

INTRODUCTION

Que je croi qu'il n'est clers qui le peüst escrire
Jehan de Saint-Quentin (?)

MEDIEVAL AUTHORSHIP IS, to say the least, a fragile concept. There is so often little to no surviving evidence about who wrote a given text, and even when such information appears, it is often limited only to a name, with no further biographical information available. Indeed, in the wake of the theoretical upheavals of the late twentieth century, most notably Roland Barthes's assertion that the author is dead (1968), and Michel Foucault's redefinition of the author as a function of discourse (1969, reprinted 1994), we may question why it matters at all to say that a text was written by a particular individual, especially when we know next to nothing about them.

Further, authorship in the Middle Ages was inevitably, in one way or another, a collaborative endeavour, with texts manipulated and changed by individuals who often operated centuries apart, as texts were copied and reworked. As Barbieri (2024, 17) notes, a manuscript text is rarely, if ever, just the work of a single author, but it is instead the cumulative output of "la pluralité des actants intervenant dans la confection (auteur, mais aussi copiste, compilateur, enlumineur, commanditaire, etc.)."¹

It would also be a mistake to assume that there was one, monolithic concept of authorship that held across the Middle Ages. Early medieval vernacular literature can be characterized by its "auctorialité faible" (Barbieri 2024, 14), its "weak authorship," in which assertions of authorship, if made at all, were often secondary to the authority of the material itself. In the German heroic epic, for example, we find that anonymity was not just a trend but a genre-specific requirement, in which "Sagenkenntnis ist nicht individuelles Wissen eines Einzelnen, sondern kollektives Wissensgut einer gentilen Gesellschaft,"² and "[d]ie Darbietung des Sagenwissens in der Dichtung gilt [...] nach Stoff und Form nicht als schöpferische Leistung eines Einzelnen, der dafür namentlich genannt wird" (Hellgardt 1998, 46).³ As Foucault

1 "[t]he plurality of actors involved in the creation (author, but also copyist, compiler, illuminator, patron, etc.); translations (my own) will hereafter be given for all secondary material not written in English.

2 "knowledge of legends is not the individual knowledge of a single person, but rather the collective knowledge of a gentile society."

3 "[t]he presentation of legendary knowledge in poetry is [...] not considered, in terms of content and form, to be the creative achievement of an individual who is named for it."

himself noted for medieval literary texts (1994, 799–800): “leur anonymat ne faisait pas difficulté, leur ancienneté, vraie ou supposée, leur était une garantie suffisante.”⁴ The author of such texts, even if named, is thus not an *auctor* but a *factor*, responsible for the production of a text but in no ways its ultimate originator.

From the thirteenth century onwards, by contrast, medieval readers developed an interest in the individual responsible for a text. This is most evident in the shift that occurs in biblical exegesis, from a focus on God as the spiritual inspiration for Scripture to a focus on the human behind the text as an *auctor* (Minnis 1988, 5), but it can also be observed in vernacular literature. Authorship is attributed from some of the earliest lyric poems in Old French, yet the key question of origins remains “for whom is it written?” until the fourteenth century, when it comes to be accompanied by a new question, namely “why is it written?” (Cerquiglini-Toulet 2006, 158). This latter question, in turn, brings about what Greene (2006a, 5) summarizes as “emergence of the ‘sentement’ [inspiration] as an authority from within, justifying the act of writing poetry independently of any patron.” As such, by this stage, “[t]he writer [of lyric poetry], even when he or she is commissioned, is no longer a servant or a minstrel, but is instead an author” (Cerquiglini-Toulet 2006, 162).

A similar diachronic trend has been observed in the use of the “I-narrator” in French chronicles and the verse romances (Marnette 2006b, 117). Uses of *je* to express the subjectivity of an author-narrator are absent from early examples, even those which contain named authors, and instead it is the prose form alone which serves to express “an impersonal, single, immanent truth” (2006b, 119). In texts dating from the end of the thirteenth century and later, by contrast, the “I-narrator” is a common feature which contributes to a “rhetoric of truth” (2006b, 118), in which “the I-narrator-author is engaged in the global coherence of his work” (2006b, 123), with the author thus playing a much more visible role than in earlier centuries.

By the fourteenth century, then, the *factor* has become an *auctor*, but great swathes of literary texts from this period remain unattributed, lacking references to named authors both within the texts themselves and in manuscript paratext. In such cases of anonymity, we may wonder whether authorship only mattered in certain contexts, and to certain people. Perhaps consistent attribution of authorship was simply less important to medieval readers than it is in our modern age with its “exceptionnel appétit d’auteur”

4 “their anonymity was not a cause for concern; their antiquity, whether real or supposed, was sufficient to guarantee their trustworthiness.”

