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and Its Usage in Old French

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of ille and iste in Late Latin, together with conditions  
favouring the evolution of the definite article, and an  
examination of articular usage in Old French up to the  
Chanson de Roland.
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INTRODUCTION

This essay is a study in linguistic evolution. In spite of the enormous amount written in the field of French syntax, there is still evidence that the last word has not been pronounced in many areas; most subjects continue to come up for discussion from time to time. Linguistic evolution is largely dependent on, and regulated by, human factors - the need for communication and a prime inner urge to simplify and make oneself understood. Syntax, in the modern sense, is thus conceived as a function of speech rather than a catalogue of rules to be followed. What early grammarians and phoneticians labelled simply as errors have now been acknowledged as powerful factors in the formation of modern language patterns. Broadly speaking, errors of the past have become practice of the present and it is likely that, if only among the less literate, this pattern will be perpetuated. Even as the controversy rages back and forth, usage is inexorably coming into its own as the criterion for assessment of correctness. The tide of change is only partially stemmed by the durability of the written word.

It is not surprising, therefore, that during the period under study, so many significant changes occurred, coinciding

1 It would seem that the diachronic explanation of linguistic phenomena has more than counter-balanced the bigotry of former years.
with a dearth of written texts, and that the discovery of printing in the Western World gave such an impetus to standardisation and "setting" of the language. Although unable to foster phonetic stabilisation, the written text could provide norms of syntax and grammar. Nevertheless, it could never wholly counteract the dynamism so characteristic of the spoken word, and must soon yield to the majority of its demands.

The evolution of the definite article in French still remains a problem, although its effective presence in the language is usually taken for granted, even by eminent modern grammarians. Scholars accept the fact that this frequently used lexeme had its morphological and functional origin in Latinity, but all do not agree on the precise time of its appearance or its generalisation. Having searched in vain for an exact counterpart to the definite article in written documents of the Classical period, linguists have had to turn elsewhere, - naturally, to the language of the rusticus, the ordinary Roman citizen, the Gallic farmer or the Frankish warrior, - only to be confronted with further complications.

The first obvious reason for the complexity of the problem lies in the fact that linguistic changes usually manifest themselves in writing - or in print - after their occurrence in the minds and speech of language users; even so, the written word is conservative. People who write as they speak belong to a rare class. Language patterns and stylistics
in speech and writing may converge very closely, as is reported in Voltaire's case, but even then, we may speak only of approximation, not of coincidence. The scholar is therefore in pursuit of an elusive ghost in his efforts to construct accurately the *sermo cotidianus* of the Romans, by examining what they wrote. In fact, our study must needs be confined to certain "misuses" and lapses made in unguarded moments by literary figures, and a certain amount of enlightened speculation and theorising.

Another reason for the current dilemma is the scarcity of documents. Before the conquered can create literature of any value in their newly adopted tongue they must first understand its various shades of meaning, its delicate nuances. Comprehension has to be fostered through education. Historical records show that social and economic, ethnic and political factors were inimical to effective linguistic teaching in Gaul, and for that matter, in the whole of Romania, during the greater part of the period to be examined. Successive invasions uprooted tribe after tribe, thereby contributing to extensive fragmentation. In the upheaval, the church emerged

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as the only potentially unifying agent; but its work was rendered ineffective by repeated military intervention and the thirst for conquest, characteristic of even some church leaders. The educational exploits of ecclesiastics and the teaching of Latin benefited only the upper crust of society.

A critical situation arose, in which administrators and administrated kept so far apart that their means of linguistic communication followed diverging routes. They could not understand each other. An overwhelming need for bridging the gap forced the "enlightened" few to adopt the speech habits of the vast majority which had now created a language of its own, having a syntax which, indeed, bore some relation to the parent stock, but of which the bases were simplification and mutual comprehension in a particular context.\(^4\) We do not know precisely when Vulgar Latin began to show its greatest deviation from Cicero's language. The exact moment where the vernacular was no longer Latin is merely an academic question. However, drawing a parallel with present experience in the behaviouristic patterns of language in the mouths of speakers, we would dare to assert that many of the phenomena found in Late Latin must have been present in the "vulgar" language from the earliest times. We remind ourselves that it was Vulgar Latin which evolved into Romance and, in Gaul, Old French.

\(^4\)Everyday language is largely a matter of functional verbal communication and rests on these fundamental bases.
It is our general view that phenomena classified as "confusion" have always shown themselves in certain syntactical quarters. The need for clarity tends to militate against "nice" distinctions and encourages a movement toward contrast. In this respect, the Latin language as a whole is no exception, and the demonstrative system is of particular relevance. This is why we begin by taking a broad view of the system as it functions in classical literature. Throughout the study we have referred to the unstable character of "lower class" syntax, and thought it reasonable to multiply several times these instances of "confusion" when applying textual evidence to everyday speech.

For the sake of precision and greater concentration, we have narrowed down the field somewhat in Chapter II. Not that we consider the rest of the demonstrative system unimportant. In fact, the pronouns and adjectives left untreated are still open for much fruitful research, some of which has already been carried out, notably by Trager. By narrowing down the field, we have endeavoured to keep our subject in focus; regardless of the limits imposed, ille, as the source of the definite article, is studied, not in a vacuum, but as part of a system, and frequent reference is made to hic, is, and ipse. This method is used in full agreement with the modern view of language as a "système où tout se tient".

In Chapter III our aim is to explore some of the many usages of the definite article in Old French up to the beginning of the twelfth century, and we have thought it useful to restrict our research to those functions which bear most relevance to practice in modern French. It must be admitted that such an approach may appear arbitrary and foster incompleteness. We hasten to point out, however, that temporal limitations and the obvious complexity of our problem have caused the entire study to rest on a selective rather than an exhaustive basis. If, within our present framework, we have succeeded in raising or underlining any interesting points of controversy, which might provoke discussion and lead to further research, we shall consider our investigation well worth the effort.

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CHAPTER I
DEMONSTRATIVES IN CLASSICAL LATIN

Classical Latin shows a variety of pronouns with pointing or emphatic qualities. In fact, quite apart from those pronouns which we now categorize as demonstratives, even the personal pronouns were used in special circumstances which coincided with a need for particular emphasis. It would be remembered that the verbs contained the suffixes (or signs) which distinguished between the first, second and third persons, and marked off the singular from the plural. Pronouns which standard works on Classical Latin Syntax group under such headings as determinants, demonstratives and intensives had a "pointing-out" or distinguishing element which could vary according to the context of the statement or the purpose of the speaker.

There existed, on the surface at least, a harmonious equilibrium in the pronoun structure which seemed to fit all

1 It was probably hybrid in function, acting both as personal pronoun of the third person and demonstrative. See W. von Wartburg, Problèmes et Méthodes de la linguistique, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1946), pp. 126-127.

the linguistic needs of speakers and writers. Apparently, there was a clear distinction between demonstrative pronouns as such and other pronominal "identifiers". Grammarians have seen a further classification among the demonstratives themselves: hic, "this near me", iste, "that near you", and ille, "that remote from both of us". Ernout makes the distinctions abundantly clear in his well-known treatise on Latin syntax:

Hic est le démonstratif de l'objet le plus rapproché du sujet parlant, que ce soit dans l'espace, dans le temps ou dans la pensée; c'est celui de la 1re personne: "celui-ci près de moi..."

Iste désigne l'interlocuteur et, d'une manière plus large, tout ce qui en émane ou le concerne;.. iste liber "le livre que tu tiens;" souvent uni à tuus: Pl. St., III: "ex istac tua sorore;..."

Ille (ancien olle) est le démonstratif de l'objet éloigné: ille liber "le livre qui est là-bas," illa tempora "ces temps lointains...".

Ille could also be used to express notoriety or fame:

Medea illa, "the famous Medea."

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3A. Ernout et F. Thomas, Syntaxe Latine, p. 187 sqq.

4There is no incompatibility between this usage and the aforementioned. It is but an extension of the previous one.

5Cic. Pomp., 22. In this example, ille denotes an abstract distinction of rank, rather than one of space or time. Medea is not singled out from other towns of the same name. The distinction borders on the absolute.
Usage involving contrast was an important factor in maintaining the force of these pronouns, and it is significant that, in an effort to avoid doubt in statements of sharp spatial or temporal distinction, the Latin language had recourse to the two extremes hic and ille. Hence Cicero would write:

\[
\text{sed hoc commune vitium; illae Epicuri propriae ruinae: . . 6: "This error (which I have just pointed out) is common to them; these (which I shall now mention) are the ones which do ill to Epicurus. . . "}
\]

By extension hic . . . ille means "the latter . . . the former":

\[
\text{Haec non dico maiora fuerunt in Clodio quam in Milone, sed in illo maxima, nulla in hoc 7}
\]

Context becomes important in some cases, where word order seems confusing:

\[
\text{melior . . est certa pax quam sperata victoria; haec [i.e. pax] in tua, illa [i.e. victoria] in deorum manu est 8}
\]

On the surface, then, demonstrative pronoun usage in Classical Latin gives the impression of a high degree

\[
\text{6Cic., Fi., 1, 18.}
\]

\[
\text{7Cic., Mi., 35. For the sake of brevity and clarity, we propose to attempt a translation only where contextual factors warrant one.}
\]

\[
\text{8Liv., xxx, 30, 19. In this example the speaker is obviously more concerned with pax (the present peace) than with victoria (a victory which is beyond man’s jurisdiction); pax has, therefore, what may be termed a "mental presence".}
\]
of compartmentalisation and a highly developed society where writers continue to make nice distinctions both on the concrete and abstract planes. Yet, it is obvious that the literary documents at our disposal do not and cannot show the actual state of the spoken language. Our knowledge of how language behaves is sufficient to convince us that the spoken tongue of any people has its inherent weaknesses which contribute toward instability and constant evolution; it is evident that we do not write as we speak. A greater or lesser degree of conservatism characterises the written word, coloured as it is by reflection and thought. One should not expect, therefore, that the spoken language of Cicero and Caesar would coincide syntactically with their written output; neither should we expect their literary works to show, to any great extent, the amount of semantic shift and over-emphasis which shaped the language of everyday life. Interaction surely occurred between the literary tradition and the vernacular, the former exerting a restraining influence on the latter. However, the fact that so much slang and "vulgar" terminology became the respectable stock-in-trade of modern Romance shows that the literary influence might have been comparatively small, perhaps smaller than it would be in a
We have already seen that all demonstratives were used where emphasis was required and some pointing or underlining force was needed. May we suggest, further, that in this very fact lies the inherent weakness of this pronoun system? It would seem that in the multiplicity of forms, all having some notion of "demonstrativity" lay the potential for confusion, which, as is typical of linguistic phenomena, would result in a general attempt at differentiation by searching for further distinguishing marks. Furthermore, it is not unreasonable to think that this search was accelerated in daily speech, where emotion and mental lapses play no small part.

