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The development of the definite article in Old High German and Old French: a comparative analysis.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the development of the definite article in the Germanic and Romance languages; in particular I will limit my field of research to Old High German, for the first group, and Old French, for the second. Following the perspective of a comparative analysis, I will focus my attention on those steps which lead to the progressive evolution of this class of elements, with the intent of individuating similarities and possible divergences existing between the two aforementioned languages.

It has already been successfully proofed that even among languages belonging to different families, some changes occur in a similar way (for example the choice of the source for the definite article), thus offering interesting material for a cross-linguistically oriented research¹. Even if it may sound obvious, it is not convenient to think that the article suddenly appeared out of the blue; such a vision is very limitative and does not take into account the internal changes these languages underwent and the complex nature, which characterizes and motivates this phenomena.

Consequently my intent is to find out where the article comes from and if the process that lead to its formation took place at a common level (i.e. Proto-Germanic for the Germanic languages or Latin for the Romance languages) or individually, in each language.

Quoting Leiss (2000: 2):

Das kausale ‚Warum‘ ist die Frage nach dem Woher des Artikels. [...] die beiden Fragerichtungen hängen eng zusammen: solange die Funktion des Artikels, d.h. seine präzisen Aufgabenstellungen nicht bekannt sind, solange wird man Schwierigkeiten haben herauszufinden, welche Faktoren sein Entstehen bewirkt haben könnten.²

In my opinion this statement is very important, as it underlines on one of the crucial points of my discussion: the individualization and the detailed analysis of each passage which played a fundamental role in the development of the definite article is necessary, as each of them

¹ The revisitation proposed by Keenan (2011), in relation to Greenberg's 'cycle of definiteness' (1978) offers a proper example: in her work, she tries to apply a version of the cycle proposed by Greenberg (that was developed from some American and African languages, all sharing the same peculiarity of having an article system base on a single element), extending the generalization also to indefinite articles. Harris (1980) was actually one of the first who tried to adapt this model to both Germanic and Romance languages.

² Leiss, E. (2000:2): „The causal ‘why’ is the question about ‘where’ the article comes from. [...] both directions of the question are strictly related to each other: so long as the function of the article, i.e. its precise types of problem are not known, so long we will have difficulties to find out which factors may have caused its genesis „

improves the understanding of the kind of function the article had and what promoted the development till its actual usage.

The topic I chose for my dissertation is of particular interest, as it is not very simple to find a proper and exhaustive explanation that can take into account of any single instance, present in a text: this is due to the fact that the genesis of a new grammatical category has many implications at different levels, in particular in the field of syntax and semantics.

Furthermore the data I am analyzing are just based on the texts transmitted by manuscripts. Due to the intrinsic properties linked to the written language itself, this approach can, in a certain way, be limitative. For instance, if we consider how a native speaker uses his idiom, and if we compare the utterance to a composition redacted by the same person, we will notice that there is not a perfect correspondence: it is very common in speech to do some “errors”, which may not exist in a more meditated and controlled written text, thus also if the speaker has received a good instruction.

Even if there are many intervening disturbing factors, it is possible to recognize systematic changes, enough to outline the grammaticalization path the article underwent.

The turning point of the debate about the development of the definite article in the area of the Germanic languages started in the eighties with Kovari (1984) and Oubouzar (1989).

Kovari tries to give an explanation about the origin of the article in Gothic. Summarizing his analysis in few words, the motivation which lead to the development of the article, was strictly connected to the weak declension of the adjective, as the latter progressively underwent a change of its grammatical functions; in particular, its capability to assign definiteness was subject to weakening.³

Kovari’s hypothesis is interesting in the way he considers the relationship existing between the definite article and the weak declension of the adjective, as this is also attested in other Germanic languages; anyway I am convinced that this is just one of the aspects we have to take into consideration.⁴

³ According to Braune & Eggers (1987) we can postulate an early stage in which the adjective, if weak declined, could alone be a marker of definiteness. Wilmanns (1909) states that this capability also determined a relative independence of the adjective. As the weak declension started to lose this capability, Kovari (1984: 55) proposes that *the article was added as reinforcement*. His observations regarding the Gothic language can be also theoretically applied to the other Germanic languages, as Old High German, for instance had also a strong and a weak declension system for adjectives, the latter always associated with a definite interpretation.

⁴ As my intent is to proceed among the lines of a cross-linguistically oriented analysis, Kovari’s proposal cannot be applied to Romance languages. We will see later that Old French, for instance, had just one declension system.

Oubouzar (1989) offers one of the most detailed analyses about the development of the article in Old High German. In particular she remarks that indefinite articles did not just appear as counterparts of the definite ones⁵.

In the branch dedicated to the development of the article in Romance, it is necessary to mention the works of Epstein (1994, 2001), Selig (1992) and Trager (1932). In particular, Epstein and Trager noticed that in the texts produced during the Late Latin period, the distal demonstrative *ille* became progressively a way to convey a particular nuance of significance, communicating personal involvement and expressivity. As Epstein restrains himself only on *ille*, Selig's studies (1992) are more complete, as she also considers the role played by *ipse* as competitor form to be grammaticalized into a definite article.

In the first part of my dissertation I will provide some basic definitions, for a better understanding of how I intend to proceed with my analysis. I retain it is necessary to mention such as an important concept as definiteness is; I will also briefly explain what a functional category is; last but not least, we cannot simply give as known that a process of grammaticalization implies.

The second part will be dedicated to the analysis of the manuscripts, hence we will see in detail in which direction changes, like semantic bleaching and conditions of use, affected the demonstrative pronouns and the order of the elements, which are part of a nominal expression. A brief paragraph will be dedicated to the reconstructed determiner system of the Indo-European; I will then proceed providing and commenting examples not only from Old French and Old High German, but also from the Classical and Late Latin period, in order to see in which direction grammaticalization moved.

After having examined the data and once I have individuated the key elements to discuss, I will focus my attention on the most theoretical part of this analysis, i.e. the comparison of some hypothesis, trying to individuate the pros and cons of the different approaches and deducing my conclusions.

⁵ As also remarked by Presslich (1998) in her study on indefinite articles, their origin is related to the [+partitive] feature with mass nouns and with count nouns with indefinite plural. The indefinite reading was due to the association of the numeral with count nouns.

Part I

1.1. Definition of functional category

A language is made up of many elements, which can be mainly split in two groups, i.e. lexical or functional categories. Noun, adjectives and verbs (all, with the exception of auxiliaries) are items of the first group. Quoting Szczepaniak (2011:1) they are *Inhaltswörter, [...] also all das, was wir aus der uns umgebenden Welt kennen, bezeichnen (denotieren) können.*⁶ Because of their concreteness they can appear in isolation and new members can be added to this class. Items of a functional category present, instead, the opposite characteristics: [...] *als Bündel abstrakter Merkmale existieren, die keine einheitliche Repräsentation im Lexikon haben.*⁷ Case is for instance an interesting example. One of the UG principles is that each language assigns case to their nominal expressions, in order to make their thematic roles visible.⁸ On the contrary, the way in which case can be rendered, i.e. if morphologically visible or not, is a language-specific parameter. If we compare Old English and Modern English, the difference is very evident:

Nominative	(Old English) se cyning	(Modern English) the king
Dative	(Old English) þæm cyninge	(Modern English) for/to the king

In Old English we can notice that both the demonstrative pronoun and the noun are declined, whereas in Modern English the two forms are morphologically the same.

Definiteness is another instance of an element of a functional category that will be object of further discussion in the next chapters, as well as determiners and articles, because of the decisive role it played in the process of grammaticalization.

Functional elements constitute a closed class, i.e. it is very difficult for a new item to be inserted. This does not exclude that they can be subject to change. In the third part of this work

⁶ Szczepaniak, R. (2011:1): „content words, [...] so all that can describe (denote) what we know about the world surrounding us“

⁷ Shin, H.-S. (1993:47): “they exist as a bunch of abstract elements, which do not have a unitary representation in the Lexicon.”

⁸ As required by the Case Filter (II), from Shin (1993:8):

- NP-Kette, wo die NP-Kette eine Theta-Position enthält und keinen Kasus hat. (NP \neq PRO)
“NP-chain, where the NP-chain contains a theta-position and has no case. (NP \neq PRO)”

For further discussion, see Shin (1993)

the development of the definite article form demonstrative pronouns will be treated with major details.

1.2. Some considerations about the double base hypothesis

As noted by Hinterhölzl (2004), if Scandinavian languages and Old English changed the original Indo-European verb-final construction to a VO order, Old German and Dutch remained basically OV; anyway the presence of VO patterns must be taken into consideration. The same phenomenon can be observed also in Latin, for example in gerundive constructions and in the eldest stages in Romance.

Pintzuk (1999) tries to explain this variation by means of the so-called double base hypothesis: the basic idea is to postulate the existence of two competing grammars, which consequently determine two opposite orders.

According to Pintzuk, with particular reference to the English history, this happened during the first stages of Middle English, due to the contact with Scandinavian languages (around the 10th century).

Actually Hinterhölzl (2009) points out that OV/VO alternation was already present in Old English, where no language contact could have taken place. Furthermore, data from Old High German and Old Norse (both showing similar mixed patterns) attest that this alternation is to be interpreted more like a common Proto-Germanic inheritance (cfr. Hinterhölzl 2009:1).

If we restrict our investigation to the field of nominal expressions, we will find again contrasting patterns. If OV languages have a head-final parameter, we would always expect to find the order adjective–noun; anyway the alternation noun-adjective is also present. Mixed orders are also very common. Actually, the disposition of adjectives is not casual but depends on many factors such as the kind of the conveyed information content (i.e. old vs. new information) and on the features of the adjective itself, i.e. if it is more nominal or more verbal.⁹

I do not think that the double base hypothesis can explain properly these phenomena, for at least two reasons: first of all, if we assume the existence of two grammars, we have to motivate how a speaker could switch from a head-initial to a head-final parameter from a sentence to another and how these two different systems could be combined to obtain a mixed

⁹ For further discussion, see also Fischer (2000, 2001)

word-order; secondly this approach does not consider the informational content determined by the position of the elements in the structure.

I conclude this paragraph, saying that in my opinion speakers have just a grammar with precise rules and that stylistic grounds (like heaviness), semantics and syntax motivate the unexpected word-orders. I retain this position more adequate to describe the situation of languages with mixed-orders, as the postulation of one base structure can evidence anomalous constructions and allow us to make generalizations.

1.3. Definition of definiteness

In his work Lyons (1999) provides an exhaustive account of the nature of definiteness. In particular he notices the following characteristics:

- The capability of identifying a referent;
- The capability to refer to a totality, in other words inclusiveness (like “unique” referents¹⁰, uncountable nouns and plurals preceded by an article).

Lyons identifies two ways in which definiteness can be encoded:

- Semantic-pragmatic codification (such as word-order)¹¹;
- Through grammatical elements encoded in grammatical categories.

Semantic-pragmatic codification of definiteness can be found in languages like Old English and Old High German, in which the order of the constituents in a sentence (but also in a phrase) seems to be relatively free. As pointed out by Hinterhölzl (2009), constituents do not occupy casual positions, but they follow a precise pattern, in which the informational content plays a decisive role in determining the position in structure; for example, if a referent is introduced anew, it is not surprising to find it in post-verbal position, whereas known referents are usually pre-verbal.

¹⁰ With “unique” referents I mean cases like the following (example from Lyons [1999:7]):

1) I’ve just been to a wedding. The *bride* wore blue.

Bride can be interpreted as “unique” thanks to the context, as we now that a wedding involves the presence of just one bride. Hence Lyons (1999:13) states that “uniqueness is merely a special case of inclusiveness, resulting from the singularity of the noun phrase”.

¹¹ This is also confirmed by Leiss (2000: 267-268), as she states that “by means of pragmatic coding, the invisible values of definiteness of the word order are used to express definiteness.”

Hinterhölzl (2009) and Petrova (2009) provide positive data to confirm this assumption; Modern English, as well as Modern German, are, on the contrary, examples of the second type.

It is also necessary to mention *Artikel und Aspekt*, the essay written by Leiss, in which aspect is not secondary in the understanding of the nature of definiteness. Leiss points out that in those languages in which the grammatical category of verbal aspect is present, *die Grammatikalisierung von Definitheit ist lediglich auf den verbalen Bereich verlagert*¹².

According to her analysis, Leiss individuates (2000: 268) two main language types:

Languages with the grammaticalization of nominal definiteness:

- Languages with articles;
- Invisible coding of the verbal aspect;
- So- called “fixed word-order”;
- Tendency to nominal hyper determination;
- Tendency to an anaphoric use of the article.

Languages with the grammaticalization of verbal definiteness:

- Aspectual languages;
- Invisible coding of nominal definiteness values;
- So- called “free word-order”;
- Tendency to nominal hypo determination;
- Tendency to an anaphoric usage of aspect.

Please note that there is a subtle difference between Lyons and Leiss: Lyons restricts the grammaticalization of definiteness to nominal expressions, without considering the verbal aspect; hence definiteness cannot be considered a universal category. On the other side, Leiss, by asserting that definiteness can be either nominal or verbal, is exactly underlining the cross-linguistic nature of definiteness.

In my opinion Leiss’ ideas have an important implication, as it is more advantageous to think that definiteness should be analyzed as a category shared by all languages.

¹² Leiss (2000:268): „the grammaticalization of definiteness is merely shifted to the verbal sphere.“

I do not totally agree with her, when she asserts that languages with verbal definiteness always have an invisible nominal coding of definiteness. The reason which motivates my doubts, is to find in the comparison between the eldest stages of the Germanic languages and Latin¹³.

Starting from the latter, Latin had several adjective declination systems, depending on the noun class. The Germanic languages, instead, had a system based on two types of declensions: weak and strong. It is interesting to notice that the weak declension was always associated with a definite interpretation and in my opinion this aspect should not be underestimated. I leave open the question, moving further to the next paragraph.

1.4. Definition of Demonstratives

In the introduction to his book “Deiktion, Artikel, Nominalphrase. Zur Emergenz syntaktischer Struktur”, Himmelmann (1997: 1) remarks that, thanks to a comparison made between different languages, we can derive the following assumptions:

- Demonstratives can be found in all languages; there are specific differences in relation to their usage;
- Definite articles, on the contrary, do not exist in all languages (as well as indefinite articles).

Himmelmann lists demonstratives among those deictic elements, which express locality¹⁴and, for instance, they are elements with a [+ deictic] feature. What does it imply? According to Fillmore (1982:35), the term *deixis* refers to a particular usage of a lexical or a grammatical item, in relation to the context in which an utterance is produced. Factors which can influence the situation are, for example, the identity of the speaker and of the interlocutor and where both are located.

Diessel (1999:2) also notes that the primary function of demonstratives is to attract the attention of the hearer to a certain object that can be part of a common knowledge shared by

¹³ The question will be object of discussion in the third part of the study.

¹⁴ Also Diessel (1999:2) in his introduction states that “demonstratives are deictic expressions serving specific syntactic functions”.

the participants in the discourse; eventually they can be used *to orient the hearer outside of discourse in the surrounding situation*.¹⁵

Himmelmann (1997: 44) recognizes in the root of the word *demonstrative* the Latin form *demonstratio/demonstrativum*, which stands for “point to something”¹⁶, which perfectly describes the anchoring effect of demonstratives.

As well as demonstrative pronouns can “point to” differently directions, we can subdivide the class of the local deictic elements through the distance they express: proximal, medial, distal. Not all languages have a triadic system, but they have at least two demonstrative elements, in contrast with each other: one, which is proximal and another, which expresses non-proximality.

1.5. Definition of Definite Article

As we said before, articles are not a common grammatical category present in every language. On the contrary, quoting De Mulder & Carlier (2010: 1):

According to Dryer (1989), articles would be attested in only one third of the languages of the world. Only 8% would have both a definite and an indefinite article. Moreover the spread of this phenomenon is geographically very unequal, with a high incidence in (Western-) European languages.

If we consider the data from those manuscripts which document the eldest stages of both Germanic and Romance languages, we can observe that the class of the definite articles is a later development, rather than a heritage. As a matter of fact in both Proto-Germanic and Latin¹⁷ we have no evidence to suppose the existence of a category of articles and in the reconstructions proposed for Proto-Indo-European it is also common to retain that there was just a demonstrative system but articles did not exist.

¹⁵ For this reason, while speaking, the use of a demonstrative is also combined with a pointing gesture (Diessel: 2).

¹⁶ The term deixis comes from the Greek and it has also the same “point to something” meaning as the word demonstrative. Anyway the two terms cannot be used as synonyms. See Himmelmann (1997) for further discussion.

¹⁷ It is more correct to precise that the process of Grammaticalization of the definite article had already started in Late Latin. Even if Brunot (1933), postulates that the full-fledged definite articles, for what it concerns Old French, were already completely grammaticalized in Late Latin, I think that it is more probable that the process ended around the 9th century, hence during the first stage of Old French. For more details, I leave the discussion open for the next paragraphs.

Even if inter-linguistically there are many differences among definite articles, we can also individuate some common features; for example, from a semantic point of view, definite articles are usually markers of definiteness or specificity¹⁸.

In relation to their characteristics articles can be subdivided in many subcategories.

Their position in the structure is, for instance, one of the criteria we can take into consideration: as well as definite articles can appear at the left side of a nominal expression, they can also be at the right periphery of it.¹⁹

Secondly, articles can be declined or not; furthermore they can also be assimilated to a near element (Himmelmann 1997:195).²⁰ In Romanian or, with some reserves, in the Scandinavian languages, for example, the article is affixed to the noun^{21,22}.

A further interesting fact related to the presence of (in)definite articles is the following: if a language has a class of indefinite articles, the existence of a category of definite articles is highly predictable; on the contrary the sole presence of the definite articles is not enough to predict the class of the indefinite ones²³. Furthermore the class of the definite articles is more widespread (De Mulder & Carlier 2010a: 2). Hence Obouzar's (1989) intuition that indefinite articles are not generated as counterparts of the definite articles is correct.

1.6. Definition of Grammaticalization

I would like to introduce this paragraph presenting Humboldt's view about the origins of grammar. Humboldt (1822) assumes that at the beginning languages just expressed concrete objects or ideas and that their structure (in particular the systematic order in sequences) was an input for the development of grammatical rules through different stages. Here I am not going

¹⁸ Definite articles can also mark that a referent is definite but not specific.

¹⁹ Himmelmann (1997:195) states that articles on the right side of a nominal expression could stand for a weak degree of grammaticalization.

²⁰ Another interesting aspect concerning the usage of articles is if it can appear at the same time with a demonstrative or a possessive pronoun. For example in Modern English the definite article is in complementary distribution with both of them. Vice versa, in the eldest stages of the English language, it was also possible to find article-words followed by a possessive pronoun.

²¹ In some Scandinavian languages (such as Swedish) there is the possibility of an affixed form of the article.

²² Himmelmann (1997: 197) considers those definite articles used as affixes as elements with a high degree of grammaticalization. It is arguable if in these cases articles can still be defined as phrasal markers. De Mulder & Carlier (2010a: 2, 3) propose that they can be both noun markers and noun phrase markers.

²³ This is a generalization, which anyway seems to predict the major part of cases (95%). See De Mulder & Carlier (2010a: 2)

to analyse in more detail this hypothesis; I just wanted to underline that lexical words are somehow involved in processes inherent to the evolution of syntax; this seems to be confirmed also by Meillet (1992).

Meillet, the first who mentions the term ‘grammaticalization’, asserts that this phenomenon takes place when a grammatical character is attributed to an already autonomous word.²⁴

According to Hopper and Traugott (1993: XV) “we define grammaticalization as the process whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions”.

In sum: grammaticalization allows grammar changes; in this way a language is not a crystallized bunch of rules but rather something dynamic and in constant development.

Lehmann (1995) extends the term grammaticalization to describe those processes in which the starting element is not lexical but rather functional; the result is the development of a more grammatical function. This is precisely the case of our topic of discussion: a demonstrative pronoun, which is a functional element according to Szczepaniak (2011), underwent the loss of a feature; thus the definite article is more grammatical as, in comparison with the demonstrative it derives from, it has a more abstract meaning.

Grammaticalization is an irreversible process, i.e. it operates just in one direction; Haspelmath (1999: 1055) proposes that languages are driven by the maxim of extravagance, i.e. each speaker wants to be noticed²⁵. This implies that in a normal pattern, used to express an utterance, a new element appears; if it is successfully accepted, it will be adopted also by other speakers. If the usage of this innovative element increases, it has more chances to become a habit; the process is successfully complete when the original meaning is no more perceived as salient.

Why does grammaticalization occur? To solve communicative problems, caused by the maxim of extravagance; it is a progressive phenomenon, which can be subdivided into stages, whose length is not predictable and language specific. For example, Late Latin and Old High German used to be languages with zero determination, i.e. the position in structure was sufficient to recover the information needed. When a speaker felt the necessity of underlying the importance of a referent to attract attention, he had to develop a new communicative strategy.

²⁴ Meillet, A. (1912:131): “l’attribution du caractère grammatical à un mot jadis autonome.”

²⁵ For further discussion see Keller (1994).

In our case we can consider the employment of demonstrative pronouns, which at the very beginning was limited to certain contexts and was very marked, as an innovative trait of the languages I am analyzing.

Before concluding this paragraph, it is necessary to mention some facts related to the development of the (in) definite articles.

Quoting Szczepaniak (2001) “Kontrastive Untersuchungen haben ergeben, dass die grammatischen Kategorien in vielen Sprachen ähnliche lexikalische Quellen haben.”²⁶

Let us make an example, considering the case of the definite article, object of our study. We have already mentioned that determiners are the starting point of the article development. If this is the case of the Germanic languages, the same phenomenon is also observable in Romance languages and in some non-Indo-European languages as attested by Lehmann (1995).

1.7. The definiteness cycle

One of the most appealing façades emerging from the comparative analysis of grammaticalization among different languages is that the stages in which we can subdivide this process, even if their duration may not always coincide, are almost the same.

Keenan (2010) points out that the first of the common points shared by both Romance and Germanic languages, attested by the data from Spanish, French for the first group and German and English for the second, is *the emergence of definite articles coincides with breakdown of synthetic systems in Late Latin/Common Germanic* (quoted from Keenan 2010:1). This aspect is in strict relation with the change in the directionality of determination: from a post-determinate system to a pre-determinate one (see Nübling 2010:251). In other words: when the morphological case marking expressed by the flecional endings of adjectives and nouns started to weaken, there was the need of developing new strategies like the definite articles to recover this kind of information.

Greenberg (1987), concentrating his studies on African and American languages that developed a system with just the definite article, already recognized that the phenomenon of grammaticalization can be principally subdivided in three main stages (or four, if we consider

²⁶ Szczepaniak (2011:38): „contrastive researches have revealed that grammatical categories have similar lexical sources in many languages.“

also stage 0, i.e. where the demonstrative pronoun has not been subject to any kind of weakening or bleaching of its original features).

The scheme below summarizes the way in which the development of the definite article may have proceeded²⁷:

Stage 0	Stage I	Stage II	Stage III			
DEMONSTRATIVE	>	DEFINITE ARTICLE	>	SPECIFIC ARTICLE	>	NOUN MARKER

At stage 0, as mentioned before, the demonstrative retained its original deictic component and the referent is, more individuated²⁸; the process undergoes other intermediate passages before reaching the last phase, loosing in individuality and becoming more general.

I want to proceed by seeing each stage in detail, while keeping in mind the data extrapolated by the analysis of the text corpora. A further remark: the question of the kind of relation existing between a definite article and a noun, i.e. the reasons behind its use/non use, are present but just in a superficial way, with the risk of generating confusion.

For this reason I decided that the questions related to the semantic content of the nouns, like concrete vs. abstract objects, will be only partially taken into consideration in this paragraph.

At the very beginning (i.e. stage 0) the demonstrative pronoun could be used only in those contexts that were situation-dependent.

This so-to-say restriction was due to the nature of the demonstrative itself: as already mentioned in the section dedicated to the demonstrative pronouns, we saw that they can be identified as the speech counterpart of a gesture employed to indicate the referent, on which we want to focus the attention of the interlocutor.

Diessel (1999) remarks that the property of the demonstrative pronouns of pointing to a referent external to the linguistic situation was the promoter of its use as an anaphoric element²⁹.

²⁷ Scheme from Carlier & De Mulder (2010: 2)

²⁸ The expression more individuated was quoted from Carlier & De Mulder (2010). According to me this describes in a proper way the status of the demonstrative pronoun at stage 0.

²⁹ Diessel (2006) basically supports Lyons' (1999) theory that the choice of the demonstrative pronoun of third person was principally due to the anaphoric use. We will see that this position is problematic.

As noted by Szczepaniak (2011: 72-73), the uses of the demonstrative can be summarized as it follows:

- Situative usage: The demonstrative can introduce a referent in the discourse, i.e. the referent was never mentioned before.

This book is a best-seller.

In this case we are speaking of the book for the first time, hence the demonstrative focuses the attention of the hearer on the noun; the referent is not only new but is also part of the communicative situation.

- Anamnestic usage: the demonstrative “points to” a referent, which was mentioned in past discussions, but of immediate comprehension for both the hearer and the speaker (but not for a person extraneous to the first discussion). A concrete example: if I explain to a friend that I am going to a conference about the book I read and the week after I see this person again, when she asks: “How was that conference?” we are facing a case of anamnestic usage.

- Anaphoric usage: the demonstrative “points to” a referent, which, differently from the situative usage, was already mentioned in a past discourse.

This usage, in particular, is considered by many (such as Diessel 2006) one of the reasons of the weakening of the deictic features of the demonstrative article.

I am looking for a book. This book had a red hard cover with black imprints.

In this case, *book* is at the beginning just generally mentioned: in the first sentence it is only said that an anonymous book *x* was lost. In the second sentence, the demonstrative pronoun reconnect with the aforementioned “abstract” book and defines it in a more precise way.

During the passage from stage 0 to stage I the demonstrative pronoun was subject to a weakening of its feature [+deictic]; the question of calling this element weak demonstrative (as proposed by Himmelmann 1997) or definite article is object of many discussions and, in my opinion, a neat distinction is in any case not possible.

While analyzing the Old High German version of the *Oaths of Strasbourg*, I had the impression that in some contexts *dher* and its forms, rather as being weak demonstratives, were instead definite articles but with a strong connotation, as if they had partially retained the deictic feature of the demonstrative.

We have already remarked that in Late Latin, in particular in the translation of Greek texts in which definite articles were present, that if we may postulate that *ille* and *ipse* could be interpreted as definite articles, they could otherwise be interpreted differently, i.e. respectively as a demonstrative pronoun or as an identity marker.

Also in Old High German, in the eldest part of the production, we could find simple demonstratives, with an ambiguous interpretation. Again, it was difficult to establish in which cases we were facing the pronoun or the article.

According to Hopper (2001) the forms of the definite article in the earliest stages of Old French have inherited this expressiveness because of their demonstrative origin; hence, this perception of “deixis” provides evidence for the persistence of this trait. Szczepaniak (2011), while analyzing the Old High German’s *Isidor*, recognized that also in the cases, in which *dher* was effectively implied as a definite article, not only were very few, but *dher* had always a tendency of “pointing to” something.

In my opinion, as I said before, a neat distinction is not possible and it is not a decisive point, as subtle nuances in the first part of the grammaticalization process, due to the strengthening of the meaning of the demonstrative pronouns, are very common³⁰. Greenberg also remarks this aspect, when he declares that grammaticalization is a continuous process.

We may say that the main difference can be caught, if we consider the different conditions involved in the use of the demonstrative pronouns and of the definite article, i.e. the level of knowledge they imply.

In any case, it is surely between stage 0 and I that the definite article started to differentiate itself from its original source; when the process is complete and the definite article can be easily identified from the demonstrative, we are facing the stage I of the grammaticalization process.

During the stage I, the article was “definite”, i.e. it was associated to nouns, whose context is specific. Definiteness was a constant throughout the whole phase, as it was necessary just a

³⁰ As pointed out by Hopper & Traugott (2003: 75-76) and reprised also by Carlier & De Mulder (2010[b]: 7)

more general interpretation or a noun to be abstract or “unique” to make the referent stand in isolation. We saw that some strategies adopted to define or to recognize the noun could have been the employment of adjectives and of relative clauses.

During the passage between stage I and the following step, the article started to expand its context of use; as a matter of fact in stage II the employment of the article was no more restricted to those referents context defined but also to those being specific in meaning. This implies that the article could also appear in non-defined contexts, which are in many languages normally associated with the use of the indefinite article (quoting Carlier & De Mulder 2010:6). In this passage we can attest an erosion of the semantics of the article and to a further expansion of its contexts of use.

Quoting Carlier & De Mulder (2010:7):

For the specific article of Stage II, no frame of accessible knowledge is supposed to allow the identification of the referent so that the referent need not be pragmatically or semantically definite, but can be conceived as discursively new.³¹

As also remarked by Carlier & De Mulder (2010), this constant progression in the grammaticalization process did not mean that an article automatically preceded all referents: the noun head should at least be definite or specific, otherwise the null article option was still available.

³¹ Carlier & De Mulder (2010:7) quote an interesting example proposed by Epstein (2002: 368), which shows how the accessibility to the common framework is not allowed:

- 1) The film’s setting and the story both have a mythic simplicity. In the aftermath of a drought that leaves most people surviving by selling themselves into lifelong servitude, a farmer and a weaver escape and set up residence in a desert ghost town. Their only contact with the outside world is a trader who keeps them in debt to him while also keeping them supplied with essentials.

Then **the woman** arrives, like a fleeing animal. Her family has been killed in a flood. She doesn’t ask to stay, but they feel guilty after they rebuff her (‘our first sin’ they call it) and invite her to share their refuge. And so begins the slow spiral toward a disaster as ineluctable, no doubt, as the eternal cycles of drought and flood.

(*Spectator*, Raleigh, North-Carolina, 14 February 1996, 11-12 from Carlier & De Mulder 2010:7)

The referent *woman* is preceded by the definite article *the*, which solves the function of indicating that the noun has a relation with an accessible frame of common knowledge. The reconstruction of this framework is left to the interpretation of the hearer/reader. At this point the problem, identified by Carlier & De Mulder 2010, is the open-ended nature of this operation, which can cause the frame to fade out. If this occurs, the hearer/reader will interpret the referent as specific but non-identified. For example here, we now that a specific woman arrives but we cannot recover further information from the background (she was never mentioned before).

The main difference occurring between stage I and stage II is related to the framework of accessible knowledge; if in the first case the information is directly achievable in the informational background, in the second instance the frame is not accessible, i.e. the referent is not identified, hence interpreted as discursively new (quoting again Carlier & De Mulder 2010:7).

