

# About French Vernacular Traditions: Medieval Roots of Modern Theatre Practices

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## *Abstract*

The article gives an overview of the writing processes of theatre performances in medieval France. At the crossroads of all processes is the *original* (the Book, *le Livre, les originaux*) containing the full text, and from which all kind of copies were produced for different reading practices – entertainment, meditation, devotion, teaching, learning – identified by specific content, layout and material features. With the case study of *Maistre Pierre Pathelin*, a late fifteenth-century comedy, is shown how the text varies in the performance process and extemporizing practices of professional players, and finally sediments in its written circulation. Detail of the same process can be closely observed with the *Mystère des Trois Doms*, a great urban play of the early sixteenth century for which, exceptionally, both the Book and an account register of a unique performance have come to us. We conclude that, in the medieval history of theatre performance in France, the author is as much corporate as individual, and that extemporizing practices of professional players, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century may well be a key in understanding the origins of the Italian *commedia dell'arte* which is generally presented as the beginning of modern professional theatre practices.

Keywords: *Codicology, Commedia dell'arte, Extemporization, Medieval theatre, Performance*

## 1. *Introduction*

The corpus of French medieval theatre totalizes at least 530 texts dating from the end of the twelfth century to the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> About

<sup>1</sup> The canonic corpus of French medieval theatre texts includes at least 176 *farces* (Faire 1993), 125 *moralités* (Doudet 2018), 18 *sotties* (Kuroiwa 2017), around 50 *miracles* and 160 *dits, jeux, histoires* and *mystères*. Petit de Julleville has listed 64 documented performances of mystery plays for which no texts are known (1880, vol. II, 628-632). In this essay, Figure 1 (*Writing and performing processes of the medieval dramatic text in XIIIth-XVIth-century France*), is the common work of Taku Kuroiwa, Xavier Leroux and Darwin

half of these texts are manuscripts, and the other half are books or booklets printed between the 1480s and the 1550s. With a few exceptions, all these *jeux, farces, miracles, mystères, moralités* and *sotties*, either in manuscript or in print, are known by a unique copy, with no related information about any performance. Whenever a performance is mentioned or documented in the archives, the text of the play is nearly always lacking. Nevertheless, it was taken for granted that all were 'theatre texts' and 'theatre manuscripts' that were part of a performing process. Altogether, it was believed that their content mirrored what was actually played or to be played, even though material and textual differences were great in the sources and editorial problems difficult to solve: lavishly decorated and illustrated vellum copies were mixed with scribbled texts on paper quires which looked like work in progress and, in some of the rare multi-copy works, the text tradition showed variations difficult to locate in the process between writing, performing and conserving. Only in the 1980s did scholars begin to question the evidence of 'theatre manuscripts', to call for codicological analysis, and to propose elements of typology for fifteenth-sixteenth-century manuscripts (Lalou and Smith 1988; Runnalls 1990). For this part of the corpus, it was pointed out that from sole codicological observations, there were no 'theatre manuscripts' as such but practices of copying and making books which belonged to widespread areas of activities, not theatre in particular (Smith 1998) and, for thirteenth-fourteenth-century manuscripts, the general way of identifying theatre texts on the basis of layout and didascalic apparatus was thoroughly questioned by Symes (2002).

Together with material observations, formal criticism of texts observed that the earliest corpus showed no difference from other literary genres. Theatre texts were basically composed in a versified *textus* (weft, *trame*) of octosyllabic couplets (*aabbccdd...*), as *romans, fabliaux, lais, dits*, or moral poems. Behind its apparent simplicity, this *textus* was a universal tool. The format permitted a multimedial circulation (memorizing, performing, writing) of any content in a most rational way for its versatility when written down (one to three ④<sup>2</sup> columns on a single page), where it also allowed transmission of text, music and image ① (Cruse, Parussa and Ragnard 2004), ④. To these considerable advantages were added the never-ending possibilities to extend contents *ad libitum* by inserting, either mentally or on the page, an interpolation, i.e. one pair or *x* pairs of lines to the *textus* without disturbing the initial structure of

Smith, a revised version of Kuroiwa, Leroux and Smith 2010, 29. The author of the present article thanks Virginie Trachsler for having corrected his draft, and Robert L.A. Clark for having read, emended and criticized all aspects of the text; responsibility for mistakes and lacks of any kind remaining his own.

