

SOURCES

MUNK OLSEN (1978, xxi-cxx) offers a comprehensive examination of the possible sources of the texts in the *J-corpus*, which I summarize here, before turning as our final source of evidence to an examination of the contribution that can be made to this question by digital textual analysis.

For several of Jehan's texts, it is possible to assert their sources confidently. The second tale within *Eaue et vergier*, for example, is either the direct or indirect descendant of the *Miserere* by the Recluse of Moiliens (Munk Olsen 1978, lxxxv),¹ while *Chanoines*, *Juitel*, and *Merlin* are all based on tales found within the *Vie des peres*.² *Respon*, *Romme*, *Chevalier et escuier*, *Pecherresse*, and *Abesse* also share significant similarities with stories within the *Vie*, but are not close enough to be able to claim that they share a direct relationship. In addition to these texts, a further eleven tales appear to be original combinations of elements found elsewhere, existing in an

¹ For an edition, see van Hamel (1885).

² The first two of these connections were made by Gröber (1888–1902), and the third by Morawski (1939). No complete edition exists of the *Vie des peres*, but for the putative sources of *Chanoines*, see Chaurand (1971), for *Juitel*, see Wolter (1879), and for *Merlin*, see Méon (1823, vol. 2).

Abstract The final chapter of this study examines Jehan's interactions with his source material, considering claims of both oral and written sources. Using digital textual analysis, I carry out a comprehensive examination of these references as they appear in the *J-corpus*, and compare these to claims found in the *A*-, *B*-, and *F*-*corpora*. Statistical analysis reveals that the *J-corpus* is notable for its high rate of references to written sources, a feature also observed in *Guillaume* and *Robert*, which further reinforces the shared-author hypothesis. I also argue against the blanket rejection by previous scholarship of Jehan's claims to have consulted such written sources, suggesting that while his references to writing are generally cursory and intended primarily to increase the authority of his material, this is not universally the case. Instead, it is possible in some cases that Jehan's inspiration was more complex, and that he drew from both oral and manuscript sources, sometimes even for the same story.

established narrative tradition, with more or less significant modifications, namely *Deux chevaliers*, *Enfant rosti*, *Povre chevalier*, *Narbonne*, *Chevalier hermite*, *Enfant sauva mere*, the first tale in *Eaue et vergier*, *Pain*, *Mescreant*, *Beguine*, and *Sauveur*. In addition to this, *Pommes*, *Florence*, and *Anelés* resemble pre-existing *vitae*, with modifications and additions that do not appear elsewhere,³ forming a group of reworkings of existing textual traditions focused on a single pious individual. To this group, we may also add our additional texts *Guillaume*, *Robert*, *Richard*, and *Jehan Paulus*. *Guillaume* is a reworking of a longer epic, which has been attributed with debatable validity to Chrétien de Troyes.⁴ *Robert*, meanwhile, is apparently based on an earlier *roman*,⁵ and Conlon (1977, 25) identifies various earlier parallels for the story told in *Richard*, and suggests that there may well have been “an earlier chanson or roman devoted to [Richard’s] adventures,” even though no such text survives. *Jehan Paulus*, meanwhile, is apparently connected to a thirteenth-century version of the same story, written in octosyllables.⁶ Kleist (1973, 53–55) also notes the presence of stories resembling *Respon*, the second tale of *Eaue et vergier*, and *Mescreant* in the *Ci nous dit*, a collection of very short summaries of didactic stories apparently intended as an *aide-mémoire* for sermon writers.⁷ Only *Cordouanier* and *Buef* have no known analogues.

Overall, then, Jehan operated within his existing textual context, and his originality comes not in the creation of new stories, but in his *remanie-ment* of existing ones. He abridges longer tales and expands on shorter ones, all with the intention of promoting his brand of narrative didacticism. The poet himself acknowledges having drawn inspiration from sources which he encountered, but in ways which offer little direct evidence, and through claims which scholarship has refuted. Kleist (1973, 53) and Munk Olsen

3 *Pommes* shares similarities with *Ami et Amile*, an alexandrine version of which is edited in Neufang (1914). For further details on tales resembling *Florence*, see p. 153n28, Wallensköld (1907), and Beaussart (2000). *Anelés* closely resembles *La Fille du comte de Pontieu*, edited by Brunel (1926). The “ring in fish” motif crucial to *Anelés* (Tubach 1969, §315) also appears within *Leu* and *Grégoire* in the *A-corpus*, in the latter case with a key rather than a ring.

4 For more on this question of the authorship of the longer epic, see Gowans (1990) and Slautina (2012), who attempts a digital approach to attribution through less directed methods than we use here, and for an edition, see Short (2021).

