

REMAPPING THE STORY: FRANCO-ITALIAN EPIC AND LOMBARDIA AS A
NARRATIVE COMMUNITY (1250-1441)

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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My dissertation focuses on the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Franco-Italian literary corpus. These texts, written in a hybrid French-Italianate language, include such works as the *Entrée d'Espagne* and, more famously, Marco Polo's *Le devisement dou monde*. Using postcolonial theory, I identify nationalist ideologies in modern scholarship that have marginalized the Franco-Italian tradition. This tradition exemplifies a medieval aesthetic of cultural and linguistic hybridity that defies modern constructs of national linguistic identity, border politics, and linguistic purity. My revisionist study argues the independent merit of medieval Lombard literature and replaces the national model with a mosaic of overlapping linguistic and cultural centers mapped according to their respective narrative communities. I use two Franco-Italian texts—a version of the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Huon d'Auvergne*

—to explore how the borders of the modern printed book have distorted our interpretation of medieval Lombard works.

The *Chanson de Roland* exists in ten French versions. Following nineteenth-century textual emendation praxis, most modern editions are based on Oxford Bodelian Digby 23. The Franco-Italian version of the *Chanson de Roland* (Biblioteca Marciana fr. IV [=225]), or Venice 4, has received little critical and editorial attention. I problematize the putative superiority of the Oxford manuscript and propose the theoretical apparatus necessary to reinterpret the Venice 4 text within its geo-social specificity, outside the textual borders of the modern printed literary classic.

Finally, I explore how each *Huon d’Auvergne* manuscript can function as a performance artifact which, because of its irreproducibility, must be considered an original document, not merely a component within a hierarchy of textual transmission. I examine how Andrea da Barberino later creates an authoritative, politicized reading of the *Huon d’Auvergne* by removing it from its manuscript matrix and placing it within the textual boundaries of chapters and books.

By de-stabilizing and de-centering notions of literary canon and linguistic purity, my study suggests new ways of interpreting not only minority medieval narrative traditions but also present-day hybrid language migrant narratives in both France and Italy.

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CHAPTER I

WRITING NATION: FRANCO-ITALIAN STUDIES AND NATIONAL LITERARY HISTORIOGRAPHIES

The role of French and of French narrative traditions on the Italian peninsula has a long history and has been the object of many studies, beginning especially with Paul Meyer and Joseph Bédier.¹ These scholars famously advanced the idea that French narrative traditions spread through the peninsula along pilgrimage and crusade routes, which, throughout the Middle Ages, facilitated the spread of the French *chansons de geste* and Arthurian legend to the very tip of the heel: the mosaic of Otranto portrays King Arthur himself. This testimony of Arthurian legend in the peninsula is especially notable since the mosaic predates by at least ten years the Arthurian romances of the champenois Chrétien de Troyes, one of the first author-figures writing in French. The Arthurian mosaic image in Otranto bears witness to the vibrant oral story-telling that occurred on travelers' long journey to the Holy Land and beyond.

Later, literature written in the *langue d'oïl* thrived in at least three main centers on the peninsula: the Angevin court in Naples; Tuscany; and Lombardia, in Northeast Italy.

¹ Joseph Bédier, *Les légendes épiques: Recherches sur la formation des chansons de geste* (Paris: H. Champion, 1926-1929); Paul Meyer, "De l'expansion de la langue française en Italie pendant le Moyen Âge," in *Atti della Sessione III: Storia della letteratura. Roma, aprile 1-9, 1903* (Rome: Salviucci, 1904), 61-104.

After defeating Manfred, the son of Frederick II, Charles of Anjou established his political center in Naples, starting in 1266.² The Angevin rule of the southern peninsula would assure a French presence for the following two centuries, until the dynasty was driven from Naples in 1443 by Alfonso V of Aragon. Literature and arts in French also had a presence at the Angevin court in Naples: most notably, the French *trouvère* Adam de la Halle worked at the court of Charles when Charles became King of Naples. Here Adam de la Halle, who was an innovator in theatre and music, wrote his *Jeu de Robin et de Marion*. In Tuscany also, literary production in French had a noteworthy presence; Brunetto Latini, a Florentine in exile in France from 1260-1266, tells us he chose to write *Li livres dou tresor* in French because of the language's vast currency.³ The third center of literary production in the French language emerged in the northern portion of the Italian peninsula, or *Lombardia*. The geographical notion of *Lombardia* at the time of Dante Alighieri generally comprised the whole of north-eastern Italy; this is how I use the term *Lombardia* here and the literary production in French in this geographical area will be the object of the present study. It should be noted, however, that Venice was linguistically and politically separate from the *terra firma*.

French literary production in *Lombardia* during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is fundamentally different from that in the other two centers: the target audience in Tuscany and Naples was intended for an public whose native language was French, whereas in *Lombardia* the manuscript evidence suggests a local target audience whose

² John Larner, *Italy in the Ages of Dante and Petrarch, 1216-1380* (London: Longman, 1980), 38-43.

³ Brunetto Latini, *Li Livre dou tresor*, edited by Spurgeon Baldwin and Paul Barrette (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), I.I.7.

native language was any number of northern Italianate dialects. The first surviving manuscript in French is a hunting treatise from 1249 entitled *Maomin et Ghatrif*, translated into French by Daniel Deloc for King Enzo of Sardinia, attesting once again to the wide currency the French language enjoyed at the time. The last manuscript witness of the Lombard French-language tradition, the Turin version of the romance-epic *Huon d'Auvergne*, is dated to 1441. The Lombard French language tradition, as attested by surviving manuscript witnesses, spans nearly two hundred years. These manuscripts conserve almost exclusively epic poetry on the life and deeds of the emperor Charlemagne, and the hero of this epic tradition is Roland, the Roland of the *Chanson de Roland*, and the Renaissance *Orlando* of Boiardo and Ariosto. In this study, I use the term 'Lombard romance-epic' to refer to this unique literary genre specific to north-east Italy. The Lombard romance epic, like other literary production of the period, combines romance elements with epic narrative conventions.

The most striking characteristic of this body of surviving manuscripts is the use of a French-Italianate hybrid language: French lexical and morphological elements are used to varying degrees in conjunction with the local Gallo-Italian dialects. The degree of linguistic interference varies from texts with very little French to texts almost exclusively in French. This spectrum of linguistic variance leads us to conclude that these manuscripts addressed an audience spanning all social classes, literate or not in French, and that these stories were often performed or read aloud. Curiously, however, this French-Italianate language was never a spoken language and was only used as a vehicle of narrative expression. Unlike the works produced in the Angevin and Florentine circles,

which used French as a language of communication, Lombard texts used French as an aesthetic language, in addition to cases in which it was also used as communication. The majority of these manuscripts are now housed at the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice and once made up a sizable portion of the ruling Este and Gonzaga family libraries.⁴

As intriguing as the hybrid language manuscripts themselves, the reception history of these mixed-language texts in modern literary scholarship has revealed perhaps more about the modern textual emendation tradition than it has about the circumstances surrounding textual and codicological production in *Lombardia*. In this study I will explore the effects of modern literary historiography in its assessment of past manuscript spaces and I will argue that our present critical apparatus is at times inadequate to interpret these spaces. Minority narrative traditions, such as those of *Lombardia*, are often entangled in a series of disciplinary borders linked to the monolithic notions of modern nation states, here, especially France and Italy; this epistemological problem is apparent in the very term ‘Franco-Italian.’ At times it will be necessary to refer to the textual production in *Lombardia* separately from other textual centers of the Italian peninsula. At other times, I will problematize the notion of ‘Franco-Italian’ studies itself, proposing a terminology that is more appropriate to expressing the geographical specificity of each literary sphere. For these reasons, I will speak of ‘Lombard literature’ instead of ‘Franco-

⁴ Giulio Bertoni, *La Biblioteca estense e la coltura ferrarese ai tempi del duca Ercole I (1471-1505)* (Turin: Ermanno Loescher, 1903), 17-33; W. Braghirolli, P. Meyer, G. Paris, “Les manuscrits français des Gonzague,” *Romania* 36.9 (1880): 32-514; see also R. Ciampoli, *I codici francesi della R. biblioteca nazionale di San Marco in Venezia* (Venezia: Olshiki, 1897); C.H. Clough, “The Library of the Gonzaga of Mantua,” in *Librarium, Revue de la société Suisse des bibliophiles* 5 (1972): 50-63; G. E. Ferrari, *Documenti marciani e principale letteratura sui codici veneti di epopea carolingia* (Venice: Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, 1961), with a catalogue of the Este library; Kevin Baker Reynolds, “A proposito di due inventari manoscritti relativi al fondo francese della Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana di Venezia,” *Romania* 27 (2009): 460-86.

Italian literature' when referring specifically to the literary production in *Lombardia*. In regards to the term 'Franco-Italian,' I will follow Lorenzo Renzi in reserving it rather for the scholarly field of inquiry that attempts to interpret the entirety of French textual production throughout the Italian peninsula, whether in *Lombardia*, Tuscany, Naples, or elsewhere.⁵

Textual Spaces and National Programs: Survey of Franco-Italian Studies

The Place du Parvis Notre-Dame, on the Île de la Cité in Paris, is the site of an accumulation of historical urban artifacts spanning from the settlement of the original Celtic city, *Parissi*, to the present. The Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris, of course, dominates the square with its medieval gothic skeleton and the fanciful neo-gothic gargoyles and spires imagined by the early nineteenth-century architect Viollet-le-Duc. On the right side of the square stands an imposing equestrian statue of the medieval emperor Charlemagne, executed in 1886 by the brothers Charles and Louis Rochet (Figure 1.1.). The aged and wise, yet resilient and brave, Charlemagne conforms to the more positive literary representations of the emperor in the *chanson de geste* tradition: the emperor is poised for battle upon his war steed and is accompanied by his two *levdes*, or noble paladins. Although they are not identified, it is easy to imagine these two warriors as the epic characters Roland and Oliver. Beneath the Parvis Notre-Dame, more layers of urban activity have been excavated: the original Roman settlement and, beneath it, vestiges of the original Celtic *Parissi*.

⁵ Lorenzo Renzi, "Il francese come lingua letteraria e il franco-lombardo. L'epica carolingia nel Veneto," *Storia della Cultura Veneta: dalle origini al Trecento* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1976), 563-89.



Figure 1.1. *Charlemagne et ses levdes*, Place du Parvis Notre-Dame, Paris.

This accumulation of historical phases in the life of the present city of Paris—Celtic, Roman, early medieval, Gothic and nineteenth-century—represents an instance in which a modern nation has created and imagined its own history. Today Notre Dame de Paris and its parvis remind us of the elaborate interconnectedness between the Middle Ages and the French *fin-de-siècle* quest for national identity. The disastrous 1870-71 French defeat at the hands of the Prussian army at the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian war encouraged a renewed interest in the Middle Ages.⁶ French medieval historians and philologists soon found themselves as active participants in creating a heroic retelling of the nation's medieval legacy that would attenuate the humiliation of the recent defeat. In

⁶ For the revival of the Middle Ages in France after the Franco-Prussian defeat, see Elizabeth Emery and Laura Morowitz, *Consuming the Past: The Medieval Revival in fin-de-siècle France* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003); Stephen Nichols and Howard Bloch, eds., *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

this way, the Parvis Notre-Dame becomes a nexus of the medieval past and national space, and assumes in the historiography of nation a metonymic connection to the French nation as a whole.

Like the Place du Parvis Notre-Dame, the Piazza Santa Croce in the *centro storico* of Florence also functions as a locus of nation. In this site, the visual syntax of monuments, spatial and topographical orientation, and urban positioning create a teleological retelling of nation that reinforces the moment of Italian national identity in 1861 and the subsequent brief period from 1865 to 1871 in which Florence was the capital of the new nation (Figure 1.2.). Like the Place du Parvis Notre-Dame, the Piazza



Figure 1.2. Piazza Santa Croce, Florence.

Santa Croce creates an atemporal space in which an illustrious literary past serves the present need for national identity. The basilica of Santa Croce is the resting-place of many of the most important protagonists of Italian cultural identity: Alberti, Michelangelo, Galileo, Machiavelli, Alfieri, Foscolo, Rossini. As is the case with the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, the present appearance of the basilica of Santa Croce is the result of nineteenth-century imaginings and recreations of the past: between 1853 and 1863 Niccolò Matas fashioned the façade in the neo-gothic style popular in the period. In front of the basilica stands the famous statue of the “national” poet, Dante Alighieri, which was executed in 1865 by Enrico Pazzi for that year’s celebrations of the poet.⁷ During the same year and for the same occasion, Giovanni Pacini composed his *Sinfonia Dante*. As if to remind the city of its ancient origins, the nearby hill town of Fiesole is visible, with its traces of Etruscan and Roman civilization.

Today it would be as difficult to imagine Paris and Florence without Notre Dame and Santa Croce as it would be to imagine French literature and Italian literature without the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Divina Commedia*. If the *Ile de la Cité* is a geographical point of origin of an urban and national landscape, then Charlemagne, Roland and Oliver are for the *fin-de-siècle* imagination the *terminus post quem* of a nascent French national conscience. For literary historians of the period, this epic point of origin would evolve “scientifically” and inevitably to become the building-blocks of the nineteenth-century fortress of French national identity. At Santa Croce, Pazzi’s Dante statue becomes the formidable authority figure for the emergent Italian identity. These two spatial

⁷ Alyce A. Jordan, “Reviving ‘the past greatness of the Florentine people’: Restoring Medieval Florence in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Medieval Art and Architecture After the Middle Ages*, eds. Janet T. Marquardt and Alyce A. Jordan (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), 171-94.

formulations of national identity stabilize the temporal teleologies that the nineteenth century imagined to link the medieval past with the political present, and both the Place du Parvis Notre-Dame and the Piazza Santa Croce derive their authority by means of implied textuality. Just as Paris offers a nationalist reading of the Roland epic, the Piazza Santa Croce shores up its nation-building program through the authority of Dante Alighieri, who was and still is heralded as the father of the Italian language.

These two locations succeed in molding textual and epistemological boundaries from the geopolitical boundaries of modern nations. The nineteenth-century ambition to collect, anthologize and display premodern narrative traditions as ‘literary classics’ succeeded in upholding the new *loci* of nation; anthologies and bookshelves are the textual manifestation of equestrian statues and public squares. Practices in modern textual emendation and the creation of literary anthologies serve the image of nation more than they serve the narrative spaces they aim to divulge. In this study, I will investigate how national borders operate upon texts and how they misrepresent and exclude those pre-national narrative spaces that do not conform to modern nation-building programs. After exposing the nature of textual and epistemological borders of nation, I will propose a revision of scholarship’s delineation of the premodern Lombard narrative space. To begin to reconsider textual borders and reinterpret the narrative spaces existing in the liminal regions between national borders, it is necessary to remap our narrative geography of the past. The textual borders under investigation serve national programs, yet at the same time contradict the nature of the premodern narrative spaces. These borders, which operate around such notions as linguistic purity, authoritative beginning and end, original

vs. copy, literary classic or *oeuvre*, and author, create privileged textual spaces of nation, while minority narrative traditions of the past, like the Lombard hybrid language tradition, slip into the obscure and liminal spaces between literary historiographies.

The textual borders I am describing are not, of course, a fabrication of nineteenth-century scholarship, but rather emerge from a long history of language standardization and the printed book. In Italy, for example, the Venetian language theorist Pietro Bembo (1470-1547), in his *Prose della volgar lingua*, was instrumental in reforming and codifying the orthography and grammar of the Tuscan idiom. In France, a similar role is often ascribed to Joachim du Bellay (c.1522-1560), who, in his *Défense et illustration de la langue française*, maintained that if properly cultivated the French language could achieve the poetic glory of the Latins and Greeks. With regard to the printed book, it is important to keep in mind the model of the Bible, whose textual stability was an instrument to transmit the authority of Church doctrine. Bound up in the textual stability of the Bible is the notion that the fixity of prose is appropriate for transmitting truth.

Gabriel Spiegel, in her *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose*

Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France, describes the authority of prose:

by adopting prose as the language of history, chroniclers created a novel vernacular historiographic discourse, one that attempted to ground historical truth in a system of authentication based on prose as a language of 'truth,' hence uniquely appropriate for the articulation and dissemination of historical knowledge.⁸

⁸ Gabriel Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 2.

In this study I am interested in how the authority of textual borders became laicized in nineteenth-century political medievalisms, and how the borders of language and book became expressions of national unity. Beyond the printed book, the nineteenth century had no other significant competing technologies for the dissemination of knowledge based in text and language. In the late Middle Ages, the hand-written codex competed with the printed book and, as I will demonstrate in Chapter V, narrative material and signifying systems had to be significantly reworked to enter the boundaries of book. Today, film and cyber-space provide us with alternate ways of telling stories; an important question this study asks is how narrative material is being extracted from textual boundaries and reinserted into new visual, oral and semi-oral frameworks through the medium of current technologies.

The fusion of narrative spaces with the geopolitical boundaries of modern nations and the subsequent transformation of privileged narrative moments into national canons is also in part due to the work of literary scholars conducted during the periods of national self-reflection I have described. Figures such as François Guessard, Gaston Paris, Léon Gautier and Joseph Bédier in France, and Pio Rajna, Adolfo Mussafia, Adolfo Bartoli, Giulio Bertoni and Antonio Viscardi in Italy, were instrumental in the first modern assessments of Lombard literature. The work of these scholars set many of the defining trajectories and categories of Franco-Italian studies through the first half of the twentieth century.

Early critics of the Lombard manuscripts were concerned primarily with the hybrid nature of this literary tradition, which they interpreted as bastardized and corrupt

attempts to compose in French. Léon Gautier, for example, initially interpreted the textual witnesses as representative of a spoken dialect particular to *Lombardia*: “un idiome particulier de l’Italie du Nord soumis aux lois d’une grammaire spéciale, [...] un vrai dialecte, une vraie langue [...] parlée dans tout le pays de l’auteur.”⁹ In his later work, however, Gautier would deny these texts any linguistic legitimacy:

Il aurait donc pu exister une langue où le dialecte de France et la langue de l’Italie se seraient non pas fondus, mais juxtaposés d’une façon si brutale! [...] Ce n’est point là une langue originale : c’est du français écorché par un Italien qui veut, à toute force, se faire comprendre de ses compatriotes. C’est un baragouin, et non pas un dialecte.¹⁰

Adolfo Bartoli, an Italian scholar contemporary with Gautier, was equally eager to see an independent linguistic entity in the Lombard manuscript tradition. In regards to the Biblioteca Marciana manuscript XIII in Venice, commonly known as the *Geste francor*, Bartoli is quick to characterize the hybrid linguistic idiom of the text as deformed and underdeveloped:

All’ibridismo linguistico della compilazione [marciana] la consistenza di un primo passo verso una lingua nuova, che, rimasta allo stato di formazione patologica, avrebbe potuto, se non fosse mancato un sufficiente svolgimento, diventare un organismo sano.¹¹

Bartoli’s contemporaries echoed this tone: Adolfo Musafia famously described the hybrid Lombard manuscripts as a pathological deformity, a *Mischsprache*.¹² The German scholar Adolfo Gaspary sees the poet of the *Geste francor* as “un cantastorie della peggior razza”

⁹ Léon Gautier, *Les époques françaises, II* (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1867), 524.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 524-525.

¹¹ Bartoli, *I primi due secoli della letteratura italiana* (Milan: Viscardi, 1880), 99.

¹² Adolfo Mussafia, ed., *Altfranzösische Gedichte aus venezianischen Handschriften. I. La Prise de Pampeline; II. Macaire* (Vienna: Druck un Verlag von Carl Gerold’s Sohn, 1864), v-vi.

who executes his art in nothing more than a “gergo barbarico.”¹³ He adds that this literature in “barbarico francese” could only belong to a literature of the lowest classes.¹⁴ François Guessard would go so far to attempt to restore the ‘Macaire’ section of the *Geste francor* into a pure French.¹⁵ Léon Gautier would eventually discredit this task, even if in an earlier addition to his *Epopées françaises* he had praised Guessard’s efforts:

en face de chacun de ces vers *italianisés, defigurés, méconnaissables* que présente le ms. de Venise, le savant philologue [Guessard] a placé un vers très français, un vers dans le plus pur dialecte de l’Ile-de-France, un vers que le trouvère le plus délicat du XIII siècle n’hésiterait pas s’avouer.¹⁶

The characteristic hybrid language of these manuscripts, which Guessard describes as “ni du français ni de l’italien” (xcix) effectively falls through the cracks of nationalizing textual boundaries.¹⁷ This critical reaction reflects an anxiety about impurity during a period in which the purity of national language was a critical element in the creation of modern France and Italy. The textual boundaries of language were set in place early on and these same boundaries would remain operative well into the twentieth century. These linguistic and literary perspectives can perhaps be summarized best in the often cited

¹³ Adolfo Gaspary, *Storia della letteratura italiana, I*, trans. Nicola Zingarelli (Turin: Ermanno Loescher, 1887), 104.

¹⁴ For this discussion, see Adolfo Gaspary, “The French Chivalrous Poetry in Northern Italy,” in *The History of Early Italian Literature to the Death of Dante*, trans. Herman Oelsner (London: George Bell and sons, 1901), 108-123. This excerpt is also reproduced in Ruggiero Ruggieri, *L’influsso francese in Italia nel Medioevo* (Rome: E. De Sanctis, 1968), 7.

¹⁵ François Guessard, *Macaire, chanson de geste* (Paris: Librairie A. Franck, 1866).

¹⁶ Gautier, *Les épopées françaises, III*, 685.

¹⁷ Guessard, *Macaire*, xcix.

words of the scholar Pio Rajna: “fu il rimatore che *volle ma non seppe* comporre in lingua d’oïl.”¹⁸

This early work surrounding the linguistic and creative intentions of the poets of the Lombard literary tradition led to attempts to create a typology for describing and classifying the extant textual witnesses. Gaston Paris, in his *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne*, divides the extant hybrid language Lombard manuscripts into three groups:

Ce sont des textes connus de chansons de geste, copiés par des scribes italiens qui les ont plus ou moins altérés; tels sont l’*Aspremont*, le *Beuve d’Hantone*, et le *Roland*; d’autres, comme *Berte*, *Mainet*, *Macaire*, traitent les mêmes sujets que des poèmes français connus, mais dans une forme qui ne peut être originairement française, ou ajoutent à leur modèles des traits qui ne s’y trouvent pas; d’autres enfin, tes que l’*Entrée en Espagne* et la *Prise de Pamplune*, ne correspondent à aucune chanson de geste connue.¹⁹

In Italian scholarship, this typology is for the most part the same. In 1907, Giulio Bertoni offers this system of classification:

1. Testi che sono copie, più o meno inquinate di italianismi, di originali francesi, nei quali si sono introdotte, talvolta, alcune modificazioni o ai quali si son fatte delle aggiunte. (*Aliscans*, *Aspremont*, *Anseïs*, *Roland*);
2. Poemi che sono rimaneggiamenti spesso assai liberi di testi francesi, in cui si introducono anche invenzioni nuove e originali. (*Rolandino*, *Bovo laurenziano*, *Bovo udinese*);
3. Opere che sono creazioni originali di autori italiani che scrivono in francese e si ispirano alla tradizione dell’epopea francese. (*Entrée d’Espagne*, *Prise de Pamplune*, *Aquilon de Bavière*, *Huon d’Auvergne*).²⁰

¹⁸ Cited in A. Viscardi, *La letteratura franco-italiana* (Modena: Società Tipografica Modenese, 1941), 45. (italics mine)

¹⁹ Gaston Paris, *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne* (Paris: Émile Bouillon, 1905), 163.

²⁰ Quoted in Viscardi, *La letteratura franco-italiana*, 37-38.

Paris is quick to dismiss the first group of texts and, elaborating on their linguistic character, adds that this category “fait pendant à la série des textes écrits en Angleterre, où la langue française est aussi fort maltraitée par les copistes.”²¹ Paris formulates the criteria for his typology around an ideal linguistic standard and a presumed national archetype for the French *chanson de geste*. His typology clearly functions within an imagined and nationalized literary teleology and it succeeds in creating hierarchies based on the textual borders of original, copy, author, French, Italian, and normative use of French. That he identifies as *étranger* the poet who curiously attempts to compose in the French idiom, reveals the invisible textual borders of nation that lie at the basis of his typology. By creating an impure linguistic Other who occupies a non-national zone on the opposite side of textual borders makes possible the self-fashioning of the imagined purity of the French literary tradition.

Like Paris, Bertoni operates around similar constructs, and goes as far as to call the first category of texts *inquinata* (polluted). The textual borders of nation are perhaps most visible when Bertoni identifies those that are *creazioni originali di autori italiani*. This last step posits a period of original creation and inspiration when Lombard literary production achieves an independence from the French tradition and becomes Italian (“cosicché la materiale venuta di Francia diventa, a un certo momento, veramente italiana”).²² Bertoni’s 1907 typology would be subsequently republished in 1941 by Antonio Viscardi in his short anthology of Lombard literature entitled *La Letteratura*

²¹ Paris, *Histoire poétique*, 163.

²² *Ibid.*, 38.

franco-italiana. Viscardi's volume remains the only general survey of this literary tradition and follows the assessment made by many of the previous critics who investigated the Lombard hybrid language manuscripts.

In the 1960s, the work of Aurelio Roncaglia and Ruggiero Ruggieri helped to change the course of Franco-Italian studies. They considered more closely the social factors behind textual production in *Lombardia* specifically, and succeeded in taking a more objective stance in regard to hybrid language manuscripts. In his contribution entitled "La letteratura franco-veneta," in the Garzanti *Storia della letteratura italiana*, Roncaglia sees no evidence to support the idea that the Lombard hybrid literary idiom had any reality as a spoken dialect. According to Roncaglia, this language was used purely as a medium of written narrative and was created on a case-by-case basis by various writers and copyists.²³ One of the most important gains in Roncaglia's rich and suggestive analysis of the corpus is the hypothesis that the characteristic hybridity was a *result* of a social context. As Roncaglia sees it, Franco-Venetian poets (to follow his terminology) adapt "il testo francese non solo alle proprie imperfette capacità, ma alle certo ancor più modeste capacità del proprio pubblico."²⁴ This perspective suggests a motive for the linguistic irregularity of the texts: to render them more comprehensible to a given audience. The peppering with French elements, according to Roncaglia, indicates connotations of prestige associated with the French language.²⁵

²³ Aurelio Roncaglia, "La letteratura franco-veneta," in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, Vol. 2 (Milan: Garzanti, 1965). 738.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 737.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 741.

Ruggiero Ruggieri's insights are equally important to the development of the scholarly literature. Perhaps one of his most important and original contributions to the development of the discipline is the recognition of the *vitalità espansionistica interclassista* of the Lombard manuscript corpus. This point is instrumental in calling into question some of the earlier assumptions based on the social class of audience and poet. The social interpretations of Roncaglia and Ruggieri set the stage for such scholars as Henning Krauss, who interprets the emerging socio-economic situation in northern Italy as the conditions which made possible the themes and characteristics of the Lombard tradition.²⁶ In 1976, the publication of the *Storia della Cultura Veneta*, edited by Lorenzo Renzi, helped to further elucidate many aspects of the cultural and political nature of the medieval Veneto.²⁷ The contributions in these volumes explore the rich cultural force of the court of Treviso under the *signoria* of Alberico da Romano; bring to the forefront the characteristic linguistic tapestry of the region; and trace cultural currents arriving from Provence, France and Tuscany. Scholars now had an important tool to begin creating a context for Franco-Lombard literature. Before Renzi's own contribution, "Il francese come lingua letteraria e il franco-lombardo," terminology in the scholarship was imprecise and confusing, as is apparent no doubt in this discussion thus far.²⁸ 'Franco-Italian' was (and still is) the term used most often in English and German scholarship,

²⁶ Henning Krauss, *Epica feudale e pubblico borghese: per la storia poetica di Carlomagno in Italia* (Padua: Liviana Editrice, 1980).

²⁷ See note 5.

²⁸ Lorenzo Renzi, "Il francese come lingua letteraria e il franco-lombardo. L'epica carolingia nel Veneto," in *Storia della Cultura Veneta: Dalle origini al trecento*, Vol. 2 (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1976), 563-589.

even if this term fails to identify the geographical specificity of the various centers of literary production in the French language on the Italian peninsula.

In the years following those analyses many of the same problems remain, most notably the lack of a clear and precise linguistic typology. The state of affairs is succinctly stated by Günter Holtus in his article *Zum Verhältnis von Oralität und Schriftlichkeit im Franko-Italienischen* in 1989:

Auch auf dem Gebiete der Textedition sind Fortschritte erzielt worden; dennoch bestehen weiterhin erhebliche Lücken, was die Verfügbarkeit der franko-italienischen Manuskripte in modernen Ansprüchen genügenden Editionen betrifft. Im Bereich der sprachwissenschaftlichen Interpretation und Klassifikation des Franko-Italienischen sind die Meinungen geteilt.²⁹

The present situation is in many respects the same and many editions still remain to be completed, revised or brought up to modern standards. The text *Huon d’Auvergne* still has no complete edition and the edition of the *Guerra d’Attila* lacks many important details related to its manuscript context. New editions of the *Bataille d’Aliscans* and *Aquilon de Bavière*, prepared by Holtus and Wunderli respectively, have helped to establish a model for editing practices within the field of Franco-Italian studies.³⁰ The lack of critical editions is often cited as a stumbling-block for further progress in the discipline and, for this reason, the bulk of criticism on the Lombard hybrid language

²⁹ Günter Holtus, “Zum Verhältnis von Oralität und Schriftlichkeit im Franko-Italienischen,” in *Testi, cotesi e contesti*, eds. Günter Holtus, Henning Krauß, and Peter Wunderli (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989), 75. “Also in the field of textual edition, progress has been achieved; there remain however further considerable gaps, such as the availability of Franco-Italian manuscripts in editions fulfilling modern standards. In the area of the philological interpretation and classification of Franco-Italian, opinions are divided.” (translation mine)

³⁰ Günter Holtus, ed., *La version franco-italiana della Bataille d’Aliscans: Codex Marcianus fr. VIII [=252]* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985); and Raffaele da Verona, *Aquilon de Bavière: roman franco-italien en prose 1379-1407*, ed. Peter Wunderli (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1982).

tradition is philological and linguistic in nature. The most recent edition of a Lombard hybrid language text, the *Geste francor*, MS. Marc. Fr. XIII (=256), prepared by Leslie Zarker Morgan, is an important step in making these texts more accessible to an Anglophone audience. This edition also corrects and supplements with important lexical information the earlier 1986 edition of Aldo Rosellini.³¹

The 1987 symposium on Franco-Italian and the publication of its proceedings *Testi, cotesti e contesti del franco-italiano* edited by Günter Holtus, Hans Krauß and Peter Wunderli, represents a renaissance moment in Franco-Italian studies.³² In this collection of essays, important new approaches and concepts emerged that would help overcome considerable historical, linguistic and theoretical hurdles. In the years since, one more important typology of Franco-Italian literature emerged through the collaboration of Günter Holtus and Peter Wunderli. In their contribution to the *Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, entitled “Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne,” Holtus-Wunderli sought to create a typology that would consider a wide range of factors, including linguistic capability of the authors and scribes, reception, comprehensibility among the audience or readers, and other political and social factors.³³

This typology results in a four-step division:

³¹ Aldo Rosellini, ed., *La Geste francor di Venezia: edizione integrale del codice XIII del fondo francese dalla Marciana* (Brescia: La Scuola, 1986); Leslie Zarker Morgan, ed., *La Geste Francor: chansons de geste of MS. Marc. Fr. XIII (=256)* (Tempe: MRTS, 2009).

³² Günter Holtus, Hans Krauß and Peter Wunderli, eds., *Testi, cotesti e contesti del franco-italiano: Atti del 1° simposio franco-italiano* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989).

³³ This typology was previously published in Günter Holtus, “L’état actuel des recherches sur le franco-italien: corpus de textes et description linguistique,” in *La Chanson de Geste : Ecriture, Intertextualités, Traductions, Littérales 14*, ed. François Suard (Paris : Centre des Sciences de la Littérature, Univ. de Paris X – Nanterre, 1994), 147-71.

1. Les textes français quelque peu italianisés créés en Haute-Italie reposant sur une tradition plutôt écrite et sur une connaissance livresque du français;
2. Les textes français sensiblement italianisés créés en Haute-Italie sur la base d'un français courant acquis oralement et mis par écrit par la suite;
3. Les textes franco-italiens au sens strict qui peuvent être considérés comme étant le produit artificiel et littéraire d'auteurs jouant consciemment avec la langue pour en faire une langue artificielle stylisée et très littéraire;
4. Les textes franco-italiens pour lesquels on n'aspire pas consciemment à un processus de mélange linguistique, cela veut dire que les auteurs ont inconsciemment introduit des éléments italianisants dans les textes (souvent sans modèle ou pendant en ancien français) et n'ont pas eu pour but de créer une nouvelle langue correspondant à un mélange du gallo-roman et de l'italien.³⁴

Unlike previous typologies, that of Holtus-Wunderli elaborates on and emphasizes the social factors of textual reproduction: audience, poetic creativity, mode of transmission.

This continued trend toward the social factors involved in the hybrid language phenomenon of *Lombardia* serves as a spring-board for further research trajectories. This typology still rests on residual precepts of textual borders, however, and continues to hinge on binary interaction between the two monolithic and anachronistic notions, of France and Italy. The Holtus-Wunderli typology places a disproportionate emphasis on linguistic concerns at the expense of the literary traits that are characteristic of the Lombard textual tradition. Like previous critical assessments of *Lombardia*, this typology fails to see the Lombard hybrid language tradition in the confines of its own readership.

The present study will continue to investigate the textual borders of book and nation that I have identified in this brief summary of Franco-Italian scholarship. I will problematize textual borders and try to show how they remain operative in our

³⁴ Günter Holtus and Peter Wunderli, "Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne," in *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters, t. 1 and 2, fascicule 10*, directed by Rita Lejeune, Jeanne Wathelet-Willem, Henning Krauss (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 2005), 24.

understanding of premodern minority narrative spaces. I aim here to show that the Lombard hybrid language tradition must be understood as an independent literary phenomenon, the result of a geopolitically specific community of narrative participants. In order to investigate the textual boundaries of the modern printed book and national language, I will engage emerging discussions that merge Medieval Studies with postcolonial theory. This methodology is useful in decolonizing the literary past and provides us with the tools necessary to remap the narrative landscape of pre-national spaces.

Decolonizing the Narrative Past: Postcolonial Methodologies

I have synthesized the main concerns of Franco-Italian scholarship in order to reveal persisting nationalistic methodologies and perspectives. An impressive bibliography has emerged in recent years devoted to investigating the discipline of Medieval Studies and the legacy of nineteenth-century positivism and nationalism.³⁵ Like Kathleen Biddick, I still see a need for further investigation, since “the consequences of the fathers’ work still elude full acknowledgment.”³⁶ In the following two chapters I will demonstrate that the borders of nation are perhaps more penetrating and deeply rooted than we have suspected. Even if the assumptions we try to avoid in our reading of the narrative past

³⁵ For example, Umberto Eco, “Dreaming the Middle Ages,” in *Travels in Hyperreality*, translated by William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986); Elizabeth Emery and Laura Morowitz, *Consuming the Past: The Medieval Revival in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003); María Rosa Menocal, *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origins of the Lyric* (Durham: Duke UP, 1994); Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); John Van Engen, ed. *The Past and Future of Medieval Studies* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).

³⁶ See Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham: Duke UP, 1998), 1.

remain inevitable, I advocate a continued and renewed investigation of the nationalizing constructs that persist in our interpretation of past literary traditions. This project stems from the idea that current scholarship has reached an impasse when it comes to interpreting regionally specific pre-modern traditions such as that of north-east Italy. These minority zones of literary production slip through the nationalizing notions of French literature and Italian literature, which manifest themselves in borders of knowledge. In an attempt to overcome this impasse and to find new avenues of interpretation, I will approach the problem from the point of view of recent discussions that merge postcolonial theoretical frameworks with medieval studies.

Since the publication of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's volume of collected essays *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, there has been much discussion of the merits and benefits of, as well as the possible anachronisms and blind spots involved in, using a postcolonial theoretical lens in our discipline's investigation of the medieval past.³⁷ In her review of Kathleen Biddick's *The Shock of Medievalism*, Gabrielle Spiegel cautions against applying modern theoretical models to the past, arguing that "it tends to evacuate the power of such theories by superimposing them on periods and persons for which they were never designed and to which they simply do not apply."³⁸ For Spiegel, postcolonial studies belong only to a specific period in history: "a postcolonial society has a historical

³⁷ Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, ed., *The Postcolonial Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave, 2000); Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham: Duke UP, 1998); Simon Gaunt, "Can the Middle Ages Be Postcolonial?," *Comparative Literature* 61, no. 2 (2009): 160-76; Stephen G. Nichols and R. Howard Bloch, eds., *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "Épater les médiévistes," *History and Theory* 30 (2002): 243-50; Nadia R. Altschul, "Postcolonialism and the Study of the Middle Ages," *History Compass* 6, no. 2 (2008): 588-606.

³⁸ Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "Épater les médiévistes," *History and Theory* 39, no. 2 (May 2000): 243-50.

specificity and density that is not easily translated into premodern worlds.”³⁹ Other scholars, such as Nadia R. Altshul in her article “Postcolonialism and the Study of the Middle Ages,” deny such claims of anachronism and argue that the mechanisms of postcolonial theory are not necessarily restricted to the historical situation from which they were devised.⁴⁰ Despite the specificity of the nineteenth-century imperialistic mission and the subsequent period of decolonization, I too believe that the mechanics of postcolonial theory can illuminate other historical instances of colony and conquest. I also believe that postcolonial perspectives have the potential to elucidate our notions and treatments of past and present and to uncover new teleological perspectives beyond those involving progressive and evolutionary patterns, since Altshul observe,

medieval societies have more profound and varied resonances with issues discussed in postcoloniality – such as multiple cultures in contact and topics such as miscegenation, transculturation, or hybridity – than they do with the constructions of the nationalist philologies.⁴¹

It may be useful to see applications of postcolonial theory to Medieval Studies as either diachronic or synchronic. A synchronic approach would investigate specific historical instances of colonization and conquest, such as the Norman conquest of 1066, which exemplifies the dynamics between historical dominant and minority cultures. This application of postcolonial theory is the more controversial of the two since it is more likely to run the risk of anachronism. This debate arises out of the fact that the historical periods in question are structurally removed from the methodological present. Studies

³⁹Spiegel, “Épater les Médiévistes,” 250.

⁴⁰ Nadia Altschul, “Postcolonialism,” 590.

⁴¹ Ibid., 591.

that carry out this application see the dynamics of colony and conquest inherent in the postcolonial as a perennial trait of humanity rather than specific to, for example, the English and French imperialistic ambitions of the nineteenth century and the subsequent process of twentieth-century decolonization. In this light, and if it is assumed that postcolonialism is not rooted specifically in the aftermath of nineteenth-century empires, postcolonial studies potentially provide a relevant framework within which to understand patterns of human behavior in various historical instances of colonization. Cohen, in fact, advocates a despecified postcolonial theory and sees an ‘always already’ condition to coloniality and postcoloniality: “just as there was never a time before colony, there has never yet been a time when the colonial has been outgrown.”⁴² To refer to this always present condition of the colonial and postcolonial in the arc of human history, Cohen uses the term ‘midcolonial’: “the time of ‘always already’, an intermediacy that no narrative can pin to a single moment of history in its origin or end.”⁴³

In this way it would seem that Spiegel’s criticism of anachronism is effectively overcome, yet Robert Bartlett, in his influential book *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950-1350*, argues that there needs to be a set of “cultural symptoms of colonialism” in order for medieval instances of conquest to be interpreted through postcolonial theory.⁴⁴ The case cited above, the Norman invasion of England, is not a candidate for postcolonial consideration since it involves two groups

⁴² Jeffrey J. Cohen, “Introduction,” in *The Postcolonial Middle Ages*, 3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴⁴ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*, 185.

with a shared ‘latinity’ and a shared religion.⁴⁵ I, however, believe that the dynamics of identity within this putatively homogeneous bloc of ‘latinity’ is subject to a greater degree of nuance, and I would argue that the case of 1066 is open to postcolonial inquiry.

A diachronic approach to medieval postcolonial studies addresses what Cohen calls the “epistemological colonization” of time, which functions alongside the imperialistic colonization of space. As Cohen puts it, “a criticism that has detailed the imperialistic colonization of space surely must now turn to an examination of the epistemological colonizations of time.”⁴⁶ This approach investigates the relationship between two periods, present and past, and reveals how present borders of knowledge are superimposed retroactively upon historic spaces just as new continents were carved up by European imperialistic appetite. The introduction to the Fall 2000 issue of the *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, written by its editors John Dagenais and Margaret R. Greer, is devoted to investigating the symbiosis of geographical and temporal colonial ambitions. According to Dagenais and Greer, “colonization of the past is an indispensable companion of empire.”⁴⁷ The casting of epistemological borders upon past spaces, as exemplified by Flavio Biondo in the Renaissance, proves to be particularly damaging in medieval scholarship, since it sets in motion the process of temporal othering and entails reducing of the complexity of the middle centuries into a convenient homogeneous block that fits neatly within the boundaries of modern national teleologies.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 24-59.

⁴⁶ Cohen, "Introduction," 5.

⁴⁷ John Dagenais and Margaret R. Greer, eds., “Decolonizing the Middle Ages: Introduction,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38, no. 3: 421.

This temporal alterity is under scrutiny in postcolonial medievalism because it bolsters the image of the modern nation-state and only helps to perpetuate the belief that the Middle Ages is too far in the past to have any bearing on the present. As Altschul explains in her article “Postcolonialism and the Study of the Middle Ages,” the postcolonial Middle Ages propose a new definition of the present, a “co- or hetero-temporality of the present” in which “the place of the past is ‘now’.”⁴⁸ The ‘co-evalness’ of the past and the present stem from important contributions in the area of anthropology, namely Johannes Fabian’s *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Objects* (1983). Fabian proposes a new vision of scholarship’s gaze upon the past, and proposes a past that is no longer other, “separate from the time of the observer,” but rather ‘co-temporary’ with the present.⁴⁹ Of the two postcolonial medieval modalities, in my opinion this second is the more justified and the more urgent. Through the lens of imperialism, the medieval past can exist only as other and can only be subservient to present knowledge borders. By decolonizing the medieval past, we can forge new avenues of literary interpretation and find productive alternatives to progress-oriented narratives of history.

I have summarized the general contours of the postcolonial medievalism debate to draw attention to the relevance of Franco-Italian studies in this dialogue. If it is true that postcolonial studies is mostly concerned with hybridities, and ambiguous borders and identities, then Franco-Italian studies is particularly well-positioned to demonstrate how

⁴⁸ Nadia Altschul, “Postcolonialism,” 596.

⁴⁹ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Objects* (New York: Colombia UP, 1983), 25.

postcolonial studies and premodern narrative spaces can mutually inform one other. As we saw in the survey of Franco-Italian studies, however, this literary tradition has been colonized and othered by the epistemological boundaries of the discipline. Simon Gaunt succinctly sums up the state of the field: “traditional literary history has largely occluded the significant body of Franco-Italian literature, since it is neither “French” nor “Italian” and thus disrupts traditional alignments between what are thought to be national languages and literatures.”⁵⁰ The most urgent reason for a scholar to use postcolonial studies to illuminate the Franco-Italian tradition, and vice versa, is to recover these texts from between the cracks of nation and nation, and to advocate for a readership that extends beyond what is deemed “French” or “Italian.”

In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha defines postcolonial theory without reference to its potential to investigate the past: “postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order.”⁵¹ In the following pages I aim to show that political and social authority is intrinsically tied to the modern textual emendation tradition, the anthologizing of narrative spaces, and the creation of national literary canon. I aim to show also that postcolonial perspectives are productive in compensating for the unequal representation of past minority literatures. Unlike Bhabha, however, I maintain that the recuperation of the past as modernity’s other has been used as a political tool for the creation of the modern world order. For this political reason,

⁵⁰ Simon Gaunt, “Can the Middle Ages be Postcolonial?,” *Comparative Literature*, 172.

⁵¹ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 171.

then, the past is intermingled within the present and postcoloniality can work along temporal axes and borders. I will use the second, diachronic application of postcolonial medievalism to examine modernity's tendency to colonize what I will call premodern narrative spaces. 'Premodern' refers to the ideologies involving language, literature and story that exist in opposition to ideologies of literacy, which are formed around the technology of the printing press. This term will be used in place of 'medieval' and 'Renaissance' to avoid borders of periodization, which have often been used, as I will show, to create and to other pre-modern narrative spaces. By a narrative space, I intend a geographically localized community of narrative participants—including redactor / poet, audience and performer—whose cohesiveness is expressed through a common aesthetic appreciation, language(s), set of narrative themes and a common socio-political context. As this chapter's title suggests, the cohesiveness of a narrative community alludes to Benedict Anderson's theory of imagined communities, elaborated in his book of the same title. It is important to use Anderson's thesis with caution, since his work investigates the cohesion of "nationness," whereas I would like to investigate cohesion not on the order of the modern nation-state but rather within a localized premodern narrative community. A narrative community, then, is "imagined and distinct" since it is impossible for all the participants to know one another, yet all participants are bound into a community by a commonly accepted set of narrational modalities.⁵²

In this vein the objectives of this study will investigate modern epistemological colonial borders imposed improperly upon the narrative space of *Lombardia*, which I will

⁵² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), 13.

define and establish as separate from modern national spaces. By epistemological borders, or borders of knowledge, I understand the manifestation of national borders in modern methodological approaches to pre-print literature. These borders may have a vast array of manifestations, but in the present chapter, I limit my discussion to those operating around national spaces and nationalizing literary constructs, such as ‘original document,’ ‘author,’ ‘*oeuvre*,’ and ‘canon.’ In Chapter III, I will investigate the epistemological borders specifically involved in national language and modern nation-state language ideology. In short, the modern textual emendation tradition seeks to re-establish texts within the imagined national borders of France and Italy, within the confines of the French and Italian languages’ imagined purity, and within the paradigm of literacy, which is often incongruent with the oral framework typical of the Lombard narrative space. I will conclude that the paradigm of literacy is a textual modality that permits the anthologizing of nation and that medieval narrative spaces must be significantly altered to fit inside the borders of the spine, cover, pages and margins of the national literary classic. Once re-conceived from a non-nationalistic perspective, the Lombard narrative space is independent from notions of French and Italian literature and exhibits literary aesthetics and linguistic characteristics proper to the Lombard narrative community. If my ambition stops short of erasing border constructs altogether—which is indeed an impossible task—I hope to show that literary analysis must take into account the perennial ebb and flow of borders within a single geographical space, and that present literary borders are incompatible with past narrative spaces.

The second chapter of this dissertation, “Mapping Imagined Spaces: Lombardia as Narrative Community,” will investigate the notion of *Lombardia* as political, economic, cultural and religious geographical space during the period in question, 1250-1441. I will show that *Lombardia* did not operate within the same rigid border systems that characterize modern administrative regions, but was instead a series of contact zones that were fluid and malleable. The political, economic and cultural zones of the premodern Lombard space overlap; they are at times contradictory and they can be mapped differently each time. In addition to these geographic manifestations, I will propose a narrative *Lombardia*, a space in which there existed a geopolitically specific community of narrative participants who developed literary conventions specific to the dynamics of their community. Within this narrative community emerged the hybrid language romance-epic genre, and the textual transmission of Lombard romance-epic texts operated within a system often at odds with the textual borders of the printed book. Manuscript witnesses of this space—indeed, all hand-written codices—can be defined on the basis of their irreproducibility. For this reason I will describe these manuscripts as ‘performance artifacts,’ which are incongruent with the textual borders of the modern literary classic.

The third chapter, “Writing Against the Rules: The Hybrid Language Aesthetic of the Lombard Narrative Community,” will analyze more closely the Lombard epic-romance genre specific to the narrative space of *Lombardia*. This discussion will investigate the aesthetic and communicative uses of French within the Lombard narrative community; I will propose that French was not a foreign idiom to the narrative conventions of the Lombard poets, who wrote for a local Lombard audience. This chapter

will conclude by reconsidering the notion of ‘hybrid,’ which, in linguistic discussions, has inherited from nineteenth-century scientific inquiry remnants of a negative valence. I will argue that the textual borders set in place by notions such as national language and linguistic purity have reinforced the spatial and chronological borders of European imperialism. The utility of these textual borders laid the groundwork for European self-fashioning during periods of national crisis in the nineteenth century; the creation of the “Franco-Italian hybrid language” was only possible in a binary relationship of othering involving the imagined “Pure French/Italian Language.”

The fourth chapter, “Writing in the Margins: The *Chanson de Roland*, Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, ms. V4 [=225],” explores how the textual borders of the modern printed book have molded our understanding of one textual witness in particular, the *Chanson de Roland*. I investigate two manuscripts of this epic poem in particular, the Oxford Digby 23 manuscript and the Franco-Italian version, Biblioteca Marciana, ms. V4 [=225]. I argue that the image of Charlemagne as a national hero, which still persists today in the French historiographic imagination, derives from the Oxford reading of the *Chanson de Roland*. Because the heroic image of the emperor in this version was more suitable to the *fin-de-siècle* nation-building program, the Oxford Roland has been the base of the authoritative version of the poem as it presently exists in the modern philological tradition. I argue that nationalizing textual borders of the literary classic that have colonized the manuscript space of the V4 Roland need to be removed in order for this version to be re-interpreted as an independent and geopolitically specific text of the Lombard narrative community.

Finally, the last chapter in this dissertation, “Writing Between the Lines: Andrea da Barberino’s *Ugo d’Alvernia* and Recreating the *Huon d’Auvergne*,” investigates an early case in which a performative manuscript space is reformulated to fit within the textual borders of an authoritative version, which would serve as a transition for later printed versions. I demonstrate how the manuscript witnesses of the *Huon d’Auvergne* story function as performance artifacts and, because of their irreproducibility, each version must be considered an original document for the sake of literary criticism, and not as components of a hierarchy of textual transmission. I identify significant thematic differences between the epic female character Ynide / Nide in two versions in particular, the Turin and Padua manuscripts, and I demonstrate how the manuscript context of these two textual witnesses works closely with narrative diegesis to create a performative signifying system. To conclude, I examine how the Renaissance author figure Andrea da Barberino creates an authoritative and politicized reading of the *Huon d’Auvergne* manuscript tradition by placing it within the textual boundaries of chapters and books.

In an epilogue, I will suggest intersections between the Lombard hybrid literary aesthetic and contemporary hybrid literary narratives in English, French and Italian. Beyond borders of print and periodization, the past has the capacity to inform the present and illuminates productive and expressive ways hybrid narratives can express transnational experiences outside of the borders of national language.