(Zimmerman 2001, 7),⁵ due both to the inherent complexity of authorship in the period, and the ways in which society considered and managed ideas surrounding intellectual property.

This unevenness gives rise to a conundrum: if attribution mattered only intermittently to medieval readers, what does modern scholarship stand to gain from attempting to identify the author of an anonymous medieval text? Besides the obvious human curiosity of wanting to discover the “maker” behind a work of art, literary or otherwise, textual philology has long been concerned with questions of authorship. As Nichols (2006, 79) argues, if Heidegger (1975, 17) was right to argue that the artist is the origin of the work and the work is the origin of the artist, then “textual philology requires an author” for “without an author, there can be no philology.”

Seen in this light, the uneven status of medieval authorship does not invalidate attempts at attribution, but rather forces us to reconsider what is at stake when we attribute a medieval text to an author.⁶ It is the thesis of this book that authorial attribution can serve as a valuable method of textual grouping: knowing that two texts share an author may tell us something about that author, but it tells us a great deal more about the texts. In identifying literary texts which share an author, we are alerted to the presence of extra- and inter-textual features which lend unity to a corpus, revealing the similarities shared by a given group. At the same time, to assert that a corpus is the work of one author is also to make an exclusionary claim, differentiating a given corpus from other texts, whether or not they have features in common.

These two effects—of unity and distinctiveness—allow for a particularly powerful approach to reading a given group of medieval texts, not least since we are more likely to read them side-by-side, as their earliest readers may have done. We come to see a single-author corpus as an interconnected network, with the themes of one text calling to mind those of another. Elements of one text which may be lost in isolation become critically important to our interpretation when that text is taken in the context of another where it is more prominent.

In this book, I show that digital and statistical approaches bespoke to the content and challenges of a particular corpus have much to offer the examination of uncertain authorship. I take a corpus of texts found mainly

5 “exceptional appetite for authorship.”

6 For a fuller account of medieval conceptions of authorship, and of the modern theories that have shaped their study, see Julien Stout (2025), esp. pp. 1–102.

within a single manuscript, namely Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 24432 (henceforth fr. 24432), which was compiled around the middle of the fourteenth century. I examine the case for the attribution of this corpus to one Jehan de Saint-Quentin, whose name appears in a single text of the corpus.

Through this analysis, I reinforce the attribution of twenty-four texts to Jehan made by previous scholarship, and I provide evidence for the novel conclusion that there are further works which deserve inclusion in his *œuvre*, specifically *Guillaume* and *Robert*,⁷ both of which appear in fr. 24432. I also suggest that it is possible to identify two echoes of earlier texts written by Jehan, which are now lost, in the shape of *Richard* and *Jehan Paulus*. Collectively, I term these claims the “shared-author hypothesis.”

The main methodological contribution of this study, meanwhile, is the suggestion that methods of digital, statistical, and codicological analysis are at their most effective when used in a bespoke way alongside the linguistic and textual approaches common in previous scholarship. This allows for the combination of a humanistic understanding of the object of study, founded on close textual engagement, with concrete, reproducible results, which provides greater clarity than either approach in isolation. The work presented here thus makes specific contributions to the study of individual textual objects, but also adds further tools to the literary scholar’s toolbox, demonstrating the utility of its methods to contexts beyond the scope of this book, and reshaping the ways we approach medieval authorship.

Jehan de Saint-Quentin and fr. 24432

The central manuscript of this study, fr. 24432, is a fourteenth-century codex written almost exclusively in Old and Middle French. It consists of 446 leaves, divided into two columns per side. The codex contains some ninety items in verse and prose, including a few additions by the manuscript’s later readers, as well as a table of contents.

The manuscript appears within well-studied groupings of codices, as manuscript *P* of the *fabliaux*,⁸ manuscript *Q* of the works of Marie de France,⁹ and manuscript *D* of the works of Rutebeuf.¹⁰ It is, however, peripheral to the

7 For short titles by which I will refer to these and other texts throughout, see the lists in the frontmatter.

8 See, for example, Noomen and van den Boogaard (1983–1998).

9 On which, see Busby (2011).

10 Zink (1989–1990).

former two groups in particular, since it contains only one *fabliau* and one text by Marie de France, and, being from the middle of the fourteenth century, it is quite late in the transmission cycle of all three.