There is need for a thorough investigation of the Roman school system. Only a carefully standardised and centralised educational system can guarantee a minimum of grammatical or syntactical correctness in speech on the part of language users. We may ask ourselves whether our knowledge of the qualifications of teachers in Romania is adequate enough to enable us to assess the level of instruction their pupils received. It would seem that the wider the area to be "civilised" the greater the difficulty in maintaining standards. Furthermore, the dissemination of knowledge was hampered by the absence of printing and paper.

It should be emphasized that the language itself generally provides its own fond from which substitutions and reinforcing elements are borrowed. Curiously enough, a large percentage of these substitutions are either dialectal, or tend to originate in slang, cant and jargon. See W. von Wartburg, *op. cit.*, pp. 123 sqq.

Confusion did, in fact, occur:

La répartition précédente ne dura qu'un temps, et, au cours du latin, ces différents termes se sont de plus en plus employés les uns pour les autres. La confusion commence à être particulièrement sensible chez Sénèque.12

In poetry *is* loses ground before *hic*, probably for metrical reasons; but even in prose *hoc est* repeatedly replaces *id est*.13 Whether this is due to a weakening of *is* or merely to confused thinking, we cannot say for sure; it may be a combination of both. What we are certain of is that these are marks of popular speech which continually shows a preference for more expressive utterance; Cicero's "lapses" may be just a faint indication of the synchronic state of the language in the mouth of the common man - the *rusticus*.

Seneca used *hic* as a mere *pronom de renvoi*, replacing *is*:

12Ernout et Thomas, op. cit., p. 190. Given the conservatism of literary documents and the paucity of written examples of what is generally labelled "vulgar" Latin, the linguistic confusion observed in Seneca may have begun at a much earlier date. For the reasons mentioned (see above p. 10) we are still to find a text that is "ultra" vulgar.

13Ibid., p. 190.
In such contexts there is a certain implied distinguishing element, but its vagueness does not warrant the use of one demonstrative as opposed to another. To put it another way, no distinction is intended between "these" whom God loves and "those" whom God loves.

Ille, even more frequently than hic, tends to be used anaphorically instead of is:

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14 Sen., Prov., 4, 7. It would appear that only the best writers reserve is for use as a pronom de renvoi. Is being fundamentally weak in temporal and spatial identification, it would seem that replacing it by hic is an attempt to find a stronger term. However, the concept of weakness in such a context needs clarification. Is is relatively weak vis-à-vis hic. In the example quoted above hic should not be thought to have lost its emphatic strength. Yet, within the demonstrative framework, hic is weak i.e. it has lost its identity of meaning in the sense of "this near me" as contrasted with iste and ille. There is a loss of distinguishing rather than of emphatic force. The phenomenon appears to be qualitative rather than quantitative. Ernout does not clarify this point. For the morphology and original use of is, see A. Ernout, Morphologie historique du latin, 3e éd. (Paris: Klincksieck, 1953), pp. 79, 81; also Ernout et Thomas, Syntaxe latine, p. 189.

15 The anaphora is here meant to be understood in its etymological sense, viz. "calling to mind". Cf. P. Oltramare's review in Revue Critique, ..., 13 jan., 1877, p. 30.
bene volo ego illi [i.e. adulescenti] facere 16
"I wish to do him a good turn"

postea quam vos me illi et mihi eum reddidistis 17
"after you had given me to him and him to me"

It is obvious from the context of the first example that *ille* fulfills the primary function of *is*, since there is neither an attempt at contrast nor at positioning mentally or spatially. *Ille* is a mere *pronom de renvoi*. In the second example the point becomes even clearer; both *illi* and *eum* refer back to one and the same person; both are used anaphorically. This type of confusion is an indication of the unsteady basis on which *is* rested even among some of the best prose writers.

*Ille*, used in this sense (i.e. anaphorically), is widespread from the first century A.D., so that Petronius could write:

habuit... oracularios servos qui illum pessum dederunt...18 "Slaves who led him to ruin"...

Used here to refer back to the subject of *habuit*, *illum* is the equivalent of *eum*.

Another example from Cicero quoted by W. von Wartburg in *Problèmes et méthodes* is worthy of our attention:

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16 Pl., Tr., 328.
17 Cic., Quir., 3.
18 Petr., Sat., 43.6.
Quam quisque norit artem, in hac se exerceat.\textsuperscript{19}

The replacement of *ea* by *hac* appears to be due to a desire on the speaker's part to place additional emphasis on the object to which reference is made, viz. *artem*. But such usage in itself attests to the relative weakness of *is* which, says Ernout "n'a pas de nuance spéciale de sens, et qui correspond en gros à l'article ou au pronom 'il' du français..."\textsuperscript{20} Quite apart from the phonetic clash of *is* as determinant and *is* as a pronoun of the third person singular – an "intolerable" situation in the linguistic system – *is* is found susceptible to replacement by *hic*, especially in the oblique cases. This preference for *hic* is probably due to its somewhat more bulky form. It would also be realised that *hic*, used in similar contexts, shows a loss of identity – what von Wartburg calls an "affaiblissement sémantique", explained thus: "l'essentiel ici est que *hic* ait perdu sa relation avec la première personne."\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{19}W. von Wartburg, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 126. This example is the Latin translation of a Greek proverb (cf. Aristophanes, \textit{Wasps}, 1431) quoted by Cicero in \textit{Tusculanae Disputationes}, i, 18, 41.

\textsuperscript{20}A. Ernout, \textit{Morphologie historique du latin}, p. 79.

\textsuperscript{21}W. von Wartburg, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 126-127, note 1. To our knowledge von Wartburg has come the nearest to complete clarity in explaining weakness and dislocation of these pronominal semantemes.
A combination of *iste* with a first person possessive provides evidence of still another shift attested in Classical Latin; *iste meus*, and *iste noster* are attested in Cicero, to quote but one relevant case.  

Somewhat curious combinations of a different nature are found in Virgil:

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haec erat illa fames. 23 "this then is that hunger."

hunc illum poscere fata 24 "that this is he whom fate demands!"
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T. E. Page views these constructions as attempts at precision and mental clarification: "the combination *hic ille* is used when the connection between something past, distant or vaguely understood and something actually present is vividly realised."  