CHAPTER II

REWRITING BORDERS: LOMBARDIA AS A NARRATIVE A COMMUNITY

In light of recent scholarship on medieval spaces, borders and frontier lands, it is challenging to conceive of premodern *Lombardia* as we would be inclined to delineate territory today. Modern cartography principles, which draw hard and fast border lines to separate clearly wrought political and administrative units and which guide the user to a chosen destination, run conceptually against medieval renderings of space.⁵³ Unlike modern political maps, medieval T-O maps are concerned less with orientation than with rendering human knowledge through a metaphor of space. The traditional medieval T-O map as conceived by Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologia* figures the Mediterranean sea in the shape of a T dividing the orb of the known Earth into the three known continents—Africa, Europe, and Asia. The ocean encircles the Earth in the shape of an O. Medieval T-O maps often convey theological principles instead of geographic ones and for this reason Asia, the locus of the garden of Eden, is located on top and encompasses one-half of the known territory. Europe and Africa are located in the bottom two quadrants, and Jerusalem is in the center (Figure 1.1). These maps are a window onto a pre-nation-state

⁵³ For recent discussion on the topic of the medieval border, see David Abulafia and Nora Berend, *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); R.I. Burns, “The Significance of the Frontier in the Middle Ages,” in *Medieval Frontier Societies*, edited by Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Daniel Power and Naomi Standen, eds. *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1700* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999).

frame of reference and show a terrestrial world that is more ontological than geographic, and belonging more to an interiorized *imaginaire* than to an externalized spatial reality. Some scholars link the internal and external conceptions of medieval geographical space to desire and it has been demonstrated that the medieval map sought to write the spatial:

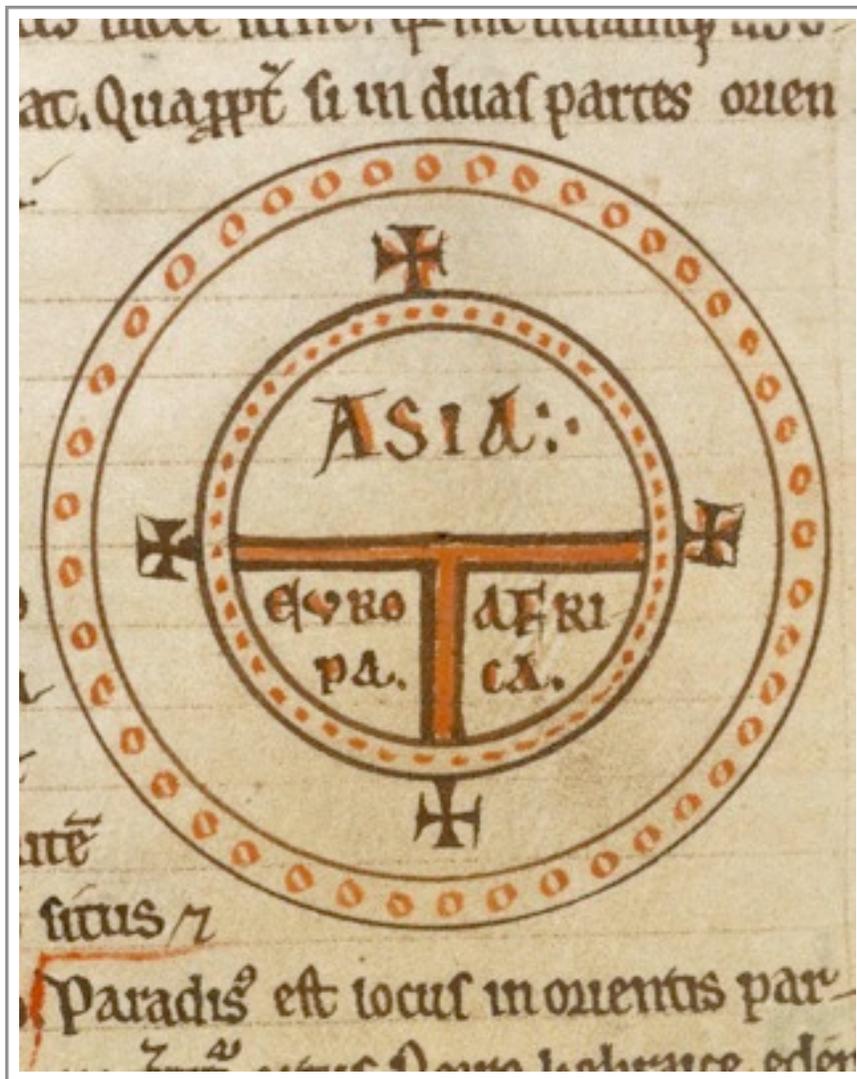


Figure 2.1. The orb of the Earth according to Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*.

‘geo-graphy.’⁵⁴ In that premodern cartography, the *imaginaire* is clearly at work delineating space not as an external reality but as a manifestation of the human imagination. To confirm this trait one need look no further than the Dantean *summa*, which proposes a vision of world geography shaped by a projection of theological understanding. One can indeed argue that Dantean geography is an attempt to encapsulate in a geographic metaphor the medieval encyclopedic program.

The task of defining the medieval geographical space of *Lombardia* is problematic, then, since the modern scholar’s undertaking arises from a sense of geography very different than the medieval; our modern notion of geographic boundary quickly becomes unwieldy when mapping medieval spaces. Lombardy emerges not as a monolithic and static geographic demarcation containing neatly defined political, economic, and cultural entities, but rather and most often as an ever-shifting mental and imagined construct. In some of the following examples, there also emerge vague political or economic notions of cohesiveness, but in all cases various conceptions of the geographic entity of Lombardy overlap and contradict with one another. The variability of the Lombard space depends on the lens of inquiry—whether economic, cultural, religious, or other—and in this way *Lombardia* takes on different shapes and contours, often encompassing a loose affinity between various demographic centers. This slipping and overlapping of layers of cohesiveness exposes a characteristic trait of the medieval border; the cultural (or political, economic, linguistic...) unit was fluid, instable and supple. In her recent book, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French*

⁵⁴ See Tomasch and Gilles, *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University Press of Pennsylvania, 1998).

Literature, Sharon Kinoshita demonstrates the fluidity of literary borders, a project that began “with the curious realization that many of the best-known works of medieval French literature take place on or beyond the borders of ‘France.’”⁵⁵

In a first example in my attempt to excavate the medieval borders of *Lombardia*, I cite the famous *sirventese lombardesco* tentatively attributed to Sordello da Goito by Gianfranco Contini.⁵⁶ Sordello (1180?-1269?), who composed at the court of the Este family and who lived for a period in Provence, was praised by his contemporaries for his poetic skill. The most notable figure to praise Sordello’s talent was Dante in the *De vulgari eloquentia*, I.XV.2, and again in Purgatory VI.74-75 when Sordello and Virgil meet and embrace. In the *sirventese lombardesco*, Sordello’s only known poetic composition in his native Lombard idiom, *Lombardia* emerges as an imagined cultural and linguistic community that serves as the poet’s audience. The first stanza of the poem reveals the novelty of writing in a Lombard idiom:

Poi qe neve ni glaza
Non me pot far guizado,
e qu dolzamentr’ardo
en l’amor qu m’abraza,
ben è raxon q’eo faza
un sirventés lonbardo,
qué del proenzalesco
no m’acreso: — e fôra cosa nova,

⁵⁵ Kinoshita, Sharon, *Medieval Boundaries: Rethinking Difference in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 1.

⁵⁶ On the attribution to Sordello, see Gianfranco Contini, *Poeti del duecento* (Milan: Riccardo Ricciardi, 1960), 501.

q'om non trova — sirventés lombardesco.⁵⁷

This example is especially relevant on linguistic grounds because it favors a local idiom over Occitan, a poetic model that was introduced and followed in the northern courts at the time of the troubadour diaspora. By departing from this model, the poet claims to forge new poetic ground by expressing the conventions of Provençal lyric in the northern *volgare*.⁵⁸ That Sordello adopts the northern *volgare* underscores a broad notion of *Lombardia* as a potential audience community, which would participate in poetic expression in the Lombard *volgare*, effectively setting the northern tradition apart from other audience communities in the southern peninsula. The linguistic cohesion hints at an established narrative community in which the participants would have understood the chosen idiom and thus would have recognized the poet's novelty. The sense of novelty would emerge from the narrative community's familiarity with the customary Occitan paradigm. What is most relevant in the example from Sordello is reference not to a physical space but rather, to use Benedict Anderson's term, to an "imagined and distinct" northern linguistic and audience community.⁵⁹

This unique attempt to compose in a northern *koiné* or *volgare illustre* represents an exception to the ancillary status afforded northern courtly poetry which, according to

⁵⁷ Ibid, 503.

"Since neither snow nor ice / can tear me apart, / and I burn sweetly / in the love that consumes me / it is only right that I make / a Lombard sirventes, / (I cannot boast of my Provençal) / and it would be a new thing / for no one composes - a Lombard sirventes." (my translation)

⁵⁸ For more on the troubadour diaspora in the northern centers of Italy, see Gianfranco Folena, *Culture e lingue nel Veneto medievale* (Padua: Programma, 1990); Furio Brugnolo, "I Toscani nel Veneto e le cerchie toscane," in *Storia della cultura veneta*, Vol. 2: "Il Trecento" (Vicenza: Neri Pozzi, 1976), 370-439; Martinez, "Chapter 13: Italy," in *Handbook of the Troubadours*, Akehurst and Davis, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

⁵⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983).

Contini, for the most part emulates the Tuscan tradition.⁶⁰ Recent scholarship has also sought to reconsider this opinion with regard to the *poesia cortese settentrionale*. While De Bartholomeis proposes simultaneity in the Southern, Tuscan and Lombard poetic traditions, Giuseppina Brunetti, in her book *Il frammento inedito “Resplendente stella de albur” di Giacomino Pugliese e la poesia italiana delle origini*, argues instead a possible direct transfer of Sicilian tradition to the north, bypassing the Tuscan intermediary.⁶¹ Although an examination of that poetic current is beyond the limits of this study, it would be beneficial to revisit Contini’s opinion, which broadly places a whole series of poets (Guinizelli, Semprebene, Polo Zoppo, Ondesto, Tomaso, Ugolino) into a subcategory of the Tuscan tradition.⁶² Sordello’s *sirventese lombardesco*, along with a series of other poetic examples identified by Ignazio Baldelli—the poem *Eu ò la plu fina druderia*, and examples of *ballate* found in a Gonzaga manuscript—indicate an independence from the Sicilian school and help to argue a separate northern cultural community. This “imagined and distinct” community consists of a poetic and linguistic tradition possibly inherited, according to Baldelli, from French or Provençal models.⁶³

In a later source, the fourteenth-century *Chronicon de Gestis Principium Vicecomitum ab a. MCCL usque ad a. MCCCLXII*, by Pietro Azario, *Lombardia* is

⁶⁰ Contini, *I poeti del '200*, 315.

⁶¹ For a summary of these arguments, see Giuseppina Brunetti, *Il frammento inedito “Resplendente stella de albur” di Giacomino Pugliese e la poesia italiana delle origini* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000), 166-67.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 501.

⁶³ Ignazio Baldelli, “Sulla lingua della poesia cortese settentrionale,” in *Dante e la cultura veneta: atti del convegno di studi, 5 aprile 1966*, edited by Vittore Branca and Giorgio Padoan (Florence: Leo S. Olschiki, 1966), 126-27.

expressed according to an imprecise network of topological points and demographic centers:

Constat siquidem Lombardiam triginta civitatibus fore praeclaram, Alpibus et montibus asperrimis, vallatam undique et circumclusam, per quam solus fluvius decidens, nomine Padus, praeclarius omnibus aliis fluviis Lombardiae, a Monte Apennino trahens initium, et per inferiora loca decurrens, Lombardiam sulcat et in Adriaticum Mare recipitur fluctuose. Quae quidem Lombardia nobilibus civitatibus Populis Gentibus et Artibus orname, inter alias Provincias Serenissima vocatur... Est igitur ipsarum Civitatum prima Civitas Metropolitana, quae Mediolanum nuncupatur, secunda Cumae, tertia Pergamum, quarta Brixia, quinta Verona, sexta Vicentia, septima Lauda, octava Cremona, nona Mantua, decima Ferraria, undecima Papia, duodecima Placentia, tertiadecima Parma, quartadecima Regium, quintadecima Mutina, sextadecima Bononia, decimaseptima Bobium, decimaoctava Terdona, decimanona Novaria, vigesima Vercellae, vigesimaquarta Alba, vigesimaquinta Alexandria, vigesimasexta Aquae, vigesimaseptima Vigintimillium, vigesimaoctava Janua, vigesimanona Savoia et trigesima Tridentum.⁶⁴

Rather than a boundary to carve out the contour of all the Lombard cities, this expression of medieval *Lombardia* is a web of demographic centers and topographical features.

There is no clear distinction as to where Lombard territory begins and ends; *Lombardia* remains instead a series of points. The cohesion among the thirty cities is not entirely clear, but it does seem to hinge upon shared artistic proclivity and a common ennobled and peaceful quality: “Lombardia nobilibus civitatibus populis gentibus et artibus orname

⁶⁴ Cited in Diego Zancani, “The Notion of ‘Lombard’ and ‘Lombardy’ in the Middle Ages,” in *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspective in Medieval Europe*, edited by Alfred P. Smyth (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998), 218: “Lombardy is made up of thirty towns, from the Alps and arduous mountains to a valley through which the river Po flows, being the most important river of Lombardy. It starts from Monte Apennino and flowing through lower places it crosses Lombardy and reaches the Adriatic sea. For these reasons Lombardy, adorned with noble cities, populations and arts, is called a most serene district among others.... Its first city is the metropolitan city called Milan, the second is Como, the third Bergamo, the fourth Brescia, the fifth Verona, the sixth Vicenza, the seventh Lodi, the eighth Cremona, the ninth Mantua, the tenth Ferrara, the eleventh Pavia, the twelfth Piacenza, the thirteenth Parma, the fourteenth Reggio [Emilia], the fifteenth Modena, the sixteenth Bologna, the seventeenth Bobbio, the eighteenth Tortona, the nineteenth Novara, the twentieth Vercelli, the twenty-first Ivrea, the twenty-second Turin, the twenty-third Asti, the twenty-fourth Alba, the twenty-fifth Alessandria, the twenty-sixth Aquis, the twenty-seventh Ventimiglia, the twenty-eighth Genoa, the twenty-ninth Savona and the thirtieth Trent” (Translation Zancani).

inter alias provincias serenissima vocatur.” Although Pietro does not provide any more insight into the substance behind the cohesion—whether political, linguistic, or cultural—of these thirty cities, it is nevertheless significant that *Lombardia* can include within its reach cities as far apart as Genoa and Verona, and that all thirty cities are bound into one entity reflecting an imagined space in which a community is perceived to exist. Although here *Lombardia* again lacks a geographical reality within a circumference of borders and is imagined as a web of affiliations among ‘noble cities,’ the chronicler lists the Lombard cities from the designated central point of Milan, a *civitas metropolitana*, from which radiate the remaining twenty-nine Lombard cities. As Zancani points out, the rise of the *signoria* of the Visconti family, who were lords of many Lombard cities by the middle of the fourteenth century,⁶⁵ created a synonymous relationship between the term *Lombardia* and a ‘state of Milan’ and therefore in this way the term may be said to assume a stronger political dimension.⁶⁶

Here we must note that the marches of Treviso, the area including and immediately surrounding the city of Treviso, and the city of Venice, are not included, while Turin and Genoa are. Indeed in the medieval notion of *Lombardia* the Veneto is often considered a separate territory, usually termed the Trevisan March, and sometimes including the city of Verona - although in this particular account Verona is included in the enumeration of the Lombard cities. While we might want to see clear borders drawn to designate the area that constitutes *Lombardia*, in Pietro’s chronicle we find border lines

⁶⁵ Bergamo and Novara, 1332; Cremona, 1334; Piacenza, 1336; Brescia, 1337; Asti, 1341; Parma, 1346; Pavia, 1359.

⁶⁶ Zancani, “The Notion of ‘Lombard,’” 225.

replaced with approximate topological notions. These topological features designate the extent of territory surrounding the enumerated cities: the Po river and valley, the Adriatic sea, Monte Appenino, and the Alps. This approximate carving out of a vague geographical entity is echoed by Boccaccio in his *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia di Dante*, in which Lombardy is called a “provincia situata tra ’l Monte Appennino e gli Alpi e ’l mare Adriatico.”⁶⁷

Another prominent contemporary figure, Brunetto Latini, speaks of Italy in his *Li livres dou tresor* (c. 1260) as divided into *maintes provinces*. Among these many provinces figures *Lombardia*:

Après [Romagna] est Lombardie, ou est Boloigne la grasse et maintes evesqués, & l’archivesqué de Milan, que dure jusque a la mer de Jene, & la cité de Saone & Albinge, & puis jusque a la terre de Ferrare, ou il a .xviii. evesqués. Après est la marche de Trevisse, qui est en la patriarché de Aquilee, ou il a .xviii. evesqués qui tochent les parties de Alamaigne...⁶⁸

Brunetto, like Pietro, perceives geographical space as a demographic accumulation, but also conceives of the geographical bounds of *Lombardia* as the lands within religious jurisdictions, namely the bishoprics. This is the first of my examples to explicitly link *Lombardia* to an administrative unit. Here again the distinction is made between the marches of Treviso and Lombardy, a point later revisited by the humanist pope Pius II

⁶⁷ Cited in Zancani, “The Notion of ‘Lombard,’” 225.

⁶⁸ Brunetti Latini, *Li Livres dou Tresor*, edited by Spurgeon Baldwin and Paul Barrette (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval Studies, 2003), 96. For the English translation, see Brunetto Latini, *Li Livres dou Tresor*, translated by Paul Barrette and Spurgeon Baldwin (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993). “After this [Romagna] there is Lombardy, in which is located Bologna the fertile and many bishoprics, and the archbishopric of Milan, which extends to the Ligurian Sea and the city of Savona and Albenga and then up to the land of Ferrara, where there are 18 bishoprics. After this is the March of Treviso, which is in the patriarchate of Aquileia, in which there are 18 bishoprics which extend to the borders of Germany...” (trans. Barrette and Baldwin).

Piccolomini who, writing in the fifteenth century, indicates border disputes between Lombardy and the Veneto: “fuerunt inter Longobardos et Venetos plures de finibus controuersie tandem conuenit ut omnis Venetia ad Abdua usque ad Aquas Salsas mutato nomine Longobardia vocaretur.”⁶⁹ Whether to include the marches of Treviso will prove to be problematic in my discussion since epic texts are produced in both regions and can be interpreted as an instance in which two modes of imagined medieval communities – political and literary – overlap; the literary community spans across the fragmented political community.

In a last example from a primary source, a poem found in a fifteenth-century manuscript *Mapa siue ymago totius prouincie lombardie*, Lombardy is personified. More so than in the previous examples, this conception of Lombard space is perhaps more akin to our notion of geographical space in that it presents a block of territory within the circumference of a measurable border:

Io Lombardia son la fior del mondo
Che l’occidente de Italia reze,
riuolza millia ottocento dece
se me mesuri ben a tondo a tondo.
Di seno, valor e largeza abondo
de oro, avere e immense richeze,
d’ogni parte per le gran mie largeze
si discende al mio sito iocundo.
Grande o pizol qual voia si sia

⁶⁹ Ed. A. Van Heck, *Pii II Commentarii. Rerum memorabilium que temporibus suis contigerunt*, 206. Cited in Zancani, 226, 231. “There were between the Longobards and the Venetians many controversial boundaries and it was therefore necessary that all of the Veneto to the Adda river and to Aquas Salsas should change its name to Lombardy” (my translation).

Da nu prende volunter cortexia.⁷⁰

This example differs notably from my previous ones; instead of a demographic accumulation of points as in Pietro and in Brunetto, here we find a measurable circumference around a geographic block of territory. The anonymous poet boasts not only of the riches, but also of the wisdom and the cultural wealth found in Lombardy; here, the cohesion of the community is cultural and economic. What is particularly pertinent, however, is the designation of *nu* and the phrase *grande o pizol qual voia si sia*, which together postulate an us/them relationship and indicate a political cohesion in relation to other states or people. The Lombard linguistic traits (*nu*, *largheze*, *richeze*, *pizol*) coincide with the rising currency of vernacular languages over Latin, even if the poem is heavily influenced by the Tuscan paradigm, which is to be expected given the later date of the fifteenth-century manuscript.

I tend to agree with Silvia Tomasch's claim that "medievalists' mappings of the Middle Ages are necessarily fundamentally flawed" and that "perhaps the best we can do is to create many competing versions of the medieval world."⁷¹ It is also true that any modern attempt to understand and assess medieval geography will always be obfuscated by the temporal divide involved in the undertaking. This temporal divide, however, is in many respects only epistemological, since modern national borders are artificial and are

⁷⁰ Cited in Zancani, "The Notion of 'Lombard,'" 231. "London, British Library, Harl. MS. 5132, a miscellaneous manuscript of the fifteenth century. The little poem, fol. 128r, is the preamble to a *Mapa siue ymago totius prouincie lombardie*, which ends on fol. 140."

"I Lombardy am the flower of the world / That governs the western part of Italy, / I measure 810 miles, if you measure all around me. / I have plenty of wisdom, virtue and riches, / Of gold, possessions and immense wealth, / From all parts because of my plenty / They come down to my pleasant site. / Great and small, whatever they are, / All take willingly courtesy from us." (trans. Zancani)

⁷¹ Tomasch and Gilles, *Text and Territory*, 11.

only imagined to delineate purity. Recognizing, however, our nation-state frame of reference and our tendency to delineate historical spaces according to modern national boundaries, can help us attempt to engage with what lies beyond this epistemological veil. In each of the examples cited above, which evoke the varied manifestations of the medieval concept of *Lombardia*, *Lombardia* emerges as an imagined community that finds its cohesiveness through a wide variety of contexts: literary and cultural with Sordello; demographic and cultural with Pietro Azario; quasi-administrative and ecclesiastical with Brunetto Latini; and finally economic and cultural in the poem “Io Lombardia son.” Succinctly stated, *Lombardia* as a political space is different from *Lombardia* as a cultural space. Just as Benedict Anderson has shown with modern nations, medieval communities are also imagined and distinct and “live in the image of their communion.”⁷² The difference is that *Lombardia* as a delineated manifestation of space remains vague and malleable and does not rely on static borders of nation to express its reality. Another notable difference between the modern imagined community and the medieval one is evident in a close reading of Dante’s *De vulgari eloquentia*. Language in a modern community is perceived as an inherent, binding and inextricable element for political community: what we might term ‘phatic cohesion,’ in Michael Townson’s phrase.⁷³ That Dante’s treatise advocates a uniting *volgare illustre* suggests that language has not always necessarily been bound to political allegiance and belonging in medieval communities. I will return to this point in the next chapter.

⁷² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 6.

⁷³ See Michael Townson, *Mother-Tongue and Fatherland: Language and Politics in German*, New York: Manchester UP, 1992. See chapter III, “Phatic Functions: The German Language as a Political Metaphor and Instrument,” 76-119.

My comparison of medieval and modern borders reveals that medieval borders, at least when language and cultural transmission are concerned, have no externalized manifestation on a map, are permeable, and do not function to delineate inalterable us / them relationships. In this sense, premodern cultural and linguistic borders, as we will see more clearly in the next chapter's discussion, are inclusive of hybridity, cultural superimposition and difference. If medievalists work within the scaffolding of national borders, which contain and locate the cohesion of narration, language and community within divisions of national languages and literatures, we set ourselves up for what Tomasch calls "a loss of relevance and a loss of value."⁷⁴ If medievalists conceive of premodern linguistic and literary borders as prohibitive and operative around the same us / them binaries that are implicit in modern border systems, our resulting image of premodern narrative spaces will indeed lead to a loss of relevance through misshaped interpretations. Colonial ambitions carving up continents have also, then, carved up past narrative spaces, and many of the problems surrounding modern accounts of medieval spaces arise from the ever-present and often unconscious lens of nationalism. As Naomi Standen observes, our interpretation of the past is "still constructed on remarkably strict national grounds, taking the modern nations of the world as the basis for dividing up the history of the world into slightly less unmanageable chunks."⁷⁵ With the goal of recuperating premodern marginalized narrative spaces, postcolonial medievalism is not

⁷⁴ Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles, *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 10.

⁷⁵ Daniel Power and Naomi Standen, eds. *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1700* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 26.

an anachronistic pursuit and has the potential to recast our interpretations of the past in a new (or an old) light.

I will use *Lombardia* in the following discussion to refer then to a community that expresses its cohesion through a shared network of narrative and aesthetic conventions. Yet because some sense of geographical extent may be useful, I understand *Lombardia* as a narrative community loosely comprising the whole of northern Italy above the Apennines, including Genoa to the west, extending north towards Milan, east to include the Venetian mainland (but not Venice), and south to Ferrara, Modena and Bologna. This reiteration of *Lombardia*, which finds its cohesion through narration, may or may not coincide with Lombard communities expressing their cohesion in political or economic terms. For this reason I include the marches of Treviso, Venice and Verona, which, as we have seen, were often at odds with political expressions of *Lombardia*. I use the adjective 'Lombard' to describe a portion of the texts that may be referred to in present scholarship as 'franco-italian,' 'franco-lombard,' or 'franco-venetian,' and I will identify these texts in the next chapter. Furthermore, the cohesion of *Lombardia* as a narrative community is expressed within an oral framework, which provides for a cycle of creation, performance, and source. The narrative agents in this oral system include not only scribes, jongleurs, poets, readers, and listeners, but also artists and sculptors who evoke literary themes. In addition to elements of narrative agency, all literary and artistic output attests to the cohesion of *Lombardia* as a narrative community.

Toward a Geography of Narration

Having articulated the notion of a Lombard narrative community, I will now detail the characteristic components of this narrative space, which highlight its status as a separate center of cultural production, independent from modern literary teleologies of “French literature” or “Italian literature.” Through these characteristics, as I will show, it is also possible to delineate literary modes and genres specific to this cultural sphere and to understand how this narrative community is distinct from other narrative communities, such as the northern French, Florentine, and Sicilian. The Lombard narrative community is not at all monolithic and static, but adapts to new aesthetic and stylistic modes that act upon the literary conventions and traditions already operative within the community. We might understand these pre-existent base traditions as an expression of what Jauss terms the ‘horizon of expectations’ and what Zumthor terms formally as ‘tradition.’⁷⁶ The aesthetic and stylistic characteristics I will outline below were most active and dynamic from approximately 1250, the date of the first text written in French in *Lombardia*, to 1441, the completion date of the Turin version of the *Huon d’Auvergne*.

I will map and define the Lombard romance-epic narrative community as an oral space with broad general phenomena at work at a macro level (tradition, transmission, aesthetic trends, reception) that exist alongside more specific dynamics at a micro level among specific actants or individuals (scribes, jongleurs, court centers commissioning a given work, a specific poet, or library catalogues attesting to the activity of these agents). The utility of distinguishing macro and micro level traits is to address traditionalist

⁷⁶ Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 96-103; Hans Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, translated by Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 23.

(macro level) and individualist (micro level) interpretations of oral literature, and most specifically *chansons de geste*. I will term the whole of this cultural-geographic framework as a 'geography of narration.' Its function is to delineate and describe a specific, cohesive community of patrons, scribes, performers and audience participants, all operating and interacting under the same narrative sphere, and under similar socio-political realities. Under the lens of a geography of narration, it is possible to decolonize premodern narrative spaces and free them from nationalizing teleologies.

The terminology I use to define a theory of a geography of narration is complicated by implement because of pre-existing usage; it is necessary to define, redefine and re-appropriate terms that are overdetermined or that carry critical weight from other critical contexts. I have rejected the term 'geography of readership' since this would describe a space restricted solely to a literate audience, in the traditional sense of the term. I have also rejected the term 'geography of textuality' since this might imply a cultural sphere of only written texts. I propose 'geography of narration' to describe a system with which we can collocate a narrative community inside a specific localized area according to specific aesthetic concerns, socio-political factors and thematic elements. In the case of *Lombardia*, this community operates primarily in a performance modality, since 'narration' is here conceived broadly to include any textual or oral composition in any genre intended to be performed either orally or by reading (see *performance* below).

The Cycle of Narration

William Calin, in his article “Singer’s Voice and Audience Response: On the Originality of the Courtly Lyric, or How ‘Other’ was the Middle Ages and What Should We Do About It?,” asserts that “the vast majority of Old French specialists recognize that all medieval literature is oral in its ‘literary consumption,’ that it was meant to be sung, chanted, or read aloud.” Calin also reminds us of the paradox of medieval literature as it comes down to us: “it was based on oral legend and imitated what was recognized to be an oral style from the past, but it appears in the form which has come down to us, in the manuscript collections.”⁷⁷ In her *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* Joyce Coleman also recognizes the mixed textual and oral nature of late medieval literature, and explores the principle of reading aloud and performing the text. In Coleman’s discussion of late medieval auralness, which is “defined as the reading of books aloud to one or more people,” she examines the relationship between physical object—the manuscript—and oral performance.⁷⁸ The ambivalent oral and textual divide characteristic of medieval literature is most recently expressed by Paula Leverage in her book *Reception and Memory: A Cognitive Approach to the ‘Chansons de geste.’* Leverage examines mnemonic imagery in a selection of *chanson de geste* prologues, and concludes that memory and text are often self-referential within this imagery:

⁷⁷ William Calin, “Singer’s Voice and Audience Response: On the Originality of the Courtly Lyric, or How ‘Other’ was the Middle Ages and What Should We Do About It?,” *L’Esprit Créateur* 23, no. 1 (1983): 87.

⁷⁸ Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xi.

this dual valency of the metaphoric imagery sets up an exchange between the two referents of the metaphor (memory and the poem) which causes each to be nuanced by the other such that the poem becomes a memory, and memory a poem.⁷⁹

This most recent scholarly inquiry into medieval textual transmission also reveals an entwined orality and textuality which challenges the notion that “orality” and “literacy” are two clearly defined categories. The binary ‘oral / literate’ is a position that forms the basis for Walter Ong’s assessment of orality and literacy, which Coleman critiques in her study.⁸⁰ Coleman concludes that “rather than imposing universal, self-validating categories of ‘oral’ and ‘literate’ style on texts, we should work outwards from given texts and literary environments to develop culture-specific descriptive systems.”⁸¹ My contribution to the discussion on orality and literacy proposes a geographically and specific description of *Lombardia* as a performative narrative community. I too follow the thought that orality and textuality are not two clearly delineated categories. My discussion here and in chapter V of this study investigates the performativity of the handwritten codex. This performativity can be traced to the irreproducibility of a manuscript and we might define a manuscript as a performance since it can never be replicated. The literate boundaries that I have identified in my introduction are, conversely, reproducible and are therefore stable and authoritative.

Because the romance-epic narrative space of *Lombardia* is an oral one, we cannot speak of titles of works and static textual creations, and must instead conceive of

⁷⁹ Paula Leverage, *Reception and Memory: A Cognitive Approach to the ‘Chansons de geste’* (New York and Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 173.

⁸⁰ Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 1982). For Coleman’s response, see Coleman, “On beyond Ong,” in *Public Reading*, 1-33.

⁸¹ Coleman, *Public Reading*, xii.

‘narrative threads’ that continually elaborate and re-interpret narrative material upon each performance. A ‘narrative thread,’ then, refers to the *matter* of a performance, either written or oral; “the matter that pertains to Charlemagne’s campaign into Spain” is a formula that would open the narrative thread of what modern scholarship and literary tradition call *La chanson de Roland*. A narrative thread is necessarily reinvented or altered at every performance, and is always interpreted by the audience and developed by the poet according to social, political and literary conditions proper to a given narrative community. The utility of such a theoretical standpoint, which separates ‘title’ from subject or *matière*, and which conceives of a manuscript source as performance, will become evident in the ensuing discussion.

Because of these dynamics of transmission, a foreign text copied and introduced into a new narrative community is altered at each subsequent moment of performance in order to make that text specific to the new community in which it circulates. In an oral framework, manuscript material conserves texts on a spectrum from *livresque* (bookish, intended for a reading audience) to *oralisant* (intended to be performed orally, yet conserved in writing), and in this way a text meant to be read aloud or silently is performed just as a text being sung or recited out loud in a piazza. Even if this text initially remains relatively unaltered in performance, it is still to be interpreted through the socio-political and artistic trends of the community in which it circulates, and it must therefore be considered as belonging and proper to this community. The concepts of *author*, *title*, *work*, *translation*, and *original document vs. copied document*, as they are understood in the modern literary and philological sense, are literate borders incompatible

with the dynamics of a premodern, pre-print, oral narrative space. These borders of the printed book are akin to the nationalizing borders that colonize premodern narrative spaces.

The incompatibility of author, work and medieval narrative is, of course, a lesson we have already learned from Paul Zumthor in his seminal *Essai de poétique médiévale*. Zumthor's famous notion of *mouvance* is at the center of the medieval narrative communities I have been describing, which operate around the valorized moment of performance. Reinterpretation in performance is the norm and static reproduction is impossible and inconceivable. The *mouvance* of a narration belongs to an oral framework and cannot be reconciled with what Zumthor defines as an *oeuvre*, or a static, reproducible work of modern literature.⁸² Zumthor's dismissal of the *oeuvre* as a modern philological construct has important consequences for our interpretation of medieval literature and invites us to investigate narration through the lens of performance modality and not through the framework of literacy. I would argue that the modern notion of the nation-state is intrinsically linked to the concept *une oeuvre*, as used by Zumthor. The identity of nation is bolstered by an authoritative selection of many *oeuvres* into a literary canon, whose community cohesion is often expressed through the immutable collection of 'classics.' Despite the contributions of Zumthor, we still forget in our accounts of literary history that in the premodern and pre-literate narrative community exact

⁸² Zumthor, *Essai de poétique*, 92-93. On mediation and performance, see also E. Köhler, "Quelques observations d'ordre historico-sociologique sur les rapports entre la chanson de geste et le roman," in *Chanson de Geste und Höfische Roman* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1961), 21-36; E. Köhler, "Observations historiques et sociologiques sur la poésie des troubadours," *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale* 7 (1964): 27-51; H.R. Jauss, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft* (Constance: Universitätsverlag, 1967); H.R. Jauss., "Allegorese, Remythisierung und neuer Mythos," *Poetik und Hermeneutik* 4 (1971); P. Gallais, "Littérature et médiatisation," *Etudes littéraires* 4, no. 1 (1971): 55.

replication of a performance is never the goal and is, furthermore, impossible in the technology of the hand-written codex. Zumthor's lesson on the nature of the preprint, hand-written codex, coupled with the contributions of medieval postcolonial studies, well-positions scholars to destabilize the network of knowledge borders identified thus far.

Another notable contribution to the nature and transmission of medieval narrative, Pierre Bec's influential *Lyrique française au moyen âge*, elaborates what he calls the *fonctionnement du texte*. This system seeks to explain the mutable and unstable nature of medieval textuality and accounts for three agents—*créateur, médiateur* and *destinataire*—involved in textual production and transmission. It aims to expose the relevance of the socio-historical context surrounding the medieval text and to account for the medieval text's characteristic 'allowance for variability,' or, as usefully defined by Bec, *le seuil de variabilité*.⁸³ Paul Zumthor's work follows Bec's model closely and elaborates upon these ideas to propose his notion of *mouvance*.

In Franco-Italian scholarship, the agencies of author, mediator and audience have long been considered to be vital to understand the linguistic variation from one manuscript to another.⁸⁴ These mechanisms of textual transmission are indeed crucial for explaining why the Lombard manuscript corpus presents us with such a wide spectrum of

⁸³ Pierre Bec, *La lyrique française au Moyen Age, XII^e - XIII^e siècles: contributions à une typologie des genres poétiques médiévaux* (Paris: A. & J. Picard, 1977), 24.

⁸⁴ For the role of author, mediator and audience, see especially Günter Holtus and Peter Wunderli, "Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne," in *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters, t. 1 and 2, fascicule 10*, directed by Rita Lejeune, Jeanne Wathelet-Willem, Henning Krauss (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 2005), 46-57; A. Roncaglia, "La letteratura franco-veneta," in *Storia della letteratura italiana, vol. II*, 727-59 (Milan: Garzanti, 1965), 735-741.

linguistic manifestations. A step forward in interpreting and applying these mechanisms in our analysis of not only linguistic hybridity, but also of many of the other defining characteristics of the Lombard epic-romance, would be to insert the dynamics between author, mediator and audience within the context of a geography of narration.

As I have noted above, the cohesion leading to the existence of a narrative community exists at parallel macro and micro levels. I elaborate on Bec's model of the *fonctionnement redacteur du texte* and propose that the three components involved in textual production and transmission are present at both the macro and micro levels (Figure 2.2).

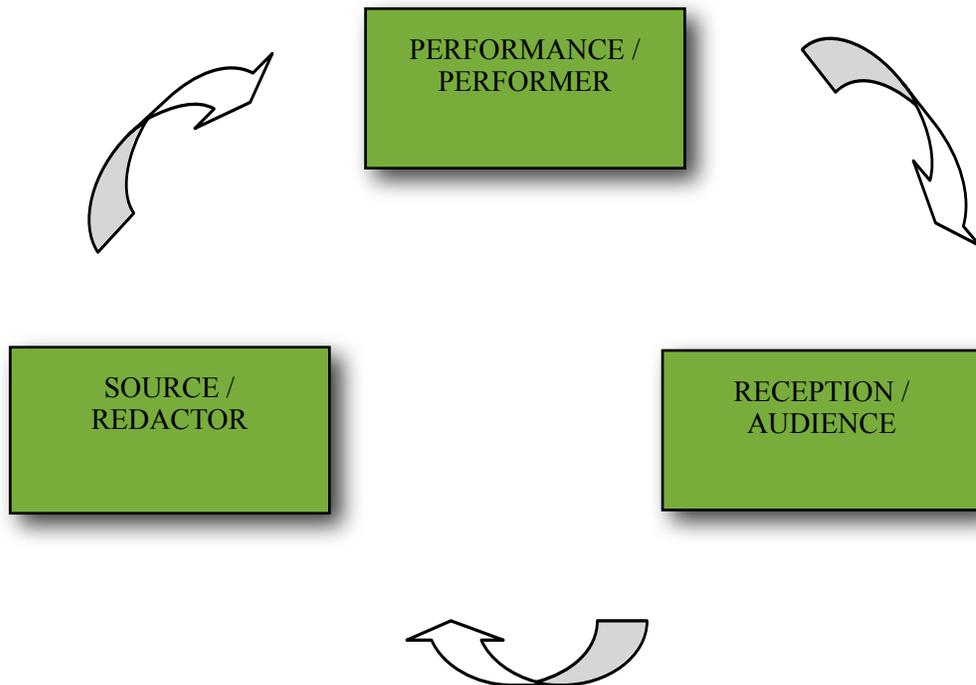


Figure 2.2. Performance cycle of an oral narrative community.

At the macro level Bec's three elements, namely *créateur*, *médiateur*, and *destinataire*, lose their quality of agent and instead become phenomena: *source*, *performance*, and *reception*. Because the Lombard narrative community functions within an oral / residual oral framework, the terms *source*, *performance* and *reception* work outside of literacy and these notions cannot be interpreted as one would interpret an *oeuvre*; performance is, as mentioned above, both a written manuscript read silently or aloud, and an oral performance of a *giullare* or *jongleur*. Unlike Bec's theory of the *fonctionnement du texte*, the triad of creation, performance and reception in my proposed altered form is cyclical and not linear, with each performance becoming a latent source if successfully received according to the aesthetic *pression*, or demand for production, of the narrative community. Each performance becomes a source available for re-interpretation at a subsequent moment of performance. The dynamics of trial and error occur at the macro level between source, performance and reception and make possible the broad traits inherent in the narrative community's characteristic literary output. As I will shortly explore these dynamics give rise to the Lombard narrative community's characteristic genre, the Lombard epic-romance. This genre, drawing on the *fonctionnement du texte*, develops literary traits and aesthetics belonging only to *Lombardia*, some of which include a heightened and strategic use of modal interference (in current scholarship generally interpreted only as linguistic hybridity); the pre-eminence of the epic persona *Roland*; and the political commentary of the texts.

At a micro level, I will reinsert the role of agent and use the terms *redactorredactor*, *performer* and *audience*. Like the phenomena of *source*, *performance* and *reception*, these actants function in a cyclical relationship and exist beyond considerations of literacy. In the oral context, a performer may be understood as either a *giullare* or a scribe. The dynamics between a specific scribe and a specific audience give rise to the internal spectrum of variation characteristic of the genre specific to *Lombardia*, the Lombard epic-romance. For this reason each extant Lombard epic-romance manuscript may be considered unique testimony of a specific manifestation of the narrative dynamic at the micro level, one which is to be understood and studied for its individuality and with regard to the relationship between specific actants. At the same time the same manuscript may also be reinserted and understood in the macro context of the narration community, thus becoming an example of the Lombard epic-romance genre. At both macro and micro levels, the socio-political realities of *Lombardia* are always in play and lead to a literary tradition entirely distinct from other traditions.

I retain the terms *mediator* and *mediation* to refer to the agent or phenomenon that transports a source through a moment of performance across the boundary of one narrative community into another. When a source is mediated and transported into the boundary of a new narrative community, even if copied, it becomes unique since it resonates within the new cultural and social relevance of the new community. The mediator performs whether orally or through writing. The mediator may be understood as, for example, a jongleur, a scribe, or a tradition which is passed through time and space. The mediator is often a linguistic go-between and mediates between

mutually incomprehensible linguistic codes and thus closely resembles the modern translator. The difference between translator and mediator, however, is that the modern translator functions upon the principle of rendering an original readable in a new language, whereas the mediator inside a premodern narrative community transposes the text into a new cultural sphere and into a new linguistic code. The translator's product seeks to remain close to the original and to preserve intact the authority and agency of the author. The mediator creates a text anew by propagating it within a new narrative community and achieving the medieval idea of *translatio*. The mediator's work, whether intended to be delivered orally or to be read, is an act of performance and is never replicated. For this reason the mediator's work does not operate within the framework of *original* and *copied* documents, since an exact reproduction of a mediator's written or oral performance is impossible.

Consequently, a performance in the context of an oral narrative community refers to a privileged moment that generates at each instance a new rendition of a narrative thread, a prequel to the thread, or a sequel. The innovation of performance as phenomenon interacts with the cohesion found in the aesthetic taste and horizon of expectation of the reception component of the narrative community. This interaction negotiates continually developing traits that constitute the originality of the narrative community's literary production. Performance as agency—a performer in the guise of *giullare*, *jongleur*, or “poet” of a text—responds to more individual narrative demands of a specific subset of the narrative community. For example, we might consider a specific court, such as the Estense court, as the specific target audience who is capable of reading

français livresque and who creates a demand that forms the content and thematics of the poet's manuscript performance.

In the performance modality of a premodern narrative community such as *Lombardia*, the (re-) generation of narrative hinges upon the moment of performance both at the macro and micro levels. Bec speaks of the *pression* that reception places upon the moment of performance.⁸⁵ In the same vein, performance must reinterpret a narrative thread at each delivery and render the narrative more culturally specific at each delivery in order to respond positively to reception. The reinterpretation of a narrative thread necessarily occurs at each oral iteration because the written text, which stimulates memory, exists independently from the poet. The result of this dynamic, as Franz H. Bäuml and Edda Spielman have observed in their article "From Illiteracy to Literacy: Prolegomena to a Study of the *Nibelungenlied*," is a separation of the roles of redactor and performer:

The written text also exists independently of the poet: once it is written down and no longer in his hands, the poet ceases to exercise control over it, and its effect does not depend on his presence. It is therefore obvious to the listener to a recitation of a written text that the reciter is not the poet. In addition, the 'narrator' [performer] becomes distinct from the poet [redactor] as well as from the text, upon which he can now comment.⁸⁶

Similar to the function of 'performance' and 'performer,' we might speak of 'reception' and 'audience.' 'Reception,' on the one hand, acts as an aesthetic force with a specific cultural horizon of expectations, which creates a cohesion between the entirety of the

⁸⁵ Pierre Bec, *La Lyrique française*, 23.

⁸⁶ Franz H. Bäuml and Edda Spielman, "From Illiteracy to Literacy: Prolegomena to a Study of the *Nibelungenlied*," in *Oral Literature*, edited by Joseph J. Duggan (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1975), 66-67.

narrative community at a macroscopic level. ‘Audience,’ on the other hand, forms the *pression* that generates individual renditions of a performance at a microscopic level. Upon a successful performance, ‘reception’ and ‘audience’ become a latent ‘source’ and potential ‘redactor’ (someone who will retell and elaborate upon what he or she has heard), which sets the cycle in motion once again to generate a new rendition of a narrative thread, a prequel or a sequel. The geographically specific narrative traits that emerge from the narrative cycle—in the case of *Lombardia*, modal interference, permutations of the Roland theme—may not be interpreted under the discipline “Italian literature,” which would not allow for variance beyond the borders of nation, and would set the Lombard literary tradition apart from the Tuscan narrative community, which has different traits altogether. I will now turn to investigate specific questions concerning the identified borders of the literate book and how these boundaries run against the actants and phenomena of the narrative cycle.

Source and Original Document

In Franco-Italian scholarship, the relationship between the binary “original document / copied document” and author has always played an operative role both in tracing the transmission of texts from the French tradition and in determining the place and value of the Franco-Italian literary tradition itself. As I summarized in chapter I, the Viscardi-Bertoni typology of the Franco-Italian corpus, the longest standing and most influential in scholarship, accords an privileged status to original vs. copied document. In the Viscardi-Bertoni typology, not only reincorporation of traditional epic themes, but also innovative

rewritings, reformulations and new creations form the third typological category of *original work*. Texts such as the *Guerra d'Attila*, the *Entrée d'Espagne* and its continuation the *Prise de Narbonne*, and the late prose romance *Aquilon de Bavière* are all examples of the last period of Franco-Italian literary development in which *creazioni originali* are written in French by *autori italiani*. These works are deemed 'original' in that they have effectively appropriated the thematic of French epic and have made it their own; they do not merely copy the French originals. As I will show with Biblioteca Marciana manuscript V4—one of the three Venetian versions of the *Song of Roland*—the binary "original / copy" remains operative in scholarship, despite attempts to refine the Franco-Italian system of classification (i.e. Günter Holtus, 1994). As is the case with the *Chanson de Roland*, as well as with other Franco-Italian texts deemed 'copies' of French originals, ideas of originality remain contingent upon modern scholarly interpretation. Missing verses and descriptions, and additions of entire new sections, clearly show that the V4 Roland is not a copy of the same reading as the Oxford Digby 23 manuscript and, in fact, that the Venetian V4 version of the epic responds to an audience particular to the narrative community of *Lombardia*.

These designations of 'original' and 'copied' are also contingent upon the notion of 'author.' In Franco-Italian scholarship, the identification of the specific actants within the Lombard narrative community has not been wholly successful. In some respects, we might regard scholarly attempts to identify the *author* of Lombard epic-texts as a Pirandello-like scenario of manuscripts in search of a redactor. In light of the performance modality in which the Lombard narrative community operates, it becomes

clear that the role of the redactor does not correspond to our modern notion of ‘author’ and we must remind ourselves of the lessons of Bec, Zumthor and Cerquiglini. In this system, the role of the individual redactor is de-emphasized to a point where the valued component of the literary cycle shifts away from ‘author’ and towards the phenomenon of performance / performer. In the oral modality characteristic of the Lombard narrative community, in which the valued moment of creation shifts from authorial *poesis* to performance, the aesthetic *pression* is centered not on a static recreation of an author’s inspired moment, but rather on the constant re-creation of a narrative thread. The binary “copy / original” consequently proves to be problematic, since any source mediated into a new narrative community is always ‘original’ and becomes specific in conjunction with a wide range of cultural, economic, political and aesthetic considerations.

If the “copy / original” binary proves ineffective, so too does the notion of author. Since the valued moment in the narration cycle has shifted from the original and inspired moment of creation to, instead, the repetition and reformulation of a previously existing narrative thread, so, too, has the figure of author shifted to that of the performer. What modern scholarship has sought to identify as the author is in reality the performer in the Lombard epic-romance tradition. The performer is not a locus for original narrative content, but rather a conduit through which a source is constantly reinterpreted. The performer, then, gives rise to the moment of performance in the narration cycle, but what do we make of source, which is so often linked to the literate agent ‘author’ in scholarly investigations of Lombard literature? By recognizing the fundamental shift from author to performance, we are able to sidestep the literate borders of ‘original,’ ‘author,’ and

‘*oeuvre*,’ which are all linked to the network of boundaries within the notion of ‘literary canon.’

Source-as-Agent

I now turn to the role of source in the narrative cycle and argue that the performer’s source may be understood as any one (or any combination) of three entities: source-as-agent, source-as-performance or source-as-tradition. Difficulties encountered in Franco-Italian scholarship may be attributed to this shift of importance from ‘author’ to performance / performer, which is also a shift of emphasis of from the material presented to who presents it. Scholarship has observed that that identifiable author-figures are often non-extant, anonymous (*Entrée d’Espagne*), or vague and two-dimensional names about which we have little information (Nicolò da Verona, etc.). In this regard, Holtus surveys the difficulties Franco-Italian scholarship must confront when searching for the author of specific manuscripts:

Pourtant, ces dates et données personnelles fournies par les auteurs et rédacteurs franco-italiens ne sauraient occulter le fait qu’en réalité l’historien de la littérature ne possède que peu de données précises concernant les véritables rédacteurs qui répandirent la littérature française en Haute-Italie, et leurs imitateurs, fidèles ou inventifs. En effet, il n’existe que dans quelques cas exceptionnels des sources historiques, des documents de l’époque autres que sa propre œuvre littéraire qui attestent l’existence du poète franco-italien.⁸⁷

A theory of narrative communities as seen through the lens of orality rather than through the boundaries of literacy can shed light on this problematic characteristic of not only

⁸⁷ Günter Holtus and Peter Wunderli, “Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne,” 49.

Lombard literature, but all premodern literature in which author attribution proves problematic. Different from the Tuscan narrative community, which often reworks epic material in a more textual form and links creation to an ‘author figure,’ the Lombard community operates within a residual oral framework that decentralizes the figure of literary creation and instead continually cycles source through performance.⁸⁸ The texts I later define as Franco-Italian (texts written in French for a pan-romance audience, chapter III) are often identifiable with an author figure and represent clear moments of creation, or *poesis*. These examples include Marco Polo and Rustichello da Pisa’s *Le Devisement dou monde*, Martin da Canal’s *Les Estoires de Venise*, Philippe de Novarre’s *Les Quatres âges de l’homme*, Thomas de Celano’s biography of Saint Francis of Assisi, and Brunetto Latini’s *Le Livre du trésor*. There are, of course, exceptions to the anonymous quality of the Lombard romance-epic, two of the most famous being Niccolò da Verona, who wrote *La Pharsale*, dedicated to Nicolò d’Este, and Niccolò da Casola, who dedicated his *La Guerra d’Attila* to Aldobrandino II d’Este.⁸⁹

How then are we to interpret source-as-agent in the Lombard narrative community, and are there instances in which a poet figure is visible? The identification of a source-as-agent in a Lombard manuscript performance follows the general praxis of textual production in the Middle Ages and is often an obscure predecessor evoked to bolster the authority and veracity in a performance. For example, the authority of Turpin, the traditional and legendary warrior and chronicler of Charlemagne, is tapped in the

⁸⁸ For Tuscan adaptations of Franco-Italian epic, see Juliann Vitullo, *The Chivalric Epic in Medieval Italy* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000).

⁸⁹ These instances of transitional textuality deserve a separate study.

Turpin of the *Entrée d'Espagne*: “l’archivesque Trepins, qi tant feri de spee, / En scrist mist de sa man l’istorie croniquee.”⁹⁰ The source-as-agent, the *auctoritas*, may be evoked parodically or else to establish textual authority. Both of these instances is the case for the *Entrée d'Espagne*, whose anonymous author, according to Aurelio Roncaglia, may create fictitious sources in order to achieve this authority:

Egli divide la sua opera in due parti, affermando d’averne derivato la materia rispettivamente da un Jean de Navarre e da un Gautier d’Aragon, checi sono d’altronde completamente sconosciuti, sì da giustificare il sospetto d’un’allegazione di fonti fittizie destinata solo a conferire autorità al racconto.⁹¹

The identification of fictitious *auctoritates* may go unnoticed by an unlearned audience. A learned audience, however, may have noticed the names ‘Jean de Navarre’ and ‘Gautier d’Aragon’ as fictitious and would have interpreted the poet’s strategy as a parody of the *auctoritas* system itself. Later in the poem, in a self-referential narrative moment, the poet purposely undercuts his role as a redactor of the textual material:

Je qe sui mis a dir del neveu Charleman
Mon nom vos non dirai, mai sui Patavian,
De la citez qe fist Antenor le Troian.⁹²

As if to further suppress his role as agent and to emphasize the importance of the traditional (yet fictitious) *auctoritas*, the poet of the *Entrée d'Espagne* openly refused to

⁹⁰ Antoine Thomas, ed. *Entrée d'Espagne*, vv. 47-48, 3. “The archbishop Turpin, who struck so many sword blows, / Wrote with his own hand the chronicle.” (my translation) For an analysis of the author of the *Entrée d'Espagne*, see especially the editor’s introduction, pp. xxxiii-lxi.

⁹¹ Roncaglia, “La letteratura franco-veneta,” 745.

⁹² Thomas, *Entrée d'Espagne*, ll. 10973-75. “I, who have set out to tell the story of Charlemagne’s nephew, / will not tell you my name, but I am from Padua, / the city founded by Antenor the Trojan.” (my translation)

identify himself. This curious narrative strategy is further complicated by the fact that these lines occur more than half-way through the 15,805 line poem.⁹³

We find another instance of source-as-agent giving legitimacy and authority to a text in the prose romance *L'Aquilon de Bavière*, which includes in the prologue a series of sources forming a string of translations:

Pour voloir demostrer coment la foi cristiane est sancte et veragie, et celle de macomet est fause, buxarde et adanie, me sui mis a traslater une istorie che longemant ert demoree che nul non oit intandus niant, laquel fu primemant scrite par um phylosophe de le part d'Afriche che fu apelés Eraclides, e depois fu només Dalfim, che scrist l'istiore primemant in lingue africane, e depois ly arcivescheve Trepin la mist in cronice por letres.⁹⁴

This prologue traces the source/mediator/performance process over several iterations, with each translation becoming a source for the following. These examples from *Aquilon* and the *Entrée* show that the source-as-agent inspired material for a manuscript performance and is invoked in order to establish authority. The allusions to the source-as-agent perhaps may have targeted a learned audience and, in the case of the *Entrée d'Espagne*, invented authority figures may cast a self-referential parody on the *auctoritas* system itself.