Amongst the manuscript's less well-known texts is a partially contiguous collection of short didactic narratives, written in alexandrine monorhyme quatrains (that is, four-line stanzas of twelve-syllable lines, all of which share a rhyme). In most cases, they tell stories of sinners who are driven to the most appalling acts, including adultery, incest, Host desecration, pillage, infanticide, and uxoricide, but who are given opportunities to change their ways and be saved. These poems have no stated author within either the text itself or the manuscript paratexts, with one exception: in line 221 of *Chevalier et escuier* (fols. 112ra–115rb), an author-narrator refers to himself as “Jehan de Saint-Quentin.” This is the only time this name appears in fr. 24432, and it is not found in any other manuscript from the period, with this text an *unicum* and with no known contemporary references existing elsewhere.

Even assuming that Jehan de Saint-Quentin ever existed, we therefore know nothing at all of his biography, not even whether he was a *clerc*, as some have suggested (Grente et al. 1994, 847), or a *jongleur* (Morawski 1939, 327).¹¹ The most likely source of his byname, meanwhile, is the town found in the Aisne region, leading Reenen and Schøsler (1997, 595) to take Jehan's language as representative of the variety used across the whole of the region. However, as Kedar (1973) has noted, medieval toponymic bynames are notoriously unreliable as a method of determining a person's place of origin, and there is no evidence that Jehan spent any time at all in Saint-Quentin. As for the period in which he was active, Léonard (1996, 248) appears justified in hedging her bets and opting for the “première moitié du XIV^e siècle,”¹² given that our best guess at dating *Chevalier et escuier* comes only from the simple fact that most of the datable texts within fr. 24432 fall within that period.¹³

Jehan de Saint-Quentin would therefore appear to be an almost wholly unknowable figure, an author lost to the winds of time, to whom only 228 lines of poetry can be attributed with even the slightest degree of certainty. Nevertheless, a small body of scholarship has developed over the course of

11 This is not a discussion which we will pursue in further detail, given its minimal relevance for the question of Jehan's possible authorship of the texts we will examine, but suffice it to say that the boundaries of such categories are in any case often significantly blurred.

12 “first half of the 14th century.”

13 For further discussion of questions of localization and dating, see below.

the last century which suggests that Jehan's contribution is more significant, and that he ought to be recognized as the author of other poems within fr. 24432, as well as of some in other manuscripts.

The principal aim of this study is therefore to answer a simple question, namely whether the use of new methods made possible by technological and scholarly developments since the last major work on Jehan's *œuvre* can assist in supporting or refuting the attribution of these texts and others. In each chapter, I examine a given feature of the texts attributed to Jehan, both considering the validity of previous analyses and pursuing new directions. In doing so, I seek not only to bring further clarity to the question of which texts may be confidently attributed to this one author, but also to demonstrate the utility of bespoke digital and statistical techniques, developed to fit a particular corpus of texts, as a means of answering diverse research questions regarding the attribution of authorship.

Existing Attribution to Jehan de Saint-Quentin

Before we begin our analysis of Jehan's work, it is useful first and foremost to examine the scholarly development of the attributed *œuvre* over time. The first attribution of any text other than *Chevalier et escuier* to Jehan de Saint-Quentin came when Gustav Gröber, in his *Grundriss der romanischen Philologie* (1888–1902), isolated a group of texts which he believed could be attributed to Jehan. His corpus totalled twenty poems, all found within fr. 24432, which are listed in Table 1. Gröber was primarily interested in the texts' sources, and gave no evidence or explanation for his inclusion and non-inclusion of any texts.

Following this, Joseph Morawski published an analysis of a corpus of twenty-two poems which, he claimed, could all be attributed to Jehan de Saint-Quentin, whom he termed a “jongleur oublié” (1939, 327).¹⁴ Morawski's list differed from that of Gröber through the inclusion of an extra poem from within fr. 24432, *Merlin*, as well as two from outside the manuscript (*Abesse* and *Sauveur*). He also excluded *Florence*, which Gröber had considered worthy of inclusion in his corpus. The list of poems which Morawski attributes to Jehan can be found in Table 2.

14 “forgotten *jongleur*.”

Table 1. Texts attributed to Jehan de Saint-Quentin by Gröber (1888–1902).

Short Title	Folios in fr. 24432
<i>Respon</i>	14rb–17ra
<i>Chanoines</i>	36vb–42ra
<i>Pommes</i>	53va–56vb
<i>Romme</i>	99rb–102rb
<i>Deux chevaliers</i>	104va–107rb
<i>Enfant rosti</i>	107rb–109vb
<i>Povre chevalier</i>	109vb–112ra
<i>Chevalier et escuier</i>	112ra–115rb
<i>Narbonne</i>	115rb–118rb
<i>Chevalier hermite</i>	118rb–120va
<i>Cordouanier</i>	120va–122vb
<i>Juitel</i>	122vb–125ra
<i>Enfant sauva mere</i>	125ra–128ra
<i>Eaue et vergier</i>	128ra–130rb
<i>Pain</i>	130rb–132va
<i>Chien et mescreant</i>	132va–135rb
<i>Pecherresse</i>	135rb–137rb
<i>Florence</i>	215rb–126va
<i>Buef</i>	247ra–257va
<i>Beguine</i>	312vb–315va

Table 2. Texts attributed to Jehan de Saint-Quentin by Morawski (1939, 328–30).