<sup>2</sup> Circled numbers refer to the *Manuscripts Sources* at the end of the essay.

the couplets: e.g. aabb–*xyyyzz*–ccdd ... or aab–*bxyyyzzb*–bccdd ...<sup>3</sup> (Kuroiwa, Leroux and Smith 2010). To sum up: in the beginning, all kinds of contents were written down as *textus*, whether it was to be performed as ‘theatre’ or not. Only little by little, in the thirteenth century, a didascalie apparatus of speaker headings (*noms de rôle*) begins to distinguish, in the writing, a ‘theatre text’ from other kinds of text. Still, in the fourteenth century, the *textus* of dramatic works *in the origin* could be written down without any speaker headings, such as *Courtois d’Arras* (34), and adapted for recitation, as Rousse has demonstrated in an exemplary manner (1978).

Up to that time, theatre texts appear only in miscellanies offering variegated but exclusively versified contents (26)(35)(74) written down to preserve narrative and teaching models through entertaining, learned, religious or moral works (Hasenohr 1999, 46-49). These miscellanies are necessarily linked to persons or communities who are in the institutional position to collect texts and who possess the financial means to have them reproduced in the luxury conservative form of a book. This is why, whenever it is possible to do the anamnesis of a miscellany, it goes back ultimately to prominent persons and/or institutions: e.g. the goldsmiths’ confraternity of Paris for the two volumes of the 40 *Miracles de Notre-Dame par personnages* (24)(25); the count of Artois, Gui de Dampierre, and the Hangest family, whose associated coats of arms frame the margins (an undelible mark of property) of the famous ms Paris BnF fr. 25566 (55), containing all major poetical works, music and plays (*Jeu de la Feuillée*, *Jeu de Robin et Marion*) of Adam de la Halle; King Charles the VI’s court for the phenomenal codex containing 1498 texts of Eustache Deschamps (27), which includes the remarkable *Dit des quatre offices de l’ostel du roy à jouer par personnaiges* (Doudet 2012a); the Collège de Navarre in Paris, where was performed a *moralité* (Bossuat 1955) on January 17, 1427, preserved as such in a compendium of schoolworks (54).

The expanding ‘literacy of the laity’ (Parkes 1973), thanks to schooling and to the production of paper which improved technically and reduced its costs constantly for our whole period (Bozzolo and Ornato 1980), transformed the relation between orality and the written word, both media functioning then more as a dual channel than one replacing the other. With the autonomization of theatre texts in self-contained units, as *Griseldis* (38),

<sup>3</sup> ‘Interpolations’ are to be distinguished from changes which don’t alter the structure of the weft. The technique symbolized in the second example, where the interpolation is added by copying at its extremities the color of the existing rhyme where inserted, thus producing four identical rhymes (aab–*bxyyyzzb*–bccdd...), has been called the ‘quadruple rime chevauchante’ a technique discovered and analyzed by Raymond Lebègue (1960). But it is often impossible to distinguish what is added from what has been cut and, moreover, an interpolation can also be a final integration of what was already intended to be performed but not written out in advance.

the new distinct genre qualifications of *moralité*<sup>4</sup> and *farce* appear,<sup>5</sup> this latter term referring to entertaining contents (not exclusively comical as it is usually believed). In mid-fifteenth century, a structural change modifies the relation between the production of a text (any text) and its circulation: with the invention of the printing press, hundreds of copies of the same work were produced to be sold to unknown readers for unknown purposes whereas, before then, a single manuscript was *always* prepared for a known person or an identified community for a specific need or potential uses. Contemporarily, writing seems to invade the complex process to performance through rehearsals and vice-versa: players' parts, books of prologues, conductor's books, sermons, panels for characters and locations onstage, reference books, lists of *secrets* (special effects), of players and characters – of which only a few exist today. They were recycled after the performance, particularly in book bindings, as was done for many technical documents of the time that had become useless (62)(63). Finally, from the 1480s on, many theatre texts are printed in Lyon, Paris, Angers and Rouen, some directly linked with a precise public performance, many others, the short ones, with texts often showing grammatical and lexical features of a distant and ancient language. Still, these printed plays, whether long or short, could be copied in manuscripts (29)(59).

In the long story of the written theatre text, from the most ancient one, copied around 1250, the *Ordo representationis Ade*, or *Jeu d'Adam* (70), to the mysteries of the mid-sixteenth century, whenever we can compare two or more manuscript versions of the same work,<sup>6</sup> as well as printed versions

<sup>4</sup> The most ancient mention of the term *moralité* qualifying a play comes from the testament's execution account register of Jean Hays, great vicar of Paris, deceased in the cloister of Notre-Dame, on March 24, 1421: 'Item, le jeu de .v. esglises en françois, avec plusieurs aultres moralitez, commençant ou second feuillet et sont seiles et ou penultieme que luy jeux d'amours, prisé 8 l.' (Paris, Archives nationales, S 851 B, n. 7, 21; 'Item, the play of the five churches, in French, with a few other *moralités*, beginning at the second folio et son seiles et on the penultimate one que luy jeux d'amours, valued 8 l.'). Unless otherwise stated, translations are mine.