⁹³ For a detailed analysis of the diegetic value of the two halves of the *Entrée d'Espagne*, see Nancy Bradley-Cromey, "Roland as *baron révolté*," in *Authority and Autonomy in "L'Entrée d'Espagne"* (New York: Garland, 1993), 27-56.)

⁹⁴ Wunderli, *Aquilon de Bavière*, 6. "To show that the Christian faith is holy and true, and to show that the faith of Mahomet is false, deceitful and wrong, I have set myself to translating a story that has not been heard by anyone for a long time. This story was first written by a philosopher from Africa named Heraclites, later called Dalfim, who wrote the story originally in the African language. Afterwards, the archbishop Turpin wrote it in his chronicles." (my translation)

Source-as-Performance

Source-as-performance would be an instance in which one performance inspired a subsequent one. This might be the case of a scribe who witnessed a performance of the Roland/Olivier thread in a piazza and subsequently attempted to capture this moment in a written form, in a manuscript. Source-as-performance is more difficult to trace, and, to my knowledge, no Franco-Italian prologue attests to an oral performance as its source. An example from the northern French ‘lyric insertion’ tradition is the *Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dole*, which takes songs as source to “dye the fabric of its story:”

car aussi com l’en met la graine
es dras por avoir los et pris,
einsi a il chans et sons mis
en cestui *Romans de la Rose*.⁹⁵

In the Lombard context, there do however exist attestations of oral performances which bear witness to the diffusion of a particular narrative thread within a narrative community. The introduction of this narrative thread, according to the performance cycle, would create the potential for subsequent retellings, or re-performances, of that thread. One such instance is in an epistle from the humanist Lovato Lovati (1241-1309) to Bellino Bissolo, who writes of a performance of the Roland/Olivier narrative thread in a

⁹⁵ Jean Renart, *Le roman de la Rose, ou de Guillaume de Dole*, edited by Félix Lecoy (Paris: Champion, 2008), p. 70, ll. 8-11. “For just as people put scarlet dye / into cloth to earn praise and fame, / so has this author put lyrics and music / into this *Romance of the Rose*.” For translation see Jean Renart, *The Romance of the Rose or of Guillaume de Dole*, ed. and trans. Regina Psaki (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1995), 3.

piazza in Treviso.⁹⁶ Other examples of indirect testimony of the performance of the Roland/Olivier narrative thread include laws and statutes that address public performances, as in Bologna and Milan, and in the naming of urban features according to a Carolingian theme, as is the case in Treviso.⁹⁷ Gaetano Bonifacio, in his *Giullari e uomini di corte nel '200*, notes that the number of wandering *cantastorie* or street performers in late thirteenth-century Bologna was becoming unbearable: “i cantastorie fossero diventati così noiosi e numerosi e rumorosi, che il Comune di Bologna sente il bisogno di proibir loro di fermarsi a cantare per le piazze della città.”⁹⁸ To this effect, in 1265 Odofredo, a professor in Bologna, writes in one of his lessons:

Unde domini ioculatores qui ludunt in publico causa mercedis, et domini orbi qui vadunt in curia communis bon.[oniae] et cantant de domino Rolando et Oliverio, si pro precio faciunt sunt infames.⁹⁹

The eighteenth-century Italian historian Lodovico Muratori, in his 1751 *Dissertazioni sopra le antichità italiane*, cites a 1324 chronicle, the *Cronica di Cesena: Rerum Italicae*,

⁹⁶ Fontibus irriguam spatiabar forte per urbem / Que Tribus a Vicis nomen tenet, ocia passu / Castigans modico, cum celsa in sede theatri / Karoleas acies et callica gesta boantem / Cantorem aspicio; pendet plebecula circum, / Auribus arrectis; illam suos allicit Orpheus. / Ausculto tacitus: Francorum dedita lingue / Carmina barbaric passim deformat hiatu, / Tramite nulla suo, nulli innitentia penso / Ad libitum volvens; vulgo tamen illa placebant; / Non Linus hic illum, non hic equaret Apollo.” Cited in Holtus and Wunderli, “Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne,” 41. “I was walking around the city rich in spring waters which takes its name from the three roads [Treviso], strolling in no particular haste, when I see upon a stage in the town square a performer singing of the deeds of France and of the military exploits of Charlemagne. The people crowded around, intent and fascinated by their Orpheus. I listened in silence. He deforms here and there with a foreign accent the song composed in French, distorting it at whim without care for the story line nor for compositional art. And nonetheless the crowd was pleased” (translation mine).

⁹⁷ Holtus and Wunderli, “Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne,” 54-55.

⁹⁸ Gaetano Bonifacio, *Giullari e uomini di corte nel '200* (Naples: A. Toco, 1907), 74.

⁹⁹ “The *domini ioculatores* [street musicians] who perform in public for profit and the *domini orbi* [another kind of street musicians] who linger in front of the city hall of Bologna and sing of Sir Roland and Oliver; if they do this for money they are abominable.” (translation mine) Nino Tomassia notes that “I *domini ioculatores* che modulavano le *cantilene* importate dalla ribelle Provenza, avevano spesso la tonsura del chierico e l’intonazione del canto di Chiesa, che si studiava nei monasteri più celebri.” Nino Tomassia, *San Francesco d’Assisi e la sua leggenda* (Padua: Fratelli Drucher, 1906), 11.

in which ancient performers of the city of Milan are compared to the street performers contemporary to the chronicle. According to the chronicler, these scenes took place in the Roman theater:

super quo histriones cantabant, sicut modo cantantur de Rolando et Oliverio. Finito cantu, bufoni et mimi in citharis pulsabant, et decenti motu corporis se circumvolvebant.¹⁰⁰

Beyond manuscript and textual evidence, these examples are relevant to this discussion of narrative communities since they hint at the dynamics of performance and reception of the Roland/Olivier narrative thread, and the Charlemagne *matière* in general, within the bounds of the Lombard narrative community, and testify to a vibrant cohesion among its members.

These examples also allude to an important relationship between source and performance within the narrative cycle in which a successful performance became a latent source in the minds of the audience. In a medieval narrative community, each performance was made engaging by its ability to evoke, reinterpret and reintegrate the material of a previous source, whether agent, performance or *tradition* (for this term, see below, *Source-as-tradition*). The aesthetic value in this system lies in variation, and, in an oral framework, originality is the only possible outcome of each performance.¹⁰¹ Each new performance potentially becomes a source for the next performance, as in the case of

¹⁰⁰ Lodovico Antonio Muratori, *Dissertazioni sopra le antichità italiane*, vol. 4 (Milan: n.p., 1751), 79-80 “...upon which the *histriones* used to sing just like nowadays actors sing about Roland and Olivier. As soon as the singing was done, clowns and mimes beat their zithers and with graceful movements of their bodies danced in circles.” Both examples also cited in Holtus and Wunderli, “Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne,” 54-55.

¹⁰¹ See note 24 above, Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*; on the variability of the medieval text, see the introduction to Pierre Bec, *La lyrique française*, 2-53; and especially Paul Zumthor “Le poète et le texte,” in *Essai de poétique*, 82-133.

Aquilon, and every source is by definition an amalgam of innovative elements and variations. For this reason, a medieval performance lacks the illusion of ‘original document’ and ‘origin point’ we ascribe to and deem intrinsic to a literary work in a literate, nation-state frame of reference. In a similar vein, the medieval performance also raises questions about an author-genius figure, as it posits rather a mediator of performance.

One urgent consequence of our shift of focus from author to source is the problematization of the notion of a literary canon, which reveals itself to be anachronistic in the context of the transmission mechanism of a premodern narrative community. Literary canon posits the existence of distinct and replicable testimonies (in printed editions) of an author-genius’s moment of creation. This testimony, as we have seen, has been termed *une oeuvre*.¹⁰² The literary *oeuvre* is an exact replicable copy of an original document and is inextricably linked to its original readership community (a segment of a narrative community), as in, for example, James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Joyce’s *oeuvre*, even if translated into French, remains Irish literature and is read with the assumption that the translation aims to capture and present to a French readership an original moment of *poesis* in the Irish literary experience. This static notion of narration was not only technologically impossible, but was never either the desired aesthetic outcome nor the hermeneutic lens of a medieval audience community. A medieval ‘copy’ would always be original in its ability to detach from a previous narrative context and to resonate with the cultural and political realities of the new narrative context.

¹⁰² Zumthor, *Essai de poétique*, 91-96.

Source-as-Tradition

In a medieval narrative community operating in an oral modality, source-as-tradition is to be understood as the most important form of source. The French term *la tradition*, following Zumthor's theorization, is the cohesion found in a collective imagination and knowledge of possible narrative threads specific to a narrative community.¹⁰³ Because of *tradition*, a performance within a given community will be expected to conform to thematic threads (such as Roland and Oliver) as they would be expected to interact with local cultural and political realities: a geographically specific version of Jauss's 'horizon of expectation.' In this way, then, the feudal hierarchy of Roland as vassal to Charlemagne quickly morphed within the political and cultural context of the Lombard narrative community, which placed little value on the feudal system and which viewed nobility as not inherited but earned.¹⁰⁴ An example of this local specificity appears in chapter III, on the Venice 4 version of the *Chanson de Roland*.

Zumthor has rightly noted that medieval narratives lack titles and do not have the ethos of the *oeuvre*, in the modern sense.¹⁰⁵ In reference to the performance-driven narrative community, this characteristic sheds light on what I have identified as 'source-as-tradition.' Performance does not center on *oeuvre* (as in *La chanson de Roland*, a form made to conform to modern readership expectations by modern philologists) but rather on

¹⁰³ Zumthor, *Essai de poétique*, 96-104.

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, K.H. Bender, "Les metamorphoses de la royauté de Charlemagne dans les premières épopées franco-italiennes," *Cultura Neolatina* 21 (1961): 164-74; J.K. Hyde, "Knights and Podestà," in *Padua in the Ages of Dante: A Social History of an Italian City State* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966), 91-120.

¹⁰⁵ Zumthor, *Essai de poétique*, 91-96.

the elaboration and re-interpretation of the ‘narrative thread.’¹⁰⁶ The transmission of narrative threads, not of distinct *oeuvres*, becomes clear in the prologues of our corpus:

From the *Entrée d’Espagne*:

En honor et en bien et en fran remembrance
Et offerant mercé, honor et celebrance
De Celui che par nos fu feruç de la lance
Par trer nos e nos armes de la enferral puissance,
Et de son saint apostre, qi tant oit penetance
Por feir qe cescuns fust en veraie creance
Que Per e Filz e Spirt sunt in une sustance
--- C’est li barons saint Jaques de qi faç la mentanze—
Vos voil canter e dir por rime e por sentence
Tot ensi come Carles el bernage de France
Entrent en Espagne, et por ponte de lance
Conquistrent de saint Jaques la plus mestre habitance.¹⁰⁷

And from the *Chanson de Roland* V4:

Chi voil oïr vere significance,
A San Donis ert une geste, in France.
Cil ne sà ben qui perle l’escrit inçante.
Nen deit aler a pei çubler que çante,
Mais çivalçer mul e destreire d’Erabie.
Dès or comença li traitment de Gayne

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Taylor investigates the *Chanson de Roland* as a construct of modern philology; see Andrew Taylor, “Was there a *Song of Roland*?” *Speculum* 76, no. 1 (2001): 28-65. This article is also a chapter in Taylor’s book: *Textual Situations: Three Medieval Manuscripts and Their Readers* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2002).

¹⁰⁷ Antoine Thomas, ed. *Entrée d’Espagne*, 1-12. “In the honor, goodwill and noble remembrance, / In thanks, honor and celebration / Of the one who was wounded by the lance for us / To save us and our souls from the infernal power, / And of His holy apostle, who had so toiled / So that everyone would adhere to the true belief / That Father, Son and Spirit are of one substance / (This is the noble Saint James, whom I’m referring to here) /, I want to tell and sing to you in rhyme and meaning / Of how Charles and the barons of France / Entered into Spain, and at lance-point/ Conquered the most forsaken land of Saint James.” (my translation)

E de Rollant, li nef de Çarle el Mayne.¹⁰⁸

In these two examples the performer draws upon the thematic source relative to the *matière* of Charlemagne and his campaign in Spain with his nephew Roland (what moderns would call *La Chanson de Roland*). The *Entrée d'Espagne* announces this narrative material with a reference to singing: “Vos voil canter e dir por rime e por sentença / Tot ensi come /Carles el bernage de Françe /Entrerent en Espagne [...]” The Venice 4 also introduces the subject of the narrative—“Dès or comença li traïment de Gayne / “E de Rollant, li nef de Çarle el Mayne”—after referencing the textual role of the manuscript in performance: “Cil ne sà ben qui per lescrit inçante.” This narrative thread draws from source-as-tradition present and latent in the Lombard community’s cohesive narrative stockpile, which is effectively a network of workings and re-workings of the Roland legend present in the collective imagination or *tradition*.

Like the Venice 4 text, the *Entrée d'Espagne* makes explicit reference to the manuscript’s oral and textual possibilities: “Et par ce vos ai jé l’estorie comencee, / A ce que ele soit e leüe e contee.”¹⁰⁹ In both the *Entrée d'Espagne* and the V4 Roland text, a performance modality is clearly invoked. The anonymous Paduan performer of the *Entrée d'Espagne* still presents the matter to be sung; although more textual than the V4 Roland, the *Entrée d'Espagne* is still conceived of as a performance and not as a textual

¹⁰⁸ Carlo Beretta, *Il testo assonanzato franco-italiano della Chanson de Roland*, vv. 1-7, 3-4. “Whoever wishes to hear a true tale; in France, at San Denis, there took place a deed. He knows well who sings it from what is written. A minstrel who sings should not go on foot, / but should ride a mule or a war horse from Arabia. Here begins the story of Ganelon’s betrayal, / And of Roland, the nephew of Charlemagne.” (translation mine)

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 55-56. “And for this reason I have begun the story for you, / so that it can be either read or sung.” (translation mine)

oeuvre in the modern sense. For this reason, and as we have seen above, the term ‘performance’ may speak to a written account of an actual oral performance as well as to a treatment of a thematic thread intended to be read in its manuscript context. Both of these manuscript performances draw from similar sources present in the collective knowledge and imagination of the Lombard narrative community.

Locating the Lombard Narrative Community

In order to interpret the literary production of the Lombard narrative community, it will be necessary to imagine the Lombard romance-epic as lying beyond the borders of the modern printed book. This said, the manuscript corpus nevertheless presents us with a paradox: the Lombard romance-epic tradition is preserved for us only because it has survived in textual form, a fact that defies the latent orality of the Lombard romance-epic narrative space. The notion that ‘performance’ can extend beyond orality to include the written text is an idea that parallels an often reiterated observation that the ‘franco-italian literary language,’ a concept I will problematize in the following chapter, had no spoken reality and was only a written modality. This is the position of Pellegrini, who argues that the characteristic language of these texts was “una *Mischsprache* fitizzia e assai varia, esemplata unicamente come lingua scritta nei noti monumenti.”¹¹⁰ Roncaglia, in his survey of Lombard literature entitled “La letteratura franco-veneta,” disagrees with Pellegrini and recognizes an oral dimension to the language of Lombard romance-epic manuscripts, which he calls ‘franco-veneto:’

¹¹⁰ G.B. Pellegrini, “Osservazioni sulla lingua franco-veneta di V4,” in *Atti dell’VIII congresso Internazionale di studi romanzi* (Florence: 1960), 707-717. Cited in Roncaglia, “La letteratura franco-veneta,” 738.

Il franco-veneto non ha certo una realtà dialettale in questo senso; ma nemmeno nasce a tavolino, per opera esclusiva di copisti e scrittori. Alla sua radice bisogna riconoscere un'esperienza di comunicazione orale: quella che il Lovato ci rappresenta dal vivo.¹¹¹

This *esperienza di comunicazione orale* is what I see as the driving dynamic force in the Lombard narrative cycle. As I will discuss in chapter V, in the three surviving versions of *Huon d'Auvergne*, oral performance is an indispensable component in accounting for the degree of modal interference, or mixing of French and Italian narrative modes, which is a defining characteristic of the Lombard romance-epic.

Performance-centered narrative spaces like *Lombardia* force us to reconsider the borders of the modern printed and reproducible book and to come to terms not only with the ephemeral act of performance, but also the material evidence that remains to us of these performances and of their diffusion. In working within a performance-based system, the valued moment of aesthetic appreciation does not occur with the written word alone, but rather with the written word as it is either performed or read aloud. Because of the performativity of the written word, we are unable to work with the primary narrative experience, which was oral and ephemeral; we are left with the physical artifacts that are intended to evoke or remind the audience of these performances and to preserve them from being forgotten, when the moment of their currency has passed. It is only when performative narrative threads are perceived to have become precarious or fragile that they attain a written reality within a manuscript. These physical vestiges of performance, which I will call 'performance artifacts,' include, most significantly, the manuscript text

¹¹¹ Ibid., 738.

itself, but also a number of other physical artifacts that attest to the circulation of a narrative thread within a narrative community:

1. secondary textual evidence, including the letter of Lovato Lovati, who describes a Carolingian-themed performance, and letters between manuscript owners attesting to readership;
2. the manuscripts' illuminations, as in those from the *Entrée d'Espagne* manuscript, Biblioteca Marciana, codice fr. XXI;
3. sculptures, frescoes, mosaics, such as those of Olivier and Roland on the door of the Verona cathedral; or the *bas-reliefs* on the façade of the church at Borgo San Donnino (province of Parma);
4. laws curbing performances or making reference to performances, such as those cited above with regard to performances of Oliver and Roland stories;
5. toponyms and onomastics, such as the urban features named after Carolingian themes, also cited above.

Modern disciplinary boundaries create a perspective in which artistic production is separate from, or at least interpreted separately from, the story. Within a geography of narration, however, all performance artifacts attest to the geo-specificity of a story and provide clues on the transmission, creation and interpretation of these narrative themes. From within the boundaries of the modern reproducible book, the story and the printed page are intimately entwined and the silent tactile experience of interacting with the page creates the illusion that the story begins and ends between the covers of the book. Performance, however, exists beyond these borders and we must consider all material evidence that alludes to narrative cohesion, or *tradition*.

To close this chapter I will consider categories 1 and 3 of the performance artifacts listed above and examine what they reveal about the narrative cohesion of *Lombardia*. Whether textual or figurative, these performance artifacts help us understand what narrative threads circulated within the Lombard narrative community and reveal the cohesion these narrative traditions created. Of all the Carolingian-themed performance

artifacts extant today from 1250 to 1441, a good majority may be collocated within north-eastern Italy and, much like the cartographic description of Pietro Azario's fourteenth-century chronicle, these performance artifacts indicate a web of points that trace the narrative contours of *Lombardia* as a narrative community (Figure 2.3). In addition, we can assume that many more performance artifacts have been either lost or destroyed (the case of the Vercelli mosaic, which may or may not have had Roland-themed elements).

Letters surviving between manuscript owners, often the Gonzaga family, and borrowers are an illuminating set of performance artifacts that attest to a dynamic and vibrant Lombard narrative community. In a letter dated 16 December 1376 from Giberto da Correggio to his uncle Lodovico dei Gonzaga, Giberto returns his uncle's manuscript of the French epic *Guillaume d'Orange* and requests in return Pliny's *Naturalis*

Historiae:

Remitto vobis librum uestrum *Guillelmi de Orenga* et rogo ut per latorem presentium mittere per aliquot dies Plinium uestrum de *Naturali Historia*, qui apus me sauus erit ac cito remitta uobis. [...]

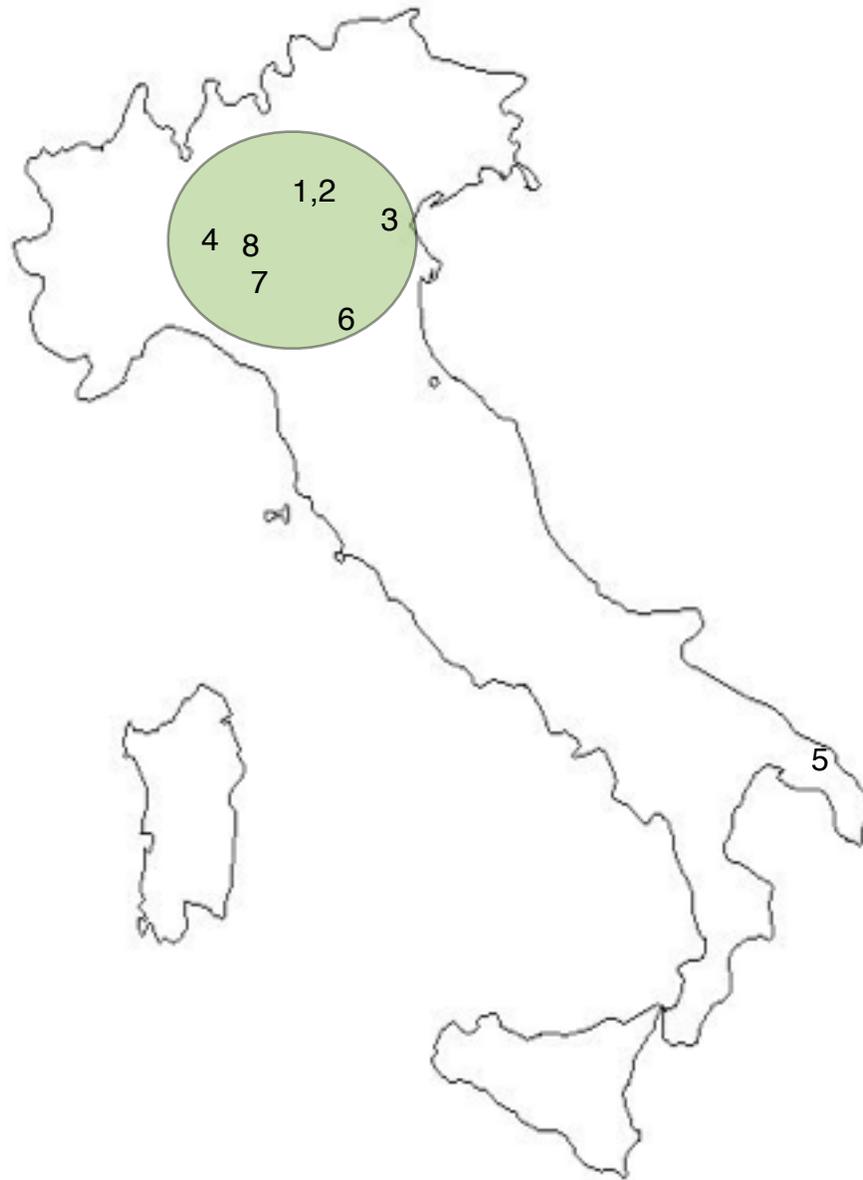
Dat. Mediolani XVI decembris.

Domino Ludouico de Gonzaga.¹¹²

Francesco Novati, in his article "I codici francesi de' Gonzaga," adds that Giberto kept his promise to return the *Naturalis Historiae*: "il Plinio tornava al suo asilo insieme a due botti di vin vermiglio."¹¹³

¹¹² Cited in F. Novati, "I codici francesi de' Gonzaga," in *Romania* 19 (1890): 185. "I am returning your book *Guillaume d'Orange* and I ask that, with the present messenger, you lend me for a few days your Pliny's *Naturalis Historiae*, which will be safe here with me and will be returned quickly to you. Milan, 16 December. To lord Ludovico de' Gonzaga. Signed Giberto da Correggio." (translation mine)

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 185.



- 1: Roland and Oliver sculptures, door of Cathedral of Verona
- 2: Roland and Ferragut sculptures, door of Church of San Zenone, Verona
- 3: Manuscript, *Entrée d'Espagne*
- 4: Pseudo-Roland mosaic, Vercelli
- 5: Brindisi mosaic
- 6: Roland sculpture, Ghirlandina tower, Modena
- 7: *Bas-reliefs* at Borgo San Donnino
- 8: Gonzaga letters

Figure 2.3. Selection of Carolingian performance artifacts of the Italian peninsula.

In another letter dated 15 June 1378, Luchino Visconti prepares for a long journey to Cyprus to accompany the queen of Jerusalem. To pass the time on this voyage, Luchino writes to Ludovico Gonzaga to ask to borrow

unum romanum loquentem de Tristano vel Lanzaloto aut de aliqua alia pulcra et delectabili materia... ut de ipso possim prefate serenissime domine Regine et michi dare solacium et placere, et tedia naufraga a nobis repellere.¹¹⁴

In another letter, from 20 July 1457, Galeazzo Maria Sforza writes to his father Francesco to borrow French books to read while traveling by boat on the Po river: “libri franciosi... per potere lezere et---- prendere piacere in nave.” Francesco’s letter suggests that these books were read aloud: “bene che più voluntera io lega libri latini che franciosi, nondimancho perché de franciosi poterò prendere dilecto con tuta la compagnia.”¹¹⁵

These and many other letters attest to the borrowing and lending of French texts within northern Italy. The exchange of manuscripts containing stories of Tristan, Lancilotto and Guillaume d’Orange show that both the romance and epic genres were popular; the romances especially were often read aloud in groups, “con tuta la compagnia.” Francesco’s letter supports the idea that a manuscript’s narrational goal was not necessarily bound to the text, but was rather in the ephemeral performance act of public reading. The exchange of manuscripts of French narrative material reveals an energetic reading and listening community and suggests that these manuscripts were not always intended for an audience whose native language was French. In Luchino’s letter, it

¹¹⁴ Cited in Daniela Delcorno Branca, *Tristano e Lancilotto in Italia: Studi di Letteratura Arturiana* (Ravenna: Longo editore, 1998), 31. “a novel telling of Tristan or Lancilotto or some other pleasant and delightful material... so I and the most noble and high Queen may draw comfort and pleasure, and so that we can ward off the boredom at sea.” (translation mine)

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 31. “French books to read and enjoy on the boat,” and “although I would sooner read books in Latin than in French, I can nonetheless enjoy the French books with the whole company.” (translation mine)

is clear that French was very much a *lingua franca* whose speaking community reached at least as far as Jerusalem.

The dialectic among both figurative and textual performance artifacts can also help identify and situate the fortune of narrative threads within a narrative community. An innovation of the Lombard romance-epic tradition is the story of Roland's infancy.

According to *Berta e Milone* and *Orlandino*, a pair of *chansons de geste* in the *Geste francor* manuscript, MS. Marc. Fr. XIII (=256), this legendary protagonist was born in Italy, in Imola. According to Francesco Zambon, the idea that Roland's birth and infancy is a narrative thread specific to Italy is reflected in the narration itself:

La sostanziale originalità delle parti dedicate a *Berta e Milon* e a *Rolandin* sembra confermata anche dal fatto che il nucleo principale della vicenda si svolge in Italia, e che, in particolare, è localizzata in Italia la nascita di Orlando.¹¹⁶

These two poems are often considered as a narrative unit; Leslie Zarker Morgan observes that "later versions of the story join the two as one plot," but adds that "in V¹³, they are separated by the *Enfances Ogier*; an illuminating consideration for the overall meaning and structure of V¹³."¹¹⁷ After Berta, Charles's half-sister, becomes pregnant by her lover Milon, they decide to escape to Italy. Once they arrive in Italy, the couple lives in a forest and Milon becomes a woodsman. Here, in Italy, Roland is born. The narrative thread as found in the V¹³ manuscript of Berta and Milon's escape to Italy, and the subsequent birth of Roland, is mirrored in a series of *bas-reliefs* in the façade of the cathedral at San Donnino. This series of panels, as noted by Rita Lejeune and Jacques Stiennon in *La*

¹¹⁶ Francesco Zambon, "La 'materia di Francia' nella letteratura franco-veneta," in *Sulle orme di Orlando: leggende e luoghi carolingi in Italia: i paladini di Francia nelle tradizioni italiane: una proposta storico-antropologica*, edited by A.I. Galletti and R. Roda (Padua: Interbooks, 1987), 55.

¹¹⁷ *La Geste Francor: Edition of the Chansons de geste of MS. Marc. Fr. XIII (=256)*, vol. 1, edited by Leslie Zarker Morgan (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009), 194.

Légende de Roland dans l'art du moyen âge, is to be read from right to left; “les scènes les plus profanes sont plus éloignées de la porte du sanctuaire.”¹¹⁸ The first panel depicts the illicit love between Berta and Milon; the two lovers take advantage of a moment when Charlemagne is out hunting (Figure 2.4): ¹¹⁹



Figure 2.4. First of three *bas-relief* panels on the façade of the cathedral at Borgo San Donnino. Milon and Berta act on their desire for one another while Charlemagne is away hunting.

¹¹⁸ Rita Lejeune and Jacques Stiennon, *La Légende de Roland dans l'art du moyen âge*, vol. 1 (Brussels: Arcade, 1966), 158.

¹¹⁹ Lejeune Stiennon, *La Légende de Roland*, vol. 2 (Brussels: Arcade, 1966), plates 129, 130, 131.

The passionate love affair is portrayed similarly in *Berta e Milon*, in V¹³:

Tant avoit Milon en soi gran belté,
Desor tot ren Berta li oit amé.
Si malament ne fo enamoré,
Mançer ni boir non poit a planté
Qe in son cor ne le sia sajelé.
Qe cun quela dame el avoit peçé;
De le en prist amor e amisté.¹²⁰

The intensity of the passion between these two lovers is portrayed in both the *bas-relief* and the textual representation in V¹³. In the panel, the position of Milon's left hand clearly demonstrates his lust for Berta, a passionate gesture echoed in the lines: "si malament ne fo enamoré, mançer ni boir non poit a planté, qe in son cor ne le sia sajelé." In V¹³, Berta is equally enamored: "desor tot ren Berta li oit amé." This reciprocal affection is also present in the panel, which portrays a woman who is not resisting the advances of her lover. Berta's raised right hand and the flower in her left hand are difficult to interpret, but these visual cues seem to underscore this lack of resistance; she would not be holding a flower to her heart if she were distressed. As Lejeune and Stiennon put it, "la princesse Berte [...] se laissa aimer par un simple chevalier."¹²¹

The next panel depicts Milon and Berta embracing in a forest, after they have fled Paris (Figure 2.5):

¹²⁰ Leslie Zarker Morgan, *Geste Francor*, pp. 638-39, ll. 9075-82. "So great was the beauty that Milon had in him, [that] Berta loved him above all others. She was so deeply in love [that] she couldn't eat or nourish herself enough, since [Milon] was so firmly in her heart. The thing went to the point that [Milon] sinned with that lady. From her he took love and friendship." Translated by Leslie Zarker Morgan, "The ORB: On-line Reference Book for Medieval Studies," accessed April 10, 2011, <http://www.the-orb.net/encyclop/culture/lit/italian/morgan4.html>.

¹²¹ Lejeune and Stiennon, *La légende de Roland*, vol. 1, 155.



Figure 2.5. Second of three *bas-relief* panels on the façade of the cathedral at Borgo San Donnino. Bertuccio and Milon’s night-time escape from Paris through the wooded forest.

The *bas relief* is again echoed in *Berta e Milon*, in V¹³:

Va s’en Milon e Berta l’insené;
 Son çamin oit ver Lonbardia pié.
 La noit çamine, e li jor oit polsé,
 Entro li bois e le selve ramé.¹²²

Again, the complicity of the lovers’ sentiments is evident both visually and textually. In the text, Berta is described as “l’insené” or the intelligent one, and perhaps the one responsible for devising the lovers’ escape. In the image, the reciprocal love between Berta and Milon is clearly portrayed as they embrace each other creating a perfectly symmetrical pattern. As in the text the lovers are shrouded in foliage, a setting that underscores the intimacy between the lovers and the transgression their act represents to the laws of their society.

¹²² Ibid., p. 644, ll. 9213-15. “Milon leaves, and Berta the intelligent one; they have taken their route toward Lombardy. They traveled during the night, and rested during the day, among copses and wooded forest.” (trans. Morgan)

The final panel portrays the young Roland or Orlandino and his father Milon, who is now a woodsman (Figure 2.6):



Figure 2.6. Last of three *bas-relief* panels on the façade of the cathedral at Borgo San Donnino. Milon the woodsman and his son Orlandino in the forest.

This last segment of the triptych too has a corresponding textual allusion in V¹³. In the *Orlandino* text, however, Milon the woodsman and his son Orlandino are not portrayed walking through the forest. Rather, they are already at their destination, standing before Charlemagne, who eventually discovers the identity of the young Roland and the whereabouts of Berta and Milon:

“Entendés moi, çentil enperer,
Dapoisqe de França eo m’avi sevrer,
E son esté en le bois converser,
A tajer legne e gran torse porter,

Por norir cest enfant e ma çentil muler...”¹²³

The close similarity between these textual and visual performance artifacts reveal two iterations of the Berta e Milon and Orlandino narrative threads and indicate a narrative cohesion within *Lombardia*. The physical testimony of manuscript and sculpture hint at a larger narrative space in which these stories would have been familiar. Non-textual artifacts like the bas-reliefs at San Donnino take on a role of performativity and become signs that are capable of invoking these narrative traditions that are common within a community. Lejeune and Stiennon propose an imaginative scenario in which these panels would have been retold by a *jongleur* to pilgrims who would have passed through Borgo San Donnino:

Comme un pèlerin de cette époque, écoutons donc la belle histoire de Berte et Milon. A l'étape même de Borgo San Donnino. Sur la place pavée de cailloux ronds, devant le dôme. Comme il se doit, le jongleur récite, tournant le dos à l'église. Et nous le regardons aussi sur la tour, instinctivement, les scènes de la frise. Elles sont surprenantes, très personnelles, bien plus que les grandes figures du portail. [...] Et nous suivons les scènes une après une, bloc de pierre après bloc de pierre...¹²⁴

This imagined scenario is akin to the frequently-evoked notion that stained-glass windows are the ‘bible of the poor’; the performance artifact is capable of activating the shared narrative fabric that binds a specific community.

Like the performance artifacts above, which are both artistic products of narrative cohesion and also signs that activate this cohesion, we can consider the hand-written codex as an artifact of narration. Unlike the printed book, however, the codex is the result

¹²³ Ibid., p. 726, ll. 11303-7. “Listen to me, gentle Emperor: since I had to leave France, I have been surviving in the woods cutting wood and bearing bundles, in order to nourish this child and my gentle wife.” (trans. Morgan)

¹²⁴ Lejeune and Stiennon, *La légende de Roland*, vol. 1, 155.

or artifact, in the etymological sense of the term, of the narrational act and not the vehicle of narration itself. If the experience of the modern *oeuvre* is the tactile silent moment between the reader and the book, we can say that the narrational goal stops within this experience and is the written word. The medieval codex, in comparison, is removed from its narrational goal, which is performance. Most vestiges of the narrative traditions surviving today are only secondary artifacts of the performative act. In the case of more *livresque* examples of manuscript production, such as the *Entrée d'Espagne* or the Berlin version of the *Huon d'Auvergne*, the hand-written and irreproducible manuscript can be said to be in and of itself a performance. Contrary to this notion, which considers the manuscript in relation to the performance act, the modern printed oeuvre is the act of narration itself whose performativity ordinarily disappears upon silent reading and becomes a private experience. Manuscript as performance, and manuscript as performance artifact, then, reveal the limitations scholarship faces when attempting to interpret within the boundaries of literacy not only the codex, but also the text contained within it. The performance act engages in active dialogue with reception and any extant manuscript would necessarily need to be interpreted within its specific narrative community.

Theorizing the notion of manuscript as an act of performance is, to summarize, useful in interpreting textual production as regionally specific, as a dynamic entity negotiated between and issuing from the dynamic between the performer and the audience. Second, manuscript as an act of performance reveals our own epistemological limitations and assumptions, especially those regarding language, book and nation. By

reconsidering these limitations, we are conceivably able to reshape the borders of literary teleologies and to imagine narrative spaces that are unique to a specific time and location, and not necessarily congruent with present-day national spaces.

By displacing the privileged moment of literary *poesis* from author figure to performance, we may sidestep a number of epistemological borders bound up within the culture of literacy: *oeuvre*, author, title, authoritative edition, original document, variant, and others. This shift also has the advantage of destabilizing ‘national canon,’ which can be understood as a network of all of the nationalizing borders that come together to politicize and include or exclude narratives on the basis of nation. The interpretative lens of a geography of narration is an attempt to look beyond these epistemological borders to re-read and re-interpret premodern narrative spaces as decolonized zones of cultural production that exist independently of nationalizing literary teleologies.

The notion of manuscript as performance is, in a sense, also a critique of and response to the influential and groundbreaking theories of Pierre Bec and Paul Zumthor, to which I called attention. I propose not only a geographically specific application of the general transmission and reception dynamics detailed by these scholars, but also a problematization of the terms ‘variability,’ ‘variation,’ and ‘variant,’ which lie at the heart of their contributions. These terms need to be reconsidered within a non-nationalizing interpretation of performativity, in which the concept of ‘original’—and consequently ‘variant,’ or deviation from an original—becomes moot. As I have shown, every reiteration of a narrative is what today we would term ‘original.’

To conclude, we may use this discussion of the Lombard romance-epic narrative cycle to trace permeable and fluid borders around an area encompassing more or less the entirety of north, north-east Italy, which distinguishes a narrative community with shared aesthetic and stylistic tendencies: *Lombardia*. In the next chapter, I will problematize and re-interpret the characteristic mixed-language aesthetic of the Lombard romance-epic within the context of a distinct Lombard narrative community.

CHAPTER III

WRITING AGAINST THE RULES: THE HYBRID LANGUAGE AESTHETIC OF THE LOMBARD NARRATIVE COMMUNITY

In the previous chapter, I discussed how premodern narrative spaces are made to conform to the modern epistemological boundaries of the modern nation-state and the static and reproducible printed book. Within the boundaries of nation, scholarly accounts of the medieval narrative past are unable to identify, much less to valorize, minority literary communities. Indeed, medieval narrative communities only become ‘minority’ when they come into contact, so to speak, with the hegemony of modern national historiographies, which create, institutionalize and promote imagined homogeneous literary canons. The present chapter will identify and investigate another important epistemological border affecting modern scholarly assessment of past narrative spaces: that of national language. The borders of language are linked inextricably to those of the nation-state and of the printed book and, as I will show, evoke the illusion of cultural purity in order to assert the mechanics of dominance. Here I will interrogate the notion of linguistic hybridity, which lies frequently at the heart of Franco-Italian scholarship. Like the notion of ‘minority,’ ‘linguistic hybridity’ is only possible if we assume the putative purity of modern national languages, implying as it does a diluted combination of two otherwise pure wholes. I will propose that the Franco-Italian hybrid language, which is

understood in modern scholarship solely as a linguistic entity, is in fact an artifact of the scholarship that aims to investigate it. To understand and interpret the aesthetic of the Lombard romance-epic, it will be necessary to recognize this hybrid language as neither hybrid nor a language, but rather as an expressive and poetic technique I will call modal enhancement. Modal enhancement is a result of the particular performance and reception cycle of the Lombard narrative community, and the hermeneutic code of the Lombard romance-epic is therefore a question of literary and not linguistic interpretation. My aim in this chapter is to reinterpret *Lombardia* as a decolonized narrative community and to identify its defining characteristics as they emerge through the cycle of performance, creation and reception. For this reason, Lombardia will be independent from the more critically recognized narrative spheres of Tuscany and Sicily; the notion of a linear influence of one literary tradition upon another will not function in my articulation of Lombardia as narrative community.

***“Con mezzi eclettici”*: Lombardia as an Independent Literary Tradition**

Italian literary histories generally account for the Lombard romance-epic corpus as a prologue tradition anticipating the vibrant Renaissance epic works of Ariosto and Boiardo, which are lauded as the felicitous culmination of the medieval romance and epic traditions. Even if the literary innovation of Lombard literature has so often been glossed over, it has not been entirely overlooked. Gianfranco Contini, in his *Poeti del '200*, writes of a “ricerca di espressività con mezzi eclettici, principalmente vernacolari, che caratterizza l’umanesimo volgare nella Marca gioiosa e a Padova fra la generazione di

Dante e di Cino.”¹²⁵ Contini observes that within the context of the Lombard poem “Auliver” “la stratificazione culturale della Marca non potrebb’essere più vivacemente rappresentata.”¹²⁶ In fact, within the first strophe of the poem, we can see the stratification and eclecticism typical of much of the literary production of the thirteenth- and especially the fourteenth-century Lombard tradition:

En rima greuf a far, dir e stravolger
 tut che de li savii eu s’ia il men savio,
 volgr’ il mio sen un poch metr’ e desvolger,
 ché de ço far ai trop long temp stad gravio:
 ch’el me conven sul lad dei plangent volger,
 a cui Amor se mostra fello e sdravio,
 che sempremai li soi destrusse e pugna;
 und’eo tengn mat quel ch’in tal ovra frugna:
 ché, quand el def bon guiderdon receiver,
 se non de mal aver se pò percever.¹²⁷

In this first strophe, we find Occitanisms (*greuf*, *stravolger*), Gallicisms (*ai*), Venetianisms (*gravio*) and elements of the Trevisan / Bellunese dialects (*frugna*). Beyond interpreting the Occitanisms and Gallicisms as linguistic hybridity, we must consider also and perhaps most importantly the thematic weight the Occitan and French elements bring to the poetry of northern Italy. The troubadour diaspora and the subsequent use of Occitan linguistic elements and literary *topoi* are congruent with the court cultures in which Lombard lyric poetry was produced, and it is within this aesthetic climate that we must then interpret not only many of the works of the Paduan humanist school but also the

¹²⁵ Contini, *I poeti del '200* (Milan: R. Ricciardi, 1960), 507.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 508.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 509. “In a rhyme difficult to make, to say and to inflect / since I am, of all the masters, the least capable, / I would like to apply my art here / because I have desired to for a long time now. / I must consider those wretched ones / to whom Love is cruel and pitiless; / Love, who always destroys his faithful. / For this reason, I consider crazy the person who is occupied with such matters: / for when he deserves a good compensation, / he may find himself having only a bad one.” (my translation)

Lombard romance-epic. It is the Lombard romance-epic that elaborates the *mezzi eclettici* by integrating to a far greater degree French lexical and morphological elements (and abandoning Occitanisms) to achieve an aesthetic and literary aim. Here French functions not as a language but as a ‘narrative mode’ and confers a patina of chivalry, feudalism and epic feats, all of which are evoked with the use of French lexical and morphological elements.

Scholars such as Holtus, Wunderli, Renzi, and Roncaglia recognized the ennobling function the French language brings to Lombard romance-epic texts, as well as the link between language and literary genre.¹²⁸ I will elaborate on their observations on the link between narrative mode and language, and propose that as a narrative mode French was not foreign, but rather proper, to the Lombard romance-epic narrative space. Here I will also explore how ‘narrative modes’ function according to medieval language theory and what they reveal about the relationship between language and political identity in pre-national contexts.

Other recent scholarship has sought to revisit the present understanding of Lombard literary production and has returned to investigate the question of how French narrative traditions originally arrived in Lombardia. Scholars have begun to question the claim that French narratives arrived from the west through Piedmont, and to explore the possibility of transmission to northeast Italy from the German courts in the North. This is an important step in understanding how the Lombard narrative community functions

¹²⁸ Günter Holtus and Peter Wunderli, “Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne,” in *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, t. 1 and 2, fascicule 10, directed by Rita Lejeune, Jeanne Wathélet-Willem, Henning Krauss (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 2005); Lorenzo Renzi, “Il francese come lingua letteraria e il franco-lombardo. L’epica carolingia nel Veneto,” in *Storia della Cultura Veneta: Dalle origini al trecento* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 1976), 563-589; Aurelio Roncaglia “La letteratura franco-veneta,” in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. II (Milan: Garzanti, 1965). 727-59

outside of nationalizing epistemological spaces, since it challenges the interpretation that Lombard literature is somehow a detour or anomaly in Italian literary history. In her book, *Il frammento inedito "Resplendente stella de albur" di Giacomino Pugliese e la poesia italiana delle origini*, an insightful and progressive study on her discovery of the oldest example of the Sicilian school poetry, Giuseppina Brunetti reminds us of the importance of the French romance tradition in the German court of Henry VII (1211 - 1242) and of his successor Conrad IV (1228 - 1254), and traces the transmission of the romances of Chrétien de Troyes from the courts in Germany to the culturally active sphere of Aquilea in northeast Italy. Two fresco cycles, in Schmalkalden and in the castle of Rodenect, both from the first half of the thirteenth century, attest to this alternative route of transmission. These frescoes have affinities with the Aquilean and Venetian schools of painting and depict narrative elements of Hartmann von Aue's *Iwien*, the German version of Chrétien de Troyes' *Yvain, ou le chevalier au lion*. This confluence of narrative and artistic traditions testifies to the flourishing cultural transmission between the German courts and Lombardia, and prove that through these performance artifacts ---- the frescoes of Schmalkalden and Rodenect ---- the narrative thread of the knight Yvain was familiar within this particular narrative community.¹²⁹ According to Brunetti the Friulian region, a crossroads of language and literatures, is an area yet to be considered for its importance in the diffusion of literature in the vernacular.¹³⁰ Investigations into the literary importance of the Friulian region would expose the independent trajectory Lombard literature took alongside other contemporary cultural spheres of the Italian

¹²⁹ Brunetti, *Il frammento inedito 'Resplendente stella de albur,'* 128.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 134.

peninsula. The economic and political ties the German courts maintained with the Veneto open an alternative way in which French and French narrative traditions would have arrived and assimilated into the narrative community of northeast Italy.¹³¹

Avoiding epistemological boundaries of national space, textuality and national language, and keeping in mind the vibrant tradition of modal enhancement as a compositional strategy in not only lyric poetry, but also sermons and didactic treatises, I will investigate how the Lombard romance-epic genre was able to develop and elaborate its defining characteristics within the performance dynamics of the Lombard narrative community. In my survey and analysis of the Lombard literary tradition, I will use genre as an organizational tool for understanding the production and developments of the literary aesthetics, *topoi*, themes and compositional strategies of the Lombard narrative community. The tradition of using French spans nearly 200 years from approximately 1250, the date of the first extant Lombard text to use French, the hunting treatise *Maomin et Ghatrif*, to 1441, the completion date of the last Lombard romance-epic text, the Turin version of the *Huon d'Auvergne*. In the Lombard literary tradition, the main generic categories of production include the didactic text and treatise (e.g., *Proverbia super natura feminarum*); mercantile records; sermons; historiographic texts (e.g. *Les estoires de Venise*); lyric poetry (e.g., by Bertolomè Zorzi, Sordello, Nicolò de' Rossi); romance (e.g. *Le roman de Belris et Machabia*); and romance-epic (e.g., *L'Aquilon de Bavière*, *La geste Francor*, *L'Entrée d'Espagne*). In keeping with the previous discussion, I use these generic borders with caution and assume a certain degree of permeability.

¹³¹ For more on the economic ties between Venice and the German courts, see Brunetti's discussion of Gerhard Rösch, *Venedig und das Reich* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1982). Brunetti, *Il frammento inedito*, 129.

***“La langue française cort parmi le monde”*: French as Communication**

The use of French is a defining characteristic of the Lombard romance-epic genre and functions alongside other linguistic entities such as Latin, Friulian, Dalmatian, the gallo-italian group of dialects, and the Tuscan idiom, which was increasingly prominent over the course of the fourteenth century. Because of this rich intermingling of linguistic entities, the composition of the Lombard romance-epic texts presents modern scholarship with a philological jigsaw puzzle. However, scholarship has not established a working definition of ‘French’ as it was used before French was a national standardized language; the underlying assumption is that ‘French’ has always indicated geographic provenance (i.e. a language from France, spoken by the French). In primary sources it is clear that the French language was proper to a European community that extended far beyond the limits of the modern French territory. For Martin da Canal, who composed his *Estoires de Venise* in French between 1267 and 1275, French was indeed a language that had a broad currency: “la langue française cort parmi le monde” [the French language travels the world over].¹³² Brunetto Latini, in his encyclopedic treatise *Li livres dou tresor*, is a little more ambiguous on the matter, writing that he uses French to write his treatise for two reasons: “l’une que nos sommes en France; l’autre por ce que la parole est plus delitables & plus comunes a tous langage.”¹³³ Brunetto, writing as an exile in France, indicates that French, aside from being aesthetically pleasing, is also more common than all other

¹³² See Martin da Canal, *Les Estoires de Venise* (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1972), I.I.

¹³³ Brunetto Latini, *Li Livre dou tresor*, edited by Spurgeon Baldwin and Paul Barrette (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), I.I.7.

languages, *plus comunes a tous lingages*. However, whether Brunetto intends *lingages* to mean “languages” or “peoples,” as in the French *lignages*, is ambivalent and the manuscript tradition reflects this confusion. The second sense would indicate that the French language is common to a greater number of peoples. Polycarpe Chabaille, in his 1863 edition, follows a manuscript reading that reflects this second sense: “plus commune à toutes gens.” Chabaille also notes another manuscript variant that reads “tous languages.”¹³⁴ The ambivalence in this passage underscores the wide geographical purview of French as a mode of communication. From these two sources, Martin and Brunetto, it would be difficult to link French solely to a people and a geographic area; it becomes clear that there existed a community of francophone readers and speakers that extended beyond the confines of France and that French was a *lingua franca* of the period. As Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet points out, “there are many ways of saying ‘French’ to designate a language in the Middle Ages; when it is in fact used, the term *français* encompasses concepts of varying breadth.”¹³⁵

In this discussion, I will use ‘French’ to refer not to the modern linguistic category, which is linked to nation and identity, but to the group of dialects comprising the *langue d’oil*, which was not only specific to what is now the Ile-de-France region, but was a *lingua franca* spoken throughout the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Mediterranean and Europe. Similarly, I will use the term ‘Occitan’ to refer to the *langue d’oc* as both a literary koiné and as a natural spoken language. French, as it will become

¹³⁴ Brunetto Latini, *Li Livres dou tresor*, edited by Polycarpe Chabaille (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1863), 3.

¹³⁵ Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, “Language, Literature, and Identity in the Middle Ages,” in *French Global: A New Approach to Literary History*, edited by Christie McDonald and Susan Rubin Suleiman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 339.

clear, was not only valued as a language of communication among many communities beyond the borders of modern-day North France, but was also prized as an aesthetically pleasing language. For these reasons, the use of French falls into two categories: communication and aesthetics. The use of French either as a narrative modality that evokes the thematic program associated with the *chanson de geste* tradition, or as a means to communicate with the largest possible audience, is determined by audience and performance dynamics. On the one hand, French is used by a Lombard redactor to address a pan-romance audience, thus addressing a larger francophone narrative community beyond the borders of the Lombard narrative community. On the other hand, French is used aesthetically as a narrative mode to address a local Lombard reading and listening audience and thus responds to the literary tastes of this narrative community.

Like Brunetto Latini, Martin da Canal also chooses to compose in French for both communicative and aesthetic criteria. Martin da Canal claims to commit to writing his chronicle in order that “elle ne soit onques mais obliee et que il soit en remembrance a tosjors mais a tos ciaux qui sont orendroit au siecle et a tos ciaux qui doivent avenir.”¹³⁶ The French narrative community, comprising all those who are able at least to read or understand spoken French, assured a certain degree of stability for Martin da Canal. In an age when “French was more common than all other languages,” his choice to compose in French meant that his chronicle would not be forgotten. Martin makes it clear that his choice of language aims to address a large audience base ---- a francophone narrative macro community. Martin, like Brunetto, also cites French as being the most pleasant-

¹³⁶ Martin da Canal, *Estoires*, I.I.

sounding language: “le français ... est la plus delitable a lire et a oïr que nule autre.”¹³⁷

Even if both these works mention both the aesthetic and the communicative benefits of writing in French, the more important of the two is the wide currency the French language afforded Martin and Brunetto.