Stage III was the final step of the grammaticalization process, in which the article became effectively a real nominal marker, i.e. it could be employed independently from the definiteness/specificity of the context. The article in stage III has developed more grammatical features, i.e. it has reached the status of a less marked item.

To conclude Szczepaniak (2011) points out that the article has developed the following usages, which are prevented to the demonstrative pronoun:

- Abstract-situative usage: the definite article can be used before a referent known from numerous people or from the whole mankind.

Yesterday I wanted to read a book, so I went to the library.

In this example, the library is definite, in the sense that we know that the term library indicates a place where a person can read books. Furthermore it indicates that we are not talking of a general library but of one in detail (for example the university library).

- Associative-anaphoric usage: the definite article identifies the referent as definite, starting from a background of common knowledge and is associated to another referent mentioned before, as in:

Yesterday I read a book. The conclusion upset me.

Here “conclusion” is associated to book. The shared informational background allows us to operate this connection because we know that a book has an introduction, a body and a conclusion.

Restricting our considerations on French and German, the examples we analyzed from the manuscripts provided enough information in favor to a postulation of a similar development.

First of all, in both cases, the distal demonstrative has revealed to be the primary source for the definite article; secondly the deictic feature, which characterized the demonstrative pronouns, underwent a process of deletion. Finally, the definite article was subject to a progressive change in meaning: at the beginning it solved the function of prominence marker only for a particular category of nouns and then extended its domain of use, causing a weakening of its primary function, i.e. to mark just pragmatic definite referents. Anyway, it is still not clear why the article expanded its domain of use: it is necessary to spend few words about the relation existing between definite article/ demonstrative pronoun and noun.

For this reason, in the next paragraph we will consider the role played by semantics in the intermediate steps of the process of grammaticalization.

1.8. The Loss of Morphological Case Marking

Latin, as well as Pro-Germanic were languages with a rich inflectional system: the flectional endings, attached to nouns and adjectives expressed morphological case marking. The breakdown of the synthetic structure in favor to an analytic one affected both Romance and Germanic languages, causing important syntactic changes.

Old French has lost almost all of the cases Latin had, retaining just the nominative and the accusative; Old High German, even if it still retained a rich flectional paradigm, was affected by a progressive weakening of the grammatical information conveyed by the weak adjectival endings. The problem was to find an alternative way to express structural case.

Quoting Giusti (1995:86):

The article developed from the demonstrative, taking over the role of case ending. The only difference between the two elements is that case ending is an affix while the article is a free morpheme.

We will see in the next paragraphs the interesting implications proposed by Giusti, in particular in the case of those nominal expressions preceded by a preposition governing more cases.

1.9.Hypothesis: Bleaching

In the paragraph dedicated to the definition of demonstrative pronouns, we mentioned that one of the features which characterizes this class of elements is the trait [+ deictic]. In sum: one of the main functions of the demonstrative is to localize the referent not only spatially, but also in the time span or psychologically (quoting Harris 1978: 67- 68).

A further feature individuated by Harris is the specifying effect that the demonstrative pronoun has on the referent it is in relation to, i.e. its capability of distinguishing the noun head it precedes from other *x* referents of the same kind.

Still according to Harris, the definite article is different from the demonstrative pronoun because it has lost the capability of indicating deixis, while maintaining the original specifying property. This position, proposed by Harris (1978) was followed by both Lyons (1999) & Hawkins (2004).

In particular, Lyons proposes that the reason behind the disappearance of the deictic feature has to be found by researching the contexts of use of the demonstrative pronoun.

Quoting Carlier & De Mulder (2010b: 5):

“[...] the shift from demonstrative to definite article is initiated in those contexts of use where the referent is either directly perceived in the physical surroundings or straightforwardly recalled from the preceding discourse.”

In other words: if the context in which the noun was inserted was clearly spatially identifiable (or psychologically, or had a location in time), the kind of information conveyed by the demonstrative pronoun was perceived as redundant, becoming, slowly, obsolete.

This process, called bleaching or semantic weakening, was gradual and it was promoted by the fact that, because of this redundancy phenomenon, both distal and proximal demonstratives started to be used one in the place of the other without any distinction³².

This could explain why the use of the definite article at the very beginning was limited to a few contexts and then widened, covering also those cases, which were formerly excluded; anyway the last sentence remarks the basic problem of this theory: generally, it has been proved that definite articles find their source in distal demonstratives and in the third person demonstrative (quoting Carlier 2010[b], speaking about Greenberg 1978 and Himmelmann 1997).

³² Noted also by Adams (1967) in respect for Late Latin.

1.10. Hypothesis: Subjectification

If the bleaching hypothesis was more focused on the aspect of the referential usages of the article throughout its development, with Epstein the research moves to another perspective: the dimension of the personal interpretation, which goes under the name *subjectification*.

According to Epstein the use of the definite article finds its motivations in the sphere of expressivity. The difference from its proposal and the theory mentioned above can be identified in the kind of point of view adopted in the relation existing between the hearer and the speaker.

Epstein notices that the referential use of the article implies an interpretation, which is speaker oriented: the definite article is a mean useful to guide the hearer to the referent it is in relation to.

Epstein (2001) following Trager (1932:54-55), quotes him as it follows:

“It was an emotional, affective usage, which grew upon the language unconsciously until it became firmly fixed as an article ... there is nothing at all of a logical analysis; on the contrary, they are wholly non-logical and subjective.”

If we adopt a subjective perspective, it is not the hearer but rather the speaker in the focus of the analysis: the definite article becomes an instrument for the speaker, who uses it to mark discourse prominence.

Hence, the article derived from the demonstrative pronoun, which, in virtue of its intrinsic deictic force, is able to “point to”³³ a referent also if it is new in the discourse and, at the same time, it is capable to assign a sort of focus to its referent.

Epstein proposes expressivity to be the key concept, responsible for the development of the definite article. In particular (as he studies principally the Latin language) all started when *ille* was used in contexts, in which it was originally not needed, in order to mark the discourse prominence of the referent it entered in relation with; when this kind of usage was progressively routinized, the deictic feature faded away.

³³ Here intended as the gesture of pointing to indicate the object we are referring to.

While postulating that the speaker expressed a sort of personal judgment, Epstein distinguishes and separates this usage from the referential (and hearer-oriented) function supported by Lyons, considering just the personal interpretation as a relevant aspect in the process of grammaticalization. Carlier and De Mulder, even if recognizing the emphatic function solved by the demonstrative pronoun, do not agree completely with Epstein, in particular with the statement that this usage of the demonstrative pronoun was subjective, i.e. speaker-oriented.

Carlier and De Mulder note that it is correct to say that the demonstrative was also used in the perspective suggested by Epstein, but his analysis should not be disjointed from the referential function, which is still important or, even better, is one of the principal employments of the demonstrative pronoun (the demonstrative pronoun is not always used to express the opinion of the speaker, but there is always a sort of direct and active involvement of the speaker, who tries to provide a hint to the hearer).

Furthermore they sustain that “referential value and expressive value are not disjoint but complementary and most often closely linked“ (quoted from Carlier and De Mulder 2010[b]: 10).³⁴ We will see in the next paragraph that the intersubjectification hypothesis tries to combine Lyons (1999) hearer-oriented analysis and the speaker-oriented view proposed by Epstein, offering, according to me, a more complete explanation about the process of grammaticalization of the definite article.

1.11. Hypothesis: Intersubjectification

Carlier and De Mulder (2010 [b]) intersubjectification analysis is very interesting, as it tries to capture the clue points of Lyon’s and Epstein’s ideas, while solving some of the problems we listed throughout the exploration of the different hypothesis.

Following the analysis proposed by Traugott (2003) for a completely different case of grammaticalization, and applying it to the development of the definite article, Carlier and De Mulder also share the opinion that at the base of this process there was the relation between speaker and hearer.

Differently from a just hearer-oriented or a speaker-oriented perspective, they propose a speaker-hearer interaction, in which both participants of the discourse take a role in the action.

³⁴ We will see in the next chapters the theory they propose, correcting the point of view of Epstein.

Quoting Himmelmann (1997 and 2001), Carlier and De Mulder sustain the hypothesis that this difference in the interpretation of the nominal expression was the key point in the evolution of the definite article from the demonstrative pronoun: the kind of informational content transmitted by the demonstrative is no longer perceived as specific just for a particular context but rather as common, including also other potential speakers/hearers, who are extraneous to the conversation. They also agree with Lyons, recognizing that the demonstrative was also used in anaphoric contexts with a meaning different from the original.

Before moving further, I just wanted to remark that from now on the term “speaker” will be replaced by “author” or “writer” and the term “hearer” with “reader”, following the line proposed by Dasher and Traugott (2002).³⁵

Going into details in the framework proposed by Carlier and De Mulder, let us see the implications of the intersubjectival hypothesis.

In Latin (both in the Classical and Late periods), demonstrative pronouns could be used also to express a personal judgment regarding the referent they were attached to (I will repeat an example with *ille* in sake for clarity):

- 1) Medea illa
“The famous Medea”
(Cic. Pomp. 22 from: Adams 1967:8)

In Latin *ille* was used mainly to indicate a positive value in contrast to *iste*, which expressed exactly the contrary, i.e. it was a pejorative.

However, this was one of the possible functions related to the demonstrative pronouns, which could be also employed neutrally, thus not expressing any opinions of any kind.

In this step the demonstrative article can be considered according Traugott’s definition *non-less subjective*.

³⁵ Actually, in place of reader they use the term addressee. For what it concerns the choice of writer, we could theoretically distinguish the function of narrator, author but it is not necessary here, as the difference seems to be not relevant, as pointed out by Carlier and De Mulder (2010 [b]).

The first changes manifested themselves during the Late Latin period, when the authors started to place the demonstratives to signalize the presence of a referent, important for the context the use of *ipse*, *ille* and of other prepositions was very marked, as Latin was and remained a language with zero determination.

Carlier and De Mulder postulate that the writer of a text perceived some referents as difficult to interpret for the reader³⁶ (quoting Carlier and De Mulder 2010[b]: 21); the position in structure was not sufficient enough for a correct interpretation.

We will see that the abuse of the original forms of the demonstrative pronoun and, i-n the case of Latin -of the identity marker, caused a change in their meaning.

Both *ille* and *ipse* became elements capable to build textual connection among the referents present in the discourse. At this point, from a stage of non-/less- subjectivity, we move into the direction of a subjective interpretation of *ille* and *ipse*.

What is subjectification exactly? Here it follows a passage I decided to quote from the paper of Carlier and De Mulder (2010 [b]: 21-22), reporting Traugott's definition of subjectification:

Traugott (2003:126) defines subjectification as “the mechanism whereby meanings come over time to encode or externalize the speaker / writer's perspectives and attitudes as constrained by the communicative world of the speech event, rather than by the so-called “real-world” characteristics of the event or situation referred to.

Traugott's definition is very clear: in the moment, in which *ipse* and *ille* stopped to have a “neutral” meaning and, instead, conveyed the perception of the author, we are talking of a process of subjectification.

Following Carlier and De Mulder (2010[b]), this can be considered as the first step of the process of the grammaticalization.

We can see that there is a certain similarity with the proposal advanced by Epstein, as he also points out the importance of the interpretation of the referent; this is also sustained by Traugott, who remarks that subjectification implies that there is a focus on the interpretation of the meaning provided by the author/speaker.

As also remarked in the paragraph dedicated to Epstein's proposal, Carlier and De Mulder recognize the importance of subjectivity and they both share the opinion that this aspect is relevant in the process of grammaticalization of the definite article; anyway they move a step

³⁶ According to Carlier and De Mulder, despite the zero determination, it was not automatic that the reader could recover the information needed to identify the referent.

further, also following the idea proposed by Traugott (2003), by taking also into consideration the role played by the hearer.

Carlier and De Mulder (2010 [b]: 22) argue that if it is correct to postulate that it is the speaker/author to operate the choice of which element is discourse relevant, we also have to motivate the reasons behind it; hence, they support the theory that:

The writer has a representation of the reader's text model and takes into account this representation of the readers text model when choosing the referential expression.³⁷

By assuming this, there is a subtle difference from Epstein's analysis, in the sense that even if the principal role is still retained by the author/speaker, the one played by the hearer is not left apart.

The term *subjectification* does not correspond anymore to the situation described by Carlier and De Mulder: for this reason, from now on, we will talk about *intersubjectification*.

The definition provided by Traugott (2003, quoted from Carlier and De Mulder), is, again very exhaustive. According to her:

Intersubjectivity in my view refers to the way in which natural languages, in their structure and their normal manner of operation, provide for the locutionary agent's expression of his or her awareness of the addressee's attitudes and beliefs, most especially their face or self-image. (from Carlier and De Mulder 2010[b]: 34)

At the very beginning of the process of grammaticalization, subjectivity is determinant in the "reinterpretation" of the demonstrative as such, in the sense that its original role is revalued again, because of the exploitation made by the authors/speakers.

Once the first step (subjectification) has taken place, intersubjectification subentries, determining the next changes. If at the beginning just the interpretation of the writer/speaker was the initial promoter of this process, in this second passage we find an innovation: the writer/speaker makes the effort of figuring out how the reader/hearer could perceive the referent, thus trying to understand the level of identification.

If we think about the meaning conveyed by the demonstrative pronoun and the definite article, the change in perspective is very noticeable.

As the demonstrative, according to its functions, introduces a reference, marking in some way its importance, the definite article implies instead that the knowledge, shared by both the

³⁷ Carlier and De Mulder (2010[b]:22)

speaker and the hearer, is also shared at a more general and abstract level, i.e. also by the rest of the community³⁸.

Simplifying the path, which leads to the final result of the intersubjectification, I am reporting Traugott's summarizing classification of the different steps:

Non-/ less-subjective > Subjective > Intersubjective

One of the positive and innovative aspects of this proposal is the fact that, in respect to those analyses in which the definite article evolved through the anaphoric use of the demonstrative pronouns, it offers a complete overview of the phenomenon, while accounting also for those cases otherwise not explicable in the other theories.

2. From demonstratives to definite articles

In the next paragraphs I will proceed with the detailed analysis of the process of grammaticalization of the definite article.

First of all I want to spend a few words, introducing the system of the demonstratives in the reconstructed Indo-European.

I will then proceed by illustrating the demonstrative pronoun system in Latin, focusing my attention on the periods of Classical and Late Latin. It will follow a detailed overview of the situation in Old French texts. We will then see briefly the demonstrative system in Proto-Germanic and its evolution in Old High German.

The aim of this chapter is, basically, to obtain all the information I will need for the next section, giving my first impressions and mentioning the opinions of other researchers, in order to have a general panorama of the context in which things were messed up.

I decided to start commenting the examples from the texts first, as the written material is the primary source, from which we can understand that something has changed throughout the time.

³⁸ Please have in mind the examples we made in the past paragraphs, while describing the basic differences existing between these two elements.

2.1. Demonstratives in Proto-Indo-European

As the name already points out Proto-Indo-European is a reconstructed language. This implies that we do not have any written attestation of the existence of this language and that we cannot confirm if the presumed data proposed by the researchers correspond really to Indo-European. Anyway, the comparative analysis, made on various families of languages, allows us to postulate that Indo-European existed.

After having recognized the intrinsic limits of this kind of research, we may proceed by considering Beekes (1995) proposal.

Beekes introduces the section he dedicates to the pronouns, by underlining that the reconstruction of demonstratives³⁹ is particularly problematic. The difficulty is due to the fact that the system of each language is very different to that of the others. According to Beekes (1995: 201), “if we should ‘add up’ all of the stems, as is usually done, we would get an unusually great number of demonstratives in PIE”. For these reasons, he tries to simplify the PIE system, proposing a model with solely two pronouns: the proximal-distal *so (which correspond to this/that) and the anaphoric *h₁, with the meaning *the (just named)*.

Table 1: Demonstrative Pronouns in PIE: Proximal-Distal						
	Singular			Plural		
	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine
Nominative	*so	*tod	*seh ₂	*toi	*teh ₂	*seh ₂ i??
Accusative	*tóm		*teh ₂ m	*tons		*teh ₂ ns
Genitive	*(to)sio		*(t)eseh ₂ s	*tesom?		*tesom?
Ablative	*tosmō d			*toios?		
Dative	*tosmō i		*tesieh ₂ ei	*toimus		*teh ₂ mus?
Locative	*tosmi		*tesieh ₂ i	*toisu		*teh ₂ su?
Instrumental	*toi?		*toi?	*toib _h i		*teh ₂ b _h i?

³⁹ For a diachronic analysis of the demonstratives, i.e. the speculation about the origins of these elements, see Diessel (1999).

	Singular			Plural		
	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine	Masculine	Neuter	Feminine
Nominative	*h ₁ e	*(h ₁)id	*(h ₁)ih ₂	*h ₁ ei	*ih ₂	*ih ₂ es
Accusative	*im		*ih ₂ m	*ins		*ih ₂ ns
Genitive	*h ₁ éso		*h ₁ eseh ₂ s?	*h ₁ es(om)		
Ablative	*h ₁ esmōd			*h ₁ eios?		
Dative	*h ₁ esmōi		*h ₁ esieh ₂ ei	*h ₁ eimus		
Locative	*h ₁ esmi		*h ₁ esieh ₂ i	*h ₁ eisu		
Instrumental	*h ₁ ei?			*h ₁ eib ^h i		

If Beekes' hypothesis is correct, PIE had both a demonstrative pronoun (as in table 1) and a demonstrative adjective (as in table 2).

Part II

3. Demonstratives in Classical Latin

Adams (1967), while speaking about the deictive elements that can be found in Classical Latin, remarks that not only demonstratives but also personal pronouns, if used in particular contexts, could present the anchoring effect we mentioned in the former paragraphs.

On the contrary, the presence of a class of definite articles is not attested. According to Leiss (2000) we would expect that the Classical Latin word order should be relatively free and our prediction is correct.

Back to the classification of demonstratives pronouns, Adams (1967: 8) individuates a triadic system, with a proximal (*hic*), a medial (*iste*) and a distal (*ille*) element:

- *Hic*: to indicate the speaker's nearest referent (this near me);
- *Iste*: to indicate the listener's nearest referent (that near you);
- *Ille*: to indicate the farthest referent from the speaker and the listener (that remote from both of us).

Ille was eventually used to underline the notoriety of the noun it referred to, as it follows:

- 2) *Medea illa*
“The famous Medea”
(Cic. Pomp. 22 from: Adams 1967:8)

Quoting Adams, *ille*, in this example, does not denote an item distant in terms of locality or time; instead, it remarks the fame of *Medea*, without making further distinctions with other towns that could have had the same name.

Hic, *Iste* and *Ille* have contrastive meanings, hence they could be used in those contexts, in which solely word order was not sufficient to recover all the information needed.

- 3) *sed hoc commune vitium; illae Epicuri propriae ruinae*
“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.”
(Cic. Fi. 1, 18 from Adams 1967: 9)

- 4) *Melior [...] est certa pax quam sperata victoria; haec [i.e. pax] in tua, illa [i.e. victoria] in deorum manu est.*
“It is better a certain peace rather than a hoped victory; this [i.e. peace] is in your (hands), that [i.e. victory] in the gods’ hands.”
(Lil. xxx, 30,19 from Adams 1967: 9).

In Livius *pax* is perceived as the nearest element to the speaker, this because peace is intended to be something for humans; on the contrary, *victoria* is related to the gods and hence interpreted as being more distant.

Another peculiar function of *ille* and *iste* is to express a positive or a negative connotation of human referents.

- 5) *Socrates ille*
“The illustrious Socrates”

- 6) *Iste homo*
“This dishonorable man”

As we can see in the mentioned examples, if *ille* in the first case underlines the respect that the speaker had towards Socrates, *iste* classifies its referent in a depreciative way.⁴⁰

It is also necessary to mention *is*, *idem* and *ipse*. *Is*, pronoun of the third person, had an anaphoric function; differently from the demonstrative pronouns, *is* did not make any distal distinction.

⁴⁰ See also Traugott and Dasher (2002) for further discussion.

Idem and *ipse* are identity markers; *ipse* (which can be translated with *himself*), in particular, concurred as a possible source for the development of the definite article as it was able to mark discourse prominence⁴¹. Quoting Carlier & De Mulder (2010b: 10): “Though not a demonstrative, *ipse* can also mark discourse prominence, on the basis of its meaning as identity marker.”

- 7) Ancillae tuae credidi [...] tu mihi non credis ipsi?
“I believed your handmaid, and you won’t believe me (myself)?”
(Cic. Orat. 2,276 from Hertenberg 2011: 173)

In this example, Hertenberg recognizes one of the common uses of *ipse*, i.e. remarkability. With this term, she means that *ipse* has the function of indicating, in some way, that the referent, to which it is related, is not expected to take part in the action/state expressed by the verb.

- 8) Id opus inter se Petreius atque Afranius partiuntur ipsique perficiendi operis causa longius progrediuntur.
“Peter and Afranius divided this task between themselves, and went in person farther (sc. from their camp) for the purpose of accomplishing the task.”
(Caes. Cil. 1,73,4 from Hertenberg 2011: 174)

Here instead, we can see that *ipse* is used more like an intensifier element, in the sense that we can translate it as “he himself, and not the others”; in this case *ipse* appears only in the form of adjunct of a noun or of a pronoun (such as *ipsique*). There are also situations, in which the intensifier *ipse* seems to occur alone; as *ipse* needs something to modify, we can postulate that both noun and pronoun may have been subject to pro-drop, rather than not present at all.

Both usages of *ipse* can also be found in the Vulgar Latin spoken in this period. One of the peculiarities we can notice, however, is the sequence *personal pronoun* + *met*⁴² + *ipse*, which was consistently used.

As Hertenberg (2011: 175) points out, “in nearly half of the examples in which *ipse* functions as an adjunct dependent on a pronoun in the Vulgate, the originally intensifying particle *met* is also present”.

⁴¹ Carlier & De Mulder (2010[b])

⁴² *Met* was originally a particle with a reinforcing meaning. Anyway, in most cases in which it appears in combination with *ipse*, it is semantically empty.

- 9) Numquid interficiet semet ipsum, quia dicit: Quo ego vado vos non potestis venire
“Will he kill himself? Because he said: whither I go, ye cannot come.”
(Jn 8:22 from Hertenberg 2011: 175)

If in the written material the distinction between the three demonstratives *ille*, *iste* and *hic* seems to be very clear, we cannot predict how the situation could have been in the spoken language, i.e. how much it could effectively correspond; the postulation of a discrepancy between the Latin used in the texts and that used to talk is very plausible.

Furthermore we have also to consider that the cultivated Latin spoken by Cicero and Livius was different from the vernacular forms. As Adams remarks, we have also to keep in mind that the school system at the time was not centralized as nowadays and this leads to further problems. Hence, the questions to answer are the following: which Latin could have spoken a teacher in the periphery of the empire and what kind of instruction he was able to give to his students.

At a certain point the system of the demonstrative pronouns starts generating confusion among the speakers as *ille*, *iste* and *hic* begin to appear in those contexts that were formerly prerogative of another demonstrative or of the anaphoric *is*.⁴³

If the meanings of the three pronouns were neatly distinguishable, it sounds contradictory to think that suddenly the occurring difference was somehow not clearly perceived.

Adams (1967) individuates precisely in the multiplicity of the demonstratives, all sharing the same capability to point to something, the weakness of the Latin system.

In particular he states that the process could have firstly taken place in speech, where utterances are generated rapidly and emotion may have influenced the speaker, thus leading to the generation of “errors”; the affirmation and the widespread of these forms lately influenced also the written language. This phenomenon was inevitable, in particular if we consider the situation of the Roman Empire after the fourth century, where the process of its dismantle had an accelerating effect.

⁴³ For example, *iste* could be used to replace *hic* and *is*. *Ille* and *hic* were also employed in substitution of *is*. See also Ernout and Thomas (1953) for further discussion.

3.1. Demonstratives in Late Latin

In this paragraph I am paying particular attention on the changes which affected the demonstrative pronoun system and the identity mark *ipse*.

Before starting commenting the material of the texts, it is necessary to make some considerations about the context in which the first significant changes occurred. As a matter of fact it would be not easy to understand what promoted the diffusion and later the affirmation of these “errors”.

First of all we have to explain what we intend when we use the term Late Latin. Adams (1967) indicates under this expression the conventional period that started with the Germanic Invasions (i.e. around the 5th century) and ended with the redaction of the Oaths of Strasbourg (842), one of the most significant documents written in Old French and Old High German. We have to remember that Adams restricts his analysis on the development of the definite article in Old French; hence this definition perfectly fits for this language. It is necessary to take note of this because this frame of time can be eventually stretched if we take into consideration other Romance languages. For example the epic poem *Cantar de Mio Cid*, written in Old Spanish, was composed around 1200.

Throughout this paper I will adopt the following definition of Late Latin, i.e. with this term I am indicating a language, which followed the Classical Latin spoken by Cicero and Livius and preceded the first attested stages of the Romance languages.

The first problem we have to face is to try to identify those texts that could be in some way more similar to the language spoken commonly. As a matter of fact the production of written documents was a prerogative of the upper class of the society, i.e. of those people, who were educated and had better living conditions in comparison to the poorest strata of the population. The rhetorical models inherited by the classical tradition are still persistent and, as Adams (1967:22) underlines, sermons and prayers were written in a language that was perceived as *sublime* and *elevated*, as they were dedicated to the deity.

We can't forget that clergymen had to address themselves to a public that did not receive instruction; hence, in order to be understood, they had to adequate themselves to a certain extent to their listeners.

Unfortunately the crystallized nature of the written language makes it difficult to see transparently how the process took place; anyway it is surely in such a context that *ille*, *iste*

and *ipse* underwent the most dramatic changes, otherwise, the forms present in later texts could not be explained.

From now on, I will mainly focus my attention on these two demonstratives, as they are the best candidates from which the definite article could develop.⁴⁴ After describing the context in which both pronouns were used, I will finally draw up my conclusions and in particular I will try to explain why *ille* prevailed on the others.

Iste mainly appears in the form of strong pronoun of second person; sometimes it is also used with an adjectival meaning. Again, as well as *ille*, it “points to” something and retains this feature also in Late Latin. *Iste* sometimes appears in those contexts, in which we would have expected another demonstrative.

10) *Iste mortem non timeat a iudicaturus cum ille vitam requirat a mortuo*
(in Peiper’s Edition 25: 27-28 from Adams 1967: 27)

11) *Convenit veritati et prophetiae quia ista peperit, quod illa concepit.*
(in Peiper’s Edition: 114: 4-5 from Adams 1967: 27)

In both sentences, taken from St. Avitus’ epistles⁴⁵, *iste* is used in place of *hic*. Quoting Goelzer (1909), the most interesting fact is to see that even a cultivated writer like Avitus has used a form, which can be considered an “error” if compared to the Classical tradition.

Hence it is evident that these “errors”, which were relatively common in the spoken language, started to have an influence also in the more conservative written texts.

This assumption could lead mistakenly to think that *iste* could perfectly fit in the role of substitute of *hic*; anyway *iste* does not prevail on it; the pronoun *hic* still survives and it is also very productive.

If we also focus our attention on the contexts, in which *iste* replaces *hic*, we can limit them to passages in which direct speech is reported, as it required a particular illocutionary force that could not be expressed by *hic*⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ The anaphoric *is* has disappeared, without leaving trace in any of the Romance languages. There are many reasons, which were determinant to its weakening. First of all, its role as anaphora was not an exclusive property of *is*, as the other demonstrative pronouns could be used in the same way. Secondly its meaning was more so-to-say neutral; quoting Ernout (1953:79): “[il] n’ a pas de nuance spéciale de sens”. This fact can explain why it started to be replaced by *hic* and especially by *ille*, which were felt more expressive.

⁴⁵ The letters were written around the 6th century.

⁴⁶ Adams (1967: 30) points out: “It becomes what Trager terms an emphatic ‘nearer’ demonstrative”.

A further remark Adams (1967:28) makes, analyzing the meaning of *iste*, is that the pronoun progressively underwent a change in meaning, from the original “that near you” to “this of yours”. Eventually it appears as normal demonstrative; i.e. without its connection to the second person.

In the fourth century there was a conscious attempt to correct the usage of *iste*; with conscious I mean that this effort was meditated in order to restore the Classical Latin system, trying not considering the recent developments of this pronoun. Anyway this nostalgic purpose failed: as a matter of fact the shift must have taken place between the IV and the VI century, otherwise we cannot explain why in texts like *Peregrinatio*⁴⁷ and *De consolatioe philosophiae* the pronoun *iste* appears with a so high frequency rate.

An apparent contradiction to my sentence is offered by St. Benedict’s works: the author shows to have a preference for *hic* rather than *iste*; anyway when the latter appears, there is no doubt that *iste* has undergone evident changes in comparison to Classical Latin.

12) Privati autem a mensae consortio ista erit ratio, ut in oratorio psalmum, aut antiphonam non imponat, negue.

“This shall be the mode of procedure of him who is deprived of coming to the table.”
(St. Benedict, Reg., 24, 4 from Adams 1967: 31)

13) Quod si nec isto modo sanatus fuerit, ...

“If he is not cured by this means.”
(St. Benedict, Reg., 13, 4 from Adams 1967: 31)

Let us give a look at the following examples taken from Boetius’ *De consolatioe philosophiae*.

14) Hi semper eius mores sunt, ista natura.

“These are always her habits, this her nature”.
(Boet., Cons., 21, 10 from Adams 1967: 30)

15) Humanae quippe naturae ista conditio est, ut ...

“For the condition of human nature is such that.”
(Boet., Cons., 35, 29 from Adams 1967: 30)

If we may argue that in example (13) there could be a sort of labile connection with the second person (quoting Adams), in (14) this is not present at all, thus attesting the intervened change in meaning.

Pregreninatio offers material of interest the emphatic use of *iste*,:

16) Ecce ista fundamenta in giro colliculoisto, quae videtis, hae sunt.

⁴⁷ see (Aebischer 1948) (Nocentini 1990) for further discussion

“These foundations, which you behold, these are.”
(*Ethéria* 14, 2 from Adams 1967: 31)

As well as *iste*, *ille* underwent also substantial changes. Anyway, it still retains those anchoring features, which it previously had. Quoting Adams (1967: 23-24):

“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.”

Secondly *ille* became even more used with an anaphoric value, progressively replacing the third person pronoun *is*.

Furthermore *ille* appears also in the function of adjective, with the meaning *aforementioned*. This peculiar usage is already attested in Tertullian.

17) *Ecquis ille Christus cum sua fabula?*
“Who is that Christ with his story?”
(Tert. 23, 12 from Adams 1967:32)

Before this mention, the figure of the Christ is mentioned many times, as Tertullian is speaking about Christianity; in particular, he points out that Jesus is God’s son⁴⁸. For this reason, I consider *ille* as having the function of underlining that we are talking of the same figure already introduced in the previous parts of the text.

