinator *ou/o ens* 'wherein, in which' (< UBI + INTUS) to introduce relative clauses with locative meaning.

2.2 Lexicon and Syntax: Locative Adverbial Relativizers⁴³

In Old French there was a rich series of locative adverbs and prepositions.⁴⁴ The most frequent adverb used in Old French locative relative clauses was *ou* (= *où* < UBI,

⁴² For an application of the sociolinguistic and contact linguistics notion of levelling in medieval textual traditions, see ZINELLI 2013 and ZINELLI 2016.

⁴³ The use of *ou* + adverbial that you discuss below does not include temporal uses of *ou/où* (e.g. *le jour où il est arrivé*).

⁴⁴ For an inventory and discussion of the Old French system of spatial deixis, see BURIDANT 2000, 531-537, §§430-435.

having both En. meanings of ‘where’ and ‘wherein’).⁴⁵ In the contexts in which the antecedent expresses the idea of a place that can be occupied or filled (e.g. a boat, a city, a chariot in examples (13), (14) and (16f) below), Old French had an alternative composite form, whereby *ou* is followed by another locative free morpheme (e.g. *ens/enz* < INTUS).

In the *Histoire ancienne*, *ou/o ens* occurs in six instances (§464.02, §799.10, §898.04, §900.08, §901.02, §1211.01). This form seems to be attested rarely in the second half of the 13th century and has virtually disappeared by the 14th century.⁴⁶ From a semantic perspective, *o/ou ens* is used in adjunct clauses clarifying or specifying the ‘content’ of the antecedent, like in the following example:

(13)

Et en cele bataille fu desconfis Anibal qui se mist en une barge, si s'en fui por guarandise avoir de sa vie, **quar la nes o ens il estoit** fu a force retenue et prise. Et il se lansa fors a grant paor, si se mist a la voie a poi de compaignie. (*Histoire ancienne* §900.08)⁴⁷

In my analysis of the adverbial relativizer in the *Histoire ancienne*, I have studied the distribution of *o/ou ens* in *fr20125* and in its textual tradition. In schematic terms, the results of this investigation can be illustrated in two types of strategies to encode relative locative clauses expressing the content of the antecedent.

Type 1: *ou ~ o/ou ens*. In this case *o/ou ens* is an adverbial subordinator alternative to *ou*:

⁴⁵ In present French *où* is the only form available. Adv. *où* can be reinforced by *là* in composite phrases (*là où*) – don’t you mean in ‘headless relatives’?. Other Romance languages, like old Italian, has other adverbial locative relativizers: e.g. *onde*, *donde*: see DE ROBERTO 2010. In Old and Modern French this form can be strengthened by *là* in the composite locution *là où* – again = ‘headless relative’.

⁴⁶ See below, note 35 for more details.

⁴⁷ In the example quoted by AND online from *The Romance of Horn* we have the same structure with the same antecedent: “Kar joe ai treis cent **nefs** la aval a la mer | **U enz** vindrent od mei meint hardi chevaler” (*The Romance of Horn* by Thomas, Edited by M. K. Pope, Oxford, Anglo-Norman Text Society 1955, vv. 4318-4319).

(14)

Quant ce fu fait, li concele o lor ost s'en alerent a Agrigente et si assistrent la cité **o ens li Poenien estoient** et lor emperere Hanibal li Vius avec o totes ses richeces. (*Histoire ancienne* §898.04 = *fr686* 309vb)

As the example shows, the same Type is in *fr20125* and *fr686*. We also find *ou enz* in part of the manuscripts of the Acre family:

(15)

ou enz estoient les po|eniyenz (*D562*, f. 197rb; *B10175*, f. 246rb)⁴⁸

Notice the different subject/verb order in *fr20125* and *fr686*, on the one hand, and in the manuscripts of the Acre family in (15), on the other. Contrary to what happens to the manuscripts of the Acre family, a nominal or pronominal subject is always fronted (in pre-verbal position) in all the instances of *ou ens* in *fr20125* (this is true in four out of six cases in *fr686*). This difference in subject/verb order begs the question whether this is the result of a different ‘perception’ of the capacity of the adverb *enz* to ‘fill’ the preverbal zone. Put simply, the issue is about whether *fr20125* (and *fr686*), on the one hand, and the manuscripts of the Acre family, on the other, analyzed the sequence *ou ens* differently, i.e. giving a different syntactic interpretation of the relative clause and of the subordinator introducing it. The concluding hypothesis is then that when we get *ou ens* + Subj + V, *ou* + *enz* must form a single constituent, otherwise the stronger rule of embedded SVO would be violated, namely: Adv + S + V + O (it would be a case of embedded V2 only if we had *ou* adv + V + S + O...), which we don’t find. I will come back to this below discussing **Type 2**, in (16a) - (16f) and in the final summary in (17).