Short Title	Folios in fr. 24432	Morawski's ref.
<i>Respon</i>	14rb–17ra	V
<i>Chanoines</i>	36vb–42ra	XX
<i>Pommes</i>	53va–56vb	XIX
<i>Romme</i>	99rb–102rb	VII
<i>Deux chevaliers</i>	104va–107rb	II
<i>Enfant rosti</i>	107rb–109vb	XIII
<i>Povre chevalier</i>	109vb–112ra	III
<i>Chevalier et escuier</i>	112ra–115rb	I
<i>Narbonne</i>	115rb–118rb	VIII
<i>Chevalier hermite</i>	118rb–120va	IV
<i>Cordouanier</i>	120va–122vb	VI
<i>Juitel</i>	122vb–125ra	XIV
<i>Enfant sauva mere</i>	125ra–128ra	XV
<i>Eaue et vergier</i>	128ra–130rb	XVI
<i>Pain</i>	130rb–132va	XVII
<i>Chien et mescreant</i>	132va–135rb	XVIII
<i>Pecherresse</i>	135rb–137rb	X
<i>Merlin</i>	199ra–201vb	XII
<i>Buef</i>	247ra–257va	XXI
<i>Beguine</i>	312vb–315va	XI
<i>Sauveur</i>	Not present ¹⁵	XXII
<i>Abesse</i>	Not present ¹⁶	IX

15 Appears only in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Arsenal 2115, fols. 48r–48v, 52r–57v.

16 Appears only in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 12483, fols. 66ra–68rb.

Unlike Gröber, Morawski was explicit in his exclusion of texts which, he argued, shared notable similarities with the poems in his corpus, but were not sufficiently similar to be considered the works of Jehan. In his 1939 work, he explained his exclusion of *Florence* and *Anelés*, noting that “nous croyons que ces deux *Dits-romans* sont l'œuvre d'un même auteur, mais nous n'avons pas acquis la conviction qu'ils soient de Jean” (1939, 351–52).¹⁷ Morawski also references a number of other texts which, he believes, are possible contenders for inclusion in Jehan's *œuvre*, but for which insufficient evidence exists to reach a definitive conclusion.¹⁸ In 1940, Morawski returned to the topic of the corpus of Jehan's poems, but did not add any further texts, instead focusing on the explicit exclusion of another four texts from the corpus,¹⁹ and reinforcing his conclusion that *Anelés* and *Florence* are not the works of Jehan. Morawski reaches his conclusions through a largely linguistic approach examining the use of possessive adjectives, to which we will return in detail below.

Birger Munk Olsen (1963a, 1963b, 1978) was the next to take up and examine Morawski's claims regarding Jehan's authorship of these poems, and the most recent to do so in detail. He is largely critical of Morawski's approach to attribution, but does not take issue with most of his decisions to exclude certain texts. Munk Olsen's work culminates in his 1978 monograph, the first attempt at a complete edition of Jehan's *œuvre*, which contains a total of twenty-four poems, including all of those cited by Morawski, with the addition of *Anelés* and *Florence*, the two poems which Morawski had believed were composed by a single author, but which he had been unwilling to accept as being by Jehan. Munk Olsen claims that his own analysis, which

17 “we believe that these two *Dit-romances* are the work of the same author, but we have not reached the conviction that they are by Jean.”

18 Specifically, the alexandrine quatrain versions of the lives of Saint Alexis, Saint Dieudonnée, and Saint Gregory, included as *Alexis*, *Dieudonnée*, and *Grégoire* in the corpus of comparable texts which we will introduce below as the “A-corpus.” For editions, see Paris and Pannier (1872), Dirickx-Van der Straeten (1931), and Fant (1887) respectively.

19 *Basile*, *Servais*, *Jehan Paulus*, and *Richard*. For an edition of the first text, see Denomy (1956), for the second and third, see Kleist (1973), and for the fourth, see Conlon (1977). We will argue later in our analysis that *Jehan Paulus* and *Richard* do, in fact, deserve partial inclusion in Jehan's *œuvre* as echoes of earlier texts which were written by Jehan and later reworked. Morawski also briefly mentions *Robert*, a text which appears within fr. 24432, but makes no claim as to whether it is the work of Jehan. We will also return to this text later in our analysis, arguing that it merits straightforward attribution.

we return to throughout this study, points to the fact that these two texts are sufficiently similar to the rest of the corpus, in both language and style, to warrant re-inclusion. Based on an analysis of various factors, he also rejects the possibility that *Alexis* could be the work of Jehan. Munk Olsen's 1978 list can be found in Table 3.