Earlier texts are not exempt from similar turns of phrase; the following comes from Plautus:

```
O Venus venusta, haec illa est tempestas mea
mihi quae modestiam omnem. detexit, tectus
qua fui. 26 "O lovely queen of love! Here, here is the storm that stripped me of all my covering of modesty."
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22 See Cic., *Cat.*, 11, 3; *Muren.*, 21; *Balb.*, 27; *Sex., Rosc.*, 139.


25 *The Aeneid of Virgil*, ed. T. E. Page, (London: MacMillan, 1924) II, p. 158; see also p. 168. If Page's explanation is correct, then we are not very far removed from the demonstrative value of *ille*. However, it would seem that anaphoric *is* is more "normal" in such contexts.

26 *Pl.*, *Mo.*, 162.
It is difficult to assert with assurance whether *haec* or *illa* is uppermost in the speaker's mind here. The phrase *haec est tempestas mea* seems adequate to convey the meaning. *illa*, therefore, may perform either of two functions: it may be an additional underlining particle, or it may be used in reference to a previously mentioned substantive — in this case *tempestas*. What is strange is the unusual juxtaposition of *haec* and *illa*; even more unusual is the link *illa...mea*. Used with concrete objects in spatial relationships, similar combinations, though unusual, take on a clearer significance, as in the following:

\[ \text{placet ille meus mihi mendicus}\] 27 "that beggar of mine is a delight to me"

Expression of contrast *hic...ille* is often replaced by *hic...hic* and *ille...ille*, 28 thus providing further evidence that these pronouns did not always remain in watertight semantic compartments.

We become aware, through a closer and more detailed examination of Classical Latin texts, that differences in syntactical usage are ever present and that observance of rules varies from one author to another, depending on personal preferences, as well as on the purpose and public in mind at

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27 Pl. St., 133. *Ille* "situates" *mendicus* while *meus* replaces a clause denoting ownership, viz. "who belongs to me". There is no attempt, in the previous example, at spatial positioning; *illa* operates in somewhat abstract surroundings. It appears that demonstrative pronoun usage with abstract nouns is more elusive to rationalisation, and more likely to contribute towards confused thinking.

28 See Pl., Mo., 778; also Te., Ph., 332.
the time of writing. According to Meillet:

la comédie de Plaute, destinée au gros public, n'est pas comparable aux discours de Cicéron ni aux bulletins du puriste qu'était César. La langue de la poésie hellénisante n'est pas celle de la prose. Il y a aussi des différences d'un écrivain à l'autre.29

As an important sector of the linguistic structure, demonstrative pronouns had their share of treatment and manipulation by different authors; those who adhered to the strictest classical traditions, whether poets, orators or historians, show a high degree of conservatism. Despite the evidences we have found of apparent confusion and semantic weakening, Virgil, Caesar, Cicero and other writers of equal merit show a syntactical usage that is generally indicative of the Latin grammar taught in the best educational institutions of republican Rome, and sporadic "lapses" only show what was possible even in the "sermo urbanus". "Infringements" are more frequent in Plautus who wrote almost a century prior to the classical era, and whose language is usually cited as more approximate to, and typical of, the "sermo vulgaris".

Is not Plautus' use of the demonstratives explained, at least in part, by the comparatively greater instability of the Latin language during an earlier period of development? Significantly enough, the linguistic phenomena (labelled "errors" in some quarters) observed in his works re-assert themselves with greater frequency in late Latin authors, during the disintegration of the Roman social, political and educational systems; add to this the fact of a more diversified and heterogeneous linguistic substratum, which further complicates the issue. The grammatical rigidity of classical authors was difficult to maintain on any large scale after the fourth century. W. von Wartburg sees a wide gulf between the "sermo vulgaris" and the "sermo urbanus" at all times, as well as a chronological "softening up" of Augustan linguistic traditions.30

It is not surprising, then, that we find a great percentage of syntactical vagaries in the demonstrative system, not in "standardised" texts of Latin classicism, but rather in works of the early period. For further evidence bordering on the conclusive, we should next turn our attention to works of a later age, to poetry and prose literature produced at a time of instability and fragmentation.

in the Roman Empire. But, above all, we must strive to get as close as possible to the spoken tongue in order to find possible reasons for semantic weakening and shift. Grandgent's comment on this point is noteworthy:

The Latin language, like every living language, has always been in an unstable condition. The evidence of inscriptions and grammarians indicates that from the beginning to the end of Roman history speech was constantly changing, the alteration being most rapid in the earliest and the latest periods. Furthermore, there were at all times, but especially before the Social War, considerable local divergences. The Social War, however, had a levelling effect, and speech in Italy became more uniform; but there doubtless were still noticeable differences in pronunciation and even in vocabulary.31

It would be strange if the syntactical and morphological structure of the Latin demonstratives did not undergo significant changes beyond the frontiers of Italy, and, more particularly, in Gaul, throughout the periods under consideration.

CHAPTER II
ILLE AND ISTE IN LATE LATIN

We shall now turn our attention to the complex question of the emergence of the definite article in French romance during the Late Latin period. Here we are faced once more with the problem of accurate interpretation of texts, as well as arbitrary selection of what we consider to be nearest textual approximations to the concept of "vulgarity". The documents available constitute the work of the educated upper crust of society, since living conditions of the social layer which was largely responsible for linguistic change hardly fostered the desire or provided the training to write anything of note. Furthermore, not a few of the intellectual elite were guided stylistically by Latin rhetorical models, and could, therefore, not reflect even a style analogous to that of the "popular" speech found in

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1The term is here used in a special sense to embrace the period stretching from the Germanic invasions (5th century) to the appearance of the Serments de Strasbourg (842). It will be seen that the period includes what philologists generally refer to as Gallo-Roman. Convention is our main guide for such clear-cut divisions; they are unknown in linguistic evolution.
some modern novels. Sermons by churchmen did not descend to the level of the rusticus, and prayers of devout intellectuals were addressed to the Deity, even as they are today, in what was considered to be sublime and elevated language.

This is the context in which ille had to evolve, and we should constantly be aware of these social and educational factors as we examine the texts. However, of one thing we are certain: this is the period when ille underwent its most important change; and, if the texts do not adequately show the transformation, we shall be forced to conclude that educated writers of all sorts were relatively unimportant in shaping the language that emerged in written form in the Serments of 842. ²

²Even the author of the Peregrinatio should be considered as ranking among the educated few, the clergy being wholly responsible for education in the provinces throughout the period under consideration. See H. Ramsden, Weak Pronoun Position in the Early Romance Languages, (Manchester: University Press, 1963), p. 54.

³It will be remembered that it was the clergymen who were instructed to "condescend" to make themselves understood by the vulgus. Vigorous evolution on one hand and conservatism on the other created an ever-widening linguistic gulf between the speech of the people and that of the church - to which education and proselytizing were entrusted. To these conditions we may add the restrictions existing between the social classes, the political fragmentation of Gaul and the slow and difficult media of communication. The results of these are manifest in dialectal traits of the earliest Romance texts. See G. Gougenheim, Les Mots français dans l'histoire et dans la vie, (Paris: Picard, 1962), pp. 19 sqq. E. Auerbach, Introduction aux études de philologie romane, 3e éd., (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klosterman, 1961), pp. 43-46.
Together with *ille*, *iste* is the only demonstrative leaving, in the earliest documents of French Romance, remnants of one form or another which were important enough to form the Demonstrative System of Modern French. It is therefore reasonable for us to examine, in a comparative way, the evolution of both these demonstratives in the general literary output of Late Latin.

The following procedure will be followed: first we shall examine the use of *ille* as pronoun, and *iste* as pronoun and adjective, in their Late Latin usage, and attempt to locate any movement away from normal classical syntax; next we shall investigate the role that *ille* played as an adjective and as a basis for the transition to the function of the definite article. We shall make, for the purpose of this study, but brief reference to the other demonstratives, and only as parts of a system in which one element affected the others. Lastly, we shall comment briefly on the question of duplication and the addition of deictic particles.

**ILLE (pronoun) and ISTE (pronoun and adjective)**

As a demonstrative pronoun, *ille* seems to have at least two functions in Late Latin. Firstly, it assumes its classical function of pointing out and distinguishing; in other words, it still means "that one yonder" and is identified with the third person. This usage is found, as would be expected, in the writings of classically-trained
scholars; it is also found in the Peregrinatio and other works of lesser writers; furthermore, *ille* used in this manner is attested textually throughout the period of Late Latin and Early Romance. Akin to it is the anaphoric use in which *ille* tends to replace *is*. However, Trager has shown that translation of *ille* exclusively by a personal pronoun in such contexts is sometimes open to question and, in the long run, may be a matter of mere subjective interpretation. In a number of texts the pronominal use of *ille* is considerable, in many instances far outweighing its adjectival use. The descriptive nature of the Peregrinatio probably accounts for the reverse trend. Yet, later documents suggest a change. Taylor's examination of the Liber Historiae Francorum, an anonymous work of the eighth century in Northern France, shows that *ille* was establishing itself progressively as a pronoun of the third person replacing *is*. She categorically asserts that "*ille*, *illa*, and *illi* were regularly used as the personal

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4 See G. L. Trager, *The Usage of the Latin Demonstratives*, (New York: Institute of French Studies, 1932), pp. 1-7. We hereby express our indebtedness to this exhaustive study for much of the material found in the current chapter.


pronoun subjects of the third person."\(^7\) Being of greater expressiveness and bulk, *ille* replaced *is* so frequently that, by the time the earliest texts appear, it has completely monopolised the function of the third person subject pronoun. "Its use as a third person pronoun and article brought about a loss of intensity — a contextual and syntactical phenomenon."\(^8\) Nevertheless, in its Late Latin pronominal context *ille* must not be understood to have weakened entirely. The original identity it had with the third person facilitated its adoption when *is* was felt to be colourless and insufficient; the latter may have disappeared from popular speech long before the texts showed visible signs of change. In fact, the texts reveal a numerical

\(^7\) P. Taylor, *The Latinity of the Liber Historiae Francorum*, (New York: Columbia University thesis, 1924), p. 122. The ratio for *ille* (pronoun): *ille* (adjective) in the *Peregrinatio*, 50: 108, tends to render invalid the argument that the frequent use of *ille* for *is* in earlier texts, e.g. the *Cena Trimalchionis* (ratio 118 pronouns: 20 adjectives), indicates that *is* was on the way out. On the whole, the use of *ille* for *is* seems to be dependent on the style, purpose, regional and personal preference of authors. Saint Jerome uses it exclusively as a pronoun of the third person while still showing a preference for *is*. See Trager, *op. cit.*, pp. 127 sqq., 187 sqq. For the demonstrative value of *is*, see A. Ernout, *Morphologie historique du Latin*, (Paris: Klincksieck, 1953), p. 81.

\(^8\) C.-L. Barber, *The Story of Language*, (London: Pan Books, 1964), pp. 253-254. The universality of *ille* as a third person subject pronoun suggests that Vulgar speech favoured it even before the disintegration of the Roman Empire.