Type 2 *ou* [+ *enz/dedenz*]. In the manuscripts of the Abridged family, the locative relativizer is *ou* instead of *ou enz*:

(16a)

ou li poenien | estoie[n]t (*Hague78D47* f. 138va)⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Innovative form in *Add15268*: “ou estoient les poeniyens” (*Add15268*, f. 234rb).

When some of the manuscripts of the Abridged family keep *enz*, this is analyzed as a free morpheme and is often placed in post-verbal position:

(16b)
ou li poenienz estoient **enz** (*Add19669*, f. 176ra)⁵⁰

If we compare the following passage in *fr20125* with the reading of the manuscripts of the abridged family, the distribution is consistent with what we have just seen:

(16c)

<i>Histoire ancienne</i> §799.10	(<i>Add19669</i> , f. 150va = <i>fr17177</i> , f. 141rb) ⁵¹
E si ot ·vi· mile chars· [et] ·viii·cens ausi ri[b]chement appareillies ou ens home haus [et] poissant de chiualerie estoient·	apparoilliez ou haut home [et] puissant dech[euale]rie estoie[n]t dedenz ·

The manuscripts of the Abridged family show the same relativizing strategy in (16b) and (16c). The difference lies in the choice of the post-verbal locative adverb: the more archaic *enz* in (16b) is replaced by the composite form *dedenz* (< DE + INTUS) in (16c). Notice the complementary subject/verb order: in both cases, the nominal subject (*li poenienz* and *haut home [et] puissant* respectively) is fronted while the locative adverb is in post-verbal position.

⁴⁹ In later Parisian manuscripts of the Abridged family, the clause appears rephrased in a way which is semantically consistent with the meaning conveyed by *ou enz* ('wherein'): *ou li poonien sestoient mis* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, NAF 3576, f. 142vb—Paris, 14th c.).

⁵⁰ Same use in the Anglo-Norman example quoted from the Anglo-Norman *Lapidaire* (*Anglo-Norman Lapidaries*, ed. P. Studer and J. Evans, Paris, 1924) in the AND online's (s.v. *enz*): "fet en petit tens l'ewe boyllir u ele [i.e. the stone Heliotrope] est enz" *Lapid* 129 (full text available: <http://txm.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/bfm/> [last access: 03/01/19]). Adverb *enz* is typically used in postverbal position. See the following examples from the Rome section in the *Histoire ancienne* tradition: "Adonc avint que li Roumain, qui mout avoient grant force, orent nes mises sor mer et gens **ens** et chivaliers" (§870.02 = *Add19669* f. 168va); "Adonc entrerent **ens** lor gens cil qui porent, mais mout en i ot ocis et de pris as destrois del entree des lices deforaines" (§940.05 = *Add19669* f. 186ra).

⁵¹ As expected, *fr686* has the conservative strategy (**Type 1**): "apareillies **ou ens** haut home | et puissant de ch[euale]rie estoie[n]t": (*fr686*, f. 272ra). In a generative analysis, we could derive the facts commented on above by claiming that the adverbial spells out the base position of the locative relative 'où' before it is moved to the clause initial position, e.g. [la maison [Jean dort **où-(ded)enz**]] > [la maison [**où** Jean dort **où-(ded)enz**]]. By contrast, in examples like (14), we could argue that the whole locative raises, namely la maison [**où enz** Jean dort où-(ded)enz]. This would be comparable to English preposition stranding in relatives, e.g. [the house [Jean sleeps **in which**]] > [the house [**which** Jean sleeps **in which**]] and [the house [**in which** Jean sleep **in which**]].