More interesting is its function as “syntactic-accent” mark (quoting Adams 1967), which was at the beginning sparsely used:

18) *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.*
“Therefore, if there is anyone who makes gods, I return to my examination of the causes for making gods out of men, and I can find none, unless it be that that great god desired servants and helpers in discharge of his divine duties.”⁴⁹
(Tert. 11,4 from Adams 1967:33)

With “syntactic-accent mark” we may intend that *ille*, rather as a simple “pointer”, served to underline the uniqueness of the referent. For instance, in (5) *ille magnus Deus* means something like *the only one great God*.

⁴⁸ In 21,7.

⁴⁹ Translations by Alexander Souter, from the *Quinti septimii Florentis Tertulliani Apologeticus* of Oehler (1917)

This case is not limited only to Tertullian, but we can find further examples also in St. Caesarius:

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

“ Silent was the noise of those wailing ones.”

(S. Caesarius, Hom., 1, 11 from Adams 1967: 33)

20) *Unus ex illis id unicum ac primum illud originale debitum sacri fontis unda vacuavit. Illud singulare delictum primi parentis interemit.*

“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.”

(S. Caesarius, Hom., 3, 25 from Adams 1967: 34)

Again, the demonstrative pronoun has an over-emphatic meaning. Progressively this peculiar use becomes even more frequent and it is not only limited just to *ille*: as a matter of fact other demonstrative particles, as we already saw for *ipse*, started to appear in those contexts, in which the authors wanted to convey a particular reading.

Peregrinatio Aetheriae offers interesting material, for what it regards the change in the use of demonstratives. As Trager (1932: 23, 24) points out we can see a considerable difference between passages that describe action and activity (personal involvement) from those with a more narrative value, in which nothing particular occurs. In the first case we have a consistent usage of demonstratives; in the latter case, the author seems to be more pauper, in the sense that *ille* appears where we would have expected.

In sum: the constant research of vividness lead to an over abundance of demonstrative pronouns and particles, causing a weakening of their original meaning but not a completely loss of their [+ deictic] feature.

Now, if *ille* has no more retained its original meaning of strong demonstrative pronoun, even if it has not lost completely its deictic features, we have to suppose that there was a vacuum in the system that had to be filled.

The strategy adopted by the speakers was that of combining demonstrative pronouns with demonstrative particles, obtaining forms like *ecce ille*. This phenomenon is not limited to *ille* but it is also attested with other pronouns, such as *iste*⁵⁰. Even if these forms are used exceptionally in the texts⁵¹, according to Adams we can postulate that they were much more in

⁵⁰ The form *ecce iste* was developed later if compared to *ecce ille*; this is explainable if we consider that *iste* maintained the meaning of pointing to a close referent for a longer period.

⁵¹ In the Fredegarius, both *ecce iste* and *ecce ille* do not appear a single time.

use in the spoken language; furthermore he also supposes that they already existed in the former stages of Latin, as attested in some pre-Classical Latin authors⁵².

The research for a clearly identifiable strong demonstrative reaches its acme in the *Peregrinatio*, where the author adopts the form *iuxta istum*:

21) *iuxta istum medianum*
“this middle one”

This tendency of creating bulky forms was not restricted to demonstrative pronouns but it affected also *ipse*: the superlative form *ipsimus*, combined with *met*⁵³, results in *met-ipsimus*, which is very popular in Vulgar Latin⁵⁴, similarly reprising a pattern which was already in use in the Vulgar spoken during Classical Latin.

In sum: Late Latin texts, even if they did not completely correspond to the spoken Vulgar Latin, allow us to understand that the interpretation and the use of the demonstratives changed in comparison to Classical Latin. Even if many authors strived in the direction of a pure and nostalgic form of the language, which would be able to recall the perfection felt in the Latin used by Cicero and Livius, the absence of a centered school system (that eventually clashed in the period of the Empire’s dismantle) and the low number of educated people were not able to contrast the innovative forms introduced in the language spoken by the poorest.

The search for effective strategies in order to express more emphasis, affected the use of the demonstratives pronouns and of the identity markers. Some of the significant changes can be resumed as following:

- The progressive - but not complete - weakening of the deictic feature of the demonstrative pronouns;
- Their capability to be marks of syntactic-accent;
- The widespread of the demonstratives in those contexts in which Classical Latin had no determiner.

⁵² Plautus’ corpus offers a proper example, as his prose reflects a Latin, different from Cicero’s. As a matter of fact Plautus’ comedies were destined to another kind of public.

⁵³ The suffix *-met* already existed in Classical Latin; it was attached to personal pronouns in order to reinforce their meanings. *Ipse* could eventually follow, as we can see in the examples *egomet ipse*, *memet ipsum* (from Menge 2000:87)

⁵⁴ As noted by Carlier and De Mulder, the form **metipsimum* did not disappear; it was lately subject to reanalysis, resulting in the forms *medesimo* (It.), *même* (Fr.), *mismo* (Sp.), *mesmo* (Pt.).

Ille, iste and *ipse* are the three demonstratives which are the best forms to serve as source for the development of the definite article. We can already exclude *iste*: even if could be basically a good competitor; its usage, similar if compared it to *ille*, was just limited to particular contexts⁵⁵.

Actually, if we consider the data from the literary corpora, it is not immediately understandable why *ille* prevailed on *ipse* in the majority of the Romance Languages: if we count how many times they appear in a text, we will see that *ipse* appeared more frequently, also as translation of the article in Greek.

22) Ipsa vero civitas auro mundo simile vitro mundo

“But the city (itself?) was made of pure gold, like clear glass.”

Greek text: καὶ ἦν ἡ ἐνδόμησις τοῦ τείχους αὐτῆς ἴασπις, καὶ ἡ πόλις χρυσίον καθαρὸν, ὅμοιον ὑάλῳ καθαρῷ.

(Rel. 21:18 from Hertzenberg 2011: 183)

23) Quae sunt omnia in interitu ipso usu secundum praecepta et doctrinas hominum

“All of these things will be destroyed with the use (itself?), after the commands and teachings of men.”

Greek text: ἅ ἐστι πάντα εἰς φθορὰν τῇ ἀποχρήσει, κατὰ τὰ ἐντάλματα καὶ διδασκαλίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων;

(Col. 2:22 from Hertzenberg 2011:183)

These two examples raise a fundamental question, i.e. if it is correct to translate *ipse* as a definite article just because it is used to render the definite article, present in the Greek text. Now, the problem is how we should interpret the demonstrative in Latin: if *ipse* is used to render the article in Greek, is it because it has become an article too?

I want to start answering this question by reconsidering the two last mentioned examples. It is true that *ipse* can somehow be interpreted as a definite article, but it is not the only available option; the hint comes from different factors: some properties related to the category “article” and the possibility of another translation for *ipse*.

Articles do not exactly behave like free morphemes; on the contrary they are strictly bound to the noun they are linked to. It means that those elements, which are not part of the noun phrase, cannot intervene between the article and the noun without leading to ungrammaticality as following: **the however city* (cfr. Hertzenberg 2011:184).

⁵⁵ *Iste* does not completely disappear, as it survives in compound forms, derived from *ecce iste*. For example in Old French we can find *cist*.

Back to example (21), we find the sequence *ipsa vero civitas*, i.e. the supposed article is separated from its noun by the intervening *vero*. Considering what we said before, another interpretation of *ipse* is more desirable and, for instance, possible, i.e. we can translate it with “itself”. In (22) there seems nothing to prevent the article reading; anyway, as in (21) the intensifier use of *ipse* is also possible.

If we consider that most of the Romance languages developed their definite articles from *ille*, the widespread use of *ipse* seems somehow to be to be a paradox.

Meillet (1912) observed that at the very beginning of the process of grammaticalization we might postulate the existence of more than one form, which can function as source.⁵⁶

For these reasons, it is plausible to think that throughout Late Latin the changes which affected the system of the demonstratives were one of the main causes that promoted a reanalysis of their meaning and of their condition of use: according to me, when the original function became confused because of the misuse of the employment of the demonstrative pronouns⁵⁷, there were many forms similar in some aspects (the emphasis on a referent) but different in others (the kind of chain they build with their referents⁵⁸). After a period in which all these forms are productive, the speakers decide for the one that, according to them, is more adequate to convey what they want to express. In my opinion, this is the point in which, from a subjective interpretation, there is the progressive switch to an intersubjective perspective: the initial need of emphasis is replaced by the effort of the speaker of figuring out the informational background of the hearer.

Even if in some contexts we may perceive these demonstratives more similar to modern articles, grammaticalization has not completely occurred but is in progress⁵⁹, as we saw in the examples from the Greek translation. According to Hopper & Traugott (2003: 24, 25) it is normal at the very beginning that expressivity plays a determining function, without causing bleaching phenomena, which are typical when the first stages are assimilated and routinized by the speakers.

⁵⁶ Meillet’s analysis is focused on the grammaticalization path of the French sentential negation. At the very beginning there were at least four possibilities to express it: *ne... pas/ point/goutte/mie*. The first form, *ne... pas*, prevailed on the others, resulting in the Modern French one.

⁵⁷ Such as their employment instead of *is* or the excessive use to express emphasis.

⁵⁸ This aspect will be analyzed in the following lines.

⁵⁹ In my opinion we can say that the process of grammaticalization is not complete because *ille* is still restricted to particular usages.

Still is to explain why *ille* was chosen over instead of *ipse*. Carlier & De Mulder (2010[b]) identify the solution, by considering crucial difference in the function of both determiners.

Ipse conveys the instruction to resume the referent identically and strengthens the continuity of the referential chain, whereas *ille* signals that the referent should be identified anew by means of indications in the context of its occurrence and introduces in this way a discontinuity in the referential chain even in its anaphoric uses.⁶⁰

In sum, the kind of information conveyed by *ipse* is, so to say, more immediate and easier to understand; on the contrary, *ille* has the capability to involve also referents introduced for the first time in the discourse, thus explaining why it could also appear in those contexts in which a referent is mentioned for the first time (quoting Carlier & De Mulder 2010[b])

4. Old French

4.1. Introduction

The *Oaths of Strasbourg* (842) can be symbolically considered the turning point of a language that has evolved and developed new features, distinguishing itself neatly from Latin. We may say that this document attests the conventional birth of Old French.

Adams (1967) points out that even if only partially, this text is able to convey some of these important innovations, which involve the field of phonology and of morphology, as the result of a process of erosion and simplification. Actually, the Oaths are not the solely document attesting this fundamental passage, as other written texts were redacted in that period; anyway we have little trace of them.⁶¹

Furthermore, till *Les chansons des gestes* (12th century) few works are produced and the efforts are mainly limited to poetry⁶².

Even if these materials are interesting accounts of some phonetic changes and of new grammatical structures, we have also to consider that the language adopted by poets does not completely correspond to the language effectively spoken, as it is frequent that fixed rules are infringed, in order to obtain a particular stylistic effect.

⁶⁰ Carlier & De Mulder (2010 [b]: 18)

⁶¹ Apart from few poems, which we will take in consideration also later, we also have some notes on a sermon dedicated to John (in Latin and French) and some glosses in a Latin manuscript (quote from Cohen 1967:72)

⁶² In the anthology proposed by Bartsch (1884), we can see that apart from few exceptions, like the glosses of Casselard and the fragments of a Homily about Jonas, the other texts are poems.

Some passages involving the transformation occurred during the earliest stages of Old French are left to speculation; even though, it is evident that the language already presents patterns, which are distinguishable from the structure of Late Latin.

In these documents we can already notice that the progressive change of *ille* is also morphologically visible: in the texts of the 9th century we already find the forms *il*, *le*, *la*, i.e. deteriorated forms of the demonstrative pronoun *ille*.⁶³

In Old French the system of the demonstrative pronouns retained just two forms, in contrast with the Latin triadic paradigm⁶⁴.

The demonstrative pronouns of the Old French derive directly from two bulky forms⁶⁵, which, as we already see, were very popular in Late Latin:

- *ecce + iste* > *cist*
- *ecce + ille* > *cil*

The texts I decided to take into consideration for my analysis are the following: the Oaths of Strasbourg, La Séquence de Sainte Eulalie, La Passion du Christ, La Vie de Saint Léger, La Vie de Saint Alexis and La Chanson de Roland. At the beginning of this paragraph, I have already explained the reasons of the importance of the Oaths that I will not repeat again. It is necessary to add a further remark, as the peculiarity of this document is that it was written not only in Old French but also in Old High German.

All the other texts, with the sole exception of La Chanson de Roland, are part of the so-called pre-epic literature; written between the 9th and the 12th century, most of them have an hagiographic content (like La Vie De Saint Léger) or narrate episodes related to Christianity (such as La Passion du Christ).

I chose La Chanson de Roland as the representative poem for the epic production because it is one of the most important texts of the Medieval production.

⁶³ Throughout Late Latin many phenomena of phonologic deterioration are attested. Evidence for this can be found in verb endings (in particular of the indicative of *-er* verbs) and in case endings. For more details, see Clackson's (2011) "A Companion to the Latin Language".

⁶⁴ Wolf (1979: 65) retains that the reduction in two forms may be due to a contact with the Germanic languages (which had, effectively, just two forms).

⁶⁵ It is interesting to mention also that in Anglo-Norman it existed also the form *(i)ço*, deriving from the compounded form *ecce + hoc*.

4.2. The Oaths of Strasbourg

The *Oaths* are of significant impact for what it concerns the history of the French language: “un événement politique important est devenu aussi un événement linguistique”.⁶⁶ As a matter of fact, *the Oaths of Strasbourg* offers an interesting panorama of the morphological and phonetic changes that took place at the time. Anyway we still face a text in which the influence of the Latin grammar⁶⁷ is strongly remarkable. We do not have to forget that the *Oaths* are a legal document; hence it is not really surprising to find archaic traits in it. Dauzat (1956) recognizes that the contact with the Germanic languages may have influenced some aspects of the syntactical construction of this text, in particular the part of the *Oath of the soldiers*⁶⁸.

One of the peculiar aspects of this text, apart the partial erosion of the morphological case system that is still alive⁶⁹, regards the non-use of definite articles; as a matter of fact, they are never employed. We have only two cases in which the compounded form of *iste* is used⁷⁰.

The comparison with the Germanic counterpart of this document will be treated in detail in the paragraph dedicated to *The Oaths of Strasbourg* in Old High German.

4.3. The Séquence de Sainte Eulalie

This text (ed. Bartsch 1884, see note)⁷¹, redacted approximately around 878, is a transposition from a Latin sequence. It describes how the martyr Eulalie preferred to preserve her virginity and her faith to Christ, rather than accepting to succumb to the Devil's temptations. The

⁶⁶ Cohen (1967: 72): “[...] as an important political event became also a linguistic event.”

⁶⁷ Dauzat (1956: 46) points out that in Vulgar Latin we can already recognize many VO orders (in opposition to the Classical OV pattern of the Classical texts). In noun phrases, the sequence *determined + determinant* is preferred to the *determinant + determined* order, which was more frequent in Classical Latin. During the Franc period the syntactical order remains, in many constructions, very conservative; Dauzat motivates these archaic features with the language contact with Germanic but in my opinion the effort of emulation of Classical Latin texts should not be excluded.

⁶⁸ Dauzat argues that the *Oath of the Soldiers* is quasi a literal translation from the Germanic counterpart of this passage in the *Oaths*.

⁶⁹ If compared with Latin, which had a rich flexional system, Old French retained the Subject Case and the Oblique Case.

⁷⁰ In order of apparition: *cist meon fradre Karlo, cist meon fradre Karle*.

⁷¹ The edition I adopted can be found in Bartsch's (1884: 3-4) “Chrestomathie de l'ancien français”. The examples are also mentioned by Adams (1967: 49-50)

Sequence has a total of 29 lines and, even if it often written in decasyllabics, the metrical structure is not always respected.

Contrarily to the previously mentioned *Oaths of Strasbourg*, in this text many nouns are preceded by an article-word.⁷² Throughout the *Sequence*, we can identify twelve instances of *il*, *le* and *la*, used to convey different meanings. Let us give a look to the data:

- 24) Voldrent la veintre li Deo inimi (l. 3)
“The God’s enemies wanted to win on her”
- 25) Elle no’nt eskoltet les mals conselliers (l. 5)
“She does not listen to the evil counselors”
- 26) La polle sempre non amast lo Deo menestier. (l. 10)
“[Nothing could lead] the young maiden not to always love God’s services.”
- 27) La domnizelle celle kose non contredist: (l. 23)
“The maiden did not protest against that thing.”

In these examples Adams (1967), Brunot (1953) and Nyrop (1899) argue that *il* (and the other forms) have an individualizing meaning, as *li deo inimi* and *les mals conseilliers* *could not refer to all enemies of God nor to all the wicked counselors*; their function is similar to the of *la polle* and *la domnizelle*.

I agree partially with them, in the sense that a restriction of a group of entities expressed by the name is plausible; anyway, I still think it is possible to interpret this article-word just as referring to a set of things, part of a common knowledge (here, for instance, the enemies of God or the evil counselors can be easily identified like the Evil).

The two examples with *la*, they can be simply be reduced to those cases, in which the article-word is used before a noun, indicating a referent already mentioned in the discourse. At the very beginning of this text, the author provides immediately to say the name of the Saint and that she was a good maiden (*Buona pulcella fut Eulalia*, l. 1); furthermore no other woman is mentioned.

Throughout the text there are many instances of the use of *il* and its oblique forms used in this way as we can see in the following examples.

⁷² *il*, *le*, *la* should not be interpreted as full-fledged articles like their modern counterparts: their function is still restricted to particular contexts, as we will see below.

- 28) A czo nos voldret concreidre li rex pagiens. (l. 21)
“The pagan king did not want to accept that.”

In lines 11 and 12 the king is mentioned; it is also explicitly written that he was the chief of the pagans. I decided to report other examples in which the article-words are used; anyway I will not comment them again, as I would repeat myself, with the sole exception of some remarks, which can be considered interesting from a linguistic point of view.

- 29) Ad une spede li roveret tolr lo chieef. (l. 22)
“With a sword, he ordered to cut her off the head.”

In this example we have an instance of indefinite article: the word *sword*, which was formerly not mentioned, is introduced by *une*.

- 30) Qued elle fuiet lo nom chrestien. (l. 14)
“To renounce to her name of Christian.”

- 31) Ell'ent adunet lo suon element (l. 15)
“She gathers up her force.”

- 32) Melz sostendriet les empedementz (l. 16)
“She prefers to undergo the torture rather than [...]”

- 33) Post la mort et a lui nos laist venir (l. 28)
“After the death and He (Christ) lets us come to Him.”

- 34) Enz enl fou lo getterent com arde tost. (l. 19)
“They threw her into the fire, so that she could burn quickly.”

Here it is interesting to notice the agglutinated form of *en+lo* > *enl*, i.e. a preposition with the definite article. Throughout the text, *en*⁷³ occurs also without article; here it is necessary to point out that the context is defined, as the author speaks about the way the saint dies; thus, even if this torture is mentioned for the first time, the definite interpretation can be explained throughout the information we can recover from the text.

In the text there are also many cases, in which nouns appear in isolation⁷⁴: they are mainly “unique” nouns, hence with a particular connotation. In lines 6 and 25 *ciel* is an expression, which obviously does not refer to the blue sky but to Heaven. Other nouns, strictly related to

⁷³ For example line 6 (*sus en ciel*).

⁷⁴ There are at least twenty instances that in Modern French would be rendered with a definite, an indefinite or a partitive article.

the Christian liturgy, are not preceded by an article-word such as *diaule* (l. 4) and *krist* (l. 24). According to Adams (1967) the influence of the ecclesiasts was determinant to preserve these forms as such for a period of time; anyway, the progressive standardization that articles underwent, affected also this class of nouns. In my opinion Adam's intuition is partially correct: I also suppose that concepts appertaining to Christianity may have been considered as particular⁷⁵, but it is difficult to prove that ecclesiasts tried to defend the status of these words. I sustain the idea that speakers did not need to insert a definite article because referents were already identifiable, thanks to their special meaning; only when these concepts started to be perceived as common, the definite article could be employed before them.

Among those nouns, which are not preceded by an article-word, we can find also nouns expressing a generalized meaning. In order to explain properly, what I mean by using this terminology, I would start with an example. As I already mentioned before, the *Sequence* introduces the Saint with the expression *Buona pulcella* (good young girl), adjective + noun. The referent is introduced here for the first time ever; hence the *pulcella* indicates a generic group of girls, of which *Eulalie* is part.

The next point to take into consideration is the relation existing between prepositions and articles, which seems not to be regulated; as a matter of fact we can find the same preposition⁷⁶ used in isolation or in combination with a definite article. In any case, there is a high percentage of instances in which prepositions appear alone (at least 7 cases).

- 35) Ne por or ned argent ne paramenz (l. 7)
Por manatce regiel ne preiement (l. 8)
“Not for gold, nor silver, nor jewels, not for the king's threats nor prayers”

There are also examples like the following, in which a preposition is followed by an article (see also the aforementioned l. 19).

- 36) Post la mort et a lui nos laist venir (l. 28)
“And may allow us to come to Him after death”

⁷⁵ With particular, I mean that in order to understand the meaning of these words, it is necessary to know the background they are related to.

⁷⁶ See again the example with *en*.

Actually, this variation is independent from the interpretation of the noun, i.e. (in)definiteness does not play a decisive role in the choice of the pattern to use. Anyway, the incidence of prepositions in isolation is numerically higher⁷⁷, suggesting that this usage was more common.

Before concluding this section it is necessary to mention the *Ludwiegslied*, a poem, written in Old High German from the same hand who copied *La Séquence* and contained in the same manuscript⁷⁸. In the part dedicated to the specific analysis of this text, we will see that the way in which the definite article is used is very similar to that of the *Séquence*. For example, referents introduced for the first time were usually not preceded by a definite article; on the contrary, if they were already mentioned, the article usually appeared before them⁷⁹. The figure of the king –just to mention a case– is presented at the very beginning of the text without article and is later preceded by the definite article, with the sole exception of few instances.⁸⁰ A further common point of these two texts is the non-use of the definite articles with nouns belonging to the Christian background: also in the *Ludwiegslied* the word *truhtin*, which stands for God, never occurs with a definite article.

Commento [D-1]: Inserire capitolo

4.4. La Passion du Christ

Composed approximately around the 10th century, this is a religious poem written in octosyllabic verses and characterized by the use, not always regular, of assonances. If compared to the *Sequence of Sainte Eulalie*, *La Passion du Christ* follows more precisely the metrical structure chosen by the writer; it means that we have to be careful in treating some structures as commonly in use in the spoken language.

The section that we are going to consider (i.e. from stanza 30 to stanza 89, proposed in the anthology of Bartsch 1884: 6-9) describes the facts occurring in the Garden of Gethsemane; it narrates also how Jesus was crucified and, lately, buried. These lines constitute the central episode, in which the author seems to be particularly involved. This text is also very interesting from a linguistic point of view; one of the peculiar aspects is how the use of the

⁷⁷ Cases of preposition with definite article are just 2 (line 19 and line 28); there is also an instance of preposition followed by the indefinite article (line 22).

⁷⁸ Ms. Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, Cod. 150

⁷⁹ We will see that there is, in particular, a case that does not fit with this generalization.

⁸⁰ I will speak with major details about this case in the paragraph of the *Ludwiegslied*.

definite article could vary, depending on the kind of passage we are analyzing: we will see that there are differences between parts with a more narrative content and direct speech.

There are words from the Latin are very few and are related to the religious tradition (*pontifex* l. 61). It is difficult to make postulations about the usage of the definite article, as *pontifex* is preceded by *le* (within the frame of a definite context) and in the other cases we are facing vocatives like in line 185 *o deus, vers rex, o Jhesu Crist*. Anyway, taking into consideration the data recovered from a later text like *La vie de Saint Léger* (980 circa⁸¹), the common usage of these words, at least in the written language, was without a preceding article.

In most cases the use of *il* is identical to that made in the *Sequence*: in many instances a noun refers to a background, part of a common-knowledge. Let us comment some examples of *La Passion*⁸²:

37) Granz fu li dols⁸³, fort marrimenz (l. 5)
“The pain was great, strong the affliction”
(from Adams 1967: 53)

38) que cum lo sangs a terra curren (l. 11)
“that flows to the ground like blood”

39) de sa sudor las sanctas gutas. (l. 12)
“of his sweat the sacred cheek”

These lines were taken from the first part of the section I chose to analyze; in the first line Jesus is introduced (*Christus Jhesus den s'en leved*), thus making clear who is suffering. In all the examples listed, *dols*, *sangs* and *gutas*⁸⁴ are directly associated with Jesus.

In sum: the context is defined. This is not a secondary aspect at all; we will see, in the following lines that if the referent is not well specified or perceived as general, the definite article does not appear.

40) ab gran compannie dels judeus (l. 16)
“with a large group of-the Jews”

⁸¹ For a detailed analysis on this text see the next paragraph.

⁸² If not differently specified, all the examples enlisted are taken directly from Bartsch's anthology (1884: 6-9)

⁸³ I think that pain, here, fits better as grief, because it has a more concrete connotation. If we look at the meaning of the word *douleur* in Modern French, it is also intended the physical pain.

⁸⁴ See also l. 25, l. 55, l. 66, etc.

41) Jhesus cum vidra los judeus (l. 17)
“Jesus as he saw the Jews”

In line 16 the group of Jews is introduced anew. Please note that *compannie* is not preceded by an article-word (as expected), whereas *dels* specifies that we are not talking of an entire community but of a restricted amount of people⁸⁵. Line 16 is, so-to-say, “determinant”; for this reason we find the definite article in the examples in line 17, line 53 and line 123. Anyway let us take into consideration the following example (see also l. 106):

42) judeu l'acusent, el se tais (l. 99)
“The Jews accuse him, he is silent”

This part of the poem describes the scene in which Jesus is accused and then condemned to death. In my opinion the author adopted this expedient to underline that *judeu*, here, does not refer to the group of line 16. I suppose, the writer wanted to express a generalization, maybe referring to the entire community or simply to a larger or to another group than the one in the Gardens. The following example is also very interesting:

43) nol consentunt fellun judeu (l. 106)
“The cruel Jews do not allow him (Pilatus) [to let Jesus go]”

As explained in the translation, Pilatus wants to free Jesus but the Jews refuse this. Again, no definite article is employed, unexpectedly, I would claim: the people mentioned here might not be the same of line 16 but they are surely the same of line 99. According to me the author wanted to maintain a general perspective, without making any specific reference regarding a particular and specific group. In my opinion this interpretation is confirmed in line 123, when Pilatus condemns Jesus to be whipped and then freed and the Jews protest again: *tuit li judeo* (all the Jews) is the form adopted here, with a strong emphasis that I would paraphrase with the expression “each of the Jews”.

My idea of definite vs. general interpretation is also supported by Adams (1967:55): he notes that the noun *terra* in line 212 indicates a specific point and is preceded by a definite article, whereas in line 206 the same noun stands in isolation and has a non-definite reading.

⁸⁵ I will face the question of the “partitive-article” in Old French in the paragraph dedicated to *La Vie de Saint Léger*, in which the amount of this form is higher.

As we already saw in the *Séquence*, also in *La Passion* “unique” nouns and abstract concepts appear in isolation.

44) *ab me venras in paradis.* (l. 184)
“With me they will come to the Paradise”

45) *A grand honor de cex pimenç* (l. 233)
“To the great honor of those spices”

Actually, in the poem there are some instances of “unique” nouns appearing in combination with the definite article: in line 195 we find *lo solez* and *la luna*; in line 204 *le spiritus* (that, we have also to remark, is from the Latin); anyway the context is always defined.

A peculiarity of the style adopted by the author can be noted in the following examples:⁸⁶

46) *li fel Judas ja s'aproismed* (l. 15)
“Judas, the traitor, moved close to him”

47) *Jhesus li bons nol refuded* (l. 31)
“Jesus, the good, did not refuse him”

48) *'Amicx', zo dis Jhesus lu bons*, (l. 33)
“‘Friend’, so said Jesus the good.”

The people cited are all known referents for both the writer and the reader; when the author wants to express a quality by means of an attributive adjective, which can both precede or follow the referent, the article word is often present. See also lines 27, 79, 93, 98, and 102.

There is a single exception in line 104 (*fellon Pilad lo retrames*), maybe explicable if we count the syllables the line is made of: they are eight. As this metrical pattern is consistent throughout the poem, it is highly probable that it is just an instance in which the author, in order to respect the metrical structure he decided to adopt, had to operate a deletion. My opinion is also supported by the fact that in *La Vie de Saint Alexis* (such as line 1, 33, 133) and in *La Chanson de Roland* (like in lines 563, 703) there are also many attested constructions in which, when an adjective describes the noun, the definite article is present.

If compared to the *Sequense of Sainte Eulalie*, this is an interesting development in the expansion of the domain of use of the definite article; anyway, the meaning of *il* and its other forms does not exactly correspond to that of the modern form of the definite article, as definiteness remains a requisite necessary for the use of the article.

⁸⁶ See also l. 27 and l. 45.

Another peculiarity of Old French, which would lead to ungrammaticality in Modern French⁸⁷, is that the definite article and the possessive pronouns are not necessarily in complementary distribution: the stressed possessive could be preceded by the article⁸⁸.

49) la soa mort mult demandant (l. 88)
“his death is very requested”
(from Adams 1967: 55)

This is however not very frequent in the text: with example quoted above, we can count just four instances throughout this passage.

In all other cases, on the contrary, if the possessive pronoun is weak, it will always be used in isolation.

50) mais per vos et per vestres filz (l. 147)
“but for you and for your sons”

In my opinion it is necessary to mention this aspect because the use of a definite article with a stressed possessive pronoun is not just a peculiar employment we find in Old French, but it also present in Old High German⁸⁹, thus suggesting that at this stage of the language possessive pronouns had a different status. Demske (2001), for example, proposes for Old High German and Old English the hypothesis that possessive pronouns behaved more like adjectives⁹⁰.

To conclude, in comparison to the *Sainte Eulalie*, the *Passion du Christ* is not such an innovative composition, as we saw that all the basic features we identified in the *Sequence* are repeated constantly here; anyway it is important to keep in mind the role played by the attributive adjectives as context definer, due to their descriptive content, thus admitting the use of the definite article.

⁸⁷ (*Ia) son amie; (*le) son chien in Modern French.

⁸⁸ Adams (1967) recognizes in it, a Latin pattern already existing in Plautus.

⁸⁹ For a more detailed analysis, see the section dedicated to Old High German.

⁹⁰ For further discussion see Demske (2001).