5 For an edition, see Gaucher (2006).

6 For an edition, see Allyn Williams and Allen (1935, 82–140).

7 On this, see our examination of *exempla* on pp. 46–53.

(1978, cxix) note the presence of a number of claims regarding the written sources of the *J-corpus*, with Kleist arguing that “[z]war weist Jehan häufig auf eine schriftliche Vorlage hin, aber solche Angaben sind formelhaft und besagen einfach, daß der Autor glaubt, sich in Übereinstimmung mit der schriftlichen Tradition zu befinden.”⁸ Similarly, Munk Olsen argues that any suggestion within Jehan’s texts that his primary sources were written are little more than “des clichés commodes,”⁹ claiming that Jehan’s sources for his poems were in fact primarily oral, but that this was a reality which the author attempted to conceal.

Claimed Oral Sources

Approaching this question of oral versus written sources through a digital lens can be useful since, as we have seen, such an approach allows us to take a holistic view across the whole corpus. In this case, digital textual analysis allows us to comprehensively examine all Jehan’s references to his sources, and consider how credible they may be seen to be.

Our earlier examination has revealed that references to oral performance in Jehan’s texts are particularly common, but it is notable that references to oral reception of his sources are much rarer. There are, in fact, only two instances in the *J-corpus* in which Jehan suggests that material for his poems came to him by oral means. The first of these is within *Anelés*, in which Jehan claims that “moult l’ay oï conter / Que ja ne perira ce que Diex veult sauver” (vv. 555–56). This is of course nothing but an appeal to conventional oral wisdom, and therefore may offer some indication of Jehan’s use of such popular didacticism when composing his poetry, but it does not give any indication as to how Jehan encountered the texts which are believed to have been the sources for his own poetry.

The only example of such a claim about having heard the details of an entire text therefore comes in *Buef*, in which Jehan says of his tale that “En sarmon l’oï dire, moult bien retenu l’ai” (v. 31). The specific nature of this claim, that Jehan encountered this story in a sermon, adds credibility to it as a genuine indication of the poem’s source material. Even if this is not the case, then it does at least foreground the supposedly religious origins of the tale, while signposting Jehan’s awareness of the position of his poetry in an

8 “[a]lthough Jehan often refers to a written source, such references are formulaic and simply indicate that the author believes himself to be in accordance with written tradition.”

9 “convenient clichés.”

ongoing tradition of oral reception and performance, which is aligned with, but not identical to, the use of *exempla* in sermons. This being the only reference anywhere in the *J-corpus* to suggest that the primary source for the text was oral, the evidence does therefore appear to support Kleist and Munk Olsen's claims that Jehan prefers not to cite oral sources, even if this may indeed have been his method.

Examination of the *A-corpus*, where we only find two such examples, reveals that Jehan is not alone in avoiding such references. The first, in *Sebastien* (v. 249), is another straightforward reference to oral wisdom, akin to that found in *Anelés*, where the narrator states that "Vous oez un proverbe souvent, qui tout est voir," before citing it directly. A more substantial case comes in *Thomas*, with the narrator this time situating the story within a broader process of hearsay:

La novele en fu tost par tute la contree,
Mais l'evesque ne pout creire la renumee,
Desque celui li out s'aventure mustree.
E il la nus conta, cum cil li ot cuntee.

(*Thomas*, vv. 73–76)

It is clear, then, that sources in the *J-corpus* are rarely given as oral, but the same is also true of the *A-corpus*, suggesting that this is a broader generic feature of the poems in both corpora.¹⁰ This is not, therefore, as distinguishing a feature of the *J-corpus* as Kleist and Munk Olsen have suggested.

Claimed Written Sources

Reading

While references to texts experienced through oral performance are limited in the *J-corpus*, Jehan makes a good deal more claims to have gathered some of his material from written media. For example, across the poems of the *J-corpus*, we find three variants of *trouver lisant* to suggest the written nature of his sources, which are given in Table 41.

All three examples appear somewhat out of the blue, in sections of the text that set up the narrative but make no other efforts to identify their sources. As a result, while they already provide a greater number of references to written sources than those we observed to oral ones, they are

10 There are twelve direct references to oral sources in the *F-corpus*, which is again lower than might otherwise be assumed, but these still appear at a higher rate than in the *J-* and *A-corpora*.

Table 41. Uses of the phrase *trouver lisant* in the *J-corpus*.