superiority of *is* over *ille* throughout Late Latin.  

During the post-classical period *iste* generally appears as a strong demonstrative of the second person; in most texts it is confined to direct address, both as adjective and pronoun—except in the *Peregrinatio* where the author restricts herself to adjectival use. It still has its classical connotations in St. Augustine's address to the Deity.

*Sed falsa loquebantur, non de te tantum, qui vere es, sed etiam de istis elementis huius mundi creatura tua.*  

*At tu, amor meus, in quem deficio ut fortis sim, nec ista corpora es quae videamus, quanquam in caelo.*

There are a few cases where it is confused with other

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10 S. Aug., *Conf.*, iii, 6.

demonstratives and even replaces them; but, on the whole, *iste* tends to disappear in narrative passages and to reappear in conversation.

St. Avitus occasionally uses *iste* for *is*:

Et cogitet haereticus, utrum istud patris gloriae adjungat, an filii? 12

Istud, quod dixit, .. .13

Duo ista sunt, quorum aut Deus solus aut homo solus utrumque non facerent 14

Most interesting is the use of *iste* for *hic*:

Iste mortem non timebat a iudicaturo, cum ille vitam requirit a mortuo. 15

Convenit veritati et prophetiae quia ista peperit, quod illa concepit. 16

Goelzer sees these "lapses" in syntax as indications that even a stylist "rompu à toutes les pratiques de la rhétorique" — as indeed St. Avitus otherwise shows himself to be — could not escape the influence of popular linguistic evolution:


13Ibid., 24, 18.

14Ibid., 26, 19-20.


16Ibid., 114, 4-5.
In his excellent treatise on the language of Grégoire de Tours, Bonnet has shown that *iste* was also affected "adversely" - as were the other demonstratives; the following statement, however, shows that he has been fully aware of the role of interpretation in a judgement of syntactical usage:

D'une manière plus générale on peut dire que les démonstratifs *hic*, *is*, *iste*, *ille* s'emploient les uns pour les autres. Non qu'on ne puisse, le plus souvent, avec la bonne volonté et quelque subtilité, expliquer les textes de telle façon que leur emploi, dans leur acceptation propre, serait justifié. Mais l'usage de l'époque classique qui, dans une telle circonstance donne la préférence à tel pronom, n'est pas observé.

The final observation we shall make concerning *iste* is its change of meaning from "that of yours" to "this", "this of yours".

After an exhaustive examination of Late Latin texts, Trager states that Tertullian (3rd century) already has the seeds for the later syntactical shift attested in the

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Peregrinatio, but that, generally, hic, in its original sense of "this near me" is still very much alive. Iste does not seem to replace hic. It is used sparingly, usually confined to direct speech, and only to express strong emphasis, whereas hic is less forceful. In some contexts, however, iste is "almost wholly unconnected with the second person":

Iste igitur dei radius, ut retro semper praedicabatur, delapsus in virginem quandam, et in utero eius caro figuratus, nascitur homo dei mixtus. 20

Omnis ista confessio illorum, qua se deos negant esse... 21

St. Jerome and St. Augustine (end of the fourth century) show sparing and rather correct use of iste; but a notable change appears in three sixth century authors:

It is only here [i.e. in Boethius, De consolatione philosophiae], in P [i.e. the Peregrinatio], and in St. Benedict's Regula ( . . . ) that such unmistakable uses of iste as an ordinary (i.e. without special reference to the second person) demonstrative occur; between the days of SA [St. Augustine] and SJ [St. Jerome] and the first quarter of the sixth century such a decided change in the meaning of iste must have occurred that even a Boethius

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19 Trager, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

20 Tert., Apol., 21, 14. The third person implications in this example and in the following one are evident.

21 Tert., op. cit., 24, 1. It may be argued that instances like these only reflect faintly the confusion that must have existed in the popular language. Their occurrence could easily be multiplied a hundredfold in the mouth of the unlettered citizen.
slips up in its use three out of five times.22

What Trager calls "a decided change" may have been merely the triumph of popular linguistic evolution over the conscious and nostalgic attempts made by contemporary scholars to ape classical models. In the three works mentioned iste seems to have, at times, very tenuous connections with the second person:

_Tu fortunam putas erga te esse mutatam: erras. Hi semper eius mores sunt, ista natura._23 "These are always her habits, this her nature".

There is no reference to the second person in the following example:

_Humanae quippe naturae ista conditio est, ut_. . .24 "For the condition of human nature is such that. . ."

St. Benedict, showing greater preference for _hic_, uses _iste_ but sparingly; even so, reference to the second person is noticeably absent. _Iste_ merely shows greater emphasis than _hic_; it becomes what Trager terms "an emphatic 'nearer' demonstrative":

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22 Trager, _op. cit._, p. 144.
23 _Boet._, Cons., 21, 10.
24 _Ibid._, 35, 29.
Privati autem a mensae consortio ista erit ratio, ut in oratorio psalmum, aut antiphonam non imponat, neque. . .25
"This shall be the mode of procedure of him who is deprived of coming to the table. . ."

Quod si nec isto modo sanatus fuerit, . . .26
"If he is not cured by this means. . ."

The following quotations from the Peregrinatio will serve to illustrate further the syntactical change in iste:

Nam in isto colliculo, qui est medio vico positus, in summitatem ipsius fabricam quam vides ecclesia est, quae ecclesia hunc appellatur greco sermone opus Melchisedech. Nam hic est locus ubi. . .27
"Now on this hill. . .For this is the place. . ."

Ecce ista fundamenta in giro colliculo isto, quam videtis, hae sunt. . .28
"These foundations which you behold. . .these are. . ."

Nam haec aqua. . .quam videtis in isto vico. . .29

In spite of an apparent connection with the second person, it is obvious that, in the three preceding examples, iste is in some way linked to the meaning of hic and merely serves as a more potent emphaserizer; it means an emphatic "this".

25 S. Benedict, Reg., 24, 4.
26 Ibid., 28, 6.
27 Ethéria, op. cit., 13, 4.
28 Ibid., 14, 2.
29 Ibid., 15, 1.
Trager sums up, in the following words, his findings on the usage of *iste* in Late Latin:

*Iste*, very uncommon at all times, is found much more often in Christian writers than in the earlier pagan writers. It keeps its second person connotation until the sixth century, but shows tendencies in the direction of becoming a word for 'this' as early as *Te* [i.e. Tertullian], and has definitely changed its meaning to a strong 'this' after the fifth century, except in archaized language.30

**ILLE as adjective and article**

It was in its functions as an adjective that *ille* was most susceptible of evolving into a definite article. In this section we shall endeavour to determine, by the examination of adjectival usage, whether Late Latin texts show this tendency.

In his *Apologeticum* Tertullian uses *ille* twenty times as an adjective, always emphatically and nowhere with the function of a mere 'the':

*Dicent ibidem: Ecquis ille Christus cum sua fabula?*31
"Who is that Christ with his story?"

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31 Tert., *op. cit.*, 23, 12.
Et hinc conceditis, opinor illum Deum justitia praecellere.
"that God" (of whom I have been speaking)

Side by side with the normal demonstrative use there are rare instances of a function which *ille* was to assume later — that of "a syntactic accent-mark":

*Igitur si est qui faciat deos, revertor ad causas examinandas faciendorum ex hominibus deorum, nec ullas invenio, nisi si ministeria et auxilia officiis desideravit ille magnus Deus.*

"It is immediately apparent [from the context] that *ille* here is used not so much as a real demonstrative as to express a very definite emphasis: 'that (one and only) great God', 'the great God'."*

St. Caesarius makes frequent use of adjectival *ille* in his sermons; along with the regular demonstrative connotations we find usages like the following:

*Siluit stridor lugentium ille, soluta sunt onera catenarum.*

"Silent was the noise of those wailing ones."*

Here the context does not imply that *ille* has more force than that of a "syntactic accent".

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32 Tert., *op. cit.*, 11, 10.
34 Trager, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
Unus ex illis id unicum ac primum illud originale debitum sacri fontis unda vacuavit. Illud singulare delictum primi parentis interemit.36 "One of them cleared away that unique and that first original debt by the waters of the sacred fountain. That single sin of the first parent he purchased."

It is in such cases of "over-emphatic pointing out" that *ille* was abused. By the time that the *Peregrinatio* appears we find an increase in this emotional emphasizing, implied not only by the frequent use of *ille* itself, but also by a multiplication of other demonstrative particles.37 The demonstratives, used sparingly - we may almost say carefully - in unexcited narrative passages, fly thick and fast when *Etheria* describes in detail her own doings.

Activity, vivacity, and the need for demonstration have been accompanied by numerous demonstratives, while plain statement of fact, uncolored by emotion or action, have only the demonstratives normally needed. The demonstrative is, then, to repeat, a means of emphasis, even when, if one were translating, it


37 Throughout the period *ipse* offers, in this function, stiff competition to *ille*. The preferences shown for the latter in Gaul may be explained by an early linking of *ipse* (in its superlative form, *ipsimus*) in popular speech with *met*, thereby giving it specialised connotations. Latin texts fail to account for the disappearance of uncompounded *ipse* in the earliest Romance texts. Furthermore, the preponderance of *ipse* in the *Peregrinatio* may be one indication of the place where the document originated, as well as of Hispanic linguistic conservatism. See Trager, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-188.
would be equal to a single definite article.38

We notice, furthermore, that Éthéri in her search for a very emphatic demonstrative which would prevent any misunderstanding, uses *iuxta istum*:

*iuxta istum medium* "this middle one".39

Despite the ever-present difficulty of accurate interpretation, two important tendencies emerge from our study of the use of *ille* in the *Peregrinatio*: firstly, in common with the other demonstratives, its frequency increases with a search for vividness; secondly, it is not yet a weakened adjective, equal in function to the definite article. Trager sums up the situation in this manner:

At the same time her syntax is . . ., notably "progressive". . .; but most striking is the use of various reinforcing devices, such as compound prepositions and adverbs, and the constant repetition of demonstratives of all kinds; on analysis, it is seen that this great use of demonstratives, for the most part confined to a multiplication of *ille* and *ipse*

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38 Trager, op. cit., pp. 23-24. For contrasting circumstances which illustrate instances of his phenomenon, see *Peregrinatio*, 2, 2-6; 52-8. See also chapters 4, 5 (which may be contrasted with the calmer tempo of chapter 7 with its comparatively smaller number of demonstratives), 19, and 20. Almost every chapter illustrates the indiscriminate and prolific use of *ille*, and the other demonstratives, in vivid description.

Since the phenomenon discussed here is contextual, we have thought it economical to refer to, rather than to quote, long passages of text.

39 *Peregrinatio*, 3, 8.
in their adjectival function, occurs in those passages where there is need for pointing out, physically or figuratively.40

He continues significantly:

These overworked demonstratives are used to strengthen the effect of the sentence, phrase or word; their continued use may lead to a weakening in their strict meanings, and result in constructions that at times are exactly like those of languages having an article, notably the various Romance Languages, but this weakening will be a later result of an originally reinforcing function. The material for the definite article is here, it would seem, but the creation of such an article would appear to be due to a real morphological and syntactical stressing, and not to any need for analysis (.), or to any already old weakened use of ille in Latin dating from the archaic period.41

The period which elapsed between the Peregrinatio and the appearance of the earliest French text is one of deterioration in the school system:

Les écoles publiques, qui continuaient les traditions de la belle Latinité disparaissent, du moins en Gaule, dès la première partie du Ve siècle. La ruine publique et l'invasion ne leur permettent plus de subsister.42