4.5. La Vie de Saint Léger

The text narrates the life and death of Saint Léger, bishop of Autun. It was written around 980, most probably in Walloon. This hymn is made up of forty stanzas, consisting of octosyllabic verses.⁹¹

Throughout the manuscript there are few words which are directly imported from the Latin; it is interesting to notice that no one of them is preceded by a definite article, as in l. 18 (*litteras*); l. 30 (*abbas*) or l. 33 (*perfectus*)⁹².

A further peculiarity of this text is the style in which it is written, as the use of the demonstratives⁹³ is slightly preferred, resulting in the over-controlled use of the definite article. It results that the article does not appear in many contexts, in which we would expect to find it.

Adams (1967: 57) identifies at least 22 instances where the article should be present French but effectively we find it only 13 times⁹⁴, and is, in the most cases, replaced by *cil* and its forms. Here it follows a clarifying example:

51) et Evvruins, cil deumentiz⁹⁵, (l. 11)
que lui a grant torment occist. (l. 12)
“and Ewruin, that atheist, who sent him to a painful end.”

As we are going to see in the next cases, there is no doubt that Ewruin is well specified. The construction used in these lines is very repetitive throughout the text, i.e. the pattern *referent + relative clause* is often used, conferring a definite interpretation to the noun, thus allowing the article to precede it, as following:

⁹¹ The version of *La vie de Saint Léger* I am adopting is the following: *Saint Léger* ed. J. Linskill (1937), Paris in: Braune, W. & Helm, K. *Altfranzösisches Übungsbuch* (1952) Halle.

⁹² Adams (1967: 56, 57) remarks that there is only one instance of word imported from the Latin (*gratia*), which is preceded by the Romance unstressed *sa*: *sa gratia li perdonat* (l. 46), *sa gratia por tot ouist* (l. 88).

⁹³ There are many instances of *ciel* and its oblique forms, as in l. 11 (*cil deumentiz*); l. 13 (*ciels temps*); l. 15 (*ciel di*); l. 20 (*ciel reis*); l. 23 (*ciel savier*); l. 25 (*ciel art*); l. 32 (*ciels temps*); l. 49 (*ciel reis*); l. 56 (*ciel eps*), etc.

⁹⁴ Adam's analysis refers only to the first 25 stanzas of the poem, as he adopts the version contained in the anthology of Bartsch (1884).

⁹⁵ It is necessary to spend a few words about the word *deumentiz*: in the translation proposed by Price, *cil deumentiz* is rendered as 'who lied'. Actually, if we literally translate this fragment, we will obtain something like 'that God-denier'.

52) in su' amor cantomps dels sanz (l. 3)
qui por lui augrent granz aanz; (l. 4)
“for His love, let us sing of the Saints, who, for Him, suffered greatly;”
(from Adams 1967:57)

Here we can notice that the referents, *sanz*, appear in a context that is with no doubt well specified by means of a relative clause. Hence, a proto-form of the “partitive article”⁹⁶ is introduced before the noun. In Old French the partitive article had other functions if compared to the form existing in Modern French. Carlier (2007:13), quoting Foulet (1965: 69) agrees with him, by affirming that “it (the partitive article) marks a partition that operates on a contextually specified set”. At this stage of the language it is more correct to interpret *de* as a particular preposition followed by an article. For this reason, as *dels* is not grammaticalized as a unit, I sustain the hypothesis that the preposition *de* and the following article should be interpreted as separate elements, thus allowing the analysis of these cases as inherent for my study.

Let us proceed with our investigation. In lines 9 and 10 there is another example similar to the one in lines 3 and 4 ⁹⁷:

53) apes ditrai vos dels aanz (l. 9)
que li suos corps susting si granz, (l. 10)
“then I will tell you of the great pains that he suffered in his body”
(from Adams 1967: 57)

Back to example (50), it is somehow unexpected that the noun *heretic* is preceded by a demonstrative. This is just not an isolated fact, as Adams (1967: 57) recognizes also: l. 20, l. 49, l. 79, l. 105, l. 111, l. 139, l. 144, etc. According to him, we can interpret the preference of the author for the demonstrative as an emphatic attempt to express clarity (Adams 1967: 57). In my opinion his intuition is correct, as while reading this text I had always the impression that the demonstrative was used to underline the importance of a particular person or object, even if the context would have required just a definite article⁹⁸. I suggest that the author felt the meaning of the definite article as more neutral and not incisive, if compared to that of the

⁹⁶ Some hints are provided by the fact that *de* does not allow extraction out of a PP (Carlier 2007:22). For further discussion, see the work of Carlier 2007, *From Preposition to Article*. Other instances in the text, in which the “partitive” is followed by a clause, are for example: l. 31, 32 (*del son juvent*); l. 225 (*de lor pechietz*); l. 235, 236 (*del corps [...] et dels flaiels*).

⁹⁷ Other instances are, for example, l. 158 (*la lingua*) and l. 165 (*lis piez*).

⁹⁸ A similar construction can be found in the Alexis: *Eufemiens, si out a nom li pedre* (l. 16).

demonstrative. For this reason, when he felt that a referent was crucial in the narration, he found in the demonstrative pronoun the best way to convey the attention of the reader on the referent.

Focusing again our attention to the use of *il* and its forms, we will notice that not only concrete nouns but also abstract concepts⁹⁹, if followed by a clause, are preceded by an article-word.

54) Primos didrai vos dels honors (l. 7)
que il auuret ab duos seniors; (l. 8)
“I will tell you first of the glory that he gained from two Lords”

Again a “partitive article” precedes the referent. Carlier (2007) remarks that the usage of this form with abstract nouns is not common; the author is generally still reluctant to use a definite article before this typology of nouns. Anyway, in this case we are facing a particular instance, as *honors* receives an alternative nuance of significance which makes this abstract concept more concrete.¹⁰⁰

Adams (1967: 57) also notes that, abstract nouns take on concrete connotations when particularized by a clause; it is for this reason that they are then accompanied by the article.

As we can effectively see, when the referents are not perceived as “concrete”, i.e. when they have an indefinite interpretation, the article, as in the following example, does not precede them:

55) don deu serviet por bona fied (l. 24)
“whom served God in bona fides”

Actually, the distinction between defined vs. non defined is also valid for concrete nouns. I think that the passage from line 171 to line 174 could be an interesting example:

56) er si el non ad ols carnels, (l. 171)
encor los ad espiritiels; (l. 172)
et si en corps a grand torment,(l. 173)
l'anima n'auura consolament.(l. 174)

⁹⁹ Another example can be the aforementioned l. 3-4 (dels aanz) or l. 151-152 (*las poenas*).

¹⁰⁰ Quoting Carlier (2007:23): “[...] *de* is never used in combination with abstract nouns, unless the abstract noun is used with a concrete meaning”. For example *dels aanz* (= pain see l. 3-4) is with no doubt abstract; when the author points out that the body of the saint suffered them, *aanz* can be associated to a physical pain (and, as a matter of fact this is also confirmed in the stanzas related to Léger’s death).

“and if he does not have carnal eyes, he still has the spiritual ones; and if (he) has in his body a great suffering, the soul will have consolation from it.”

First of all, it is necessary to point out that in the previous stanzas the author has already described the mutilations, which were inflicted to the Saint (his lips and his tongue were ripped off, as well as the eyes) and that Léger suffered from them. In sum: it is clear that the parts of the body mentioned in the lines we are analyzing, are those of the Saint. I would explain the absence of the article by assuming that the author wanted to give a more general interpretation, taking the Saint as a model, in which all Christians should identify themselves. In l. 171 and 173 the nouns are related to the flesh and not to the sphere of spirituality, hence they have a more “concrete” connotation. Or, proposing the theory Szczepaniak (2011) applied for Old High German, the use of the article with nouns non-referring to human beings (hence animals, plants, objects) was not regulated. I will reprise Szczepaniak’s hypothesis with major details in the chapter where I discuss Old High German.¹⁰¹

A further interesting peculiarity of this text is that the word *rex* (as well as the form *reis*), if followed by a proper noun, is never preceded by an article and when there is the need of putting emphasis in some lines, he does it by means of a demonstrative pronoun.¹⁰²

57) *Reis Chielperics cum il l'audit* (l. 85)

“King Chielderic, as he heard it”

58) *Rex Chielperings il se fud mors* (l. 115)

“King Chielderic, he was dead”

59) *luil comandat ciel reis Lothiers* (l. 20)

“King Lothar commanded him”

These structures are marked, as the noun is not in its base position but it was subject to movement; anyway, rather as considering here the sentence construction as decisive in the choice of use/non use of the article, I sustain that our attention should be focused on the kind of relation existing between the two nouns. As a matter of fact the word *king* and the proper name associated to it seem to build up a single constituent, rendering in some way the presence of the definite article superfluous, as the connection existing between the two nouns

¹⁰¹ In particular, see the paragraph dedicated to the *Tatian*.

¹⁰² Quoting Adams (1967: 58): “*Reis* [rex] used as a determinant before a proper noun dispenses with the definite article.”

is able to individuate the referent. We will see in the *Alexis* and, even more frequently, in *La Chanson de Roland* that this formulation will be subject to a reinterpretation and that the definite article will also appear before this kind of nominal expressions.

Commento [M2]: Indicare paragrafo corrispondente.

Commento [M3]: Indicare paragrafo corrispondente.

Before concluding this paragraph, I would like to spend some words to sum up the situation we are facing at this point of the evolution of Old French.

Basically, definiteness is still decisive for the employment of the definite article: a context can be defined by means of an adjective describing its referent or also by means of a relative clause. A further instance, which I would classify under those strategies adopted to specify the context, is the employment of the definite article before referents already presented in the text. For our analysis regarding the path of grammaticalization, all the examples mentioned above, in particular those regarding abstract nouns, are very useful to show the slow but progressive development of the definite article in a functional element with a more general meaning.

Even if it is only applied to those concepts which are somehow concretized, the article starts to appear also associated to abstract referents, introducing an innovation; as a matter of fact, if we compare the *Vie de Saint Léger* with the *Sequence of Saint Eulalie*, we can notice that if in the latter text there is not a single instance, in which abstract terms co-appear with an article-word, in the *Léger* we can list –even if still few- some cases where *il* is present.

In any case the persistent distinction existing between (in)definite context, concrete/abstract terms and the abundance of demonstratives prevent us to postulate that the article is already fully grammaticalized, thus marking these peculiar instances as exceptional rather than the norm.

4.6. La Vie de Saint Alexis

Presumably written in the 11th century, this poem¹⁰³ has a hagiographic content, as it narrates the life of the son of a senator, who decides to devote his life to religion. The text is made up of a total of 625 decasyllabic lines.

From a chronological perspective, of all the documents mentioned so far, this is the most recent; hence we would expect some significant developments in comparison to its

¹⁰³I am adopting the following edition of the text: Gaston Paris (1921) “La vie de saint Alexis : poème du XIe siècle”; the translation is partially offered by Joseph E. Price (from stanza I to stanza XL)

predecessors. On the contrary, even if not rigidly stuck to the origins, we will see that this text presents also conservative traits, as if we were still at the time of the *Oaths of Strasbourg* or of *The Sequence of Saint Eulalie*.

First of all, it is necessary to make some considerations about the way in which the poem is redacted: we spoke about the *Sequence*, we mentioned the fact that, even if most lines are octosyllabic, the metrical structure is not rigidly respected, thus allowing exceptions (also for the use of the article).

La vie de Saint Alexis is, on the contrary, a very meditated composition; the author follows scrupulously the pattern he chose to adopt; for this reason Adams (1967) postulates that some instances, where the article is expected to be present but it is not, are simply due to the sake of the metrical structure.

If we compare the *Alexis* with *La Vie De Saint Léger*, the use of the article has evidently increased.

The article appears, again, in those contexts, which are well determined; sometimes, an adjective or a particular construction are used to define it, as it follows:¹⁰⁴

60) Bons fut le siecles al tems anciënour, (l. 1)
“Good was the world in the ancient times”

I decided to take an example from the very beginning of the text, where all referents are introduced necessarily anew. *Tems* is followed by an attribute, making a restriction on the range of time the hearer has to take into consideration. The entire phrase *al tems anciënour* is related to *siecles*, which, as predicted, takes the article.

Some usages are still similar to the ones mentioned in the previous analyses. Let us analyze the following extract, focusing our attention on the words *fille* and *pulcele*:

¹⁰⁴ See also l. 10 (le terme); l. 55 (li jorz); l. 56, 110, 115, 240 (li pedre); l. 60 (le lit); l. 60, 241 (la pulcele); l. 73 (la vide); l. 76 (les renges); l. 78 (la chamber); l. 79, 109, 137 (la contrede); l. 80 (la mer); l. 81, 215 (la nef); l. 86 (la nacele); l. 101 (les povres); l. 102, 122 (l'almosne); l. 105 (al padre); l. 105, 111, 240 (la medre); l. 106, 112 (la spouse); l. 120 (li enfes); l. 123 (li altre fredre); l. 137 (le lueu); l. 158 (le duel); l. 186 (le país); l. 199 (li orez); l. 216 (les rues), etc.

Commento [D-4]: Ho preferito citare la traduzione di Price perchè alcuni versi, traducendoli personalmente, risultano identici ai suoi. Cosa mi suggerisce di fare?

61) *Donc li achatet fille ad un noble franc.* (l. 44)

Fut la pulcele de molt halt parentet, (l. 45)

Fille ad un comte de Rome la citet (l. 46)

“So he bought a wife from a noble Frank. The girl was of the very best extraction, daughter of a count of the city of Rome”

Fille, as well as *pulcele*¹⁰⁵ and *spouse* (later), are the terms used by the author to designate the first young girl Alexis’ parents want him to marry. If in line 44 it is predictable to find the referent alone (first mention) and in line 45 it is not surprising to find *la* (signalizing that the referent was already mentioned), I think that the absence of the definite article in 46 is related to the copular construction of the sentence (*the maid was the daughter of...*), which requires a new identification of the word *fille*. My suspect is also increased by the presence of the indefinite article before *comte*, even if in 44 the referent is already introduced by *un*.

Let us consider the following case, regarding Alexis’ father. It is necessary to point out that the man is mentioned for the first time in line 13 (*Si fut uns sire*). In line 14 (*Riches om fut*) the nominal expression would be rendered in Modern French with an indefinite article. Furthermore, in line 15 it is explained that the narration will be based on the life *d'un son fil*. Now, in line 16 we find the following construction:

62) *Eufemiens, si out a nom li pedre,* (l. 16)

“Eufemiens, the father was called thus by name”

The definite article here indicates that the referent was already introduced in the previous lines; anyway, in my opinion, thanks to the topicalization of the proper name, *pedre* is even more specified: he is not just a rich man with a son but he is Eufemiens, the father, a man who plays a relevant role in the story. Throughout the text the article will always precede *pedre*, except in those cases in which the weak possessive pronoun occurs¹⁰⁶.

This is not a single case, but we can find other clues if we analyze the nominal expressions referring to the mother.

63) *Donc prist moillier vaillant ed onorede,* (l. 23)

“Then he took a worthy and honored wife”

¹⁰⁵ Actually, in line 70, *pulcele* is also used alone; this is an instance of vocative, hence it not a case, which could as classified as strange

¹⁰⁶ See lines 54, 74, 117, 135, 206, 213, 263, 337, 415 and 469.

64) Que la moillier donat feconditet: (l. 31)
“That He gave the woman fertility.”

65) Or revendrai al pedre ed a la medre (l. 105)
“Now I will return to the father and to the mother”

In line 23 the mother of Alexis is mentioned for the first time, exactly as we saw before with *fille*. As expected, no definite article is to see. Already by the second time the author speaks of her, *la* appears; the same happens when she is lately depicted as the mother. Again, as we already commented, if the possessive pronoun is used, the definite article does not appear¹⁰⁷.

66) ‘Filz Alexis, por queit portat ta medre?[...]’ (l.135)
“Son Alexis, why did your mother bear you?”

We can sum up these observations, by saying that as we already saw in the precedent texts, the article precedes those referents which are at least mentioned once throughout the discourse or are inserted in a well-specified context. Furthermore, the *pattern article + possessive pronoun* starts to be used very few.

In almost all cases (there is an exception in line 85) in which the name of a town is followed by *citet*, the definite article appears.

67) Puis s'en alat en Alsis la citet (l. 90)
“Then he went to the city of Edessa,”

68) Larges almosnes par Alsis la citet (l. 97)
“In the city of Edessa he gave great alms”

It is also interesting to see that, even if it is not an attributive form like the examples listed above, the author applies a similar formula to construct the following sentence.

69) Dreit a Lalice, ço fut citet molt bele, (l. 85)
“Straight to Laodicea, that was a very beautiful city”

Here Adams (1967: 60) proposes that *citet* should be theoretically be preceded by an indefinite article, which is not expressed.

Another interesting use of the definite article, which distinguishes the *Alexis* from the *Saint Léger*, is that the article precedes the word indicating the regnant, i.e. a word able to identify a

¹⁰⁷ See also lines 207, 249, 396, 438 and 449.

particular person. Remember that in *Saint Léger*, the noun *reis* was in isolation or preceded by the demonstrative.

70) Sur tuz ses pers l'amant li emperere (l. 18)
“The emperor loved him above all of his peers.”

71) Puis vait li emfes l'emperethur servir (l. 35)
“The child entered into the service of the emperor.”

72) Li apostolies e li emperedour, (l. 260)
“The apostles and the emperor”

According to me, the nominal expression was interpreted differently in the *Saint Léger* and in the *Alexis*. It is necessary to point out that both *reis* and *emperedour* are nouns expressing a functional concept, as in the same time and place there can be just a regnant. In the case of the *Léger*, the absence of the article suggests that the nominal expression was interpreted just semantically, in the sense that the definite interpretation could be recovered directly from the meaning conveyed by *reis*, in combination with a proper name. In the *Alexis*, the nominal expression *li emperere* (l. 18) indicates that we are talking of a specific emperor but we are not able to say exactly who he is. Furthermore, in line 18 the emperor is nominated for the first time. In sum: *emperere* is still semantically interpreted but it enters also in a morphological relation with the Determiner. The increased number of definite articles present in the text speaks in favor of a change in the way in which the noun head and the definite article interact. In particular, we can see that a progressive process of generalization affects the definite article that starts to appear also in non-specified contexts.

In the *Saint Alexis* the definite article precedes some abstract concepts and “unique” nouns.

73) Plaignoms ensemble le duel de nostre ami, (l. 158)
“We will lament the grief of our dear friend together.”

74) Mais la dolour ne puedent obluder, (l. 161)
“But they cannot forget the sorrow.”

75) Pres est de Deu e del regne del ciel: (l. 133)
“And he is worthy to enter into heaven.”

Commento [D-5]: Ho cercato di sistemare la spiegazione, integrando anche aspetti che avevo inserito nella “parte teorica” della tesi.

In the texts previously analyzed, the word *ciel* could appear in isolation but just with the meaning of *heaven*. Here it is clear that the author talks about the Paradise¹⁰⁸; on the contrary, when *ciel* (l. 590) means “blue sky”, the noun is not preceded by a definite article. Adams (1967: 62) notes that this could be related more to a contextual lecture rather than to the “uniqueness” of noun: he recognizes that the example of line 590 is the solely instance, in which the article is not used; furthermore, it is also the single case, where *ciel* does not stand for Heaven.

Let us comment the next example:

76) Deseivret l'aneme del cors saint Alexis (l. 336)
“The soul separated from the body of Saint Alexis”

77) Cist apostolies deit les anemes baillir (l. 620)
“This apostle has to handle the souls”

I consider *soul* to be a “unique” noun as it refers to a concept strictly related to Christianity. Following Adam’s idea, *aneme* is defined: in the first case it is explicit that we are talking about the soul of Alexis; in the second, the plural refers to the soul of each man. For this reason, I would say that in a certain extent the use of *il* and its forms with “unique” nouns was starting to be perceived as more common.

78) Par la Deu gracie vochiet emperedour; (l. 366)
“The emperor called for the God’s grace”

We already saw, in *La Vie de Saint Léger*, that “*gratia*” was the only word imported from the Latin which could be accompanied by the Romance *sa*.¹⁰⁹ In this case we can notice that the author did not use the Latin written form for this word, which I suppose was so-to-say vulgarized. With this term, I mean that the word was fully accepted in Old French and adapted to its phonetics (as also attested by the different way of writing it). Furthermore, the remark that this grace comes from God, specifies this word, permitting the use of a definite article before it.

¹⁰⁸ See also line 414 (and others): *el ciel* has, again, the meaning of *Heaven*.

¹⁰⁹ Dauzat (1956: 51) individuates many substantives in the Alexis, such as *charité* (caritas) and *patience* (patientia) that are modelled on the popular language (*les mots continuent à être modelés sur la langue populaire*). This phenomenon occurred consistently, as it is also noticeable in a later text like *La Chanson de Roland*.

In sum: even if contextuality is still decisive for the choice of the article, the author of the *Saint Alexis* adopts some innovations, which are peculiar if compared to the rest of the production we examined. Even if generally abstract concepts with a general meaning are still in isolation, it is impossible not to consider that the article started to be used wider.

79) Quer feit i eret e justisie ed amour,(l. 2)
“For faith and justice and love there were”

Adams (1967:62) sees in the following example an instance of article used like a demonstrative (al David):

80) Al tems Noe ed al tems Abraam (l. 6)
Ed al David, cui Deus par amat tant, (l. 7)
“At the time of Noah, and at the time of Abraham and of David, whom God so much loved”

I simply consider the use of the article, in this case, as proper because the context is determined, as Noe and Abraam describe a certain span of time. Rather as having a demonstrative interpretation, I think that that *tems* in line 7 was just omitted for reasons of space; if we adopt this view, *al* does not point to an external referent of the discourse. My opinion is also motivated by the fact that the three proper names are all linked by terms of the conjunction *ed*.

A further aspect we should consider is the use of the article in some fixed expressions, employed only when the context is defined.

81) De lour tresor prenent l'or e l'argent, (l. 530)
“Of their treasure they took gold and silver”

82) D'or e de gemes fut il sarcueus parez (l. 590)
“The Coffin was prepared with gold and gems”

In line 530 the words *gold* and *silver* are specified as elements appertaining to a larger treasure; on the contrary, in line 590, the author speaks generally and, as predicted, no article is to find.

4.7. La Chanson de Roland

*La Chanson de Roland*¹¹⁰ is an epic-poem, which, differently from the texts we have seen so far, does not deal with religious themes; it narrates of Charlemagne and his knights and of their exploits. In particular, their mission is to fight against the Arabs (the poem was written in time of the Crusades) and one of the most famous passages is related to the death of Roland. The poem consists of 4002 lines, regrouped in stanzas of different length, following a hendecasyllabic pattern; it was written in the 12th century.

Before starting evaluating the status of the definite article, it is necessary to pay more attention to the nature of this text.

The content is based upon recurring themes, which can be considered to be part of a common knowledge. In particular, some of the most important concepts are the fidelity to God and to the king, the value of honor and heroism, fundamental for the figure of the hero, who could die for them.

If we already saw a significant augmentation of the presence of the definite article in *La Vie de Saint Alexis*, this phenomenon is even more remarkable in the *Chanson de Roland*.

83) Carles li reis, nostre emper[er]e magnes (l. 1)

“Charles the King, our Lord and Sovereign,”

This is the introductory line of the poem. The context is defined, explaining why a definite article precedes *reis*. Throughout the text, we can find many examples in which a proper noun is followed by an adjective or by a noun (mainly depicting the role in the society occupied by the referent), which serves as clarifier; this pattern is not new, as it was already in use in the texts we mentioned before.

84) Que il ne sunt a Rollant le cataigne, (l. 1846)

“That they are not with Rollant the Captain,”

¹¹⁰ I am adopting the edition of L. Petit de Julleville *La Chanson de Roland. "Traduction Nouvelle Rhythmee et Assonancee. Avec une Introduction et des Notes* (1878) Paris. Alphonse Lemerre, Editeur 27-31, Passage Choiseul.

Translation by Charles Scott Moncrieff *The Song of Roland, done into English, in the original measure* (1919), London, Chapman & Hall, Ltd. I chose this translation because the author adopted the same version of the *Roland* I chose.

85) Carles li magnes ad Espaigne guastede (l. 703)
“Charles the Great that land of Spain had wasted,”

86) «Bel sire Guenes» dist marsilies li reis, (l. 563)
“‘Fair Master Guenes,’ says then King Marsilie,”

87) Li reis Marsilie le destre poign i perdit, (l. 2794)
“King Marsilie’s of his right hand bereft,”

As we previously saw, if a referent is introduced in the text and it is later mentioned, the article precedes it. In the first stanzas both *Charlemagne* and *Marsilie* are presented as kings of their respective lands; throughout the poem their names are often repeated with the expression *li reis*, followed or not by the proper name. Martin & Ligneraux (2003: 199) classify these instances of endophoric reference, with the context located to the right.

There are anyway few instances that seem to contradict what I have said, such as in line 125 (see also 680):

88) Iço vus mandet reis Marsilies, li bers:
“Proud Marsilies this message bids me say:”

The translation proposed by Moncrief (1919) is not literal; anyway we can immediately recognize a formula, which normally identifies and determines the context. For this reason, the fact that *reis* is not preceded by *li* is unexpected even if still explainable, if we consider that the author has always respected the limits imposed by the metrical structure.

Other instances in which *reis* is used alone can be cases of plurality or generality.

89) Reis Almaris, del regne de Belferne (l. 811)
90) “King Almaris, Belserne for kingdom had,”

I think that this case may be interesting, as it is the first time that this king is introduced in the poem; anyway, the context is specified, as it is explicitly written which land is his reign. In most cases we find the sequence *li reis + proper name*; I retain that in such instances as in l. 811, the author just omitted the article to save the metrical structure.¹¹¹

I want to spend a few words about the plural forms of the nouns. We have already noticed that, also in the other texts we analyzed, plurals are normally in isolation; the reason is not only

¹¹¹ A further reason, which motivates my hypothesis, is that in *Saint Alexis*, the word emperor, which can be also interpreted as individualizing, is preceded by the article.

linked to a more general interpretation, but also to the fact that nouns in Old French had a grammatical marker to signalize the plural form. Quoting Carlier (2007:31):

A second postnominal grammatical marker¹¹² that is progressively lost is the plural ending. The weakening of the final *-s* as plural ending starts from the 13th century and is carried to its end in the 15th century. [...] The loss of the plural marking goes along with an extension of the use of the articles, at the expense of zero determination. On the one hand, the existing articles, definite *le(s)* and singular indefinite *un* widen their conditions of use.

According to Carlier (2007), definite plurals started to be associated to definite articles already in Old French: for example, we saw in the *Alexis* that a plural noun in a non-specified context could be preceded by a definite article (*cist apostolies deit les anemes baillir*). Now, the problem was caused by non-singular indefinites: “the need is felt to create a new article [...], in order to mark the distinction between singular non-count and plural count nouns e.g. pain ‘bread’ versus pains ‘breads’”. The lack of a form of the definite article to express this distinction can be identified as the reason behind the grammaticalization of the Modern French partitive article.¹¹³

In sum, when the employment of the definite article started to prevail on zero determination, the conditions of use widened (including, for example, also non-specific contexts) but the “definiteness” of the referent remains the reason that legitimates the use of definite articles behind noun heads.

Some interesting data regarding “unique” nouns is offered by the following examples:

91) *Clere est la nuit e la lune luisante.* (l. 2512)
“Clear was the night, the moon shone radiant.”

92) *Passet li jurz, la nuit est aserie;* (l. 3658)
Clers est la lune e les esteiles flambient. (l. 3659)
“Passes the day, the darkness is grown deep, but all the stars burn, and the moon shines clear.”

93) *Clers fut li jurz e li soleilz luisanz.* (l. 3354)
“Clear is the day, and the sun radiant;”

¹¹² The first grammatical marker is case inflection.

¹¹³ Carlier (2007: 32). For further discussion about the grammaticalization of the partitive article, see Carlier (2007).

Differently from the aforementioned *La Vie de Saint Alexis*, in which we saw that “unique” nouns could appear with a definite article also if the context was not necessarily defined, the panorama offered by these examples is a slightly different. *Jurz*, *noit*, *lune* and *soleilz* are usually preceded by a definite article, or by a possessive pronoun or by *tuz*. The same observation can be applied to the word *ciel*; the only cases in which no article is to see is only when a preposition like *suz* (such as in line 2904) precedes the word. According to Martin & Lignereux (2003: 199) they can be listed as cases of exophoric reference.

The examples I listed here can be useful to see if the employment of the definite article with prepositions was regularized or not.

Looking at the data, the answer is negative:

94) Cunduit sun cors en la presse des Francs. (l. 3370)
“Guided his corse amid the press of Franks,”

95) Cil gunfanun sur les helmes lur pendent. (l. 3005)
“Their gonfalons flutter above their helms.”

In these two examples, the definite article and a noun are preceded by the preposition, which is definite as well.

96) Sur palies blancs siedent cil cevaler, (l. 110)
“On white carpets those knights have sate them down,”

Palies blancs is plural and has somehow a connotation of generality. We can notice that the definite article is missing in this structure, maybe because the pattern in which the sentence is structured recalls the one adopted for oral texts. See also the following example:

97) Serez ses hom par honur e par ben. (l. 3319)
“Stand honour bound, and do him fealty.”

Here, the nouns designate abstract concepts; hence the demonstrative is used without article. Not surprisingly, would I say, the *pattern preposition + definite article* is still dependent from the kind of noun and to its interpretation.

The definiteness of the context plays a decisive role for the positioning of the article before nouns indicating nationality.

98) Cuntre Franceis sempres irez ferir; (l. 3203)

“Against the Franks go now, and smite them quick.”

99) Mult ben i fierent Franceis e Arrabit; (l. 3481)

“Right well they strike, both Franks and Arrabies,”

In both cases, *Franceis* and *Arrabit* are used in a general sense, without referring to a particular group of soldiers.

100) E li Franceis n’unt talent que s’en algent; (l. 3475)

“But Franks, to escape they think it no great matter;”

In this example *Franceis* is just a part of the whole Franks, who are attacked by the Saracens.

Adams (1967: 67) individuates a case in which this “rule” is not respected.

101) Oliver est desur un pui muntet; (l. 1028)

Or veit il ben d’Espagne le regnet (l. 1029)

E Sarrazins, ki tant sunt asemblez. (l. 1030)

“Upon a peak is Oliver mounted, kingdom of Spain he sees before him spread, and Sarrazins, so many gathered.”

Here there is no doubt that Oliver sees a group of Saracens and not the whole community. Also in lines 1416-20 there is an unexpected use of *Frances*: in line 1420, even if we are talking of the same group mentioned in line 1416, no article precedes the noun¹¹⁴.