Since this work, very little attention has been paid to the attribution of these poems, with references to Jehan's *œuvre* generally taking Munk Olsen's corpus as the definitive list.²⁰ The only more recent attempt to engage with the question of attribution comes in a footnote to a recent article, in which Gabriel Cholette (2022, 96n6) questions why *Robert* is not attributed to Jehan, but does not provide evidence to support a shared attribution beyond the fact that the text is also found in fr. 24432, and "ressemble beaucoup aux autres dits."²¹ He makes no mention of the attribution of *Guillaume*, the other unattributed text within fr. 24432 which fits the same criteria, and argues that the similarities across all of Jehan's texts in "la versification, le style, la fonction du récit [...] relève[nt] davantage du genre

Table 3. Texts attributed to Jehan de Saint-Quentin by Munk Olsen (1978).

Title	Folios in fr. 24432	Munk Olsen's ref.
<i>Respon</i>	14rb–17ra	A
<i>Chanoïnes</i>	36vb–42ra	B
<i>Pommes</i>	53va–56vb	C
<i>Romme</i>	99rb–102rb	D
<i>Deux chevaliers</i>	104va–107rb	E
<i>Enfant rosti</i>	107rb–109vb	F
<i>Povre chevalier</i>	109vb–112ra	G
<i>Chevalier et escuier</i>	112ra–115rb	H
<i>Narbonne</i>	115rb–118rb	I
<i>Chevalier hermite</i>	118rb–120va	J
<i>Cordouanier</i>	120va–122vb	K
<i>Juitel</i>	122vb–125ra	L
<i>Enfant sauva mere</i>	125ra–128ra	M
<i>Eaue et vergier</i>	128ra–130rb	N
<i>Pain</i>	130rb–132va	O
<i>Mescreant</i>	132va–135rb	P
<i>Pecherresse</i>	135rb–137rb	Q
<i>Merlin</i>	199ra–201vb	R
<i>Florence</i>	215rb–226va	S
<i>Anelés</i>	231ra–241rb	T
<i>Buef</i>	247ra–257va	U
<i>Beguine</i>	312vb–315va	V
<i>Sauveur</i>	Not present	W
<i>Abesse</i>	Not present	X

²⁰ See, for example, Simpson (2019) and Cerquiglini-Toulet (2022).

²¹ "is very similar to the other *dits*."

littéraire que de l'auctoralité" (2022, 96),²² a claim which we will dispute on the basis of comparisons to other texts of a similar type. Cholette is nevertheless correct to suggest that "le fait que les dits narratifs aient été regroupés dans un même manuscrit n'est pas suffisant pour affirmer qu'ils ont été écrits par le même auteur."²³ While collective compilation is a mark in favour of the shared-author hypothesis, we must go much further in order to be able to say with any degree of certainty that these poems can be described as the work of a single author, and to determine which others might also be included.

Localization and Dating

Much of the possible linguistic analysis of the Jehan's *œuvre* has already been carried out, most recently and in most detail by Munk Olsen (1963a, 1978, cxii–cxlii). These analyses have largely centred around questions of Jehan's apparent dialect, and the extent to which this can be used as a means of localizing the texts. Certainly, given Jehan's byname, as apparently originating from Saint-Quentin, we might be tempted to entertain the possibility that his own dialect was one closer to Picard. Fundamentally, however, as Munk Olsen (1963a, 124) acknowledges, "à partir [des] traits de langue attestés comme authentiques par la rime ou par la scansion, il est bien difficile, voire impossible, de localiser de façon précise l'auteur des *Dits*."²⁴ At best, it seems, Jehan's language can be best described as containing a mixture of traits associated with several different, predominantly northern and western, dialects.

Morawski (1939, 333) categorizes the language of the *J-corpus* as being primarily a "mélange de formes franciennes avec des formes septentrionales et occidentales,"²⁵ which he notes is a common feature of many of the French poems from this period written in alexandrine rhyming quatrains. Morawski's evidence in support of this claim is primarily morphosyntactic, noting in particular the frequent presence of the 1.PL ending *-on*, common in western and Picard dialects, as well as picardisms such as the presence of syllabic, epenthetic *e* within the future stem, as in *penderai* (*Cordouanier*, v.

22 "the versification, style, and function of the narrative [...] pertain more to the literary genre than to authorship"

23 "the fact that the narrative *dits* were grouped together in the same manuscript is not sufficient to affirm that they were written by the same author."