With examples (16b) and (16c) in mind, we can come back to the variant reading of example (13) above. *Rennes*, a manuscript of the early 15th c. very close to *fr20125*, reads *ou dedens* for *ou ens*:⁵²

(16d) [= (13)]

<i>Histoire ancienne</i> (§900.08)	<i>Rennes</i> f. 270va
Et en cele bataille fu desconfis Anibal qui se mist en une barge, si s'en fui por guarandise avoir de sa vie, quar la nes o ens il estoit fu a force retenue et prise. Et il se lansa fors a grant paor, si se mist a la voie a poi de compaignie.	Car la nefz ou dedens estoit [i.e. Hannibal] fut a force retenue et prise- et il se lanca hors a grant paour si se mist a la uoiea peu de compaignie-

The adverb *dedens*, a more ‘modern’ locative than *ens/enz*, appears in pre-verbal position, right after *ou*.⁵³ We might say that the choice of *dedens* would be the less marked option for a scribe of the 15th century. From this standpoint, *Rennes* would then represent a sort of compromise between ‘conservative’ and ‘innovative’ relativizing strategies: the superficial word order is maintained except for the substitution of the ‘old’ with the ‘new’ (*ou ens* ~ *ou dedens*) and for the omission of the subject pronoun. When *Rennes* has the subject and the locative adverb *dedens* both in pre-verbal position, the adverb is always separated from the relative subordinator *ou* precisely by the subject:

(16e) [= (14)]

<i>Histoire ancienne</i> (§898.04)	<i>Rennes</i> f. 269vb
la cité o ens li Poenien estoient	ou les poeniens dedens estoeient

In light of examples (16b), (16c) and (16e), I wonder whether we may reconsider the syntactic interpretation of the cases of *ou enz* and *ou dedens* in *Rennes* (16e) and in the manuscripts of the Acre family (15) respectively:

⁵² Old French lexicalised composite adverbial/prepositional phrases made of two or more morphemes: e.g. *çaienz* (< *ça* + *ens*, also spelled *chaiens*, *ceianz*, *ceenz*, *cenz*) and *laienz* (< *la* + *enz*). Cf. modern forms *céans* and *léans*, although not in use anymore (literary examples in late 19th- and early 20th-c. literature see *TLF* online, s.v.). The same principle is found in current French composite adverbs/prepositions and adverbial locutions like *dedans* and *là-dedans*. See BURIDANT 2000, 533-536, §§431-434.

⁵³ It is worth reminding ourselves that *dedans*, adverb and preposition, is current in modern French.

(16f)

<i>ou</i>	<i>dedens</i>	<i>estoient</i>	Ø
REL	Adverb	Copula	PRO ⁵⁴

<i>ou</i>	<i>enz</i>	<i>estoient</i>	<i>les poeniyenz</i>
REL	Adverb	Copula	Subject

In the same way I would consider the following case where *Add15268*, a 13th-c. manuscript of the Acre family, reads *ou sus* for *ou ens*:

(17a)

<i>Histoire ancienne</i> §799.10	<i>Add15268</i> , f. 204rb
E si ot ·vi· mile chars· [et] ·viii·cens ausi ri[b]chement appareillies ou ens home haus [et] poissant de chiualerie estoient·	[et] si ot ·xvi·xx·[et]viii· chars· ri[chement appareillies· ou sus estoient haus homes [et] puissa[n]z de che[u]alerie·

In tabular form the different interpretation of the syntactic structure of the adverbial relative clauses can be represented as follows:

(17b)

<i>ou</i>	<i>sus</i>	<i>estoient</i>	<i>haus homes</i>
REL	Adverb	Copula	Subject

in contrast with *fr20125*:

<i>ou enz</i>	<i>home haus...</i>	<i>estoient</i>
REL	Subject	Copula

On this basis, I would classify examples like (15), in manuscripts of the Acre family, (16d), in *Rennes*, and (17a), in *Add15268*, as variants of the **Type 2** relativizing strategy rather than of the relativizing strategy in examples of **Type 1**, where the subordinator is the composite form *ou enz*.

In a schema, the data for the strategies for locative relativizer subordinators can be summarized as follows:

⁵⁴ PRO stands for pronoun-dropping (pro-drop), i.e. the superficial absence of the pronominal subject in the clause.

(18)

Type1//ou ~ ou ens//	fr20125 + fr686
Type2//ou (+ enz ~ dedenz ~ sus)//	Abridged family + Acre family + Rennes

Type 1 (fr2s0125 + fr686) represents the more archaic strategy, whereby *ou ens*, works as a subordinator introducing adverbial relative clause, used in a context which in modern English would require either ‘where’ or ‘in which’.