An even earlier instance in which a Lombard author chooses French to address the widest possible audience ---- a francophone narrative community ---- is found in the prologue to the hunting treatise *Maomin et Ghatrif*, translated into French in 1249 by Daniel Deloc for king Enzo of Sardinia. In contrast to Martin and Brunetto, Daniel Deloc does not cite the vast currency of French or its *delitable* quality, but rather excuses himself for perhaps not writing in a perfectly sound idiom:

je, qi sa semoinse preing et doi prendre par destroit comandemant, com cil qi sui sieus liges serf e qi a lui m’aten dou tot, ensi com se doit attendre liges homes et serf a naturel segnor, tot soie je de povre letreüre et de povre science garniç e tot soit greveuse chose a ma lange prefferre le droit françois por ce qu lombard sui, m’en entremetrai seüremant de buen cuer et volentiers a tot le miels qe je le savrai fere.¹³⁸

Daniel Deloc’s concern for the quality of his French is illuminating here because it is a concern for the comprehensibility of his expression, his ability to compose in *droit françois*, or correct French. This concern underscores the practical and communicative value French plays in diffusing the contents of the treatise. The translator, who identifies himself as a Lombard, is writing not only for King Enzo, but for a francophone narrative

¹³⁷ Ibid., I.I

¹³⁸ Håkan Tjerneld, ed., *Moamin et Ghatrif* (Stockholm: C.E. Fritze, 1945), 96. “I, who obey his orders and must do so by firm command, like the faithful servant I am who owes him everything, just as one must expect between a liege vassal and serf, and his natural lord; although I am equipped only with poor letters and poor learning and since it is a difficult thing that, because I am Lombard, to prefer French to my own language, I nevertheless willingly and with good intention undertake the task [of translating] to the best of my abilities.” (translation mine)

community that evidently extends well beyond the Ile-de-France. Daniel's anxiety for a sound idiom and the examples of Brunetto and Martin reveal a category of texts whose wide communicability hinges upon the French language. Even if in scholarship these texts are grouped alongside Lombard romance-epic texts as 'Franco-Italian,' the two groups of texts use French in a fundamentally different way. I will use the term 'matrix language' to refer to the language in a mixed-language text that bears the communicative freight and is responsible for delivering the message. The introduction of the secondary language may not be intentional (as is the case with Brunetto, Martin and Daniel) and would be perceived as hindering comprehension, or its use may be deliberate and function aesthetically and must therefore be considered within the bounds of literary and not linguistic interpretation. To refer to the French of the first group of texts, those whose matrix language is French, I will use the term 'French-as-communication;' to refer to the French of those mixed-language texts whose matrix language is an Italianate language, I will use the term 'French-as-aesthetic.' Those texts using French-as-communication will always use French as the matrix language; those texts that use French-as-aesthetic, including the Lombard romance-epic corpus, may have as the matrix language either French or an Italianate language. In this case, French will always be used aesthetically as a stylistic device and / or to evoke an element of satire or political commentary.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ For a discussion on the debate surrounding communicability and comprehensibility of French texts in northern Italy, see Busby, *Codex and Context: Reading Old French Verse Narrative in Manuscript*, Vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 602-604.

***“Le plus delitable a lire”*: French-as-Aesthetic**

French-as-aesthetic is a characteristic and innovative element of the Lombard narrative community. That French in this literary sphere is prescribed for narrative modes associated with Carolingian epic and Arthurian romance is not in itself innovative, but the choice by Lombard poets to use an Italianate matrix language with a patina of French-as-aesthetic for many romance-epic texts is indeed a development unique to this narrative community. Because of the wide spectrum that exists in the use of French, from patina to matrix language, we know that the Lombard romance-epic tradition had a *qualità interclassista*, to use the phrase of Ruggiero Ruggieri, and was used in texts intended for both literate and illiterate audiences, and for both courtly audiences and an audience in a public piazza.¹⁴⁰ The proportion of French lexical and morphological elements in the different texts of the Lombard romance-epic corpus may be interpreted within the framework of performativity, and I will investigate specific examples of how reception, creation and performance yield varying degrees of modal enhancement.

One such example is the *Aquilon de Bavière*, a prose epic-romance by Raffaele da Verona. This text appears in the Estense library catalogue made in the year 1437 and was composed between the end of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth. It is the latest example of the Lombard romance-epic tradition using French-as-aesthetic, even if its prologue gives evidence of the growing hegemony of the Tuscan paradigm. The prologue concludes by addressing the reasons why the author chooses to write in French:

¹⁴⁰ Ruggiero Ruggieri, “Origine, struttura, caratteri del franco-veneto,” *Orbis* 10 (1961): 20-30.

Ma nota qui c'el me convien lassare
La dolce rime d'otto versi in canto
Per non vollar l'istoria perlongare.
I lasero le rime qui da canto
Por che i prosa voglio comenzare,
Che per mie rime non me darei vanto
Seguir l'istoria tanto gientilescha;
Pero comenzero in lingua francescha.¹⁴¹

Raffaele, not confident about his ability to narrate concisely in verse, abandons Tuscan and gives in to the convention of using French in his prose narrative. This convention, noted most famously by Dante in his *De vulgari eloquentia*, identifies French as the idiom of prose narrative on epic and chivalric themes, and Tuscan and Occitan as the idioms of verse on lyric themes. The suitability of French for specific modes of narration, or genres, is clearly still in place at the time Raffaele da Verona composes, between 1379 and 1407, and seems to indicate that this was a distinction shared widely, from Tuscany to Lombardy.

In the opening to his French prose *roman*, Raffaele further elaborates on his choice of French: “E pour caver malanconie e doner dellit e giogie a ceus che unt giantil coragie, l'ai redute in lingue che pora esre intandue da homes e da dames literés e non literés.”¹⁴² In this second reprise, Raffaele does not mention again that French is the linguistic mode for his narrative, but he does write that he rendered (*redute*) the matter *in lingue*, which is comprehensible to both a literate and illiterate audience. He states, too,

¹⁴¹ Raffaele da Verona, *Aquilon de Bavière*, edited by Peter Wunderli (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1982), 5. “But take note that here I must leave / the sweet eight line rhyme in canto because I do not want to prolong the story. / I will here leave rhyme aside / because I wish now to begin in prose, / for I wouldn't claim to follow the noble story / with my rhymes; / for this reason I will begin in the French language.” (translation mine)

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 6. “An in order to root out melancholy and to give delight and joy to those who have a noble heart, I rendered it into a language that will be understood by men and women lettered and unlettered alike.” (translation mine)

that he did so to take away melancholy (*caver malanconie*) and to give pleasure and joy to those with noble hearts (*doner dellit e giogie a deus che unt giantil coragie*). The French narrative mode in which the matter is conveyed takes on an edifying quality because of the choice of language, and noble hearts (*giantil coragie*) of seemingly any degree of learning and any gender (*da homes e da dames literés et non literés*) are able to enjoy and benefit from his tale.

This prologue offers a wealth of information in regards to the function French had as a language even up to the beginning of the fifteenth century. It is first of all interesting that Raffaele uses the term *lingue* without again mentioning the language he employs by name. This suggests that French as a narrative mode, a language used aesthetically to convey literature with sentiments of nobility, was not a foreign idiom to this audience and within this narrative community; French was the language, *lingue*, most fitting and most natural for the narrative material the author sets out to convey and it is sufficient to use the generic *lingue*. Interestingly, too, Raffaele uses *lingue* without an article and thus makes the idea of “language” less specific and further opens the *lingua francesca* to the possibility of being a locally specific narrative modality.

Before Holtus, Wunderli, Renzi and Roncaglia, Franco-Italian scholarship had recognized, as early as 1896, the link between linguistic mode and the intended patina of nobility; Vincenzo Crescini observed that French was inseparable from the *materia eroica e romanzesca* and therefore conveyed qualities of this *matière* as a stylistic mode

of composition.¹⁴³ Günter Holtus agrees with Crescini's observation, yet believes we are lacking a complementary explanation in order to explore the phenomenon in depth:

Fondamentalement, le postulat selon lequel l'utilisation de la langue française est à expliquer par le fait que le français était considéré comme indissociable de la *materia eroica e romanzesca* est lui aussi correcte; tel quel, il n'est cependant valable que pour une partie de la littérature franco-italienne et demande à être complété si l'on veut expliquer l'ensemble du phénomène.¹⁴⁴

Like Holtus, I believe that this pattern is valid only for a specific category of texts written in French in the north of Italy. Accordingly, I propose separating the disciplinary notion of *Franco-Italian* into at least two major divisions. By following an organization according to genre and audience, we are able to delineate two major branches of French textual production in Lombardy and associate these divisions with two basic purposes: *Franco-Italian* texts are intended for a broad pan-romance audience and use French-as-communication, and *Lombard romance-epic* texts are intended for a local audience (literate or illiterate) and employ French-as-aesthetic, a French narrative modality especially adapted for this audience (Figure 3.1.). The way in which Lombard romance-epic texts interact in performance-audience dynamics is fundamentally different from other texts whose principal goal is to communicate clearly and efficiently. The Lombard romance-epic uses French to invite the reader or listener to interact with the text and to explore meanings and allusions that are not immediately apparent. As Leslie Zarker

¹⁴³ Vincenzo Crescini, "Di Nicolò di Verona," in *Románica fragmenta: Scritti scelti dall'autore* (Turin: G. Chiantore, 1932), 361.

¹⁴⁴ Holtus and Wunderli, "Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne," 52.

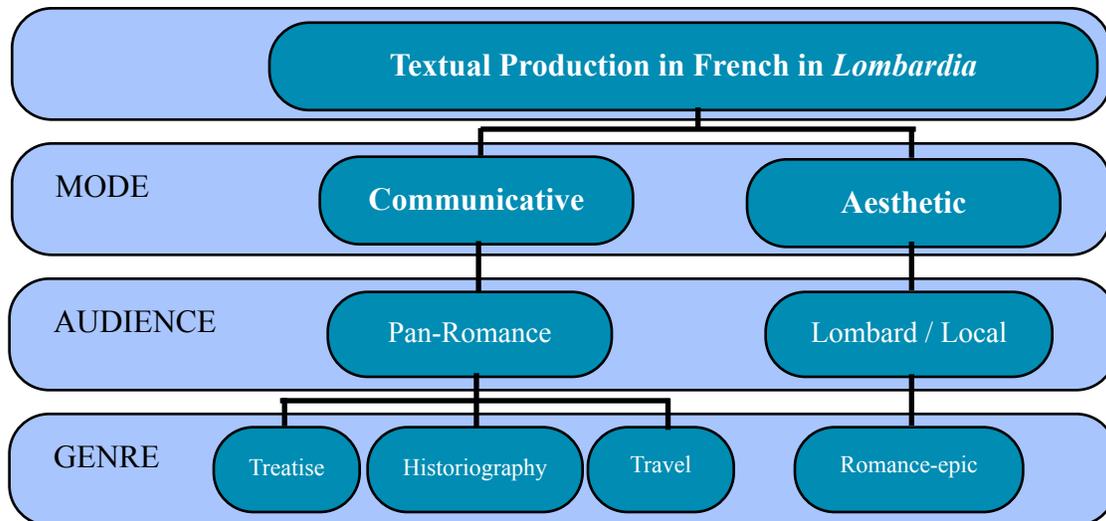


Figure 3.1: Textual Production in French in *Lombardia*

Morgan observes, it is important to bear in mind then that these texts, usually elaborating Carolingian epic themes, were written by northern Italians for a northern Italian audience.¹⁴⁵ The Lombard romance-epic text, even if the matrix language is French, necessarily uses French to achieve a secondary aim, one we might surmise to be literary, political, satirical, nostalgic, etc.; clearly these texts drew upon a collective tradition, or awareness, within the Lombard narrative community of narrative threads and stylistic turns associated with the French narrative mode.

An important question remains: how did the French narrative mode work at a literary level, beyond simple linguistic hybridity? I see the use of French-as-aesthetic as inextricably linked to the social realities of the Lombard narrative community, even if it is often difficult to identify precise ways in which these realities interact with specific texts. Hennig Krauss divides the social context in which the Lombard narrative

¹⁴⁵ Leslie Zarker Morgan, ed., *La geste francor: edition of the chansons de geste of MS. Marc. Fr. XIII (=256)* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2009), 24.

community emerges into three chronological phases: a first phase in which epic material is essentially copied from the French tradition and in which the feudal social system remains intact; a second phase that corresponds to the increasing influence of the bourgeois class and begins to present changes and alterations to the feudal hierarchies in the epic text; and a third phase that sees the rich bourgeois class rise to power, distancing itself from lower levels of society.¹⁴⁶ Although these social factors identified by Krauss are important in interpreting the textual tradition within the society of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Lombardia, this three-fold diachronic vision of the tradition proves to be problematic. This system of classification, found previously in the textual typology of Viscardi-Bertoni (1941) and later revised by Holtus, imposes a teleological framework in which copied text leads back to original document, and in which epic leads forward to romance.¹⁴⁷ Whether we are to understand the Holtus typology as synchronic or diachronic is not entirely clear, though he does seem to favor a synchronic understanding of the Franco-Italian typology in his more recent work “Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne,” a fascicule of the *Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters* (2005): “il serait cependant faux de conclure de cet exemple [the three versions of the *Huon d’Auvergne*] que l’italianisation est corrélée de façon plus ou moins régulière avec le cours du temps.”¹⁴⁸ Leslie Zarker Morgan most recently states that “it must be emphasized that the division of the text types is not chronological by any means: copies

¹⁴⁶ Hennig Krauss, *Epica feudale e pubblico borghese. Per la storia di Carlomagno in Italia* (Padua: Liviana, 1980), 217.

¹⁴⁷ Chapter I, p. 14.

¹⁴⁸ Holtus and Wunderli, “Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne,” in *Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, vol. 3, tome 1/2, fasc. 10, directed by Rita Lejeune, Jeanne Wathelet-Willem, and Henning Krauss (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2005), 31.

were made at different levels of italianization near the same time.”¹⁴⁹ In my analysis of the Lombard corpus, I will adopt this latter view since first, as Zarker Morgan points out, the uncertain dates of individual manuscripts makes chronological analysis difficult; second, I see no reason to believe that epic and romance did not in fact coexist in the Lombard literary community. This observation follows Sarah Kay’s findings that there existed a dialectic between the two genres.¹⁵⁰ Following similar conclusions in the previous chapter, it is clear that the borders between epic and romance were permeable and mutable, and informed and interacted with one another. The term ‘Lombard epic-romance’ will posit that all extant Lombard manuscripts in the genre belong to an epic-to-romance spectrum in which the epic / romance dialectic is always potentially present and in which generic hybridity is always present to varying degrees. I find that the presence of generic hybridity, which is a phenomenon of the period throughout Europe and not specific to Lombardia, functions alongside the above socio-political considerations and that these considerations can be used as a hermeneutic tool in interpreting the parody, satire and commentary latent within the Lombard epic-romance text.¹⁵¹ It is also within this framework that we must interpret the use of French as a narrative mode. Having posited that French existed at two levels—the communicative and the aesthetic—I will now turn to medieval linguistic treatises to explore how French functioned not as a language but rather at a literary level as a narrative mode. This analysis will challenge the

¹⁴⁹ Leslie Zarker Morgan, ed., *Geste francor*, 20.

¹⁵⁰ Sarah Kay, *The Chansons de Geste in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

¹⁵¹ An excellent example of this phenomenon, which merits further investigation, is the example of the Lombard romance-epic the *Entrée d’Espagne*.

modern scholarly notion of ‘hybridity’ and demonstrate that this construct functions along nationalizing linguistic borders.

Horizontal and Vertical Interpretations of Linguistic Variance

The unique mixed language character of the Lombard romance-epic has garnered the majority of scholarly attention since the emergence of Franco-Italian studies in the mid-nineteenth century. Franco-Italian scholarship, as I have shown, matured in the shadow of *fin-de-siècle* nationalist ideologies and, in response to the modern nation-state’s attempt at a self-fashioning, medieval philology merged with the nationalist cause to bolster the illusion of national purity by creating the temporal boundaries necessary to identify and describe the medieval hybrid other. Just as the French nation fortified its national spatial boundaries against the backdrop of a racially diverse empire spanning the world’s continents, it also distanced the temporal other by placing it behind the boundary of the medieval. When the Lombard manuscript corpus came into contact with nineteenth-century philological inquiry, its temporal superior, it assumed the identity of a ‘Franco-Italian hybrid language,’ a *Mischsprache* to use the term of Aldolfo Mussafia.¹⁵² The putative linguistic impurity of the Lombard romance-epic idiom was at odds with national linguistic and literary identity and stood as a bastardized half-identity beyond the borders of France.

More recent scholarship, especially that following the 1989 symposium on the Franco-Italian epic that resulted in the publication *Testi, cotesti e contesti*, has considered

¹⁵² Aldolfo Mussafia, ed., *Altfranzösische Gedichte aus venezianischen Handschriften. I. La Prise de Pampeline; II. Macaire* (Vienna: Druck un Verlag von Carl Gerold’s Sohn, 1864), v-vi.

linguistic hybridity in a more favorable light, and it has increasingly been suggested that hybridity is an intentional poetic strategy of the Franco-Italian literary redactor.¹⁵³ On this point, Roncaglia suspects an intentional deformity in order to maintain communication with the audience, and he links this deformity specifically to the narrative mode of the *chansons de geste*:

per una canzone di gesta, per un poema narrativo, è indispensabile che gli uditori possano seguire il filo della narrazione: in questo caso, un certo grado d'intenzionalità nella deformazione, quale necessaria concessione al livello del pubblico, è insomma tutt'altro che escluso.¹⁵⁴

Roncaglia's observation may be interpreted in the linguistic framework I have proposed, in which the matrix language facilitates communication and the patina of French carries an aesthetic and ennobling function. In a performed narrative, the communicative message must negotiate with an intentional deformation of the text or, as I prefer to call it, an intentional enhancement of the narrative thread with the introduction of the French narrative mode. The performance and audience dynamic determine the outcome of this compromise and involves varying degrees of mixing of linguistic forms, corresponding to the audience's capacity to understand spoken or written French. If the French narrative mode did not add depth to the literary interpretation of the text, there would be no reason for the redactor to depart from the matrix language in any way: the French patina, in short, enriches the text with additional meaning. In this way, Rajna's claim that the poet *volle ma non seppe*, or wanted to write in French but was not able to, becomes in current

¹⁵³ Testi, *cotesti e contesti del franco-italiano. Atti del 1° simposio franco-italiano (Bad Homburg, 13-16 aprile 1987)*, edited by Günter Holtus, Hans Krauß and Peter Wunderli (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1989).

¹⁵⁴ Aurelio Roncaglia, "La letteratura franco-veneta," in *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. 2, edited by Emilio Checchi and Natalino Sapegno (Milan: Garzanti, 1965), 737-38.

scholarly interpretation a poet who simply *non volle*, did not in fact want to write in a ‘standard’ French.¹⁵⁵ The Franco-Italian literary redactor, regardless of his or her knowledge of French, was operating uniquely within the boundaries of the Lombard narrative community.

An interpretation of the Lombard romance-epic corpus through the lens of modal enhancement is especially difficult from a modern reader’s point of view because linguistic elements such as orthography and lexical choice have since become standardized and have taken on political implications.¹⁵⁶ Literate borders of standard national languages have obfuscated scholarly assessments not only of the Lombard romance-epic, but also of other medieval and early modern narrative spaces. In his book *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe*, Peter Burke explores how the cohabitation of national identity and language takes form from the advent of the printing press to the nineteenth century.¹⁵⁷ The link between the two, intensifying especially over the course of the nineteenth century, becomes solid to the point that today it is inconceivable to speak of national identity without reference to a national language. The result of this *soudure* of nation and language is evident in multilingual countries today, where tensions gather around issues of language and identity. In the framework of nation, language assumes the illusion of purity through such tools and mechanisms as dictionaries and grammatical standardization. By the same token, mixing two linguistic

¹⁵⁵ “Fu il rimatore che volle ma non seppe comporre in lingua d’oil.” Pio Rajna, cited in Viscardi, *La letteratura franco-italiana*, 45.

¹⁵⁶ Günter Holtus, *Zu Versuchen der Kodifizierung einer romanischen Kunstsprache: Franco-Italienisch. Zum Stand der Kodifizierung romanischer Kleinsprache* (Tübingen: G. Narr, 1991), 105-118.

¹⁵⁷ Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 2004.

entities becomes a bastardization of identity, a composite product of two or more fragmented wholes.

In discussing the mechanics of modal enhancement, I will refer to ‘horizontal’ and ‘vertical’ linguistic variance. With ‘horizontal linguistic variance,’ linguistic entities are metonymous with speech and narrative communities that share a perceived normative language; linguistic difference is spread horizontally throughout space and each language is perceived as a distinct system that is assigned to a geographic space. With ‘vertical linguistic variance,’ different linguistic entities are stratified within one speech or narrative community. In this situation of poliglossia, all of these linguistic levels are available to a speaker or author of such a community not as foreign linguistic elements, but rather as linguistic modalities proper to this community. In the case of the Lombard romance-epic, I am interested in the vertical alignment of narrative modes and not everyday spoken languages. The French narrative mode, for example, may be layered over the Italianate matrix language and the result is an embedding of French lexical and morphological items within the narration. In this system, French and the local Italianate dialect are both used by Lombard poets for a Lombard audience, and both French and the Italianate dialect are proper to the same narrative community.

Cultural production purposefully creates or imitates hybrid linguistic systems in order to achieve humor or to tag a narrative subject as inferior or foreign. To take a modern example, we might use one of the final scenes to Roberto Benigni’s film *Non ci resta che piangere* to identify the mechanisms behind linguistic hybridity as a satirical tool to provoke a knee-jerk reaction in a modern audience that subscribes to the national

illusion of a “pure” language. In this scene the two lead characters Saverio (Roberto Benigni) and Mario (Massimo Troisi), who have both been inexplicably transported back in time to the year 1492, are in a Spanish tavern and are en route to stop Christopher Columbus in his tracks. Saverio, a high school history teacher, believes that if he can stop Columbus’ voyage he can not only prevent the calamitous clash of worlds that results from the discovery of the western hemisphere, but he can also prevent his sister’s unhappy marriage to a chauvinistic American. In the tavern, Saverio and Mario encounter a woman warrior named Astriaha (Iris Peynado), who is charged with protecting the Spanish borders until Columbus has successfully set sail. Saverio and Mario recognize the warrior, having had a run-in with her and her steel-tipped arrows some days before, and, in a panic, attempt to assume Spanish identities to conceal their true origin. The result is a humorous hybridization of Spanish with Italian:

Saverio: Non gli gusta nientos.

Astriaha: Ustedes son españoles?

S: Como nos? Tutto duos somos spagnolos puros. Tutto duos.

A: De donde?

S: Eh, io de Madrids... nativos, nativos! Perchè sono uno che gira parecchios tutto lo partes.

A: Y usted?

S: (to Mario) Eh... de dove seis? (whispers) Io ho detto di Madrid.

Mario: ummmm... Ugalos.

A: Ugalos!?

S: Ugalos, non conosci Ugalos!? E un piccolissimo paesinos viciniis... ummmm... a Ualos, difficilissimo trovarlos nella cartinas... provinca de Grenadas. Ha una casas.

A: Ah!

S: (to Mario) Che se dice a Ugalos?

M: Eh, nientes... se dice... Olè!¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Roberto Benigni, *Non ci resta che piangere*, 1984. Clip may be viewed on youtube.com: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHCimcrKSXs>

This scene engages with the linguistic assumptions of the modern viewer to construct its humor and parody. These assumptions involve the imagined purity of national language communities, whose difference occurs geographically along a horizontal axis: Italy and Spain. The humor in this scene arises from the incongruence or dissonance that occurs when the separate and horizontally aligned Italian and Spanish linguistic identities are awkwardly melded into a hybrid linguistic identity. The restricted communicative abilities of Mario and Severio, however, underscore how non-normative speech is perceived in a negative light when linguistic variance occurs along a horizontal axis.

Instances of non-normative language and horizontal dissonance between speech communities are also common in medieval texts. Like the example of Benigni, these texts portray comic situations through the mixing of languages and through an amplification of the subject's *foreignness*. William Calin, in his article "Obscene Anglo-Norman in a Central French Mouth; or, How Renart the Fox Tricks Isengrin the Wolf, and Why It Is Important," highlights a particularly colorful example of non-normative language used to provoke laughter.¹⁵⁹ In Branch Ib of the *Roman de Renart*, dating from the late twelfth century, Renart the fox attempts to disguise himself from Isengrin the Wolf. First, he falls into a vat of dye and colors himself yellow to resemble an English *jongleur*; second he devises a way to change his speech, "Lors se porpense en son corage / Que il changera son langage."¹⁶⁰ The result of Renart's deception is a mishmash of French, English,

¹⁵⁹ William Calin, "Obscene Anglo-Norman in a Central French Mouth; or, How Renart the Fox Tricks Isengrin to Wolf, and Why It Is Important," *Florilegium* 18, no. 1 (2001): 7-19.

¹⁶⁰ Jean Dufournet and Andrée Méline, eds., *Le roman de Renart* (Paris: Flammarion, 1985). "So he (Renart) reflects down deep that he will change his speech." Translated by William Calin, "Obscene Anglo-Norman," 9.

Breton, and, according to the editors Dufournet and Méline, “voire de flamand et de haut allemand:”¹⁶¹

Ez vos Renart qui le salue:
“Godehelpe, fait il, bel sire!
Non saver point ton reson dire.
---- Et Dex saut vos, bau dous amis!
Dont estes vos? de quel païs?
Vos n’estes mie nés de France
Ne de la nostre connaissance.
---- Nai, mi signor, mais de Bretaing.
Moi fot perdez tot nom gaaing
Et fot cerchier por ma conpaing,
Non fot mes trover qui m’enseing.
Trestot France et tot Engleter
L’ai cherchiez por mon conpaing qer.
Demorez moi tant cest païs
Que j’avoir testot France pris.
Or moi volez torner arier,
Non saver mes ou moi le quier,
Mes torner moi Paris ançois
Que j’aver tot apris françois.
---- Et savez vos neisun mestier?
---- Ya, ge got molt bon jogler.
Mes je fot ier rober, batuz
Et mon viel fot moi toluz.
Se moi fot aver un viel,
Fot moi diser bon rotruel,
Et un bel lai et un bel son
Por toi qui fu semblés prodom.
Ne fot mangié deus jors enters,

¹⁶¹ Dufournet and Méline, *Renart*, p. 162, note 1.

Or si mangera volenters.¹⁶²

The humor in this situation arises from both horizontal and vertical dissonance. On a linguistic level, a horizontal tension between the communicative competencies emerges between Renart and Isengrin, the latter of which conforms to what is intended as the standard speech paradigm. What is implicit in this passage is the negative judgement Isengrin casts upon Renart and his non-normative speech (which is the intended result of the deceptive fox). As Calin observes, “these texts reveal language prejudice in the Central French region [and] reveal that by the 1190’s, French had attained a significant degree of standardisation and that the Parisian and court standard was asserting hegemony over the insular language and also over Picard French and Occitan.”¹⁶³ The non-native speech of Renart and Isengrin’s response in idiomatic French exposes a humorous geographical, horizontal dissonance between two speech communities, the French and the Anglo-Norman. This horizontal dynamic amplifies the notion of *foreignness* and sets the stage for a situation in which a negative judgement is made upon non-normative language for the sake of a pun.

¹⁶² Here comes Renart who greets him:

---- Godehelpe, he says, mine Lord! Not to know speak your talk.

---- And may God bless you, my dear fellow! Where are you from? From what country? You are not French nor of any species from around here.

---- Nay, mine lord, but from British. Me you fucking lost all my goods and to fucking look for my mate. Not to fucking find someone who learns me. All France and all England I have you looked for finding my mate. You stay me in this country until I to have had all France. So me you want to go back, me not know still where to look for him. But to return me to Paris before I to have learned all French.

---- Don't you have a livelihood?

---- Ya, I a very good fucking minstrel but I fucking yesterday to rob and beaten and my fucking viol me stolen. If I to have a fucking viol, me fucking to sing good retrouenge, and a fine lay and a fine song for you who was seem a worthy man. Not fucking eaten for two whole days. So certainly he will eat gladly. (trans. William Calin, “Obscene Anglo-Norman,” 9-10.)

¹⁶³ Calin, “Obscene Anglo-Norman,” 15-16.

The horizontal tension between standard and non-normative speech reinforces a vertical tension along social register when Isengrin “relaxes his guard because of his presumed superiority due to social stratification (superiority of a lord over an entertainer) and linguistic variety (superiority of a native speaker over a foreigner).”¹⁶⁴ Isengrin’s perceived linguistic and social superiority is underscored by the constant pun on the Old French *foutre*, “to fuck.” As Calin has noted, the play on words arises from Renart’s intentional confusion between the third person singular of *foutre* - *fort* - and either *fut* (the third person past form of “to be,” used as an auxiliary) or *falt* / *faut* (the third person present of “to be necessary”).¹⁶⁵

As in Benigni’s film, this moment of linguistic tension is isolated and occurs briefly to advance the diegetic thread. Furthermore, these instances operate around a heightened self-referentiality; Renart calls attention to his hybrid linguistic status and his *foreignness*: “Demorez moi tant cest païs / que j’avoit trestot France pris. / Or moi volez torner arier.” The non-normative speech, then, becomes a rhetorical device to achieve humor and becomes a mechanism for character development.

Within the Lombard narrative community, the introduction of French lexical and morphological elements arrives at a different narrative aim. The romance-epic *Huon d’Auvergne* is an example of how language variance occurs along a vertical axis and does not constitute a dissonance between horizontally aligned linguistic communities. Rather, French interacts as a narrative mode with the Italianate language, alluding to the French epic discourse. In this narrative, the protagonist, Huon, is sent to hell by his lord Charles

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 12.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 11.

Martel. Huon is to seek tribute from Lucifer for the king. The plan to send Huon to hell, however, is the king's disguised attempt to gain access to Huon's wife. I have chosen the following lines randomly, since this phenomenon occurs throughout the poem:

Un puocho de lui qua laseron,
A puocho d'ora nu li troveron
Quando luogo e tempo seron.
De Carlo Martello nui si ve diron,
Como lo manda ad Alvernia lo bufon,
Colui che Sandin aveva non.
Dio lo confonda che sofrì passion,
Che per so conssejo lo re Carlon
Si manda Ugo a la scura maxon,
Per querir trabuto a Lucifero lo felon.¹⁶⁶

In this example, the matrix language is Italianate - *puocho, luogo, aveva, manda* - and carries the narrative content. The introduction of French lexical items is ornamental and occurs at the end of the lines on the assonance *-on*: *laseron, troveron, seron, diron, bufon, maxon*. The presence of non-Italianate elements operates differently in this example than it does in the example of Renart and Isengrin. Here, the introduction of French creates a patina of "epic" that occurs throughout the text and works to ennoble and enhance the narration. French lexical items do not directly interrupt the diegetic thread, and the use of French is not self-referential. In this way, the composite linguistic character of the text does not function around a dissonance between horizontally aligned linguistic systems, but rather as a vertically oriented interaction between narrative modalities, the epic register enhancing and punctuating the Italianate matrix-language. Instead of creating

¹⁶⁶ Huon d'Auvergne Biblioteca Seminario del Vescovile, MS 32, 45r, "We will leave him for a while, / In a short while we will return to his story, / When it's the right time and place. / Now we will tell of Carles Martel, / And how he sent his minstrel, who was named Sandin, to Auvergne / May God, who endured the passion, strike him dead, / Because following his counsel king Charles / Sent Ugo to the dark realm, / To seek tribute from evil Lucifer." (translation and transcription mine)

self-referential moments of non-normative language, this use of French is normative within the Lombard romance-epic narrative space.

Although the recent scholarly studies of Lombard romance-epic texts have looked at this mixed-language aesthetic more favorably, the phenomenon of modal enhancement is still largely interpreted solely as a linguistic construct. Scholarship also continues to interpret this vertical system of linguistic variance through the horizontal paradigm of national languages: French and Italian. New avenues of scholarship might interpret the use of French through a literary lens, and investigate how the presence of various linguistic elements constitutes an intermingling of narrative modes. In order to understand how vertical linguistic variance and modal enhancement work to create layers of meaning, I will now compare these ideas to selected examples of medieval linguistic thought.

Imagining Dante: A Horizontal Interpretation of Language Variance

Dante Alighieri's linguistic treatise *De vulgari eloquentia (DVE)* provides one model of language with which to contrast the linguistic system of Lombard romance-epic texts and gives us a glimpse of some political implications language may have had in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italy. *Perhaps* one of the most innovative implications of this work is the link Dante establishes between language on the one hand, and political unity and identity on the other, a process Burke calls 'politicization.'¹⁶⁷ In terms of linguistic variance, the politicization of language creates a situation in which vertical

¹⁶⁷ For the term 'politicization of language' and the process this concept entails, see Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities*, 166.

variance and linguistic hybridity exacerbate anxieties of impurity. As Kathryn A. Woolard points out, “moral indignation over nonstandard forms derives from ideological associations of the standard with the qualities valued within the culture, such as clarity or truthfulness.”¹⁶⁸ In the Lombard narrative community, however, French existed as a literary language alongside the Gallo-Italian dialects, Occitan, Latin and Tuscan, all of which were used for an aesthetic aim in the *Auliver* poem. In the Lombard romance-epic tradition, linguistic hybridity between French and northern Italianate languages was a creative and positive force. Within the framework of vertical variance, French as an aesthetic literary language was proper to the Lombard narrative community and was recognized among its narrative participants; this socio-linguistic reality defines the Lombard hybrid language aesthetic.

Dante’s treatise, however, is an example of a departure from this model. His treatise embarks on a process of ‘grammaticalization’ of the vernacular, which envisions a single literary linguistic entity - the *volgare illustre* - capable of unifying the disparate city-states of thirteenth-century Italy. His ambition could therefore be explained as an attempt to describe a monolithic narrative community with the Tuscan dialect, or the *volgare illustre*, acting as the cohesive language of written expression. As Marianne Shapiro points out in the introduction to her translation of the *DVE*, “the institution of grammar would provide a common uniform language, which through transcendence of time and place would resist formal variation.”¹⁶⁹ In this system, the model of Latin would

¹⁶⁸ Kathryn A. Woolard, “Introduction,” in *Language Ideology as a Field of Inquiry*, edited by Bambi B. Schieffelin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 21.

¹⁶⁹ Marianne Shapiro, ed., *De vulgari eloquentia: Dante’s Book of Exile* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 28.

provide the crucial stabilizing force with which the vernacular could resist diachronic change. Consequently, Dante's linguistic vision runs contrary to the aesthetic of vertical linguistic variation, or 'hybridity,' that allowed for narrative modalities in French, Occitan, Tuscan and Latin to be mixed, a system that flourished for 150 years in the Lombard hybrid language epic-romance tradition.

In the *DVE* a language specific to all of Italy, *l'Italia intera*, takes on horizontal, geographical implications. A *vulgare illustre*, an illustrious vernacular, common to a pan-peninsular poetic community, transcends all other linguistic boundaries and creates the basis for a monolingual literary community. This illustrious vernacular was already used by the *illustri maestri*, or poets of the vernacular, in Sicily, Puglia, Tuscany, Romagna, Lombardy and the Marche:

Hoc autem vulgare quod illustre, cardinale, aulicum et curiale ostensum est, dicimus esse illud quod vulgare latium appellatur. Nam sicut quoddam vulgare est invenire quod proprium est Cremonae, sic quoddam est invenire quod proprium est Lombardie; et sicut est invenire aliquod quod sit proprium Lombardie, <sic> est invenire aliquod quod sit totius sinister Ytalie proprium; et sicut omnia hec est invenire, sic et illud quod totius Ytalie est. Et sicut illud cremonense ac illud lombardum et tertium semilatium dicitur, sic istud, quod totius Ytalie est, latium vulgare vocatur. Hoc enim usi sunt doctores illustres qui lingua vulgari poetati sunt in Ytalia, ut Siculi, Apuli, Tusci, Romandioli, Lombardi et utriusque Marchie viri.¹⁷⁰

By creating a grammaticalized language, Dante envisions a system of literary monoglossia that is common to all members of this illustrious community of poets. More

¹⁷⁰ Shapiro, ed., *De vulgari eloquentia*, 67. "This language, which I have demonstrated to be illustrious, pivotal, courtly, and curial is to be called Italian. For just as we find one vernacular that belongs to Cremona, so another can be found that belongs to the whole of Lombardy; and likewise one may be found that belongs to the whole of the left side of Italy; and just as all these exist, there is one for all Italy. As the first is called Cremonese, the second Lombard, and the third "half-Italian," the language which belongs to all Italy is called Italian. It is the language used by illustrious masters who have composed vernacular poetry in Italy, for example, men from Sicily, Apulia, Tuscany, Romagna, Lombardy, and both the Marches." (trans. Shapiro)

importantly, this linguistic community of poets spans beyond the many linguistic zones of the Italian peninsula and finds its unification in a standardized linguistic system.

This early iteration of a literary language theorized horizontally is peculiar to the Dantean treatise and would be appropriated many centuries later when the nineteenth-century nation-building program would subsume Dante's vision to create the imagined national linguistic space of Italy. The central position of the Dante statue in the visual syntax of the piazza Santa Croce underscores this "father-of-the-nation" role assigned to the poet shortly after unification. The result of an idealized linguistic model, as imagined in the nineteenth century, is the creation of boundaries of correct / incorrect usage and accepted / rejected linguistic forms. These linguistic borders create a space in which dominance, hegemony and national consciousness can be expressed linguistically within the modern notion of national language. As it is understood in a nineteenth-century national language paradigm, Dante's vision of language becomes politicized and intricately linked to unity, belonging and cohesion. The innovation of the *DVE*, as it would be understood many years later, lies in the coincidence between language, political borders and identity.

Paradoxically, however, Dante's ideal political state actually transcends the idea of an autonomous, national Italy. In his *De monarchia*, Dante envisions rather a supranational empire: "Et sic omnes partes prenotate infra regna et ipsa regna ordinari debent ad unum principem sive principatum, hoc est ad Monarcham sive

Monarchiam.”¹⁷¹ Joan Ferrante reminds us, in *The Political Vision of the “Divine Comedy,”* that this vision for a supreme emperor who will rein in the corruption of the church is prophesied twice in the *Comedy*: the *veltro* of Inferno I and the DXV in Purgatorio XXXIII.¹⁷²

Even if Dante’s vision of Italy is subordinate to a greater imperial reality, his vision of the Italian *volgare illustre* fuels the horizontal conception of language in the nineteenth-century unification effort. In the nineteenth-century iteration of Dante’s *volgare illustre*, language is aligned horizontally with the political borders of the emergent nation of Italy and, as a result, the Italian language as indicator of a national identity undergoes a process of purification in an attempt to ‘weed out’ its anomalous elements. As Carlo Dionisotti explains, the nationalists’ faith in Dante as a symbol for linguistic unity and ultimately for the cohesion of the Italian nation as a whole, stems from earlier nineteenth-century idealizations of the poet. Antonio Cesari (1760-1828), a priest and linguist who fought to purify the Italian language from the influences of French and English, was a proponent of *Purismo*. In his *Dissertazione sullo stato presente della lingua italiana*, Cesari sought to excavate from the past - the *Trecento* in particular - a more pure Italian language, and “rappresentante massimo di quell’antica Italia e lingua era Dante.”¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ Dante Alighieri, *De monarchia*, edited and translated by Richard Kay (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998), 37. “And thus all the parts of mankind, including both kingdoms and their component parts noted above, ought to be subordinated to one ruler or rule, namely the monarch or monarchy.”

¹⁷² Joan Ferrante, “Church and State in the Comedy,” in *The Political Vision of the “Divine Comedy,”* 76-131.

¹⁷³ Carlo Dionisotti, “Varia fortuna di Dante,” in *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1967), 220-21. See also Antonio Cesari, ed. Alessandra Piva, *Dissertazione sopra lo stato presente della lingua italiana* (Rome: Antenore, 2002).

Building upon these foundations, purification of the Italian language continued, which allowed for the emergence of an imagined horizontal linguistic construct to equate with national identity. Vincenzo Monti, writing on refining the Italian vocabulary to be published in dictionary form, identifies three essential steps in the creation and purification of the Italian language:

Purgare la lingua, legittimamente arricchirla e stabilmente fissarla, ecco i tre precipui oggetti della riforma del Vocabolario. Quest'opera dev'essere necessariamente di tutta la nazione, vuolsi dire di tutte le classi educate e pensanti della nazione. Ma dee nel tempo stesso avere un centro motore, e dirigente gli immensi lavori che vi abbisognano.¹⁷⁴

As Zingarelli points out, Monti's imagery echoes that of Dante, "con immagine analoga alle dantesche del *De vulgari eloquentia*, come 'metter la falce.'¹⁷⁵ The three fundamental components of Monti's proposal ---- to purge, to enrich, and to stabilize or fix ---- are to be understood within a linguistic system that is hostile to hybrid elements, a system that will ultimately have racial implications.

What appeals, then, to post-unification nation-building efforts is the possibility that language can be conceived horizontally and that one unifying linguistic system can bridge the differences between all other linguistic variants that are typical of the Italian peninsula, whether these be the various dialects of Italian or the non-Latinate language communities. The power of the *vulgare illustre*, as interpreted in the nineteenth century, is its possibility to provide national cohesion. The unifying potential of the Italian language was, of course, far removed from the linguistic reality of the peninsula and, as Krystyna

¹⁷⁴ Nicola Zingarelli, "V. Monti, l'istituto lombardo e la lingua italiana," in *Scritti di varia letteratura* (Milan: Hoepli, 1935), 501.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 504.

von Henneberg and Albert Russell Ascoli observe, “cultural Italianness, in this [cultural and linguistic] sense, was a form of selective and largely elite consciousness that ennobled some traditions, while excluding many others.”¹⁷⁶ In literary historiography, the tendency also existed for certain past narrative traditions to be ennobled and other to be left to the margins; this is visible in the reverence for the work of Dante Alighieri and the neglect of minority narrative spaces, such as the Lombard hybrid language manuscript corpus.

Current trends in linguistics investigate language ideologies of modern speech communities and the relationship between perceptions of language and social cohesion. We can understand the term ‘language ideology’ as a speaking community’s perception of the use and nature of its own language, and the shared vernacular or non-scientific knowledge of how that language works. Kathryn Woolard, in her introduction to the volume *Language Ideology as a Field of Inquiry*, points out that in the context of the nation-state paradigm, language ideology is quick to equate identity with language. Fueled by this ideology, the notion of one language / one nation has been both a national rallying point and the instrument of oppression of minority linguistic communities. Furthermore, “it is a truism that the equation of language and nation is not a natural fact but rather a historical, ideological construct.”¹⁷⁷ Seen in this light, the cohesive possibilities of the Italian language, as imagined at the moment of unification, are a result of a nation-state ideology that traces national space and identity with borders of a refined

¹⁷⁶ Albert Russell Ascoli and Krystyna von Henneberg, eds., *Making and Remaking Italy: The Cultivation of National Identity Around the Risorgimento* (New York: Berg, 2001), 7.

¹⁷⁷ Kathryn A. Woolard, “Introduction,” 16.

and stable linguistic system. A national language assumes a horizontal, geographic relationship to other national languages in a process that perceives languages themselves as discrete systems.

Woolard reminds us, however, that “the existence of a language as a discrete entity is always a discursive project, rather than an established fact.”¹⁷⁸ That a language can indeed be a discrete entity is necessarily bound up in struggles between the dominant and the subaltern, and in the forging of collective identities.¹⁷⁹ The textual borders of language that I am investigating in this study are entwined with inherited assumptions that languages are separate entities that delimit geographically defined identities. These assumptions about language and national identity continue to obfuscate modern scholarly assessments of premodern manuscript spaces. It is within the horizontal conception of the Italian national language that we must interpret early Franco-Italian scholarship. Our inherited definition of language is still dissonant with the linguistic realities of the Lombard romance-epic manuscript space, which allows for a vertical hybridization of language for aesthetic ends. In the next section I will investigate further the characteristic vertical alignment of linguistic variance in the Lombard romance-epic manuscript space.

“*Triphario nunc existente nostro ydiomate*”: Alternate Ways to Think About Language

In *DVE* I.X, Dante develops a theory for the nature of the languages we now call French, Italian and Spanish, writing: *triphario nunc existente nostro ydiomate*, “our

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 20.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 21.

language therefore being threefold.” With the possessive adjective *nostro*, Dante creates a vertical possibility for linguistic variation as aesthetic that interprets the three variants of *nostro ydiomate* not as separate linguistic entities but rather as narrative modes. This stratification of language allows Romance authors or poets to select the appropriate language to narrate their subject. Conceived as narrative modes, these three languages - in addition to Latin and Occitan - become aligned vertically within a broadly conceived community of speakers, a pan-Romance block. Dante’s reference to *il nostro idioma* indicates that language was not always interpreted as an indicator of political identity and that the languages of *oïl*, *oc*, and *sì* (French, Occitan and Spanish / Italian respectively) were also open to this vertical, stratified interpretation according to style or aesthetic.

The idea that all Romance languages were variations of one entity was common in Dante’s time and the suitability of each for a particular mode of narration also had broad currency in contemporary thought. On this matter, Keith Busby points out the theoretical stance of Raimon Vidal de Besalu, who writes that French is most suitable for narrative genres and that Occitan, or *la lenga lemosina*, is most suitable for lyric: “la parladura francesca val mais et [es] plus avinenz a far romanz et pasturellas, mas cella de Lemosin val mais per far vers et cansons et serventes.”¹⁸⁰ As noted, the northern Italian literary cultures used Occitan to develop their lyric poetry tradition.

The suitability of Occitan for lyric discourse lends theoretical support to Cerquiglini-Toulet’s observation that “the Albigensian Crusade (1208-44) marks a break

¹⁸⁰ Busby, *Codex and Context*, 601. For the text of Raimon de Vidal de Besalu, see J.H. Marshall, *The ‘Razos de Trobar’ and Associated Texts* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 6, ll. 72-74. “The French language is better and more suited for composing romances and pastures, but the language of limousin [Occitan] is more suited for composing chansons and sirventes” (translation mine).

in this harmonious repartition of the literary uses of languages.”¹⁸¹ The anonymous author of the *Frayre de Joy et Sor de Plaser*, cited by Cerquiglini-Toulet, alludes to a shift from aesthetic to political motives in deciding the language of his narration. The author’s choice to use his native Occitan instead of French occurs as a result of the dynamics of dominance and oppression in the wake of the Albigensian Crusade and, as Cerquiglini observes, the author “refuses to employ the idiom of those who have violently repressed the people of the South.”¹⁸² In order to distance himself from the arrogant French, the author of the text begins with a justification of breaking with narrative norms:¹⁸³

Sitot Francess a bel lengatge
No-m pac en re de son linatge,
Car son erguylos ses merce,
E-z erguyll ab mi no-s cove,
Car entre-ls francs humils ay apres;
Per qu’eu no vull parlar frances.
Car una dona ab cors gen
M’a fayt de prets un mandamen,
Qu’una faula tot prim li rim,
Sense cara rima e mot prim,
Car pus leus, se dits, n’es apres
Per mans plasenters ab franquesa,
Per mans ensenyats e cortes.
Don faray sos mans, que obs m’es
E diray o tot anaxi
Con la dona ha dit a mi,

¹⁸¹ Cerquiglini-Toulet, *Language, Literature, and Identity in the Middle Ages*, 343.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 343.

¹⁸³ For a discussion of the dating and linguistic character of this text, see the introduction to: Suzanne Méjean-Thiolier and Marie-Françoise Notz-Grob, eds., *Nouvelles courtoises occitanes et françaises* (Paris: Livre de Poche “Lettres Gothiques,” 1997), 37-40.

Que mas ni menys no-n pensaray.¹⁸⁴

This *faula* resonates with the lasting effects of the French crusade campaign in the South and demonstrates a process in which French, in an age contemporary with Dante, increasingly assumes a geographical locus and identity and supersedes its function as a narrative idiom; the aesthetic interpretation of the language gives way to an increasingly horizontal and politically-charged model. The anonymous author alludes to a language ideology that equates language with identity not only in his play on words in the rhyme *lengatge / linatge*, but also in his characterization of the French and his own people. According to the subsequent adjectives the French are “*erguylos ses merce*,” while he was born and raised among simple and humble people (“*car entre-ls francs humils ay apres*”), and it is for this reason he does not elect French to write his tale (“*per qu’eu no vull parlar frances*”). In this passage, the author’s choice of language is a critical factor with which to assert his own identity and to dissociate himself with the oppressors.

The author would not have to justify not using French if he were not breaking with some previous aesthetic tradition. We might deduce that he is breaking away from using the traditional French narrative mode for his composition, a literary model that must have had currency in his southern context. This break with a prior aesthetic norm opens up the possibility that the choice of language used in literary composition would be made with political concerns in mind. The author’s choice to write not in French but in

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 207. “Although the French have a beautiful language, / I don’t like anything about their lineage, / because they are arrogant without mercy, / and pride doesn’t suit me at all, / for I was brought up among sincere and simple people; / this is why I do not want to speak French. / A lady of noble appearance / bestowed a command upon me: / to create a rhymed narration for her, / without rich rhyme and subtle words, / because it will be learnt easier, they say, / by many pleasant and honest people, / well educated and courtly. / So I will carry out her command, because I must, / and I will tell the tale / as my lady asked of me, / and think no more about it.” (translation mine)

his native Occitan becomes a politically contestatory act that underscores an affirmation of southern identity. Like the example of Sordello in his *Sirventes lombardesco* of the previous chapter, this Occitan prologue seeks to address a narrative community deliberately made separate and exclusive, effectively casting the French outside its borders. The choice of Occitan reflects the qualities of the people, *una faula tot prim li rim / sens cara rima e mot prim*, and asserts the language as a marker of identity. The result is a departure from the idea that French is everyone's language, *nostro idyomate*, in favor of a perception that French is the language of a dominant other.

Dante's theorization of the vernacular in the *DVE* presents an anomalous view of language in the fourteenth century, namely that language can be an indicator of a shared identity. The *DVE* does not limit linguistic variance to a horizontal conception, however, providing us instead with the most thoroughly articulated iteration of the notion that languages can work both aesthetically and geographically (vertically and horizontally) at the same time. Dante addresses the suitability of the three romance idioms ---- the languages of *oïl*, *oc*, and *sì* ---- and their respective modes of discourse (i.e. lyric, romance, epic):

Quelibet enim partium largo testimonio se tuetur. Allegat ergo pro se lingua *oïl* quod propter sui faciliorem ac delectabiliorem vultaritatem quicquid redactum est sive inventum ad vulgare prosaycum, suum est: videlicet Biblia cum Troianorum Romanorumque gestibus compilata et Arturi regis ambages pulcerrime et quamplures alie ystorie ac doctrine. Pro se vero argumentatur alia, scilicet *oc*, quod vulgares eloquentes in ea primitus poetati sunt tanquam in perfectiori dulciorique loquela, ut puta Terus de Alvernia et alii antiquiores doctores. Tertia quoque, <que> Latinorum est, se duobus pibilegiis actestatur preesse: primo quidem quod qui dulcius subtiliusque poetati vulgariter sunt, hii familiares et domestici sui sunt, puta Cynus Pistoriensis et amicus eius. secundo

quia magis videntur initi gramatice que comunis est, quod rationabiliter
insipientibus videtur gravissimum argumentum.¹⁸⁵

Dante here interprets all the areas that speak the tripartite literary idiom as a single linguistic block, a pan-romance speaking community. Within this community there exists a hierarchy of linguistic varieties, all superimposed. This interpretation confirms other iterations of European identity, including the political. Robert Bartlett, in *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950-1350*, identifies a communal identity, the ‘frankish identity,’ in the face of the non-European other.¹⁸⁶ Each of the three variants of the “tripartite idiom” does boast virtues that allow for literary and aesthetic modes of narration; French has certain virtues not found in the two other linguistic modes and is said to be the most pleasant and the most widely known. These three linguistic entities are therefore conceptualized as narrative modes, each suitable for a different subject of discourse. Furthermore, the three narrative modes are available to all members of a poetic community, regardless of their geographical provenance. French, Occitan and Italian become vertically aligned along an axis of the aesthetic. As Busby points out, “it could be argued that Dante’s concern here is primarily to distinguish between narrative

¹⁸⁵ Shapiro, ed., *De vulgari eloquentia*, 26. “Indeed, each of the three divisions can claim much evidence in its favor. The langue d’oïl may allege for itself, since it is the easiest, most pleasant, and most widely known, whatever is written in or translated into vernacular prose as most particularly its own, that is, biblical compilations with the histories of Troy and Rome, and the lovely digressions in the fables of King Arthur, and other works of history and knowledge. Now the langue d’oc may argue for itself that masters of vernacular eloquence first used it for poetry as the sweetest and most developed language, such as Peire d’Alvernhe and other most ancient masters. Third, the Italian language brings as its witnesses two privileged facts: first, that those who have composed the sweetest and most subtle poetry in the vernacular have been its familiars and servants, such as Cino da Pistoia and his friend; second, that they seem to rely more on grammar, which is common to all, a thing which if rationally considered is seen to be a most weighty argument.” (trans. Marianne Shapiro, 57)

¹⁸⁶ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 18-23.

and lyric, between long and short forms, as much as between prose and verse.”¹⁸⁷ This seems indeed to be the case, and this interpretation tends to coincide with the use of the French narrative mode in the Lombard romance-epic genre. T.E. Hope argues:

on an intuitive judgment, the evidence does seem to show that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries French [lexical] loans did evoke a special kind of local colour and were endowed with a particular aesthetic aura which qualified them to be used in these contexts.¹⁸⁸

Even if Dante does not specifically mention the *chansons de geste* as being most suitably written in French, this perspective does seem to be operative within the Lombard narrative community, which sought to evoke French morphology and lexicon to varying degrees as a hermeneutic literary device.