<sup>5</sup> The most ancient example of the word *farce* for a play is a didascalical note ('cy est interposee une farsse') to an entertaining interval in the *Vie de saint Fiacre* from the MS 1131 of the Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève in Paris, the manuscript dating from the 1420s-1440s, but the text dated between 1380-1400 (*Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, <<http://atilf.atilf.fr>>, 'farce<sub>2</sub>', accessed 10 January 2019).

<sup>6</sup> *Jeu de Robin et Marion* (3 mss), *Courtois d'Arras* (4 mss), *Maistre Pierre Pathelin* (3 mss and many prints), *Mystère de la Passion* d'Arnoul Gréban (9 mss), *Jeu de la Destruction de Troie la Grant* (12 mss and many prints), *Mystère de saint Quentin* (2 mss), *Jeu du Cœur et des Cinq Sens* (4 mss). A few farces are known in different versions from the British Museum and the *Florence recueils*: *L'obstination des femmes* (Lewicka 1970, iii) and *La mauvaistié des femmes* (Koopmans 2011, xlvi); *Mahuet, badin natif de Bagnolet* (Lewicka 1970, xxviii) and *Mahuet* (Koopmans 2011, xxxix); *Sottie des trompeurs* (Lewicka 1970, xxxix) and *Sottie des sotz triumphans* (Droz 1966, x); *Colin fils de Thevot* (Lewicka 1970, xlvi) and *Thevot qui*

of a known play given as ‘newly performed’ on their frontispiece, we always face important modifications to the text. This is not particular to theatre but to medieval literature as a whole, and has been called, for forty years, the ‘*mouvance du texte*’ (Zumthor 1984). The *Jeu de Robin et Marion* is the first to display it, with short and lengthy interpolations added to the *textus*, thus *condensing in the written text what had to be developed through extemporization in performance* (Kuroiwa, Leroux and Smith 2010, 29-33). Two centuries later, the textual tradition of *Maistre Pierre Pathelin* shows a complicate sedimentation caused by the same process in a definite context of professional players associated in companies (see section 3. *Performed Layers: the Textual tradition of Maistre Pierre Pathelin*).

During these three centuries, public performances had not only developed in genre (*farce, moralité, sotties*), from the generic *ludus, jeu* and *dit*, but also in their dimensions towards monumentality, up to the extreme case of the *Mystère des Actes des Apôtres*, sixty thousand lines long (Smith, Parussa, Kanaoka, Mansfield 2009). This extreme case also shows the same type of *mouvance*, though not in the capillarity and substantiality of plays of the professional sphere (*farces*) where it concerns at least one sixth of the text (*Robin et Marion, Maistre Pierre Pathelin*). Evolution towards monumentality was made possible by the ever-growing place of the written word in the dual writing-orality channel. The written production was, on its side, ever more structured by scholarly models – *glossa* (‘commentary’), *lectio* (‘teaching’ and ‘interpreting’) – under the hand of clerics, of learned lay men and women (Christine de Pizan), who used these scholarly models in the vernacular following the basic principles of *oppositio* and *varietas* (Smith 2017). It helped develop the technicity of the relation between the performed and the written word from the jugglers’ tradition in the thirteenth century, as illustrated by Adam de la Halle, to the same kind of professional author/player/writers at the other end of our period, some very famous, as Pierre Gringore (47), but also many others who, in the sphere of the ‘amateur’ production of the great urban mysteries and moralities, display considerable know-how in handling and accompanying the text, between its written state to the final performance, as with canon Pra in Romans (see Section 4. *Writing and performing process of the Mystère des Trois Doms*).

The chart of the *Writing and performing processes* (Figure 1, p. 38) is an attempt at giving a global synchronic and diachronic synopsis of the circulation of theatre text from its creation as a *textus* – an (intellectual) formatting process – to the end of the (material) formalizing process of its diversified written forms. It is accompanied by a *glossary-commentary* which seemed the best way to describe the phases of the processes while giving references in a condensed manner.

*revient de Naples* (Koopmans 2011, v); *Débat de la nourrice et de la chambrière* (Lewicka 1970, xlix) and *Les Chambrières* (Koopmans 2011, li); *Le Savetier Audin* (Lewicka 1970, xxxii) and *Martin de Cambray* (Koopmans 2011, xli).