Type 2 represents the innovative strategy, where the locative relativizer is *ou*. When the antecedent requires it, the manuscripts may have a locative adverb: *enz*, *dedenz* or *sus*, which can either appear in post-verbal position or be raised in pre-verbal position (examples (15), (16d), (16f)), in which case the subject is either dropped or postponed.

The difference between **Types 1** and **2** might be better grasped if we compare the different structures involved in the relativizing strategies in the textual tradition of the *Histoire ancienne* with the grammar of adverbial relative clauses in other languages. To illustrate this point, let us take example (19a):

(19a)

Si s'en vint en la montaigne o cil estoient qui les Romains destreignoient et se si combati a aus tot plainement tant que li conceles Calatinus et ses grans esfors fu tos trespasés les grans destrois **o ens il embatu estoient** (*Histoire ancienne* §901.02).

As expected the manuscripts do not have the marked word order:

(19b)

ou il estoient emba|tu· (fr686 311rb, Add19669 f. 177ra, D562 f. 198rb, and so forth)

Consistent with what we have seen above (see (16d)-(16e) and our comments related to exs (16f) and (17a) and (17b)), *Rennes* has both the subject and the adverb in pre-verbal position, while the past participle precedes the auxiliary:

(19c)

ou il **dedens** embatu | cestoit· *Rennes* f. 271ra.

The grammar of the examples of relative locative clauses introduced by *ou ens* in (19a) is similar to the configuration of adverbial relative clauses in present High German:⁵⁵

(19d)
 les grans destroys **o ens il embatu estoient**

o ens	il	embatu	estoint
REL	S	PTCPL	AUX

with the relative clause in the following example from German:

Das Interessanteste, **worüber wir gesprochen haben**, war das Essen.

worüber	wir	gespröchen	haben
REL	S	PTCPL	AUX

Examples (19a) and (19b) show how both in *Histoire ancienne* **Type 1** and German the relativizer (REL) introduces a clause whereby the past participle (PTCPL) is fronted separating the pronominal subject (S) from the inflected auxiliary (AUX).

The examples discussed above should clarify how the difference between **Type 1** and **Type 2** may have structural implications. From this perspective, we could say that the two different strategies for adverbial relative clauses correspond to two different linguistic varieties of Old French: one (**Type 1**) that survives only in *fr20125* but also in *fr686* (albeit to a lesser extent); and one (**Type 2**) that involves the rest of the manuscript tradition of the *Histoire ancienne* (although in different measures and according to different superficial solutions). We could ask whether it is possible to discern which of the two varieties correspond to the oldest linguistic layer in the textual tradition. The examples of **Type 1** appear in two manuscripts, *fr20125* and *fr686*, of different branches of the *Histoire ancienne* tradition. **Type 1** should then mirror an older linguistic layer in the manuscript tradition, while **Type 2** would

⁵⁵ The French example in (19d) could also be analysed as a case of so-called ‘stylistic inversion’. See Irene Franco’s phd thesis: http://www.ciscl.unisi.it/doc/doc_pub/Irene%20Franco%20PhD%20thesis.pdf.

then be the polygenetic response of scribes who might have perceived the concurrent variety as increasingly difficult to tolerate as such.⁵⁶

A final consideration. In two instances *fr686* reads differently from *fr20125* with regard to the locative relative clause subordinator *ou ens*. The first is illustrated in (19b) above. The second corresponds to the *varia lectio* to example (20) below:

(20)

Amphioraus estoit apeles par non en griois language· de scie[n]ce estoit renomes sor toz ceaus dou roiaume alor deus cest alor ymages quil aoroient **ou ens lidiable habitoient prendoient** respons [et] adeuinances· Cil amphioraus auoit ia parle a ses ymages· [et] demande del ost des grius· [et] de la bataille· [et] respondu li auoient [et] dit que sil avec le roi en aloit a thebes· ia ne repairoit ariere· ains ouerroit la terre soz lui [et] fundroit si que toz uis cherroit aual en abisme· (*Histoire ancienne* §464.02-03)

For the scribe of *fr20125*, it was the people of Thebes who *prendoient respons*, who went (directly or via Amphiarus, the mediator) to the gods looking for answers and advice, thus “toz ceaus dou roiaume” doubles up as the subject of the following clause. It is possible that the plural form *prendoient* in the root clause was triggered by the plural form *habitoient*, the verb of the relative locative clause, and eased by the distance of the verb from its subject.