24 "based on linguistic features attested as authentic by rhyme or scansion, it is quite difficult, if not impossible, to precisely localize the author of the *Dits*."

25 "mixture of Francien forms with northern and western forms."

106) and the interchangeable use of the 2.PL possessives *vo* and *vostre* (1939, 333).²⁶ Munk Olsen observes further Picard traits in Jehan's work, in particular the fact that the tonic and atonic *e* pair in *-iee* is often reduced to a single tonic vowel *-ie*, as well as an isolated example of the Picard form *fiex* "son" (*Anelés*, v. 637), which is unlikely to be a scribal modification given its rhyme with the forms *iex*, *viex*, and *ciex*.²⁷

That said, as Munk Olsen (1963a, 124) observes, these picardisms in Jehan's *œuvre* are the exception to the rule, since "la plupart des particularités du texte sont caractéristiques de l'Ouest."²⁸ These include the frequent reduction of diphthongal /ie/ to /e/ (as in the presence of quadrisyllabic *appareillierent* rhyming with forms without /i/ such as *porterent*; *Buef*, vv. 670–71), monophthongization of pre-consonantal /ai/ to /ɛ/ (as in *nestre* rhyming with *prestre*; *Narbonne*, vv. 144–45), and the raising of tonic /o/ to /u/ (as in the rhyme of *seignor* with *dolour*; *Chevalier et escuier*, vv. 217–18), alongside the appearance of forms such as *el*, *li*, and *celi*.²⁹ It is of course possible that many of these forms could result from scribal changes, but their preponderance in circumstances where such a change would have resulted in inconsistencies in the rhyme or metre allows us to say with some certainty that this is not always the case, and that the language of Jehan's texts thus exists somewhere between Picard, western, and *francien* varieties.

Munk Olsen (1963a, 125) hence suggests that:

La meilleure solution à ce problème inextricable serait certainement d'y voir une langue artificielle et hybride: l'auteur a pris des notes dans n'importe quel dialecte [...] et, puisqu'il n'avait aucun sens d'une langue normalisée, il n'avait aucun scrupule à les utiliser même s'ils étaient en contradiction avec son propre dialecte qui a pu être le picard aussi bien qu'un des ceux du centre occidental de la France.

The best solution to this inextricable problem would certainly be to see it as an artificial and hybrid language: the author took notes in any dialect [...],

26 We ought to note, though, as Munk Olsen (1963a, 124) does, that this latter feature was also widespread outside of Picardy towards the beginning of the fourteenth century.

27 We also observe such Picardisms within the *A-corpus*, introduced below. See, for example, *parlon* (*Richard*, v. 321), *perdera* (*Quatre sereurs*, v. 105), and *fiex* (*Alexis*, e.g., v. 41).

28 "most of the peculiarities of the text are characteristic of the west [of France]."

29 Cf., in our *A-corpus*, trisyllabic *eslongnierent* rhyming with *entrerent* (*Guillaume*, v. 386–87), *neistre* rhyming with *pestre* (*Jehan Ewangeliste*, v. 226), and *doctor* rhyming with *dolour* (*Vision*, v. 37–38).

and since he had no sense of a normalized language, he had no qualms about using them even if they were in contradiction with his own dialect, which could have been Picard just as well as one of those from the west-central part of France.

There are a great many questionable assumptions in this claim, not least that Jehan would have had no concept of a normalized, or prestige, dialect. That said, we may interpret Munk Olsen's underlying claim to be the more neutral suggestion that there is evidence of diglossia in the texts attributed to Jehan, with the author perhaps usually speaking a Picard dialect which influences his predominantly western *scripta*. Whether or not this is true, through these observations we reach a more valuable conclusion for the purposes of this study, namely that the texts of Jehan's *œuvre* present a degree of unity in the extent to which they combine Picard, western, and *francien* forms, regardless of the reasons why such a combination exists. This does not provide conclusive evidence for the shared-author hypothesis, given the extent to which such forms are also found elsewhere, but at the very least it does not discourage collective attribution.

As for the dates of the texts attributed to Jehan, there is little concrete evidence to come from the language itself. Morawski (1939, 334) suggests that the poems were most likely written within the period 1313–1345, the range of dates given within the texts and paratexts of fr. 24432, although these are not directly linked any of the texts attributed to Jehan.³⁰ To support this linguistically, he notes that analogical forms such as non-epicene *grande* occasionally appear in rhyming position or at a moment where the two-syllable form is metrically necessary (once each in *Narbonne*, *Chevalier et escuier*, and *Buef*), but are still rare compared to the non-analogical forms.