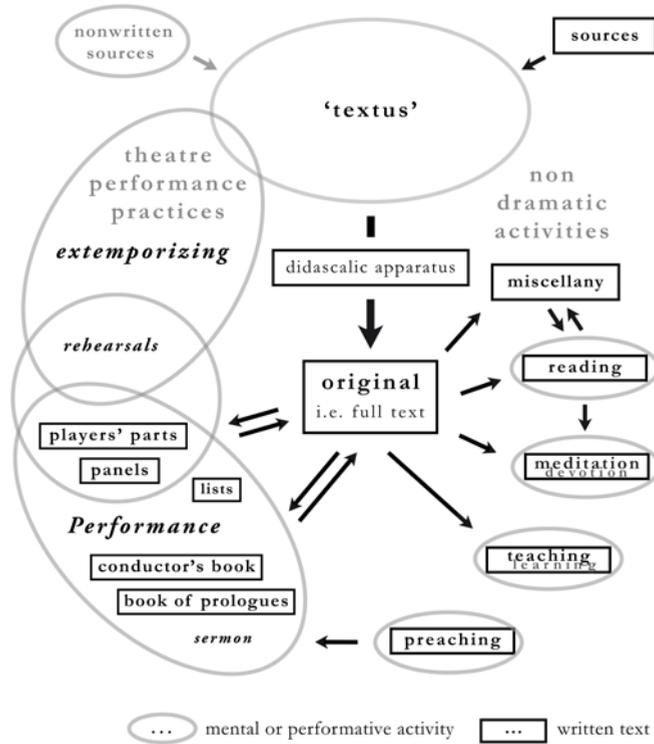


Figure 1 – Writing and performing processes of the medieval dramatic text in XIIIth-XVIth-century France (cf. Kuroiwa, Leroux and Smith 2010, 23)

## 2. Theatre Writing and Performing Processes: Glossary-Commentary

After the entry, when necessary, the corresponding Middle French and Latin terms are given in brackets.

**Book of prologues** (*Livre des prologues*) — In the case of a multi-day play, the book containing together all the *prologues* beginning and ending (*prologue final*) each day. The only surviving *Livre des prologues* comes from the *Passion* of Mons (18), containing the twenty-six *prologues* of the eight-day performance. The common practice to have *prologues* together as the part of the *Prologueur*, *Prêcheur*, *Messenger*, *Portitor libri* or whatever status he has or character he impersonates (Ridder and Smith 2017, 144-145), is attested indirectly by their absence in stage originals, and conversely by their integration at their right place in fair (7 23 44 45) or luxury copies (21 22).

Sometimes they remain partly grouped in fair copies (8) and conservatory originals (28), thus keeping an organization particular to their source material, i.e. the *Livre des prologues* (Smith 1998, 6-7).

**Conductor's book** (*Abrégé, protocole, protocollum*) — Register giving cue lines (first and last) of each speech, speaker headings and names of players, detailed stage directions for entries, movements and props (Cohen 1925; Smith 1998). As for the Book of prologues, the *Abrégé* of Mons is the only surviving manuscript of the type (17), composed originally of eight self-contained units of in-folio quires, *one for the morning (matinée) and one for the afternoon (après-dîner)* of each day of performance, in two twin copies. The simple but very clear and efficient layout designed for directing a complex staging makes clear that this *Abrégé* is but the sole witness of an elaborate tradition (Smith 2001). From the end of the fifteenth century, *tenir la direction du jeu* ('to hold the direction of the play') was given to men called *meneur du jeu* (2) (16) (65), *maître du jeu* (9), *conducteur* (39) (50). Some sources indicate they worked in pairs, each one having his role and register, 'the Book' (*le Livre, les originaux*) to control the text on one hand and the *protocollum* or Conductor's book, on the other. In the case of Mons, the twin series of the *Abrégé* might have been required by a separate direction of Hell and Paradise, the two most distant locations onstage where there were very many mechanical devices to monitor.<sup>7</sup>

**Devotion** see **Meditation**.

**Didascalic apparatus** — Speech headings (*noms de rôle*), marginal or interlinear texts or notes, signs (Figure 2, p. 40), music, images, drawings, added to the *textus* for reading, memorizing or performing purposes. Marginal and interlinear notes vary considerably according to the status of the copy, i.e. the needs to be fulfilled: reading, meditating, teaching, rehearsing, etc. Stage directions are rare before the second half of the fifteenth century. They are written at the table in the author's draft and originals. At that stage of the work, they are not very detailed, being only intended to give basic information for directing rehearsals and, in some case, for choosing what had to be done onstage – this explains the *ad libitum* type of notes such as, in the *Mystère de saint Vincent*, (41) f. 93r, 'Si c'est en chaffault, montent le Chrestien et Cruquart ...' ('If in scaffold, the Christian and Cruquart climb ...'), or in the *Jeu saint Lojs*, (49)