Looking at the textual tradition for this passage, the most important differences among the manuscripts concern two aspects: 1) the adoption of a

⁵⁶ One variety for which our only documentary evidence is in 12th and early 13th-century texts. In further research I will provide a thorough investigation of the use and chrono-geographic distribution of the phenomenon. It would be interesting to verify to what extent it is just a coincidence that the TL, AND online, *Frantext* and *BFM* examples of *ou ens* relative clauses are from manuscripts and texts localised either in the Insular or in North-Eastern regions of the French speaking domain. In the dictionaries and according to the partial recognition of the texts in *BFM* and *Frantext*, the examples are confined to the 13th century. TL (3,738,28) attests the locative subordinator *ou ens/enz* four times in three texts, namely: once in Robert de Clary's *La conquête de Constatinople* ('le galie ou ens il estoit', glossed in German 'wo drinnen'); once in *Dits et Contes de Baudouin de Condé et de son fils Jean de Condé*, p. p. Aug. Scheler, t. I: Baudouin de Condé, Bruxelles 1866 ('En ce mal siecle ou ens nous sommes' 63,13); twice in Chrétien de Troyes's *Première Continuation de Perceval* Potvin's edition based on an Hainaut ms: *P* = Mons Univ. 331/206 (4568) [tourn. 2em. 13es.] ('li greaus ... **U ens li ciers sans glorious**' 28074, and l. 35018 for the second context; ed. Potvin 1865-1871). The AND online, s.v. *enz*, provides three more occurrences: *Lapid.* 129 (where the form is split *u... enz*, like in *Add19669*, illustrated by (15a) below), *Folie Tristan* ANTS 429, *Horn* 4319. To the instances of the dictionaries, I can provide the following examples: “Un grant boucel ou ens il mist son vin” (Moniage Guillaume. Seconde Rédaction, in *Les deux rédactions en vers du Moniage Guillaume : chansons de geste du XIIIe siècle*. Vol. 1, p. 329-330).

relativizing strategy to replace *ou ens* as a subordinator, and 2) the verbal form of the root clause within which the locative relative clause is embedded. **First**, the relative adverbial *ou ens* clause is omitted in all cases, including *Rennes* (f. xyz):

(21)

Amphio|raus estoit par nom appelle en grec | langaige· De science estoit sur tous re|nomme de ceulz du royaume a leur | dieu· Cest des ymages quil adoroient· et prenoit response· et deuineme[n]t·

[He was called Amphiaraus in the Greek language... he sought responses and augury from their gods, i.e. from the effigies/sculptures that they worshipped]

Secondly, *Rennes*, the manuscripts of the Acre family and *fr686* have a 3SG matrix verb, *prenoit* (instead of the 3PL *prenoient*). In these manuscripts, Amphiaraus is the grammatical subject of the whole sentence:

(22)

Aleur dex cest | as ymages q[ui] aoroient prenoit | respons [et] deuinances· (Add15268 f. 90vb, *fr686* f. 119vb)

The manuscripts of the Abridged family show a different state of affairs. They obliterate the *ou ens* structure, but not the locative relativizing strategy. Moreover, they also have a plural verb in the root clause:

(23a)

[et] estoit a|pelez amphoras· cil estoit renomez descien|ce sor toz ceaux douroiaume· alor ymaige | quil aouroient ou lideables auoit res|pons a ce quil lidemandoient· (Add19669 f. 68rb, *fr17177* f. 60vb,)

[and he was named Amphiaraus. That one was praised for his wisdom above all the people of the kingdom. To their effigy that they worshipped where(?) the devil responded to what they asked him.]

The whole sentence is more difficult to rationalize. If *li deables* is the subject of relative *ou*-clause, then the dative clause that ends the passage should be the complement of the verbal locution *auoit respons* (*auoit respons a ce quil li demandoient*). If this is the case, *avoir respons* would mean 'to answer'. Another possibility is to read this passage as follows:

(23b)

a lor ymaige qu'il aouroient ou li deables <habitoit>, avoit[= il = *Amphiarus*] respons a ce quil[= *toz ceaux dou roiaume*] li demandoient.