In the majority of cases, the situation of abstract nouns is still identical to the previous texts we analyzed: for the most part of the poem, they appear in isolation:

102) Par grant honor se fist rereguarder: (l. 2774)

“Rereward he set, to save (his) great honour:”

Adams (1967: 67) recognizes also an instance in which abstract nouns, used in a general sense, are preceded by the article:

103) Asez est melz qu’il i perdent le chefs, (l. 44)

¹¹⁴ See also Adams (1967: 67)

- 104) Que nus perduns l'onur ne la deintet, (l. 45)
“Better by far they go, though doomed to die, than that we lose honor and dignity,”

There are also other (few) cases, in which the article is present, i.e. if the context in which the word is inserted is well defined:

- 105) Marsilies fut esculurez de l'ire; (l. 485)
“Now Marsilies, is turn'ed white with ire,”

Here I would also argue that there is a sort of concretization of *ire*, as it is associated with the “coloring” of the face.

There are also instances, in which the article precedes this typology of nouns, as it follows:

- 106) Teres tutes ici [...] rengnes vos rendemas (l. 2832)
E Sarraguce e l'onur qu'i apent. (l. 2833)
“Quittance I give you here of all my land, with Sarraguce, and the honor thereto hangs.”

In this case honor receives a concrete connotation (quasi if we are talking of a piece of land too) and it is strictly related to the portion of territory of the Saracens. Again, the definiteness of the context and the typology of the noun are decisive for the choice (or not) of the article.

In *La Chanson de Roland* we can find the construction *town noun + la + citet*, already present in the *Alexis*:

- 107) Il est al siege a Cordres la citet (l. 71)
“He is in siege of Cordres the city.”

Even if there are many instances where we would have expected the use of a definite article because the context is defined, we find instead a demonstrative pronoun: the author prefers to use *cils* to express over-determination. Recall the *Peregrinatio*: the author, in the description of vivid passages with personal involvement or with lots of things going on, characterized them by means of over-abundance of the demonstrative pronouns.

- 108) escheles ad li reis anumbrees. (l. 1452)
Lacent cil'elme as perres d'or gemmees, (l. 1453)
E cil escuz e cez bronies sasfrees; (l. 1454)

“Twenty columns that king had numbered. With gleaming gold their helmets were jewelled.
Shone too their shields and surcoats embroidered.”

Here it is specified that the helmets, the shields and the surcoats are those of the soldiers, who Marsilie is leading. The demonstrative can be explained because these lines report an important event.

109) Cuntre le soleil reluisent cil adub, (l. 1808)
Osbercs e helmes i getent grant flambur, (l. 1809)
E cil escuz, ki ben sunt peinz a flurs, (l. 1810)
E cil espiez(z), cil oret gunfanun. (l. 1811)
“Their armour shines beneath the sun's clear ray, Hauberks and helmets throw off a dazzling
flame, and blazoned shields, flowered in bright array, also their spears, with golden ensigns
gay.”

In the previous stanzas¹¹⁵, Roland, proximal to death, sounds the Oliphant to advert the king and the soldiers who are with him. When Charlemagne listens to the signal, he orders his men to prepare themselves (and here is the point where there is an enumeration of some objects, like the *helmes* and the *espees*) to reach Roland.

Hence, in the lines I reported, we are talking of the same group of Franks of the stanzas previously mentioned; this is also confirmed by the fact that the word *Franceis*, few lines below, is preceded by *li*. Again, in this passage there is a lot of involvement, as the emperor has to move with haste, in the hope to find Rolland living and not dead.

Even if there is a solely case that illustrates an instance of articular usage more similar to a demonstrative, this in line 3145¹¹⁶:

110) Pur la Carlun dunt il oit parler (l. 3145)
“After, that (i.e. his sword) on his left side he's set,”

The author is talking about the sword of Charlemagne and he refers to it, using *la*. Because of the missing word designating the sword, we can interpret this article as a sort of pronoun, which refers to the “missing” *spee*. Such a “pointing to” interference can be certainly interpreted as reminiscence inherited from the original demonstrative pronoun *ille* and should

¹¹⁵ In particular, I refer to stanzas CXXXV and CXXXVI

¹¹⁶ I am citing the example proposed by Adams (1967: 67), as in my version of La Chanson de Roland the word *spee* is present.

not been classified as a typical feature characterizing one of the many functions of the definite article (as attested by Carlier & De Mulder 2007); furthermore this is only one instance present in the whole poem.

In his studies about the peculiarities of the grammaticalization phenomena, Hopper (1991) also recognizes that there is always the possibility to find some archaic remnants; furthermore this is typical of each of these processes.

The definite article can also front some adjectives, with a substantivizing effect:

111) Tut li trenchet le vermeil e le blanc
“Slices it through, the white with the scarlat;”
(1.1299 from Martin & Lignereux 2003: 198)

112) Ja li corners ne nos avreit mester
“No help it were to us, the horn to blow”
(1.1742 from Martin & Lignereux 2003: 198)

To conclude, we have also to mention the use of the definite article in concomitance with the stressed possessive pronoun, which is still persistent in *La Chanson de Roland*, like in the previous poems¹¹⁷. This form is anyway not as common, as those instances, in which the possessive pronoun stands in isolation. For this reason, we can explain also why such construction (i.e. *definite article* + *possessive*) has lately disappeared.

Que nus requert ça en la nostre marche?» (l. 374)
“What seeks he now of us in our country?”
La sue mort l'i vait mult angoissant. (l. 2233)
“His death comes to him with very cruel pangs.”

4.8. Some final considerations

Before starting to consider the case of Old High German, it is necessary to make a few final remarks on the data we have seen in the previous paragraphs. My intent is to provide an initial

¹¹⁷ See also l. 50 (*la Iur tere*); l. 82 (*le soen Deu*); l. 189 (*la nostre lei*); l. 389 (*li soens orgoiltz*); l. 403 (*la sue feit*), l. 917 (*la citet sue*); l. 1907, l. 2600, l. 3277 (*li nostre deu*); l. 1444 (*li nostre empereür*); l. 2198 (*la meie mort*), l. 3396 (*la sue gent*); l. 3989 (*la sue grant ire*); etc.

sketch of the evolution of the definite article in Old French, which will serve also as comparison throughout the investigation of the other language in interest.

As we already saw in the case of Classical Latin and Late Latin, it is very probable that the innovations we find in the written texts already existed or were in progress in speech.

Furthermore, in particular for what it concerns the first part of the Old French period, it is arguable how much the *Sequence of Saint Eulalie*, *La Vie de Saint Léger* and *La Passion du Christ* can reflect the real estate of article-words; *La Vie de Saint Alexis* and *La Chanson de Roland* offer at least a good source for our study.

For what it regards the eldest stages of this language, it is necessary to mention Brunot's proposal¹¹⁸, which is also the view followed by Adams (1967): both authors share the same opinion, i.e. that the definite article was already fully grammaticalized at the end of Late Latin.

In the first stages of Old French, *il* and its oblique forms have already lost their original deictic feature, even if they sometimes retain a sort of "pointing to" function¹¹⁹, which progressively disappears¹²⁰.

According to Adams (1967: 46):

Ille, reduced to *il*, *le*, *la*, [...] 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.

With anaphoric, we mean that the article had the function of calling into mind something (quoting Adams 1967:13).

Before him, Foulet (1928: 49-60)¹²¹ has precisely observed what it follows:

Au moyen âge sa fonction est bien vraiment de marquer la détermination. Dès qu'un substantif est pris dans un sens vague et indéfini, dès que les limites de son extension s'effacent un peu, l'article disparaît... Au fond, l'ancien français n'éprouve pas le besoin

¹¹⁸ The work mentioned is the following *Histoire de la langue française* (1993)

¹¹⁹ Here I am referring to the example regarding the sword of Charlemagne, we previously saw.

¹²⁰ The disappearance of this function can be partially motivated by the fact that already in Old French we can see that *case inflection, as the marker of grammatical function, is progressively lost. This evolution is accomplished by the end of the Old French period* (Carlier 2007:31) (please, remember that the declension system was reduced already in the *Oaths of Strasbourg*, hence at the very beginning of Old French). There are still few examples with this function also lately, which have to be seen more as a rest rather than an effective use of the article.

¹²¹ Foulet (1928:49-60): "In the Middle Ages its function [of the definite article] is really to mark determination. When a substantive is perceived in a vague and indefinite sense, when the limit of its extension is a bit deleted, the article disappears.... At the end, Old French has not the need of juxtaposing an article with indeterminate nouns. It uses the article just before nouns with a neatly delimited and circumscribed meaning"

d'accoler un article aux noms indéterminés. Il n'emploie l'article que devant des mots de sens nettement délimité et circonscrit.
(quoted from Epstein 1994: 63)

I decided to report this passage because it summarizes, concisely, all the phenomena we faced in our previous analysis.

It is interesting to notice that, in all the written documents we took into consideration, the definite article was exclusively used in determined contexts or before concepts that are already introduced in a text.

The process of grammaticalization is actually not complete in *La Chanson de Roland*, as the use of the article still requires particular conditions and it has to fight also against the abuse of the determinative pronoun, still in vogue; as a matter of fact the over-emphatic use of *cils* and its forms can be compared to the efforts of emphasis that occurred in Late Latin, to convey a stronger nuance of significance.¹²²

If we compare the earlier texts with the most “recent” production, there are surely many differences; one of the most important is the progressive increment of the instances, in which the definite article was used.

At the times of the *Sequene de Sainte Eulalie*, as we already saw, there was no need to express some concepts like indefiniteness by means of an article: the distinction operated by the use or non-use of the definite article was neat and clear; also concreteness and abstractness played a decisive role in the employment of the article.

The problems rise when the formal structure of the poems prevailed over a relatively free composition, thus making difficult to understand if the author really did not want to use a definite article in a particular position or if the deletion was a necessity, in order to respect the metrics; furthermore, as the process of grammaticalization progressed in the direction of “generality” it is not so easy to find an explanation to all the examples provided by the data¹²³.

We do not have to forget another aspect, even if it may be considered minimal, i.e. the fact that those words, directly imported from the Latin, faced more resistance before being treated as “normal” Old French entries. I think Adams’ suggestion is very interesting, as he proposes

¹²² Actually, this confusion among the usage of the article and of the demonstrative caused the weakening of *cils*, lately reinforced with a particle.

¹²³ See also Epstein (1994)

that the influence of the Church may have played a decisive role, causing a delay for these words to be preceded by an article.

Already in *La Passion du Christ*, even if we noticed that basically few important changes occurred, we can already individuate some new strategies adopted to express “definiteness”, thus allowing the use of the article. I signalize again the use of an adjective and, later, of a common noun in the function of “specifiers” of the referent.

More interesting is *La Vie de Saint Léger*, in which a noun could be particularized by means of a relative clause; rather as being of particular interest for what it concerns human referents (as still in the Sequence such a construction is adopted), they produce an interesting result with the other typologies of nouns. The most interesting effect related to the usage of the relatives, is how an article could precede abstract nouns if they were combined with them; these instances reveal themselves to be the turning point for the expansion of the conditions, in which the definite article may appear in combination with a noun.

This change did not occur rapidly, as attested by *La Chanson de Roland*: still in the 12th century, a definite article before this typology of nouns was more an exception rather than a fixed rule.

Throughout the Old French period, it is evident that grammar was not such determinant in the establishing of the use of the definite article. I think it is evident that semantics was instead the key factor, which promoted the phenomenon of generalization.

My assumption is motivated by some considerations regarding two main factors, which I am going to explain.

First of all the fact that a demonstrative pronoun appears as a replacement of the definite article, even if the context is clearly delimited and identified, should be interpreted as a symptom that *li* and its forms are still not interpreted as a noun marker; the so-to-say “unexpected” examples give the impression that the structure of the nominal expressions in Old French is very free.

Already at the time of *La Sequence de Sainte Eulalie*, *il* and its forms have surely lost their [+deictic] feature, typical of the demonstrative pronouns; anyway they retain a sort of emphasis, which is maybe more correct to identify with the term of expressivity.

With expressivity, I mean that those referents, which are prominent in the discourse, become by means of a definite article more visible.¹²⁴ This could be a characteristic inherited from *ille*; Epstein (1994) proposes that the use of the demonstrative pronouns *ille* and *ipse* in Late Latin could have been hearer-oriented, resulting in a subjective interpretation of the referent by the speaker.

Carlier & De Mulder (2007: 100) contrast partially Epstein, in particular for his interpretation, in which the role of the hearer “activates” the perception of the speaker; they retain the basic concept of expressiveness while focusing, on the contrary, more on the fact that the perspective of the analysis should be conveyed to the speaker, who plays the role of transmitting the message to the interlocutor, guiding him to a correct interpretation of the information. Quoting Carlier & De Mulder (2007: 100)¹²⁵:

This choice is therefore not dictated by purely subjective motivations, but it is motivated by the worries of guiding the hearer in his interpretational work that the speaker has. Either it is for the speaker to guide the hearer in the direction of a correct identification of the referent (referential usage), or to signalize him the importance assumed by the referent at a certain point of the passage in the global textual structure (expressive usage).

If we consider that a noun in Old French could also be definite without being necessarily preceded by a definite article or by a demonstrative pronoun, I retain the proposal of Carlier & De Mulder adequate to account of many usages of the definite article.

In my opinion, Epstein formulated an interesting viewpoint, but I agree with Carlier and De Mulder that the process should have been started from the speaker and not from the hearer¹²⁶.

In particular, I would add, independently from the deictic nature of *ille*¹²⁷. I sustain the hypothesis that this kind of interpretational function conveyed by the demonstrative pronoun was also inherited by the definite article and present in its earliest stages, in particular when

¹²⁴ Carlier & De Mulder (2007) propose that in Late Latin we can already find some usages of this kind. In particular they focus their analysis on the *Fredegarius*, a text that was formerly criticized a lot because of the form, in which it was written (i.e. it was perceived as composed in a barbarian language, if compared to the standards proposed by the Latin manuscripts).

¹²⁶ We will see in the last part of the work the theories with much more details, also to see if what seems compatible with Old French can be also be applied to Old High German.

¹²⁷ I retain this deictic property of *ille* important for another factor, i.e. its capability to overwhelm *ipse* in the decisive passages in which one of the two must be chosen. As a matter of fact the [+deictic] nature of *ille* permitted it to some contexts, which were precluded to *iste*.

the process of grammaticalization was still at the very beginning (which could also be supported by Traugott's hypothesis).

Carlier & De Mulder confirm in a certain way my intuition, i.e. that in Old French the hearer could perceive in the definite article a sort of deicticity, as it was able to attract the attention to a particular noun.

As a matter of fact there is often the tendency of using the definite article before a noun already mentioned in the discourse, thus creating an effect, similar to the "pointing to" typical of the demonstrative pronouns, which progressively faded in parallel with the generalization of the usage of the article.

Even if we said that in some instances abstract nouns could also acquire a nuance of concreteness and be preceded by a definite article, this does not mean that they stop to appertain to this typology of nouns. According to me, once definite article started to be accepted before abstracts with a concrete connotation, the usage was extended also to the entire category, of which these referents are part.

For what it concerns "unique" nouns, we saw that they started to be systematically regularized in the times in which *La Chanson de Roland* was written; please still remember that I am always speaking of the manuscripts and not of the spoken language. As noted by Adams, in some cases, the presence of the definite article may be due to the influence of the common speech, where we can postulate that the development was a step further.¹²⁸

However, the rare cases of articular use with abstract nouns taken in a general sense show the inroads that popular speech was making into the literary language
(Adams 1967: 67)

Before making further hypothesis, I would rather introduce Proto-Germanic and the Old High German case, watching, as I already have done here, how the definite article was used throughout the time.

Demonstratives in Proto-Germanic

¹²⁸ Adams (1967:67-68) notices that the abstract nouns *onur* and *deintét* are preceded by a definite article also in abstract contexts. As the most part of abstract noun still appears in isolation (except when they are context-defined), the use of the article before *onur* and *deintét* can be considered strange.

As well as Proto-Indo-European, Proto-Germanic is a reconstructed language. Again, the question is how the system of determination should be reconstructed. Comparing the data from the derived Germanic languages, we can at least postulate that like its ancestor, Proto-Germanic had just a class of demonstrative pronouns but not of definite articles. Bhatt (2006) proposes the following reconstruction

Demonstratives in Proto-Germanic

	Masculine		Feminine		Neuter	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Nominative	*Sa	*Pai	*So	*Pōz	*Pat	*Pō
Accusative	*Pen(ō) *Pan(ō)	*Pans	*Pō			*Piō
Genitive	*Pes(a)	*Pezō	*Pezōz	*Paizō	-	-
Dative	*Pesmō *Pasmō	*Pemiz *Paimiz	*Pezai	*Paimiz	-	-
Instrumental	*Piō	-	-	-	-	-
Locative	*Pī	-	-	-	-	-

The reason which motivates this hypothesis is to find in the earliest stages of the Germanic languages: they all had demonstratives but the definite article was an individual, later development. This is not surprising, if we make a comparison with the Romance languages: in Late Latin, which was still a common level for all of them, the definite article did not exist; at least the first steps in the direction of grammaticalization had already taken place.

Actually, it is difficult to predict if the situation of Late Latin may have occurred also in the final stages of Proto Germanic, as we do not have any document that can validate this theory; anyway, a parallelism should not be excluded.¹²⁹

Last but not least, it is presumably in the passage from Proto-Germanic to Old High German that the system underwent a decisive change: from a synthetic system we have the progressive passage to an analytic one.

¹²⁹ Keenan (2011) considers this idea to be very probable, as also in the Germanic languages, as well as in Romance, there is a gradual change in the language system from synthetic forms to analytic ones.

Old High German

Old High German is one of the languages derived from the Proto-Germanic, in which case distinction is visible and expressed by means of flecional endings.

Differently from Proto-Germanic, Old High German has simplified a little this system, retaining nominative, accusative, dative and genitive case while losing ablative, instrumental¹³⁰, locative and vocative.

In particular, the opposition between the accusative and genitive case was decisive with perfect verbs, in order to make a distinction between (in)definite direct objects. If the direct object was expressed by means of an accusative case, the interpretation it conveyed was of a definite kind; vice versa, if the direct object was rendered by means of a genitive, the indefinite interpretation was the typical reading for this kind of usage.

- 113) Allero giuuelih thie mih (Acc./+Def.) bigihit fora mannun, thes (Gen./-Def.) bigihu ih fora minemo fater thie in himile isti inti for a sinen engilun
“Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven”
(Tatian 44, 21 from Szczepaniak 2011: 67)

According to Szczepaniak (2011:67) this example explains clearly the difference indicated by the opposition between accusative and genitive: the verb in the two sentences is the same but the choice of case is different. In the first sentence through the accusative, it is clear that *mih* refers to a particular referent (in this case Jesus is speaking, hence *mih* stands for him); the nominal expression is definite. In the second sentence, the genitive underlines that there is no direct reference to a particular person, among those who acknowledge the Christ.

As remarked by Donhauser (1990), this case distinction could also specify the nature of the verb, i.e. if it was perfective or not, as sometimes the two forms could coincide, making the direct identification difficult; vice versa, the choice of case on a referent rendered it immediate.¹³¹ Let us comment the following examples:

- 114) Beitota gotes riches
“he waited (long) for God’s reign”
(Tatian 212, 2 from Szczepaniak 2011: 67)
- 115) Inti uuas thaz folc beitonti Zachariam

¹³⁰ Of the instrumental case only few crystallized expressions survived.

¹³¹ The perfective/imperfective system will be subject to a progressive weakening, resulting in Middle High German in the adopting of the genitive as marker of imperfectivity.

Commento [BM6]: Questa interpretazione è la sua o l’ha trovata in letteratura? A me non pare del tutto convincente. *Allero* (cioè l’antecedente) è al caso genitivo, quindi si potrebbe dire semplicemente che *thes* concorda con il suo antecedente. E’ vero che non si parla di una persona in particolare, però è altrettanto vero che non si parla di “tutti” in generale, bensì di coloro che riconoscono Cristo. Non può inserire un esempio più convincente?
-Proverò a cercarne un altro, però ammetto che quello proposto da Szczepaniak mi aveva convinta. Intanto mi deidco alle altre correzioni. In caso non riuscissi a trovarne un altro, potrei eliminarlo

“and the people waited for Zacharias”
(Tatian, 2,10 from Szczepaniak 2011:67)

In the first case the genitive indicates that the verb is imperfective. In the second instance, the accusative indicates that the action is concluded: as a matter of fact, in the next sentence Zacharias comes out from the temple where he was.¹³²

Not only nouns but also adjectives were declined, depending on the genre, number and case of the noun they were attached to; anyway the inflectional system is different: if nouns can belong to a class or to the other without any apparent semantic ground, the reason that motivates the choice for the adjectives relies on syntax, as adjectives have to match with the number, gender and case expressed by the head noun¹³³; definiteness should be treated apart, as it implies other relations in the nominal expression.

If compared to Old French, which had just a paradigm of adjectival inflection¹³⁴, in Old High German we can distinguish two forms¹³⁵, i.e. a strong and a weak flexion¹³⁶. This is not a secondary aspect at all, as it seems that in the first stages of Old High German, the choice of the kind of flexion could be significant for the interpretation of a head noun as definite or not¹³⁷.

116) denne stet dar umpi engilo menigi, // guotero gomono
“he will be surrounded by a throng of angels and of good men”
(Muspilli 88-89, around the 9th century)¹³⁸

In this example, we can see that the indefinite or, even better, general interpretation is rendered by means of the strong flexional ending *-o*.

Here it follows an example of the weak declension, taken from Otfrid:

¹³² See Szczepaniak (2011: 67).

¹³³ As noted also by Schmidt (2007).

¹³⁴ This should be interpreted in the sense that the endings are different in relation to gender, number and case, independently of the fact that the nominal expression could be definite or indefinite.

¹³⁵ The strong form is an inheritance from the Proto-Germanic; the weak declension is, on the contrary, an innovation developed independently from this language.

¹³⁶ It is interesting to see that also in the other Germanic languages, the situation was very similar to the one existing in Old High German: for example in Gothic, Old Norse and Old English we find four cases and two different adjectival declensions.

¹³⁷ This was not the only one possibility. As we said before, languages without articles can encode some relevant information by means of position in the structure. As well as in Latin, the word order (but also the order of the elements of the nominal expressions) was very free. We also mentioned that the verbal (im)perfectivity could be a hint for (in)definiteness.

¹³⁸ The edition of the text I adopted “München Bayerische Staatsbibliothek clm 14098” can be found in the following page: <http://www.linguistics.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/~strunk/Deutsch/muspilli.htm>

117) Zi themo éwinigen líbe
 “to the eternal life”
 (Otfrid L,77 from Demske 2001: 67)

The ending *-en* means that the referent is definite; furthermore, a definite article is present. The use of the definite article here not only remarks that the referent has a definite interpretation but it solves also the function of case marker, as the ending of the adjective is not sufficient to recover this information.

In particular instances, the weak declension of the adjective did not require the use of a definite article:

118) Êuuîgo truhtîn
 “The immortal Lord”
 (Tatian 119, 9 from Demske 2001:67)

It is necessary to point out that this example is a vocative form; in different texts we will see that all vocatives required the weak declension of the adjective, as they are always defined.

According to Schmidt (2007) the weak declension is used only in association with a definite article or with a demonstrative pronoun; vice versa, in all the other cases, the strong declension is necessary.

I retain this position too limitative, as it does not consider, for example, the peculiar case of the vocatives or superlatives, we saw before.

While correct in his basic assumption that the weak declension was the only one to appear with a demonstrative and definite article¹³⁹, I would revise the general assumption that the weak declension could be used just in these cases.

I retain the opinion of Braune & Ebbinghaus (1981) of particular interest for our analysis, even if their discourse does not directly refer to Old High German.

Braune & Ebbinghaus (1981), while analyzing the data from the Gothic language, assume that there was a stage of this language (also attested in Old High German, in Old English and in

¹³⁹ Even if restricted to few cases, when the indefinite article is used we can notice that the kind of adjectival inflection associated to it is the strong one. In some way I retain this a little strange, as the indefinite article at the very beginning has a sort of individualizing interpretation.

other Germanic languages), in which the flexional ending of the adjectives was a marker of definiteness or indefiniteness¹⁴⁰.

Furthermore there seems to be a connection between the weak declension and the definite article, as when *ter/der* preceded an adjective, the latter was always weak.¹⁴¹

The system of the demonstrative pronouns consisted of two paradigms: the simple demonstrative pronoun (*der, diu, daz*)¹⁴² and the compounded demonstrative pronoun (*deser, desiu/disiu, di3*)¹⁴³; the form of the definite article finds its origin in the first one.

In Old High German there were also other strategies adopted for the understanding of the (in)definite value of the referent of a nominal expression, such as the positioning of the attributive genitive¹⁴⁴: prenominal genitives were usually responsible for a definite interpretation of the nominal expression, whereas postnominal genitives for the indefinite.

Even if we will focus our attention principally on the role played by the adjectival declension, we will see also the relation it existed between definite article/demonstrative pronoun and the possessive genitives and pronouns.

The Oaths of Strasburg

We previously analyzed the version of this text in Old French, noting that the style in which it was redacted was very conservative at some extent and, contemporarily, innovative for some aspects; anyway the text did not provide much interesting data for the analysis of the development of the definite article.

¹⁴⁰ Hogg & Denison (2008) remark that in Old English the adjectival endings were strong enough to express definiteness alone; anyway a sort of article could be used and was associated with the weak declension of the adjective. If compared with the German language, we can notice that the grammaticalization of the definite article occurs later in English.

¹⁴¹ Wilmanns (1909) states that we can explain the connection existing between definite article and weak declension, only if we accept that adjectives, at the very beginning, could be used alone.

¹⁴² In *Tatian* and *Otfried* we can notice a difference in the way both demonstrative pronouns and definite article are written: in place of *d* (*der*), the scribes use *t* (*ter*).

¹⁴³ The compounded form of the demonstrative pronoun derives from the fusion of *der, diu, daz* with the demonstrative particle *se*.

¹⁴⁴ Non-partitive genitives were problematic, also in prenominal position: the definite lecture was not automatic, as Szczepaniak (2011: 68) points out. For example *chuningo hrucca* could be interpreted in two different ways: the back of a king or the king's back.

In the German part of the text¹⁴⁵, we can find many interesting constructions:

119) fon thesemo dago frammordes
 “From this day forth”

I report also the structure used in Old French (*d'ist di in avant*): as well as in Old High German, Old French adopts a demonstrative pronoun to emphasize the importance of the head noun¹⁴⁶. The stress can be also motivated with the implication that the oath will be valid from that precise instant it is pronounced and also in the future.

120) so hald ih thesan minan brudher
 “I will protect (this) my brother”

Despite the presence of the possessive pronoun, the demonstrative pronoun is present in the nominal expression. The same pattern is adopted in both Old French (*si salvarai eo cist meon fradre Karlo*) and Latin (*sic salvo ego eccistum¹⁴⁷ meum fratrem Karlum*) construction, as, also in these languages, the demonstrative is present. In my opinion, the use of the demonstrative pronoun is again necessary to remark the importance of the nominal expression: this is a solemn moment, as the two brothers swear reciprocal protection.

121) soso man mit rehtu sinan brudher scal,
 “as a man in justice has to protect his brother”

Here, in opposition to the example we have analyzed before this one, the possessive pronoun and *brudher* are not preceded by a demonstrative. Again, the same construction is also adopted in Old French (*si cum om per dreit son fradra salvar dift*) and Latin (*sic quomodo homo per drectum suum fratrem salvare debet*). Another thing we can observe, is that *man* is used with a general connotation; for this reason no article word precedes it. According to me, this interpretation is also supported by the fact that in Old French (but also in the Latin text), when Louis swears to protect his own brother (two times), the proper name *Karlo* follows *fradre*, i.e. the referent is clearly and univocally identified. Furthermore, also in Old French, the compounded form of the demonstrative pronoun introduces the nominal expression only when *fradre* has a specific interpretation.

¹⁴⁵ The Old High German edition of the Oaths of Strasburg was taken by the following site: http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/09Jh/StrassburgerEide/eid_text.html

¹⁴⁶ Here, I would say, it is particularly evident the change in meaning that affected *iste* in Latin and that we mentioned in the previous paragraphs.

¹⁴⁷ Please, notice the use of the bulky form *ecce iste* in the Late Latin version of the Oaths.

Comento [D-7]: Ho tolto l'altro esempio, quello del christian poblo. Non mi convinceva più

Even more interesting is the part dedicated to the Oath of the Soldiers, in which we can find a particular use of *then*:

122) Oba Karl then eid, then er sīnemo bruoðher Ludhuwīge gesuor
“If Charles (keeps) the oath that he has sworn to his brother Louis”

In this case, the demonstrative *then* is used with a weak and anaphoric connotation: the relative clause specifies important information for the identification of its antecedent *eid*. This construction is not surprising, as it was also frequently used in Old French texts.

Szczepaniak (2011) points out that the *der* and its forms, at this stage of the language (but also in *der Althochdeutsche Isidor*, which was composed in the same century span but a little later in comparison with the *Oaths*), are usually employed to stress the communicative importance of a nominal expression.

Here, for example, we can assume that the oath of the soldiers was pronounced after the one of the two reignants; it follows that the referent *oath* was already introduced. I retain a further hint the fact that we are facing a weak demonstrative because, if we compare the same lines with the Old French text, we can see that there is no demonstrative pronoun in the nominal expression (*si Lodhuiigs sagrament quæ son fradre Karlo iurat*), while in most examples, when the demonstratives are present in Old High German, they are present also in Old French. As already explained in paragraph (N), the Old French part of the *Oaths* presents many archaic features, due to the attempt of emulating the Latin language.

Commento [D-8]: Devo inserire il numero del paragrafo.

Der Althochdeutsche Isidor

*Der althochdeutsche Isidor*¹⁴⁸ is a translation of the Latin *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos* of Isidor of Seville¹⁴⁹. The dating of this text is approximately end of the 8th/ beginning of the 9th century. The fact that we are facing a translation is not secondary at all, as we will see how the author was dependent from the original and in which sense he introduced some innovations or

¹⁴⁸ I am referring to the edition proposed by Eggers, H. (1964) *Der althochdeutsche Isidor. Nach der Pariser Handschrift und den Monseer Fragmenten*, Tübingen: Niemeyer present also in the TITUS project: <http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/germ/ahd/isidor/isido.htm>

¹⁴⁹ See Sonderegger (2003: 129)

structures, without considering the pattern of the Latin text. For this reason, under the examples in Old High German I decided to insert also the Latin text¹⁵⁰.