These meta-literary discussions suggest that the patina of French present in the Lombard romance-epic would be tied to the *matière* or subject matter, the text conveyed. The presence of French in these texts is symptomatic of a collectively shared perception and interpretation of *frenchness* within the *tradition* of the Lombard narrative community. How and why the Lombard narrative space interprets French in that manner is an important question for current scholarship. Possible interpretations of the hermeneutics of *frenchness* are possible, especially following the clarification of Dante and his contemporaries, and according to the linguistic profile of the French used in the Lombard texts, which is often archaic in form with respect to other texts of the period written in French. We might suspect, then, that the French narrative mode evoked nostalgic feudal constructs such as nobility, chivalry, the liege-vassal bond, heroic valor, and even

¹⁸⁷ Busby, *Codex and Context*, 602.

¹⁸⁸ T.E. Hope, *Lexical Borrowing in the Romance Languages: A Critical Study of Italianisms in French and Gallicisms in Italian from 1100-1900*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), 142-43.

Arthurian legend and the *merveilleux*. Holtus observes this linguistic phenomenon in the Lombard romance-epic tradition:

l'événement qui touche à Charlemagne et à Roland doit être transcrit dans la même forme ou dans une forme plus ou moins proche de celle utilisée couramment en France. Ce n'est pas seulement la matière qui est importée, mais avec elle aussi la langue et la forme des oeuvres.¹⁸⁹

Although this observation generally agrees with the conclusion of my analysis, I do not think the French language was perceived as foreign and geographically exterior to the Lombard space, but was rather a literary language proper to and available within Lombardia. Furthermore, I also do not believe that the French language was employed solely for the sake of making a text sound more French. It is likely that in some Lombard texts, allusions to these feudal constructs through the use of the French narrative mode are not made at face value, but rather contain a degree of parody and satire. In other texts, modal enhancement functions politically to tie current dynastic ambitions to the authority and glory of the past. These two possible modes of interpretation for the introduction of French linguistic elements into Lombard romance-epic are to be interpreted and understood in light of micro-level dynamics between redactor and audience in regards to specific texts.

The Venetian version of the *Chanson de Roland*, Manuscript V4 at the Marciana library in Venice, exemplifies how the sound of French and the patina it creates function not at a linguistic but at a literary level. As Roncaglia has observed, the poet of the V4

¹⁸⁹ Günter Holtus, "Plan- und Kunstsprachen auf romanischer Basis IV. Franko- Italienisch / Langues artificielles à base romane IV. Le franco-italien." In *Lexicon der romanistischen Linguistik*, vol. 7, edited by Günter Holtus (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998), 748. Here the author goes on to cite once again Vincenzo Crescini, "Di Nicolò di Verona," in *Románica fragmenta*, 363: "franco-italiana la materia, franco-italiana la lingua."

Roland arbitrarily invents terminology and lexicon to create a French-sounding assonance and to evoke nostalgic prestige, thus underscoring a predilection for aesthetics over communication:

Al punto che, per esaltare la funzione fonica, si giunge spesso, senza esitare, a conguagli di terminazioni del tutto arbitrari, da cui risultano voci lequali dovevano suonare come straniere, ma che in realtà sarebbero state inammissibili nella lingua originaria. Così, per fare qualche esempio, una lassa di V4 (la LXXVIII), che ha in fine di verso voci quali *altor, paganor, brunor, coreor*, ecc., fedelmente calcate sull'originale francese, presenta, alla fine d'altri versi, voci di cui è stata arbitrariamente modificata l'uscita, come *erbor* per *erbos*, *compagnor* per *compagnon*, *flanbior* per *flanbios*, *traisor* per *traison*; e in un'altra (la XC), frammiste a rime in *-er* schiettamente francesi, come *parler, soner, ber, blasmer, aler*, incontriamo forme come *avrer* per *avrez*, *retiner* per *retenez*, *ferter* per *fertez*, *aparler* per *aparellez*. [...] C'era ben vivo il desiderio d'evocarne [della struttura linguistica originaria] il prestigio arcaico o straniero esaltando ad un tempo la funzione della rima, sede privilegiata di valori espressivi, e dunque anche sede privilegiata di quel prestigio.¹⁹⁰

Roncaglia illustrates precisely how the patina of the French narrative mode in the *Roland* V4 text was created through the use and invention of French-sounding phonemes. The link between sound and *matière* can be interpreted in the context of the previous chapter, which investigated the relationships between the components of the performance cycle. I suspect that the degree of hybridity, indeed the fact that this epic text was not translated into the Italianate matrix language in the first place, is a function of the dynamics existing between a performer/audience relationship. It is clear from the examples Roncaglia cites that the collective *tradition* or knowledge of French epic material can be evoked by merely alluding to the sound of a French lexical item. This lexical item does not even need to exist in the Old French lexicon to achieve this aim. In the example of *compagnor* for *compagnon* the Italianate indicator of agency *-or* is maintained to negotiate

¹⁹⁰ Aurelio Roncaglia, "La letteratura franco-veneta," 741.

comprehension between the redactor and the audience in performance, while *compagn-* is recognized as belonging to the modality of epic. Holtus also assigns a similar function to the aesthetic language:

en franco-italien, l'utilisation de la deuxième langue non-autochtone par le rédacteur ou l'auteur italien est liée au choix de registres linguistiques spécifiques, eux-mêmes liés au genre littéraire et à la matière traitée.¹⁹¹

The Roland V4 shows how the performer/audience dynamic negotiates the ratio between communication and aesthetic, while adding a layer of meaning that touches upon political commentary, parody and humor.

In light of last chapter's conclusions, which define the narrative space of *Lombardia*, Roncaglia's observations tend to perpetuate a nationalistic interpretation this literary space. In his claim there are allusions that within the Lombard narrative community French functioned only horizontally as modern languages function, and that we must interpret French as necessarily linked to a geographic locus outside of *Lombardia*. For this reason, Roncaglia interprets the French patina as evoking "il prestigio arcaico o straniero." Although I agree that the French indicated nostalgia, I would argue that the French lexical elements introduced to the Italianate matrix language do not evoke *foreign-ness*, or 'from France,' but rather are proper to the Lombard narrative space. The nationalizing interpretation, as we read it in Roncaglia and Holtus, subscribes to a horizontal model of linguistic variance. I have tried to demonstrate that scholarship tends to assume two inaccurate positions: either that premodern narrative spaces had the same language ideology as we do today, or that they had no shared

¹⁹¹ Holtus and Wunderli, "Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne," 61.

perception of how languages and linguistic variance work. The examples of Dante and his contemporaries have demonstrated the contrary, however, and reveal a field of inquiry yet to be explored. How did premodern narrative communities perceive the language in which they told stories? Was their linguistic medium governed by rules and mechanisms now invisible to modern readers? By definition, ideologies are taken for fact and are not meditated upon by those who hold them; this is often the case in the present nation-state paradigm in which the “one language / one identity” framework passes unchallenged and forms the basis of policy, legislation and practice. With this in mind we can now proceed to analyze and problematize two key concepts in Franco-Italian studies: the term ‘Franco-Italian’ itself, and the notion of ‘hybrid language.’

The Hybrid Linguistic Subject and European Self-Fashioning

I have discussed two language ideologies at odds with one another: the language ideology of the modern nation-state, and an incongruent language ideology proper to a narrative space that existed before the formation of modern national spaces. The nation-state paradigm has drawn boundaries very different from those that existed in premodern cultural spaces, and one of the major consequences of the politicization of language is the tendency to draw and reinforce national boundaries using the invisible epistemological borders of language. Just like national borders, modern epistemological borders of language reinforce identity by rejecting linguistic entities that are perceived to be non-standard and thus politically subversive. The assumption that languages are distinct and pure entities shores up the nation-state’s illusion that national identities and races too are,

or at least should be, distinct and pure. In Medieval Studies, the convergence of national boundaries and linguistic borders of knowledge is evident in anthologization programs such as the *Société des Anciens Textes Français (SATF)*, which may be interpreted as an attempt to create a literary historiography for the French nation. This historiographic undertaking is reinforced by the boundaries of nation, language and periodization apparent in the SATF's opening statement in their first Bulletin:

La Société des anciens textes français a pour but de publier des documents de toute nature rédigés au moyen âge en langue d'oïl ou en langue d'oc.¹⁹²

Linguistic borders also appear in editorial conventions, such as those found in the *Conseils généraux de l'École des chartes* or in scholarship, as in *On Editing Old French Texts*, by Alfred Foulet and Mary Blakely Steer.¹⁹³ The editorial norms established in these works fail to address completely the lexical intricacies of the Lombard manuscript corpus, especially word division. As Leslie Zarker Morgan observes, “transcription of Franco-Italian is problematic, because it is not a standardized language, and contains forms related both to Old French and to Italian.” The *École Nationale des Chartes* does give special attention to the cedilla in editing Franco-Italian texts, but a certain amount of scholarship devoted to editorial concerns in Franco-Italian scholarship has revealed that

¹⁹² *Bulletin de la Société des anciens textes français, Première année* (Paris: Librairie Firmin-Didot, 1875), 1.

¹⁹³ Françoise Vieillard and Olivier Guyotjeannin, coord., *Conseils pour l'édition des textes médiévaux, fasc. I: Conseils généraux* (Paris: École nationale des chartes, 2001); Alfred Foulet and Mary Blakely Steer, *On Editing Old French Texts* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979).

the lexical norms of these texts fall somewhere between “French” and “Italian.”¹⁹⁴ Günter Holtus’ edition of the Marciana library version of the *Bataille d’Aliscans* has become the standard of editorial procedure in Franco-Italian textual emendation.¹⁹⁵

In Franco-Italian scholarship in particular, these anthological and editorial problems have marginalized the Lombard romance-epic corpus on linguistic grounds. In fact, only one Lombard text has been published in the SATF series, the *Entrée d’Espagne* edited in 1913 by Antoine Thomas. We could argue that the notion ‘Franco-Italian’ itself is symptomatic of a tendency to perpetuate nationalizing literary historiographies, while also trying to create a liminal narrative tradition between “French” and “Italian.” The term ‘Franco-Italian’ ultimately alludes to the merging of two national spaces whose linguistic difference is expressed horizontally and geographically, along distinctions of identity. Our perceived mixing of French and Italian linguistic elements has led to the notion of *Mischsprache* (Aldolfo Mussafia) and later to the idea of a ‘Franco-Italian hybrid language.’¹⁹⁶

I would like to consider for a moment the term ‘hybrid,’ which can expose the linguistic epistemological boundaries created by preoccupations of national language operative in modern scholarly assessments of the Lombard narrative space. The methodological lens I propose requires that we uncover the implications of the term

¹⁹⁴ Frankwalt Möhren, “Huon d’Auvergne / Ugo d’Alvernia: Objet de la lexographie française ou italienne?,” *Medioevo Romanzo* 4, no. 2-3 (1977): 312-25; Günter Holtus, “Sulla posizione del franco-italiano nella dialettologia italiana,” in *Scritti linguistici in onore di Giovan Battista Pellegrini*, edited by Paola Benincà (Pisa: Pacini, 1983), 63-71; Günter Holtus, “Aspects linguistiques du franco-italien,” in *Essor et fortune* (Modena: Mucchi, 1984), 802-06; Leslie Zarker Morgan, “Text and Non-Text: For a Standard Lemmatization of Franco-Italian,” in *Testi, cotesti e contesti* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1988).

¹⁹⁵ Günter Holtus, *La versione franco-italiana della “Bataille d’Aliscans”*: *Codex Marciana fr. VIII [=252]* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985).

¹⁹⁶ Aldolfo Mussafia, ed., *Altfranzösische Gedichte aus venezianischen Handschriften*, v-vi.

‘hybrid,’ and expose how the term becomes problematic when assessing the literary aesthetics of the Lombard romance-epic.

The etymology and the usage history of the term ‘hybrid’ reveal the pejorative nuance it nearly always bears, even if in recent cultural studies (Homi Bhabha, for example), ‘hybrid’ has regained a more positive reading.¹⁹⁷ The pejorative sense derives from the premise that a hybrid entity is a makeshift and sterile integration of two incomplete and incongruent parts. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, the term emerged for the first time around 1600 in Philemon Holland’s translation of Pliny’s *Historie of the World*: “There is no creature ingenders so soon with wild of the kind, as doth swine: and verily such hogs in old time they called Hybrides, as a man would say, halfe wild.”¹⁹⁸ From its origin, the term ‘hybrid’ is linked to a less-than-ideal whole and to something wild and non-civilized. As an adjective, the term later took on an especially biological nuance in the context of nineteenth-century scientific and Darwinian inquiry: “produced by the inter-breeding of two different species or varieties of animals or plants; mongrel, cross-bred, half-bred.” Analyzing the instances of the use of ‘hybrid’ as an adjective given in the OED, it is clear that the term gained currency especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is not surprising that this term gained momentum during the apex of colonial ambitions, a time when an expanding Europe was undergoing a process of self-identification and self-fashioning. Indeed, the need to distinguish between pure and hybrid lay at the heart of the imperial enterprise and became a driving factor in the argument that the European races were superior and thus

¹⁹⁷ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

¹⁹⁸ Cited in *Oxford English Dictionary*, 10 Feb. 2011, <www.oed.com>.

willed by God to civilize and instruct the rest of the non-European world. In this environment, which rejects the ‘hybrid’ subject as a threat to political dominance, the standardization of language and the construction of ‘pure national languages,’ not surprisingly, also flourished. These connotations of ‘hybrid’ are confirmed by the 1862 *OED* entry, from Thomas Henry Huxley’s *On Our Knowledge of the Causes of the Phenomena of Organic Nature: Being Six Lectures to Working Men*: “There is a great difference between ‘Mongrels’ which are crosses of distinct races and ‘hybrids’ which are crosses between distinct species.’¹⁹⁹ In this sense, ‘hybrid’ is even a greater impurity, mixing two unrelated entities. Ideologies of language were bound up with contemporary biological theories of evolution, which sought to place not only animals but also languages and races into a natural order and a hierarchy of organic growth. In 1879, the term ‘hybrid’ is attested in the realm of philology: “Sometimes we find English and Romance elements compounded. These are termed *Hybrids*.”²⁰⁰

The Darwinian interpretation of languages as evolving species, for nineteenth-century thought, is only the ‘objective proof’ that language is intrinsic to the evolutionary biology of humans, as is famously expressed in the opening line of Herder’s *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache*: “Schon als Tier hat der Mensch Sprache.”²⁰¹ Language, race and dominance are all bound up in the processes of human biology. Herder’s philosophy, an echo of and engagement with Condillac’s affirmation that “chaque langue

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ R. Morris, *Historical Outlines of English Accidence*, 39. Cited in the *OED*, 10 Feb. 2011, <www.oed.com>.

²⁰¹ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache: Text, Materialien, Kommentar*, edited by Wolfgang Pross (Munich: C. Hanser, 1978), 9.

exprime le caractère du peuple qui la parle,” views language as the cohesive bond of a people and argues that dominant nations have exerted their supremacy not by warfare but by “the use of a more cultivated language.”²⁰² During the course of the nineteenth century these concepts of biological supremacy would be linked to race, and illusions of linguistic and racial purity would go hand in hand. As Michael Townson has said of the German language, the purified and idealized form of this language “becomes a symbol of national unity; the dominant metaphor is that of the language as an organism incorporating the spirit of the German nation.”²⁰³ For this reason, Townson defines the function of a language ideology that works to bind the community of nation as ‘phatic,’ or working at a national level to reassert social cohesiveness.²⁰⁴ In France and Italy, the metaphor of language for a people undergoes a similar process as a result respectively of the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71) and of the *Risorgimento* (resulting in the unification of Italy in 1861).

In this climate of nation-building through the positivism of the empirical sciences, medieval philology becomes yet another avenue of investigation, an archeology of national identity that transforms language into a metaphor for race and genius. It is not surprising that philology would be bound up with images of trees, branches and organic systems in the context of nineteenth-century scientific inquiry. As Stephen G. Alter has argued, it would not be wrong to interpret philological inquiry as a dialectic between language and Darwinism:

²⁰² Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines* (Paris: Galilée, 1973), 260.

²⁰³ Michael Townson, *Mother-Tongue and Fatherland* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), 93.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

All of this suggests that Charles Darwin was not acting as an isolated thinker when he came up with analogies to illustrate his species theory. Rather, he participated in a close-knit discursive world, whose shared theoretical concerns and rhetorical usages were already promoting a sense of philology's natural resonance with other scientific fields.²⁰⁵

In the nineteenth-century positivistic environment, the humanities and the sciences were more entangled and inter-referential than they are today, especially in the Anglo-Saxon academy. French and Italian conserve lexical vestiges of the interplay between science and the humanities, with advanced research in the humanities referred to as “*recherches scientifiques*” and “*ricerca scientifica*.” Gaston Paris, operating within a paradigm that blends the humanities and the sciences, characterizes philology in biological and even Darwinian terms in his *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne*. For Paris, the development of the French national epic tradition follows a ‘survival of the fittest’ program that purifies and strengthens the ‘*qualités bonnes ou mauvaises*’ of epic.²⁰⁶ Paris identifies three periods in the development of epic poetry; in the third, *l'époque cyclique*, the French *chansons de geste*, according to Paris, develop their good and bad qualities along evolutionary lines to form families of poems:

L'hérédité des qualités bonnes ou mauvaises est érigée par eux [nos poèmes] en principe, et ces qualités vont se grossissant de plus en plus, au point de former de chaque famille comme une race particulière: on dirait que nos arrangeurs ont prévu le système de la *sélection naturelle* et appliqué par avance à leurs héros les théories de M. Darwin.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵ Stephen G. Alter, *Darwinism and the Linguistic Image: Language, Race, and Natural Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 14.

²⁰⁶ Gaston Paris, *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne* (Paris: Émile Bouillon, 1905), 75.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

In this vision, the evolution of the national epic is subjected to the principle of natural selection, and it is through the process of natural selection that the strongest and most resilient elements will be inherited by the modern nation of France. Incidentally, many of these epic elements become the adjectives and attributes that contemporaries use to describe the French nation after the 1871 French defeat in the Franco-Prussian war: *virile, preux, sage, splendide, puissante riche*, etc. Paris relies on the weight of the evolutionary biologist Charles Darwin in order to give literary history the patina of a natural science, an inquiry as predictable as crossbreeding finches. This link to natural science, or at least the use of natural science as a metaphor for procedure, is an important step in assigning an evolutionary trajectory to the literary past. Again in scientific metaphor, Paris imagines the French epic tradition issuing forth as a plant would from a seed:

Alors, comme la plante s'empare pour germer de tous les éléments analogues que contient la terre où elle est semée, l'épopée saisit tous ces éléments épars, les transforme suivant sa propre loi, se les assimile et s'épanouit bientôt dans la richesse et la puissance de sa végétation splendide.²⁰⁸

This botanical imagery builds an argument that would make it difficult to refute the connection between nation and literature, with being national identity being an inevitable evolutionary result of an illustrious epic stock. As a plant takes elements of its soil and manifests them in its vegetation, the French epic, for Paris, assumes particular characteristics because it was cultivated in French soil. The flower of the initial seed is seen here to be *splendide* and characterized by *richesse* and *puissance*. The elitist undertones of this rhetoric are unmasked in Paris' energetic last paragraph:

C'est pour la France un sujet de légitime fierté de pouvoir montrer une épopée véritable, cette production rare et magnifique dont ne peuvent s'enorgueillir que

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 3.

les nations d'élite: plus on étudiera l'histoire de l'humanité dans son véritable esprit, plus ce fait prendra d'importance, et plus son souvenir tiendra de place dans notre conscience nationale.²⁰⁹

Through the metaphors of natural science and Darwinian theory, Paris is effectively makes his case for an evolution and end result of the epic consciousness. Modern France becomes the *splendide, riche, and puissante* flower of this process and the nation-state becomes the embodiment of all the best qualities. Paris came to the same conclusion as Gautier and, according to the trajectory of nineteenth-century positivism, is able to provide proof and authority to his conclusion that France is an elite, biologically superior, modern-day political entity. Epic poetry is the essence of the national consciousness: "elle est l'expression du sentiment national; c'est en elle que le peuple prend, pour ainsi dire, conscience de lui-même."²¹⁰

Paris the scholar is at odds with his own patriotism, at times advocating a dissociation of scholarship and nationalism and at times, especially early in his career, insisting on the necessary role philology plays in the creation of the modern French nation. Ursula Bähler notes that Paris advocated the former position, a separation of scholarship and nation-building, before and after the 1870 war:

Sans relâche, tant avant qu'après la guerre de 1870, Gaston Paris insiste sur la nécessité de débarrasser les recherches historiques des préoccupations patriotiques. Le patriotisme peut certes déclencher des investigations philologiques, mais ces investigations elles-mêmes doivent être libres de tout souci patriotique.²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 31

²¹⁰ Ibid., 1.

²¹¹ Ursula Bähler, *Gaston Paris et la philologie romane* (Geneva: Droz, 2004), 392.

The scholar's earlier stance on the issue, in the 1865 introduction to his *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne*, contradicts this later position and he is swept away by linguistic nationalism: "Le grand signe et le principal facteur de la nationalité, c'est la langue."²¹² In 1885, Paris took a position of compromise on the issue and finally admits his view that literature is not completely stripped of agency in the expression of nationhood. For him language and literature are intrinsically linked to nation and national consciousness, and are capable of revealing a camaraderie among the citizens of a nation:

La littérature est l'expression de la vie nationale: là où il n'y a pas de littérature nationale, il n'y a qu'une vie nationale imparfaite. Ce sentiment commun, cet idéal, cet amour dans lequel tous les citoyens d'une nation fraternisent, est, de sa nature, vague et indéterminé: ce n'est que par la littérature qu'il s'exprime, se précise et se fait reconnaître de tous avec enchantement. [...] Une littérature nationale est l'élément le plus indestructible de la vie d'un peuple.²¹³

Through efforts such as these, the triad of nation, race and language meld in a biological metaphor and combine forces to reassert cultural dominance. The momentum of the nineteenth-century ideology of language as a reiteration of nation is, at least in part, a twofold undertaking; first, to attempt to draw borders around an imagined purity; and second, to identify, classify, and assign a name to the non-European subject. As if collected as a specimen in a laboratory, this subject was rendered inferior, uncivilized and a threat to solidarity. It is within this context that we must understand the concept of 'hybrid,' a term that is tightly bound up with the naturalizing and nationalizing metaphors of language and race.

²¹² Cited in Ursula Bähler, Gaston Paris, 408-409.

²¹³ *La poésie au Moyen Âge, leçons et lectures, par Gaston Paris* (Paris: Hachette, 1885), 99-100. Cited in Bähler, 408-409.

Vernacular language ideologies have long assumed that national languages are naturally formed and provide, to return to Townson's term, the biological 'phatic cohesion' necessary for a national community. Furthermore, languages are assumed to be free from the influence of artificial political forces.²¹⁴ For nineteenth-century philological inquiry, the 'Franco-Italian hybrid language' was a created language that stood as an antithesis to the putative refined national languages and was seen as an unnatural re-merging of two linguistic branches and thus a deformation of the natural evolutionary process. It is in this sense that Franco-Italian is termed 'hybrid' and, seen in this light, we must interpret the 'Franco-Italian hybrid language' as a construct of the nineteenth-century language ideology, a construct that did not exist until problematized.

The creation of this hybrid entity reveals itself to be a negative reaffirmation of French national linguistic purity and a counterweight to European national self-fashioning. European expansionism in the nineteenth century created an anxiety of contamination, and the identification of indigenous languages on non-European continents has been interpreted as a mechanism of colonial empire in which the dominant language creates, not discovers, the subordinate indigenous language.²¹⁵ Epistemological borders of language have been drawn in dictionaries and critical editions as political borders have been drawn on continents and oceans. All borders, whether epistemological or cartographic, provide a mechanism for the creation of an inferior other, a notion not

²¹⁴ Kathryn Woolard, "Introduction," 21.

²¹⁵ Walter D. Mignolo, "On the Colonization of Amerindian Languages and Memories: Renaissance Theories of Writing and the Discontinuity of the Classical Tradition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30 (1992): 301-330. See especially page 305.

dissimilar to the Freudian notion of the ‘narcissism of minor difference’ in which the distance between self and other is exaggerated.²¹⁶

Epistemological borders of language can work temporally as they do geographically and, in the case of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Lombard romance-epic corpus, borders of periodization were drawn in order to place the hybrid subject beyond the borders of the modern nation. We can collocate the early interpretation of Lombard romance-epic within the framework of a horizontal interpretation of language and identity. In this way, the mixed language texts of Lombard romance-epic manuscripts was conceptualized as an independent linguistic entity, the ‘Franco-Italian hybrid language.’ This conceptualization conformed to the negative connotation of hybrid explored above. However, in a vertically conceived interpretation, which we must bear in mind as possible when considering a non-nationalized vision of the Lombard narrative community, these texts are not at all linguistically hybrid, but are the result of modal enhancement between stratified aesthetic modes.

Independent Trajectories: Toward a Definition of ‘Lombardia’

Just as a language ideology is invisible to its community of users, epistemological borders of language have persisted unnoticed in shaping our interpretation of past narrative spaces. The following are several scholarly linguistic constructs that I identify as bearing nationalizing borders:

²¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, *On Sexuality* (London: Penguin, 1991), 272.

Literacy: Literacy and orality, discussed in Chapter II, are contentious issues and the terms can be problematic and overdetermined. As I have argued, however, the essential difference between the manuscript and the printed book lies in reproducibility. The preprint manuscript, because of its ephemeral and irreproducible nature, must be considered a performance and, as Joyce Coleman has argued, is a reflex of orality; in fact in ‘aurality,’ literacy and orality were coexistent.²¹⁷ In the nation-state paradigm, which has valorized the printed and reproducible book as a symbol of purity and stability, the written word is perceived as inert and devoid of political connotations; but within this framework of literacy, which is deep-rooted within the nation-state language paradigm, the written word and its orthography are never empty of the political. An example of this phenomenon are the two spellings of the word ‘color’ and ‘colour,’ which imply American and British Empire orthography respectively. Lexical variants are also attached to nation in French and Québécois: ‘voiture’ and ‘char,’ for example, are lexical variants that represent respectively standard French and standard Québécois. Such Québécois lexical innovations such as ‘courriel’ [email] and ‘clavardage’ [chat] also testify to the political connotations lexical variants can assume. The literate paradigm attempts to detect and even establish standardized literate systems for premodern narrative spaces and, in this way, the national borders of language colonize these spaces. The notion of Lombard romance-epic as ‘hybrid’ stems in part from two incompatible language ideologies: a dominant modern ideology that involves national belonging, and another that functions in narrative spaces as a temporal minority.

²¹⁷ Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Old French: Attempts to interpret premodern textual spaces through the lens of the nation-state language paradigm led, in the nineteenth century, to a tremendous effort to create dictionaries and grammars of the medieval phase of the French language. This in turn led to the creation of the notion of ‘Old French,’ which sought to codify and create beyond the temporal borders of periodization (medieval / modern) a ‘medieval language.’ As I will argue in the next chapter, the Old French nominative declension marker *-s* became, for nineteenth-century philologists, a marker of a putative ‘medieval French identity,’ which would develop in the modern French nation. As Bédier himself states, Old French exists as a theorized construct in Old French grammar manuals, and only the earliest of surviving documents in medieval French approximate this linguistic system.²¹⁸ These manuals create the illusion of linguistic unity and construct the epistemological borders of language necessary to other the Lombard romance-epic corpus, to eject it from the French national literature. The Lombard romance-epic did not become ‘hybrid,’ ‘minority’ or ‘Franco-Italian’ until the temporal borders between medieval and modern were drawn and premodern narrative traditions came into contact with their would-be temporal superior, the nineteenth-century philological inquiry.

Canon and Anthology: With linguistic and temporal borders in place, the French philological tradition was able to begin the process of anthologization and canon formation. In the next chapter, which focuses on the textual emendation tradition of the *Chanson de Roland*, I will explore in some detail the canonization of this epic. The

²¹⁸ Joseph Bédier, *La Chanson de Roland commentée par Joseph Bédier* (Paris: L’Edition d’Art, H. Piazza, 1927), 248.

formation of a medieval French literary canon operates within linguistic boundaries and, like the printed and reproducible words it contains, the French medieval masterpiece is not chosen without political implications. An anthologization project presumes a finite number of texts conforming to an overarching principle of categorization. For the nineteenth-century philological project, and still today, this categorization is grounded in nation and the genius of a people, with each edition a piece of a collectable whole, a shelveable metaphor of book spines, book covers and book ends marking the textual borders of a metaphor for nation. The Lombard epic-romance corpus, interpreted as 'hybrid' along a horizontal axis of linguistic variance, stands outside the purview of the national anthology.

The critical edition: The last facet of linguistic border creation to address is the modern critical edition, which represents a colonization of a performative space by a literate border system; the task of the modern editor is to transpose the irreproducible and spontaneous preprint codex into a reproducible and static form capable of being anthologized. I do not advocate eliminating the critical edition, since it is inescapable. However, digital internet technologies and advanced reproduction systems provide modern readers with a sense of the performativity of the preprint codex.²¹⁹ As I will show with regard to the Oxford version of the *Chanson de Roland*, language is often altered in the editorial process to fit within the linguistic boundaries of nation. In chapter V, I will investigate the performative manuscript space of the *Huon d'Auvergne* manuscript tradition and I will show how the textual boundaries introduced later by Andrea da

²¹⁹ See, for example, Testimonio Compañía Editorial (www.testimonio.com) and Facsimile Editions (www.facsimile-editions.com)

Barberino in his Tuscan version *Ugo d'Alvernia* are capable of altering and stabilizing diegesis in order to create a politically authoritative reading.

The modern political map reflects the nation-state language ideology, with borders of political units often seen as coterminous with homogeneous language blocks. If the borders of nations and languages coincide in the current language ideology, we cannot assume that the borders of narration, language and identity will necessarily line up in the same way in premodern narrative spaces. The epistemological borders of nation, literacy, language and temporality that scholarship has used to colonize the continent of the past must be problematized in order for not only the Lombard narrative space, but all premodern literary spaces, to be decolonized, reread and reinterpreted.

Conclusion

Chapters I and II have explored how a post-colonial framework can be used to expose and problematize epistemological borders of nation. I have identified how the national space manifests itself as constructs of knowledge, and how language, literacy and print culture all carve up narrative spaces of the past so that they can better contribute to nationalizing literary teleologies. In the following two chapters, I will present two case studies that I will reinterpret as decolonized narrative spaces. To do this, I will distill a working definition of Lombardia in light of my conclusions thus far.

Lombardia is a narrative space, which may or may not coincide with economic or political iterations of spaces of the same name. The Lombard narrative community is

performance-driven and, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, its narrative participants developed and sustained a flourishing epic, romance, didactic, lyric and historiographic tradition. Because literary production was produced by members of this narrative community for an audience of the same narrative community, this tradition must be considered independent of other contemporary cultural spheres on the Italian peninsula. The Lombard epic-romance is a genre proper to this narrative community, the most innovative characteristic of which is an aesthetic use of the French narrative mode to convey the *matière* of Charlemagne and Roland, often used within an Italianate matrix, or communicative, language. French, too, was used as the matrix language depending on the competencies of the intended audience, but the use of French was always an aesthetic choice. The French narrative mode introduces to varying degrees lexical and morphological elements of the *langue d'oïl*, which have hermeneutic value and may be interpreted as political or satirical. The Lombard narrative community shared a language ideology that did not tie linguistic entities to political belonging, but rather to modes of literary expression. For this reason, language variance at the literary level could exist vertically and, as in the Lombard epic-romance genre, French and Italianate linguistic modes were mixed to varying degrees. Finally, the Lombard epic-romance corpus of manuscripts does not wholly participate in a literate framework and each manuscript bears a latent orality and performativity. For this reason and in order to account for a wide spectrum of variability, each manuscript must be considered as a 'performance artifact,' or a physical remnant attesting to a particular micro-level reception/performance relationship.

CHAPTER IV

WRITING IN THE MARGINS: THE *CHANSON DE ROLAND*, VENICE, BIBLIOTECA MARCIANA MS. IV [=225]

The re-emergence of the *Song of Roland* as an object of modern scholarly inquiry begins with the work of the French scholar Francisque Michel who in 1835, was sent by François Guizot, minister of French public instruction, to visit English libraries in search of medieval texts belonging to the French literary patrimony. Michel's enthusiasm in recovering the epic is evident in his letter from England:

Je vous écris de la ville d'Alfred, à deux pas de la Bodléienne, où je viens de trouver.... quoi?... Devinez!... La *Chanson de Roland*!! C'était presque la quadrature du cercle!

Ce n'est autre chose que le *Roman de Roncevaux* rimant par assonances comme *marches, corages, vaille, homme...* etc., mais c'est le Roman de Roncevaux dans un manuscrit du commencement du XIIe siècle, et chaque couplet se termine par *aoi*, que vous m'expliquerez; ne serait-ce pas le cri *away*, cri d'élan sur l'ennemi?²²⁰

Michel's own *élan* issues from what he perceives as the excavation of a lost French literary monument; this archaeology of the codex edified a fundamental pillar in the

²²⁰ Michel's letter is published in Gerard J. Brault, "'C'est presque la quadrature du cercle': Francisque Michel's Letter Announcing the Discovery of the Oxford Manuscript of the *Chanson de Roland*," *Olifant* 5.4 (1978): 271-75. Michel's reports on his archival work in England and Scotland are published as *Rapports à M. le Ministre de l'Instruction Publique sur les anciens monuments de l'histoire et de la littérature de la France qui se trouvent dans les bibliothèques de l'Angleterre et de l'Ecosse* (Paris 1838). For a detailed survey of early Roland scholarship, see also Andrew Taylor, "Was There a *Song of Roland*?" in *Speculum* 76.1 (2001): 28-65.

historiographic reconstruction of the French epic tradition. Throughout the nineteenth century the re-emergence of the Oxford manuscript and Michel's subsequent 1837 edition continued to occupy a central position in a tireless search for the origins of the French national consciousness. Following the fall of the French Second Empire at the close of the Franco-Prussian war (1870-71), the role of medieval literature would become even more vital amid the fervor surrounding the search for national identity in the face of defeat; philology and textual reconstruction amounted to a detailed archeological uncovering – or perhaps more suitably, a creation – of the French medieval past. In this socio-historical climate Léon Gautier's vast editorial and scholarly contribution to Roland studies would have a lasting legacy and would firmly establish the *Song of Roland* as France's national epic.

In his *Epopées françaises*, Gautier concludes triumphantly in capital letters, as if engraved in stone tablets:

LA FRANCE EST LA PLUS ÉPIQUE DES NATIONS MODERNES;
ELLE A POSSÉDÉ, AU MOYEN AGE, UNE ÉPOPÉE NATIONALE ET
CHRÉTIENNE, ET LA CHANSON DE ROLAND EST NOTRE ILLIADÉ.²²¹

Working closely with Gautier to popularize the *Song of Roland* and to “rappeler à la France son glorieux passé et ses traditions nationales” was the illustrator Luc-Olivier Merson, who would engrave the frontispiece to Gautier's 1884 *édition populaire* of the epic.²²² The *édition populaire* featured Merson's artistic talent and sought to kindle interest in the Roland epic among a non-specialist audience. The 1884 edition opens with a

²²¹ Léon Gautier, *Epopées françaises* (Paris: Victor Palmé, 1865-1866), 794.

²²² *Ibid.*, 794.

frontispiece by Merson depicting a politically charged and strongly idealized reading of the epic. This image not only advances the nationalistic *fin-de-siècle* reading of the epic, but also serves to retell *in nuce* the entirety of the epic's narrative diegesis (Figure 4.1).

In the center sits Charlemagne on his throne with a long white beard – his iconic *barbe fleurie*. The emperor bears in his right hand a sword and in his left hand an orb, symbolizing his dominion over the world. The emperor sits beneath a Renaissance-style arch and the juxtaposition of the medieval emperor and the neoclassical elements seems to suggest a chronological accumulation of France's past glory and a benjaminian launch of the French historical narrative into an ever-present *hic et nunc*. In the background, on the right and left of the throne, are *ronces* or brambles, which evoke the epic toponym *Roncesvaux*. On the left in the foreground, Merson depicts Pinabel's defeat in his duel with Thierry. This corner of the scene evokes justice, power, and the fate of those who betray, as does the lineage of Ganelon. On the right, a fraternal embrace between the *compagnons* Olivier and Roland takes on a strangely erotic quality. In front of them kneels Roland's fiancée, *la belle Aude* who, in the Oxford Digby 23 reading of the epic, famously falls dead at the emperor's feet upon learning of her betrothed's demise. In Merson's iconographic program, Aude represents the chaste and pure love and loyalty that any French citizen must have toward *la patrie*, as well as the faith one must have in the national historiographic narrative. This image glosses Gautier's epic project: the *Song*

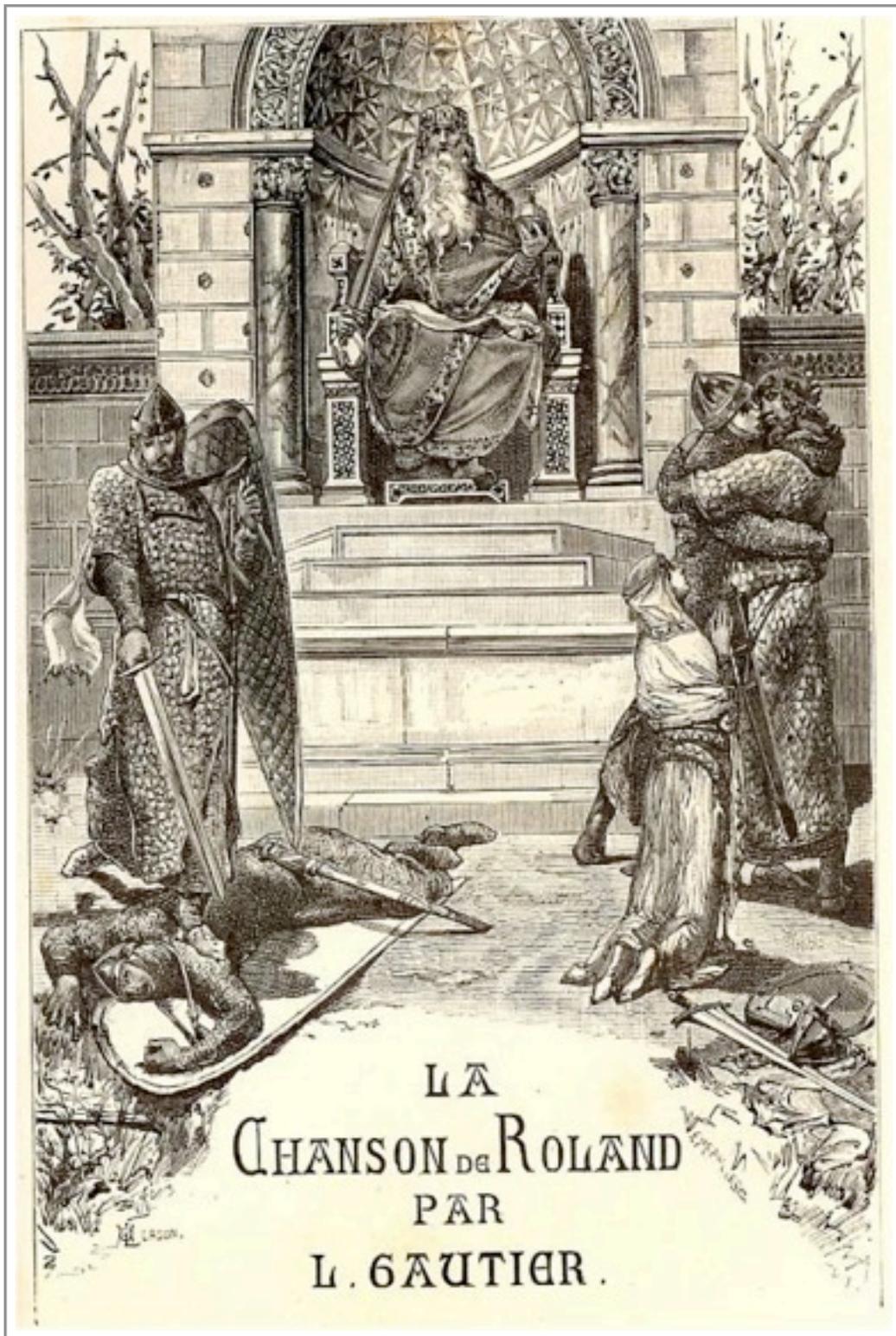


Figure 4.1. Luc-Olivier Merson, Frontispiece to Gautier's *Édition populaire* of the *Chanson de Roland*, 1881.

of Roland, canonized and set into the pantheon of great French literary works, teaches young Frenchmen to love their country and to identify with a host of glorious qualities excavated from the medieval literary past.

This *fin-de-siècle* reading of the Roland legend catches Charlemagne on a good day; Gautier's didactic program promotes the erroneous idea that Charlemagne was consistently a wise and bold emperor. This nationalistic image of the emperor has tenaciously persisted to the present in part because the *Song of Roland* still holds its privileged position in the French literary canon. This reading of the Roland epic is problematic in many ways, however, and is at the center of recent scholarship that has worked to unmask the nationalizing and politicizing scaffolding behind the nineteenth-century nation building project as it relates to the literary past.²²³

In this vein, I would like to add that the above reading of the epic is not in any way absolute since the characteristics of the Roland epic most dear to the nationalistic enterprise are most explicitly expressed in one manuscript alone, the reading preserved in Oxford Digby 23. Andrew Taylor has convincingly argued that the *Song of Roland* as we read, study and enjoy it today is a creation of a modern philological tradition based specifically on the Oxford reading. Instead of representing nascent French national consciousness, the Oxford manuscript version represents what Taylor interprets as a snapshot of a single performance within a specific sociological framework, namely that

²²³ See, for example, Ursula Bähler, *Gaston Paris et la philologie romane* (Geneva: Droz, 2004); David A. Bell, *The Cult of Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Elizabeth Emery and Laura Morowitz, *Consuming the Past: The Medieval Revival in fin-de-siècle France* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003); Robert John Morrissey, *L'empereur à la barbe fleurie: Charlemagne dans la mythologie et l'histoire de France* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997).

of Anglo-Norman England at the eve of the twelfth century.²²⁴ In this regard, the numerous modern editions of the *Song of Roland* must be interpreted within the bounds of their respective modern medievalisms and disciplinary contexts. Francisque Michel's 'discovery' and subsequent edition set in motion not only the integration of the *Song of Roland* into modern French self-fashioning, but also the long tradition of textual emendation favoring the Oxford manuscript on thematic, chronological and linguistic grounds. More than any other reading of the Roland epic, the thematic program of Oxford Digby 23 most closely corresponds to the French nation building project.

What modern scholarship identifies as the *Song of Roland* exists in ten versions, three of which are fragments.²²⁵ The Roland narrative exists also in German, Welsh, Norse and Flemish versions.²²⁶ All of these readings of the Roland legend require consideration on their own merits and within the bounds of their specific socio-historic spheres. The objective of this essay is twofold: first, I will problematize the notion of the pre-eminence of the Oxford manuscript inherited from early Roland scholarship; and then

²²⁴ Andrew Taylor, "Was There a *Song of Roland*?" 28-65; Chapter Two, "Bodleian MS Digby 23," in Andrew Taylor, *Textual Situations: Three Medieval Manuscripts and Their Readers* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2002), 26-70.

²²⁵ The ten manuscripts are as follows: O = Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 23; V4 = Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana, ms. V4 [=225]; C = Châteauroux, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. I; V7 = Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana, ms. 251 (olim fr. VII) ; P = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. fr. 860 (olim 7227/5) ; T = Cambridge, Trinity College, ms. R 3-32 ; L = Lyon, Bibliothèque de la Ville, ms. 984 (olim 649). The three fragment versions are: *l* = "Fragment Lavergne," Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, nouv. acq. fr. 14658; *b* = "Fragment Bogdanow," London, British Library, Additional, 41295.G; ; *f* = "Fragment Michelant," Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, nouv. acq. fr. 5237. For more information and a description of each item, cfr. Cesare Segre, *La chanson de Roland: i testi della Chanson de Roland*, xxxvii-xlvi.

²²⁶ *n* = Norse version, Branch VIII of the *Karlamagnús saga: Saga af Runzivals bardaga*; *K* = German version, Konrad, *Ruolandesliet*; *w* = Welsh version, Campeu Charlymaen; *h* = Flemish version, *Roelantslied*.

I will explore the geographic, cultural and compositional specificity of one version in particular, the V4 Roland: Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, ms. IV (=225).

I approach the canonized position of the *Chanson de Roland* and the pre-eminence of the Oxford manuscript from the point of view of recent discussions that merge postcolonial theoretical frameworks with medieval studies. I will use this approach to investigate modernity's tendency to colonize what I will call medieval narrative communities. As defined in chapter III, a narrative community is a geographically specific group of narrative participants—including redactor / poet, audience and performer—whose cohesiveness is expressed through a common aesthetic appreciation, language(s), set of narrative themes and socio-political realities. In this vein, this chapter aims to identify modern epistemological colonial borders imposed incongruently upon the narrative space of the V4 *Song of Roland*. By epistemological borders, I mean the manifestation of national borders in the context of textual emendation and in methodological approaches to medieval narrative. These borders, as I will discuss, are spatial, linguistic and literate: textual emendation in the Roland tradition operates within the imagined spatial borders of France, within the confines of the French language's imagined purity, and within the paradigm of literacy, which is incongruent with the oralizing modalities typical of the V4 manuscript narrative space. I use the term 'oralizing' to refer to textual production exhibiting a latent element of oral performance. I will conclude that the paradigm of literacy is a textual modality that permits the anthologization of nation and that medieval narrative spaces must be violently altered to fit inside the borders of the spine, cover, pages and margins of the national literary

classic. Even if my ambition stops short of erasing border constructs altogether, I hope to show that literary analysis must take into account the perennially shifting nature of borders within a single geographical space, and that present literary borders are incongruent with past narrative spaces. By recognizing these modern epistemological borders as they are imposed upon the narrative space of the V4 manuscript, I propose that the V4 Roland is a narrative territory ripe for new interpretations wholly independent from the narrative space of Oxford Digby 23.

The Reception History of Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, MS. IV [=225]

For reasons I will explore, the Roland emendation tradition has overwhelmingly favored the Oxford reading of the epic and represents a continuing legacy of the nineteenth-century disciplinary paradigm. The V4 manuscript reading exists in only six modern editions, while the Oxford text has provided the basis for an great number of editions as well as literary studies and translations.²²⁷ Since all translations of the *Song of Roland* in English are based on editions of Oxford Digby 23, it is not surprising that much of the understanding of the epic in English scholarship is necessarily biased toward the

²²⁷ For a selection of some of the most important editions of the *Song of Roland*, see bibliography. The six editions of V4 manuscript are K = Kölbing, E., ed., *La chanson de Roland: Genauer Abdruck der venetianer Handschrift IV* (Heilbronn: Henninger, 1877); M = Mortier, Raoul, ed., *Les textes de la Chanson de Roland. II: La version de Venise IV* (Paris: Editions de la Geste Francor, 1941); GQ: Gasca Queirazza, Giuliano. *La chanson de Roland nel testo assonanzato franco-italiano* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1955); RM = Robertson-Mellor, Geoffroy, ed., *The Franco-Italian Roland (V4)* (Salford: Univ. of Salford Reprographic Unit, 1980); B = Beretta, Carlo, ed., *Il testo assonanzato franco-italiano della "Chanson de Roland": Cod. Marciano Fr. Iv (=225)* (Pavia: Università degli studi di Pavia, 1995); C = Cook, Robert F. "The V4 Version," in *La Chanson de Roland = The Song of Roland: The French corpus*, edited by Joseph J. Duggan, Karen Akiyama, et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005).

Oxford reading. A reconsideration of not only the V4 reading, but all the versions of the Roland epic, is long overdue.

The first edition of the V4 manuscript was published in 1877 by E. Kölbing and is in function a “genauer Abdruck,” a diplomatic edition that aims to make the text available to a wider audience of scholars. Editorial attention would not come, in fact, until 1941, when Raoul Mortier published all extant versions and fragments of the epic poem in the series *Textes de la Chanson de Roland*. As if revisiting the post-Franco-Prussian climate in which the Roland epic provided a national rallying-point, the Mortier series of editions was completed as an act of defiance in German-occupied Paris at the time of publication. Scholarship often cites the inaccuracy of these editions, which is due to Mortier’s inability to consult in person the manuscripts in World War II Europe.²²⁸ By this date, the Oxford manuscript editorial tradition was well underway; some of the most important editions had already appeared, including Müller (1851), Gautier (beginning in 1872), Stengel (1878), Bédier (1921, 1937), Jenkins (1924, 1929), Hillka (1942), and Bertoni (1935, 1936).²²⁹ In 1954 the third editorial project of the V4 Roland was prepared and published by G. Gasca Queirazza and far surpasses in quality of the two preceding editions. The next edition, by G. Robertson-Mellor, appeared in 1980 and has generally not been favored by criticism; indeed, Carlo Beretta, the following editor of the V4 Roland (1995), identifies Robertson-Mellor’s edition as “un passo indietro.”²³⁰ Beretta’s

²²⁸ For more details of the circumstances of Mortier’s series of editions, see Joseph J. Duggan, gen. ed., “Introduction,” in *La Chanson de Roland / The Song of Roland: The French Corpus*, 28-30.

²²⁹ This information comes from Carlo Beretta, “Introduction,” *Il testo assonanzato franco-italiano della Chanson de Roland*, xiii.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, xv.

edition, on the other hand, is the first to give the manuscript thorough philological attention and represents a significant contribution to the visibility of the V4 text.

The most recent edition of the V4 manuscript was prepared by Robert F. Cook and is one in a series of editions of all the existing readings of the Roland in the French language. Cook's edition makes two important contributions to Roland scholarship. First, it aims to present the V4 manuscript as a self-sufficient entity and is intended to be read without the Oxford Digby 23 as a subtext. Second, Cook leaves intact some of the more difficult passages in order to consider the experience of the medieval reader facing a text whose "convoluted surface was meant to be fascinating in itself, even where it seems at first to delay or block access to the narration."²³¹ This perspective bears on my present discussion, since Cook's editorial principles aim to respect the integrity – whether easily accessible to the modern reader or not – of the original narrative space of the V4 Roland.

This cursory summary of the V4 editing history yields valuable insight on the state of Roland scholarship. On the one hand, the Roland epic is one of the most widely read works of medieval literature among a general audience, thanks mostly to the pedagogical ambitions of Léon Gautier. On the other hand, Roland scholarship is plagued with numerous blind spots, leading to generalizing assumptions about both the poem's socio-cultural context and function, and its literary interpretation. The V4 manuscript has only recently come under genuine and thorough philological examination and because of these efforts, the narrative decolonisation of the V4 manuscript is underway. The important new directions taken in editing the V4 Roland are coupled with recent

²³¹ Cook, "The V4 Version," 22.

productive assessments of the manuscript's importance. Despite efforts to valorize the aesthetic program of the V4 manuscript and to shed light upon especially the linguistic character of the text, however, many current assessments still unwittingly subscribe to the nationalizing epistemological borders created by early scholarship. There are many Roland scholars we could consider here but, for the sake of brevity, I will detail how the positions of Léon Gautier and Joseph Bédier specifically have helped to create and reinforce the nationalizing linguistic, spatial and literate borders that have colonized the narrative space of the V4 manuscript.

Nationalizing Programs: Pre-eminence of Oxford Manuscript Digby 23

Scholarship, in fact, has largely assumed the pre-eminence of the Oxford manuscript since the work of Léon Gautier and, later, of Joseph Bédier. Léon Gautier's ambitious editorial project sought to create an aura of arcane authority around the Oxford manuscript: "Le voilà devant nous. Nous ne le toucherons pas, nous ne l'ouvrons pas sans une certaine émotion profonde et sincère."²³² The Oxford Roland is favored for its early date, whereas for Gautier and for the majority of subsequent editors, V4 proves to be useful only as a resource in amending and interpreting difficult lessons in the Oxford version. The V4 Roland was therefore relegated to an ancillary status, from which, as we have seen, one can hope it will soon emerge.

²³² Léon Gautier, "Introduction," in *La chanson de Roland: édition classique*, xxvj.