40 Trager, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

41 Trager, op. cit., p. 49. Etheria's "speech", valid as it is for our understanding of speech patterns in Vulgar Latin, cannot be taken as a faithful mirror of everyday language in sixth century Romania. Her educational background restricted her text to the portrayal of a mere tendency which, if not characteristic of popular speech dating "from the archaic period", may have pervaded the langage of the illiterate early Roman settlers in Romania.

Poor educational facilities are evidenced in the ever-widening cleavage between ecclesiastical speech and popular jargon. In the turmoil, clerics fail to make themselves understood from the pulpit; the sparse documents from the period are filled with blunders:

Un autre témoignage, et irrécusable, de l'ignorance du latin, c'est l'aspect que présente la langue des manuscrits des VIIe et VIIIe siècles. C'est un fourmillement de bévues, de fautes de tout genre. On y offense la morphologie et la syntaxe à chaque phrase.

Ethnic and linguistic factors inherent in Roman expansion are stressed by Meillet, who rightly maintains that evolution of language forms is slower when language is transmitted from one generation to another "dans un même milieu". He proceeds to cite the case in point and its contrasting circumstances:

Mais dans une langue qui se répand sur de grands domaines nouveaux et qui, pour la plupart des sujets, est nouvellement apprise, ces survivances tendent plus vite à s'éliminer. Le "latin vulgaire" a tendu à beaucoup simplifier l'ancienne grammaire.

In their efforts to acquire the new tongue, the conquered failed to seize the delicate nuances of the demonstratives in

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43 The Bishop of Noyon is said to have been chosen for his post in 659 because of his ability to speak roman. See G. Saintsbury, A Short History of French Literature (3rd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), p. 3.

44 F. Lot, op. cit., p. 106.

a language not their mother tongue. They therefore simplified the syntax, while showing preference for an expressive "doubling up" and lavish use of demonstrative forms. Meillet continues:

"Un exemple remarquable de ces simplifications faites par le latin vulgaire est fourni par les démonstratifs."\(^{46}\)

This is the general picture of the milieu in which *ille* had to develop, and, through constant abuse, it became a mere underlining particle: "*ille*, qui était un démonstratif, n'est devenu un simple article que parce que le désir de s'exprimer avec force en a fait un emploi abusif."\(^{47}\)

The centuries between Etheria's travelogue (about the fifth century) and the Serments de Strasbourg were therefore most critical in the life of all demonstratives, and particularly where *ille* was concerned. It is during this period that the accelerated weakening of *ille* took place, occasioned by intense linguistic abuse by speakers who have left little or no record of what they said. This is the time when the balance swung

\(^{46}\) Meillet, p. 255.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., p. 256. H. F. Muller finds that "*ille* is on the whole preferred" during the period. See H. F. Muller, *A Chronology of Vulgar Latin*, (Halle: Z.F.R.P., 1929), pp. 75-79. Both Pei and Muller date the "emploi abusif" – the "pleonastic use of the pronoun, and principally *ille*", in the second half of the eighth century. See Ibid., pp. 83-84; Pei, *Language of the Eighth Century Texts*, . . . , p. 196. Our belief is that any document examined so far is conservative and somewhat out of date when compared with the diachronic development of the spoken tongue. We submit that few Gauls or Franks ever spoke "grammatically correct" Latin; few used the demonstratives "correctly" in daily speech. The textual upsurgence of demonstrative "tool-words" (the term is used by M. K. Pope)
away from strong demonstrative notions to connotations of the definite article. Used as a prefix, *ille* had moved from a "that" meaning to a "the" meaning.

Another factor which must have accelerated the generalisation of *ille* - and its subsequent abuse - is the deterioration of the declension system, recognizable in Late Latin. The resulting chaotic conditions in the linguistic framework created a need for particularising the noun, especially in cases where the dynamism of sound-laws brought about phonetic approximation and confusion of genders. Textual evidence of this phenomenon must be considered very inadequate when one thinks of the intense substantival usage which characterizes every day speech. Frequent use of *ille* in this respect led to a kind of "wearing-out" of its force, which, it must be remembered, does not disappear entirely. Constant use as a "syntactic accent" later welds *ille* to the noun, and subsequent sentence stress rendered it atonic.

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47 may easily be considered as a hesitant clerical condescension for purposes of comprehension on the part of readers. The propagation of *ille* was based on a conscious or subconscious need for "definiteness". For an enlightening discussion of linguistic evolution and its dependence on psychological need, see A. Martinet, *A Functional View of Language*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 135 sqq.

48 The inadequacy of available texts has already been explicitly stated in this study; but we think it impossible to over-emphasize such a fact in an essay of this nature.

This weakened demonstrative which now accompanied the noun with increasing frequency performed functions similar to, if not identical with, those of the definite article as it appears in early Old French.

**Addition of deictic ECCE**

*Ille* having been affected by the normal weakening process inherent in too frequent usage, speakers found it necessary to seek a replacement of relatively stronger demonstrative function. The popular reinforcing tendency and preference for bulky forms attested in the vulgar tongue (e.g. *metipsimus* for *ipse*) shows its effect in the use of an *ille* strengthened by the proclitic addition of deictic particles: *ecce ille* becomes more and more generalised in use as a demonstrative of the remote object. Analogy is responsible for the later widespread use of *ecce iste*, since *iste* had retained its force and connotations of the closer object, until very late. 50

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50 For a further discussion of this question, see Wartburg, *Problèmes et Méthodes*. . . , pp. 127-129; Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 325; Pei, *Studies in Romance Philology and Literature*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), pp. 17-21; W. Meyer-Lübke, *Grammaire des langues romanes*, (Paris: H. Welter, 1900), vol. III, 95 sqq. The rare appearance of *ecce iste* and *ecce ille* in Late Latin texts does not prove their non-existence in the spoken tongue. Their presence in Plautus (*Merc.* 434, *Curc.* 455, 615) strengthens the possibility of their existence throughout all phases of Latin; their frequency may have increased in Late Latin. Professor Pei's argument in favour of *hic ille* (instead of *ecce ille*) is not wholly convincing, (see Pei, *Studies*, . . . pp. 17-21). His conclusions seem to be based on instances where *hic* is combined with *iste*, not with *ille*. The situation he cites can be interpreted in terms of our earlier observation, namely, that *iste* moved from a meaning "that" to a meaning "this". *Hic iste* merely seems to strengthen the argument concerning this semantic shift.
The Late Latin period provided fertile soil, linguistically, ethnically and socially, for extensive evolution of the demonstratives *ille* and *iste*. Continual search for emphasis and concreteness led, throughout Gaul, to multiplication and pleonastic use of the former, giving rise to natural erosion in expressivity, and attachment to the substantive. The resulting void was adequately filled by the stronger *ecce ille*. Analogy probably played a very important role in the fashioning of the third person personal pronoun from an *ille* which often replaced a colourless *is* in anaphoric function; indeed, the necessity of having

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51 We must re-emphasize our awareness of the difficulties involved in interpretation and the tricky problem of distinguishing between the adjectival use and the more articular trend in the use of *ille*. On the whole, we are inclined to agree with Professor Pei, when he states in The Language of the Eighth Century Texts, that "Generally speaking, it is quite difficult to separate the adjective from the article function of *ille*. When referring to a noun already mentioned, it is safer, for the most part, to assume that the function is adjectival, and that the meaning is "the aforesaid". When the noun that the pronoun accompanies has not already been mentioned, the assumption that it is used with the function of an article is fairly safe. It will be seen... that the latter function appears far more clearly in the documents of the latter part of the [eighth] century than in the earlier ones..." p. 196.

subject pronouns was further hastened by the phonetic decay of distinctive verb endings, as, for example, in the present indicative of -er verbs. *iste*, frequently "summed up" by *hic*, and almost exclusively connected to direct address,\(^{53}\) shifted nearer the speaker, psychologically speaking; it was under such circumstances that it held its ground in Romania;\(^{54}\) but by the middle of the ninth century it had succumbed, at least in Gaul, to the analogical influences which were to transform it into Old French *cist* (< *ecce iste*).

On the whole, the texts are extremely important; in fact, they are the sole legacy remaining from the period. But they are only valid as indicators, in a relatively slight manner, of syntactical trends, which should be studied in the light of a practical knowledge of linguistic evolution. What texts show in miniature should be magnified several times if we are to conceive of a picture which approximates to the true condition of the demonstratives *ille* and *iste* in particular, and, more generally, of the linguistic totality which was to constitute the Old French language system. We believe that the definite article was already a fait accompli in popular speech when the *Serments* were pronounced in 842.

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53 Under such circumstances, *iste*, through showing sporadic signs of confusion, could not offer *ille* serious functional competition.

54 Von Wartburg postulates the existence of a system *iste* - *ecc(u)-ille* in Late Latin. See Problèmes et Méthodes ..., pp. 128-129.
CHAPTER III

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE IN OLD FRENCH TO
THE BEGINNING OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

The year 842 has always been recognised as a landmark in the linguistic evolution of French. It was in this year that the now famous Serments de Strasbourg were drawn up, and, significantly enough, the notoriety of this document lies in its complete break with the classical tradition, by assuming a linguistic form inconsistent with the language of clerics who were so much responsible for the teaching of formal grammar. The Serments demonstrate, in written form, but only partially, synchronic phenomena — syntactical and phonetic — which are the result of centuries of continuous linguistic erosion caused by the simplifying influences of ethnic factors operating in Gaul. They provide evidence that French Romance is moving progressively away from its Latin parent-stock and showing multiplied signs of independence. But the Serments are only a sample, and a small one at that, of the many similar documents that may have been drawn up at this period. Unfortunately, we have little or no record of these; hence we are left to speculate as to what were the syntactical bases upon which ninth century French rested. However, all indications point to the fact that early French syntax showed striking differences from that of Latin.
Until the Chansons de Geste of the twelfth century, few literary works make their appearance. Apart from dialectal peculiarities, all available documents indicate in varying degrees, a movement toward linguistic standardisation and the formation of syntactical and analogical patterns. Writers who decide to abandon Latin for a more pliable medium of expression generally resort to the poetic line. Valuable as their works are for an understanding of phonetic and grammatical facts, they cannot reflect, to its fullest extent, the prosaic character of normal speech. It would seem that even syntactical norms can be sacrificed to the exigencies of the octosyllabic or decasyllabic line. The anonymity which characterises the period further complicates matters, limiting, as it does, our knowledge of the authors' educational and social background, and hence our assessment of the parallelism, tenuous though it be, which their written works have with the spoken language. It is with these facts in mind that we proceed to examine the syntax of the definite article in Old French.