First of all, *dher*, *dhiu*, *da3* are used to translate the demonstrative pronouns *ille*, *hic* and *iste* from the Latin. In these cases, *dher*, rather than functioning as a definite article, is used as a real demonstrative.¹⁵¹

There are also instances, in which *dher* is used in an anaphoric way, in particular to attract the attention of the reader to a referent of particular importance¹⁵².

123) [...] huuer ist dher uuerodheoda druhtin, [...] (3, 8)
[...], *quis est ille dominus exercituum*, [...] (Latin)
“[...], who is the holder of the armies, [...]”

In this part of the text it is explicitly said that the Christ is the *druhtin*: this was already pointed out in the previous *sentence*¹⁵³, where it is explained that the *druhtin* mentioned in David’s Psalm can only be the Christ. Hence *dher* underlines that we are talking about the same *druhtin* of the Psalm.

124) dahzs ziidh (8,2)
Hoc tempus (Latin)
“The time”

The *sentence* in which we can find this example explains that the Jews are still waiting for the Christ and do not believe that he already came; this concept is also clearly explained in the title¹⁵⁴. According to me, *ziidh* does not refer generally to the concept of time but it rather stands for “the arrival of the Christ”. Hence, *ziidh* depicts a precise event with an important religious connotation.

¹⁵⁰ The same procedure will be adopted also for the other texts, where it coexists the Latin variant.

¹⁵¹ For example Jäger (1917:12) identifies 11 instances, in which *ille* is translated by means of a demonstrative pronoun in Old High German.

¹⁵² Jäger (1917: 11) points out that the definite article in Old High German is used at least 13 times to translate a demonstrative pronoun in the Latin text.

¹⁵³ In the edition I adopted, the text is divided in chapters and sentences.

¹⁵⁴ (Isidor 8.0): “ENDI BIHUUU MAN IN IUDASES CHUNNES FLEISCHE CHRISTES BIDENDI UUAS”

Even if in the Latin text there are many nouns, which are not preceded by a demonstrative, the translator of *Isidor* used the demonstrative *dhese* in many contexts, in which he wanted to give the noun a particular emphasis.

- 125) Dhesses chiboranin sunes (2, 5)
Gignendi filii (Latin)
“This born son”

In this *sentence*, for example, it is explained that Jesus is God’s son. As this concept is repeated many times throughout the chapter, the use of the demonstrative remarks that the referent is the Christ and not an anonymous child.

Focusing our attention on those referents which are strictly related to the sphere of the Christianity, we have to mention a particular example, which shows how the definite article had the function of attracting the attention on a referent of particular relevance.

- 126) Dhiu magad christian gabar in fleische
“This woman, who gave birth to Christ”
(Isidor I, 8 from Szczepaniak 2011: 74)

There is no doubt that *magad* is referred to the mother of the Christ. Again, the author wanted to be sure that the reader would have interpreted correctly the sentence, without misunderstanding the figure of Mary with that of another woman.

A noun could receive a specific interpretation, thus by means of particular constructions. In the *Isidor* we can find only a single instance of this:

- 127) Dhiu berahtnissi fona sunnun: (3, 21)
splendor e lumine. (Latin)
“The light of the sun”

Fona sunnum has a delimitative function, which serves to define the context: the light is associated specifically with the sun; hence the definite article has reason to appear before the noun.

There are also other cases, in which the restrictive effects are not specifying enough; for this reason, there is no definite article.

Commento [D-9]: Ho tolto la parte delle citazioni bibliche fatte da Jaeger, in quanto non sono riuscita a trovare il libro per ricontrollare: purtroppo è stato preso in prestito. Oggi la biblioteca è chiusa, quindi non mi è possibile ritentare. Ho tolto anche la parte di cyrus, la mia interpretazione non mi sembrava più molto convincente

128) So uuort fona munde, so uuisduom fona herzin (3, 22)
ut uerbum ab ore, ut sapientia ex corde (Latin)

“So the words from the mouth, so the wisdom from the heart.”

In particular, here, I would argue that *mouth* does not really identify the context. If in the example mentioned before the light could have been of the sun or of a candle, the association between words and mouth is very common; in the case of *wisdom*, we are facing an abstract word, hence the absence of the definite article is not surprising at all.

In Old French there was the possibility of defining the context also with relative clauses that served to specify some characteristics of the noun.

Confronting the translation with its original counterpart, Jäger (1917: 31-34) notes that this use is rendered in Latin with *is, ille, hic* and *iste*; in Old High German the use of a strong deictic element or of the weak form of the definite article depends on the kind of relative clause adopted and the fact that in Latin a demonstrative pronoun is used does not prevent a different way to translate the same sentence.

129) Endi chiuuisso ist christus in dheru selbun salbidhu chimeinit, dhar chiquhedan uuar got chisalbot (5,5)

Et utique christus ipsa unctione monstrantur, cum deus unctus insinuator.

“And certainly Christ is meant in that same salve, which was insinuated God was anointed”

Here, the relative clause provides some necessary information for the individuation of the referent because it points out that the salve was “the salve”, with which, presumably, also God was anointed. Here I see also a case of subjective interpretation by the writer; according to me there is a particular stress on the noun *salbidhu*, also obtained by the choice of reinforcing *dheru* with the reflexive *selbun*.

130) endi bidhiu iu chiuuisso quham christ, dhen dhes forasagin uuort bifora chundida (27, 2)

ideoque iam aduenit christus, quem adnuntiabat sermo propheticus (Latin)

“And therefore they came to Christ, who announced the prophetic words”

This example seems to be an exception; anyway, if we analyze the function of the relative, we can see that rather than specifying the referent, it is just a sort of continuation of the sentence, i.e. we can recognize a difference existing between restrictive and non-restrictive relatives.

This is also confirmed by the fact that *christ* is a noun expressing a functional concept, which does not need further clarifications.

Commento [BM10]: Ok. Questo è un aspetto interessante, che merita di essere trattato nel dettaglio, con riferimenti anche alla teoria. Inoltre, negli esempi precedenti (di cui lei ha commentato aspetti diversi – per esempio l'enfasi) ci sono già indizi a supporto di questa ipotesi.

Sono incerta su come sistemare questa parte.

Secondo lei, l'esempio della relativa (19) può essere già intesa come una parte integrante della teoria?

Inoltre ho aggiunto un commento all'esempio (17)

In order to understand when the relative has the function of sentence continuation, it is helpful to take into consideration those cases, in which the referent is introduced by a numeral, a proper name or by a possessive pronoun. As noted by Jäger (1917:33), in these cases the relative clause has just the role of continuation of the sentence.

Here it follows an explanatory example:

- 131) unser druhtin iesus christus, dher unsih dhurah iordanes runsa [...] (6, 1)
dux nobis dominus iesus christus [...] Qui nos per iordanis fluenta [...] (Latin)
“our Lord Jesus Christ, who us through the river Jordan [...]”

In this case, the antecedent of the relative is Jesus or, more exactly the noun *druhtin*. The definite interpretation provided by the possessive pronoun does not prevent the eventual use of a definite article, as Demske (2001) remarks that in Old High German the article could precede them: the personal pronoun should be interpreted more like a “particular” adjective; anyway, the referent is very individuated: the nominal expression is interpretable as “unique” because there is a proper name and the entire nominal expression can be read as “Jesus Christ”. Furthermore, the relative does not provide additional information for a better identification of the referent: if we try to read the text excluding this sentence, we still understand the meaning of the nominal expression.

The relationship between article and prepositions seems not to be regulated: there are cases in which an article follows a preposition and other instances in which *dher* is not present.

- 132) fona dhemu heilegin gheiste (33,10)
de spiritu sancto (Latin)
“of the holy spirit”
- 133) dhiu chiholan ist fona manno augom (2, 15)
latet enim ab oculis hominum (Latin)
“It is hidden for the men’s eyes”

I chose two examples with the same preposition. In the first case there is a noun related to the Christian background, *heilegin gheiste*. Anyway, if compared to other two nouns appertaining to the same typology, such as *fater* and *sunu*¹⁵⁵, it distinguishes itself because it is always in combination with an adjective. The use of the definite article is regulated by some constraints:

¹⁵⁵ *Fater* and *sunu* are usually used in isolation, except for few instances, in which the definite article with a strong deictic connotation precedes them. See the example in (1,8) with the term *madga*.

if it appears in combination with *fater* and *sunu*, it will always stand alone (see 12,9); if the adjective is interpreted as such, *dher* will be used; if the adjective is perceived to form a sort of unity with the noun *gheiste*, the article is not present. Here, I would propose that the adjective serves to determine the noun *gheiste*.

The second example could also be seen from a certain perspective as “problematic” because the expression *manno augom* refers specifically (by means of the genitive) to the eyes of humans (rather than to the eyes of an animal); anyway the plurality of the referent and the fact that eyes are inanimate objects neutralizes the particularizing effect of the genitive.

In sum: rather than depending on the kind of preposition, the use of the article is more related to the semantics of the nominal **expression**: as remarked by Demske (2001) and by Obouzar (1992), pragmatic definites can be preceded by a definite article, differently from semantic definites.¹⁵⁶

Back to the expression “fona dhemu heilegin gheiste”, I want to introduce a further aspect regarding the use of the definite article, i.e. its function as individualizer.

The sequence *adjective + noun* is not something new, as we already found it in the Old French production (see *La Passion du Christ*).

Interestingly, the same pattern we find in (33,10) “fona dhemu heilegin gheiste” in Old High German defines the context in which the noun is inserted and *dher* precedes it.

134) fona dhemu almahtigin fater (3, 6)
a patre (*Latin*)
“of the almighty Father.”

As mentioned in [a](#) note, *fater*, when referring to God, is one of those words that are normally not accompanied by a definite article because part of common knowledge background. I want also to point out that the adjectival ending is weak (see also the paragraph above dedicated to some generalities about Old High German).

Actually, the presence of an adjective does not automatically mean that all nominal expressions with an adjective must be preceded by the definite article; in the following case, for example, we have a postnominal adjective declined strong.

¹⁵⁶ They both refer to Löbner’s (1985) hypothesis: he distinguishes between semantic definites and pragmatic definites. The first ones can be always identified as “unique” because of their inherent meaning, whereas the meaning of pragmatic definites is dependent on the context in which they are inserted.

Commento [BM11]: Ecco, qui ad esempio ho ripreso la parte di Loebner che ho deciso di eliminare.

Commento [D-12]: Sì, mi riferivo all’esempio. *heilac gheist era un altro esempio che avevo trovato all’interno del testo*

Commento [D-13]: Inserire numero nota dopo aver impaginato.

135) endi uirdit siin namo chinemnit got strengi (22, 10)
uocabitur nomen eius deus fortis (Latin)
“and he heard his name called by the mighty God”

About genitives preceding a noun¹⁵⁷, there was no restriction in the use of the definite article: if in Modern German such a construction would lead to ungrammaticality, in *Isidor* it is was accepted.

As Szczepaniak (2011: 67-68) remarks, prenominal genitives identified the nominal expression as definite; furthermore they usually did not need a definite article to precede them.

As Jäger explains(1917: 62):

Durch die Voranstellung eines Genitivs vor das dadurch bestimmte Substantiv wird der Genitiv selbst zum Träger der Individualisierung, wodurch sich die Anwendung der individualisierenden Artikels vor dem regierenden Substantiv erübrigt [...]¹⁵⁸

136) Fona paradises bliidhnissu (5, 10 from Demske 2011: 217)
“Of the paradise’s joy”

Anyway, there are also instances in which the definite article precedes the genitive:

137) In dhemo druhtines nemin
“In God’s name”
(Isidor 4,3 from Demske 2011: 225)

Actually this apparent contradiction to Szczepaniak is explainable if we focalize our attention on the prepositions used: in the case of *fona*, the morphological case is already clear as the preposition requires dative case. On the contrary, with *in*, it is necessary to specify if the case should be an accusative or a dative; the definite article remarks that the case of the nominal expression is the latter.

¹⁵⁷ It is necessary to point out that the highest percent of these preceding Genitives do not follow the original pattern of the Latin text, where this construction was sparsely used. Furthermore in Old High German a Genitive before the noun was not perceived as an exception, making its usage similar to that of the Genitives in Modern English. If we consider the status of prenominal Genitives in Modern German, we can see that they are restricted only to a specific typology of nouns, i.e. proper nouns; this discrimination did not occur in Old High German, where also nouns characterized by the feature [+living] and those bearing the feature [- living] often appeared prenominal. For further discussion see Demske (2001: 206-317)

¹⁵⁸ Jäger (1927: 62): “By means of placing a Genitive in front of a substantive, which is definite through it, the Genitive self becomes the vehicle of the individualization which spares the usage of the individualizing article before the governed substantive [...].”

The following table, taken from Jäger (1917: 13) summarizes the employment of *dher/dhese/dher selbo*, in order to see in a more general view how they could be used as translations of the demonstrative pronouns of the original Latin text. This table is

Latin	Dher	Dhese	Dher selbo
Ille	8	-	-
Hic	2	5	3
Iste	-	3	-
Is	-	-	-
Qui	2	3	3
Idem	1	-	11 + 1 ¹⁵⁹
Ipse	-	-	4
Total	13	11	22

Ludwiegslid

The text¹⁶⁰ is a production of the late period of the Carolingian times and can be dated around the second half of the 9th century (881-82). It is contained in the same manuscript of the Saint Eulalie; more precisely, the *Ludwiegslid* follows the *Séquence* and was copied by the same hand.

I am starting the analysis of this poem by concentrating on of all those expressions, related to King Ludwig, as they offer interesting material for our investigation on the use of the definite article.

In the first lines of the poem (already in the first one, directly with title and proper name), the figure of King Ludwig is introduced; according to what we formerly said, we would expect to find all the nouns referring to his persona preceded by a definite article. Anyway, in line three, the word that depicts him, as he was a child stands in isolation:

¹⁵⁹ We also to consider the forms of *dhese selbo* (4 *ir selbo* and 1 *sineru selbes*)

¹⁶⁰ I am adopting the edition of K. A. Wipf (1992) *Ludwiegslid* in: *Althochdeutsche poetische Texte*, Stuttgart: Reclam. The text can be found at the following link: http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/09Jh/Ludwiegslid/lud_text.html

- 138) Kind uuarth her faterlos (l.3)
“As a child he was fatherless”

We can notice that if we translate this line in Modern German (*als Kind war er vaterlos*), we would have again a null article preceding the referent, as this sequence can be interpreted as “unique” (*at the time of his youth*). Once excluded the possibility of using a definite article, it is also not surprisingly not to find *ein*, as at this stage of the language, similarly to Old French, it was used to underline the introduced referent had a specific meaning.¹⁶¹ Here, rather as speaking of the child, the author is talking, more generally, about the times, as Ludwig was a young boy. A further remark: the adjective *faterlos* is strong (without flexional ending), because of the predicative construction of the sentence, which always required this type of declension.

- 139) Ther kuning reit kuono, (l.46)
“The king rode brave”

The word *kuning*, as referring to Ludwig, is combined with an anaphoric article, which indicates that the referent was already introduced.

- 140) ‘Hludwig, kuning min, [...]’ (l. 24)
“ ‘Ludwig, my king [...]’ ”

This case is a vocative, hence no definite article is required. The same pattern can be found in line 57 (*Uuolar abur Hludwig, Kuning uilo salig!*)

There is only an instance, which seems to be exceptional:

- 141) Kuning uuas ervirrit, Thaz richi al girrit, (l. 19)
“The king was distant, the reign destroyed”

Curiously, the nominal expression *thaz richi* contains a definite article, whereas *kuning* stands alone, even if Ludwig was introduced already in the first line. In this case we can suppose that the choice of omitting the article was dictated to respect the metrical structure. I read in *thaz richi* the clue for the correct postulation of this assumption: if the word *richi* that directly

¹⁶¹ A concrete example of this kind of usage of the indefinite article is to find in the first line of this poem: *Einan kuning uueiz ih*

refers to the aforementioned *Vrankon* is preceded by *thaz*, I see no other reason to explain why the definite article is missing before *kening*.

Furthermore the context cannot be read as indefinite and is not interpretable as such; otherwise the article would have also not appeared before the term indicating the reign.

Apart from the last case reported above, in the other examples the article is used as we would have expected it to be: as anaphora and in combination with an attributive adjective describing some characteristics of the person it refers to; on the contrary it is not present when the referent is mentioned for the first time ever in the poem or when it is employed in the vocative form.

The next step of our analysis will be to consider lines 47-49, in which the battle of the Franks against the Normans is described; in particular we will see how common nouns and nouns referring to nationality behave in relation to the definite article.

142) oh alle saman sungun ‚Kyrrieleison‘. (l. 47)
Sang uuas gisungan, Uuig uuas bigunnan, (l. 48)
Bluot skein in uuangon: Spilodun ther Vrankon. (l. 49)
“All together they sung the Kyrie. The song was sung, the battle was begun, blood appeared on the cheeks: the Franks battled with joy”

143) Thiot Vrancono Manon sundiono. (l. 12)
“Reminding the population of the Franks of its sins”

I retain the passage in lines 47-49 very interesting, as this is one of the crucial moments of the whole poem. The only word preceded by a definite article is the word *Vrankon*, employed here in a way, which recalls the usage made in *La Chanson de Roland*: as the referent is indicating a particular group (the soldiers) and not the whole community of the Franks, the context, in which the word is inserted, is defined. In *La Chanson de Roland*, we faced a similar case; in particular, when the author wanted to indicate the population (hence, adopting a general interpretation of the nominal expression) the word stood in isolation; in the *Ludwiegslid* we can notice the same phenomenon (see line 12).

Back to the passage 47-49, I am focusing now my attention to the other nominal expressions, in which no definite article is present, and, at some extent also surprisingly. In particular, in line 47 it is explicitly written that the soldiers are singing the Kyrie and not a general song; for this reason, I would have expected to find a definite article before *sang* in line 48. I would

account of this fact, assuming that this is a case of **elision**, desired by the author in order to respect the pattern chosen for the poem. According to me a point in favor of this interpretation can be found in the same line of the song: *uuig* (war) is definite, as it is clear that the Franks are going to fight against the Normans but not preceded by a definite article; also in line 27, when the king takes the *gunfanon* (war flag), the article is not used.

The noun *bluot* is also not preceded by a definite article but as *blood* is not specifically used for one of the two fronts but as the result of the battle in progress. Rather than a definite article, I would have not been surprised to find a demonstrative pronoun, as there are lots of things involved in the action and I suppose that the author was also emotionally involved while describing the facts.

144) Hilph minan liutin! (l.24)
“Help my people”

Here we have again an instance, in which population is used with a general interpretation, thus the article does not appear.

Another case, in which the noun could appear in isolation, is when the word used by the author is an alternative way to say God:

145) Holoda inan truhtin, Magaczogo uuarth her sin. (l. 4)
“God called him, he became his educator”

Truhtin is, when associated to God, to interpret a “unique” noun and the definite article is not necessary.

146) Gihalde inan truhtin bi sinan ergrehtin. (l. 59)
“God, preserve him to his magnificence!”

As we also noted during the earliest stages of Old French, abstract nouns appear, usually, alone:

147) Bitteres lides. So uue hin hio thes libes! (l. 54)
“Bitter sorrow. It will hurt them for the whole life”

lides is with no doubt something not concrete and is not preceded by the article; furthermore it is preceded by an adjective declined strong. In the case of *libes*, we are facing a precise span of **time**, hence, I retain that the phrase should be interpreted as definite, thus legitimating the presence of the definite article.

Commento [WU14]: Formulare ipotesi va bene, ma devono essere supportate da qualche dato intra- o intertestuale. Perché pensa ad un caso di elisione? Ve ne sono altri?

Vanno bene?

Commento [WU15]: Ma l'infinito può essere descritto come “a precise span of time”?

- Ho sistemato la traduzione. Può andar bene?

Throughout the poem both possessive genitives and pronouns appear.

148) Gilobot si thiū godes kraft (l. 55)
 “Praise God’s power”

Also in this poem we can notice that the definite article can be used in those contexts, in which the possessive genitive is present. The possessive genitive, as well as the possessive pronoun seem to function more like adjectives in these constructions, rather than of determinants like in Modern German¹⁶².

Der Althochdeutsche Tatian

This is a translation in East-Frankish of a text originally composed in Latin.¹⁶³ The *Tatian* is conceived as a bilingual text, as Simmler (1998: 307) points out: “Die gesamte Anlage des Codex Sangallensis ist von vornherein auf eine Zweisprachigkeit angelegt [...]”¹⁶⁴; anyway, this does not prevent the possibility to find structures that are not literally translated from the Latin, but that are typical of the Old High German Language, as it was the case of the *Isidor*. Hence, throughout our analysis, we have to pay attention and try to recognize those instances, in which the scribe was influenced by the Latin word-order and those cases, in which the scribe did not follow rigidly the pattern of the original text.¹⁶⁵

The use of the definite article is an example of a choice deliberately taken from the translator, without basing himself on his model.¹⁶⁶

A further peculiarity is that we can recognize the hand of six scribes, who dedicated themselves to the redaction of this document and may have interpreted differently some passages¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶² For further discussion, see Demske (2001)

¹⁶³ The translation can be dated in the second part of the 9th century. The edition I adopted is the following: Sievers, E. (1966), *Tatian. Lateinisch und altdeutsch mit ausführlichem Glossar von Eduard. Zweite, neubearbeitete Ausgabe [1892]*. Unveränderter Nachdruck Paderborn Schöningh, (Bibliothek der ältesten deutschen Literatur-Denkmäler, L. Band), pages 3-292

¹⁶⁴ Simmler (1998: 397): “The whole structure was determined from the beginning to be bilingual”

¹⁶⁵ Dittmer, A. and E. (1998) identify, in the rigidly respected line rendering, one of the reasons why some sentential constructions are atypical.

¹⁶⁶ Simmler (1998) also confirms this in his work.

Proceeding with the analysis of the development of the definite article, I want to start by introducing the following extracts:

- 149) So uns saltun thie thar et fon anaginne selbon gisahu, inti ambahta uuarun uuortes, (Prologus, 2)
Sicut tradiderunt nobis qui ab initio ipsi viderant ministri fuerunt sermonis (Latin)
“According as they, who from the beginning were the witnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them unto us”.
- 150) Thaz thü forstantes thero uuorto fon them thü gilerit bist uuar. (Prologus, 4)
Ut cognoscas eorum verborum de quibus eruditus es veritatem. (Latin)
“That you may know the verity of those words in which you have been instructed.”

This case, taken from the first lines of the text, provides a proper example to depict one of the main functions the definite article retained, that is, to precede those nouns that are already introduced in the discourse.¹⁶⁸

Here we can see that the first time, *uuortes* is appears alone; a few lines later, the same noun is precede by *thero*.

This is extremely clear in the next lines:

- 151) In anaginne uuas uuort inti thaz uuort uuas mit gote inti got selbo uuas thaz uuort. (25, 16)
In principio erat verbum et verbum erat apud deum et deus erat verbum. (Latin)
“At the beginning there was the word and the word was with God and God was the word.”

Here there are the first lines taken from the first paragraph. *Uuort* is again, at the very beginning alone; but, already by the second time the word is used, we can notice that *thaz*, as expected, precedes the referent.

If we make a comparison with the Latin text we can notice that the scribe has not always respected the pattern of his Latin model. And this is not an isolated case: the translator inserted the definite article always before those referents, which have been already mentioned even if it means to take distance from the Latin text.

This kind of usage is here justified because it is clear to what the noun refers: in the first case *thero uuorto* are the words of the prophets and in the second they are God’s words. It is

¹⁶⁷ For example, even in such passages, where the referent was already mentioned, sometimes the definite article misses. Jäger (1917) notes that there is a sort of coincidence between the absence of the article and the hand of a new scribe.

¹⁶⁸ Jäger (1917) individuates at least 313 instances, in which the definite article precedes a noun that was already introduced in the text.

necessary to point out that if the context is not well specified or if the interpretation is more general, the article will not be used. We will see later in the analysis of this text that the use of the definite article before nouns referring to objects, plants and animals is not always predictable, also if the context is specific. Before considering this aspect, I want focus my attention on human referents.

Whith nouns indicating people or a group of them, we can notice that there are interesting developments about the use of the article. Let us make an example, citing the case of word *heilant*. In line 3, 25 the Heliand is mentioned for the first time (*ginemnis sinan namon Heilant*¹⁶⁹).

152) inti mit diu ther heilant uz gieng (250,1)
 et cum egrederetur ihesus de templo accesserunt (Latin)
 “and when the Heliand went out of the temple, they came there.”

153) Tho quad in ther heilant giloubet ir (97, 12)
 & dicit eis ihesus creditis (Latin)
 “than the Heiland said to them”

154) bihaltenti thern heilant (319, 3)
 custodientes ihesum (Latin)
 “who guarded the Heiland”

These examples regarding the word *heilant* are very interesting, if compared with the former *Isidor* and *Ludwigslied*, as we can effectively notice that there is an evolution pertaining the context of use of the definite article. *Heilant* is basically a different expression to indicate Jesus Christ, thus categorizing this word as “unique”.

Now, I want to consider a case in which the noun indicates a group of people: the *Pharisees*. *Pharisees*, as well as the *Heliand* are referent appertaining to a background strictly related to the Christian tradition; furthermore in the particular case of the Pharisees, we can notice that even from the first time they are ever mentioned, they are precede by the definite article.

155) Thö her gisah manageio thero Phariseorum (l. 13, 13)
 Videns autem multos Phariseorum. (Latin)
 “he saw many Pharisees”

¹⁶⁹ I would not define this instance as an expected case of first mention without definite article because of how the sentence is structured.

As we already saw in the case of Heliand, when they are mentioned later in the text, the article is present in most instances. Sometimes the article misses in some points, in which the translator wanted to point out that those group was not the aforementioned one; another peculiar case is the absence of *dher* in passages, quoting Jäger (1917: 18)¹⁷⁰:

[...] wo die Pharisäer sogar mehrmals erwähnt werden, nämlich innerhalb der Kapitel 88, 13 und 91, 5 [...] (cap. 84, 9) *uuartet uon themo theismon Fariseorum inti Saudocerum*. Dies in der direkten Rede, wo keine Beziehung auf das Vorhergehende stattfinden kann.

This is also confirmed in (cap. 182, 25), when Jesus speaks; few lines later, we find again the same construction without article.

Throughout the *Tatian* we can recognize at least 313 times, according to Jäger, the use of the definite article without deictic force, as mean of signaling that the referent has already been mentioned.

It is arguable if in some passages the absence of the definite article is simple related to the hand of the scribe, rather than to the interpretation of the context. By stating this, I mean that we still have not to forget that the text was manipulated by at least six copyists: as noted by Jäger (1917) in some points the text presents such evident inconsistencies, which find a proper explanation if we suppose that another scribe has started the translation of a sequence. Quoting Jäger (1917: 17)¹⁷¹:

Denn es ist nur natürlich, wenn der eine oder andere dieser Übersetzer Begriffe, die auf der vorhergehenden Seite erwähnt sind, doch ohne Artikel einführt, weil sie ihm eben in seinem Stück noch nicht vorgekommen.

In his analysis, Jäger recognizes 11 instances, in which these inconsistencies are particularly evident:

156) Truhitines engil (76, 32)
“The Lord’s angel”

¹⁷⁰ Jäger (1917: 18):“ [...] where the Pharisees are mentioned even more times, viz. between chapter 88, 13 and 91,5 [...] (cap. 84, 9) *uuartet uon themo theismon Fariseorum inti Saudocerum*. This in direct speech, where no link with the aforementioned can take place. ”

¹⁷¹ Jäger (1917: 17): “Because it is normal, when the one or the other of these translators introduce concepts that were already mentioned in the previous pages without the article, because they have already not occurred in his piece.”

157) Fon engile (79, 22)
"Of the angel"

Furthermore, some passages and protagonists of the Bible were of so common use that the scribes placed, in a way that may be perceived as automatic, the definite article before these referents, peculiarity that we have already discussed with the examples of the Heliand and of the Pharisees.

Anyway, these two cases are not so proper to exactly precise what I intend, as both referents are frequently mentioned; there is an interesting case, in the part dedicated to the blind man, who Christ healed. In 132, 1 the man is introduced as *man blintan* (blind man), i.e. without the article; in 135, 22 we can read the following construction *thie inteta ougun thes blinten*, where the article in the genitive form preceded *blind* (man). At a first glance this example seems not extravagant, but we have to consider that we have two different hands: in chapter 135 a new scribe continues the translation and *thes* is somehow unexpected, as in other points the referents are identified anew; anyway, this episode of the Bible is very famous, hence, even if we consider the possibility that the translator has not read what his predecessor wrote, the definite article is justified because he was describing the "famous" blind.

If with names regarding people we have observed that the use of the definite article was relatively predictable, we have also to take into consideration those names indicating the name of animals, plants and inanimate objects.

158) inti scaf folgent imo, uuanta siu uuizzun sina stemma (133, 7)
oves illum sequuntur, quia er in uora; sciunt vocem eius. (Latin)
"And the sheep follow him, because they recognize his voice."

Scaf is generally not preceded by the definite article (even if there are few examples that attest the contrary and are all cases, as we can already predict, in which the context is well defined). Focalizing our attention on the semantic aspect of (133,7), according to Szczepaniak (2011: 75), *scaf* has not a generic interpretation here. Quoting her words:

[...] die definite Lesart bei wörtern wie *scaf* 'Schaf' und *stein* 'Stein' nicht zwingend durch *ther* markiert.¹⁷²

159) Tho namun sie steina thaz sie vvurphin in inan (131, 26)

¹⁷² Szczepaniak (2011: 75) "[...] the definite reading of words like *scaf* 'sheep' and *stein* 'stone' (is) not necessarily marked by *ther*."

Tulerunt ergo lapides ut iacerent in eum. (Latin)

“So they took the stones (in their hands) that they wanted to throw to him”

In most cases *stein(a)* is used in isolation¹⁷³, as we also said for *scaf*; anyway there are few cases, in which the article appears; otherwise we can find the compounded form of the demonstrative pronoun (as in the example it will follow) in some peculiar instances, in particular when the author wanted to attract the attention of the reader, or in passages of a relevant importance¹⁷⁴ or simply implied to translate a demonstrative from the Latin.

160) Inti ih quidu thir, bidiu thu bist Petrus, inti ubar thesen stein gizimbron mina kirimeam, chun, inti hellephorta ni gimupraevalebunt gun uuidar iru. (90, 3)
Et ego dico tibi, quia tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam et portae inferi non praevalebunt adversus eam. (Latin)
“And I say to you, who you are Petrus, and build over this stone my church and (the) hell’s doors will not prevail against it.”