Text	Line	LH	KW
<i>Enfant rosti</i>	45	Huit jors devant Noël, si com	trouvons lisant
<i>Narbonne</i>	18	A l'escole fu mis, si com le	truis lisant
<i>Enfant sauva mere</i>	29	Il fu .i. riches hons, si com	trouvons lisant

not sufficient on their own to allow us confidently to refute Munk Olsen's hypothesis that all such references are simply "des clichés commodes,"¹¹ included to add a sense of authority to Jehan's words, rather than a specific reference to his sources. Indeed, we note the lack of any more specific detail surrounding these phrases, as well as the fact that all three examples appear in apparently fixed constructions lasting a single hemistich, preceded by *si com* and with *lisant* at the end of the line, suggesting possible use simply as means of filling half a line with an "easy" rhyme. The use of the first-person plural in two of these examples further reinforces this suggestion, since it adds a sense of generality, indicating that one could find such references in written form, but not necessarily suggesting that Jehan himself has done so.

The verb *lire* also appears in the first-person plural in *Guillaume* (v. 128), this time without a form of *trouver*, but again with a variant of *si com*, in "si comme nous lisons." This phrase appears in a similar context to those observed in the *J-corpus*, and helps us to reinforce our attribution of this text to Jehan, while also reinforcing the suggestion that such phrases, whether true or not, were used by Jehan predominantly as a way of adding authority to his poem while also filling an entire hemistich and providing a common rhyme.

Table 42. Uses of the phrase *trouver lisant* in the *A-corpus*.

Text	Line	LH	KW
<i>Thibaut</i>	127	Helyas fu premiers, co	trovons nos lisant
<i>Thibaut</i>	417	De caus de fors aucun, ce	trovons nos lisant

Jehan is not unique in his use of *trouver lisant*, but it is notable that the two other examples that appear in the *A-corpus*, both within *Thibaut*, differ in their exact structure. In both examples, given in Table 42, we observe the presence of the pronoun *ce* before the verb, and the interposition of *nos* before *lisant*. These examples therefore do not encourage the attribution of

11 "convenient clichés."

Thibaut to *Jehan*, rather they reinforce that it is the entirety of the phrase *si com trovons lisant* which was preferred by *Jehan*, thus adding coherence to the *J-corpus* and reinforcing the attribution of *Guillaume*.

Finally, we may also argue that the verb *trouver* alone is a term more generally associated with reading in *Jehan's* texts, through association with its use in *trouver lisant*. A number of examples of this use will appear alongside those given for other reasons in the following sections, but it is worth for now noting a passing reference in *Chevalier hermite* that “Nous trouvons que jadis estoit .i. chevaliers” (v. 17), arguably an oblique reference to reading, which suggests again the use of such references as a means of asserting textual authority, and adds further unity to *Jehan's* texts.¹²

Writing

Looking at references to *Jehan's* sources having been written down that appear in the *J-corpus*, as well as in *Guillaume* and *Robert, Richard, and Jehan Paulus*, we find further examples which create a body of evidence against the absolute nature of Kleist and Munk Olsen's claims regarding the oral nature of his sources.

As an initial point of comparison, we note that of the 101 texts in the *F-corpus* of *fabliaux*, only nine contain references to a written source for the text (8.9%). By contrast, across the *J-corpus*, *Guillaume*, *Robert, Richard*, and *Jehan Paulus*, which together make twenty-eight texts, there are some eleven texts which contain references to written sources (39.3%, $p = 0.00634$). These references are made across seventeen individual examples, included in Table 43, which give some suggestion that all or part of a given text is drawn from a written source, either directly or through more oblique means.¹³ The statistical significance of the rate at which such references appear points to a clear distinction between the *J-corpus* and the *F-corpus*, reinforcing the coherence of the *J-corpus*, while again reinforcing the strength of our attribution of *Guillaume* and *Robert* in particular to *Jehan*.¹⁴

¹² In the *A-corpus*, *Thibaut* also contains the line “Hissi lo trovons nos en la divinité” (v. 642).

¹³ This is in addition to five references to writing within the narrative, and two references to Holy Scripture without discussion of how its content has influenced the narrative.

¹⁴ No non-narrative references to writing appear within *Richard* or *Jehan Paulus*. If such references ever existed in *Jehan's* putative earlier versions, then these were perhaps removed by the later *remanieur(s)*.

Table 43. References to written sources in the texts of the *J-corpus*, as well as *Guillaume* and *Robert*.