For purposes of convenience and clarity, we shall divide the period into two sections, the first dealing with the most important literary productions prior to the twelfth century (i.e. pre-epic literature), the second dedicated to epic literature as represented by the Chansons de Geste, generally recognised by scholars as the acme of medieval literary tradition in France. Arbitrary as this division may seem, its reasonableness can be argued on the basis of the
qualitative and quantitative differences which are present in the periods represented; it also corresponds to a demarcation line between a period of sparseness and one of productivity.¹

The texts to be examined in Period One are:

1. The Serments de Strasbourg
2. The Séquence de sainte Eulalie
3. The Passion du Christ
4. The Vie de saint Léger
5. The Vie de saint Alexis

In Period Two we shall examine the Chanson de Roland, usually considered the best representative of its class.

We have already seen that morphological and phonetic evolutionary forces had so affected the classical Latin demonstrative system that, by the ninth century, when French Romance begins to appear in written documents, the marks of deterioration are in full evidence.² Ille, reduced to li, le, la, along with other dialectal or

¹Delimitation in linguistics must be arbitrary - sometimes dangerously so. We are not assuming that no written works existed apart from those to which we have had access. It should also be remembered that phonetic changes do not necessarily correspond to changes in syntactical usage. For the purpose of this study we are following, roughly speaking, Pope's divisions into Old French I and II, see M. K. Pope, From Latin to Modern French, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1952), p. 9. See also B. Woledge and H. P. Clive, Répertoire des plus anciens textes en prose française, (Genève: Droz, 1964), p. 11, n. 2.

²See above, pp. 32-40.
corrupted remnants, already functions as a definite article. Unaccented and attached to the noun, these monosyllabic remnants play an unmistakable role - a role that will continue to be predominantly anaphoric. The bulkier cil had now become a distinguishing particle, spatially and temporally, and le (la), joined to its noun, assumes wider functions, no less important, which constitute the concern of the present chapter.

For the sake of consistency we shall follow the method observed in the previous chapter, namely, an initial labelling of the syntactical uses of the article followed by citation of relevant examples in the texts mentioned. Continuity will be aimed at by some attempt to draw parallels with, or point out similarities to, models in Late Latin syntax. As in the foregoing chapters of this study, our approach is to regard syntax from a functional viewpoint, and we shall try to be as objective as possible in our interpretation.

A study of the syntactical or functional use of the definite article in Old French may be divided, broadly speaking, into two categories, namely, use and non-use. Yet, it is only

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3Brunot sees the definite article as a fait accompli even prior to written Romance: "Cependant à la fin de la période latine il y a déjà réellement un article." F. Brunot, Histoire de la langue française, (Paris: A. Colin, 1933), I, p. 97. We follow this view. For the etymological sense of anaphoric see above, p. 13, note 15.
by regarding the use of the article as a fait accompli that we can seriously discuss its omissions since non-use was the rule rather than the exception in Latin - at least, in literary Latin. It would be noted that we have already suggested the great likelihood of a more-than-casual use, in the spoken language, of the demonstrative adjective throughout Vulgar Latin—a demonstrative which was to become the article in Old French. We shall now proceed with our endeavour to discern any functional patterns which may have existed in the use of the article prior to the literary renaissance which occurred in the twelfth century.  

The Serments de Strasbourg

As a legal document, the Serments offer some opportunity for the precision and over-stressing so common in Vulgar Latin. The emphatic cist seems still very much alive in this document

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4 The majority of treatises on Old French syntax are based on textual examples from the twelfth century and later. See L. Foulet, Petite syntaxe de l'ancien français, (3e éd.; Paris: Champion, 1930); Kr. Nyrop, Grammaire historique de la langue française, (2e éd.; Copenhague: Gylendal, 1960), vol. II; F. Brunot, La Pensée et la langue, (3e éd.; Paris: Masson et Cie., 1953); J. Anglade, Grammaire élémentaire de la langue française, (Paris: A. Colin, 1933), vol. I. From this date, a progressive standardisation seems to be at work, but these treatises point to great syntactical freedom throughout medieval times.

5 We shall deal with the texts in the order followed by K. Bartsch in his Chrestomathie, and follow a chronology based on the accepted date of composition, rather than date of appearance of the manuscript, which is of no relevance.
and the fact that it is used suggests that the parties concerned tried to avoid any misunderstanding. Under such circumstances, we are not too surprised to find that the article is missing. It would seem that it has given way to the much more precise, and stronger, *iste* (compounded). Latin grammatical influence is still evident in the conservative legal language, and the close-knit analytical structure of preposition-plus-noun leaves no place for the definite article. It is also evident that the Latin declension system, although ruined by phonetic changes, was still very much alive in the linguistic consciousness of both speaker and scribe—if we believe that the scribe's textual representation is a faithful report of what the bargaining parties did, in fact, say. Because of its conservative nature, syntactically speaking, we would assert that the *Serments* is of little use for our purpose. It is rather more valuable as morphological and phonetic document than as a landmark in the evolution of syntax.

The *Séquence de sainte Eulalie*

From a general linguistic viewpoint, and, more

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6 It should be remembered that the manuscript appears more than a century after the agreements were pronounced.

7 With respect to the value of the *Serments* for a study of the definite article Sneyders de Vogel makes the following statement: "Dans les *Serments de Strasbourg* (842) on ne rencontre pas une seule fois l'article, ce qui nous étonnerait, si nous ne savions pas par ailleurs que ce texte ne représente nullement le langage parlé". K. Sneyders de Vogel, *Syntaxe historique du français*, (2e éd.; Groningue: Wolters, 1927), p. 6.
specifically, as far as our study is concerned, this document offers greater evidence of progressive syntactical evolution than the previous one. Composed about 880, the poem appears in manuscript before 900, thus minimising the possibility of wide differences between the original and the transmitted text. A comparison with the Homélie du prophète Jonas serves to show that there was by no means homogeneity of syntax or style in the literary expressions of the religious traditions in the same geographical region or district. It will be noted also that, although the Sécquence is poetic in form, the metrical structure is sufficiently loose to allow use of the article wherever generalisation would warrant it.

The article appears twelve times: 3-1, 5-1, 10-2, 14-1, 15-1, 16-1, 19-1, 21-1, 22-1, 23-1, 28-1.8

In the majority of cases the article in its nominative or oblique forms is placed before concrete nouns previously mentioned, or nouns which one may assume to have designated objects or persons of common knowledge:

Voldrent la veintre li deo inimi (3)
Elle non eskoltet les mals conselliers (5)
La polle sempre non amast lo deo menestier (10)

8 The number of the line is followed by the frequency of occurrence. For the text, see K. Bartsch, Chrestomathie de l'ancien français, 12e éd., (New York: Hafner, 1958), p. 4.
Enz enl fou la getterent, com arde tost (19)
A czo no s voldret conceidre li rex pagiens (21)
Ad une spede li roveret tolir lo chief (22)
La domnizelle celle kose non contredist (23)
The definite is also found with abstract nouns:
lo deo menestier (10)
gued elle fuje lo nom chrestiien (14)
Ell'ent aduzet lo suon element (15)
Melz sostendreiet les empedementz (16)
Post la mort (29)

But these nouns denote concepts of common knowledge.

It seems that the article has an individualising function in this poem since li deo inimi and les mals conseilliers could not refer to all enemies of God nor to all the wicked counsellors. In these expressions li and les perform a similar function of that of la in lines 10 and 23, namely, they help to point out a particular group of enemies and consellers. There is present a kind of limiting function.  

Nouns which are unique or "particular" in their own right are not accompanied by the definite article; hence *diaule* - 4, *ciel* - 6, 25, and *krist* - 24 stand alone.\(^{10}\)

The part prepositions played in regulating the use of the definite article is not always clear. For instance, in line 7 *por* (combined with *ne*) governs no less than five nouns, both abstract and concrete,\(^{11}\) without intervention of the article, while in lines 19 and 28 the article appears after *eng en* and *post*. In line 15 *lo suon element* (reminiscent of Latin *ille meus mendicus*) does not set a pattern for *souue clemntia* after *par* in (29). On a mere statistical count it is only apparent that prepositions are not usually followed by the definite article.

Transplanted wholesale from Latin, *rex* (12) could hardly be expected to have an accompanying definite article.

The vacillation of popular speech is probably responsible for the absence of the article before *corps* in (2), since this noun is in a determinative context.

It would appear, then, that there is some sort of general differentiation between determinate and indeterminate nouns in the *Séquence*, the article showing preference for the former. However, we have to be very careful about categorising; it is still too early to formulate a watertight syntactical

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\(^{10}\) Ecclesiastical influences may have had some part in retaining the "autonomy" of such words, until a time came when they could no longer resist the forces of analogy and generalisation. Clerical remnants usually show stiff opposition to linguistic change.

\(^{11}\) Enumeration may be the operative factor here.
ThePassion du Christ

The *Passion du Christ* is a religious poem of the tenth century. It is composed in octosyllabic lines, and assonanced. The portion to be examined comprises stanzas 30 to 89 of a text established by Gaston Paris and the relevant section is to be found in the anthology of Karl Bartsch. The passage chosen represents a clear-cut episode tracing Christ's sufferings from the Garden of Gethsemane to his death on the cross and subsequent burial. Our choice is based on the episodic character of this portion of the text - and hence its completeness - as well as its varied constructions.

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12 Comparing the *Serments* with the *Séquence* in definite article usage, Sneyders de Vogel states: "Par contre dans la *Sainte Eulalie* (fin IXe siècle) l'article est déjà plus fréquent; on le trouve même dans les cas où plus tard, on pouvait encore s'en passer, notamment après une préposition . . ." Sneyders de Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

13 Karl Bartsch, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-10.
character (both narrative and conversational aspects are featured). Finally, from a literary and religious standpoint these stanzas represent the most important part of the whole poem.

Despite the capricious nature of the assonance, the poem seems, on the whole, better organized metrically than does the Séquence de sainte Eulalie; it is therefore probable that, in this document, more of the spontaneity of normal speech has been sacrificed to the demands of poetry than in the Séquence. The nature of the poem is of such as to give free rein to the type of emphasis and emotional duplication we witnessed in the Peregrinatio, despite the "second-hand" nature of the tenth century poem. The small number of Latin words, borrowed intact from the church, and the close links with the biblical record suggest that the document originated with a cleric; he is anxious to impress the faithful with the fact of Christ's suffering.

In its determinative use the article still preserves a kind of "definiteness" not normally as forceful in modern usage:

Granz fu li dols, fort marrimenz (5)

Mais nemperro granz fu li dols (221)15

14 We do not overlook the fact of convenience, Bartsch's work having played no small part in making certain passages so accessible for our use.

15 Cf. (11), (12), (25), (55), (66), etc.
The reference is made to a well-defined grief experienced by a well-known personage in the poem; here Christ is the sufferer.

All the proper nouns in the poem refer to popularly known figures. When these nouns are "determined" by attributive adjectives, the article accompanies the said adjectives:

\[\text{li fel Judas ja s'aproismed (15)}\]
\[\text{Judas li fel ensenna fei (27)}\]
\[\text{Jhesus li bons nol refuded (31)}\]
\[\text{'Amix', zo dis Jhesus lo bons (33)16}\]