Munk Olsen, meanwhile, suggests an earlier date range than Morawski, but nevertheless acknowledges the difficulty of determining any precise date of composition, suggesting that “nous ne sommes guère plus avancés quoique nous n'ayons que le choix entre la fin du XIII^e et le début du XIV^e

30 The following dates are given within the manuscript's texts: 1332 (fol. 245ra), 1338 (fol. 17rb), and April 23, 1345 (fol. 266rb). The following dates are given in the surrounding paratext: 1313 (fol. 146va), 1318 (fol. 148rb), 1320 (fol. 152ra), and 1324 (fol. 142vb). The *terminus post quem* for the manuscript's production is therefore St. George's Day 1345, April 23. However, due to the range of dates given in paratexts (the earliest being 1318), as well as the appearance of much earlier texts such as Marie de France's *Yonec*, likely dating to the late twelfth century (Busby 2011), it seems that a narrow dating based on the manuscript's other texts is impossible.

siècle" (1963a, 125).³¹ Evidence of forms associated with the late thirteenth century comes in the form of enclisis in *nel*, *nes*, and *sel*,³² the persistence of final /t/ in *-ent*, and the occasional use of disyllabic imperfect and conditional endings (1978, cxxxv–cxxxvi), while his arguments for placing the texts into the fourteenth century come again from the appearance of analogical developments such as *grande*. In addition, Munk Olsen observes what he argues is a low level of degradation of the case system, particularly for an author with a predominantly western *scripta*, with a reasonably consistent rate of around 10% of nouns displaying what might be considered the “incorrect” case, where this can be confidently determined to be the result of an authorial choice, rather than a scribal one (that is, where nominative and oblique forms are imparisyllabic).

Ultimately, then, while there are trends to be observed within Jehan’s language which increase the unity of his corpus, these do not offer much clarity as to where or when he was writing, nor do they differ especially from other, comparable texts. A more comprehensive, holistic approach to the corpus is therefore required to assess the validity of the shared-author hypothesis.

Four New Additions to Jehan’s *œuvre*

As discussed above, the main contribution of this book to the study of Jehan de Saint-Quentin’s work is what I have termed the “shared author hypothesis.” That is, my central claim is that, alongside the continued attribution of the twenty-four texts previously attributed to Jehan, it is possible to identify two further texts which merit inclusion in his *œuvre*, namely *Guillaume* and *Robert*, and two which survive as reworkings of earlier texts by the same author, namely *Richard* and *Jehan Paulus*.

Given the agglutinative nature of the arguments presented throughout this study, it is not possible here to set out the full case for their addition to the *œuvre*. At this stage, I seek only to introduce these texts, and to examine previous scholarly attention that they have received, to highlight the significance that they will, by the end of the study, come to hold as works (or echoes of works) by Jehan.³³

31 “we are hardly any further along, although we only have the choice between the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century.”

32 Also observed in *Robert* (vv. 568, 675).

33 All four texts are included in our *A-corpus* of narrative poems written in alexandrine monorhyme quatrains that have hitherto not been attributed to Jehan,

Robert is mentioned by Morawski (1940, 518), but only as a comparator for *Richard*, with no attention paid to whether the text should be attributed to Jehan. As we have already noted, Cholette (2022, 96n6) observes that *Robert* “ressemble beaucoup aux autres dits,”³⁴ and suggests that the text could be the work of Jehan, but offers no additional evidence to support this claim. The text appears in fr. 24432, immediately after *Merlin* and immediately before *Florence*, both texts previously attributed to Jehan, and thus appears a prime candidate for consideration based on its compilation alone.³⁵ It also appears in a further three manuscripts, namely Besançon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 588; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 1881; and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS français 12604. The poem aligns closely with the didactic content of the *J-corpus*, telling a reworking of the story of Robert le Diable, the son of a duke of Normandy who commits terrible acts of violence after having been promised to the Devil by his mother, but eventually repents of his sins and is saved.

Turning to *Guillaume*, this text also shares a great many similarities with Jehan’s texts, both in form and content. Alongside its appearance as the first item of fr. 24432, *Guillaume* also appears in an early fourteenth-century manuscript London, British Library, MS Additional 15606, making the copy in fr. 24432 likely not the earliest surviving witness of the text. The poem is again simultaneously narrative and heavily didactic in its content, telling the story of William, King of England, who undergoes many trials imposed on him by God, including exile to France, before eventually proving his piety and being reunited with his family.