Text	Line	LH	KW	RH
<i>Chanoines</i>	1	L'	escripture	tesmoingne et nous fait asavoir
<i>Romme</i>	81	Elle fist tant de biens si com dit li	escriis	
<i>Romme</i>	103	Et de ces .ii. pechiez si com dit li	escriis	
<i>Deux chevaliers</i>	13	Il nous est tesmoignié en la sainte	Esriture	
<i>Eaue et vergier</i>	9	La divine	Esriture	nous en fait mencion
<i>Pain</i>	13	Ainsinc com nous trouvons en la sainte	Esriture	
<i>Mescreant</i>	21	En la <i>Vie des peres</i>	escript	en parchemin
<i>Florence</i>	20	Que l'	escripture	dit de ce ne doutez mie
<i>Buef</i>	87	Grant penitence en firent si com dit li	escriis	
<i>Sauveur</i> ¹⁵	4	Ainsi est il	escript	en la divinité.
<i>Sauveur</i>	11	Or advent une fois, si come dit l'	escriis	
<i>Guillaume</i>	7	L'	escripture	tesmoingne que qui vault hault monter
<i>Guillaume</i>	9	Et c'est	escript	c'un riche qui ne veult dire rien
<i>Guillaume</i>	29	Le philosophe dist—c'est	escript	en maint lieux—
<i>Guillaume</i>	141	Que l'	escripture	dit c'om doit pour Dieu laisser
<i>Guillaume</i>	582	Que je croi qu'il n'est clers qui le peüst	escrire	
<i>Robert</i>	96	Ainssi comme l'en trueve en plusieurs lieux	escriit	

¹⁵ The line immediately preceding this one reads: “Les sages clers le tiennent en grant auctorité.” While this is not an explicit reference to writing, it certainly gives a further indication that Jehan believed, or at least wished to claim, that his tales stemmed from a place of textual authority.

Further evidence for the collective attribution of *Guillaume* and *Robert* to Jehan through this feature comes from the similarities these structures contain. *Guillaume* shares “L’escripture tesmoigne” with *Chanoines* and “Que l’escripture dit” with *Florence*, while “Ainssi comme l’en trueve” in *Robert* is reminiscent of “Ainsinc com nous trouvons” in *Pain*, and aligns in metre such that the differences between the two structures could simply be scribal. The narrator’s claim in *Guillaume*, that the eponymous king’s suffering was so great “Que je croi qu’il n’est clers qui le peüst escrire,” also lines up with one found in direct discourse in *Deux chevaliers*, that the torments of hell are such that “Cuer nel porroit penser ne main de clerc escrire” (v. 124).¹⁶ *Guillaume* and *Robert* also share a similar structure, with “c’est escript en maint lieus” in *Guillaume* resembling “en pluseus lieus escrist” in *Robert*.

Notably, none of the examples in Table 43 appear within texts that also contain examples of *lire*, thus expanding the total number of texts in the *J-corpus* containing references to reading written sources to thirteen, over half of the corpus, which reinforces the apparent importance of such references for Jehan.

In addition to this, two features of these examples stand out. First, as has already been observed for *trouver lisant*, eight of the seventeen examples above appear at the end of the line. Most of these line-final examples occur within one of two construction types, both of which span a single hemistich, which again suggests at least some use of the reference as a means of filling out the poetic metre. The most common of these, *si com dit li escris* (four examples), functions as another hemistich-length phrase which are simply tagged on to a line to provide an appropriate rhyme, while also adding a sense of textual authority. The structure is therefore once again one which contributes to the coherence of Jehan’s *œuvre*, but does little to reinforce the written nature of his sources.

A similar argument can be made for the second structure which appears at the end of a line, *en la sainte Escripiture* (two examples), but in this case the question of function is a little less straightforward. This phrase is not used simply to fill a line, since both examples appear as part of wider phrases which emphasize the reference to a narrative source. The possible function of these structures is made clearer through the examination of a second feature to stand out within these examples, namely the claim that the written sources from which the texts allegedly emanate are in some way *sainte* (two

16 I make no claim as to whether these phrases are oblique self-references by Jehan, not wishing to engage in the largely semantic debate around whether Jehan was a *clerc* (as Munk Olsen [1978, xi–xii] claims) or a *jongleur* (as Faral [1910, 176] posits).

examples, both in the repeating structures discussed above) or *divine* (two). Interestingly, the two references to Holy Scripture elsewhere in the *J-corpus* also make use of the descriptor *divine*,¹⁷ with one such example appearing within *Pain*, which itself contains a description of Jehan's supposed source for the poem as *la sainte Escripature*. In the examples involving *divine*, the references are to general moralizing claims rather than to a narrative source. From the similarities of these structures to those involving *sainte*, we therefore get the impression that, through his use of such phrases, Jehan was similarly intent on claiming that *Deux chevaliers* and *Pain* were drawn directly from Biblical or apocryphal sources, without offering any evidence that this is the case. He uses the terms *sainte* and *divine* to add authority, rather than clarity, to his supposed narrative and didactic sources, and his references to writing in this way, as with *si com dit li escriis*, act as little more than markers of this authority, rather than invitations for an audience to go and seek out the sources themselves.