Generally speaking, early criticism of the V4 Roland was most fervently vocal with regard to the manuscript's linguistic character. For Léon Gautier, the defects of the manuscript are threefold: linguistic, chronological and thematic. Beretta places the manuscript's provenance in the cultural center of Treviso and suggests that the text itself was written between 1320 and 1340-5 in the Franco-Italian literary idiom.²³³ Initial discussion as to whether the hybrid Franco-Lombard literary language was in fact a dialect (see, for example, Guessard's introduction to his edition of *Macaire*²³⁴) quickly gave way to the opinion that it was simply the result of ignorant Italian scribes attempting to compose in French, as in fact Gautier had already opined in his first edition of the poem: "Ce n'est point là une langue originale: c'est du français écorché par un Italien qui veut, à toute force, se faire comprendre de ses compatriotes. C'est un baragouin, et non pas un dialecte."²³⁵ This point of view would remain stable throughout Gautier's editorial career, for even in the posthumous publication of the 25th edition, which would be used in the French public school system as a canonical text, he reaffirmed emphatically that: "Tout d'abord, il a été écrit par un scribe ignorant et en un français déplorablement italianisé."²³⁶ Such criticism of the linguistic composition of the V4 Roland effectively reaffirmed the manuscript's status as a second-best to the Oxford, useful only in editing the latter. Bolstering the imagined inferiority of the V4 Roland are the criticisms involving the date and thematic context of the manuscript.

²³³ Beretta, "Introduction," xviii.

²³⁴ François Guessard, ed., *Macaire* (Paris: A. Frank, 1866).

²³⁵ Gautier, *Epopées françaises*, 556.

²³⁶ Gautier, "Introduction," in *La Chanson de Roland*, 25th edition, xxvii.

Thematic and chronological frustrations with the V4 Roland as expressed in early scholarship are intricately linked to the French historiographic narrative. For Gautier, the manuscript's departure from the Oxford reading represents a regrettable development of French epic themes abroad and a temporal drifting away from the pure and noble period of epic composition. In his chapter "Voyages de l'épopée française" of the *Épopées françaises*, Gautier discusses the permutations which the French *chansons de geste* underwent in literary circles outside of what he considers France. With regard to modifications of the Roland legend, Gautier observes *l'attitude nouvelle* that marks Roland in the Italian context: "On le transforme en héros pontifical; on en fait le sénateur de Rome et le général en chef des armées du Pape. Dans l'*Entrée d'Espagne* Roland pense moins à 'France la douce' qu'à la 'glesie romaine.'"²³⁷ This innovation on Roland's role and acquired power has been the object of much critical attention since Gautier's time and has become a focal point in current Franco-Italian scholarship.²³⁸ Reading Gautier's commentary, we find that such thematic permutations are bound to a chronological inferiority assigned to the V4 manuscript. For Gautier, the Oxford Roland presents a far more noble reading because of its early date:

Dans la *Chanson de Roland*, telle qu'on la pourra lire tout à l'heure, c'était l'esprit du XI^e siècle qui frémissait ; dans nos *rifacimenti*, c'est celui du XIII^e. Les âmes y sont moins mâles. Tout s'alanguit, s'attédie, s'effémine. [...] L'auteur se fait voir davantage dans ces œuvres trop personnelles. Plus de proportions; point de style, avec plus de prétentions. Des formules, des chevilles, et, comme nous le dirions aujourd'hui, des « clichés »

²³⁷ Gautier, *Épopées françaises*, 352.

²³⁸ See the seminal work on this subject, Gaston Paris, *Histoire poétique de Charlemagne* (Paris: Émile Bouillon, 1905). For more recent scholarship on the transformation of Roland and Carolingian epic in Italy, see K.H. Bender, "Les métamorphoses de la royauté de Charlemagne dans les premières épopées franco-italiennes," *Cultura Neolatina* 21 (1961): 164-74.

insupportables. Ces remaniements, nous les abandonnons volontiers à ceux qui nous accusent de trop aimer notre vieille poésie religieuse et nationale. De ces œuvres de rhéteurs ennuyeux, la Patrie et Dieu sont absents. Nous ne descendrons pas à les admirer.²³⁹ (xxxvii-xxxviii)

Gautier willingly abandons the Venise 4 manuscript *remaniement* to scholars who share my point of view. These linguistic, thematic and chronological anxieties are symptomatic of a grid of closely meshed epistemological borders conforming to the contours of the modern French nation. Linguistically, the Oxford text – even though it is written in a normanized French idiom – corresponds most closely to an idealized linguistic precursor to modern French. For this reason, the linguistic profile of the V4 Roland is perceived as lying outside an imagined linguistic border, beyond which French becomes corrupt and detrimental to the purity of nation. Thematically, as we have seen throughout this discussion, the Oxford manuscript conforms most closely to a politically constructed vision of France as a modern nation whereas the “remaniements” are only “œuvres de rhéteurs ennuyeux” from whose work both God and the nation, *la Patrie*, are absent. In establishing the binary *original* : *remaniment*, Gautier effectively others the V4 Roland according to geographical parameters: the production of the V4 Roland takes place beyond the borders of the modern French nation and lies beyond the acceptable borders of nationhood. Finally, on chronological grounds, the Oxford reading is privileged as representing a temporal point of origin and a teleological starting-point for a literary history of France; the V4 text therefore lies beyond temporal borders of origin.

Joseph Bédier’s criticism of the V4 manuscript – although less caustic and fervent than that of Gautier – aligns itself in many instances with earlier criticism. The

²³⁹ Gautier, “Introduction,” xxxvii-xxxviii.

manuscript is written, according to Bédier, in a “surprenant langage hybride.” The qualifier *surprenant* does nothing to flatter the V4 version of the epic and hints again at a non-French otherness. For Bédier, the thematic divergences are unfortunate: “malheureusement, venu à ce point (c’est-à-dire au v. 3845, lequel correspond au v. 3681 d’O), l’auteur abandonne son modèle pour en exploiter d’autres, de moindre ancienneté et de moindre beauté.”²⁴⁰ Here again, the V4 manuscript lies outside French nation, history and language.

Bédier’s lasting contribution to the study of all Roland manuscripts would be his thesis on the pre-eminence of the Oxford manuscript. As one scholar put it, “after the work of Bédier no one again will surely ever dispute that the *Chanson de Roland*, French in language and French in spirit, was a product of the essential genius of France.”²⁴¹ Since the Bédier edition is based on the anglo-norman Oxford text, we might modify this statement accordingly: “no one will surely ever dispute that the Oxford *Roland*, (almost) French in language and French in spirit, was a product of the essential genius of France.” In his *Commentaires*, Bédier outlines his famous thesis as follows:

Notre thèse, conforme en ses grandes lignes à celle de Theodor Müller, est donc que le texte d’Oxford a autant d’autorité à lui seul que tous les autres textes réunis, parce que tous les autres textes procèdent d’un même remanieur. Pour le prouver, il faut et il suffit que je sache produire un passage, un seul passage, où, O disant une certaine chose, tous les autres textes s’accordant à

²⁴⁰ Joseph Bédier, *La Chanson de Roland commentée par Joseph Bédier* (Paris: L’Edition d’art, H. Piazza, 1927), 67-68.

²⁴¹ See David Douglas, “The *Song of Roland* and the Norman Conquest of England,” in *French Studies* 14 (1960): 99-116, citation on page 108. Cited in Taylor, “Was There a Song of Roland?,” 53.

dire une même certaine autre chose, il apparaisse que la leçon originale est O et que la leçon opposée n'en est que l'altération.²⁴²

The parameters of Bédier's thesis are again consistent with the chronological concerns expressed by Gautier. In this vision, the Oxford manuscript represents the closest possible form of a lost original, the "manuscrit original, l'archétype, à jamais perdu," and therefore responds best to the elusive origin point that merges French epic with an emerging national consciousness.²⁴³ As a consequence, all other manuscripts by dint of their later composition date fall outside the chronological borders drawn by Gautier and taken up again by Bédier. The dependence, and thus ancillary status of the V4 Roland to the Oxford reading, is solidly reaffirmed. Aside from arguing the pre-eminence of the Oxford Digby 23 manuscript, Bédier's work insists on another important point, namely that of poetic agency.

Beyond reaffirming the knowledge borders of previous scholarship, Bédier's vision of the authority of one manuscript alone reveals another unseen preoccupation of modern scholarship, namely the cult of the author. For Bédier, the identity of the author is a tantalizing problem: "comme on voudrait être renseigné sur ce poète, sur son origine et sa condition, savoir au moins son nom!"²⁴⁴ Bédier would consecrate an entire chapter to the desire to identify the poet of the Oxford poem. This chapter, "A la recherche de 'Tuoldus,'" refers to the obscure persona in the famous closing line of the Oxford text: "Ci falt la geste que Tuoldus declinet." The search for the author of the *Song of Roland*

²⁴² Joseph Bédier, *La Chanson de Roland commentée*, 93.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

was certainly not only Bédier's preoccupation, but it was indeed Bédier's work that reinforced the search for origin and original poetic agent, which soon reveals itself to be a nearly futile task given the sparse information we have with regard to the poem's composition. As I will discuss below, modern scholarship's search for a poetic agent is symptomatic of another boundary imposed upon medieval narrative spaces, namely the writerly boundaries of a literate culture imposed upon the oralizing modalities of pre-modern narrative communities. Before I turn to this and other specific examples of the workings of the other epistemological boundaries identified above, I must address how the legacies of early scholarship still permeate our present-day readings of narrative spaces as offered by the manuscript tradition.

Today, if the V4 manuscript is referred to independently of the Oxford Digby manuscript, this generally occurs within the bounds of Franco-Italian studies. This field of study is concerned most generally with a body of manuscripts that preserves a wide range of textual material, from epic to treatise, all composed in what is now widely accepted as a stylized literary language, combining varying degrees of French elements with local Italianate dialects. The V4 Roland manuscript, along with the other exemplars of the Franco-Italian epic tradition, is generally categorized in modern scholarship according to the two influential typologies, those of Bertoni-Viscardi (1941), and most recently of Holtus-Wunderli (2005).²⁴⁵ In the Bertoni-Viscardi typology the understanding of the Franco-Italian narrative space is essentially made to fit into the boundaries of two key binary parameters: French/Italian and copy/original. In addition to

²⁴⁵ See chapter I, p. 14.

these parameters, there is a shadow of agency involved in the creation of these manuscripts, alluding to the concepts of author, redactor, poet, imitator and translator. The Bertoni-Viscardi typology is also articulated chronologically: the three classifications of the Franco-Lombard corpus correspond to a progression of three phases: a period of curious readers of French *chansons de geste*; a period in which this material is elaborated *in loro modo*; and finally, a period of original creation and inspiration when Franco-Lombard literary production achieves an independence from the French tradition, “cossichè la materiale venuta di Francia diventa, a un certo momento, veramente *italiana*.”²⁴⁶

The Bertoni-Viscardi typology relies heavily on the epistemological boundaries outlined above defining national space, language and chronology. This typology ultimately stands in the shadow of the modern historiographic narrative as it relates to the modern national borders of France and Italy. Bertoni and Viscardi adhere faithfully to a teleology of origin and evolution that posits an end point culminating in original Italian compositions in a more pure form of French. Thus these later original works of this tradition are opposed to early ones that were *inquinata di italianismi, di origine francese*. Here, as above with Bédier, the lexical choice “inquinata” is symptomatic of anxieties surrounding linguistic purity. While the Bertoni-Viscardi typology hinges upon original inspiration, later scholarship would seek to describe the Franco-Italian corpus through a linguistic typology.

²⁴⁶ Viscardi, *Letteratura franco-italiana*, 38.

Günter Holtus and Peter Wunderli, who have published extensively on the subject and are among the foremost experts on Franco-Italian, sought in their 2005 publication “Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne,” to create a typology that describes the Franco-Italian corpus along a predominately linguistic axis. While considering a range of agents involved in textual transmission, including authors and scribes, Holtus and Wunderli construct a typology in a four-step division.²⁴⁷ Like previous typologies, Holtus and Wunderli’s elaborates and emphasizes compositional factors involved in the Franco-Italian tradition. These gestures toward textual production and circulation serve as a springboard for further discussion on the linguistic impact of social currents. However, the Holtus-Wunderli typology still rests on residual impulses of the nationalistic tradition that see a binary interaction between two monolithic and anachronistic visions of France and Italy. In my view, this typology still places too much emphasis on classifying the Franco-Italian corpus within the bounds of its linguistic composition and on ties to an imagined “standard” French: “textes français quelque peu italianisés;” “textes français sensiblement italianisés.” This perspective fails to see the texts belonging to the Franco-Italian tradition solely within the confines of their own readership. From this perspective, it would seem strange to categorize the French national canon of medieval literature based on the same grounds of originality and language. This system clearly would not work, for Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France would be merely imitators and not iconic figures in the French national canon. Similarly, if we hold the Oxford Roland and

²⁴⁷ See chapter I, p. 19.

its spectrum of Anglo-Norman traits to the same standards of purity, we would frankly be dealing with a “not-quite-French-enough” manuscript.

Holtus and Wunderli’s work influentially and productively introduces oral and textual factors to the discussion of typology, a question I find central to interpreting the narrative space of those Franco-Italian texts produced specifically in the region around Treviso, Padua and Verona. These texts exhibit oralizing characteristics and are almost all associated with Carolingian themes and they have been defined as belonging to the ‘Lombard epic-romance corpus.’ Even if these texts appear to be written within an oralizing modality, their *livresque* quality is often noted in scholarship. However, it is likely that this *livresque*, or even literate, character was accessible to only a small and specialized bracket of the population involved in their narrative space, including scribes, poets and performers, and perhaps literate patrons and amateurs of literature. Because of the impressive spectrum of introduced French elements, it is clear that this narrative space was, as Ruggiero Ruggieri has point out, *interclassista* and would then have been characterized by the difficult-to-define threshold between orality and literacy.²⁴⁸ For all these reasons, it is important not to overemphasize the *livresque* character of these works at the expense of their latent orality. Even though many Franco-Italian manuscripts, like the V4 manuscript were probably performed not from memory, but by reading out loud to an illiterate audience, as is suggested in the prologue of the text transmitted in the V4 manuscript:

Chi voil oïr vere significance,
a San Donis ert une geste in France.

²⁴⁸ See Ruggiero Ruggieri, *L’influsso francese in Italia nel Medioevo* (Roma: E. de Santis, 1968), 189.

Cil ne sa ben qui per le scrit in çante.
Nen deit aler a pei çubler qui çate
mais çivalçer mul e destreire de Rabie.²⁴⁹ (ll. 1-5)

In this way, the Lombard epic manuscript itself becomes an instance of performance and the Franco-Lombard narrative space must be interpreted within the context of a residual oral framework, to borrow the terminology of Walter Ong.²⁵⁰

I have given a cursory overview of the critical and reception history of both the Roland manuscripts in question: Oxford Digby 23 and Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana, ms. 225 (olim fr. IV). This critical survey reveals the broad lines in scholarship's tendency to subscribe, whether consciously or not, to the legacies of nationalistic modalities in medieval philology. I will now turn to a closer examination of the Venice manuscript itself and propose new avenues of inquiry that come to light when this manuscript is analyzed as a de-colonized narrative space.

“La douce France” and Charlemagne Reconsidered

In my discussion thus far, I have highlighted specific moments in the critical reception history of the V4 manuscript to show how editorial practices have often tailored their readings of medieval narrative spaces to the exigencies of the modern epistemological borders of language, nation and literacy. By identifying and problematizing these boundaries, I do not suggest that this or any subsequent study will be free of unseen borders and methodological constraints. The past will always be read

²⁴⁹ Cook, “The V4 Version,” II/87. “Whoever wants to hear a true tale; / in France, at Saint Denis, there took place a deed. / He knows well who sings it from what is written. / A minstrel who sings should not go on foot, / but should ride a mule or a war horse from Arabia” (All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated).

²⁵⁰ See Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 113-14.

through the lens of the present; here I advocate for a greater sensitivity to this inescapable imperative.

As is manifest in the criticism of Léon Gautier, and latent even in current criticism, interpretations of the Oxford reading of the *Song of Roland* are found to be more responsive to the created vision of the modern French nation than to the specific narrative space in which it was created, as described above by Andrew Taylor.²⁵¹ Because the V4 manuscript (and all other versions) provide neither the thematic basis for a nationalistic reading nor a teleological point of origin for French literary identity, these manuscripts have been used for the most part to correct or confirm difficult passages in Digby 23. In even the most current typologies, the “spare part” function of the V4 manuscript is justified with the assumption that the first third of the text is a copy of the Oxford text, each having a common missing manuscript source, α .²⁵² Indeed, the reading that informed the Oxford version was evidently the same model for the Venice manuscript, and it is true that that some of the passages are strikingly similar. However, it is important to note that there are significant modifications to the material as it is found in the V4 Roland and these modifications are most profound in the beginning of the “copied” text, while the remaining first third closely parallels the Oxford reading. The modifications found in the opening section of the V4 Roland effectively skew the narrative focus of the poem to provide a heightened role for Roland as a hero of the church and consequently a diminished stature for Charlemagne. Ultimately, a significant

²⁵¹ Taylor, “Was There a Song of Roland?,” 41-53.

²⁵² William W. Kibler valorizes and advocates the independent literary merit of the V4 Roland in “The *Roland* after Oxford: The French Tradition,” *Olifant* 6.3 & 4 (1979): 275-92.

narrative shift away from the tragedy of Roland’s death affords new emphasis on the thematic role of the Roland-Ganelon feud. This skewing of the diegetic trajectory is made evident immediately in *laisse* 1, vv. 6-7: “Des or comença li traïment de Gayne / e de Rollant li nef de Çarle el Mayne.”²⁵³ William W. Kibler, in his article “The *Roland* after Oxford: The French Corpus,” was perhaps the first to indicate this diegetic shift present in the V4 manuscript, even if he did so without reference to the broader Lombard epic-romance context.²⁵⁴

The next and perhaps most important thematic alteration found in the manuscript is Charlemagne’s reduced stature and the consequent amplification of Roland’s already valorous stature. For the most part, the Franco-Lombard version leaves intact the character of Roland while relegating Charlemagne to a secondary role. From the very beginning we see important omissions, such as the emperor’s name in *laisse* II at the council of Marsil in the orchard (Table 4.1):

Oxford Digby 23	Marciana V4
<p>Il en apelet e ses dux e ses cuntés: « Oëz, seignurs, quel pecchét nus encumbret. li empereres Carles de France dulce en cest païs nos est venuz cunfundre. (II. 14-17)</p>	<p>E sî apella som dux et soi conte: — Oldî, signor, qual peçé nos ingombre: L'imperer sî nos ven per confondre. (II.20-21)</p>

Table 4.1: Textual variations between Oxford Digby 23 and Venice Marciana V4

²⁵³ “Now begins the betrayal of Ganelon / and of Roland the nephew of Charlemagne.”

²⁵⁴ See William W. Kibler, “The *Roland* after Oxford: The French Tradition,” 275-92.

The V4 version omits the names of both *Charlemagne* and *France dulce* and thus diminishes the profile of the emperor and eliminates reference to the kingdom of France.

One of the most striking demotions of the image of Charlemagne in the V4 Roland is the complete elision of descriptions of the emperor at early and strategic points in the text. The *profil* of Charlemagne in the Oxford tradition, which informs the nineteenth-century artistic renderings of the emperor, shows an aged, wise, brave and pensive warrior:

Desuz un pin, delez un eglenter,
Un faldestoed i unt, fait tut d'or mer:
La siet li reis ki dulce France tient.
Blanche ad la barbe e tut flurit le chef,
Gent ad le cors e la countenance fier:
S'est kil demandet, ne l'estoet enseigner.
E li message descendirent a pied,
Ail saluerent par amur e par bien.²⁵⁵ (ll. 114-21)

This Charlemagne, reflected in Merson's frontispiece to Gautier's *édition populaire* of the poem, commands authority and dominion over the kingdom of France and is respected by those in his presence. This is the image of Charlemagne that inspired Charles et Louis Rochet's equestrian statue of the emperor in the Place du Parvis Notre-Dame, in Paris. In V4, these lines are omitted and the poetic redactor merges *laisse VIII* directly into *laisse IX*, when Blancandrin delivers his message to Charlemagne.

²⁵⁵ Short, Ian, ed., "The V4 Version," in *La Chanson de Roland = The Song of Roland: The French corpus*, edited by Joseph J. Duggan, Karen Akiyama, et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), I/115. "Under a pine, near a hawthorne / Upon a throne of pure gold, / Sits the king who rules all of sweet France. / His beard is white and his hair gray, / His body regal and his demeanor proud; / Anyone seeking him will find him right away. / The messengers dismount their horses, / They greet the king with friendship and wish him well."

The narrative shift to the feud between Roland and Ganelon is taken up again and is made most evident early on in the text when the V4 version inserts a completely original *laisse*. Once Ganelon is designated as messenger and sent to the king Marsilie in *laisse* XXIII of the V4 manuscript, we are given a glimpse of the traitor's thoughts when he addresses his horse:

Civalça Gayne di et noite a la luna,
 Sì sum quel hom che de mort à paüra.
 Contra son cival à soa raxon tenüa :
 — O bon cival sòr, ch'avì la cropa bruna,
 Lassé lo passo, sì tigni l'amblaüra!
 Vu passari la grant aigua de Runa,
 Sì passari la val de Gardamuna,
 Che tant è fera et fort et argoioxa :
 Quil che la passa mai in França no torna.
 Al roi Marsilio portarò la recontra.
 Quel chi [m]e manda de mi no à miga cura,
 Ço è Rollant, cui Damnedeo confunda!
 Sì farà el, se Dé vita me dona.' (*laisse* 23)²⁵⁶

These words to his horse externalize Ganelon's thought process.²⁵⁷ Here we have a very different image of Ganelon, who is perceived through an individualistic lens, similar to what we might find in the contemporaneous romance tradition. In the Oxford text it is not Ganelon who expresses his anger towards Roland, but rather his fellow knights who lament Ganelon's precarious assignment as messenger to the king Marsilie:

Table 4.1. Textual variations between Oxford Digby 23 and Venice Marciana V4.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁶ Cook, "The V4 Version," II/97. "Ganelon rode day and at night by the light of the moon, / He is the man who fears death. / He expressed his thoughts to his horse: / — Sauro, my good horse with the brown back, / Do not slow your gait, keep steady. / You will pass the flowing water of the Runa, / You will pass through the valley of Gardamuna, / Which is steep, strong and arduous: / He who passes through it will never return to France. / I will go hold counsel with King Marsille. / The one who sends me has no regard for me, / This is Roland, may God smite him! / And he will, if God grants me life."

²⁵⁷ Instances of talking to horses appear in at least once the *Entrée d'Espagne*, and at least in two versions of *Huon d'Auvergne*.

‘Ki ço jugat que doüsez aller
Par Charlemagne n’iert guariz ne tensez.
Li quens Rollant nel se doüst penser,
Que estrait estes de mult grant parented.’ (laisse 27, ll.353-56)²⁵⁸

By assigning the expression of anger to the mouths of Ganelon’s fellow knights, the poet avoids a direct expression of the Ganelon-Roland hatred. The intensification of this aspect in the V4 version hints at geographically and chronologically specific socio-cultural dynamics lying at the margins of the text; the V4 Roland was produced and performed in a society in which feudal constructs were obsolete and in which feuding families were common.²⁵⁹

As mentioned above, the alterations to thematic material occur less frequently in the second section of the “copied” portion of the V4 manuscript and the adjectives describing the emperor return to their customary laudatory tone, as in the Oxford reading. Joseph Bédier interprets the return in the second half to the “copied” text as scribal frustration:

Au terme de cette revue, il convient de mettre en relief un fait singulier: les cas où une leçon O entre en conflit avec une leçon α , si nombreux dans les 2500 premiers vers, deviennent, dans les 1500 derniers, rares et insignifiants. [...] Comment interpréter ce fait? Je n’en vois guère qu’une explication, et c’est que le remanieur α a remanié de moins en moins: en cours de route il aura pris conscience de ses méfaits et se sera progressivement dégoûté de sa besogne.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Cook, “The V4 Version,” II/100. “The one who proposed that you should go / Will not be protected or saved by Charlemagne. / Count Roland ought not to have thought of that, / For you were born of very high parentage.” Translated by Brault, *The Song of Roland*, 25.

²⁵⁹ For more on how the V4 text can be linked to late-medieval society, see Kibler, “The *Roland* after Oxford,” 276-77.

²⁶⁰ Bédiers, *Commentaires*, 176-77.

Méfais, as in diverging from the aesthetic conventions of French epic? *Dégoût* for diverging from nationalistic glorification and from an imagined linguistic norm? It is difficult to interpret exactly what Bédier means here by *prendre conscience de ses méfaits* and what he might have in mind as the *dégoût* of the scribe, but it is clear nonetheless that the textual borders of language, author, original and copy are indeed shadowing his reading of the V4 manuscript space. This account of the *fait singulier*, which is typical of the V4 reading, is shored up by imagined critical boundaries. For this reason it is essential for current criticism to reconsider the idea that the V4 text is a “copy” of a same “original” model, the ephemeral *leçon α*, but rather to read it as an autonomous narrative space, independent of the Oxford narrative space. In this vein, it is evident that a medieval audience listening or reading the V4 text would not have in mind the subtext of the missing *leçon α*, and would not build the same epistemological barriers as a modern historian of medieval literature.

The following *Prise de Narbonne* portion of the V4 text (existing only in the V4 version) and the final Ganelon and Aude section resonate with irony when confronted with the preceding passages that re-nobilized Charlemagne’s image. This literary interpretation is possible only when the V4 text is interpreted as a whole and within its own narrative space, and not when divided into original and non-original sections. In the V4 version, after the death of Roland, Charlemagne embarks on his conquest of Narbonne. Once the city is taken, he seeks a worthy knight to hold the city:

Nostro enperer monta il palais major
in la sala grant dal temps ancienor,
après lui de França dolce lo bernaço e la flor.

Nostro enperer la apella por amor :
 “Franchi çivaler, dist li nostro enpereor,
 entro nos çivaler un dux o un contor,
 dux ni chatanio ni hom de tel vigor,
 che voia Nerbona tenir e tut l’onor?
 Servir ge n’a dexe millia barun.”
 Deo no fe quel chi l’inperer respon.
 Tut in lo palais i tent li cef inbron.
 Tuti la çuça a fou e a carbon.
 Mal fou arda Nerbona.

Quant l’inperer vid soa baroniã,
 ni ben ni mal nus hom li respondiã,
 li enperer parla a la çeres ardïa:
 “Trai vos avanti, Riçardo de Normandiã!
 Prendi Nerbona, volunter ve l’otriã.
 Servir ve n’a çivaler .xx. millia.
 — Bon rois, dist il, vos parlé de foliã.
 .XVII. anni est che non fu in Lormandiã.
 Guera me fa una gent de Saracinïa,
 tol me mie terre, mie çastelle e ma villa.
 Ad altri la dona, bon roi, che no la vo miã.”
 Mal fou arda Nerbona. (laisse 290-91)²⁶¹

The vision of emperor Charlemagne in these two *laisse*s returns to the altered profile of the beginning of the poem. Reading this passage as an intentional diegetic development rather than as a deviant innovation from α , the problematic re-nobilization of the emperor (the *prise de conscience* of the scribe) now resonates ironically with the foolish and

²⁶¹ Cook, “The V4 Version,” II/230-31. “Laisse 290: Our emperor entered the great palace, / in the great hall of ancient times, / following him were the nobility, the flower of sweet France. / Our emperor called to them, out of love: / ‘Noble knights,’ said our emperor, / ‘Is there among us a duke or a count, / a commander or a castellan or other man of such strength, / who might want to hold the city of Narbonne and all the honor of this task? / I have ten thousand hardy men serving me.’ There was nobody who answered the emperor. Everyone in the hall held his head low. / Everyone gave the city up for being burnt. / — Let Narbonne burn to the ground! Laisse 291: “When the emperor saw his lords, / and nobody answered him for good or ill / the emperor spoke with a courageous expression: / ‘Step forward, Richard of Normandy! / Take Narbonne, gladly I give it to you. / There are twenty thousand knights to serve you.’ / ‘Good king,’ he replied, ‘you talk nonsense. / I haven’t been in Normandy for seventeen years. / A Saracen army is waging war with me, / taking from me my lands, castles and my city. / Give it to someone else, for I certainly don’t want it.’ Let Narbonne burn to the ground!”

authority-deprived figure we see in this passage. This interpretation has two consequences: first, the portion parallel to the Oxford reading becomes less a “copy” and more a gloss, or commentary on the text that served as a model; second, this irony, freed from Oxford as a subtext and from the shadow of the modern nation, opens the V4 Roland to new avenues of interpretation. It becomes clear that when considered in its entirety, the redactor V4 Roland is a narrative space incongruent with that offered by Oxford. The V4 manuscript is less about the tragic death of the heroic Roland than it is about the family betrayal and consequences of this betrayal between Roland and Ganelon. Much criticism has failed to take into account the national borders edited into the Oxford manuscript and has subsequently read the narrative space of the V4 Roland accordingly. In this way, these perceived deviations of theme, language and structure are preoccupations created by scholarship.

Despite what recent criticism has said on the matter, the unique narrative space offered by the V4 Roland necessarily resonates with the social realities of the medieval Veneto, the cultural sphere in which the manuscript was produced.²⁶² I would suggest the underlying political commentary is no longer consistent with feudalism, but rather with the emerging rival families of the northern Italian city-states; the Roland and Ganelon feud could be interpreted in this way. The final extended Belle Aude passage also resonates with a changed set of roles for women in a mercantile, proto-capitalist, society.

As Duggan suggests, the V4 reading responds to the reality of female audience

²⁶² Günter Holtus, for example, sees few manuscript characteristics that may be linked to social context: "En ce qui concerne les modifications du contenu, il est difficile de trouver des traits qui soient clairement motivés par le contexte politique et socio-culturel de l'Italie septentrionale." See Günter Holtus and Peter Wunderli, "Franco-italien et épopée franco-italienne," in *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters* (GRLMA), volume III, tome 1/2, fascicule 10 (Heidelberg: Winter, 2005), 205.

participation.²⁶³ Seen from this perspective, the reading of the V4 manuscript I propose bears in mind the experience of the medieval audience.

Narrating Beyond the Borders of Old French

Criticism of the V4 Roland and of the entirety of the Franco-Italian manuscript corpus, as I have shown, was most concerned with the linguistic profile of these texts, which were often considered inadequate attempts at composing in French. This is the view expressed in Pio Rajna's oft-cited characterization of the Franco-Italian poet, *volle e non seppe*; the poet wanted to write in "standard" French, but was unable to.²⁶⁴ Some extreme followers of this position include François Guessard who sought to restore the Franco-Italian epic *Macaire* into what he considered standard Old French, "par comparaison avec le français des chansons de geste de la fin du XII^e siècle ou du commencement du siècle suivant."²⁶⁵ From this point of view, the Franco-Italian *Macaire*, a *chef-d'oeuvre de barbarie* according to Guessard, demonstrates to what extent linguistic borders in early scholarship are tied to national ones.²⁶⁶ For Guessard, the task

²⁶³ See especially pages 83-85 in Joseph J. Duggan, "Oral Performance, Writing, and the Textual Tradition of the Medieval Epic in the Romance Languages: The Example of the *Song of Roland*," in *Parergon 2* (1989): 79-95; and Joseph J. Duggan, "L'épisode d'Aude dans la tradition en rime de la *Chanson de Roland*," in *Charlemagne in the North: Proceedings of the Twelfth International Conference of the Société Rencesvals, Edinburgh, 4-11 August 1991*, edited by Philip E. Bennet, Anne Elizabeth Cobby, and Graham A. Runnalls (Edinburgh: Univ. of Edinburgh Printing Dept., 1993). Along with Duggan, proponents of reading the V4 Roland within the context of its socio-cultural sphere include K.H. Bender, "Les métamorphoses de la royauté de Charlemagne dans les premières épopées franco-italiennes," in *Cultura Neolatina 21* (1961): 164-74; Hennig Krauss, *Epica feudale e pubblico borghese: per la storia poetica di Carlomagno in Italia* (Padua: Liviana Editrice, 1980).

²⁶⁴ Cited in Viscardi, *La letteratura franco-italiana*, 45.

²⁶⁵ François F. Guessard, ed., "Preface," in *Macaire*, c. (Paris: A. Frank, 1866).

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, preface xcix.

of recuperating *Macaire* and re-establishing it in the French epic canon is synonymous with making the narrative space of this text fit within the imagined borders of the Old French language and with re-appropriating it within the borders of the “real” French nation. As a *chef-d’oeuvre de barbarie*, the narrative space of the *Macaire* text lies beyond the imagined and assumed boundaries of French, or even Italian, and slips through the cracks of national spaces. With similar motivations in mind, early editors of the Oxford Roland operated under the influence of similar anxieties of contamination.

As Bédier points out in his survey of emendation practices before his milestone editions, early editors sought to restore a linguistic norm to the Anglo-Norman Digby 23 in order to bring it back onto the French side of a putative linguistic border. Grammatical particularities were seen as irregularities because they lay outside the realm of imagined nineteenth-century Old French language grammatical borders. Bédier cites these verses 503 and 505 of the Oxford manuscript, which read:

e Blancandrins i vint al canut peil, [...] (503)

e l’algalifes, sun uncle e sis fedeilz. (505)²⁶⁷

The phrase *sun uncle e sis fedeilz* as an apostrophe to the substantive *l’algalifes* is perceived to be problematic since the accusative *sun uncle* does not agree with the nominative case of *l’algalifes*. Gautier and Clédât resolve this inconsistency by changing the reading to *sis uncles*. Stengel’s 1890 edition reads *Vint l’algalifes, ses oncles, al conseil*, whereas Jenkins’ 1924 edition reads: *E l’algalifes, sis uncles e fedeilz*. This

²⁶⁷ “White-haired Blancandrin came, [...]” (l. 503); “And the Caliph, his uncle and his loyal companion” (l. 505); translated by Brault, *The Song of Roland*, 33.

grammatical irregularity transgresses the accepted linguistic borders of the Old French linguistic paradigm and, in these examples, the declensional nominative ending *-s* is restored in order to bring the Oxford reading back into the confines of a standardized vision of Old French. Bédier is careful to distance himself from such normalization, noting that

si l'on met à part les plus anciens textes, ceux du IX^e ou du X^e siècle, comme *Sainte Eulalie* ou *Saint Léger*, les règles de la déclinaison n'apparaissent en toute leur pureté que dans les grammaires modernes de l'ancien français.²⁶⁸

The *grandes lignes*, so to speak, of my argument are anticipated in Bédier's criticism of previous editors of the *Song of Roland*. Key to this important turn in perspective is the term *pureté*; the apparent irregularities of the French found in Digby 23 aggravated a *fin-de-siècle* concern with impurity. Interpreted through the lens of post-colonial medievalism, it is evident that the declensional nominative ending *-s* is a textual border for nation. In editing the linguistic marker *-s* back into the text of Digby 23, early editors were essentially editing national borders – both linguistic and spatial – back into the Roland epic and, in this way, the *Song of Roland* conformed more closely to the nationalist program. If even Digby 23 presented such problematic irregularities, then it is easy to see why the V4 manuscript was a hopeless cause in this nation building program.

Even if recent Franco-Italian scholarship still operates according to assumed and residual national linguistic and spatial borders, important new perspectives have emerged

²⁶⁸ Bédier, *Commentaires*, 248.

on the linguistic character of the V4 Roland as productive and not deviant.²⁶⁹ It is generally agreed in scholarship that the characteristic linguistic hybridity of Franco-Italian manuscripts is an intentional aesthetic choice, even if the poetic mechanics have not been entirely brought to light. We have gone from *volle e non seppe* to *seppe e non volle*—he knew how but chose not to—and the Franco-Italian poet is now seen as in command of his idiom.

With regard to the V4 Roland, the poetics of hybridity are visible in many important ways and in the remaining discussion I will show how we might reinterpret these characteristic renderings of French lexicon and morphology in a new light when the epistemological borders of “national language” are removed. It is first of all important to recognize that the use of French linguistic elements in the Lombard romance-epic corpus does not refer to a spatial construct, as today we would link French lexical elements to France. When not used as an indicator of identity and geography, French used for aesthetic purposes corresponds to the medieval theory of modal discourse, in which each linguistic mode is suitable for specific matters, such as epic, prose romance, historiography, and lyric poetry. Dante Alighieri, in his treatise *De vulgari eloquentia*, tells us that the *lingua d’oil* mode of discourse is most suitable for prose narrative and chronicles, whereas the *lingua d’oc* is suitable for lyric poetry.²⁷⁰ Similarly, the French – or more precisely the *lingua d’oil* – elements found in the V4 Roland evoke the epic

²⁶⁹ See, for example, Stefano Maria Cingolani, "Innovazione e parodia nel marciano XIII (Geste Francor)," *Romanistisches Jahrbuch* 38 (1987): 61-77; Aurelio Roncaglia, "La letteratura franco-veneta," *Storia della letteratura italiana*, Vol. 2 (Milan: Garzanti, 1965), 727-59.

²⁷⁰ Dante Alighieri, *De vulgari eloquentia*, edited by Vittorio Coletti (Milan: Garzanti, 1991), 38.

register and create a chivalric ethos and nostalgia. Furthermore, linguistic variance occurs vertically in a single text and not horizontally across geographical space; it is linked to literary aesthetic and not to geographic location and identity. If *lingua d'oïl* lexical and morphological elements give a chivalric *patina* to a performance of the text, then the communicability of the text occurs through the matrix Italianate language, which is a conflation of Lombard dialectical and Tuscan elements.

Just as the declensional nominative *-s* was for the *fin-de-siècle* editors a marker for nation, the nominative *-s* in the V4 Roland becomes an overt morphological marker of *Frenchness* or, more accurately and in accordance with the narration modality, of *lingua d'oïl*, a marker for chivalric nostalgia. As Robert F. Cook notes in his edition to the V4 manuscript, this scribe seems to make the same declensional errors as a French scribe would during the same period in which the V4 Roland was composed.²⁷¹ Both the French of the first part of the fourteenth century and the French elements in the V4 Roland have ceased to assign communicative weight to the declensional *-s*. However, what is unique about the Venice manuscript is that the nominative *-s*, when juxtaposed with the Italianate base language of the poem, becomes an aesthetic feature by virtue of its *Frenchness* and becomes a functioning element in a poetic program.

As well noted with regard to the V4 Roland and to the Franco-Italian corpus in general, the nominative *-s* is used inconsistently. There are many examples of the declensional *-s* used grammatically in the V4 (*-s* in bold, \emptyset indicates an omission of the nominative *-s*):

²⁷¹ Cook, "The V4 Version," II/44.

— Per foi, dist Gaynes, per la francesca çant (l. 310)

Ambe dos çivalça Gaynes e Blanardinø. (l. 313)

Gaines li cont comença a parler. (l. 335)²⁷²

Although less frequent, the presence of the declensional *–s* used agrammatically is nonetheless present, as in *laisse* 203 (agrammatical nominative *–s** in bold):

Clers* est la noit e la luine lusant.
Çarle se çist, mais dol oit de Rollant,
e d’Olivers* li pesait molt fortmant,
de doçes peres de la francesca çant,
qu’en Roncivals laissent mort sanglant.
Nen poit müer n’en plur e n’en demant.
E preit Deus* qu’en paradis li metant. (ll. 2703-2709)²⁷³

Often the declensional marker *–s* is omitted in the nominative case:

Çarleø se çist, mais dol oit de Rollant (l. 2704)

Marsilionø estoit in Saragoçe. (l. 16)

Blançardinø est plus saçes çivaler
blança oit la barbe e lo vis cler. (l. 27-28)²⁷⁴

From these examples it is clear that the declensional *–s* in the V4 Roland does not bear communicative weight and is omitted or added for aesthetic effect. The *laissez* in which assonance occurs on *–s* provide further evidence that this declensional marker was used aesthetically and not communicatively, and that its presence is intentional and not

²⁷² “‘By faith,’ said Ganelon, ‘for the people of France.’ (l. 310); ‘Both Ganelon and Blancandrin rode.’ (l. 313); ‘Ganelon the count began to speak’ (l. 335)

²⁷³ “The night was clear and the moon bright, / Charles was resting but he grieved Roland, / and his thoughts of Oliver weighed heavy on his mind, / his thoughts of the twelve peers of the French, / who lie dead and bleeding in Roncevals. / He cannot help but cry and grieve. / And he prayed God that he put them in paradise.” (ll. 2703-2709)

²⁷⁴ “Marsille was in Saragosa” (l. 16); “Blancandrin is the wisest knight, / he had a white beard and a proud face.” (l. 27-28)

accidental. In these instances the oblique case nouns may end in *-s* to preserve the assonated sound:

Lasent lor elmes molt bon saracénés*. (l. 934)

Li angle Deux ministreit al barons*. (l. 2757)²⁷⁵

This phenomenon is frequent in *laisse* 104 :

Li cont Ençilinø seit in cival livrés*
e ses conpagø Ençiler in Passacers*.
Laisent lor reines, si broçent tuti adés,
si vont a ferir un païn, Timodés*.
L'un el fer in l'uberg e l'aitre in le scu çemés*,
che mort l'abat davant si in l'erba frés.
Esperçiaris i est, li filz Borés*,
e lu ancist Ençiler de Bordels*.
Le [li] arcivesqueø çet mort Çenglorels*,
l'inçantaor che ça fu a l'infers*:
per arte de diable l'i codux Jupiters.
Dist l'arcivesqueø: "Çestu e molt fels."
Rollantø : "Vencu est lo culvers." (ll. 1299-1309)²⁷⁶

From these examples we can conclude that the declensional *-s* in the V4 Roland, instead of bearing any communicative value, becomes instead an overt and intentional aesthetic marker, which perhaps evokes the *lingua d'oïl* chivalresque and epic narrative register. In this respect, the Italianate base language functions as the matrix language in which all the

²⁷⁵ "Many good Saracens laced their helmets." (l. 934); "The angels of God administered to the noble knights." (l. 2757)

²⁷⁶ "The count Ençilin sat upon the horse Livrés, / and his companion Ençiler was on Passacers. / They loosened their reins, spurred their able horses, / and they go to strike a pagan, Timodés. / One of them strikes him in the hauberk and the other one strikes his gem-studded shield, / they strike him dead, forward into the fresh grass. / Esperçiaris is there, the son of Borés, / and he killed Ençiler of Bordels. / The archbishop struck dead Çenglorels, / the enchanter who was already in Hell: / Jupitur lead him there because his black magic. / The archbishop said: 'This one here is very evil.' Roland: 'The villain is defeated.'"

communicative weight resides and the *lingua d'oil* elements serve as a poetic device.²⁷⁷

If the use of overt morphological and lexical markers as indicators of aesthetic mode was as widespread, as *interclassista*, and as long of duration (circa 1250 to circa 1400) as the manuscript evidence leads us to think, then the knowledge and circulation of epic poetry in the *lingua d'oil* modal register was not a foreign idiom imported into the Lombard narrative space, but rather an inherent and local poetic device available to the redactors and performers of Carolingian epic within that narrative space. Whether the modern reader of medieval Lombard epic poetry is able to completely interpret and appreciate the modal enhancement in the same way medieval audiences did is a difficult question. In the modern nation-state paradigm, horizontal language variance is intrinsically linked to geographic location and identity. The mixing of modal discourses is a hermeneutic code not entirely accessible to us as modern readers.

If we are to recognize that the French elements in both the V4 Roland and in many other Franco-Italian epics are intentionally aesthetic in purpose, then the notion of Franco-Italian as a hybrid language is in itself a faulty construct that returns to the same epistemological borders of nation and language discussed above. As I have argued, the designation 'Franco-Italian hybrid language' is a modern construct symptomatic of our long-standing anxiety over language purity. In terms of nomenclature, what is termed 'Franco-Italian' presupposes a partial adherence to what is both French and Italian, and operates within the borders of modern nations. As I have shown, the V4 Roland operates

²⁷⁷ Aurelio Roncaglia's observations on lexical innovation in the V4 Roland manuscript are further evidence that modal enhancement was an intentional aesthetic goal and deserve to be elaborated upon. See Aurelio Roncaglia, "La letteratura franco-veneta," 738.

not within linguistic hybridity, but rather within the aesthetic of modal enhancement. In addition, I would argue that the term ‘hybrid’ in its traditional acceptance is inappropriate for this literary tradition, since ‘hybrid’ implies a makeshift whole composed of two or more incomplete elements. The redactors of epic poetry in medieval Lombardia were operating within the boundaries of their own narrative spaces, and the *lingua d’oil* modal register was available to them not extraneously but from within these boundaries. If the Old French declensional –s as an overt morphological marker could evoke a patina of chivalry, then we must accept that this mode of narration was readily recognized among and belonged to the audience of the Lombard narrative community. That the chivalric ethos as evoked by Old French morphological markers was recognized among all levels of Lombard society is attested by the spectrum and degree of modal enhancement in manuscripts of the Lombard romance-epic corpus. It would be appropriate to reconsider our modern nomenclature for this particular literary tradition if we are, in fact, to remove anachronistic linguistic and national borders and instead opt to operate within the confines of the specific narrative space of this body of manuscripts. For these reasons, I propose the term ‘Lombard romance-epic’ to designate this unique literary manuscript corpus that, in addition to the above definition, develops not linguistic hybridity but rather the aesthetic of modal enhancement. The V4 Roland, then, is interpreted more productively within the context of the Lombard romance-epic tradition and not as a deformed copy of a canonical pillar of the French literary tradition.

Conclusion: Beyond the Borders of Book and Literacy

If we accept the conclusion that modal enhancement was often an intentional aesthetic choice in the V4 Roland, then it is necessary to return to the oralizing character of the text. Visually, while reading, the introduced *lingua d'oïl* lexical and morphological items would have produced the desired effect for the reader, yet the nominative –s, or any other *lingua d'oïl* element, evokes the modal register of epic more vividly in sound than in silent reading. The wide variety of manuscript production, from jongleur handbooks to beautifully illuminated deluxe manuscripts, cautions us to nuance the idea that the Lombard romance-epic was a performed genre, however. In this regard, another study must be devoted to investigating the orality of the Lombard romance-epic manuscript. Here, however, I am not concerned so much with whether the V4 Roland was customarily read aloud, and thus performed, as I am with the notion that the text—whether silently or aloud, individually or communally—belongs nevertheless to an oralizing modality of textual production. A text produced in such an oralizing modality bears a latent orality and makes reference to the performance act itself. As I have shown, this auto-referentiality occurs in the opening lines of the V4 Roland and in the aesthetic composition of the text; the declensional –s of the *lingua d'oïl* is more than a silent visual marker and its aesthetic weight would have been evoked most vividly in oral performance. In line 949 of the V4 Roland, *çubler* or jongleur is used instead of the Oxford *chanter*: “Malle çançon che ça çubler non des.” This lexical choice again alludes to the performance act itself and gives hints as to how the Roland epic have been transmitted in the medieval Veneto, namely by means of a jongleur performance. This

latent orality has been the subject of recent discussion in medieval studies, and I would argue that the oralizing modality is typical not only of the Lombard romance-epic narrative space, but also of a broader medieval textual phenomenon.²⁷⁸

The oralizing modality of the V4 Roland has been interpreted most often through our invisible modern literate bias. The borders of literacy have also skewed our reading of the Roland tradition and much effort has been made in both Franco-Italian studies and in medieval textual emendation to impose the borders of the book upon the medieval narrative space. Current manifestations of the epistemological borders of book and literacy stem in part from nineteenth-century undertakings to canonize and anthologize national epics, with one of the most influential anthologizing projects being the *Société des Anciens Textes Français*. The choices made in compiling anthologized collections is necessarily subjective and political, and can result only in literary figures being placed upon bookshelves as the city of Paris would place statues in squares and parks to evoke a created and imagined historiographic narrative. In order to advance our understanding of what the *Song of Roland* meant to a medieval audience, it will be necessary for future scholarship to dismiss several closely held assumptions: the notions of author, title, original vs. copy, and the tenacious idea that somehow the *Song of Roland* is a fundamental pillar of the French national literary canon.

²⁷⁸ Advocates for the oral performance of romance include Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996); Joseph J. Duggan, "Oral Performance of Romance in Medieval France," in *Continuations: Essays on Medieval French Literature and Language in Honor of John L. Grigsby* (Birmingham: Summa Publications, 1989); Evelyn B. Vitz, Nancy Freeman Regalado, Marilyn Lawrence, eds., *Performing Medieval Narrative* (Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 2005); Evelyn B. Vitz, *Orality and Performance in Early French Romance* (Suffolk: D.S. Brewer, 1999).

It is clear that the V4 version was never meant to be French and was probably never read by its intended audience as a copy of a French work. The V4 Roland is an original text in its own right that circulated within a very specific socio-political situation pertaining to medieval Lombardia. Because the V4 Roland belongs to an oralizing modality of production, the search for its author becomes a red herring. The oral modality provides for the continuation of a collective narrative tradition belonging to a specific narrative space through continually new instances of performance.²⁷⁹ In this dynamic oralizing modality, the static agent of author and the idea of a stable “original” text are wholly incongruent, as is the notion that each performance would have had a title. Author, original text and title are once again symptomatic of an anxiety of national impurity and thus become the textual borders that protect and edify *la patrie*. As Andrew Taylor has shown, the *Chanson de Roland* as we know, teach, and study it today is an imagined construct of the modern philological tradition and it exists within the national borders of the material book, with the title and the cover arbitrarily indicating the text’s beginning, end, and nation of origin.²⁸⁰ Instead of a kaleidoscope of ever-changing motifs typical of the medieval oral tradition, the *Chanson de Roland* has become a collector’s item to be shelved in the anthology of a literary canon, a static unit bolstering the illusion of the modern nation. For this reason, minority narrative spaces such as Lombardia have been relegated to the margins. Modern methodologies in scholarship have colonized the temporal past, forcing our temporal Other, the Middle Ages, to fit

²⁷⁹ One might think of Paul Zumthor’s term “*tradition*” here, as discussed in the second chapter, “Le poète et le texte,” of *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Seuil, 1972).

²⁸⁰ For the *Song of Roland* as a creation of modern scholarship, see Taylor, “Was there a Song of Roland.” See note 1 above.

awkwardly into the ontological framework of nation. Minority narrative spaces such as the V4 manuscript wait to be de-colonized and re-interpreted.

CHAPTER V

WRITING BETWEEN THE LINES: ANDREA DA BARBERINO'S *UGO D'ALVERNIA* AND RECREATING THE *HUON D'Auvergne*.

In the previous chapter, I problematized the position of the *Song of Roland* in the French literary canon and proposed a decolonization of the manuscript space of the V4 version of this text. I showed that the *Song of Roland*, as a creation of modern scholarship, is intertwined with the French nation-building program of the nineteenth-century *fin-de-siècle* and that these political motivations are still largely present in our current conception of the Roland tradition. The independent literary merit of the V4 Roland can be recognized only beyond the modern epistemological borders of book and language. I would like to turn now to the textual tradition of another Lombard romance-epic, the *Huon d'Auvergne*. The *Huon* narrative tradition is considerably less known in modern scholarship than the Roland story and consequently occupies a much less contentious position in French and Italian literary teleologies. Despite its marginalized position in modern criticism, the case of the Lombard romance-epic *Huon d'Auvergne* and its reworking into the Renaissance version *Ugo d'Alvernia*, deserve investigation since they represent an early instance of literate borders and of how oral manuscript spaces were initially transferred into frameworks of literacy.

The *Huon d’Auvergne* survives in three manuscript witnesses, which are written to varying degrees in the French-Italianate mixed language characteristic of the Lombard romance-epic corpus. There is also one fragment of 1256 lines, housed in Bologna and referred to as the Barbieri fragment.²⁸¹ The *Huon* tradition also survives in a Renaissance prose adaptation by Andrea da Barberino, the *Ugo d’Alvernia*. An *ottava rima* version by Michelagnolo da Volterra has also recently been identified by Gloria Allaire in a manuscript copied between 1487-1488, the Laurenziana, MS Med. Pal. 82. Following Gloria Allaire, who is the foremost scholar on Andrea da Barberino today, I will refer to the Lombard manuscript tradition as *Huon* and to the Tuscan version as *Ugo*.²⁸² The earliest surviving *Huon* manuscript witness is the Berlin manuscript from 1341, a date indicated within the text itself. The second in chronological order is the Padua manuscript and is datable on palaeographical grounds to the end of the fourteenth century or early-fifteenth century. The latest surviving complete textual witness is the Turin manuscript, dated 1441. For brevity, I will refer to the three surviving *Huon* manuscript witnesses as B, P and T respectively. The narration of the *Huon* story itself, as Allaire has noted, was “known before 1235, and the text continued to be copied by hand and printed after 1500.”²⁸³ Many elements of the *Huon* Hell scene allude to Dante’s *Commedia* and it has

²⁸¹ These manuscripts are: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Hamilton 337; Padua, Biblioteca del Seminario vescovile, 32; Turin, Biblioteca nazionale, N III 19; Bologna, Biblioteca dell’Archiginnasio B 3489.

²⁸² Gloria Allaire, “Considerations of *Huon d’Auvergne* / *Ugo d’Alvernia*,” *Viator* 32 (2001): 186. Her Appendix 1 “Summary of Transmission Evidence” gives the shelf numbers of the manuscripts conserving the Andrea da Barberino version.