In this interpretation we would have *Amphiarus* and *toz ceaux dou roiaume* are the implied subjects of *auoit respons* and *demandoient* respectively.⁵⁷ The integration of a missing stative verb (such as *habitoit*) could be justified with simple a *saut du même au même*: “li deables habitoit avoit” > “li deables avoit”. The absence (or omission?) of *adevinances* could have led to a last modification, the insertion of the verb *demandoient*. All these small changes could be a trace of the attempt of the scribe of dealing with the ambiguity of *fr20125* verbal plural form *prendoient* (see above (20)). If this is the case, then the plural form of the verb in the root clause in *fr20125* may derive from their common source. The occurrence of a third person singular verb in *Rennes* and *fr686* and the manuscripts of the *Acre* family could be due to the scribes all separately reading *prenoit* for *prenoient*. Both *prenoit*, on the one hand, and *auoit respons*, on the other, could well be a polygenetic adjustment introduced independently by different scribes of manuscripts pertaining to different groups and different branches of the *Histoire ancienne* tradition. Be that as it may, *fr20125* stands in isolation (a possible *lectio singularis*?) in relation to the rest of the tradition. One may wonder whether there might be sufficient elements for an emendation of *fr20125* that could also be supposed as the original reading:

(24)

A lor deus, c'est alor ymages quil aoroient, ou ens li diable habitoient, <et prendoit> respons [et] adeuinances.

⁵⁷ In spite of its difficulty, the reading of *Hague78D47* (f. 55vb) seems to support the idea that the subject of *demandoient* is “*toz ceus dou reaume*”: “Cil estoit re[n]omez descience sor toz ceus dou reaume· alor ymages quil aoroient seur qui li deables auoit respons ace q[ui]l demandoient·”.

3. CONCLUSION

Examples in section §2 illustrate how textual variation is linked with specific linguistic features at graphemico-syntactic level in §2.1 and at lexico-syntactic level in §2.2.

This connection is based on the comparison of a sample of manuscripts chosen on the basis of the digital edition of the complete text of the *Histoire ancienne* (based on *fr20125*), and the availability of a tool, *Alignment*, a map of the contents of the *Histoire ancienne* in its rich manuscript tradition. *Alignment* has proven an invaluable instrument in understanding the relations between the manuscripts of the *Histoire ancienne*. At the same time, we would not have realized the ‘competition-behavior’ among the manuscripts without *Alignment* and the systematic study of the textual tradition.⁵⁸

From a linguistic perspective, the first redaction of the *Histoire ancienne* as it appears in *fr20125* and *fr686* (and to a lesser extent in *Add19669*) reflects a peculiar form of the text different from that passed down by the rest of the textual tradition. For reasons of economy, it is more sensible to suppose that *fr20125* and *fr686* had a more conservative approach to the language of its sources than the other manuscripts. The rest of the tradition tended to level those linguistic features that might have been perceived ‘marked’, albeit in different measures. Now, the manuscript *fr20125*, those of the Acre family and of some the manuscripts of the Abridged family were all compiled at the end of the 13th century. The linguistic refashioning of the first redaction of the *Histoire ancienne* could have started relatively early, but its traces become visible at only at a later stage, during the last decades of the century, when features like those exemplified in §2.1 and §2.2 might have begun to feel structurally marked and stylistically old-fashioned or archaic. We

⁵⁸ See also LEDGEWAY – VENTURA forthcoming.

also know that the editing work witnessed in the manuscripts of the Abridged family is anterior to the mid 1260s (RACHETTA forthcoming). The behavior of manuscripts such as *Add19699*, where some of the marked features are still present, indicates that the linguistic editing was done progressively after the archetype of the Abridged family was composed, hence after 1266. The almost complete absence of the marked features described above in the manuscripts of the Acre family shows how the margin of tolerance for certain linguistic characteristics shrank over the last two decades of the 13th century.