This also aligns with the four examples in Table 43 found towards the beginning of *Guillaume*, in which the narrator refers to written sources to reinforce the conventional wisdom which he presents. In these cases, the written sources are not said to be *divine* or *sainte*, but the religious and didactic content of the argument once again reinforces the suggestion that Jehan's inclusion of ideas of writing was often as a means of adding authority to the didactic component of his poems.

This is not necessarily true for all Jehan's poems, however. In contrast to the general nature of these examples, and in greater contrast to Kleist and Munk Olsen's hypotheses that Jehan's references to writing were in all cases simply rhetorical flourishes, a surprisingly specific example is found in *Mescreant*. The text tells of a disbeliever who attempts to prove the futility of the Eucharist by feeding the Host to his dog, which refuses to take it and devours its owner instead.¹⁸ Jehan claims that the source for his version

17 *Enfant sauva Mere* (v. 14) and *Pain* (v. 7).

18 This tale resembles, but is far from identical to, Tubach's (1969) tale type 2641, *Host adored by dog*, in which a Jew offers the Host to a dog, but the dog bows before it. Similarities are also found to 1718, *Dogs tear apart excommunicated woman*, a fate also sometimes given to a false priest, as well as 3776, *Pig, scrupulous*, in which a pig, or sometimes a dog, refuses to take bread from the hand of an excommunicate. The *mescreant* at the heart of the tale, we should note, appears to be a Christian who does not believe in the power of the Host, rather than a Jew. It would not be a significant jump, however, to suggest that Jehan's source(s) may have focused on Jewish Host desecration. For more on this (but nothing resembling our present tale), see Rubin (1999).

of this text is the *Vie des peres*,¹⁹ itself apparently “escript en parchemin.” Again, this is clearly an appeal to authority, but it would seem premature to so easily dismiss this example, as Munk Olsen (1978, cxix) does, as a reference which does not “correspondre à [une] réalité.”²⁰

Indeed, the reference to material transmission is sufficiently specific as to warrant a closer examination of the *Mescreant*’s possible source. No clear ancestor of *Mescreant* appears within the surviving versions of the *Vie des peres*, with Munk Olsen himself finding only a tenuous connection to a tale within Optatus’s fourth-century *De schismate donatistarum*, in which heretics are punished for having fed the Host to their dogs.²¹ Both from the differences between the content of the tales, and Jehan’s focus on vernacular literature, it is clear that he did not work directly from the *De schismate donatistarum*, instead he most likely borrowed the tale from a source much later in the chain of the tale’s transmission, if the two are indeed connected.

Although no text survives which could offer such a link, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Jehan’s claim is not false, and that he did indeed draw his inspiration from a source, now lost, which told a similar story to *Mescreant* in the vernacular, and which may itself have been included within versions of the *Vie des peres*, or another sequence known by the same name. After all, the fact that the surviving texts now known as the *Vie des peres* do not include the text which Jehan claims as his source does not mean that no such version ever existed.

Similarly, while we cannot determine with any certainty whether Jehan’s interaction with this putative text would have been through the written or aural medium, and even if we take a less absolute view of Munk Olsen’s perspective, assuming that Jehan’s work was primarily completed from oral sources, the reference to parchment in *Mescreant* means that it is certainly possible that he saw this text in the flesh, or indeed other texts which he took as his sources. Turning to the *B-corpus* as a source of comparison, we find that the phrase “en parchemin” and its orthographic variants appears

19 Two possible further references to the *Vie des peres* are made in *Eaue et vergier*, which references “les sains peres” (v. 98) as the source of the poem’s second tale, and *Sauveur*, which claims its source as the “*Vie des sains*” (v. 5). In both cases is unclear whether these references are to the same sequence of texts as the *Vie des peres* referenced in *Mescreant* (be they the texts known today as the *Vie des peres* or some other sequence).

20 “correspond to reality.”