<sup>7</sup> In Mons, two *conducteurs des secrets* (literally a 'conductor of the secrets', a man acting a hidden machine or a technical device producing a special effect onstage) had been hired to prepare the technical devices (Cohen 1925, lxxiii), and 18 persons were paid to monitor these devices during the eight days' performance (Cohen 1925, lx). Other documented references of the kind are available for the sixteenth century, mentioning up to '24 ou 25 hommes et plus' (Couturier and Runnalls 1991, 165, 236rv) solely for monitoring the devices of Hell. Gordon Kipling (2006) has argued that the permanent directing function of the *meneur de jeu* (literally a 'play leader' acting as a stage director) is but a creation of Gustave Cohen and does not correspond to reality, but his analysis does not take into account the status of his sources for their interpretation, nor the variety of names and contexts of this necessary function.

f. 11v, 'S'il [l'Evesque de Paris] veut aller à la mule, le secretaire dist ceste ligne' ('If he [the Bishop of Paris] wants to go with the mule, the Secretary says the following line'). In texts written 'par personnages', as both a literary and performative genre, marginal notes can be long and written in a descriptive style, as narrative complement to the dialogues, such as in the *Ystoire de la Destruction de Troye la Grand* (51) or in the *Mystère du Siège d'Orléans*, – and not condensed as in originals or practical and focused on staging issues as in a Conductor's book.

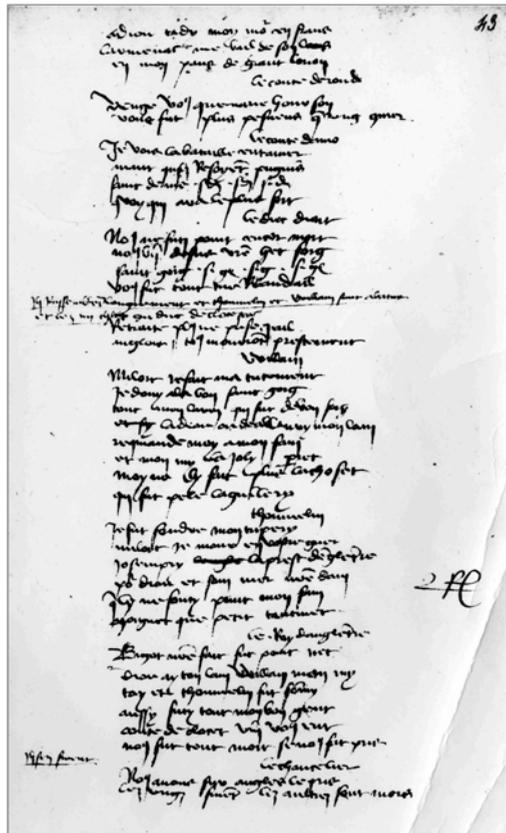


Figure 2 – *Jeu saint Lojis* (ca 1470), f. 43r, a rare (clean) author's draft presenting the constitutive features of an original. On the right side of the text, a big cursive –r with a curled suspension line, abbreviating the word 'redictes' ('repetition'), has been added over a 'crotchet' (∟): this composite sign indicates that the corresponding speech is a *textus* furnishing themes and verbal material for extemporization (Smith 1987, 265-279; 1998)

**Extemporizing** (*jouer à plaisance*) — To produce a link between the stage and the public with relevant playing on the basis of a memorized *textus*, voiced with dialogical developments, rhythmic, syllabic and metric echoes that could be inserted at any moment thanks to a peculiar look, an exclamation, a repetition, slapsticks and jokes, singing and farting. Some roles, like Devils, Fools or *Sots*, have a specific extemporizing character. In the second half of the fifteenth century, the *textus* for the Fool begins to be written down on leaflets in ‘stage originals’, or as memoranda in companies’ registers (Smith, Parussa, Halévy 2014, 107, 343-345). Most of the time, it is only indicated ‘Cy parle le Foul’ (‘Here the Fool speaks’) as in (37) f. 37r, or ‘... *et Stultus loquitur*’ (‘... and the Fool speaks’), (61) 13r, without any speech written out. Devils can be mentioned in lists of acting characters, and not appear in the text nor in the didascalical apparatus, meaning they have a nontextualized role: e.g. (49) 107r (Lucifer, Pluton, Penthagruel, Titynilluz).

**Learning** see **Teaching**.

**Lists** — For organizational purposes, lists are drawn up for the performance, such as the booklet of roles and *secrets* of the 1536 performance of the *Actes des Apôtres* in Bourges (5) (Smith, Parussa, Halévy 2014, 102). Lists of characters, grouping (*compagnie, train, societas*) those belonging to the same location (‘Le train de Babilonne’, ‘La Synagogue de Jérusalem’, ‘Enfer’, ‘Paradis’), or category (‘Les Juifs’, ‘Femmes à qui on tue les enfans’) can be included in author’s (clean) autograph, as in (49) 52rv and 106v-107r, in originals, as in (30) 1v, (64) 240r-241v (with players’ names), (40) 80v (with the number of lines of each character), (50) 255r-259v (by *matin* and *après-le-disner* of the three days of the performance), and fair copies: (7) 1r-2v, (51) 6r-7v.