On the other hand, the conservation of these features in late 13th-c. or early 14th-c. manuscripts pertaining to different families of the *Histoire ancienne*'s textual tradition, such as *fr20125*, *fr686* (and more rarely in *Add19669*), shows that we are not facing singular innovations of an idiosyncratic scribe. It means that these features were most probably in place at a very early stage in the textual transmission.⁵⁹ But it also raises questions about their rhetorical and aesthetic status. The marked word order and structural distribution discernible in *fr20125* and elsewhere might certainly respond also to rhetorical strategies. For example, the kind of discontinuous structure visible in *fr20125* (19a) and *Rennes* (19c) could be a case of hyperbaton. But syntactic apprehension and rhetorical interpretation are certainly not mutually exclusive. The kind of aesthetic inclination for 'discontinuity' visible in *fr20125* is closely linked with an actual spectrum of linguistic possibilities. These possibilities changed in time along with changes in the linguistic structure and with changes in the taste of late 13th-c. scribes and readers. The kind of structural oscillation that we have observed in the textual tradition of the *Histoire ancienne*, takes place along two axes of variation. The first is diachronic and responds to the

⁵⁹ We are not dealing with what textual scholarship traditionally name *lectiones singulares* (singular variant readings). Important as they are linguistically and culturally, this kind of variant reading is not taken into account for the purposes of textual reconstruction.

changes in the linguistic system. The second is diaphasic (stylistic) and is driven by communicative, generic, and 'literary' stimuli (LEDGEWAY and ROBERTS 2017: 596, LEDGEWAY 2012: 236). For example, it is possible that the redactor of the *Histoire ancienne* could have played with verb final orders available in subordinate contexts in very Old French, viz. the relative embedded clauses commented above.⁶⁰ This linguistic characteristic could have helped him giving the French prose a shape redolent of the rhythmical prose (with *clausolae* and other figures of the *cursus*) so frequent in medieval Latin works (GUGGENHEIMER 1972, SCHIAFFINI 1943, POLHEIM 1925). While this might have been felt as a stylistically marked but suitable feature over the first decades of the 13th century, it became barely acceptable in prose by the end of the century. Before dropping out of use, it persisted as a sporadic archaism in a very limited number of, albeit crucially important, manuscripts of the *Histoire ancienne* tradition.

⁶⁰ ROBERTS and LEDGEWAY 2017, 596, and BAUER 1995, 107-111.

Bibliography

BARBI, Michele. 1938. *La nuova filologia e l'edizione dei nostri scrittori da Dante a Manzoni*. Florence: Sansoni.

BARBIERI, L. 2005. *Le 'epistole delle dame di Grecia' nel 'Roman de Troie' in prosa. La prima traduzione francese delle 'Eroidi' di Ovidio*. Tübingen/Basel: Francke.

———. (2012). *Trois fragments peu connus du Roman de Troie en prose: Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Ludwig XIII 3 Porrentruy, Archives de l'ancien Évêché de Bâle, Divers 4 Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 1850*, in « Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes », 23 (2012), pp. 335-75.

———. 2014. *Roman de Troie Prose 5*, in M. COLOMBO-TIMELLI (ed.), *Nouveau repertoire des mises en prose (XIV^e-XVI^e siècle)*, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2014, pp. 823-48.

BAUER, Brigitte L. M. 1995. *The Emergence and Development of SVO Patterning in Latin and French*. Oxford: OUP.

CANOVA, Andrea. 2015. "Dal laboratorio di Franca Brambilla Ageno: annotazioni per il metodo e una corrispondenza con Sebastiano Timpanaro." *Tra filologia e storia della lingua italiana. Per Franca Brambilla Ageno*. Edited by Andrea Canova, 77-109. Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura.

COKER JOSLIN, M. (1986). *The Heard Word: a Moralized History. The Genesis Section of the Histoire ancienne in a Text from Saint-Jean d'Acre*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press.

DE ROBERTO, Elisa. 2014. "Varietà medievali e descrizione del sistema. Note alla Grammatica dell'italiano antico". *Romanische Forschungen*, 126, 487-510

FLEISCHMAN, Suzanne. 2000. "Methodologies and Ideologies in Historical Linguistics: On Working with Older Languages". *Textual Parameters in Older Languages*. Edited by S. C. HERRING, Peter VAN REENEN, Lene SCHØSLER, 33-58. Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

GAULLIER-BOUGASSAS, C. 2012. *L'Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César, ou Histoires pour Roger, châtelain de Lille. L'histoire de la Macédoine et d'Alexandre le Grand*. Turnhout: Brepols.

GAUNT, Simon. 2016. Philology and the Global Middle Ages: British Library Royal Ms 20 D 1. *Medioevo Romanzo*, 40: 27-47.