Even if the precedent example was not just one of the less known episodes of the New Testament, this passage has, surely, more relevance and importance: *stein* does not simply stand for stones but it is the fundament upon which the church must be build.

At this stage of the language nouns, other as terms depicting human referents, may be preceded by the definite article if they are in a determinate context as well as not; according to me this behavior shows that the definite article is not fully grammaticalized. Similarly to Old French, there is a tendency for those nouns referring to humans to appear more frequently in combination with a definite article and not necessarily requiring to be mentioned first.

I would also point out that a further case, in which a noun, regardless of its features (hence, of being animate/inanimate, human/non human etc.) appears in isolation, is when the referent is used in the vocative (as in the example of *Otfrid* mentioned in the introductory chapter dedicated to Old High German) or, when it is inserted in a predicative construction.

161) Fater heilago (302, 33)
pater sanctae (Latin)
“Sacred father”

This is a case of a vocative expression, in which the adjective is not preminally, as it follows the referent. In Old High German it was common to find adjectives also in post nominal position, even if here we may argue that it is an instance of a literal translation from the Latin.

162) Uuili uurista uuesen (190, 22)

¹⁷³ *ubar stein* (43, 1- 2 times; 43, 5); *in steine* (15, 4), *stein* (40, 5);

¹⁷⁴ As in the episode, where Christ transforms the stones in bread (*these steina* 15,3).

Vult primus esse (Latin)
“He wanted to be the first”

Here, the term *uurista* is used predicatively, as also hinted by the auxiliary verb *uuesen*. In those nominal constructions, where an adjective in the superlative is present, as argued by Demske (2001), the norm is to find these instances preceded by the definite article:

163) Der iungoro fon then (193, 15)
Adolescentior (Latin)
“the youngest of them”

The presence of the definite article before this kind of expressions, as the superlative has a sort of defining function.

The definite article can appear before a possessive pronoun or a possessive genitive; similar to Old French, there is no complementary distribution between them.

164) in minen örun (4,4)
in utero meo, (Latin)
“in my uterus”

165) thaz min suester (63,3)
soror mea (Latin)
“this my sister”

Sometimes the translation from the Latin is so literal, that the scribe omitted the article.

166) Gihortemo uuorte (137, 11)
Audito verbo (Latin)
“Words listened”

In the introductory section, I dedicated a general overview to some of the main features of Old High German, mentioning, in particular, the fact that weak and strong flexion alone could be used to identify a referent as definite or not. When the definite article precedes both adjective and noun, we can notice that in every instance, the adjective will be always declined weak. Here, the definite article has also the function of expressing case marking: the inflectional ending of the adjective is not sufficient alone to recover all the syntactic information needed for the understanding of the whole nominal expression.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ See Giusti (1995)

167) Themo itmalen tage halpscritanemo (104, 4 from Demske 2001: 70)
Iam autem die festo mediante (Latin)
“about the midst of the festive day”

168) Mit flaheru henti (192, 2 from Demske 2001: 66)
autem palraas (Latin)
“With gentle hands”

Within certain limits, there is an innovation concerning “unique” nouns, in particular if we make a comparison with the *Isidor*.

In the *Isidor* a “unique” concept like *worolt* (i.e. world), was never preceded by a definite article; on the contrary, in *Tatian*, *worolt* appears 33 times¹⁷⁶ determined by *ther*. Anyway it is not the case to speak of a generalization of the use of the article, as the cases in which this “unique” noun stands in isolation decisively outnumber the percentage of *ther worolt*¹⁷⁷. I noticed that the article before these nouns was used mainly to give a particular lecture of the nominal expression, like in the cases in Old French texts.

Commento [WU16]: Ok, sono d'accordo. Ma allora come giustifichiamo le 33 occorrenze?
Devo aggiungere più dettagli?

We already saw in the *Isidor* that, even if just limited to a case, it existed already the possibility of restricting the meaning of a noun, specifying it. In *Tatian*, this pattern appears more frequently, if compared to its predecessor.

169) Thiu menigi thiu thar stuont anderhalb thes seuues (162, 36)
Turba quæ stabat trans mare (Latin)
“The crowd that was standing there at the other side of the sea”

Again, as in *Isidor*, a relative clause can solve the function of specifier of a noun and, as we can predict from the other texts we already analyzed, the definite article precedes the referent. We do not have to forget that also throughout the Old French period, this construction was also employed to specify the antecedent of the relative.

170) Fuor thô Ioseph fon Galileu fon thero burgi thiu hiez Nazareth (77, 29)
Ascendit ... Ioseph a Galilea de civitati Nazareth (Latin)
“Then Joseph from Galilea lead from that town to that named Nazareth”

If compared with the *Isidor*, the amount of instances is definitely higher. A further innovation is that the translator use this formula, also when there is no correspondence in the Latin text:

¹⁷⁶ cfr. Szczepaniak (2011:75) also for other examples of “unique” nouns.

¹⁷⁷ *Worolt* appears, in isolation, 118 times (see Szczepaniak 2011:75)

171) fon thesemo uuazzare thaz ih gibu (173, 17)
 ex aqua quam ego dabo (Latin)
 “of that water that I gave”

The solely exception, in which the definite article does not appear, are exactly the same we found in the *Isidor*: when the relative clause does not specify or clarify the context in which the referent is inserted, but it simply continues the sentence.

172) Tuot íu sekila thie ni altent (110, 32)
 Facite vobis sacculos qui non veterescunt
 “make (the) bags, which do not become obsolete”

According to me, this distinction between relative clause should not be underestimated:

About the question of the Genitives, there is no much to add to what I have previously said about the *Isidor*: both patterns with/without article are possible. In particular we can notice a high amount of Genitives in isolation, when the referent is a proper noun.

173) Fon Aarones tohterun (74, 29)
 “Of Aaron’s daughter”

174) thaz uirdit ginemit gotes barn
 “they want to call him (the Child) God’s son.”
 (3, 7 from Demske 2001: 217)

In the latter example we face also a pronominal Genitive without definite article. In both cases, if we compare the percentage of occurrences to those of the *Isidor*, we can notice that there is a higher incidence of Genitives in postnominal position (like 70, 11 *fon huse Dauides*). Probably this was due to a more literally translation of some passages from the Latin.

175) Ther mannes sun (263, 35)
 Iste filiu hominis (Latin)
 “the man’s son”

Again, if the Genitive appears postnominally, a definite article can precede the noun it refers to, as it follows:

176) thero erdo Sodomorum inti Gomorreorum (144, 7)
 terrae Sodomorum et Gomorraeorum (Latin)
 “for the land of Sodom and Gomorra”

This is a case of double Genitive. The fact that the article precedes *erdo* does not prevent it to stay before Sodom and Gomorra; anyway, as proper names are usually used alone, the

Commento [WU17]: Ok. Questo è interessante. Insistere su questi aspetti (e ridurre un po' le parti descrittive) avrebbe potuto aumentare l'originalità del suo lavoro.

Genitives stand in isolation. It is important to remark that the definite article before *erdo* solves, again, the function of case marker (the dative, in this case. Without the article it would have been more difficult to recover the information about the case of this nominal expression, disambiguated by the presence of the determiner.

177) in thero ziti thes rouhhennes (68, 21)
 hora incense (Latin)
 “in the time of the incense”

Here, on the contrary, the Genitive, which still is after the referent, is a common noun and is preceded by *thes*.

The examples I reported in this paragraph are focused on the main aspects of the use of the article in the *Tatian*.

As I formerly proposed in the paragraph dedicated to *Isidor*, I want to report, as it follows, the summarizing table with the data regarding the incidence of the translations of the Latin demonstrative pronouns.

Latin	Ther	These	Ther selbo
Ille	80	1	1
Hic	15	105	-
Iste	8	24	-
Is	8	-	-
Qui	3	-	-
Idem	1	-	5 ¹⁷⁸
Ipse	2	-	12
Total	117	130	18

To conclude, I want to sum up, in a synthetic way, some of the main divergences we can note if we compare this text with the preceding ones.

If we compare the data summed up in this table with those of the *Isidor*, it is evident that some changes have occurred: the amount of *dher*, used as an anaphoric article, is striking higher.

¹⁷⁸ There is also a case with *thîn selbes*.

Even if the function of the definite article is still mainly limited to definite contexts¹⁷⁹, nouns referring to determinate human beings seem to be the first to be in a certain way affected by a generalization process; this phenomenon can be explained if we consider that this typology of referents indicates a precise person/group of persons: the most part of them are just nouns of common knowledge, as the Biblical reference of most of them must not be forgotten.

Semantics is still decisive in the choice of the use of the definite article but we should not forget that also its grammatical function of case marker, in particular in those examples, in which a weak attributive adjective preceded the noun.

Otfrid

Otfrid's Evangelienbuch can be classified among that literature, dedicated to the formation of the good Christian¹⁸⁰. Quoting Engelberg (1913:8): “Der Sprecher will im Hörer absichtlich gewisse Stimmungen, Affekte, Wollungen anregen.”¹⁸¹

We will see how the author tried to communicate all of this through his lines. As it is always the case for poetic texts, we will also see here that the rhythmical pattern could affect the order of the constituents of the sentence (and, of course, of the nominal expression).

Engelberg notes that sometimes the meaning Otfrid wanted to impress on a certain word in order to stress its importance was rendered through the positioning of the adjectives in the nominal expression. Like Fischer (2000 and 2001) points out for Old English, I retain that the positioning of the adjectives pre- and postnominally was already determined by how a referent was perceived as rhematic or not. Even if the development of the definite article has not stopped and is not complete, there is no significant change in the order of the constituents of the nominal expression; this is not only attested by pre- and postnominal adjectives, but also from the possessive genitives and pronouns, which could also appear before or after the head noun without particular restrictions.

Basically, the progresses we pointed out in the *Tatian* are present also in this work; the role played by the identification of the referent of the attributive adjectives is still very important.

¹⁷⁹ Jäger listed a few examples in which the article is present also in the plural.

¹⁸⁰ Engelberg (1913:8) names it *Lehrgedicht*.

¹⁸¹ Engelberg (1913:8): “The speaker wants to prompt voluntarily certain atmospheres, emotions, volitions in the hearer. „

178) Er nam góuma líbes thes héilegen wíbes (8. 12, 15)
“He took into consideration the love of the sacred woman”

In this example we have not only a definite article followed by an adjective with a weak flexional ending but also a postponed genitive.

Also in Otfrid a definite article can be reinforced by means of the reflexive *selbo*:

179) thiú selbun éngiles wort (17. 13, 2)
“the word of the same angel”

Again, the endophoric construction, following the *pattern noun + definite article + adjective* still persists:

180) Lúdowng ther snélló (1. 1)
“Ludwig the rapid”

181) Adamon then alton (2. 5,5)
“Adam the old”

As we already commented before and saw in the previous texts (and also present in Old French), we can see how the attributive adjective can specify its referent, allowing the construction with the definite article.

Even if the adjective appears after the noun, the definite article can still precede the referent, as it follows:

182) thie Kristes álmaga (3. 7, 2)
“Christ almighty”

In other examples we can also attest that despite the presence of referential elements like the possessive genitive or the possessive pronoun¹⁸², definiteness seem to be determined by rigid rules only for those adjectives at the left side of the noun, whereas those appearing at the right periphery are freer (see also Demske 2001, who also remarks this interesting fact, reporting cases where the noun is preceded by a definite article/demonstrative pronoun plus an adjective and it is at the same time followed by an adjective in postnominal position).

¹⁸² Even if the status of possessive genitives and of the possessive pronouns was different at the time, as they were more similar to attributive adjectives, there is no doubt that they are elements bearing referentiality (they have a delimiting meaning, as they point out who the possessor of an *x* noun is).

This example is also interesting because of the nature of the referent of the nominal expression: Christ. Even if the referent has a “unique” identification, differently from previous texts, a determiner is used. According to me, the use of the definite article is legitimated as it marks case, as the weak adjective is not sufficient to recover this information.

Again, when an adjective appears in isolation, its declension determines if the referent is definite or not.

183) von hímilísgen líothe (1. 12, 4)
“of celestial light”

In this example, the ending *-en* indicates that the adjective is weak declined, thus providing the definite interpretation to this nominal expression.

Here I would also add that the preposition provides enough information about the case required by the nominal expression; thus, the definite article is useless. We will see in the next examples that the definite article precedes rarely this category of nouns; hence, the fact that in this instance no article is present may also due to the “uniqueness” effect characterizing the whole expression.

A further hint may be provided by the following example:

184) Bi alten Nóes zítin (4. 7, 50)
“To the times of the old Noah”

Again, no definite article is to find, as the preposition marks the case of the nominal expression. Furthermore *alten Nóes* is a genitive; in this case I would claim that the article misses, rather than for of the “uniqueness” of the referent, because the genitive alone is already marker of identification¹⁸³. According to Demske (2001: 70):

“[...] ist die Artikellosigkeit [...] jedoch nicht Ausdruck der individualisierenden Bedeutung der schwachen Flexion im Ahd., sondern hängt mit dem Gebrauch des bestimmten Artikels in dieser Periode der deutschen Sprachgeschichte zusammen. Denn anders als im Gegenwartdeutschen bleibt dessen Verwendung im Ahd. auf nicht unikal zu interpretierende Nominalphrasen beschränkt.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ See the quote from Jäger (1917) in the paragraph dedicated to the *Isidor*.

¹⁸⁴ Demske (2001:70): “The absence of the article however is [...] not the expression of the individualizing meaning of the weak declension in Old High German, but it hangs up together with the usage of the definite article in this period of the history of the German language. Because, differently from the Modern German, its use in Old High German remains limited to those nominal phrases, which are not to be interpreted as ‘unique’”

The critic moved by Demske is motivated by the fact that the choice of the flexional ending of those adjectives located in the post-nominal position seems to be relatively free, independently if the noun is preceded by a definite article or not (or even if in place of a definite article we find a compounded demonstrative pronoun).

I agree only with her; in particular I share her opinion when she states that a missing the article does not imply that the weak adjectival ending so-to-say acquires a “defining” meaning.

With mass nouns the article can precede the referent as well as not.

185) thaz ménigi thes líutes (4. 8, 78)
 “The amount of the people”

Here the use of the article is motivated by the context defined in the previous lines¹⁸⁵. As a matter of fact, when the same noun is used in a less defined context, we can notice again that the definite article was not employed.

186) sia ist éngilo ménigi (3. 7, 32)
 “This is the amount of angels”

We may argue that *éngilo* is one of those words appertaining to the sphere of the Christian knowledge, thus making superfluous the presence of the definite article; anyway, throughout the text the word occurs also preceded by it. Here we have a general interpretation, as Otfrid is speaking generally and does not refer to a particular group.

In some cases, in which the referent is specified and preceded by an adjective, the definite article is not used; in particular we can find this in vocative phrases and with the adjective in the superlative form.

187) Líobo man (2. 7, 2)
 “Dear man”

In this case we have an accusative, not being preceded by the definite article (notice that the adjectival ending is weak).

188) Ih méinu sancta Máriun, kúningin thia ríchun (3. 7, 31)

¹⁸⁵ See (4. 8,71)

“I mean saint Mary, the mighty queen”

This example is a further instance of vocative, in which *kúningin*, which refers to Mary, is not preceded by a definite article; *thia* precedes *ríchun*, even if this noun is “unique”, because this is a postnominal genitive.

189) in ira barm si sazta barno bézista (l. 13,10)
“on her lap the most beloved child is seated.”

In this example we have an instance of a superlative form. As expected, the adjective is weak. The absence of the article before *barno* can be motivated by the particular interpretation implemented by the adjective; in particular, the superlative form identifies a child among many others.

190) thiu éwiniga súnna! (l. 96)
“... the eternal sun”

Sunna, one of those words that can be classified as „unique“, is here preceded by the definite article; the presence of the adjective is necessary, again, for the understanding of case.

We have to remark that this is just an exception as, throughout the text, there is a slightly higher percentage of cases in which *sunna* stands alone, as it follows:

191) Sunna irbalg sih thrato (4. 33, 1)
“The sun incensed itself so much”

If we look at other examples of “unique” nouns, we will see that the instances in which the definite article precedes them are very limited. It is anyway evident that the definite article is extending its domain also to this class of nouns.¹⁸⁶

192) Zi themo éwinigen líbe (l. 77)
“To the eternal life”

When a preposition is present, the use of the definite article is still not regulated:

¹⁸⁶ Still considering the example of *sunna*, Szczepaniak (2011: 75) points out that among the 18 instances in which the word appears, only five present the definite article. Also *mano* (i.e. moon) in 3 of 4 cases it is used, is not preceded by the article.

I conclude this note, reminding that the nature of the relationship existing among the definite article and nouns will be analyzed in detail in the next chapters.

193) Mit worton mih ginuagen (5. 25, 90)
“with words sufficient to me”

In this example *worton* is used without any kind of specificity, to justify the use of the definite article.

The definite article can still precede a possessive genitive or a possessive pronoun, without leading to ungrammaticality; this confirms also the statement I made at the beginning of this paragraph, i.e. that the changes toward the actual status of the nominal expression in German have not taken place.

194) thero sínero worto (2. 6,8)
“(this) his word”

To conclude: if compared with the *Tatian*, the definite article has remained more or less the same; anyway, the use made by the author before non human referents, even if still reduced to special instances as being the norm, starts spreading; a further development of this aspect will be seen in Notker.

Notker der Deutsche: Boethius „De consolatione philosophiae“ and Psalter

The text¹⁸⁷ is structured in the form of a dialogue between the narrator (Boethius) and a woman, who is the personification of philosophy, following the pattern of the *Prosimetrum*: as the name already says, parts in prose (*prosa*) alternate with parts in verses (*metrum*). The version proposed by Notker was written around the 11th century.

Before starting with the analysis of this text it is necessary to point out some relevant facts about the text. Quoting Hehle (2002: 106):

Notker unterteilt den Text der >Consolatio< in einzelne Segmente, die er nacheinander behandelt. Diese Textsegmente können identisch mit den betitelten Kapiteln sein; im Regelfall enthält ein Kapitel jedoch zahlreiche Segmente.¹⁸⁸

Section 1.01 ¹⁸⁷ The original text, composed in Latin, is a production of the late 6th century. The edition of the *De Consolatione* and of the *Psalter* I adopted is the following: Sehart, E. H. & Starck, T. (1934) *Die Werke Notkers des Deutschen* Halle: Max Niemeyer.

¹⁸⁸ Ehle (2002: 106): “Notker subdivides the text of the >Consolatio< in single segments, which he treats one after the other. This segments of text may be identical to the entitled chapter; as a rule a chapter contains however numerous segments.”

In sum: Notker is faithful from a linguistic perspective, to the original Latin text, when he limits himself to the translation; anyway it is very frequent to find extra commentaries (deriving from other sources¹⁸⁹) sometimes directly integrated in the translation or following it. A further complication is that translation and explanation of a certain passage cannot be easily separated.

As Meier (1885: 85) points out, unlike Otfrid's *Evangelienbuch*, Notker's did not just want to write a readable copy of a Latin text but he wanted also to provide an explication to those concepts, which could have been of not immediate understanding.

We can repeat more or less the same points, we identified for the *Boethius*, also for the *Psalter*: the translation is relatively faithful to the Latin text, even if Notker may have added some commentaries, in the effort of making some passages clearer to the reader.

According to Braune & Reiffenstein (2004: 105) in this period the form of the definite article varies graphically again: from <ter> to <der>.¹⁹⁰ The following quotation by Clausen (1979: 358) summarizes, in a concise way, Notker's Anlautgesetz:

The spellings p-b, k-g, t-d (and sometimes f-v) alternate with each other when preceded by a voiceless or voiced sound, respectively. This alternation is restricted to the beginning of a syllable and may be brought about by the last sound of the preceding syllable within a word or by the last sound of a previous word, for example *tes koldes- unde demo golde*

In the first of his excurses, we can find a definite article preceding a word derived from the Latin:

195) Únde er dés fortunam scúldigota (Boethius 6,39)
 “He made the fortune responsible”

fortunam is also a word with an abstract meaning; this is not a single instance, but there are also many other cases, like the following:

196) Er hábet mih kezógen bi démo uuazere dero labo. (Psalm 22)
 Daz ist baptismum (tóufi), mit démo diu sêla gelábot uuírdet.
 Super aquam refectionis educavit me. (Latin)

¹⁸⁹ In her work, Ehle (2002: 38-58) points out that the original *Boethius* was lately commented by various authors. For more information, in chapter 3 Ehle offers an interesting overview.

¹⁹⁰ I will not go deeper with the discussion, suggesting to see Braune & Reiffenstein's work.

Commento [M19]: In quale area dialettale? Capisco inoltre che non intenda affrontare l'argomento nel dettaglio, ma almeno qualche cenno generale va dato.

Secondo me questa definizione di Clausen è esaustiva ma allo stesso tempo contenuta. Lei cosa ne pensa? Siccome lui non dà una traduzione in inglese di Anlautgesetz, ho deciso di lasciarlo così (mi pare anche più appropriato)

“He has brought me up on the water of the refreshment. This is Baptisms, with it the soul is refreshed.”

We can also notice that an object like water is preceded by the definite article, as well as the noun *sêla*. The article misses before *baptismus*: here I retain that the word, a “unique” noun was still perceived as definite enough to be understood alone.

With plurals it is very common to find the nominal expression without a definite article; plurals have always a sort of more general connotation in comparison to their respective singular form, thus explaining why the author may have been reticent in the use of the article in a context like this one.

197) Gange ih óuh hîer in míttemo scáteuue des tôdes (Psalm 22)
Nam et si ambulavero in medio umbrae mortis. (Latin)
“For though I should walk in the midst of the shadows of death”

Even if we may say that the context is somehow defined by the postnominal genitive, “shadows” still remains a general plural: “death” is also an abstract concept, which eventually fails to provide a more concrete connotation to shadows. More interesting is the case of death, as it appears after “shadows”. In the introduction dedicated to Old High German, I remarked that the position of the genitive could be determinant for an (in)definite interpretation of the nominal expression. If this distinction was effective when the demonstrative pronoun had just started its process of grammaticalization, with the development of the definite article and the progressive widening of its contexts of use, *der* was used to introduce all definite genitive attributes - with the sole exception of proper names- in the postnominal (like in this case) and, later, also in prenominal position¹⁹¹.

198) In déro stéte dar uuéida ist, hábet er mih kesezzet (Psalm 22)
In loco pascuae ibi me collocavit. (Latin)
“He sat me in the place of pasture”

Here the use of the definite article is not problematic, as “meadows” are a concrete object, i.e. the identification in the mind of the writer was easier if compared to such an abstract concept as “shadow”.

¹⁹¹ Actually, the use of the definite article before a definite genitive was restricted to the postnominal position: in the *Isidor*, for example, prenominal definite genitives were usually not preceded by the definite article. See also Oubouzar (1992) and Szczepaniak (2011) for further discussion.

199) Únde sáment mír sízzendo tráhtotôst állen dén uuittûom, tér an gót kât. Únde án die liute. (Boethius: 1, 12)
In qua mecum sepe residens. Disserebas de scientia diuinarum humanarumque rerum (Latin)
“Where you seated together with me, and you debated about all the knowledge of the divine and of the human things”

The use of the definite article before “unique” nouns starts to be more widespread, if compared to the usage made in the *Tatian* and in Otfrid’s works, even if still not complete, as the example with the noun *baptism* showed.

Furthermore the use of the definite article seems to be also more regularized for what it concerns abstract and also living but non-human nouns (animals and plants). It is not surprising because, differently from abstract terms, they are something concrete and tangible.

Even if we can notice that some evident changes have taken place throughout the history of Old High German, some archaisms still persist; one of the most evident is the use/ not use of the definite article in concomitance with a preposition.

In the previous texts we already commented that the choice of inserting the definite article or not was apparently free; this can be explained by the fact that the function of the entire prepositional phrase (in which also the referent is contained) is decisive to operate the choice.

Obouzar (1992) identifies, among those functions in which normally no definite article is to find as following:

- Causal ground: fone uuinde Boethius 2,7 and 2,8 (from Szkzepaniak 2011: 76)
- Locality: in hímile, Psalt 122 (from Szkzepaniak 2011: 76), Boethius 2, 8
- Temporality: in lenzen Boethius 1, 28 (*in Spring from* Szkzepaniak 2011: 76)

Szczepaniak (2011) also points out that adverbial prepositional phrases should not be interpreted as referential expressions. The example she proposes is the following: *Die Hochzeit fand im Frühling statt*, arguing that it is difficult to localize exactly when the marriage took place (see Szczepaniak 2011: 77); hence in Notker we can find such non-referential expressions preceded by the definite article.

Furthermore she identifies in this extension of use (as in the other texts there is not something similar to the example we have just seen) the turning point for the widespread of the

Commento [D-20]: Spostato gli esempi qui sopra
Può andar bene o devo ampliare?

employment of the definite article also with those nouns, which are not properly well specified.¹⁹²

Still concentrating on prepositional phrases, let us take into consideration those cases, in which the definite article is regularly used.

Throughout our analysis we often pointed out that the level of “definiteness” of the referent is decisive in determining the use/non-use of the article; anyway, the occurrence of *der* and its forms in these prepositional constructions depends also on the type of preposition and of the case required. In particular, when the preposition governs more than one case and in the nominal expression a prenominal weak adjective is present, the definite article will be necessary to mark morphological case.

It is interesting to notice that the necessity of a noun to be already mentioned in the text in order to “permit” the use of the definite article, is a feature which is still very persistent not only in Old High German, but also in later stages of the language: in Middle High German we find many instances, which testify that this tendency is still alive.¹⁹³

We already saw in *Tatian* that, even if this is limited to a few cases, some referents conveying a general meaning were preceded by the definite article. For sake of clarity I will propose the example, taken from the *Tatian*, here:

200) Nio mag ther man iouuht intphahen, noba imo iz gigeban uuerde fon himile
non potest homo quicquam accipere, nisi ei fuerit datum de caelo. (Latin)
“The mankind cannot receive anything, if it is not given from Heaven”
(*Tatian*, 21, 5 from *Szczepaniak* 2011: 75)

Man is here to be interpreted without any doubt as a generic noun, referring to the whole mankind. Let us compare this usage with the following example, extracted from the *Boethius*:

201) Ter mennisco ist keschaffen ad imaginem (...) dei

¹⁹² Anyway, at some extent I do not consider *Friling*, in the example reported by *Szczepaniak* completely non-referential, as it still individuates a precise season, even if it does not indicate the precise day in which the marriage occurred. I retain, still concentrating the analysis to this example, that the expression was something “in the middle”, thus helping the acceptance of the use of the article before such forms.

¹⁹³ In the Middle High German period this expressivity characteristic of the definite article persists (see for example *Dietmar von Aist*, 12th century); it is only in the period of Early New High German that the usage of the definite article becomes generalized in prepositional construction, thus making the necessity of a referent of being once aforementioned obsolete.

Commento [M21]: Lei intende che è così anche con i sintagmi preposizionali, di cui sta parlando? Qui sembra che si passi ad un argomento più generale. Continui a discutere dei sintagmi preposizionali. Io le consiglieri di focalizzare l'attenzione sul “tipo” di preposizione usata. Non ci sono solo ragioni semantiche che guidano l'uso dell'articolo.

Può andare bene così?

“Mankind is created as God’s image”
(Boethius I, 29, 2 from Szczepaniak 2011: 77)

Again, *mennisco* indicates a general amount of humans; this example is structurally very similar to the one of the Tatian; anyway, even if still of a general lecture, the definite article precedes the noun.

In sum: in this paragraph we saw that, at the end of the Old High German period, the definite article has continued to develop, moving from the status of “individualizer” to that of nominal marker.

Even if its meaning has progressively generalized, we can still remark that semantics plays an important role in the determination of the context and of the use of the article: even at this stage a referent, in order to be preceded by an article, must be introduced previously in the discourse (it is not always necessary, but we mentioned that this features will disappear very late, persisting in Middle High German).

The hint, which confirms us that the definite article has not been reinterpreted syntactically, is offered by the observation on the flexional ending of the adjectives: I want to end this chapter, reporting Obouzar’s (1992 and 2000) conclusion about the definite article and its usage adopted by Notker. She states that “[...] in Notker the number of the noun phrases determined by *der* is 25% higher of those without determiner.”¹⁹⁴

Obouzar further remarks that at this stage, the definite article has lost completely any deictic remnants, thus solely absolving the function of marker of definiteness. According to her, the definite article has completely lost, at this point, not only its original significance and, from a phonological point of view, it has no accent.

This is only one of the main aspects, which let her identify *der* as a definite article and not as demonstrative pronoun anymore: first of all there is *no more the systematic limitation* (quoting Obouzar 2000: 256) recognizable, on the contrary in the *Isidor*; furthermore the definite nominal expression must be marked.

¹⁹⁴ Obouzar (2000: 256): “[...] in Notker the number of the noun phrases determined by *der* is 25% higher of those without determiner.”

The declension of adjectives: differences between OHG and ENHG

In this paragraph I am going to focus on an interesting change that affected the declension system of the adjectives, in particular in Early New High German. As a matter of fact, the flectional endings attached to the root of the adjectives underwent a process of simplification; furthermore, their use in respect of other elements present in the nominal expression is different.

Throughout our analysis, we pointed out some peculiarities characterizing the adjectives, which we can sum up as follows:

- They could appear both pre- and post-nominally. In particular, the adjectives appearing after a noun were considered normal constructions and not as “exceptional”¹⁹⁵;

Themo itmalen tage halpscritanemo ‘about the midst of the festive day’ (Tatian 104,4 from Demske 2011:70);

I retain this example very significant, in order to see the behavior of the adjectives in different positions. Here, the nominal expression is definite (*themo* at the beginning), the first adjective (prenominal) has a weak ending, whereas the postnominal adjective has a strong one. The article is necessary to express the morphological case marking, not visible in weak adjective (unlike in the strong one);

- The distinction between strong and weak declension was very neat; we can distinguish two forms of the strong endings: one declined and one non declined; about the second type, we have to remember that it was associated with both definite article and demonstrative pronoun, as for instance, in the example mentioned above;
- The weak declension of the adjectives become even more frequently associated with definite contexts (adjectives in the superlative and vocatives included); on the contrary the strong declension was used in those cases, in which the interpretation of the noun

¹⁹⁵ Adopting the hypothesis that all attributive adjectives are generated in prenominal position, it is still to explain why we can consider “unmarked” nominal expressions in which the adjective appears after the noun. One of the possible ways of solving the problem is to consider them as the result of a reduced relative clause. I retain that this is also the reason why definiteness was in some way optional: the interpretation occurred anew in the relative clause, thus explaining why, even if a demonstrative pronoun or a definite article preceded the head noun, the flectional ending could also be strong, despite the definite interpretation of the whole phrase.

phrase was indefinite. Furthermore, the association of the definite article to weak adjectives was not casual but motivated by the need of marking morphological case.