21 Book 2, chap. 19: *Eucharistia a Donatistis canibus data, ampulla chrismatis in praeceptis projecta aliaque eorum sacrilegia*, PL 11 (Migne, 1845), cols. 972–74.

on fifteen occasions, with only three referring to the sources of a text.²² Particularly comparable to Jehan's use is the structure found in the prologue to the *Lai de Tyolet*,²³ in which the narrator claims that stories of King Arthur's court:

mises estoient en latin
e en escrit em parchemin,
por ce qu'encor tel tens seroit
que l'en volentiers les orroit

(*Lai de Tyolet*, vv. 29–32)

In this case, the narrator claims an intervening role played by the Bretons, who:

[...] en firent lais plusors,
si con dient nos ancessors

(*Lai de Tyolet*, vv. 35–36)

It is the Breton *lai* that the narrator claims to relate, and thus his claimed sources are oral, despite the reference to written material. Despite the lack of any reference to intervening oral sources in *Mescreant*, unlike in *Tyolet*, it is possible that Jehan's claim in *Mescreant* is similar to that of the *lai*, presenting a belief that written material appeared further up the chain of the story's chain of transmission, even if the source from which Jehan drew his inspiration was oral. Our conclusion for the text's source must therefore be tentative, but it would nevertheless be unwise to discount the possibility, as Munk Olsen does, that Jehan's primary source was written, or that he had at least encountered a written version of the story. We ought also, of course, not to assume that Jehan would only have encountered a given tale once, and in one medium: he could in fact have come across the same tales on several occasions, and in different media.

Taylor (2000, 740) offers some useful context here, namely that preachers using *exempla* of the kind which appear to have inspired some of Jehan's poems "usually informed the audience of the source of their examples," and used phrases like *j'ai vu* to claim that the tale arose out of personal

²² Reference to parchment as a transmission medium for the tale being told appears in the *A-corpus* within *Confesseur*, in the line "Nul ne pourroit escrire en parchemin" (v. 104). The reference is reminiscent of that found in *Guillaume* (v. 582), but this time the reason for being unable to express the story in writing is because of the presence of great joy, not sorrow. It also offers little about the possible source of the poem in question.

²³ For an edition of this text, see Walter et al. (2018).

experience, *j'ai entendu* to suggest second-hand knowledge, and *lit dans* to indicate written sources. Jehan's frequent references to written sources, not least the specific example in *Mescreant*, therefore sit within a broader tradition of such citation within didactic narrative, which we would be unwise to dismiss out of hand. Similarly, Brémond, Le Goff, and Schmitt (1982, 63–64) note that as the fourteenth century progressed, a great deal of the reception of *exemplum*-type narratives was through the written, rather than the aural medium, in the form of moralized tales intended to be read, such as Nicolas Bozon's *Contes moralisés* (ca. 1320),²⁴ which take a tale akin to an *exemplum* as their starting point, but offer additional moral explanation surrounding it, as Jehan does. While Jehan would be early in this process of change in the *exemplum* from an oral to a written tradition, if indeed he did write at the turn of the fourteenth century, this possibility suggests that for the case of *Mescreant*, it is at least feasible that Jehan encountered the tale which inspired it through a written text which has now been lost.

We therefore must at least entertain the possible veracity of Jehan's claims as to the written nature of certain of his sources, although we ought at the same time to be more cautious with other examples. The prime instance of this is to be found in *Florence*, in which Jehan claims on two separate occasions to have sourced his tale from the chronicles of Rome. In the first, he compares them in content to the chronicles of Saint-Denis:²⁵

Douce gent, es croniques de Saint-Denis en France,
Voit on moult de merveilles; mais sachez sanz doutance
Celles de Romme sont de trop plus grant sustance.

(*Florence*, vv. 5–7)

Such a reference, as well as the comparison given, is particularly effective as a means of reinforcing textual authority, since Jehan's claims to know the chronicles of both Saint-Denis and Rome paints an image of the author-narrator as particularly well-read. Beaussart (2000, 6) interprets this as being a reference to the version of the tale in the *Gesta Romanorum*,²⁶ but as we have seen, Jehan's lack of engagement with Latin material suggests that this is unlikely to have been his direct source. Further, as Beaussart himself

24 For an edition, see Toulmin Smith and Meyer (1889). Indeed, we may choose to see *conte moralisé* as the most appropriate generic descriptor for Jehan's texts.

25 Cholette (2022, 102) erroneously suggests that it is the Saint-Denis chronicles that Jehan is positing as his source, a claim which does not align with the content of this stanza, nor with the Roman flavour of the text.