²⁸³ Allaire, “Considerations,” 186.

been suggested that this is the first text to make reference to Dante.²⁸⁴ Because of this evidence, we can assume that the Hell section must have been composed in the 1320s at the earliest, after Dante's work had been diffused throughout the Italian peninsula.

The principal protagonists of the *Huon* story are Carlo Martello, the king; Huon d'Auvergne, who is sent to Hell; his wife, Ynide; Sofia, the wife of Sanguino, who is Huon's good friend; and Sandino, a minstrel sent to seduce Ynide by King Carlo Martello. The story consists of six main episodes: Sofia's betrayal; Carlo Martello's love for Ynide; Huon's travels through the East and his visit to the lands of Prester John; Ynide's defense; Huon's journey through Hell; and finally the siege of Rome. In the first episode, which is present only in P and in Andrea da Barberino's version, Sofia betrays her husband Sanguino (who is also Huon's good friend), and reveals her love for Huon. The plot is uncovered, however, and Sofia and her chambermaid are eventually both burned at the stake, while Sanguino and Huon are reunited. This section follows the biblical plot of Potiphar's wife. The second segment tells how Carlo Martello falls in love with Huon's wife, Ynide. In order to gain access to Ynide, Carlo Martello follows the advice of his minstrel Sandino and takes advantage of Huon's extreme loyalty to Carlo; Carlo asks him to go to Hell and seek tribute from Lucifer himself. The third episode tells of Huon's travels through the Holy Land and through the lands of Prester John. The traveler's journey becomes more and more allegorical as he approaches the entrance to Hell. In the fourth episode, which recounts what happens in the meantime back in

²⁸⁴ Luisa A. Meregazzi, "L'Ugo d'Alvernia: poema franco-italiano," *Studi Romanzi* 27 (1937): 29; D.D.R. Owen, *The Vision of Hell: Infernal Journeys in Medieval French Literature* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), 189; Keith Busby, *Codex and Context. Reading Old French Verse Narrative in Manuscript*, Vol. 2 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 770.

Auvergne, Carlo sends his minstrel Sandino (or, in other versions, a large envoy of ambassadors) to reveal the king's love for Ynide. Ynide's brothers Baldoin and Tomas, who are left in charge of Huon's lands, punish the king's envoy by cutting off his nose, cutting out his tongue and poking out an eye. Carlo subsequently besieges the castle, but fails to take it. The fifth episode recounts Huon's descent and journey through Hell. During this journey, Huon's guides are first a devil, then Aeneas and the epic hero Guillaume d'Orange together. The pilgrim visits sinners who suffer torments befitting the sins they had committed in life. Finally, Lucifer gives Huon the tribute that Carlo had asked for. Huon wakes up in his own castle and when the tribute is given to King Carlo, Carlo is carried off by devils. A sixth and final scene, which does not exist in P but is conserved in B, T and in Andrea da Barberino's version, tells of a Saracen siege of Rome, which occurs immediately after Huon's return home. The Pope calls on the Germans and the French for help and promises the Imperial crown to those who succeed in pushing the Saracens back. Ultimately the Germans succeed in winning the Imperial crown, even though the French were the ones to save the city. Huon dies in this last combat against the Germans. Important plot variations occur from one surviving textual witness to the next: P does not include the last episode; only P and the *Ugo* include the Sofia scene; and the *Ugo* does not include Ynide's defense.

Manuscripts B, P, and T all indicate an unidentified "Odinel" as the narration's redactor: "Com or devise Odinel en roman" (Berlin MS fol. 49r.a.); "com or devissa Ondinelo yn questo roman" (Turin)²⁸⁵; "De ondinel se cunta che..." (Padua fol. 56v.).

²⁸⁵ This line, otherwise unpublished, is cited by Arturo Graf, "Di un poema inedito di Carlo Martello e di Ugo conte d'Alvernia," *Giornale di filologia romanza* 1 (1878): 97.

Luisa A. Meregazzi, in her study “L’Ugo d’Alvernia: poema franco-italiano,” and Carla Giacon, in her unpublished thesis “La redazione padovana dell’*Huon d’Auvergne*: studio, edizione, glossario, tesi,” theorize an original French text, now lost.²⁸⁶ As Giacon points out, Andrea Cappellanus, in his *De arte honeste amandi*, cites the *Huon d’Auvergne* as an instance in which the woman makes amorous advances to the man. Giacon suggests that this may indicate a previously existing poem in French.²⁸⁷

Beyond speculation on the “Odinel” figure, the poem’s ownership history is traceable and the surviving manuscripts appear in Italian library catalogues; manuscript B is listed as item 21 in the 1407 Gonzaga family library:

21. Item. Ugo de Alvernia. Incipit: *Altens de mais quant furent li preel. Et finit: En sont sant regne.* Continent cart. 83.²⁸⁸

Similar entries exist in the 1437 Estense family catalogue and in the 1488 catalogue of the same family as item 49, “Liber dectus Albernascus.” The Visconti family also had a copy of the text, which is in the inventory of the Visconti-Sforzesca library compiled by Ser Facino da Fabriano on 6 June 1459.²⁸⁹ Curiously another reference appears in an English source. On 4 November 1472, Sir John Paston writes to his brother concerning a range of topics, including a lost diamond ring, a pregnant duchess and a new hawk for his brother, and ends: “I feere me that idelnesse ledythe yowre reyne. I praye yow rathere

²⁸⁶ Luisa A. Meregazzi, “L’Ugo d’Alvernia: poema franco-italiano,” *Studi Romanzi* 27 (1937): 69; Carla Giacon, “La redazione padovana dell’*Huon d’Auvergne*: studio, edizione, glossario, tesi” (unpublished manuscript, 1960-61), Università degli Studi di Padova, 14-15.

²⁸⁷ Giacon, “Redazione padovana,” 44-45.

²⁸⁸ Willelmo Braghirolli, “Inventaire des manuscrits en langue française possédés par Francesco Gonzaga I, capitaine de Mantoue, mort en 1407,” *Romania* 36 (1880): 508.

²⁸⁹ Cited in Giacon, “Redazione padovana,” 22-23.

remembre Ser Hughe Lavernoy's tyll yowre hauke come."²⁹⁰ This letter would seem to indicate that a *Huon* manuscript was circulating in England and, in this case, provided entertainment for Sir John's brother while he was waiting to receive his new hunting bird, his *hauke*. The reference to "Ser Hughe Lavernoy's" indicates that the *Huon* story was known widely through Europe, and it is clear that, even if untraceable to a French original, the *Huon* story was widely read and known well into the early modern period.

Today, however, the *Huon / Ugo* tradition receives little scholarly attention because none of the extant versions is edited. Of all the *Huon d'Auvergne / Ugo d'Alvernia* versions, only the Andrea da Barberino prose adaptation exists in a modern edition. This edition, prepared by F. Zambrini, needs to be updated to consider further manuscript witnesses identified since its publication in 1882.²⁹¹ Selections have been published of the B, P and T manuscripts; most recently Leslie Zarker Morgan published the Ynide and Charles Martel portion of all three manuscripts.²⁹² The previously cited unpublished 1961 edition of P, a *tesi di laura* by Carla Giacon, unfortunately contains numerous transcription and foliation errors, is in poor condition and is not available to the

²⁹⁰ Andrew Breeze, "Sir John Paston on *Ser Hughe Lavernoy's*," *Notes and Queries* 48 (March 2001): 10-11.

²⁹¹ Andrea da Barberino, *Storia d'Ugone d'Alvernia*, ed. F. Zambrini (Bologna: Romagnoli, 1882. Rpt. Bologna: Commissione per i testi di lingua, 1968).

²⁹² See Leslie Zarker Morgan, "The Passion of Ynide: Ynide's Defense in *Huon d'Auvergne* (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Hamilton 337) (I)," *Medioevo Romanzo* 27.1 (Jan-Apr 2003): 67-85; "The Passion of Ynide: Ynide's Defense in *Huon d'Auvergne* (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Hamilton 337) (II)," *Medioevo Romanzo* 27.3 (Sep-Dec 2003): 425-62; "Nida and Carlo Martello: The Padua Manuscript of 'Huon d'Auvergne' (Ms. 32 of the Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile, 45v-49v)," *Olifant* 23 (2004): 64-114; "Ynide and Charles Martel. Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale N III 19, Folios 72R-89R (I)," *Medioevo Romanzo* 29.3 (Sep-Dec 2005): 433-54; "Ynide and Charles Martel. Turin, Biblioteca Nazionale N III 19, Folios 72R-89R (II)," *Medioevo Romanzo* 31.1 (Jan-Jun 2007): 70-110.

general public.²⁹³ This current chapter will form the basis of my own study and edition of the Padua manuscript.

To date, most critical attention paid to the *Huon / Ugo* traditions has been philological and codicological in nature. Since early studies of Graf and Stendhal in the nineteenth century, scholarship on the *Huon* manuscripts has overlooked the literary merit of these texts and the lack of a modern critical edition has precluded any substantial literary analysis of the *Huon / Ugo* traditions. As Morgan observes, “Extant criticism of the *Huon d’Auvergne* Franco-Italian versions has primarily addressed philological concerns, not narrative or literary problems: editions of text segments, commentary on the relationship among manuscripts, or source studies such as the relation of Dante’s *Inferno* and *Huon*’s journey to Hell.”²⁹⁴ I have argued in the previous two chapters that the linguistic and philological attention afforded the Lombard romance-epic corpus has discussed these manuscripts only within nationalizing typologies. Further literary analysis will be critical to illuminate how Lombard narrative traditions such as the *Huon d’Auvergne* functioned within their own narrative communities. In the present discussion, I am interested in how scholarship has interpreted the *Huon* tradition within these nationalizing frameworks and has attempted to traced the Franco-Italian versions of the romance-epic to a French original.

Luisa A. Meregazzi’s 1937 contribution “L’Ugo d’Alvernia” remains the first and only extended study to date of the *Huon d’Auvergne* tradition.²⁹⁵ In it, Meregazzi gives

²⁹³ See note 7.

²⁹⁴ Leslie Zarker Morgan, “Passion of Ynide (I),” 71.

²⁹⁵ Luisa A. Meregazzi, “L’Ugo d’Alvernia,” in *Studi romanzi* 27 (1937): 5-87.

special attention to the question of textual transmission and to the role of a certain ‘Giovanni Vicenzio’ or ‘Vicentino,’ whom she speculates might be a possible author figure. In the Hell scene of the Andrea da Barberino adaptation, Vicentino’s name appears in conjunction with the insertion of sections of the Hell scene written in *terzina rima*. According to Meregazzi, Vicentino’s missing version (V) occupies a critical position in the transmission history of the *Huon* story: it would have been the original translation from a French original (A). Furthermore, with regard to the question of original text and subsequent copied texts, Meregazzi eliminates the possibility that P represents the *originale dell’ignoto rifacitore* and speculates that this textual witness is once removed from V. Meregazzi’s study proposes the following manuscript stemma (Figure 5.1.):

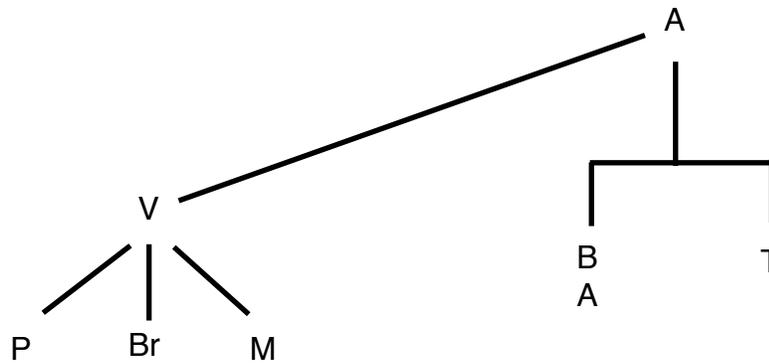


Figure 5.2. Giacon stemma of the *Huon* manuscript tradition.

The Meregazzi stemma uses dotted lines on the left half of the stemma to indicate which versions are reworkings of the lost French original, A, and solid lines to indicate which versions are copies of these reworkings. The surviving textual witnesses are thus divided into two families. On the left are those derived from the lost Vicentino reworking (V): the Paduan version (P); the Barbieri fragment (Br); and the Andrea da Barberino reworking, abbreviated as M in reference to the author's complete name, Andrea di Jacopo de Mangabotti. On the right are the remaining two complete manuscript witnesses that survive: Berlin (B); and Turin (T).

In Carla Giacon's unpublished 1961-62 thesis, two elements of the above stemma are eliminated: both B and T are derived directly from the lost French original, A; and P derives directly from V (Figure 5.2.):

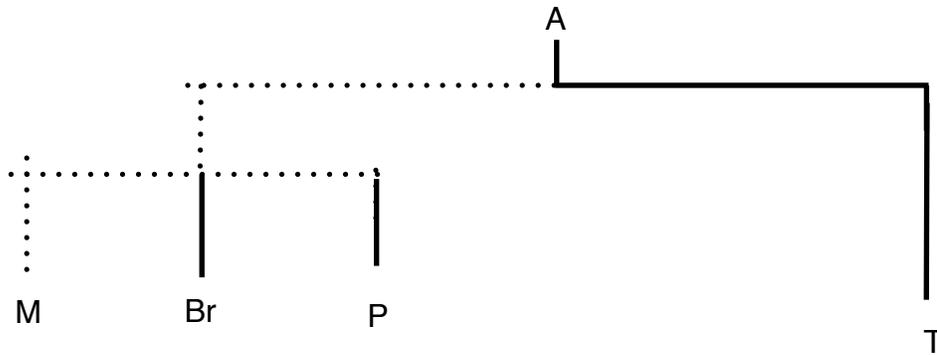


Figure 5.1. Meregazzi stemma of the *Huon* manuscript tradition.

Although I do not discount the utility of these manuscript stemmata to account for the historical relationship between textual artifacts, they can at the same time reinforce the borders of temporal and textual hierarchies that obfuscate the independent merit of each manuscript witness. In this final chapter I avoid these diachronic manuscript hierarchies and instead investigate the *Huon d’Auvergne* romance-epic narrative tradition and its surviving textual witnesses as ‘performance artifacts,’ or secondary and irreproducible testimony to moments of performance, whether oral or *livresque*. Each narrative and codicological outcome of the *Huon* tradition illustrates how the privileged moment of performance in the narrative cycle acts as a guiding factor in textual and manuscript production. My analysis brackets the idea of a lost French original: I am interested rather in how each manuscript witness is a unique product of the Lombard narrative cycle, and thus proper to *Lombardia*. The *Huon d’Auvergne* manuscript tradition is particularly useful to demonstrate the constituent elements of the Lombard epic-romance narrative cycle, including the elaboration and fluidity of narrative threads, the principle of ‘performance artifact,’ the notion of ‘mediation,’ and the narrative participants of ‘audience,’ ‘redactor,’ and ‘performer.’ This study will concentrate mostly on P and its relationship to both T and the Andrea da Barberino elaboration. I will illustrate how all three of these versions have different narrative trajectories and should thus be considered three separate iterations of the *Huon d’Auvergne* thread, each of which is molded linguistically, structurally and thematically by the specific audience / performer dynamic. I will also explore the consequences of literate borders introduced in the Andrea da Barberino version, which sever the text from the manuscript’s signifying system. The

Andrea da Barberino reworking illustrates an instance of mediation from an oral, performative framework to the framework of the literate borders-of-book, which provide structural stability and narrative authority.

Codicological Description of the *Huon* Tradition: B and T.

The three complete extant manuscripts of the *Huon* tradition - B, P and T - exemplify the spectrum of modal interference typical of the Lombard tradition. B transmits the *Huon* narrative in a *français livresque* with few Italianisms and presents the story to a cultivated audience capable of reading written French. According to Meregazzi, the original language of B “non è il francese ma il franco-italiano.”²⁹⁶ However, critical thought on the topic has shifted since Meregazzi’s study and, as I also argue, Franco-Italian does not exist as a language per se; in B, French is used as a matrix language, and the Italianisms could be interpreted as the *patina* that responds to the aesthetic program of the local Lombard narrative community. Meregazzi interprets the linguistic character of B in a pejorative light and argues that the linguistic constitution of the text “dimostra che il poeta ignora e disprezza il retto parlare francese.”²⁹⁷ In my view, however, this observation does not take into account the notion that French was proper to the Lombard narrative space and that B was produced for a local audience. As cited above, manuscript

²⁹⁶ Meregazzi, “*L’Ugo d’Alvernia*,” 55.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

B was, in fact, catalogued as part of the Gonzaga family library; this manuscript was produced for and circulated within the local Lombard narrative community.²⁹⁸

T is written primarily in the Tuscan idiom, which is consistent with the manuscript's date of 1441, a period in which the use of the French modal register was no longer frequent. Merzaggi, in fact, maintains that "il suo grado di italianizzazione è avanzato a tal punto da non potersi più considerare un testo franco-italiano."²⁹⁹ Carla Giacon adopts this position, and adds that T must be considered a Tuscan text: "la lingua di T, infatti, non è più il franco-veneto, anche la rima non è più rispettata e l'influsso toscano è talmente ampio che T si può considerare un testo toscano."³⁰⁰ Despite these observations, graphic features such as *zò* (4627), *zamay* (4628), *posanza* (4708) (where *z* is equivalent to *ç*) and the use of a singular verb for a plural subject, as in "Li mesazi se parte da la corte de Carlon" (4653) indicate a northern Italian provenance.³⁰¹ Merzaggi attributes the spectrum of italianization of the three surviving textual witness of the *Huon* tradition to chronological factors:

Lo stato linguistico dei tre testi B, P, T ci permette dunque di seguire il graduale esaurimento del francese di fronte all'invasione della lingua toscana, che sempre più si imponeva anche nell'Italia settentrionale.³⁰²

Merzaggi's interpretation that the linguistic character of B, P and T become less French in order of chronology is only entirely relevant to T, whose later date does in fact

²⁹⁸ W. Braghirolli, "Inventaire des manuscrits," 497-514.

²⁹⁹ Merzaggi, "*L'Ugo d'Alvernia*," 61.

³⁰⁰ Carla Giacon, "Redazione padovana," 30.

³⁰¹ All citations of T and B will be from Leslie Zarker Morgan's editions, unless otherwise indicated (see note 13).

³⁰² Merzaggi, "*L'Ugo d'Alvernia*," 62.

correspond to the increasing hegemony of the Tuscan paradigm. In my view, the fact that P uses French to a lesser degree than B is to be interpreted not only chronologically, but also according to two different audience-redactor dynamics; B is produced for a learned audience, whereas P is produced for an audience that does not necessarily understand written French. Apart from the prologue, the 1407 prose epic-romance *Aquilon de Bavière* is written entirely in French, and indicates that the tradition of composing in French was still alive in Northern Italy into the beginning of the fifteenth century. I argue that P uses Italian as the matrix language since it was adapted for oral performance or to be read aloud, and thus responded to the needs of a non-Francophone audience.

As already noted, the language of B indicates an audience fluent in either written and / or spoken French. The manuscript's *mise en page* and illumination program also suggest a literate, cultivated and rich audience; B is lavishly illuminated and decorated, written in two columns in a regular and clear gothic rotunda hand. The costly appearance of the first folio and the care taken in the preparation of the manuscript, along with three crests at the top and a coat of arms in the bottom center of the first folio, indicate a wealthy patron who ordered a copy of the *Huon* story for a private collection. This patron was most likely a member the Gonzaga family since the three coats of arms at the top of the first folio -- six bands of alternating gold and black -- can be identified with that family.³⁰³ The coat of arms at the bottom is dark and blackened, perhaps tarnished silver.

Sebastiano Bisson, in his description of the French manuscripts at the Biblioteca

³⁰³For a history and description of the Gonzaga coat of arms, see Alia Englen. "Stemma dei Gonzaga di Mantova e il suo impiego nelle monete mantovane," in *La sezione gonzaghesca (monete, medaglie, pesi e misure mantovane nell'età dei Gonzaga)* (Mantua: Comune di Mantua, 1987), 173-177; and Michael Maclagan, *Heraldry of the Royal Families of Europe* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1981), p. 258, table 129.

Marciana in Venice entitled *Il fondo francese della Biblioteca Marciana di Venezia*, notes that all manuscripts “al loro ingresso nella biblioteca dei Gonzaga, [...] venivano decorati con le insegne della famiglia. Tale fratica fu seguita soprattutto nel periodo di governo di Guido (1360-1369).”³⁰⁴ The head of the initial column is framed by four medallions representing what appears to be Huon, the protagonist, at different points in the narration. The last medallion depicts a Hell scene, which is mirrored in a marginal illustration of flames. These images are entwined with green and pink acanthus leaves, a characteristic of gothic illuminated manuscripts. Despite the luxuriant quality of the script and the materials, which include a generous amount of gold leaf, the illuminations on the first folio are awkwardly arranged and executed, suggesting the work of an illuminator of modest ability, or a quick or non-professional job. This first folio is somewhat damaged; some of the illuminations are scuffed and there are stains in the margins and within the text of column b. The first folio is peculiar since the text begins in one column for ten lines, then breaks into two columns for what appears to be the remainder of the manuscript.³⁰⁵ The opening lines of this single column read:

Al tamps de may quand furent li prael
 Tot reuerdis lorer et arboisel
 Que en amors uient maintes mainer doisel
 Por ce chantent et font lison mout bel
 Tot ensemant font dames et doncel
 Qe por delit entrent as iardinel
 Tot les pulcelles ensamble as iouencel
 De flors de roses chascune fait çapel
 Si soi sbanoie por qui amors le chadel
 En pentecoste quand chiualer nouel

³⁰⁴ Sebastiano Bisson, *Il fondo francese della Biblioteca Marciana di Venezia* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2008), 9.

³⁰⁵ I do not have access to an entire reproduction of B.

Desire iostre *esmerueillos zambel*
 Estoit en france vne rois mout cruel
 Selonch qui mostre et cronicha odinel
 Qui hom apelle le rois . karlle martel
 Grant cort tenoit hom no la uit ia tel.
 Mais dune zonse oura il bien cum fel:
 Quant un son dru gita de son hostel.
 Si lenuoia a querir lucibel.
 Querir trehu ale lou denfernel.
 Sol por auoir ynide au quer bel.³⁰⁶

These opening lines appear only in B, since P is lacking the first two folios and the first folios of T are damaged and illegible. The opening lines, which imitate the *reverdie* lyric form and situate the narration at Pentecost at the court of a king, alludes to and mirrors the traditional opening of Arthurian legend. Meregazzi identifies the audience of B as a well-to-do patron: “[Berlino], appartenente alla Biblioteca Gonzaga, in pergamena, con belle miniature, curato nella scrittura, nella lingua, nella versificazione, serviva evidentemente per la società scelta.”³⁰⁷

The manuscript matrix of B is built upon a clear hierarchy of image and text. The narration is divided into two columns of rhyming *laissez*, each containing thirty-seven alexandrines, with a caesura after the sixth syllable. The manuscript contains 85 folios of

³⁰⁶ A. Tobler, “Die Berliner Handschrift des *Huon d’Auvergne*,” in *Sitzungsberichte der königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Phil.-hist. Klasse*, 27, 1884, 605-620. “In the month of May when the meadows / Are green with laurel and foliage, / When many manner of birds are in love / And for this they sing and make pleasant sounds. / Young men and women do just the same: / For pleasure they enter the little garden, / All maidens together with young men. / Everyone makes a garland of flowers and roses / and enjoy themselves at love’s behest. / On Pentecost when new knights / Are ready to joust with astonishing noise. / There was in France a cruel king, / According to / what Odinel writes in his chronicle, / Whom they called king Charles Martel. / He held a great court; never before was its like seen. / But one thing he devised like a vile man: / When he cast one of his vassals from his lodging / And sent him to seek Lucifer, / To demand tribute in the infernal realm. / All just to have Ynide with the noble heart” (All translations unless otherwise indicated).

³⁰⁷ Meregazzi, “L’Ugo d’Alvernia,” 64.

parchment and the text is 12,225 lines long.³⁰⁸ Each alexandrin line begins with a capital initial, and each *laisse* begins with a colored initial. The text is echoed in a program of illuminations, all of which consistently occur at the bottom of the page and span two columns. The narration of T follows closely that of B.

Manuscript witness T was severely damaged in the 1904 fire at the Biblioteca Nazionale in Turin; because of the damage, the margins and large portions of the text and illuminations are illegible. The manuscript was restored in 1911-1912. Because of the poor state of the manuscript, no modern edition has been prepared. Fortunately, however, Pio Rajna transcribed the manuscript in 1869, and, even if his handwriting is difficult to interpret, his notebook will be important for scholars to prepare a future edition of T.³⁰⁹ Unlike B, T is a paper manuscript and there are no watermarks to help establish provenance. The text is written in one column per folio, which, according to Geneviève Hasenohr, is a vestige of the *chanson de geste* format.³¹⁰ Also unlike B, the scribal hand in T is irregular and it appears as if the text has been written without ruling. After 23v, it appears that there is either a change of hand or the copyist copied with more haste; here the text becomes more irregular and crowded. Graf makes a similar observation and notes that “la scrittura è trascurata e frettolosa.”³¹¹ T has no textual divisions into *laisse*s, unlike the other two surviving manuscripts of the *Huon* tradition, B and P, but there are colored

³⁰⁸ Leslie Zarker Morgan, “The Passion of Ynide: Ynide’s Defense in *Huon d’Auvergne*,” 68.

³⁰⁹ Rajna’s notebooks contain a transcription of both P and T. See Pio Rajna, Transcription of Padova, Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile 32, Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, *Carte Rajna*, XII M 101.

³¹⁰ Geneviève Hasenohr, “Les chansons de geste,” in *Mise en page et mise en texte du livre manuscrit* (Paris: Edition du Cercle, 1990), 239.

³¹¹ A. Graf, “Di un poema inedito,” 93.

initials that indicate the beginning of sections of text. The criteria for narrative division would need to be examined in conjunction with the Rajna transcriptions.

The haste of the scribal hand and the lack of divisions into *laissez* hints at a pragmatic function for this manuscript, used perhaps as an *aide-mémoire* for oral recitation. Arguing against this observation, however, is the fact that T does not end in rhyming verses, as do B and P; the ends of the verses are still visible from the inside, unburned portion of every verso page. Like B, the manuscript includes a program of illuminations, but the illuminations are not fixed in any location within the manuscript's *mise en page*, as they are in B. These illuminations are colored and some include gold leaf. The images may have functioned in a lector's recitation of the text by helping locate a desired passage within the manuscript. Regarding the use of the manuscript, Meregazzi writes that "[Turino], di ignota provenienza, cartaceo, rozzamente miniato, trascurato nel metro e nella lingua, non potea servire che a girovaghi cantastorie."³¹² Manuscript T may be interpreted, then, as a 'performance artifact' that testifies to oral performances no longer accessible to us. As a performance artifact, manuscript T remains once removed from its narrative goal, which is the moment of performance itself.

Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile, Padua

Manuscript P is conserved in the Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile in Padua. Unlike B and T, P is not dated in the text of the manuscript but, based on the handwriting, it can be dated between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³¹³ Although, like T, P is of paper and

³¹² Meregazzi, "L'Ugo d'Alvernia," 64.

³¹³ Morgan, "Ynide and Charles Martel (I)," 433.

also does not contain watermarks to help determine manuscript provenance. Venetian morphological and phonetic elements in the orthography indicate a northern Italian provenance. The manuscript underwent restoration at some point, and torn pages have been stabilized with tape, making some passages difficult to read. The binding on the manuscript has also been restored, but the paste boards are original. This can be determined by the presence of matching worm holes through the wood of the paste boards and into the last pages of the last gathering.

The manuscript consists of twelve gatherings measuring 22 cm by 29.5 cm, and the end of each gathering has catchwords (*puo tolse, de maltalento, e si se bem, lo conte, e per un puoco, medieximamente, forte, e tu vero hom, dellor defender, costor chison, ay sire*). All gatherings contain five bifolia except for gathering three, which has only four bifolia, and the last gathering, which has six bifolia. The first gathering is missing the first two folios, and therefore the beginning of the text; the last two sheets of the last gathering are torn. Because the narration nears the completion of the Hell episode, and because one extra bifolium was included in the last gathering as if to provide just enough space to finish it, I suspect that the manuscript's narration ended on these last two torn pages. Giacon's unpublished edition of P included folio numbering errors; the folio count is 117, not 118. There are two numbering systems in the manuscript; I follow the numeration on the bottom of the pages. As Morgan points out, the text of P is considerably shorter than that of B, with a total of only 5690 lines.³¹⁴

³¹⁴ Ibid., 434.

As in T, the *mise en page* follows the *chanson de geste* format, and the text is written in single column assonanced *laissez*. There is no evidence to suggest that the text was copied by more than one scribe, an observation that Giacon confirms on linguistic grounds:

La prova più sicura, tuttavia, che la versione padovana dell'Ugo d'Avernia fu composta da un'unica persona, ci viene offerta dalla lingua. Nella redazione padovana, infatti, tanto nella prima, quanto nella seconda parte, linguisticamente troviamo gli stessi fenomeni, e soprattutto gli stessi errori e le stesse corrottele che ci fanno presupporre il passaggio da una redazione franco-veneta (come quella di B) a una versione veneta-francesizzante (come quella di P). Mi sembra fuori posto, di conseguenza, affermare che la prima e la seconda parte del romanzo padovano siano opera di due poeti diversi.³¹⁵

Each *laisse* begins with either a blue or a red initial, some of which are hastily executed, and one of which is not colored (folio 111r.). A face has been drawn within the bow of this uncolored initial, a capital D beginning a line that reads: “Dixe lucifer a ugo lievato.” In addition to this peculiar feature, the initials on folios 110v., 111r. and 111v. have been crossed through with red. These features draw attention to the importance of this moment of the narration, which is a dialogue between Huon and Lucifer. The anthropomorphic initial seems to have been included in the original preparation of the manuscript, especially since it is the only initial not to be colored and because it occurs in a moment of heightened diegetic value. The importance given to this passage in its codicological preparation gives important insight into literary interpretation of this version of the *Huon d’Auvergne*, indicating that the narrative climax was perceived to occur in this passage.

³¹⁵ Giacon, “Redazione padovana,” 57.

A feature that distinguishes P from T, and in particular from B, is the consistent agglutination of lexical and grammatical elements. A sample of word phrases from the first three folios of P reveals patterns in the way word separation is used by the scribe (Table 5.1).

1r	chelnonfo asotera asanguin Sesanguin albevere ealmançar asocostie defradeli nonfo nidemare nidepare selavesse aincontrie molamalvaxia	1v	orascholte perdio Elorespoxe Lasestar silivarespondan
2r	albosco eallaselva laconfonda Oroldire dellei logran lovedonero la chameriera alvostro	2v	sirespoxe alvostro lavesaluder Alaforesta dundinier lolofarò amallamorte

Table 5.1: Lexical agglutination in the first two folios of P.

Words are joined in sense units that consist of shorter monosyllabic grammatical units attached to a base lexical item. In this way, we find combinations such as preposition + noun; articulated preposition + noun; preposition + possessive adjective + noun; preposition + indirect object pronoun + noun; temporal adverb + verb; subject pronoun + verb; etc. One particularly striking example is found on lines 10-12 of folio 2v.:

Siere dixie lacameriera iosom mesacier
Disufia laduchexa chelivigne aparler

Respoxe lodux ionevignire volentier.³¹⁶

Word separation has been linked to the act of private, non-performative reading and has been treated most thoroughly by Paul Saenger.³¹⁷ Keith Busby observes that scholarship has only begun to understand the matter of word separation in scribal practice. A manuscript with more systematic word separation, such as B, would most likely have functioned for private reading, whereas a manuscript with more words in groups, such as P, would have been used for oral performance of the text. Busby adds, however, that “of course, there is nothing to prevent a manuscript with word-separation functioning as a performance text, and many must have done so.”³¹⁸ Scholars such as Peter Rickard, and more recently Nelly Andrieux-Reix and Simone Monsonégo, have also noted the monosyllabic prefix often introducing word clusters.³¹⁹ Andrieux-Reix and Monsonégo attribute this again to the interaction between the manuscript function and the act of writing:

Toutefois, cette entrave pouvait n’être pas excessivement gênante lorsque les textes ainsi écrits n’étaient destinés qu’à fournir un support mémoriel à des lecteurs les connaissant déjà ‘par coeur’ et n’ayant donc pas à les déchiffrer.³²⁰

³¹⁶ “Sir,” said the chambermaid, I am a messenger. / His daughter the duchess asks that you come speak to her.” / The duke responded “I will come willingly.”

³¹⁷ Paul Saenger, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 1-17.

³¹⁸ Busby, 142.

³¹⁹ Peter Rickard, “Système ou arbitraire? Quelques réflexions sur la soudure des mots dans les manuscrits français du Moyen Âge,” *Romania* 103 (1982): 470-512; Nelly Andrieux-Reix and Simone Monsonégo, “Écrire des phrases au moyen âge: matériaux et premières réflexions pour une étude des segments graphiques observés dans des manuscrits français médiévaux,” *Romania* 115 (1997): 289-336.

³²⁰ Andrieux-Reix and Monsonégo, “Écrire des phrases,” 317.

According to Busby, the clustering of words was important to oral performance of *chanson de geste* poetry since often the clusters aided in establishing the metrics of the verse.³²¹ This does not seem to be the case with P, since the verse length is often irregular; word-clusters in P, however, do provide possible clues as to the use of the manuscript. The hypothesis that P was used as an *aide-mémoire* in recitation and performance of the text, is further supported by the rather modest appearance of the manuscript and by a series of blank spaces that occur throughout the manuscript. These spaces are an illustrative program that was never executed and would have possibly served as a visual tool for a performer. The illumination program of T and the spaces provided for illustrations in P, however, are not parallel, and they punctuate the narration of T and P in different ways.

Table 5.1: Lexical agglutination in the first two folios of P

It is evident that each of the three textual witnesses of the *Huon* tradition had a very different function and was produced within very different audience-redactor dynamics. Manuscript B is a luxury manuscript produced for a courtly and learned audience. Rather than interpreting the language of B as “rozzo” and diverging from a “retto francese,” it is more appropriate to see its use of French as corresponding to the literary traditions existing within the Lombard narrative community. From this point of view, B is a product of the Lombard narrative cycle. Manuscript T, dated 1441, is written almost exclusively in the Tuscan dialect. The content of this manuscript is related to B, however, and for this reason I consider it a late representative of the Lombard romance-

³²¹ Busby, *Codex and Context I*, 148.

epic. T represents the Lombard romance-epic narrative tradition as it continued to develop even after the Tuscan paradigm had supplanted the use of French. The language of manuscript P represents the more Italianized side of the Lombard manuscript spectrum, unlike B: P was produced for a listening audience not versed in *français livresque*. P, too, is a product of the Lombard narrative cycle and shares with B the macro-level characteristics of this narrative community: modal interference, thematic program and narrative structure. P and T may both be interpreted as the physical artifacts of oral performance, or ‘performance artifacts,’ that are removed from the narrative goal itself, which is ephemeral and was created anew at each performance. B, even though it is of a heightened bookish quality, must also be interpreted as a performance artifact since it represents, like all hand-written codices, an irreproducible codicological and narrative moment in an audience-redactor dynamic. B, T and P all assume their defining characteristics through the *pression* (as defined in Chapter II) particular to the redactorredactor-audience dynamic to which they belong.

Manuscript Matrix and Diegesis

The detailed codicological analysis of the *Huon* textual witnesses demonstrates that each of these manuscripts is the outcome of a privileged moment of performance, each responding to specific audience / performer dynamics. I will turn now to the codicological and textual features I described above to investigate how each of these narrative outcomes is an independent manuscript space that offers altered diegetic readings of the *Huon* story. I will then discuss the case of Andrea da Barberino’s

reworking of the *Huon* story, which can be interpreted as a mediation from an oral framework to a literate one. I use ‘mediation’ as I have theorized it in the previous chapters, and in this way avoid comparing Andrea da Barberino’s text with P in terms of copy, original, translation, adaptation. Andrea da Barberino’s text signifies a new creation and a fundamental reorganization of the *Huon* tradition into a narrative system working within the boundaries of literacy.

The first important codicological feature of P is the spaces provided for an illumination program. The illustrative program of each surviving manuscript witness of the *Huon* tradition is unique and, for this reason, much remains to be said about how each textual version of the tradition is punctuated by these images and how critical diegetic moments are heightened by the presence of illuminations, or spaces for them. My analysis here must bracket B, since I do not have access to the entire manuscript at this time. A separate study would consider a detailed comparative study of the *Huon* illustrative material and its role in creating a narrative matrix that can aid in the literary interpretation of each manuscript space.³²²

The illumination program of T and P, apart from serving as a mnemonic system to recall a recited narration, highlight important narrative moments in each text. Given that the two illumination systems actually punctuate the text at different points, each one acts as an interpretative lens through which to understand and interpret the texts of P and T. In P, the task of assigning meaning to the illumination program is obviously complicated by the fact that the illustrations were never executed. Unlike B, however, whose illustrations

³²² The extant images of T have not been studied. T deserves further scholarly attention in conjunction with an edition of the Ranja notebooks.

are always placed at the bottom of the page, the spaces of P float within the text. The spaces in P still bear hermeneutic value and may be used to understand how a reader may have interpreted the codicological context and the text to create a complex signifying system between diegesis and the physical performance artifact. This function is especially important, as I will show, because each version of the *Huon* story is an example of a unique meaning system, which functions in the broader relationship between text and image. For the sake of brevity, I will only consider the episode of Ynide's defense and the Hell scene. The character of Huon's wife is referred to as 'Ynide' in T and 'Nida' in P, so I will use 'Ynide' and 'Nida' to refer to the character in the respective versions.

Beyond the Hell scene, the only other portion of the *Huon* story to receive recent scholarly scrutiny is the Ynide / Nida episode.³²³ A conspicuous difference between T and P is the contrast between the assertive role of Ynide and the almost silent and submissive role of Nida. In T, Ynide asserts her authority and protests the supplications of the king's ambassadors, who are trying to convince her to come to the king's court until Huon returns. The king hopes to have Ynide near him because he is in love with her. In a first attempt to rid herself of these advances, Ynide commands that the ambassadors not be allowed to enter the city door:

Galudin dize a la dona: "Ora che volite comandare?"
"Ay lassa!" dize Ynida, "che me lasate stare!"
"Dona", dize Berardo, "che loro lasate.ly yntrare".
"Vero", dize Baldovy, "sire, el è da fare." (ll. 4829-4832)³²⁴

³²³ See bibliography in note 13. In addition, see Leslie Zarker Morgan, "Can an Epic Woman be Funny? Humor and the Female Protagonist in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Epic," *Humor* 19.2 (2006): 157-178.

³²⁴ Galudin said to the woman: "What do you command?" / "Alas!" said Ynida, "That leave me alone!" / "Lady," said Berardo, "you should let them enter." / "True," said Baudoin, "sire, it is necessary."

Ynide wishes to be left alone, yet her brothers still let the ambassadors enter the city. Before the envoys arrive to consult with Ynide and begin to attempt to convince her to come to the king's court in Paris, Sandin, the king's minstrel, admonishes the brothers to follow the king's wishes. This passage sets up the brave defiance of the countess, who will consistently refuse the ambassadors' appeals:

“Signore”, dize, “Dio ve guarde da tropo parlare,
e vuy tute le cosse che amente lo nperadore,
e tuto sconfonda zascun chi vole contradire.”
“Vero”, dize Tomaso, “asay el è malavase consejo
chi fano altruy per lo mondo penare e travajare.” (ll. 4841-4845)³²⁵

Although her brothers are easily beguiled, Ynide sees through the transparent excuses the envoys invent to convince her to come to court. Rugero, *chi à molto gran podestà*, begins and tells Ynide that the king's lady and their daughter desire her company at court:

“Apresso sua dona e soa bela filia vole che li state
com piú alta compagnia, non soy con piú el è.
Con vuy averite, s'el ve deleta e piaze,
tanto che lo conte torna de soa ynquesta.” (ll. 4869-4872)³²⁶

Ynide's response is a defiant and terse “no”: “Non farò”, dize la dona, “per la devina maistà!” (l. 4873).

After Rugero, each envoy attempts to convince the queen and each attempt meets with her firm rejection: the following envoys are Terise, Belenzero, Morando, Gui lord of Barcelona, and Galerarto. After the last rejection Tomaso appears to be ashamed of his sister Ynide's defiance, “Tomaso taze et tene soa testa ynclina” (l. 4964). The assault by

³²⁵ “Lord,” he said, “God keep you from speaking too much, / and [keep] you, all the things that the emperor loves, / and confound those who would deny him [anything].” / “True,” said Tomaso, “it is a very bad thought / to make others toil and labor in the world.” For clarification on lines 4841-4845, see Leslie Z. Morgan, “Ynide and Charles Martel (II),” 81.

³²⁶ “He wishes you to be at his wife's and his daughter's side, / I don't know any nobler company. You shall have anything, if you so please and desire, / until the count returns from his quest.”

Uzero does not end here, however, as Uzero de la Savina attempts to convince Ynide, only to provoke in her a fit of grief. This attempt is followed by the archbishop, also sent by the king, who “very suavely begins his speech” (*molto dolzemente suo sermon comenza*). The archbishop’s supplication, which is a caustic commentary on the corruption of the clergy, is not enough to sway Ynide. Finally Sandin, the king’s minstrel, attempts to impress Ynide by underscoring the high rank of the ambassadors of the even more illustrious king. Ynide, who is not swayed either by Sandin’s cunning speech - his *latino* - or by earthly riches and authorities, remains firm in her decision not to leave for Paris:

“Certo”, dize la dona, “ben yntendo questo latino.
Avante morta vojo, et ardere apresso un pino,
che ejo may venisse a luy! Questa si è mia fine.” (5063-5065)³²⁷

The envoys, who think they are making Ynide an offer she cannot refuse, are still not convinced that she is thinking clearly. Sandin tells Ynide to sleep on it and that they will expect a definitive response from her at the following day’s meal:

“Dona”, dize Sandino, “avite vuy pensero:
doman apresso manzare si a nuy responderite,
che ora si à da conzarse et avere riposo.” (5066-5069)³²⁸

This elaborate episode features a strong and vocal Ynide who persistently defies the authority of the king’s ambassadors and the king himself. The countess Ynide uses witty and terse retorts in response to the ambassadors’ prosaic requests, a strategy of defiance that Morgan interprets as an instance of humor in an epic female character. Furthermore,

³²⁷ “Surely,” said the lady, “I understand this talk well. I would sooner die and burn tied to a pine tree / than go to him! This is my final word!”

³²⁸ “My lady,” said Sandino, “think about it: / tomorrow after eating you will answer us, / for now it is time to retire and to rest.”

Morgan maintains that the effect of the strong figure of Ynide “continues an anti-clerical and anti-royal message delivered throughout the poem by her husband: the worldly representatives of God are wrong to press their advantage, and will be punished.”³²⁹ The character of Ynide further amplifies the message of the poem by providing a counterbalance to her husband’s personal quest; the conclusion to Huon’s voyage to Hell may be interpreted as a message that celestial authority trumps Earthly rulers and, in this light, Ynide represents the understanding for which Huon strives.

Further hermeneutic significance is given to Ynide’s defense by its lexical choices and narrative structure, both of which hint at a lyric modality. The incessant requests on the part of the king’s ambassadors culminate in Sandin’s supplication in the language and idiom of courtly love:

“Quando debe avere zoja, vuy el fate languyre;
 quando el se crede essere seguro, vuy li fate smarire.
 Lo feu d’amore sovente li fate sentire;
 non avite scusa versso nuy che ly posate coprire,
 ch’el vostro amore no.l faza morire,
 né quele piage non pono zamay guarireredactor
 nula criatura fora vuy, che site lo medicho.” (5324-5330)³³⁰

As Morgan points out, however, “Ynide’s responses make the foolishness of lyric love clear.”³³¹ Ynide’s authority is in this way further emphasized through the lyric role of the *domna*. Through the use of a lyric patina, satire and parody are achieved through modal interference, even if in T this does not happen through the introduction of non-Italian

³²⁹ Morgan, “Can an Epic Woman be Funny?,” 170.

³³⁰ “When he should have joy, you make him languish. / When he feels certain, you make him feel lost. / You often make him feel the ardor of love. / You have no excuse that you can offer us; / That your love doesn’t kill him, / No other being but you can ever heal that wound, / You are the doctor.”

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 170.

lexical elements. The narrative structure further underscores Ynide's authority and resolve; the incessant entreaties of the king's men - no fewer than eleven - plays off the structure of the *pastourelle*, another lyric convention. Even if Ynide does not play the part of a shepherdess, her witty rebuffs trump the lengthy supplications of each of the ambassadors. This narrative structure is drawn out at length in the Ynide passage, and provides a non-textual layer of meaning to the narrative. The repetitive structure of this literary convention magnifies Ynide's authority and her spiritual devotion remains infallible despite the king's persistence. The dynamic between Ynide and the king can be interpreted as a battle between earthly and spiritual love, and Ynide becomes a model of both resistance of the impure and devotion to the sacred. The dominant role given to Ynide in T is heightened and given prominence by the illustrative program that punctuates this segment of narration: an image of Ynide bowing to divine authority (Figure 5.3) is preceded and followed by two illuminations depicting earthly riches and the corruption these involve. The model of Ynide's defiance is a central message in this episode, and the manuscript matrix mirrors this interpretation to create a meaning system involving not only text but also codicological features and narrative structure.

Manuscript P presents an illustrative program very different from that of T and includes only one image space in its much-abridged Nida episode. In accordance with the visual codicological presentation, the audience of P is presented with a much different interpretation of Nida, the wife of Huon, who is silent and meek. In P, only one envoy is sent by the king: his singing and harp-playing minstrel Sandin, who unlike in T, tries to



Figure 5.3. (T 80r) Ynide kneels before the cross, blood flows from the hand of Jesus. This folio is described by Pio Rajna in his transcription: “Ynida ai piedi del crocefisso.”

convince Nida only once. Nida does not immediately deny his request, but rather tells him she will need to think of a gift to send to the king. She leaves Sandin waiting and quickly runs to consult her brothers, who were left in charge of Huon's lands during his absence:

Responde la dona, "vui parlle como ber
Or me lasse un puoco per pensser
che un gran don li voio mander
Per la mia perssona plui a fider e a finer
In lla camera lo lassa alla celler
E vene in lla ssalla sul maistro soler
Amantimente domanda Baldoin se frer
E in plorant tuto li va conter
Ço che li aveva dito lo çubler
E como ell era de Carllo messaçer.
Quando Baldoin l'intende molto se presse airer
Dell anbossata che a dito lo maufer

Baldoin vete plançer so seror tendremant
Per lo so signor che andado in tal tormant
Suor disselo no ve teme niant
Vui non pode aver nul destormanent
Tanto ch'io sia vivo non abie nessun spavant
E mi e vostro frar lo combatant
Ma colui che tal anbossada va contant
Del so mestier averà el mierito si grant
Ch'el se na recorderà tuto el so vivant (laissez 65-66)³³²

The brothers and Nida have reversed roles in P: the brothers wield the authority and the power, while Nida is reduced to a weak and fearful female figure. Once Nida seeks her

³³² The lady responds, "you speak very nobly, / now let me think a little, / for I wish to send him a great gift / so he will esteem and trust me more." / She leaves him in the room / And comes into the hall of the great chamber. / Immediately she beseeches Baudoin her brother, / And in tears she tells him everything, / That the jongleur had told her / And how he was a messenger of Charles. / When Baldoin hears this he is enraged / Of the message relayed by the evil man.

Baldoin sees his sister weep tenderly / For her lord who went away to such toil. / "Sister," he said, "do not fear anything / You must not be upset, / As long as I live do not be afraid: / [as long as we live,] / your brother the fighter and I. / But the one who brings such a message / Will collect such a reward from his duty / That he will not forget it as long as he lives.

brothers' help in defending her honor, the punishment is quickly carried out: Sandin's tongue is cut out, his nose is cut off and one of his eyes is gouged out. The sole illumination space in the Nida episode of P occurs after this cruel treatment, which suggests the possibility that an illustration may even have been devoted to this gory episode and not to Nida. The illustrative program of P may or may not have functioned as in T, in which the images are inserted in the corresponding diegetic moment in the text. Paul Creamer, in his recent article "Privatizing the *Conte du Graal*: How Renaissance Printers Reformatted Chrétien's Public Text for Private Reading," has observed that in several Chrétien de Troyes manuscripts, "the miniatures have most often been situated in the columns of text in positions that are - oddly and surprisingly - slightly 'out of synch' with the written narrative they accompany."³³³ Even if the manuscript preparer of P did not intend for the miniatures to be "in synch" with the text, the diminished narrative importance of the submissive Nida is reflected in the presence of only one illumination in the episode devoted to her (Figure 5.4).

This characterization of Nida is a theme of version P, and we are told in an earlier episode, when Carlo Martello first falls in love with her, that she is unable to speak when the king professes his love to her. Laisse 45 contains an illumination space that might have represented the scene in which the king makes his feelings known to Nida. We are told immediately following the illumination space, however, that Nida was too ashamed to speak:

Al cuor ella ave inolto gran bufois

³³³ Paul Creamer, "Privatizing the *Conte du Graal*: How Renaissance Printers Reformatted Chrétien's Public Text for Private Reading," in *Acts and Texts: Performance and Ritual in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, eds. Laurie Postlewaite and Wim Hüsken (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 224.

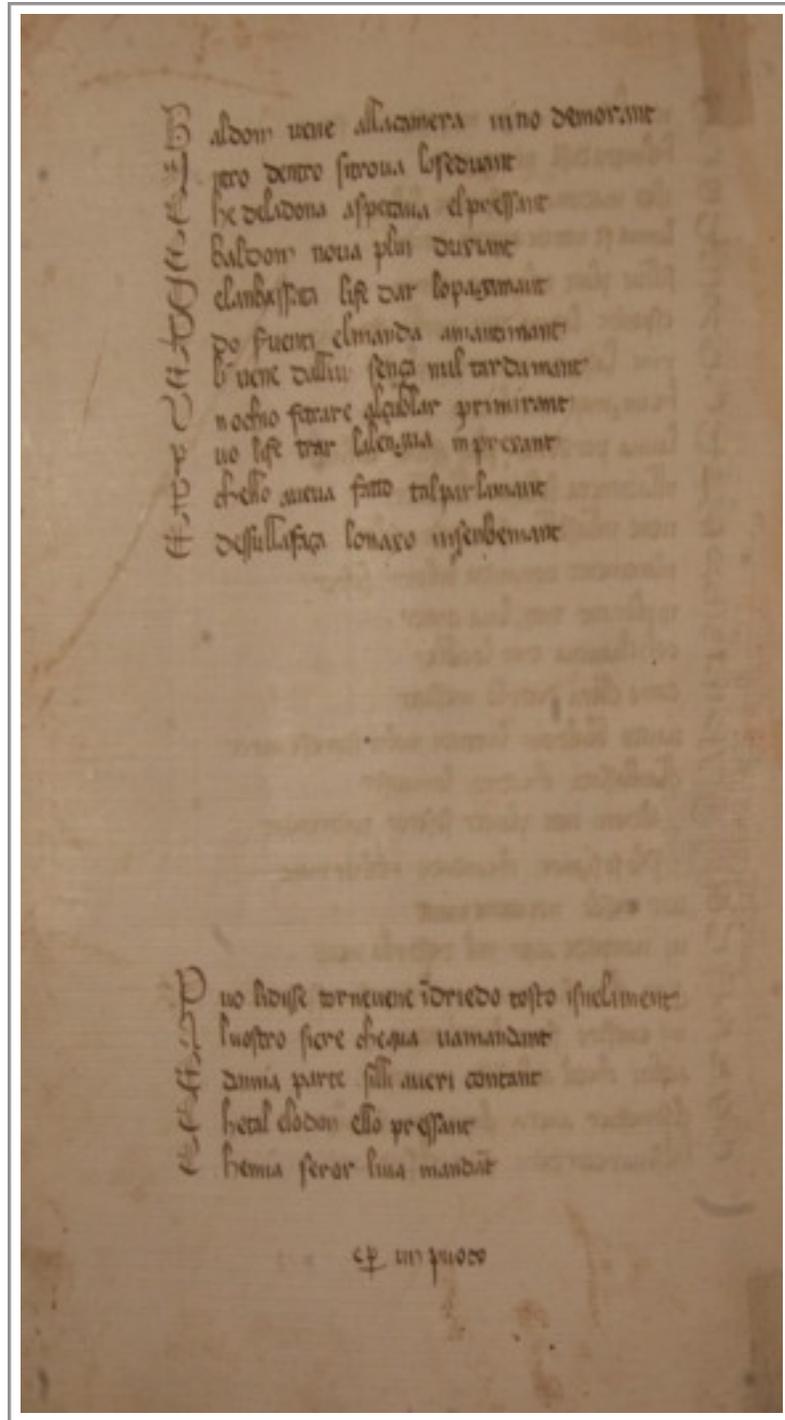


Figure 5.4. (P 46v) The only illumination space in P occurring during the Nida defense scene is placed immediately after the disfigurement of Sandin.