- In those predicative contexts, in which the adjective was always strong, both declined and non-declined forms were used, without any kind of restriction.

These characteristics are persistent in the texts of the Old High German period (as seen in the previous paragraphs); basically the same can be affirmed also for the Middle High German period, even if we still have to consider that the first steps which lead to the revolution of the system that occurred in Early New High German did not take place suddenly but found a fertile ground, because of some innovations introduced in the language across the time; among the new traits we can find many processes of grammaticalization involving different elements of the nominal expression and, in particular, we can mention the complete grammaticalization of the numeral into an indefinite article, already begun during Old High German and the reanalysis of both possessive genitives and pronouns.

Back to the relation between declined adjectives and definite articles/demonstrative pronouns, in Middle High German Sahel (2011) also individuates some peculiar aspects that provide a hint for the subsequent development of both the paradigm and the endings of the adjectival system.

Apart from some differences involving the positioning of the adjectives in relation to the noun they are linked to¹⁹⁶, he recognizes that the paradigm has the tendency of moving in the direction of a mono-flexional declension system.

In particular he individuates the most important hints from the observation of the following points: (a) when there is no article, the strong declension prevails; (b) when there is a definite article or a demonstrative pronoun the weak declension is the most widespread and (c) there is the tendency of using both weak and strong declension with possessive pronouns, indefinite articles and with vocative plurals, i.e. contexts which were formerly only associated only with the strong or only with the weak ending. If (a) and (b) does not illustrate something new, as

¹⁹⁶ In sake for clarity, I will sum up them here below some of the main changes in Middle High German. We can notice a slightly augmentation of adjectives position in pre-nominal position. Adjectives after the noun started to become rare, and when used post-nominally, they were in most cases not declined (such as *roslein rot*). Also predicative adjectives appeared even more frequently without declension.

they describe the situation existing in Old High German, (c) shows, on the contrary, the manifestation of an atypical **construction** that cannot be explained if we do not take into account the role played by syntax.

Commento [M22]: Quindi?
 Ho aggiunto il ruolo della sintassi visto che poi lo riprendo, va bene così?

Demske (2001) also underlines the fact that in Middle High German we can already find some exceptional patterns, reflecting the ones we can find in Early New High German.

202) Der listiger man
 The funny man
 (König Rother 2193; PWG 1989:285 from Demske 2001: 84)

This example does not need much explanation: it is evident from the ending in *-er* that the adjective is not weak as expected when a demonstrative article is present, strong. Even if the points (a) and (b) mentioned by Sahel are basically maintained, the example reported by Demske accounts for the first kinds of instabilities manifesting in a “rule”, formerly widely accepted.

In the previous paragraphs we saw that it existed an association between the definite article (and the demonstrative pronoun) with the weak declension of the adjective and, on the other side, between indefinite referents and strong declined adjectives was very neat in Old High German and for the most part of the Middle High German period.

I propose the scheme proposed by Demske (2001: 82), which effectively summarizes the slight difference existing between the adjectival flexional system in Old High German, Early New High German and Modern German. Middle High German is not mentioned because it remains basically more similar to Old High German.

	Old High German	Early New High German	Modern German
Definite Article	Wk	Wk/St	Wk
Demonstrative Pronoun	Wk	Wk/St	Wk
Possessive Pronoun	Wk	Wk/St	WkSt
Vocative	Wk	Wk/St	St
No article words	St	St/Wk	St

Indefinite article	St	St/Wk	WkSt
Indefinite pronouns (<i>jed-, manch-</i>)	St	St/Wk	Wk
Interrogative Pronouns	St	St/Wk	Wk

In the table the abbreviation St stands for Strong, Wk for Weak and WkSt for a subtype of the weak flexion that presents mixed forms.

The scheme proposed by Demske (2001) underlines the huge difference between the two antipodes of the language and highlights the curious status of Early New High German. Let us go further, seeing what may this stand for.

The points individuated by Sahel, in my opinion, describe properly the situation, which lead to the change of the conditions of use of the adjective, even if they represent the problematic from a more superficial point of view, i.e. they account only for the position in the nominal expression but do not explain the effective motivations behind this process.

For this reason, I am going to try to make a hypothesis of what this development can signify.

In Old High German we said that we could notice how semantics played a decisive role in the use/non use of a definite article. This statement was repeated more times in this paper, also for the status of the definite article in Old French, with the solely difference that Old French does not present the same situation of the adjectival endings as in Old High German, thus making an eventual comparison impossible¹⁹⁷.

¹⁹⁷ In Old English, the division of weak and strong declension of the adjective followed also the same pathway of the situation we can see in Old High German but while German still retained the differentiation of the paradigm (even if still simplifying it), English has not. For this reason I would focus on a concise comparison between these two languages. If the definite article in Old High German was declined differently, depending on case, number and gender, as well as it happened in Old English, in Middle English the system underwent dramatic changes.

In first line, we can see (in particular at the very beginning of Middle English) a progressive erosion of the endings of the adjectives, even if some of the strong declension ending still survive but are used in unexpected contexts:

- 1) Þes heȝes kinges
“of the high king”
(Example from Wójcik 2010:1)

From the data of the previously analyzed texts it is evident that the meaning of the noun has played in the first stages of this language a decisive role in the choice of use/non use of a determiner.

On the contrary, in Early New High German we cannot speak anymore of interpretation of the referent. Quoting Demske (2001: 86):

Dieser systematische Zusammenhang ist für den frnhd. Sprachlerner aufgrund des veränderten sprachlichen Inputs nicht mehr rekonstruierbar mit der Folge, dass starke, schwache und unflektierte Formen ohne Unterschied in ein- und denselben Umgebungen erscheinen. Aus diesem Grund treten die stark flektierten Formen auch in Umgebungen auf, in denen bereits seit dem Ahd. die schwachen Formen fest etabliert schienen [...]¹⁹⁸

In sum: in Early New High German the previous distinction which operated in Old High German crashes, thus making the strong declension, for example, appearing in concomitance with a demonstrative or a definite article. This may be due also to the increased number of prepositions, able to express morphological case; thus, the function of case marker of the article underwent a progressive reduction, with the consequent extension of its contexts of use. Furthermore, still quoting Demske, the confused employment of the strong and weak endings caused a mix between the strong and the weak paradigm, creating a fusion of the two¹⁹⁹.

Commento [M23]: Guardi, però, che aumenta anche l'uso delle preposizioni. Quindi, in estrema sintesi: più preposizioni = più marche di caso espresse = meno funzionalità dell'articolo come marca di caso = estensione del suo uso
-Aggiungi o un accenno sul ruolo delle preposizioni

As we saw in the example cited from Demske (2001) for Old High German, we can notice the use of a strong declension in concomitance with a definite article instead of the weak one, which is something anomalous.

At a later stage of Middle English, the definite article eliminated from its system the distinction of case and gender (which, at the same stage of the language, is surviving in Middle High German) flectional endings where at a such a critical point that the solely difference between definite and not was signaled by the addition of a final *-e*.

Even if the behavior of English is somehow comparable to that of German, I retain the situation a bit different, as the result obtained by the two system modification is different: in English it ended with a total disappearance of case and gender distinction for definite article, determinative pronouns and attributive adjectives; in German there was a "reorganization" of the system, but the difference was still retained.

I suppose that in English the distinction operated by the flectional ending was perceived as obsolete. This seems to be proofed also by the fact that in poems, for reasons of metrical structure, the final *-e* typical for definite contexts could disappear.

For the effects that this process had in Middle High German and Early New High German, I will dedicate a more detailed place while describing the effective properties of this change in the text.

¹⁹⁸ Demske (2001: 86): "[...]This systematic correlation is no more restorable for the Early New High German language learner because of the changed language input with the consequence, that strong, weak and not declined forms appear without distinction in one and the same background. For this reason the strong inflected forms appear also in those cases, in which the weak form, already in Old High German, seemed to be firmly established [...]."

¹⁹⁹ For this reason she adopts the abbreviation WkSt for describing the Modern German mixed paradigm in the scheme I also reported previously.

In any case, the relationship between article and adjectives has developed in a morphologic-based one (more or less around the second half of the 16th and progressed in the 17th century). Here it follows some example, in order to see the confusion it existed at this stage of the language:

- 203) Mit einem reinen, züchtigen und schönen weibe
“With a pure-WK, modest-WK and nice-WK woman”
(AB VIII, 18 from Demske 2001:79)
- 204) die alten dapffern herrliche Maenner
“The old-WK, brave-WK, glorious-WK men”
(from Demske 2001:78)
- 205) diser stiller einveltikeit wesen ist ir leben
“This silent-ST silly being is her life”
(Seuse II 28 from Demske 2001: 78)

The situation that existed in Old High German is significant, to me, in order to take into account of some decisive changes, which affected the structure of the nominal expression.

If the definite article could be before considered as an “accessory”, of which the author of a text could dispose to convey the attention on a particular referent, lately in Middle High German and in Early New High German the definite article is an effective and accepted component of the nominal expression and not an optional.

The confusion among the choice of the declension of use attests that the semantics of the head noun played no more the decisive role of the earliest stages; instead, syntactical reasons, like the marking of morphological case, became even more important²⁰⁰.

The words of Kern and Zutt (1977: 111) are adamantine in remarking this point:

Im Verlauf der Entwicklung entstand daraus eine rein grammatische Distribution, wonach die Flexion der Adjektive durch die Verbindung mit bestimmten Wörtern gesteuert wird und keine Bedeutungsdifferenzierung mehr damit verbunden ist. Das Syntagma, nicht wie im Vg. (Vorgermanischen) die Klasse, steuert die Wahl der Allomorphe.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ I would also say that the same principle could be applied to the indefinite article. Even if my work is principally focused on the definite article, it is necessary to spend few lines for treating the question of the status of the indefinite article. Even if I will not analyse step by step the process of grammaticalization, which involve the numeral, it is attested that the indefinite article started its process during the Old High German period and assumed its definitive form during the Middle High German span of time. It is interesting to notice that in Old High German, if an adjective was also part of the nominal expression, its declension was always strong; anyway, even if also in this case the control over the declension type seemed to be clear, it was upset during the Early New High German period, as well as it happened with the definite article.

²⁰¹ Kern and Zutt (1977:111): “ In the course of the evolution it was developed a pure grammatical distribution, where the flexion of the adjective is controlled through the connection between definite words and no

Kern and Zutt also add that this change lead to a progressive “detachment” of the adjective from the noun.

Commento [M24]: Spiegare meglio questo “distacco”.

The Old High German period was a time of changes, in which the presence of the definite article started slowly to be routinized. The process was partially complete at the beginning of the Middle High German phase: partially, because it is still necessary in many cases a first mention²⁰² before the definite article can be used and there is still some resistance for some generic nouns²⁰³. For this reason, we may say that the adjective was building a sort of relationship of the noun, driven by semantics.

On the contrary, in Early New High German, the use of the definite article has been routinized and completely regularized also with the other categories of nouns, which still represented some kind of exception; in any case the definite article cannot be considered just a way to attract the attention of a hearer/reader, but it has just a neutral meaning, i.e. it signalizes definiteness but without remarking that the referent is of salient importance in the discourse. I retain that this progressive generalizing effect, which affected the definite article, was somehow responsible also for the detaching mentioned by Kern and Zutt (1977): the article is still part of the nominal expression but has definitely lost its original connotative features.

Furthermore I would not underestimate the phonological asset of the flecional endings of the adjectives in Old High German, which was richer.

If the difference occurring between Old High German and Early New High German is remarkable already by the forms of the masculine, feminine and neutral singular, one of the most evident changes has affected the plural form: firstly, for each gender, we had a separate form, while later they clashed all in just one paradigm.

differentiation of meaning is linked with it. The Phrase controls the choice of the allomorpe and not, like in the Proto-Germanic, the class. “

²⁰² See the paragraph dedicated to the last part of the changes underwent by the definite article, and in particular, Notker.

²⁰³ Please note that I do not mean that general nouns are usually not preceded by a definite article; when they stand alone it is more like an exception rather than the rule at this point of the evolution of the article and it is a passage common also for other languages (see the scheme proposed by Keenan 2011, summarizing the main steps of the development of the (in)definite article in English).

In particular, as we are interested more on the weak declension, as formerly always associated to the definite article, I would like to focus the attention on the endings related to our interest. In Old High German we can count at least five different endings for the masculine singular weak declension type:

-o (nominative), -en -in (genitive and dative), -on -un (accusative).

In Early New High German the forms are just two: -e for the nominative and -en for the other cases. This change attests the progressive loss of the function of morphologic case marker of the weak flexional endings of the adjectives, function that was solved by the definite article.

At its first stages, the definite article did not operate a choice on the ending required by the adjective, but it was the adjective self to be declined in a different way, depending on the interpretation of the noun it was attached to and on its position in structure.

As we mentioned before, in prenominal position definiteness was not optional; on the contrary, the postnominal position of the adjective seemed to have a free choice of ending²⁰⁴, even if the noun was introduced by an article/demonstrative.

If we focus on the prenominal position, in the first stages of Old High German, we may postulate that the richness of the inflection may have let the information content recovery easier, as the existence of more forms would have also immediately been perceived by both the hearer and the reader; on the contrary, the reduction of the forms may have lead to a major ambiguity, which was completely solved by the form assumed by the definite article.

For this reason, I retain that the reduction of the flexional endings could be a further point in favor of a different perception of the definite article within the nominal expression.

As a matter of fact nominal expressions are just not made up of determiners, attributive adjectives and nouns, but they are complex unities, in which it is necessary to understand the function and the implication of each element of which it is constructed.

Throughout its initial phase till the stage of Early New High German, the internal structure of the nominal expression has undergone consistent changes; the development of the class of the definite articles is just one of them.

With this assumption I simply want to say that for a proper account of all the phenomena manifested throughout the time, we cannot just treat a topic as the most determinant among the

Commento [M25]: Appunto: la motivazione sintattica, parzialmente presente già nella fase antica, diventa vieppiù cogente nelle fasi recenti, con la progressiva perdita di funzionalità delle desinenze.
Aggiunto

Commento [M26]: OK. Questo è vero.

²⁰⁴ See the data proposed by Demske (2001)

others, without seeing the implications that also the other elements, of which a nominal expression is made of, may have had.

To conclude, the aim of this paragraph, even if briefly, was to consider one of the most interesting aspects concerning a curious development, as the use of the adjectival endings in Old High German was regular and of easy understanding.

Considerations about the bleaching hypothesis

Lyons (1999) suggested that that in the passage from demonstrative to article the deictic feature was lost. It is generally recognized that this change has occurred; I also share this opinion: according to me, if the article had retained this capability of “pointing to” something, the abstract-situative and also the associative-anaphoric usages would have never been developed.

In my opinion his theory of semantic bleaching fails to capture some important facets related to the reasons behind the loss of this feature, in particular for what it concerns Late Latin. According to Lyons (1999), in those contexts where the demonstrative pronoun was employed as anaphoric, the deictic information of the demonstrative was redundant; for this reason the distal *ille* and the proximal *hic* started to alternate without any differentiation, as if they had the same semantic content.

If it is correct to say that *hic* did not disappear, we still have to remember that its use was more restricted, if compared to that of *ille* and of *ipse*. Lyons does not consider the role played by the identity marker; this is a bit reductive, as we saw that *ipse* was very important in Late Latin.

It is necessary to point out that there is one context of use of *ille* in Late Latin, which distinguishes this demonstrative pronoun from both *hic* and *ipse*: its capability to be used before nouns that were not already introduced in the discourse.

As pointed out by Selig (1992), it is necessary to precise that the referent was introduced anew, but with the peculiarity of being followed by a relative clause²⁰⁵, with the function of specifying and delimiting the context in which the noun was inserted.²⁰⁶

- 1) [...] *homines illos* quos Waiofarius ad defendendam ipsam ciuitatem dimiserat clementiam sue pietatis absoluit dimissisque reuersi sunt ad propria.
“Of his goodness he showed mercy to *the (litt. that) men* that Waiofar left there to defend the city, and dismissed them to go off home.” (Continuaciones: 43 from Carlier & De Mulder 2010[b]: 6-7)

Quoting Selig (1992: 165): “Der Bereich der definiten Erstnennungen ist die eigentliche Funktionsdomäne von *ille* in den hier analysierten Texten”²⁰⁷

According to her, this was the fact determining the bleaching (and than the loss) of the deictic feature of the demonstrative pronoun.

I would add a personal consideration, i.e. that the context in which the newly introduced referent appears is always identifiable and determined; the relative clause does not function as a sentence continuation but serves to “describe” the referent it is linked to.

Furthermore, we saw that already in the *Isidor*²⁰⁸ -even if there are also many examples from other Old High German texts- this construction was also in use; in particular the text is interesting if compared to the Latin version, because if in the original text a demonstrative was used, the translation in Old High German could be rendered with both the simple demonstrative pronoun and/or the definite article²⁰⁹. I retain this a proof that, even if an influence from the Latin cannot be entirely excluded, the choice of a solution, not limited to

²⁰⁵ According to Herman (2000) this usage of *ille* in association with the relative clause was so diffused, that it eventually resulted into a morphological contamination with the relative pronouns.

²⁰⁶ There are also some cases, very limited in number, in which we can find this construction also with *ipse*. Selig (1992) point out that it is so exceptional, that we can find it only in particular texts.

²⁰⁷ Selig (1992: 65): “the domain of the definite first mentions is the original functional domain of *ille* in the text here analyzed.”

²⁰⁸ I chose in particular the *Isidor* because of the contrast we could make with the Latin text. Also in the *Muspilli* there are some examples in which the simple form of the demonstrative pronoun:

- 1) enti sih der suanari ana den sind arheuit // der dar suannan scal toten enti lepenten (v. 74-75)
“and the judge si metterà in cammino, who will there judge the dead and the livings”

As we saw in the *Isidor*, the referent judge is preceded by a definite article: the relative clause successfully solves its function as it determines the referent. Please note that with this assumption I do not want to give the erroneous idea that the presence of a relative clause means automatically that the definite article will always precede the referent; the semantics of the noun is still relevant and decisive.

²⁰⁹ We have still not to forget that the translation could be rendered without both of them if the relative provides a sort of continuity with the main clause.

the replacement of the demonstrative Latin pronoun with the Old High German variant instead of the one already present in Latin, can be interpreted as an independent structural strategy, existing in the language we analyzed. I retain that this data is interesting, in the sense that it sustains the hypothesis of Selig (1992).

Even if the passage from the Proto-Germanic to Old High German has no attested documents, I think that a text like the *Isidor* provides evidence enough to say that the association of a referent with a relative clause is important for determining the weakening of the deictic function of the demonstrative articles (obviously if the source for the definite article is the demonstrative pronoun).

For this reason, rather of speaking of the anaphoric usage of the article as the main factor of this change, I would rather focus the attention on the role played by the relative clauses.²¹⁰

Another fact, which in my opinion should be seen from a different perspective, is the basic assumption that the definite article developed from the anaphoric use of the demonstrative pronoun.

Even if it is attested that this usage is one of the most widespread and common in the different stages of grammaticalization, I retain it to be just a normal employment, resulting from the definiteness of the context: as it communicate that the referent was already introduced, it follows that by the second mention we know it.

We have also to try to answer the following question: if in a language like Sardinian the source of the article is *ipse*, i.e. a third person pronoun without deictic features, how could have distality been the main reason why the development was prompted?

We also do not have to forget the role of *is*, which, quoting Himmelmann (1997), if it had survived²¹¹, could have probably been the source of the definite article.

Thus, the theory adopted by Lyons, if correct when postulating the fading of the deictic feature, misses one of the crucial points, relevant to the understanding of the widespread of *ille* in place of other demonstratives.

²¹⁰ In my opinion the role of the relative clauses is also very important for what it concerns another aspect of the development of the definite article. I will analyse this aspect later, after I have introduced the most important theories regarding the reasons behind this phenomenon.

²¹¹ The main cause of its disappearance is attributed to phonological weakness. See Harris (1978) and Vincent (1997) for further discussion.

Some limits of the subjective hypothesis

Epstein (2002) proposed that the reason behind the grammaticalization of the demonstrative pronoun is the speaker's interpretation of a referent.

As well as Lyons he forgets the the status of *ipse*: while identifying in the deictic feature of *ille* the reason which could have lead to its grammaticalization and to its role of discourse prominence marker, he does not take into consideration the role of *ipse*, which we saw compete with *ille* for the role of source of the definite article.

Iipse, even if not a demonstrative pronoun, was also capable to solve some of the functions we listed for *ille*: it could also signal that the noun had a particular importance.

If we consider just deictic elements as possible promoters of a process of grammaticalization, we would automatically exclude the possibility that an identity particle like *ipse* could be used instead of *ille*.

Finally, I retain this theory not precise, in the sense that the role of the hearer/reader is not considered at all, when, on the contrary, he/she is also a participant in the action. If we keep considering just the point of view of one of the two participants, I retain that some of the most appealing proceeds regarding the grammaticalization process could not be taken into account. For instance – and, in particular, commenting Epstein's hypothesis – if there is just a speaker, who interprets the context and derives his decisions, how can he/she be sure of the success of his/her communication?

I make an example, personifying the speaker: if I want to share some information with another person, and I want to be sure that all the main referents are intended as such, there is no doubt the need of a personal interpretation, as I am the one who is going to construct the sentence. The problem in Epstein's view, in my opinion, is that I, as speaker, actually know what I want to say; hence I see no need to put an emphasis on something in particular.

On the contrary, if it is just the speaker's view to be taken into consideration, the decisive role of the hearer is left in shadow: in my opinion, even if still at some extent passive in relation to that of the speaker, the role of hearer must not be forgotten as he/she is the one who receives the information the speaker gives.

Some considerations about intersubjectification and semantics

After having analyzed the data of the manuscripts, I retain it is evident that there is a shift in meaning, which can be explainable only if we account of the fact that there is an interaction between a person, who has the information, and another one, who may be aware of the content expressed by the referent, as well as not.

Furthermore we still have not to forget that the major part of the texts, we took into consideration before, had the scope of illustrating the cardinal points of Christianity to a public, who presumably did not receive any kind of education but knew, more or less, the main contents of the religion.

For this reason, I retain the corpus ideal, in order to see better the change of the interpretation the demonstrative pronoun, in particular because:

- The author wanted that the concepts explained in his work could be of easy understanding (subjective interpretation);
- They had to be understood from many people who partially knew the argument treated; this is helpful to see how some nouns referring to well-known referents were more constantly introduced firstly by the demonstrative pronoun and than by the definite article.
- When we are facing a text based on the Christian tradition, we can be sure of those referents, known by the whole community. On the contrary, if we are facing a text like *La Chanson de Roland*, it is more difficult for us to identify what could have been part of the reader's knowledge and what was new for him/her.

With this I do not intent to state that documents, not related to the Christian thematic are not useful, but this specific typology of production can help our analysis, for the sake of clarity.

Furthermore the general problem at the base of these texts is also the level of education of the authors behind. Presuming that at that time the ones capable of writing were a restricted group of people, it spontaneous to ask ourselves how much could have their instruction influenced their writing competence; anyway, as we have just a source providing information, we can just comment it as it is.

We are also very limited by the fact that we have no attestation on how these language could have been spoken, i.e. to see how much the written language could have coincided with speech.

In my opinion all the “evolutions” attested in the written documents are a later reflection of progresses already occurred by the spoken community; anyway it is impossible to calculate how much span it exactly exists between these divergences.

In the previous paragraphs, I introduced some of the most interesting analysis concerning the development of the definite article; furthermore we saw different aspects that may have had an important implication for a more extended use of the definite article. In this section I will try to depict my line of thoughts, assumptions based on a reflection about the data collected in the parts dedicated to Old French and Old High German.

Among the thesis advanced before, I must say that the one proposed by Carlier and De Mulder (2010[b]) is the most appealing and, in my opinion, the most exhaustive as it accounts of one of the decisive facts, which can be considered as the turning point of the grammaticalization of the demonstratives. According to me, the intersubjectival hypothesis reflects and describes well how this phenomenon was promoted.

I retain that the role of the writer/speaker and of the reader/hearer are both necessary to account of the evolution of the definite article; in particular, even if it is the reader/speaker who receives the information and who seems to have a passive role in this exchange, it solves actually a decisive function for what it regards the way in which the referent should be interpreted, also by the speaker/writer. Furthermore, without the reader/hearer, it should exist no reason to motivate the need of emphasis, manifested, for example, in the Late Latin production: if it is just the writer/speaker who perceives a referent important, the question is under which criterions he/she can decide this.

I assume that in the moment in which the writer/speaker decides to formulate a sentence, he/she is aware of the content he/she wants to transmit; hence, I see no reason why he/she should need a determiner to focalize the attention on a referent, he/she already knows being of discourse importance.

The basic function of language is to transmit, to communicate something to somebody else. For this reason, I retain Epstein’s thesis incomplete, because he takes into consideration just

the viewpoint of the writer/speaker without thinking of the function solved by the reader/hearer.

While we are deciding how the sentence we want to express should be structured, I retain automatic a sort of personification with the addressee, in the sense that we try to postulate which kind of knowledge is in his/her possess; there is also an evaluation, from the part of the writer/speaker of what should be successfully being communicated and how the scope could be achieved.

If we also try to imagine a situation, in which the writer/speaker is alone, why should he/she make an effort in organizing and planning his/her thoughts, discourse-marking some referents in respect to others?

The pragmatic usage of a language should never been left apart or just treated as a secondary aspect, as it has also influences in the field of syntax and semantics²¹².

If it is without any doubt evident that the writer/speaker must operate a choice for what it regards the information he wants to transmit, he/she must also consider the options offered by his/her own language.

A language is made of different levels of analysis; grammatical rules can be considered the formal construction, which allow a sentence to be successfully understood.

Till the basic system of a language is solid, there is no need of developing new communicative strategies; when the system starts becoming ambiguous or less clear, if compared to a precedent stage, doubts insinuate in the writer/speaker, who has to find a solution to the problem because he would risk to fail in his intent of communicating.

For this reason I retain appealing the intuition of Adams (1967), when he asserts that at a certain point, in Late Latin there was confusion: if at the times of Classical Latin the usage of the demonstrative pronouns was substantially understandable (or at least this is what we can perceive from the written documents), at a certain point this stability was messed up.

As pointed out by Keenan, I retain that the passage from a synthetic language to an analytic one could have lead to a breakdown, causing the grammatical solutions usually adopted not to be clear enough.

²¹² Here I am talking about the choice, for example, of a different approach to the addressee like a formal or an informal register.

If the identification of the referent could be obtained also just thanks to the position in structure, (i.e. the contrast between thematic and rhematic information) and lately the same construction was no more able to let the speaker/writer to recover it, there is the hint that something has changed; for example both the loss of verbal aspectuality and of morphological case may have provided further instability to the system.

Rather as creating something anew, the speaker develops from the material offered by his grammar new strategies to obtain the same result he/she had before.

In the case of Old French and Old High German, the distal demonstrative was perceived as the more indicate alternative to attract the attention of the hearer/reader.

Supporting the proposal of Selig (1992) for Late Latin, I would extend her observations also to Old High German: one of the main instances of use of the demonstrative pronoun, which caused the loss of the deictic feature, was the use in presence of relative clauses. Even better: not relative clauses in general but restrictive relatives. I retain the intuition of Jäger (1917) for Old High German very interesting in this sense, as the descriptive content of this kind of relatives (similar to that of thematic adjectives) was able to define the noun they specified.

Specificity, definiteness and expressivity are the keywords to understand the entire process.

After a first stage, in which the need of emphasis caused an abuse in the employment of the demonstratives –and, in case of Latin, of the identity marker *ipse-*, there was an assessment phase (*intersubjectification*), in which the author/speaker considers how he can better express important information; in order to do that he needs to figure out the mental prospect of the addressee.

Words are complex units. The best explanation for this sentence is to remember the role semantics played, determining the conditions of use and non-use of the article. At the very beginning, the article was used before human referents of particular importance in the discourse, contrarily to non-human referents like animals, objects or abstract concepts.

I think this is not something strange, i.e. I retain it explainable, if we consider the narration upon which all texts are based: the scope of each of them is to describe the actions of the protagonists, i.e. of the main human characters.

We already noticed that usually, once the principal figures are introduced and lately mentioned they were usually introduced by the definite article.

Quoting Szczepaniak (2011: 74), in a nominal expression like *ther cuning* (from *Tatian*), the function of the definite article is simply to signalize that the head of the phrase refers to a particular and identifiable king; furthermore in the example cited, *cuning* is an appellative. I would also add that it is a case of appellative with a particular meaning, i.e. it stands for a proper name, of a person clearly identified.

For what it regards objects, plants and animals the use was not so regular because they needed to be perceived as important for the passage. I noticed that when the object was not of particular relevance for the events, the meaning it expressed had, so-to-say, a general value. I retain that the writer did not feel the need of using a definite article, as there was nothing to underline, to put the accent on. On the contrary, when the object was used to convey a particular meaning, or it indicated something very specific, the definite article was to find.

For example in the *Sainte Eulalie*, when it is described that she had a nice body, the author uses the expression *bel avert corps*. I retain that this passage was not of particular interest for the writer, who just listed some features of the woman. Later, when it is said that the king wanted the saint to die, the words *fire* (enl fou), *head* (lo chief), *earth* (lo seule) are all preceded by a definite article, even if they were never mentioned before, or specified by a relative clause. We noticed the same thing also in *Tatian*, when I introduced the examples with the word *stein*: used with a general implication the article was not present, but when expressing something important *ther* was there, before the noun.

Talking about abstracts, I would say that they were lately associated with a definite article because of the difficulty for speakers to figure out exactly an image of a non-concrete concept. In both languages, anyway, when these words were used with a more concrete connotation, the definite article appeared.

It is also not surprising that plurals also started later to be preceded by an article-word; again, the reason is to be found in their generalizing meaning. When we are facing a concrete object in the singular form²¹³ a precise identification is possible, with plurals this definite individualization gets partially lost.

To conclude: I retain very interesting the proposal adopted by Carlier & De Mulder (2010[b]) and I would propose the same analysis for Old High German.

²¹³ I am speaking of countable items.

As I explained before, I retain fundamental the role that interpretation played in the understanding and in the construction of both sentences and nominal expressions.

Quoting Oubouzar (1992: 75)²¹⁴: “*dher* steht in NG, die kommunikativ besonders wichtig sind.”

Furthermore it is necessary to remember the role played by syntax in the use of the definite article to express the morphological case once visible by the flexional endings, in particular with prepositions governing more cases.

²¹⁴ Oubouzar (1992: 75) “ the article is in nominal expressions that are particular important in the communication.”