26 For an edition, see Weiske (1991–1992).

acknowledges, the fact that the text does not contain a narrative element in which Florence is accused of adultery with her brother-in-law and briefly condemned to death by her husband suggests at the very least that Jehan “ne s’inspire pas exclusivement des *Gesta*” (2000, 6),²⁷ such that the text may be seen to be closer to the thirteenth-century *Chanson de Florence de Romme* (2000, 8).²⁸

A valuable point of comparison here from the *A-corpus* comes in the form of an extraordinarily detailed and yet seemingly wholly fictitious account of the translator’s art, found in the prologue of *Basile*:

L’istore, dont je voel or comencier mes dis,
 Conmenche *approbate consuetudinis*.
 Et qui ne m’en voet croire, voit lire les escriis,
 Il trouvera pour voir tout ce que je vous dis.

L’istore doit bien yestre devant clers rechitee
 Et devant laie gent ne doit yestre celee,
 Car elle est de latin en francois translatee
 Sans mettre et sans oster fors tant qu’elle est rimee.

Jou ay au translater mise grant estudie
 Et, pour le mieus rimer, villiet mainte nuitie
 Que de toutes gens fuist plus volentiers oïe.
 Je voel or commenchier. Dieus m’en soit en aïe! (Basile, vv. 9–16)

Here, the poet-narrator goes much further than Jehan ever does in laying out his apparent sources and poetic method. He gives an *incipit* line for the text he claims to have translated, which is identifiable as a reference to a sermon composed by Fulbert of Chartres on the Nativity of the Virgin Mary. The sermon contains a very cursory reference to the life of Saint Basil, but as Denomy (1956, 105) notes, it is very unlikely to be the direct source of the narrative presented here, and *Basile* is certainly not a direct translation of it, as the poet-narrator claims. Like Jehan’s apparent reference to the *Gesta Romanorum*, then, the poet-narrator here is attempting to burnish his credentials by claiming that his poem is further up the chain of sources than can be considered plausible, as a means of reinforcing the strength of his didactic claims.²⁹

27 “is not exclusively inspired by the *Gesta*.”

28 For an edition of this text, see Wallensköld (1907–1909). Beaussart also examines *Florence* alongside the thirteenth-century *De l’empeeris qui garda sa chastee* by Gautier de Coincy, edited in Méon (1823, 2:1–128).

29 The same tendency to exaggerate one’s proximity to the earliest sources of a

A second reference to the chronicles in *Florence* reinforces this sense that Jehan seeks to show off his literary awareness and shore up the claim that his version of the tale is superior to others. When Florence's abusers arrive at Beaurepaire to meet their judgement, Jehan asserts:

Douce gent es croniques de Romme sont trouuees
 Les paroles qui sont ci de par moi contees,
 Mais .i. rommans en est ou en a ajoustees
 Granz bourdes qui n'i doivent pas estre recorderees
 (*Florence*, vv. 693–96)

On this occasion, Jehan criticizes an alternative version of the same tale, itself possibly also written down, which supposedly includes information which Jehan considers inappropriate, or simply extraneous. If Jehan is making a specific criticism of the content of a version of the text that he read, it is unclear exactly which this might be, since none of the surviving versions of the tale differ significantly from *Florence* at this moment in the tale. Given Jehan's references to the *Vie des peres* elsewhere in his corpus, however, it is at least also possible that he chose to critique a version of the tale linked to the one which survives in this collection,³⁰ which also contains the motif of accused adultery while also omitting further details present in Jehan's version, including for example, the murder of a child in Florence's care (Beaussart 2000, 5n5).

Whether or not we believe Jehan's claim to have encountered this "rommans," we may interpret his reference as an attempt to see off literary competitors telling similar stories. Indeed, it is also conceivable that, regardless of the texts to which he refers, Jehan consulted at least two versions of the tale in his preparation for writing *Florence*—one which he used as his main source and one which he rejected—which would reinforce our own rejection of the absolute claim that Jehan had a single oral source for each of his texts.

If we consider Jehan's references to the chronicles of Rome in light of this apparent awareness of multiple versions of the same story, our reading of such claims can be nuanced somewhat. Rather than reading it as a claim that his texts were drawn directly from the chronicles, or perhaps the *Gesta Romanorum*, one might suggest that Jehan here is citing his sources

tale appears in the work of compilers of *exempla*, who "se réclament de l'autorité et du prestige en revendiquant des sources anciennes [lorsqu']en vérité, beaucoup d'*exempla* sont issues de compilations intermédiaires" (Rehr and Polo de Beaulieu 2021, §11; "claim authority and prestige by citing ancient sources [when] in truth, many examples come from intermediate compilations").

30 On which see Wallensköld (1907–1909).

second-hand, and that his inherited belief, genuinely held or otherwise, was that the chronicles were the ultimate source of the story. Jehan is not claiming to have found the stories himself, as evidenced by the passive “sont trouuees,” but he sees himself as participating in a textual tradition that stretches back to the chronicles, with his poems offering a synthesis and *remaniement* of various later versions of the tale which he had encountered, perhaps in both written and oral media.