**Meditation and Devotion** — Meditation is the act of reflecting on personal and moral issues through mental images by hearing or reading a text, looking at its paintings, to improve body and soul through emotions. A clerical and learned practice in the twelfth century, it entered religious practices of the laity in fourteen-fifteenth centuries to become central in spiritual exercises of the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries (Smith 2002, 60-61 and notes). Though meditation is distinct from devotion for it can be experienced with any kind of text or daily life event, it nevertheless leads to it as a step in the scale of praying. The life of Christ being the object of many treatises of meditation, it is likely that this practice is potentially involved in devotional readings of any *Passion* play and not only in copies prepared for (23)(36)-(46). Devotional reading is clearly expressed in a liminary text to the *Mystère de la Conception* (9) 1r: ‘Et est fait et compilé à l’onneur de Dieu et sa glorieuze mere, he à la singuliere devotion de treshaulte et puissante dame, madame la contesse de Monpansier’ (‘And this was done et compiled in honor of God and his glorious Mother, and for the particular devotion of the very high and powerful Lady, our mistress the countess of Montpansier’).

**Miscellany** — A group of autonomous texts assembled together or copied as a whole in a single manuscript (self-contained unit). Strictly speaking:

a ‘multitext book’ (Gumbert 1999, 27-28),<sup>8</sup> All ‘theatre’ texts before the end of the fourteenth century are part of miscellanies (see section 1. *Introduction*). Many plays, before that period, certainly had an autonomous circulation in independent self-contained units before being collected in such books. Theatre-oriented miscellanies were generally produced by communities involved in regularly producing plays for their feast, such as the aforementioned rich Parisian confraternity of goldsmiths who gathered forty years (1340-1382) of their annual miracle plays in honor of the Virgin in two volumes (24)(25) (Clark 1994; Maddox and Sturm-Maddox 2008), the companies competing for the Procession de Lille behind the performances and writing of 72 mysteries (75) (Knight 2001), or the confraternity of Notre-Dame de Liesse (56). Such also are some saints’ mystery plays which are a succession miracle plays, such as Gringore’s *Mystère de Saint Louis* (47) for the Carpenters of the *Grande Cognée*, or the *Mystère de saint Crépin* for the Shoemakers of Rouen and Paris (11)(58).

**Nondramatic activities** — All activities where the *textus* is copied, transmitted or performed for a different purpose than theatrical performance.

**Nonwritten sources** — Any event or cultural fact transmitted through a visual, aural or performative medium – image, song, tale, mime, dance, play. An imaginary debate and battle between the four services of the King’s household (Kitchen, Sauce, Bread, Wine) (27) is inspired by King Charles VI’s court environment. Major historical events lead to composition of plays: the Council of Basel (3), the peace treaties of Arras (72) and Péronne (14), the delivery of Orléans by Jeanne d’Arc (73). Many moralities and plays present deep contextual references to the time of the performance, but political content could be hidden behind an apparently religious subject. The *Jeu saint Loÿs*, apparently a hagiographical mystery play, is in fact a *chronicle play* (the *Grandes Chroniques de France* are its source) written as a propaganda instrument for Louis XI after the disastrous treaty of Péronne with the Duke of Burgundy (Smith 1987, 90-103).

**Original** (*le Livre, originalia, les originaux*) — The full text used as a reference book in a definite place and time, usually produced from an author’s draft (Figure 2, p. 40) or a conservatory original from a former performance in the same place, as in Troyes where they played a revised version of the same *Passion* for more than twenty years (71), or borrowed from some other town. Different *originaux* can be produced in the course of a single performance (Figure 7, p. 52). The most ancient ones date from the 1450s-1470s (31)(49) and their basic features remain the same in the sixteenth century (30)(40): an inverted double fold of whole in-folio paper quires (i.e. the sheets are not folded one by one, but in independent quires), perpendicular to the direction of writing, these folds justifying the text on the left of the recto and the verso of the folio (Smith 1998, 2003), no lineation, absolutely

<sup>8</sup> We do not use the word ‘miscellany’ in the meaning of ‘a purely haphazard arrangement’ as opposed to the ‘anthology’ which would be ‘a coherent grouping of texts’ as proposed by Stemmler (1991) quoted by Hunt (1999, 52). Gumbert (1999) remains fundamental for its critical analysis of the different terms describing ‘miscellanies’ and their correlated methodological issues.

no use of colored ink for any kind of decoration or punctuation, interlinear or marginal notes and signs (Figure 2, p. 40), interpolated lines and speeches (Figure 3, below and Figure 6, p. 51). Some ‘stage originals’ have their quires folded as holster books (see Figure 3, below).