JUNG, Marc-Renée. 1996. *La Légende de Troie en France au Moyen Âge: Analyse des versions françaises et bibliographie raisonnée des manuscrits*. Basel/Tübingen: Francke.

LEDGEWAY, Adam. 2012. *From Latin to Romance: Morphosyntactic Typology and Change*. Oxford: OUP.

LEDGEWAY, Adam and Ian ROBERTS. 2017. "Principles and Parameters". *The Cambridge Handbook of Historical Syntax*. Edited by Adam Ledgeway and Ian Roberts, 580-628. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lynde-Recchia, M. (2000). *Prose, Verse, and Truth-Telling in the Thirteenth Century: an Essay on Form and Function in Selected Texts, Accompanied by an Edition of the Prose Thèbes as Found in the Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*. Lexington: French Forum.

MEYER, Paul. 1886. "Les premières compilations françaises d'histoire ancienne". *Romania*, XIV, 1-81.

MICHA, A. 1990 (ed.). *Guillaume de Palerne*. Genève: Droz, 1990 («TLF», 384).

MONTORSI, Francesco. 2016. Sur l'*intentio auctoris* et la datation de l'*Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*. *Romania* 134:151-68.

RACHETTA Forthcoming a: Brunetto *MR*

RACHETTA Forthcoming b: Francigena

ROCHEBOUET, Anne. 2015. *L'Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César ou Histoires pour Roger, châtelain de Lille, de Wauchier de Denain. L'histoire de la Perse, de Cyrus à Assuérus*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2015.

ROCHEBOUET, A. (2016). De la Terre Sainte au Val de Loire: diffusion et remaniement de l'Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César au XV^e siècle. *Romania* 134: 169-203.

SCHØSLER, Lene and VÖLKER, Harald. 2014. "Intralinguistic and extralinguistic variation factors in Old French negation with ne-Ø, ne-mie, ne-pas and ne-point across different text types". *Journal of French Language Studies*. 24, 127-53.

TRACHSLER, Richard. (2013). L'Histoire au fil des siècles. Les différentes rédactions de l'Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César. In R. Wilhelm (ed.), *Transcrire et/ou traduire: variation et changement linguistique dans la tradition manuscrite des textes médiévaux*. Actes du congrès international (Klagenfurt, 15-16 novembre 2012). Heidelberg: Winter, pp. 77-95.

DE VISSER-VAN TERWISGA, M. (1995-1999), *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César: Estoires Rogier*, éd. partielle des manuscrits Paris Bibl. Nat. f. fr. 20125 et Vienne Nat. Bibl. 2576, 2. Vols., Orléans, Paradigme.

TOBLER, Adolf – E. Lommatzsch, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*, t. 1-10, Berlin (Weidmann) – Wiesbaden (Steiner) 1925 [1er fasc. 1915]-1976; t. 11, col. 1-768, u- vonjement, p. p. H. H. Christmann, Stuttgart (Steiner) 1989-1995; t. 11, col. 769-938, vonjement-zure, p. p. R. Baum – W. Hirdt – B. Frey, 2002; t. 12, *Gesamtliteraturverzeichnis*, p. p. R. Baum, 2008; [= FEW TL; AND T-L].

VARVARO, Alberto. 1990. "Koinè nell'Italia meridionale". *Koinè in Italia dalle origini al Cinquecento*. Atti del Convegno (Milano-Pavia, 25-26 settembre 1987). Edited by Glauco Sanga, 69-78. Bergamo: Lubrina. (= *Identità linguistiche e letterarie nell'Europa romanza*. Roma, Salerno, 2004).

WEINREICH, Uriel. 1954. "Is a Structural Dialectology Possible?". *Word* 10: 388–400.

ZINELLI, Fabio. 2011. Siena

———. 2012. *Mot So Razó*

———. *Ve-Ag*

———. 2016. "Au Carrefour des traditions italiennes et méditerranéennes: Un légendier français et ses rapports avec l'*Histoire Ancienne jusqu'à César* et les *Faits des romains*". in, *L'agiografia volgare: Tradizioni di testi, motivi e linguaggi*. Atti del congresso internazionale, Klagenfurt, 15-16 gennaio 2015. Edited by Elisa de Roberto and Raymund Wilhelm, 63-131. Heidelberg: Winter.