A Possible Contradiction

This more nuanced perspective, that Jehan most likely drew inspiration from a number of different sources for his tales, which may have been both oral and written, and that he acknowledged his position in an extended textual tradition, allows us also to take a more considered approach to an apparent contradiction observed by Munk Olsen (1978, cxix) in the sources claimed within *Buef*. As we have seen, at the beginning of the text, we find the claim that “En sarmon l’oï dire, moult bien retenu l’ai” (v. 31), which Munk Olsen argues is “certainement une description exacte de sa méthode de travail,”³¹ and which Cholette (2022, 102) suggests is evidence of the poem presenting its sources as exclusively oral. A little later, however, we find an instance of the structure “si con dit li escriz” (v. 87), as given above in Table 43.

Given our previous conclusions about this latter phrase, it would be easy to dismiss it, as Munk Olsen does, as one of the “clichés commodes qu’il faut se garder de prendre en sérieux” (1978, cxix),³² allowing us to take Jehan’s claim regarding the oral nature of his source at face value. That said, the overwhelming abundance of references to written sources found throughout the rest of the *J-corpus*, as well as for *Guillaume* and *Robert*, has cast doubt on the strength of Munk Olsen’s claim that there is no way Jehan could ever have encountered his sources through a written medium. Instead, if we assume that Jehan’s poem had multiple sources, then it is entirely plausible that he could have both heard the tale told in a sermon, and come across it in writing. In fact, this appears all the more plausible an interpretation when we consider that, as for *Florence*, *Guillaume*, *Robert*, and perhaps also *Richard*, Jehan’s tendency in the case of his longer texts is far more often to shorten even lengthier tales, rather than to lengthen shorter ones, and thus a brief sermonic *exemplum* is unlikely to have been the sole source for *Buef*, itself the second longest text in the *J-corpus*.

31 “certainly an exact description of his working method.”

32 “convenient clichés that should not be taken seriously.”

Overall, then, a more thorough analysis of the corpus than has previously been possible, enabled by digital methods, has allowed us to discover that the claim that Jehan only encountered his texts through oral sources is at the very least excessively inflexible. Ultimately, there is no good reason to ignore the examples of specific references to written sources which appear within his texts, even if we are to be wary of taking their claims at face value. From the perspective of the attribution of authorship, we therefore observe a unity across the *J-corpus*, as well as for *Guillaume* and *Robert* in particular,³³ but not in the way that previous scholarship seems to have imagined. Jehan's texts are united in the frequent use of references to written sources, and the widespread absence of references to oral ones, with the poet making a conscious effort to appeal to the authority of written text as a means of strengthening his own arguments. While references to the written sources of a text are far from unique to Jehan, we are nevertheless thus able to add this evidence to the overwhelming sense of unity which we have observed in Jehan's texts up to this point, building the case for the shared-author hypothesis.

33 We note again here that the lack of references to sources in *Richard* and *Jehan Paulus* could indicate that, unlike many of Jehan's earlier features which these texts appear to retain, references to their sources may well have been removed by the later *remanieur(s)*, wishing to present the reworked versions as innovative.

Building the Case for the Shared-Author Hypothesis

The final unifying thread of this study comes in the form of Jehan's appeals to textual authority when presenting the sources of his tales. The texts we have attributed to Jehan, comprising the *J-corpus*, *Guillaume*, *Robert*, *Richard*, and *Jehan Paulus*, collectively display a much higher rate of claimed written sources than both the *A-* and *F-corpora*, and specific formulaic phrases used to enhance textual authority in *Guillaume* and *Robert* also serve to link these texts directly to others in Jehan's *œuvre*. The absence of references to writing in *Richard* and *Jehan Paulus*, while not evidence against attribution, could nevertheless suggest that such references, if they had existed in Jehan's putative earlier versions, were subsequently removed by the texts' later *remanieur(s)*.

Methodological Contribution

In this final chapter, I have demonstrated how digital methods can assist in quantifying rhetorical strategies and appeals to textual authority across a broad corpus. By conducting statistical analysis on the relative frequency of references to written sources between corpora, I have displayed how the very act of claiming textual authority can be a more significant to questions of authorship than determining whether or not those claims are based on fact. Once again, by examining specific examples revealed through digital textual analysis, I have shown how data-driven approaches to text are at their most effective when combined with close textual engagement, allowing for a more holistic and falsifiable approach than would be possible using either method in isolation.