There are different kinds of originals, depending on whether they were used for controlling rehearsals and performance (‘stage original’) or prepared afterwards for purposes of conservation (‘conservatory originals’) these being very clean copies without emendations. Stage originals are patent by their emendations (Figure 3 below), interpolations (Figure 6), cancellations and displaced parts. They can be modified to the point where it is necessary to have a new clean copy, as well as the players’ parts on which emendations of roles had been firstly reported during rehearsals. For evident reasons, this second original has to be executed as quickly as possible, so the whole work is given simultaneously to different copyists. The most obvious case is that of the *Mystère des Trois Doms*, where the three parts of the play are given on the same day to three notaries (Figure 7, p. 52), but in the *Jeu saint Loÿs* eight quires of the second and third days were given to eight copyists (Smith 1987, 10-14). This simultaneous selective distribution of work has been described by Gumbert (1989) as a copy system inspired by the *pecia* but fundamentally different. The format of holster book (*format agenda*) or long in-4° (two successive parallel foldings perpendicular to the long side of the full sheet in the middle, whereas the standard in-4° has the second folding perpendicular to the first one) is not the exclusive type of ‘stage original’: there are as many of those as in-folios (19 30 31 40 43 71) as of holster books (10 12 13 57 60). (It must be underlined, though, that some of these ‘stage originals’ are crossing the border delimited here and give also obvious conservatory features: 12 13 60 71).

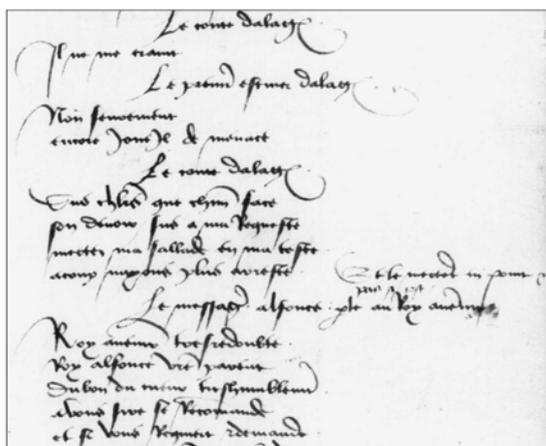


Figure 3 – *Mystère du Roy Advenir* (1455), original, f. 20r (detail): an interlinear note ‘pas si tost’ (‘not that early’) has been added in a small cursive hand by the author under the marginal note ‘Et le meccent en point’ (‘And they [the knights] arm him’); this interlinear note is neither transcribed nor indicated in the edition of the text (Meiller 1970, l. 1142)

Out of drafts and/or originals (in which quire signatures are numbered according to their different parts, or days, as independent self-contained units, Smith 1998), quires of the whole work are gathered and renumbered according to the new structure of the volume. From this source, together with other manuscript material of the performance – players’ parts, books of prologues, conductor’s book, lists – new copies for different needs, persons or communities are produced, all of them having their own personal, professional or moral link with the performance. Some are fair (9)(32)(33)(68) or luxury copies (21)(22)(39)(66), others display features of a conservatory original intended for keeping all necessary information for future reuses: clean copies, eventually with minor authorial corrections (15) (Smith 2017, 73), prosodic punctuation (69), music (28)(65). Copying this kind of text is the work of scribes, notaries and clerics who introduce peculiarities related to their proper professional practices, like the unusually dimensioned quires of the Rome manuscript of Gréban’s *Passion* with the third and fourth day following each other in the same quire (Smith 2011, 209-210), albeit days are normally copied in self-contained units in originals, as said earlier. Above all, the proximity with the performance, in the copying of any manuscript – whether original, private and current (37), fair or luxury – appears in various ways: lists, director’s name in the didascalical apparatus (65), performance account (50), unexpected presence of diacritic performative signs in a luxury copy of Gréban’s *Passion* (21) (Smith 2017, 165-166).

**Panel** (*brevet, écriteau, nom, nomen*) — Sheet of paper bearing a word naming a location or a person on stage, and pinned to a tapestry, a curtain, a scenery, or handled by a player. For the Mons performance in 1501, a priest was paid for having written 98 panels with big letters for locations’ names on the platform (*‘briefvés de grosses lettre des lieux sur le hourt’*, Cohen 1925, 536). Characters were carefully identified in the *Ascension* of Rodez, and it might have been a norm as for locations (68)53r: *‘Nota quod quilibet apostolorum suum tabernaculum habet et quilibet habet suum nomen et nomen provincie’* (‘Careful that each apostle has his location and each of them has his name and his province’s name’). When Mons’ conductor’s book specifies that [Adam] gives to [Eve] her name (*‘Il luy donne son nom’*), it means that he is handing her a panel with her own name (Smith 2001), implicitly emphasizing the woman’s role in teaching the alphabet and writing to small children. The holy origin and pedagogical use of the written word is also exemplified in a *Creation* (60) where God, having sent four angels in the cardinal directions, welcomes them back, each bringing a panel with a big gold letter that he spells out carefully to form the name of the first man: ADAM (Jeanroy and Teulié 1893, 2-6).