There is but one oblique case where the article does not feature; but this may be due to metrical reasons:

\[\text{Fellon Pilad lo retrames (104)}\]

The author's sparse use of nouns denoting nationality does not permit us to draw definite conclusions: of the six cases the article appears in four:

\[\text{ab gran compagnie dels judeus (16)}\]
\[\text{Jhesus cum vidra los judeus (17)}\]
\[\text{Anna nomnavent le judeu (53)}\]
\[\text{ensems crident tuit li judeu (123)}\]

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16 Cf. (45), (79), (93), (98), (102). This usage strikes us as being a generalisation of the Cicero, ille opulentissimus formula of the Latin period. For its modern counterpart, see M. Grevisse, Le Bon usage, 8e éd., (Gembloux: Duculot, 1964), pp. 256-57. Undetermined proper nouns do not take the article.
The relevant context does not allow of a clear-cut distinction and there is nothing to prove that judeu in (99) is not the same group as los judeus in (17).

The article with the stressed form of the possessive pronoun comes from a formula present since Plautus. In this episode it is found four times:

Semper li tend lo son menton (30)
la soa mort mult demandant (88)
chi traverset per lo son cor (222)
La soa madre virge fu (237)

Abstract nouns, nouns used in a general sense and nouns which, by their very nature are unique dispense with the article:

en caritad toz es uniz (160)

tan durament terra crollet roches fendient, chedent munt sepulcra s'anz obrirent mult (206-208)18

ab me venras in paradis (184)19

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17 See above, p. 17, note 27.

18 Cf. (212) where terra refers to a particular spot, thus necessitating use of la.

19 Use of the article with solelz and luna (195) seems to reflect popular speech.
The use of the article with prepositions does not present a clear picture, and seems to be dependent on whether the noun is in a determinative context rather than on the type of preposition. Thus it is used after a in (4), (42) and omitted in (11), (48). In (150) metrics are sacrificed to use of the article after davant.

Two final points are worth noticing. Juxta-position of the article to spiritus (204) apparently reflects the abuse of popular speech and certain encroachments upon conservatism. We note, too, that the article could still be used in the genitive:

\[ \text{non es amis } l'\text{emperador} (120) \]

Such instances justify the impression that there was a period of some confusion which affected even the literary language.

The *Vie de saint Léger*

This manuscript belongs to the religious tradition of the tenth century. The portion to be examined comprises the first 25 stanzas as they are found in the edition of Bartsch.\(^\text{20}\) It constitutes more than half of the text (40 stanzas) and deals with the main episode of the story. The verse is octosyllabic. Nouns taken intact from Latin are few in number, and are not accompanied by the definite article. In fact, the only Latin word which takes a Romance

\[ \text{See Bartsch, op. cit., pp. 10-12.} \]
qualifier is *gratia* which is preceded by unstressed *sa* in (47) and (88).

The author's preference for over-emphasis and demonstrative usage in the name of clarity\(^{21}\) seems to restrict the use of the article.\(^{22}\) In each case of articular usage the noun is within well-defined limits:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{in su'amor cantomps dels sanz que por lui augrent granz aanz (3-4).} \\
&\text{Primos didrai vos dels honors que il auuret ab duos seniros (7-8).} \\
&\text{al rei lo duistrent soi parent, qui donc regnevèt a ciel di (14-15).} \\
&\text{davant lo rei en fud laudiez (41)\(^{23}\).}
\end{align*}
\]

As can be seen from (7), abstract nouns take on concrete connotations when particularised by a clause; it is for this reason that they are then accompanied by the article.

There are further instances of the stressed pronoun formula attested in the previous texts:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{que li suas corps susting si granz (10).} \\
&\text{mais lo sen fredre Thëotri (58).} \\
&\text{guandius al suo consiel edrat (69).}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{21}\text{Cf. (49), (56), (80), etc.}\)

\(^{22}\text{The article is used 13 times out of a possible 22 instances where it would normally be present. Our count excludes articular use with the stressed possessive. Cf. (11), (20), (49), (79), (105), (111), (139), (144).}\)

\(^{23}\text{Cf. (75), (83), (90), (116), (132), (141).}\)
Substantives used indefinitely do not have the article:

- don deu serviet por bona fied (24)
- Il lo presdrent tuit a conseil (61)
- et Evvrüins ot en gran dol (63)
- perfectus fud in caritet, fid aut il grand et veritiet, et in raizons bels oth sermons, humilitiet oth per trestoz. (33-36)

Reis [rex] used as a determinant before a proper noun dispenses with the definite article:

- Reis Chielperics tam bien en fist (67)
- Reis Chielperics cum il l'audit (85)

The latent demonstrative function of the definite article is in evidence, though its use is restricted to one line of our text:

- vindrent parent- e lor amic li sanct Lethgier, li Evvrüj (117-118)

In spite of the conservative use of the article in this document, there seems to be a broad distinction between concrete and abstract nouns, as well as between those used in a general sense and those functioning in well-defined limits. The article appears in determinative circumstances and is absent in less clearly defined instances. Details of these broad categories are dependent to some degree on the poet who can, at times, omit the article for what seems to

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24 Cf. also (15). For an explanation of the appositional and determinative use of rei(s), see Sneyders de Vogel, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
be metrical reasons as in the following:

\[ \text{pobl'et lo rei communiet} (83).^25 \]

The Vie de saint Alexis

Our final pre-epic text is the Vie de saint Alexis, "poème du XIe siècle".\(^26\) Composed in the poetic style of the twelfth century, and most probably by a churchman, this document is still subject to some or all of the conservatism which is characteristic of early Old French literature. Thus, in spite of its chronological position, the Saint Alexis should not be expected to bristle with drastic linguistic changes, and whatever "progressive" features appear should be viewed as part of the author's normal literary language. The carefully arranged stanzas reflect the attention given by the poet to rhyme and metric values. It would even seem that, in this poem, a monosyllable like the article would be sacrificed, where necessary, to the demands of the decasyllabic line.

The definite article is widely used in the Saint Alexis as a determinant. The substantives in question are frequently qualified by an additional epithet; abstract nouns used in

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^25 However, it is evident that, although the poet has a particular group of people in mind, rei is in a more determinative context than pobl'.

well-defined contexts are also accompanied by the article:

Bons fut li secles al tens anciener (1)
[E]ufemien - si out a num li pedre (16)
La dreite vide nus funt tresoblir (619)

The word emperere (and its variants) in the following examples refer to a well-known personage and is therefore "limited" by the article:

Sur tuz ses pers l'amant li emperere (18)
Puis vait li emfes l'emperethur servir (35)
Le gunfanun. l'emperedur porter (414)

The following use with abstract nouns comes shortly after a description of the mother's grief:

Del duel s'assist le medre jus a terre(146)
Mais la dolur ne pothent ublier (157)

In the following line del secle limits the scope of the meaning of honor; thus the article appears:

E de l'honor del secle ne l'encumbrent (200)

A similar principle operates in what appears to be formulaic usages:

Si fut uns sire de Rome la citét (13)
Cil s'en repairent a Rome la citét (126)
Tut le depart par Alsis la citét (92)

27 Cf. also (101), (106), (251), (263), (306), (314), etc.

28 Of the 16 cases of citét only one does not take the definite article. It is found in (81) where the indefinite article is implied though not expressed.
Stereotyped expressions involving articular use are present. However, in each case, the limits are well defined by the context; in the following lines rice and povre, grant and petit, or and argent are particularised in the context; they do not embrace an entire class:

A lui repairent e li rice e li povre (302)
Tuit i acurent, li grant e li petit (510)
De lur tresors prenent l'or e l'argent (526)

The article is present in two of the three clear-cut cases of nouns used in the superlative with plus:

[Mais as plus povres le dunet a manger] (255)
Ed en cel altra la plus durable glorie (624)

Its omission in (196) may be due to the indefinite nature of articular usage with verbal substantives:

Dreit a Lalice revint li sons edrers (190)
Ne poet estra altra, turnet el consirrer (156)

29 In the third example the attributive nature and the adverbial value of pres obviates the use of the article.

30 The text contains only two examples of this Latin formula; cf. (415).
Danz Alexis le met el consirrer (244)

Articular use with ciel points to the fact that "determination" does not depend so much on the uniqueness of the noun as on the contextual meaning. Of the seven examples where ciel is used the article is absent only once (590) - where the word refers, not to the abode of God and the souls of men, but to the indefinite "heaven", "skies". 31

Abstract nouns are treated as in previous documents, and where they refer to general concepts they stand alone:

Quer feit i eurte justice ed amur
S'i eurt creance, dunt or n'i at nul prut (2-3)

El num la virgine ki portat salvetet (89) 32

The definite article could still be used with demonstrative pronominal force when the decasyllabic line imposes restrictions; but such examples are rare in the Alexis: 33

Al tens Noé ed al tens Abraham
Ed al David, qui Deus par amat tant (6-7)

Of the five pre-twelfth-century texts examined, the Vie de saint Alexis, if only by its bulk, offers the widest possibilities for a study of definite article function. A

31 Cf. (53), (122), (179), (410), (550), (590), (606). Paradis modified by Deu also takes the article; cf. (544).

32 Cf. also (142), (492), (64), (185), (438), (508), (599).

33 Cf. modern Spanish, el (la) de su padre.
count of its uncompounded uses reveals that the frequency ratio in the *Alexis* is greater than that of the *Saint Léger*. The distinction between "definiteness" and "indefiniteness" is evident as broad categories; with some difficulty, we can even fit clichés into each group. It seems however, that metrical demands and personal taste could have played some part in deciding whether the article should appear. Its extension to verbs and nouns (see above pp. 30-31) is probably indicative of the greater liberties which it enjoyed in popular speech, which was to transform it, in written documents, some centuries later, into a "simple signe grammatical qui annonce un substantif". The fact that it could be used demonstratively (cf. p. 32) shows that the force of the article had not yet diminished entirely, to the point of becoming a mere *signe*.

*The Chanson de Roland*

The *Chanson de Roland* belongs to the secular, but crusade-inspired, literature of the twelfth century. It therefore differs in spirit and origin from the documents examined.

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34 The ratio for the *Saint Léger*, based on a line-count is less than 1:9; for the *Saint Alexis* it is greater than 1:3.


heretofore. It is also the best known and the most lengthy work to be cited in this chapter.

The work comprises 4002 lines of decasyllabic verse recounting the heroic exploits of Charlemagne and his warriors, the death of Roland and the rout of the Arab invaders. As a representative of Old French literary tradition, the Chanson derives from the twelfth century linguistic context; because of its length, it gives wide scope for extensive sampling.

In the Chanson the article appears most commonly as an individualizer or determinant. This function is understood more clearly if we bear in mind that the work is mainly legendary and traditional, and that many substantives used denote items of common knowledge. We must ask ourselves, however, whether the determinative use is strictly adhered to, or whether the proclitic use of the article is due to some generalisation caused by popular influence.

The following are clear cases of determinative use:

Guenes, i vint ki la traïsun fist (178)
La bataille est merveilluse pesant (1412)
La rereguarde de la grant host Carlun (883)
Les castels pris, les citez violées (704)

In each case the noun "articularised" is either an item of common knowledge (e.g. traïsun) or defined in the
text (e.g. *de la grant host Carlun*). Examples are numerous.  

Cases of "implied common knowledge" pose some problems, since it is not always easy to decide whether a noun mentioned in the text for the first time, with the article attached to it, has taken the article through particularisation, or through generalisation and analogy.