De gran vergogna vien pallida como çenois
Soa faça inclina si plançe de sso oils
A lo re ella no responde ni ssi ni nois
Da lui se parti sença plui demois. (34r)³³⁴

Immediately following this scene, Nida continues to remain silent, not telling her husband Huon that the king requested her love for fear of creating a rift between the vassal and his lord:

Torna a sso maxon no mostra nul boffois
Delle parole che li dixè carlo liois
Per puoço chella nol dixè a Ugo l'Alvernois
Che iera so marido e sso amigo perfois
Ma lla dona che iera ssavia e cortois
Si guarda per lo gram pesprixois
Che porave avegnir infra lui e rois. (34r)³³⁵

Unlike T and B (from which T derives), the narrative thread of P does not view Nida as instrumental in her husband Huon's quest. Whereas in T Ynide serves as a model for King Carlo Martello, who must learn that spiritual authority prevails over any earthly law, in P Nida acts as a silent and two-dimensional character and does not impart any moral lesson to the king. In P, the brothers are given prominence and their military exploits against the ruler of France are emphasized: the scene ends with Baldoïn and Thomas' successful defense of the castle against Carlo Martello's forces. In T, by contrast, the prominence is given to Ynide, who serves as the model combatant in a spiritual battle. In fact, in T, the Ynide episode entirely eliminates Carlo Martello's

³³⁴ In her heart she has much fear, From shame she turns as white as ash. / She lowers her head and tears run from her eyes. / She does not respond either yes or no to the king. / Without any further delay she leaves him.

³³⁵ She returns to her home and shows no fear at / the words addressed to her by Charles the king. / she nearly revealed them to Hugh of Auvergne, / who was her husband and perfect love. / But the lady who was wise and courtly / restrained herself for the great hostility / that could arise between him and the king.

campaign against Huon’s castle, an omission that suppresses the importance of earthly battles and therefore heightens spiritual ones. The manuscript’s scribe is aware of this omission, and briefly summarizes its contents in a gloss: “Mancha qui como Carlo Martelo andò a champo” (5742) (Figure 5.5). This omitted scene, then, is given codicological prominence, and Morgan observes that: “this line is preceded by a space and is surrounded by two lines across the page with this line written in between, and a further space below.”³³⁶

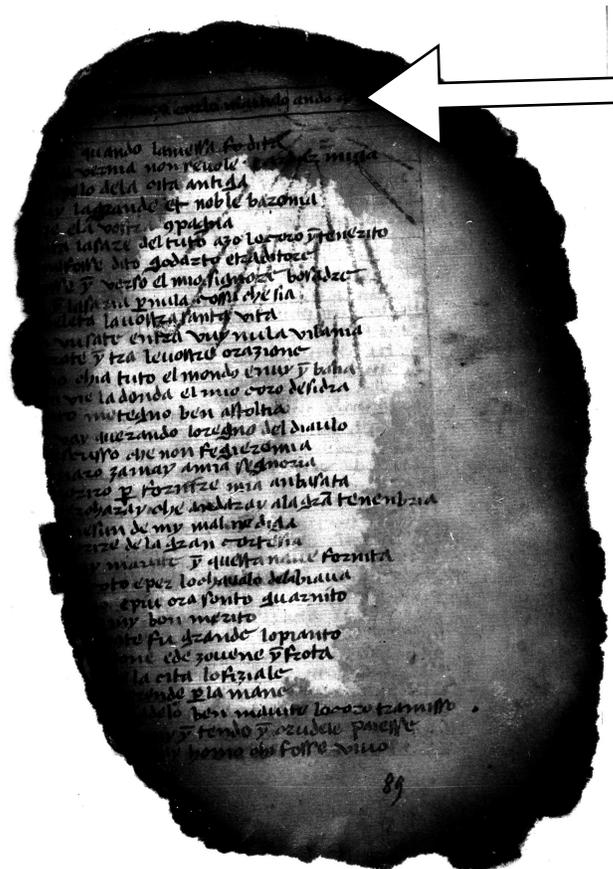


Figure 5.5 (T 89r) Scribe indicates the omitted battle scene: “Mancha qui como Carlo Martelo andò a champo.”

³³⁶ Morgan, “Ynide and Charles Martel (II),” 110, note 389.

The divergence in the manuscript illustrations of the manuscript witnesses P and T mirrors two divergent diegetic outcomes. In light of these considerations, which entwine the physical nature of the manuscript with the narrative exegesis, each component of the *Huon* manuscript tradition -- B, T, and P -- is a performance artifact, and transmits in its codicological and narrative entirety an irreproducible and hermeneutic value that cannot be contained within the borders of modern textuality. Furthermore, these manuscripts are artifacts of the oral matrix in which they were conceived, each with its unique meaning system. These observations concerning the irreproducibility of B, T and P are of course true for all medieval manuscripts. For Creamer the medieval and early modern reader could have been either ‘amateur’ or ‘professional.’³³⁷ The codicological evidence in his case study of manuscript and print versions of the Chrétien de Troyes romances reveals that the hand-written codex was often created for the professional reader, who performed the narrative aloud and who was intimately familiar with it. For this reason, the manuscript versions of the romances contained no index, table of contents or other orienting mechanisms to guide a first-time reader. With its transformation into a printed form, however, the audience was larger and the act of reading became ever more private and silent; the borders of textuality, including chapters, tables of contents and chapter summaries began to appear. Below we will see an example of this transition from orality to textuality with the example of Andrea da Barberino’s reworking of the *Huon* story. Creamer also indicates that the manuscript’s images were unlikely to be a mechanism for orientation, “for the simple reason that [the reader] would not yet have understood the

³³⁷ Paul Creamer, “Privatizing the *Conte du Graal*,” 217-48.

depicted figures' role in the plot during that reading."³³⁸ Most likely, these images were rather a mnemonic device to help the professional reader navigate the text, or a tool for the lector to show to his or her audience during a public reading.³³⁹

These codicological considerations concerning P and T thus provide similar clues surrounding the use and function of these manuscripts. Apart from providing important diegetic emphasis on the text and thus indicating two different readings of the *Huon* story, the images would have aided the performer of the text to relate his or her story to a listening audience. Like the hand-written codices in Creamer's analysis, neither P and T includes first-time orientation mechanisms to guide an amateur reader. Beyond these conclusions about the manuscript witnesses P and T, the transmission history of *Huon d'Auvergne* is particularly well-suited to illuminate the characteristics and dynamics of the Lombard narrative community because the oral space of the *Huon* tradition was transformed into a literate modality by the Florentine Andrea da Barberino.

Narrative Borders: Oralizing vs. Literacy

The Tuscan version of the *Huon d'Auvergne* story, *Ugo d'Alvernia*, was written by Andrea da Barberino around the beginning of the fifteenth century and survives in six manuscript witnesses.³⁴⁰ Past studies of Andrea da Barberino's version have analyzed its philological relationship with representatives of the *Huon* tradition. Merzaggi argues that

³³⁸ Ibid., 223.

³³⁹ Ibid., 225

³⁴⁰ Florence, Bibl. Nazionale Centrale II.II.69 (dated 1511); Florence, BNC II.II.58; Florence, BNC Panc. 34; Parma, Pal. 32 (dated 1509); Laur. Redi 177, (dated 1520-22); Vatican, Barb. lat. 4101 (dated 1515).

the main source of the Barberino version is a combination of P and B, or manuscripts copied from P and B:

In P, infatti, è detto che Sanguino offre in sposa ad Ugo la bella Inida. Non è spiegato, però, chi sia questa donna. Nel Barberino, invece, Inida appare come la figlia del castellano Gualtiero. Questo è l'unico punto in cui le due redazioni si differenziano per quanto riguarda la prima parte del racconto. Nella seconda parte, invece, quella in cui è narrato il viaggio di Ugo all'inferno, nel rifacimento in prosa il racconto si svolge parallelo a quello del testo berlinese. E' evidente, perciò che la fonte del Barberino doveva comprendere tanto la materia di P che quella di B.³⁴¹

As recent scholars have noted, the Barberino version makes an important transition into a more authoritative textual format. In her book *The Chivalric Epic in Medieval Italy*, Juliann Vitullo interprets the authority gained by prose composition within the context of Andrea da Barberino's Florence. For Vitullo, the *Ugo* narration represents the struggle for hegemony between languages, generic forms and expression in poetry or prose.³⁴²

Alessandro Vitale-Brovarone also interprets the shift from oral techniques to literate ones as signifying a fundamental shift in the valorization of signifying systems:

Le donné stylistique nous permet d'observer l'évolution d'un goût, d'un public, d'une technique de composition; avec ces données il est déjà possible de repérer les premières lignes, dans le temps et dans l'espace, d'un changement de civilisation.³⁴³

These developments are not specific to Italy, of course, but symptomatic of later developments of epic poetry throughout both France and Italy.³⁴⁴ Here I will develop this

³⁴¹ Merzagazzi, "L'Ugo d'Alvernia," 43-44.

³⁴² See Juliann Vitullo, "Orality, Literacy, and the Prose Epic," in *The Chivalric Epic in Italy*, 99.

³⁴³ Alessandro Vitale-Brovarone, "De la Chanson de Huon d'Auvergne à la Storia di Ugone d'Alvernia d'Andrea da Barberino: techniques et méthodes de la traduction et de l'élaboration," *Charlemagne et l'épopée romane. Actes du VII^e Congrès international de la Société Rencesvals (Liège 28 août - 4 septembre 1976)*, vol. 2., eds. Madeleine Tyssens and Claude Thiry (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1978), 403.

³⁴⁴ See François Suard, *Chanson de geste et tradition épique en France au Moyen Âge* (Caen: Paradigme, 1994).

ambitious premise within the theoretical framework of a geography of narration, and I will argue that the *Ugo* tradition is neither a translation nor an adaptation of the *Huon* tradition, but represents an even more fundamental shift from an oral performative manuscript matrix to a new signifying system within the borders of literacy. Even though the *Ugo* texts in question are themselves manuscripts, they were nonetheless created within the context of a new concern for textual stability, which would ultimately be guaranteed by the advent of the printing press.³⁴⁵ This shift from orality to literacy constitutes the notion of mediation I developed in chapter II, and the *Ugo* tradition may be interpreted as mediation from one narrative community into another, from the Lombard to the Tuscan. As Kittay and Godzich maintain, “a change of signifying practice is an attack on authenticity and authority.”³⁴⁶ The creation of authority through prose is reinforced with the introduction of Andrea da Barberino’s authoritative reading of the manuscript that attacks the irreproducibility of performance, and adopts the reproducible and stable architecture of the early printed book. The *Ugo* version, which becomes a new signifying system within the introduction of literate borders, is in many ways congruent with the modern notion of original composition.

Before beginning my analysis of P and Andrea da Barberino’s text, certain methodological problems need to be addressed in order to fully describe this instance of

³⁴⁵ For a discussion on the transition from manuscript to print, see Franz Bäuml, “The Transformations of the Heroine: From Epic Heard to Epic Read,” in *The Role of Women in the Middle Ages*, edited by R. T. Morewedge (Albany: SUNY Press, 1975); Franz Bäuml, “Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy,” *Speculum* 55 (1980): 23-40; Franz Bäuml and Edda Spielman, “From Illiteracy to Literacy: Prologomena to a Study of the *Nibelungenlied*,” in *Oral Literature: Seven Essays*, edited by Joseph J. Duggan (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1975).

³⁴⁶ Jeffrey Kittay and Wlad Godzich, *The Emergence of Prose: An Essay in Prosaics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 8.

mediation. First, my analysis will not consider the codicological context of the Andrea da Barberino version, since I have not seen any of the extant manuscripts in person, nor have I seen any images. When appropriate, however, I will continue to use codicological features of P to reveal characteristics of its own narrative program.³⁴⁷

A second methodological challenge to the present study is the modern *Ugo* edition itself. Since the publication of the Zambrini edition in 1882, new manuscripts have been identified and linked to the Tuscan *Ugo* tradition. There may, therefore, be significant textual variants. A further study is needed to synthesize and describe the relationship of all the surviving pre-print versions of the *Ugo* tradition.³⁴⁸ This final discussion aims to illuminate how the borders of early modern textual modalities alter the signifying system of oral spaces. I will show this using the case study of Andrea da Barberino's mediated version of the *Huon* tradition, which took P as its main source.

Andrea da Barberino's first important revision of the *Huon* tradition is to delineate the textual boundaries, thus creating the *Ugo d'Alvernia* story, and to transfer the narrative content of the *Huon* tradition into the signifying system of literate boundaries. This practice is not unusual during Andrea's period (c. 1370-1431), and Andrea is adapting the oral system of the *Huon* tradition to the increasingly literate and textual reading community.³⁴⁹ Andrea is the first to assign to the *Huon* tradition a title and a clear beginning, and to associate textual creation to an unnamed author figure:

³⁴⁷ A future comparative study is necessary of the *Ugo* / *Huon* traditions, which would explore the relationship between the narration, and textual and illustrative *mise-en-page*.

³⁴⁸ Gloria Allaire has done the most extensive work on the surviving examples of the *Ugo* tradition. See note 3.

³⁴⁹ See Juliann Vitullo, *Chivalric Epic*, 93-113.

Al nome di Dio. Questa istoria si chiama Ugo d Venia, il quale fu conte di Vernia, et grande amico di Dio; et fue al tempo di Carlo Martello imperadore di Roma, et re di Francia; et fu quello Ugone che andò allo inferno. Comincia qui il primo libro dell'autore.

The textual borders of author, title and beginning are mirrored by a delineation of a clear and authoritative ending:

Et qui finisce la storia del conte Ugo da Vernia, figliuolo di Buoso, stralutato di francioso in nostra lingua toscana per maestro Andrea di Jacopo di Tieri da Barberino di Valdelsa cantatore. Deo gratias. Amen. Amen.

That Andrea identifies himself as a 'cantatore' seems to defy not only this finalizing textual border, but also the entire textual frame that transmits his *Ugo* narrative. Vitullo also recognizes that there is a tension between oral and literate modalities in the *Ugo* text and suggests that Andrea acts as a mediator between an oral narrative tradition and an ever more literate audience; Andrea aims to "organize and systematize the same material in a way that a literate community would find more logical and less redundant."³⁵⁰ The textual boundaries of beginning and end in the above citations reflects this concern for the literate reader; it is "an attempt to reify the text as a packaged, fixed object."³⁵¹ Beyond delineating a stable end point to the narrative, this closing statement offers important insight into how Andrea perceived his task from a methodological perspective.

In the *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*, the verb *stralutare*, according to fourteenth- and fifteenth-century usage, is glossed as a transfer of property, "trasferire una proprietà." As a participle form, the lexeme can be understood as "translated."

Stralutare is a Florentine development through metathesis from *traslatare*, which can

³⁵⁰ Vitullo, *Chivalric Epic*, 102

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 107.

signify “trasferire qualcosa da un luogo a un altro,” as in a priest who transfers bones or relics. *Traslatare* can also be used in the sense of an author who transfers material from one language to another, “tradurre da una lingua ad un'altra.” In the case of Andrea da Barberino, we can understand his task as a transfer of one narrative system into another, and not strictly a “translation” in the modern sense. Andrea, in other words, does not claim to create a faithful copy of a previous original, but rather to transfer the narrative material of the *Huon* tradition in order to create a new original text, capable of appropriating a new authority. The opening and ending lines to the *Ugo* story function as bookends to the Andrea da Barberino four-book version and transform the mutable, oral *Huon* tradition into a static, authoritative text that can be linked to a moment of *poesis*, or creation, by an individual author figure. The privileged moment of narration is no longer found within the context of performance and an official and authoritative order of the narrative events is understood to be the goal. The *Ugo* text is no longer the *Huon* text, even if the composite character and plot material remains the same.

Following common praxis of his time, Andrea further delineates the narrative structure into four books, which are further divided into chapters. With the exception of book three, each narrative segment includes introductory and concluding structural information that further establishes stability (Table 5.2.):

Book	Total chapters	Page Length	Beginning	End
Libro I	16	62	Comincia il primo libro dell'autore.	Finito il primo libro d'Ugone d'Avernia.
Libro II	20	112	Finito il primo libro d'Ugone d'Avernia. Comincia il secondo, nel quale si tratta come Ugo tolse Dama Conida per moglie.	E qui però finisce il libro [secondo] d'Ugone, et comincia l'altro.
Libro III	63	159	-----	-----
Libro IV	17	187	Ora qui comincia il libro quarto d'Ugone, quando entrò nello 'nferno; e prima in versi trinari. Ed è composizione di Giovanni Vincenzio Isterliano di detto Ugo.	Et qui finisce la Storia del Conte Ugo da Vernia, figliuolo di Buoso, stralato di francioso in nostra lingua toscana per Maestro Andrea di Jacopo di Tieri da Barberino di Valdelsa cantatore. Deo gratias. Amen. Amen.

Table 5.2. Narrative structure of the *Ugo d'Alvernia*.

The structural framework introduced by Andrea da Barberino carves the *Huon* story into four distinct sections: Sofia's betrayal; Carlo's love for Conida (i.e. Ynide / Nida) interlaced with Huon's departure; Huon's wanderings and extended metaphorical introduction to Hell episode; Huon's trip through Hell and Rome besieged. The episode involving Conida's defense is conspicuously eliminated and we might wonder if this is a reflection of Andrea da Barberino's reading of P, which had already silenced the role of Huon's wife. Even though page numbers obviously vary from one manuscript and edition to the next, I have given the number of pages in the Zambrini edition, along with the number of chapters comprising each book, to give an idea of how much narrational time each book contains. What is immediately surprising is the number of pages in the fourth

book (187), which contains only 17 chapters. With a similar number of chapter divisions, the first book fills only 62 pages. With the bulk of the narrative material in books III and IV, the diegetic focus, then, is concentrated on Ugo's journey and descent into Hell. Another significant structural decision Andrea made is to divide the Hell episode in two. Ugo's arrival in Hell ends chapter three, and the actual journey through Hell, or the *scura maxon* -- a narrative segment comprising 102 pages alone -- is contained within a single chapter. The chapter opening draws further attention to this 102-page section by attributing the work to a certain 'Giovanni Vincenzio.' Even more curiously, this chapter is the only one in the entire work to be composed in alternating prose and *terza rima* sections.

The oral manuscript space of P stands in sharp contrast to the literate structural features that delineate the narrative content of Andrea da Barberino's version. Unlike this narrative, P is not delineated by chapters and books, but unfurls as a continuous strand of narration without any orientation apparatus for the first-time, amateur reader. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know for sure whether the text of P began in a way similar to Andrea da Barberino's text, with a phrase demarcating a beginning and an end, because the manuscript is missing two folios at the beginning and two at the end. Textual boundaries in P would likely not have been similar to those used in Andrea's version, however, especially if we consider the other narrative boundaries within P. The conclusion of P was most likely substantially different from both T and Andrea's versions; the codicological evidence suggests that P ended at the conclusion of Huon's visit to Hell, and did not continue with the episode of Rome besieged. Meregazzi, in fact,

interprets the final lines of the poem (page 46, below) as an *explicit* to the poem: “dunque il poema in P doveva con tutta probabilità terminare col ritorno di Ugo e la morte dell’imperatore.”³⁵² Two pieces of codicological evidence support this conclusion, both of which were discussed briefly above in the description of P. First, the last gathering consists of six bifolia, whereas the rest of the gatherings are of five bifolia (except for the third gathering, of four). An extra two folios of parchment space in a six-bifolia gathering would have permitted the scribe to conclude the text without wasting seven folios of unused parchment. Second, wormholes on the original pasteboard continue uninterrupted through the pages of the last gathering. This suggests that the pasteboard is the original and the last gathering of the manuscript in its present state has always been the last gathering. The binding was restored at a later unknown date. Some of the worm holes continue through the entirety of the last gathering and into the penultimate one, which further supports the conclusion that the present manuscript’s last gathering has always been the last, and that the narration did, indeed, end at the conclusion of Huon’s travels through Hell (Figure 5.6.).

Unlike Andrea’s text, which is structured around the textualizing borders of author, title, beginning, end, chapters and book divisions, manuscript P of the *Huon* tradition organizes itself within a framework of orality. The narration of this manuscript is divided into seven main segments, all marked by narrative breaks, of which the last is the largest. This last segment includes three important narrative events: the allegorically rich ‘approach to Hell’; the voyage through Hell itself; and Huon’s return to his castle. The

³⁵² L.A. Meregazzi, “L’Ugo d’Alvernia,” 54.

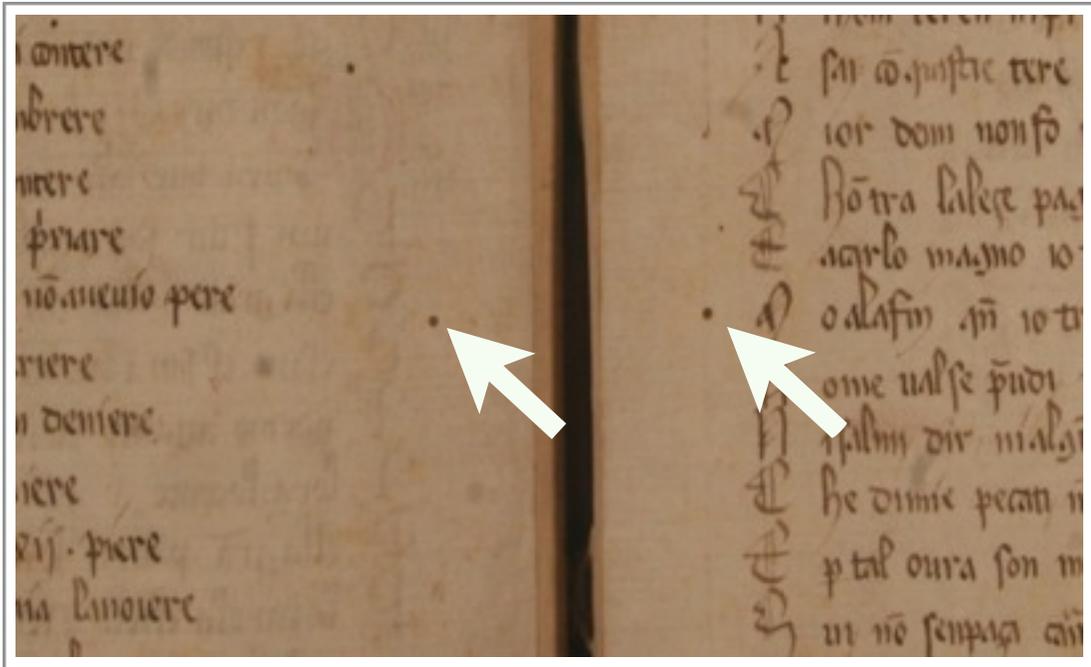


Figure 5.6. (P 107r) Worm holes extend through the last gathering and into the penultimate.

text is further divided into rhyming laisses with colored (blue or red) initials at the beginning of each (Table 5.3.).

The organization of P indicates that the performer, the manuscript's user, would likely have been a professional reader and would have been intimately familiar with the text since the above narrative divisions are not made prominent with any special codicological treatment. The textual evidence of oral narrative divisions along with the physical evidence discussed above—illuminations, word clusters—support the conclusion that this manuscript was used for performance, or would have been read out loud. As stated earlier, P is a performance artifact and is a secondary trace of the narrative goal, which would have been an ephemeral oral recitation or performance. The narrative goal of Andrea da Barberino's version, on the other hand, is the private reading of the

manuscript itself. The clear textual boundaries assume no prior knowledge of the text and a reader would have referenced them easily.

Segment	Number of Laisses	Narrative Break
1st segment	1 extant	(missing)
2nd segment	5	Or ascholte signor per dio onipotant Si ve dirò un gran tradiment
3rd segment	13	De la duchessa ve vuoio lasere Del duc Sanguin ve voio contere
4th segment	22	De Ugo d'Alvernia ve voio lasere
5th segment	22	Or lasseremo de Ugo che ben e alturie La marçe de Dio e dell ssoata honorere
6th segment	5	Un puocho de lui qua laseron A puocho d'ora nu li troveron
7th segment	at least 128	Or laseremo de Carlo si diremo de Ugon Como ello s'en va per lo flume abandon

Table 5.3. Narrative structure of P.

The organization of P indicates that the performer, the manuscript's user, would likely have been a professional reader and would have been intimately familiar with the text since the above narrative divisions are not made prominent with any special codicological treatment. The textual evidence of oral narrative divisions along with the physical evidence discussed above—illuminations, word clusters—support the conclusion that this manuscript was used for performance, or would have been read out loud. As stated earlier, P is a performance artifact and is a secondary trace of the narrative goal, which would have been an ephemeral oral recitation or performance. The narrative goal of

Andrea da Barberino's version, on the other hand, is the private reading of the manuscript itself. The clear textual boundaries assume no prior knowledge of the text and a reader would have referenced them easily.

As I have indicated, for Andrea da Barberino's version the Hell episode receives special structural treatment: Huon's 100-page journey through Hell is contained within one chapter, and this segment is separated from the allegorical approach to Hell. The passage narrating Huon's descent into Hell is further complicated in Andrea da Barberino's version because it serves as an introduction to the last book, book four, which finishes with the siege of Rome and the awarding of the imperial crown to the Germans rather than the French. In P, the Hell episode also receives special structural and codicological attention. In the table above, it is clear that the Hell scene in P had a dominant function in the narration and occupied roughly twice as much narrative space as the first six segments combined. The initial of each line, which are all struck through with red only in the scene when Huon and Lucifer are in dialogue, further underscore the diegetic importance of this episode (Figure 5.7). The initials crossed in red occur on folios 110 v, 111v and 112r and not only indicate an important passage in the narration of P, but also would have aided the manuscript's user to quickly return to this section for gloss, interpretation or re-performance.

The initial D, discussed in the description of P, is another prominent codicological feature that points to the hermeneutic value of this passage. This initial is not colored in either blue or red, but yet has a face drawn within the bow of the letter. Even if this face

was drawn in later, this initial still remains significant since it is the only one in P to have never been colored red or blue (Figure 5.8.).

The unique attention accorded to the Hell scene in both P and the Andrea da Barberino text appears throughout both the *Huon* and the *Ugo* traditions. Gloria Allaire has pointed out that the Hell scene occurs in all but two versions of *Huon/Ugo*: the exceptions are Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Redi 177 (dated 1520-1522), and Vatican, Barb. lat 4101 (dated 1515).³⁵³

We might add the unexplained omission of the Hell scene in these two manuscripts to a list of special codicological and narratological treatment of this scene:

1. In Andrea da Barberino's text the Hell scene comprises one bulky chapter;
2. Andrea da Barberino introduces the Hell scene as a text by another unknown poet by the name of 'Giovanni Vincenzio';
3. The Hell chapter in Andrea da Barberino's version alternates between *terza rima* and prose glosses;
4. In P, the Hell scene also occupies one disproportionately large narrative segment;
5. In P, the Hell scene receives special rubrication and contains the only decorated initial;
6. As far as we can tell, the Barbieri fragment contains only the Hell section;
7. Conversely, the Hell segment has been omitted from two manuscripts of the *Ugo* tradition.

It is difficult to know why the Hell episode receives a large amount of special consideration in the *Huon/Ugo* traditions, but it does seem clear that this episode initially stood alone as an independent narrative thread, as I have defined this term in Chapter II of this study. This narrative thread, which circulated within the oral framework of the *Huon* tradition, has been incorporated awkwardly into the textualizing fabric of Andrea da Barberino's version. If we are to accept that the Hell scene is an independent narrative

³⁵³ Allaire, "Considerations," 185.

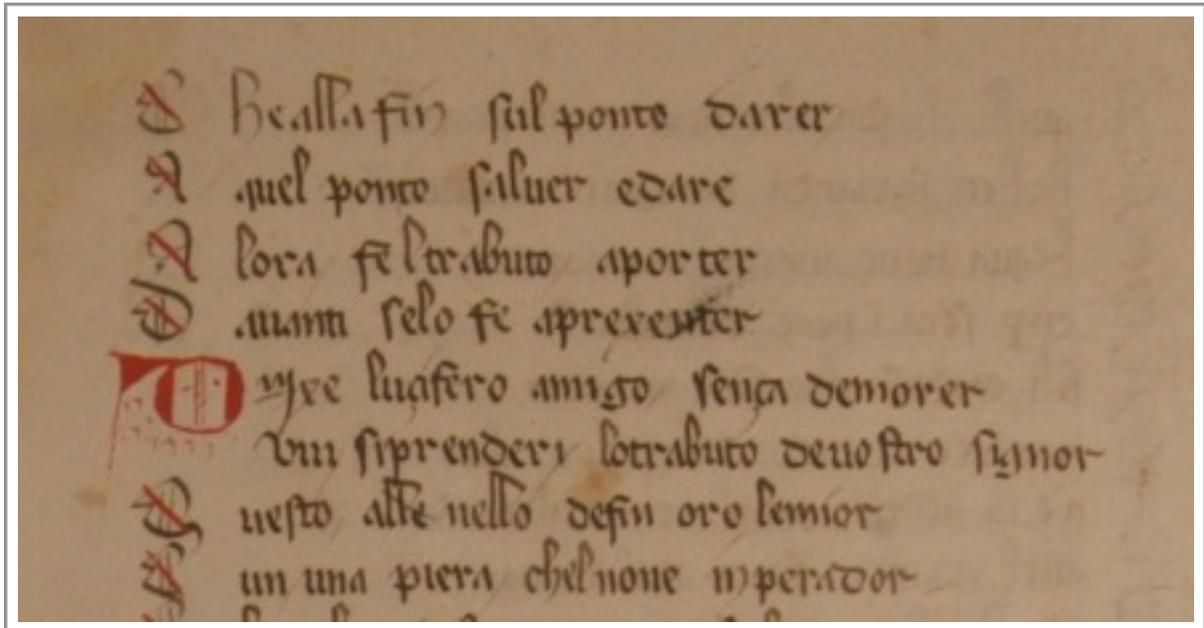


Figure 5.7: (P 110v) In P, line initials are struck through in red only in Huon's dialogue with Lucifer, folios 110v, 111v, 112r.

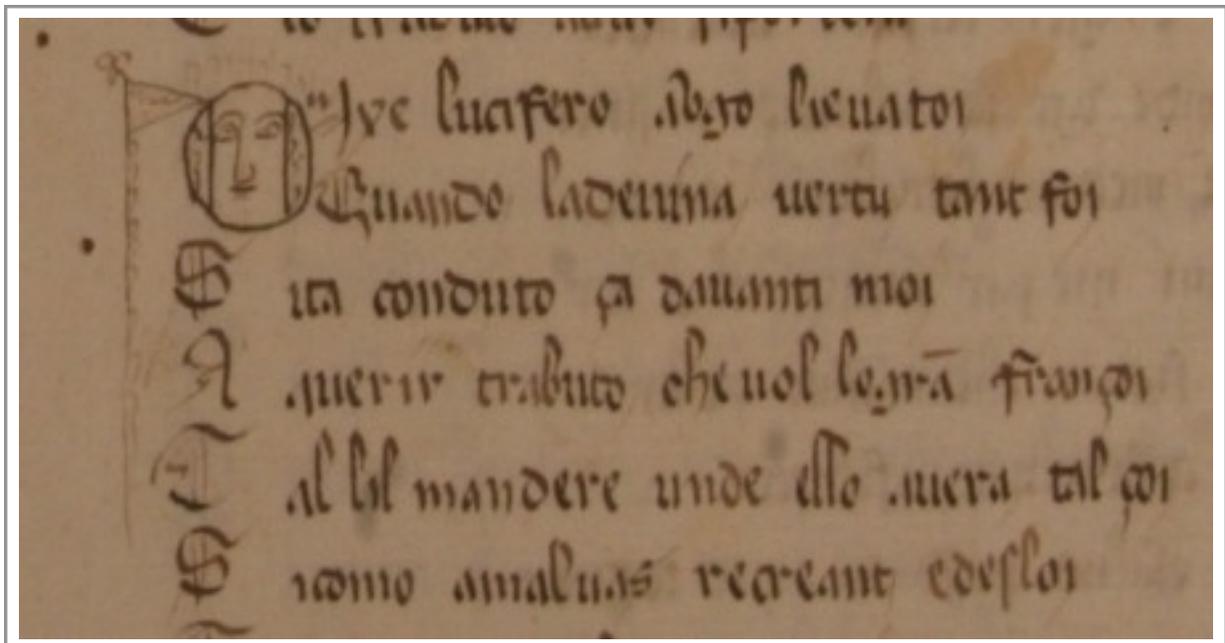


Figure 5.8. (P 111r) Initial D with face to highlight the hermeneutic prominence of this passage.

thread, we might also interpret the Barbieri fragment as a complete narrative unit. This segment at some point was deemed an independent narrative worthy of conservation, perhaps in light of the fame Dante's *Divina Commedia* had in the Florentine area.

These above structural and codicological considerations have important implications when we set out to interpret the hermeneutic system of the *Huon/Ugo* traditions. In P, the narration ends with the Hell episode and the narrative high point is indicated with an unusual rubric system. This ending leads to a moral interpretation of the poem, a conclusion that is supported also by the final extant lines of the poem:

Lo conte non fe' demoramant
Glixie fe far e hospedali plui de çant
Poveri vestir e darli vin e formant
Penetenca fe semper al so viant
Per S. Guielmo che li fo inguarant
Un monistier fe' far in.....
De C moiessi era al so.....
e chili aveva vitov.....
de Ugo laserò.....
de servir ad.....
e puo sar.....
e Dio non e.....³⁵⁴

P may be interpreted as Huon's spiritual quest to recognize his true authority, which is God and not the corrupt earthly king Carlo Martello. Meregazzi also interprets P as a personal quest of the character Huon:

Invece gli ultimi versi conservati da P, seguendo immediatamente alla morte dell'imperatore, lasciano capire che ormai Ugo, compiuta ogni missione, vive

³⁵⁴ L.A. Meregazzi, "L'Ugo d'Alvernia," 54.

tranquillo attendendo a pratiche religiose; si stacca dal mondo, il che è in opposizione con quanto si legge in B.³⁵⁵

Lucifer's words to Huon, occurring in the *laisse* with the only decorated initial in the manuscript, drive this message home and reveal the deceit and corruption that has been invisible to Huon because of his unfaltering and exaggerated allegiance to his lord, Carlo Martello. The oral codicological framework in which the text of P operates becomes a signifying system in itself; manuscript context and diegesis are linked to become a metalinguistic system of meaning.

Within a framework of orality, it is clear that the narrative segments in P are not bound to an authoritative order as they are in Andrea da Barberino's version, which solidifies the narration within the borders of a textualized structure. In Andrea da Barberino's text, the Hell scene is split in two and Huon's journey through Hell becomes a prologue to the final outcome of the narration: the siege of Rome. Unlike P, Andrea's version does not aim to investigate the hero's spiritual quest, but rather ventures into political commentary and thus opens the relevance of the narrative to a larger Florentine reading community. Andrea da Barberino's reading reflects the influence of the Guelph and Ghibelline political factions in Florence, and offers a commentary on the Florentine political situation, which opposed French rule. Even if by Andrea's time the Guelph party had already lost its original allegiance to the papacy, Alison Brown, in her article "The Guelph Party in 15th-Century Florence: The Transition from Communal to Medicean State," has shown that the Guelph party remained "the guardian of chivalry and

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 53. "Lord," he said, "God keep you from speaking too much, / and [keep] you, all the things that the emperor loves, / and confound those who would deny him [anything]." / "True," said Tomaso, "it is a very bad thought / to make others toil and labor in the world" (my translation). For lines 4841-4845, see Leslie Z. Morgan, "Ynide and Charles Martel (II)," 81.

conservative ceremonial Florence.”³⁵⁶ Vitullo interprets the conclusion of the *Ugo* version in a similar way and maintains that this and other prose adaptations

project the fears of Italian communes to remain independent from the French kings and German emperors, yet also represent the desire of the new communal aristocracy to enjoy the privileges of nobility.³⁵⁷

The authoritative structure Andrea da Barberino assigns to his reading of the *Huon* story attempts to secure the meaning of the poem for his own political aim. His version draws on textual boundaries to create a hermeneutic structure; the signifying system of his work derives from the introduction of textual borders, such as authoritative beginning and end, and no longer from the text’s interaction with its manuscript context. The stability of this message, then, entails a separation of the diegetic thread from the signifying system of the manuscript; in this way he attempts to mediate an irreproducible performance into the static and reliable space of textuality. Mediation results in the severing of the text from its former codicological meaning system.

These conclusions on the process of mediating from orality to literacy also give us insight into the narrational strategy of P, T and B. These texts build meaning by creating a syntax of narrative threads. The narrative segments I have identified above may be expanded or contracted to create new meaning out of conventional narrative units, as in the Ynide/Nida episode. By amplifying and contracting narrative threads, and by syntactically assembling them, the oral framework allows for infinite signifying systems with a limited number of units. This possibility is precluded once oral spaces are

³⁵⁶ Alison Brown, “The Guelph Party in 15th-Century Florence: The Transition from Communal to Medicean State,” *Rinascimento* 2, no. 20 (1980): 46.

³⁵⁷ Vitullo, *Chivalric Epic*, 112-13.

meditated into the borders of literate spaces, which establish an authoritative beginning, end and narrative sequence.

I approached this chapter with two questions in mind: how are oral manuscript spaces changed according to early modern preoccupations with textual authority and stability? And, more specifically, how do the literate boundaries introduced by Andrea da Barberino change the signifying systems of *Huon d'Auvergne* textual witnesses? A first conclusion we can draw is that the surviving manuscript versions of the *Huon* tradition -- B, P and T -- must each be considered as independent signifying systems, all of which deserve further individualized consideration. Through the illustrative program and other codicological features, the irreproducibility and performativity of these manuscripts become apparent. This para-textual signifying system, along with the narrative program itself, becomes a system of signification and the manuscripts can be interpreted as 'performance artifacts.' The Andrea da Barberino version of the *Huon* story, however, represents an important shift in narrative technique. Responding to the concern for textual authority and emergent print culture of the period, Andrea da Barberino transposes the narrative elements of the *Huon* story into the borders of a literate framework and creates a new system of meaning. This task, which is an instance of mediation and not of translation, removes the *Huon* narrative material from its codicological matrix and fashions a new and more stable work, the *Ugo d'Alvernia*.

These conclusions illustrate how we can interpret the *Huon / Ugo* narrative tradition within a theory of narrational geography. At the same time, they also pose new problems for our understanding of not only this particular narrative tradition, but also for

the transmission of narrative itself. Beyond the hierarchies of diachronic manuscript stemmata, which aim to illustrate manuscript genealogies, it is clear that each textual witness represents a unique narrative trajectory. The three textual witnesses of the *Huon* tradition are productions of a performance-driven narrative cycle, which moulds the performance outcome according to micro-level dynamics between performer and audience. Manuscript B, prepared for the Gonzaga family who claimed noble ancestry, is an irreproducible outcome of this particular elite rapport in the narrative. Manuscript P is fashioned for an audience and a circumstance entirely different from B, and is the physical artifact of a privileged performance moment of the narrative cycle. The *Ugo d'Alvernia* by Andrea da Barberino is the product of a narrational cycle no longer based on performance, but rather on the authority of the written word; this text is the product of a literate Florentine narrative community. Different from B and P, the *Ugo d'Alvernia* has been severed from its manuscript matrix in order to privilege stability and has been significantly altered to fit inside the borders of literacy.

If we accept that each manuscript witness is an independent narrative unit, the modern editor is faced with a new iteration of familiar and vexing questions: how do we mediate oral manuscript spaces into the textual borders of modern editions? Is it possible to conserve non-textual meaning in our attempt to represent premodern narrative spaces? Is it possible to avoid nationalizing constructs in editorial practices? For these reasons, it will be important for future scholarship -- in Franco-Italian studies and beyond -- to reconsider present systems of textual emendation and to explore how modern non-print

media may be exploited to capture and transmit faithfully texts that were never, in fact, meant to be reproduced.

CHAPTER VI

WRITING OUTSIDE THE LINES: THE PAST'S CHALLENGE TO THE ONE LANGUAGE / ONE NATION PARADIGM

Present to Past

The novel *Sea of Poppies* by Indian writer Amitav Ghosh tells the tale of a former slave ship adrift at sea at the height of British colonial ambition in India. Above, on and below the decks of the *Ibis*, Ghosh assembles a motley hierarchy of ocean voyagers, among them the disguised, orphaned, polyglot daughter of an eccentric French botanist, who has voluntarily joined a group of imprisoned Indian laborers; an American sailor born to a slave mother and a white father; a recovering Chinese opium addict / convict; a bankrupt Bengali prince, now also a convict; and the widow of a poppy farmer who has run away with her second husband to find a new life on the island of Mauritius. As the *Ibis* sets sail from the mouth of the Ganges river, each class of voyager speaks a different language, each occupying a piece of a hierarchical linguistic mosaic from captain down to convict. Once the ship enters the vast borderless expanse of the Indian Ocean, however, the rigid hierarchy of oppressed and oppressor comes crashing down. What is the catalyst to this disintegration? It is the polylingual capabilities of the disguised orphan Paulette, who speaks French, Bengali and English fluently.

The metaphor of a borderless expanse of open sea proposed by Ghosh has both spatial and temporal implications; adrift upon a stormy ocean, outside the geopolitical borders of power and oppression, the *Ibis* sees its linguistic hierarchies dissolve and a new social order emerge that defies the historical colonial present. This study has sought to identify similar spatial and temporal borders within modern assessments of the literary past and to problematize the holds, captain's quarters, crow's-nests and gang-planks of literary historiography. I have argued that the polylingual Lombard epic-romance tradition, and even medieval literature broadly conceived, can act as a Paulette of sorts, a catalyst to destabilize not only the linguistic borders we imagine to exist between nation and nation, but also the temporal borders we have placed between past and present.

Along a horizontal spatial axis, the modern borders of nation, book and language have colonized premodern narrative manuscript spaces. These borders have succeeded in delineating the privileged spaces of "French literature" and "Italian literature" -- the captain's quarters -- for those texts lauded for their value in retelling the lineage of nation. The putatively impure, incomplete and marginal manuscript spaces that menace the authority of the canon and the historiographic imagination have been silenced and cast into the hold of the historiographic ship. Because of such mechanisms, set up during the height of European imperialism, the Oxford Digby 23 version of the *Chanson de Roland* has been favored over all other extant versions of the epic. The Roland epic, and other similarly anthologized premodern texts, are placed strategically at the nexus of time and national space and occupy a privileged place on the bookshelves of French and Italian literature, just as the copper and marble statues of Charlemagne and Dante Alighieri are

the sentinels of historiographic locations of nation at the Place du Parvis Notre-Dame and the piazza Santa Croce. In a system that aims to separate past from present, these locations paradoxically become atemporal in their significance, melding lauded moments of the past with the political needs of the historical present.

As we have seen with the Venice 4 *Chanson de Roland* and the *Huon d'Auvergne* manuscript tradition, a text's beginning and end are by no means absolute; the textual borders of beginning and end have been created to serve editorial and political needs. Medieval narrative threads circulated in a web of geographically and temporally specific systems independent of modern national borders. For this reason, I have suggested that new horizons in Medieval Studies, and literary criticism in particular, will need to remap narrative spaces of the past separately from present national spaces. The opposition between open-ended narrative threads and the textual constraints of the modern printed book, however, is more problematic than issues of interpretation. For this reason, this study has explored the dilemma that we face today when we read medieval narrative within the confines of the printed literary classic. Even if minority narrative spaces of the past can potentially erode the ontological boundaries of the nineteenth-century nation building project, how do we transpose the irreproducible into the reproducible?

As we have seen with the Andrea da Barberino version of the *Huon d'Auvergne*, the signifying system of the narrative is fundamentally altered in a narration's transposition from performative manuscript spaces to textual spaces. Manuscript traditions such as the *Huon d'Auvergne* reinforce what scholarship has known for quite some time: that the art of medieval narrative does not hover upon the page as a static

object, but rather interacts semiotically with the parchment and inks that transmit it. To address this question, Bernard de Cerquiglini, Michel Zink and Pierre Bec deserve a second glance and the medieval disciplines need to begin to confront the difficult problem of how to integrate this knowledge into how we read, study and teach medieval narrative. If the medieval codex is, in its true essence, not a book but an irreproducible narrative space, then modern digital technology can help us avoid imposing the boundaries of the reproducible book on preprint narrative spaces. Unlike textual spaces, cyberspace is able to bridge the distance between the modern scholar and the medieval artifact.

The textual borders of nation have cast the Lombard romance-epic's hybrid aesthetic into a negative light. These horizontal boundaries have, on the pretext of conserving language purity, refused to recognize a vertical possibility of linguistic variance. As I have shown with the *Chanson de Roland* tradition, early scholarship in medieval textual emendation favored the Oxford Digby 23 manuscript over the V4 manuscript because it conformed more closely to the linguistic patterns of Old French, a system that is in its pure form a construct of nineteenth-century philology. The Oxford version was amended on several occasions during its modern critical history to match even more closely this imagined linguistic system. I have attempted to overturn the idea that the linguistic hybridity of the V4 version, and of other Lombard romance-epic texts, is an infringement on the linguistic norms of the present, and to claim instead that it is to be interpreted as a positive and creative force. Future scholarship will continue to expose the network of linguistic borders that 'Old French' imposes on past narrative spaces.

Because of the borders of normative language, modern scholarship has been reluctant to recognize the positive aesthetic value of medieval linguistic hybridity and, in the process, has been quick to disregard the communicative value of these mixed language texts.

From a methodological point of view, I have proposed using emerging theories in postcolonial Medieval Studies to approach the imperialistic discourse that suffuses the present's epistemological engagement with the past. Such an approach, however, seems to assume that the decolonization of the past is, in fact, possible. Despite our best efforts, our present point of view will always be veiled with assumptions and blind spots that obfuscate our reading of the past; the borderless expanse of open sea remains an unattainable metaphor. It is true, however, that scholarship has dismissed certain texts on the basis of national canon. From this perspective, a limited decolonization of the past is in fact possible and, as I have proposed, consists of rethinking the borders of canon and anthologization. A decolonization of the past would mean, for example, rethinking how we teach the Middle Ages. In teaching politically-charged texts such as the *Chanson de Roland*, we can challenge national boundaries of canon by introducing students to divergent readings of the epic as found, for example, in the V4 Roland.

Another vexing methodological issue arises when we do make the move to use postcolonial studies in our study of the past: What is the utility of 'decolonizing' past manuscript spaces? In this study, I do not wish to set aside a diachronic system that seeks to understand textual transmission, cultural exchange and narrative development. From a literary point of view, however, the removal of teleological notions of periodization -- the medieval / modern divide -- avoids a situation in which we dismiss a manuscript's worth

on chronological grounds. By removing temporal boundaries, each manuscript space exists in the present and its value should not be eclipsed by the perception of incomplete beginnings and endings. The present's dialectic with the past consists of an interpretation, while the past constantly responds to the issues of the present. This necessity diminishes the validity of inherited authoritative readings of past manuscript spaces. To decolonize the past means to recognize that manuscript spaces are agents in the present and must be interpreted as 'co-eval' with the present. Once the hold of the ship is breached and borders of periodization are breached, the narrative spaces of the past have the potential to exist in and inform the narrative present.

Past to Present

In a short story entitled "Ana de Jesus," by Italo-Brazilian writer Christina de Caldas Brito, a young woman servant confesses to her *padrona* the struggles she faces living as a Brazilian migrant in Italy. "Signora, io non trovo bene qui," begins the young woman, Ana. "Permesso, signora? Desidero parlare. Io tengo piccolo problema e voglio risolvere con te."³⁵⁸ What follows is a testimony of a migrant living in the ambivalent liminal space between national borders and their respective normative languages. Her speech reveals her difficulty in communicating in standard Italian, yet her message is crystal clear: "Di tanto saudade, mi sento spezzare dentro."³⁵⁹ Even if the Portuguese

³⁵⁸ Christina de Caldas Brito, "Anda de Jesus," in *Amanda, Olinda, Azzurra e le altre*, (Milan: Oèdipus, 2004), 37. "Signora, I not well here. Signora, may I? I'd like to speak. I have small problem and I want to resolve with you" (translation mine).

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 40. "I feel myself breaking inside from so much *saudade*" (translation mine).

notion of *saudade*—or *nostos*, *nostalgia*, *nostalgie*, longing for home—had a precise Italian equivalent, would it qualify what this young migrant woman feels? Can her transnational experience be expressed in any one “pure” language? Her story elicits no response from her *padrona*, however, and this dialogue immediately becomes a monologue. Implied is the idea that non-normative language is incapable of communicating a message worth listening to, a notion of which the protagonist, Ana, is acutely aware:

Ma tu mi chiama con campanello e non con voce e io voglio persone che parla con me, che ride e dice il mio nome con bocca chiusa, con suono che esce dal naso senza bisogno di pensare se ha lettere doppie. Se le mie parole tengono un ritmo, e se tu capisci il ritmo, perché non posso sbagliare le parole?³⁶⁰

Indeed, why can Ana not *sbagliare le parole*? Within the borders of standard language, Ana’s message remains unheard. This is in many ways the heart of my present discussion, and it is the same question I have attempted to answer. Like Ana and her *padrona*, the interaction between hybrid language narrative spaces of the past and modern scholarship has not been a dialogue, but rather a monologue; a system of periodization has created rigid temporal boundaries that preclude an exchange between past and present. If we are willing to erase the temporal borders of periodization that arbitrarily divide modern from premodern, an accumulated present would be possible in which polylingual narrative spaces of the past inform the present. These hybrid language manuscript spaces exist despite our modern national boundaries, and demonstrate that narrative communities can

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 40. “But you call me with a bell and not with voice and I want people who talk with me, who laugh and say my name with closed mouth, with sound that comes out their nose, without any worries about double letters. If my words keep a rhythm, and if you understand the rhythm, why can’t I get the words wrong?” (translation mine). Here, the protagonist is referring to the nasal quality of her native language, Brazilian Portuguese. In Italian, double consonants are pronounced and remembering when they occur in orthography poses a challenge to non-native speakers.

and do exist despite our best efforts to shore up the putative purity of nation and national language.

The Lombard romance-epic tradition informs us that linguistic hybridity can be a positive creative force, and these neglected manuscripts can be used as an interpretative lens through which to investigate and understand our present-day anxieties involving borders and linguistic impurity. After all, Azouz Begag, Ahmadou Courouma, Christiana de Caldas Brito, and many other writers, have already shown that migrant narratives written in defiance of so-called “standard language” can be interpreted not as a threat to national and linguistic purity, but rather as an expression of transnational experiences.

The consequences of upsetting the temporal divide, in which narrative manuscript spaces interact with the present, demonstrate that language does not always coincide with nation and, more importantly, that a narrative identity does not necessarily have to fit within the boundaries of nation. The Lombard hybrid language tradition, if considered within the present, resonates with current discussions surrounding language contamination, border politics, and the threat of losing American, French or Italian identity because of incorrect use of the respective languages. The polylingual manuscript spaces of Lombard romance-epic texts defy the notion that language is synonymous with national identity and pose a formidable challenge to the persistent one language / one nation paradigm famously expressed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1919:

We have room for but one language in this country, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house.³⁶¹

Past and present hybrid language narrative communities and the stories they tell wait to be re-interpreted, re-examined and re-mapped.

³⁶¹ Published in the Chicago Daily Tribune, “Abolish Hyphen Roosevelt’s Last Words to Public,” (7 January 1919), 4. Letter from Theodore Roosevelt to the president of the American Defense Society, 6 January 1919.

APPENDIX A

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

Manuscript Sources of the *Chanson de Roland*

O = Oxford, Bodleian Libirary, Digby 23

C = Châteauroux, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 1

V⁷ = Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana, fr. VII [=251]

V⁴ = Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana, fr. IV [=225]

P = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fr. 860 (olim 7227/5)

T = Cambridge, Trinity College, R 3-32

L = Lyon, Bibliothèque de la Ville, 743 (olim 649)

l = Lavergne fragmentsslied, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, nouv. acq. fr. 14658

f = Fragment Michelant, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, nuov. acq. fr. 5237

b = Fragment Bogdanow, London, British Library, Add. 41295 G

n = Norse version, in branch VIII of the *Karlamagnús Saga*, the *Saga af Runzivals bardaga*

K = Konrad, *Ruolandes liet*

w = Welsh version, *Campeu Charlyman*

h = Flemmish version, *Roelant*

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³⁶² The system of acronyms is adopted from the introduction to Carlo Beretta's edition, *Il testo assonanzato franco-italiano della "Chanson de Roland": Cod. Marciano Fr. IV (=225)*, 1995. I have added Beretta's edition as B and Cook's edition as C.

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APPENDIX B

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