While *Guillaume* and *Robert*, as we shall see, can be straightforwardly considered the work of Jehan, the same is not true for *Richard*. Instead, the text that survives to the present day is most likely a reworking of an original version composed by Jehan. It is preserved in a sixteenth-century manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS nouvelle acquisition française 10721, and in a late fifteenth-century incunable edition with the *incipit*: *S’ensuyt le romant de Richart filz de Robert le diable qui fut duc de Normendie*. The poem tells the story of Richard, the son of the eponymous (anti-)hero of *Robert*, who proves through various trials that he deserves

as discussed below. Initially, at least, they are thus compared with texts previously attributed to our author, and they will be singled out for specific comment as the evidence in favour of the shared-author hypothesis begins to grow.

34 “is very similar to the other *dits*.”

35 The text appears at fols. 202ra–215rb between *Merlin* (fols. 199ra–201vb) and *Florence* (fols. 215rb–226va).

the title of *sans peur*. Morawski (1940, 516) suggests that at least a portion of *Richard* dates to the fourteenth century, and he observes points of intersection between *Robert* and *Richard* which take on additional significance in the context of our shared-author hypothesis: in the closing lines of both poems, the narrator(s) provide information about the character Richard, in the former case proceeding down the family tree from his father Robert:

Le fille l'emperere ot de li un enfant
C'on appella en France dant Richart le Normant,
Qui fist moult de prouesce tant comme il fu vivant;
De Fesquan l'abaie fonda, je vous creant.

L'abbaye et le moustier de Fescamp il fonda
Et Saint Wandrille aussi. Sainte vie mena.
Avecques Charlemagne oultre les mons passa
Et fist de grans proesses en tant comme il dura.

Avecques Karlemaigne passa outre la mer.

(*Richard*, vv. 807–10)

(*Robert*, vv. 1009–13)³⁶

The comparable references to Charlemagne and Fécamp abbey, and the use of parallel structures such as “passa outre la mer” with “oultre les mons passa,” and “Qui fist moult de prouesce tant comme il fu vivant” with “Et fist de grans proesses en tant comme il dura” are all suggestive of significant influence, if not outright copying, in earlier versions of *Richard*, providing initial evidence in support of the suggestion that these two poems could, in their putative earliest versions, be considered the work of one author. In this context, it is worth considering the opinion of Conlon (1977, 33), the most recent editor of the text, who claims of the poem in its current form:

[*Richard*] was written in Paris and dates from the closing years of the fifteenth century or the first half of the sixteenth. This does not exclude the existence [sic] of an earlier version written in a dialect from Upper Normandy, but there is no conclusive evidence for such a version in the extant text.

Contrary to Conlon's suggestion, the evidence which we shall accumulate over the course of this study, points strongly towards the possibility that an earlier version of *Richard* did exist, and that it was written by Jehan.

36 Note that when giving parenthetical citations for texts of the *J-* or *A-corpora*, the two main corpora used in this study which are defined in Chapter 1, I am not directly citing any specific edition. Instead, the citation is of my own textual data which I have produced with reference to one or more existing editions, as well as my own reading of the manuscript sources. Here, quotation marks are used within citations of source material in text and in tables to indicate direct discourse, i.e., as examples of “quotes within quotes.” For details of the development of the data for the *J-corpus*, see the discussion that follows, and for the editions consulted for the development of the *A-corpus*, see the list of short titles in the frontmatter.

As with *Richard*, *Jehan Paulus* shares sufficient similarities with Jehan's other poems to suggest that it deserves inclusion in his *œuvre*, but the version which survives today is likely a reworking of an earlier version by Jehan. The poem is found only in Grenoble, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 319, the fifteenth-century manuscript which also contains the only other surviving copy of *Florence*. The appearance of this text near *Florence* is already an indicator that the texts are closely related, perhaps indicating that *Jehan Paulus* was reworked on the road to inclusion in the manuscript, while *Florence* escaped the same fate, at least to such a significant extent. The poem recounts a tale which, while unusual in that it is explicitly a saint's *vita* (unlike all but *Sauveur* within the texts previously attributed to Jehan), fits almost exactly with Jehan's apparent narrative fixations, particularly in his shorter texts: Devil-induced debauchery and violence, penance, and a miracle performed by Mary.³⁷ The eponymous saint, himself a hermit, is tricked into lying with and murdering a young noblewoman, who is kept alive only by the grace of the Blessed Virgin and a prayer that the hermit repeats incessantly.

None of these four texts are perfect archetypes of Jehan's *œuvre*. As this study will set out to prove, however, they do share sufficient similarities, both as a group and with works previously attributed to Jehan, that the shared-author hypothesis is much more plausible than previous scholarship has suggested.

37 Indeed Morawski (194, 513–16), while still arguing that the text is not the work of Jehan, notes that the Marian focus in *Jehan Paulus* is augmented compared to other retellings of the same story.