Another example of determinative usage is seen when a proper noun - name of a person, noun denoting nationality, or geographical term - is "determined" by an adjective or adjectival noun; the article attaches itself normally to the determining adjective or noun:

*Carles li velz a la barbe flurie* (970)

*Que il ne sunt a Rollant le cataigne* (1846)

There are a few examples in which the article is attached to the geographical name:

*Ki se cumbat as Sarrazins d'Espaigne* (1847)

*El Val Tenebrus la les vint ateinant* (2461)  

Some common nouns (and adjectives) could either be

qualificative, or appositional to proper nouns; in the latter

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37 Cf. (85), (178), (511), (642), (754), (771), (954), (1149), etc. Individualisation was first applied to concrete nouns. See Sneyders de Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

38 Use of the article in this example as well as its position before the noun can be explained by the fact that *Val* moved from a state where it was qualified as a common noun to become proper. The article was likely to be attached at all times to a noun thus determined; cf. (815).
case they invariably take the article:

Li empereres Carles de France dulce (16)\(^{39}\)
Jo cornerai, si l'orrat li reis Karles (1714)
Li reis Marsilie i fist mult que traitre (201)

Nouns denoting nationality become "defined" when reference is made to a single member or to a particular group:

E li Franceis i fierent cumunement (1416)
Fors s'en eissirent li Sarrazins dedenz (1776)

These are references to specific groups under well-defined circumstances. When Roland and Oliver single out their adversaries the article again appears:

Li guens Rollant parmi le champ chevalcher,
Tient Durendal ki ben trenchet e taillet,
Des Sarrazins lur fait mult grant damage.
Ki lui veîst l'un geter mort sur l'altre. (1338-41)

When the opposing armies are taken together as classes, indefiniteness steps in and the article disappears:

La bataille est aduree endementres,
France paien merveillus colps i rendent,
Fierent li un, li altre se defendent. (1396-98)\(^{40}\)

However, there are some instances which show that

\(^{39}\) In this example Carles de France dulce acts as "qualifier" for empereres. The two subsequent illustrations are clearer indications of apposition. The article disappears when the noun is qualificative; cf. Reis Corsalis... .., (885).

\(^{40}\) Cf. also (1438-39), (1543-44), (1579), (1590), etc.
practice here was somewhat flexible. In referring to the same group the author drops the article where we expect him to use it:

Éli Franceis i fierent cumunement.
Moerent, païen a milliers e a cent.
Ki ne s'en fuit, de mort n'ad guarent.

Franceis _perdent lor meillors guarmemenz_ (1416-20)

Oliver est desur un pui muntét,
Or veit il ben d'Espaigne le regnét
É Sarrazins _ki tart sunt asemblez_ (1028-30) 41

Foulet's observation concerning the omission of the article with abstract nouns is generally correct. 42 However, the rare cases of articular use with abstract nouns take in a general sense show the inroads that popular speech was making into the literary language; _onur_ and _deintét_ are here generalised:

Asez est melz qu'il i perdent le[s] chefs
Que nus perduns l'onur ne la deintét

Elsewhere abstract nouns tend to take the article when placed

41 The general picture shows that, with proper nouns, the tendency is to omit the article. In the first 1200 lines _Franceis_ takes the article only four times out of thirty-two usages; omission occurs even when specification and definition are evident; cf. (177), (217), (701), (1180), (1187), etc. In commenting on the use of the article with nouns of classification Sneyders de Vogel makes the following assertion: "Il est souvent impossible de dire pourquoi on a préféré telle ou telle construction; le vieux français garde ici une grande liberté." Sneyders de Vogel, op. cit., p. 13. We believe that this "liberté" reflects popular usage.

42 L. Foulet, op. cit., p. 49. See (85), (485), (489-90), (698), (1467) for other examples of explicit particularisation.
In determinative contexts.43

Invariably, the article accompanies the stressed possessive pronoun-adjective in the Chanson; yet, the rare use of this formula probably explains why it never became generalised. We cite two examples of the six which occur in the first 1000 lines of text:

Francs s'en irunt en France, la lur tere (50)
Si recevrat la nostre lei plus salve (189)44

Enumerated nouns offer clear instances of indefinite use. As with abstract nouns, the article does not appear. A rare exception is found in line (850).

Or e argent, palies e ciclatuns,
Muls e chevals e cameilz e leûns.
Marsilies mandet d'Espaigne les baruns;
Cuntes, vezcuntes e dux e almacurs,
Les amirafles e les filz as cumturs. (846-50)

"Lapses" of this type would have been much more frequent in non-literary circles.

The latent demonstrative pronominal connotations of the article is clearly evident in a solitary example:

Pur la Carlun dunt il oit parler (3145)

Here, reference is made to Charlemagne's sword, the article taking the place of l'espede. Usage of this kind must have

43 In the first 500 lines there are 27 clear cases where abstract nouns would take the article in the modern sense. Of these cases, the noun takes the article only 8 times, six of which are cases of determinative usage.

44 Cf. also (82), (389), (403), (917), (1444).
become less frequent when remnants of the two-case declension system gave way to total analytical forms. Modern survivals are from popular sources.

Even more interesting is the appearance of the demonstratives where we would normally expect to find the definite article. Although frequent throughout for Chanson de Roland, this substitution occurs even more frequently in vivid passages describing the battle; the nouns concerned are found in specific or determinate contexts:

Oliver est desur un pui muntét,
Or veit il ben d'Espagne le regnét
E Sarrazins ki tant sunt asemblez,
Luisent cil helme ki ad or sunt gemmez
E cil escuz e cil osbercs safrez
E cil espiez, cil gunfanun fermez;
Sur les escheles ne poet il acuntee
Tant en i ad que mesure n'en set (1028-35)

Helmes laciez e blancs osbercs vestuz,
Dreites cez hanstes, luisset cil espiét brun.(1661-43)

La (la) b[at]ille est m[erv]eiluse e hastive,
Franceis i ferent par vigur e par ire,
Tré[nch-lent] cez poinz, cez costez, cez eschines,
Cez vestemenz entresque as chars vives (1661-64)

Passent cez puis e cez roches plus haltes,
E cez parfunz, cez destreiz anguisables,
Issent des porz e de la tere guaste (3125-27) 45

45 Cf. also (1452-53), (1832-33), (3125), (3137), etc. Similar piling-up of determinants is also evident in the Peregrinatio; see above, pp. 34-36.
Such passages, where the demonstrative and the article stand on equal footing as determinants, are valuable illustrations of the confusion which existed in the literary usage of the article, and which must certainly have been more intense in popular speech. Moreover, this frequency of the demonstrative in vivid passages throws some light on the linguistic evolution of the article. It shows that compounded ille has begun to follow the same path which the uncompounded demonstrative took in moving toward articular function, namely, a weakening through abuse and confusion. Some centuries later an effort will be made to help the weakened forms of ecce ille and ecce iste to make their meaning clear: deictic particles will again come into play.

Obviously, there is still room for further and more detailed investigation of articular usage in the Chanson de Roland, which, we believe, presents a fairly composite picture of literary syntax at the beginning of the twelfth century. Our brief survey shows, nevertheless, that, as a general rule, authors, still conscious of the origin of the article, keep within two broad classifications: the article

46 The appearance of the demonstrative in articular function is also mentioned by Anglade: "L'ancien français connaît aussi l'emploi du démonstratif... en fonction d'article; Cet emploi est même fréquent." J. Anglade, Syntaxe élémentaire de l'ancien français, 12e éd. (Paris: A. Colin, 1959), p. 180. However he fails to advance any possible reason for this frequent use. The statement quoted suggests that the phenomenon is not confined to the Chanson de Roland, but he cites no other sources.
appears when implicit or explicit determinative usage warrants its presence as a kind of syntactical accent; it is absent in indefinite contexts—indeterminate abstract nouns, nouns denoting a class in general terms etc. 47

What, then, is the value of the so-called "lapses" to which we have drawn attention? It would seem that they illustrate two important aspects of linguistic evolution. Firstly, they show that use of the article is by no means standardised, or based on strict literary grammatical norms. Analogy is already operating in this syntactical domain, preparing the ground for a later generalisation which was to increase in scope from the thirteenth century and manifest itself in written texts. There was nothing to prevent this same generalisation from being much more advanced in prosaic utterances of the populace. Secondly, the linguistic "lapses", some rare, others more frequent, attested in the Chanson de Roland, (namely, "doubling-up" of demonstratives, and confusion of nuances) 48 are the result of the same predilection for bulky forms, emphatic emotional pointing and a measure of miscomprehension which surely characterized

47 For the conservatism and determinate value of the article in Old French, see Anglade, op. cit., p. 159.

popular speech during the entire period of Latin, pre-classical, classical and post-classical. Syntactical development of the article in progressive and continuous rather than sketchy and intermittent. The Chanson is, therefore, not an isolated case, but a link in the chain of linguistic events pointing toward clarity and standardisation.
CONCLUSION

This study on the syntax of the demonstratives and the definite article deals with an ideal example of phenomena in linguistic evolution and the forces responsible for this evolution. We have seen that, valuable and indispensable as literature proves to be in controlling linguistic "progress" and in providing an image of vertical\(^1\) and horizontal development of language, it invariably yields, albeit reluctantly and in varying degrees, to the demands and needs of everyday speech. This latter, with its criteria of bulk, picturesque exaggerations and simplifications of phonic elements and syntactical processes, has to bear a heavy responsibility for the vogue or unpopularity, and even the disappearance, of signs. It is believed that the disappearance of *is* was probably due to its small phonic value, as well as to its weak, indeterminate syntactical function; no reason that is wholly satisfactory has yet been advanced for the absence of uncompounded *ipse* in French.

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\(^1\)"Vertical" is here used to apply to the movement of terms from a popular context to one of literary respectability, "Horizontal" differences are regional.
Romance. Popular attempts at mental clarification and vividness led to mis-use and abuse of all demonstratives in Latin; but evidence of what occurred in popular speech is either sketchy or difficult to come by, in documents of the Classical era where the literary fabric was so well-knit.

Of the entire demonstrative system *ille* proved the most productive element when Romance took on the definite shape which distinguished and separated it from its conservative parent. Indeed, a desperate struggle to preserve the integrity of classical ideals hastened the separation and widened the gulf which already existed between what intellectuals wrote and what constituted popular speech.

Linguistic processes are slow, spreading over several centuries. The sudden appearance of a definite article in Old French literature should not surprise us overmuch if we constantly bear in mind the fact that we are at a disadvantage, throughout the period under our review, due to the scarcity or absence of recorded popular speech patterns. We have to conclude that this missing link holds the answer to the problem of the definite article which, we believe, must

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2We do not wish to imply that speakers did not understand each other. Comprehension depends, to a large extent on gestures and contextual factors.
have existed in speech long before it appeared in writing.

Documents up to the twelfth century reflect only faintly the flexibility of "vulgar" grammar; and it took the unifying influences of academic and linguistic forces, the development and spread of the art of printing, as well as various political and social factors of the thirteenth century and the Renaissance to introduce a measure of standardisation and stability in everyday speech. It is difficult to assess the extent to which these factors affected both parole and langue. The archaic remnants of Old French definite article usage which we inherit come from an age when the rusticus was, unconsciously, the chief grammarian, and, like his modern counterpart, a force to be reckoned with in sophisticated linguistic circles.
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These texts are listed in a chronological order of origin.
La Passion du Christ in Ibid.


Articles


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