**Part** see **Player’s part**.

**Performance** — The time of the play (*jeu, ludus*), during which players (*joueurs, lusores, historiens*), in a definite playing area (*parcus, parc, platea, place*), sometimes on a scaffold (*échafaud, scafaldus, établie*) or platform (*plateforme, tabulatum*) give voices, gestures and sound to the *textus*. Performance can include moments of collective playing/reciting of episodes

extracted from such works as the *Ystoire de la destruction de Troye la Grand* for which no staged performance is recorded. The status of the manuscripts involved in its circulation and some didascalic notes clearly indicate performed readings, as for Cassandra’s prediction of Troy’s destruction in (51) 87r: ‘Il est asçavoir que Cassandra dira les huit lignes precedentes trois fois’ (‘Cassandra has to say three times the eight preceding lines’), reported as ‘Ter dicitur’ (‘It is said three times’) at the end of the last line of the same speech in (42) 97v.

**Player’s part** (*rôle, parchon*) — Manuscript containing all the speeches of the same character, with the cue words of its responding characters (61) (Figure 4, below). Prepared for transmitting, memorizing and rehearsing plays, parts have been closely studied by Lalou (1991). They are transcribed from an original, on folded sheets or scrolls of paper glued or sewed together and written on one side. Longer roles are copied recto and verso in booklets or in-4° registers (holster or standard). In great urban plays (Passions, Saints’ lives), parts are distributed to chosen players who commit themselves formally to rehearse and perform. It can happen that a second set of players’ parts is done in the course of rehearsals to update the *textus* with ongoing modifications (Figure 7).

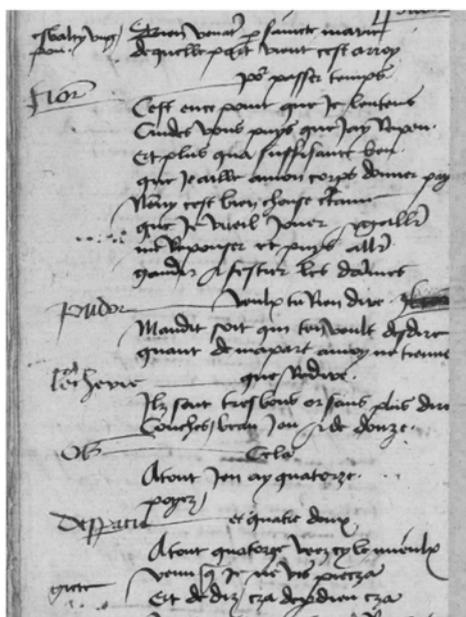


Figure 4 – *Moralité de l’Homme pécheur*, player’s part of Homo (XV<sup>3/3</sup>), containing all the speeches of the lead character. Because of its length (3500 lines), this part is a whole holster in-4° of 37 folios, also containing the names of its counterparts. Here (f. 5v), in the left margin, from top to bottom: ‘Timor’ (‘Fear’), ‘Pudor’ (‘Shame’), ‘Lecherie’ (‘Gluttony’), ‘Omnes’ (‘All’), ‘Desperacio’ (‘Despair’), linked by a follow-up line to their cue-words – and stage directions: in the top left margin, *a bit astonished* (‘esbahy ung pou’), and bottom, *he throws [dice]* (‘gicte’)

**Preaching** — Giving a sermon as a prologue, or in any part of a play, with the actual status of a preacher.

**Reading** — Individual or collective act of reading, silently or aloud.

**Rehearsal** (*récitation, répétition, record*) — Collective reciting of their parts by the players, to check their knowledge, teach them the necessary gestures and eventually adapt the text. Rehearsals are first conducted in a closed space (town hall, church), then on the platform or the chosen place of performance when ready.

**Sermon** — A sermon delivered as such during the performance of a play, which might later be incorporated in originals (41), fair or luxury copies (24)(25), in a prose or formatted version.

**Sources** — Any vernacular or Latin text: Scripture and its authorized or apocryphal commentaries, Church fathers, authorities, chronicles (*Historia Scolastica, Grandes chroniques de France, Journal du Siège d'Orléans ...*). Source references are very seldom indicated in the didascalical apparatus of manuscripts (9)(15), more often in some incunabula, sometimes with long Latin quotations, as in the *Incarnation et Nativité de Rouen* (Le Verdier 1884-1886) and printed editions of the sixteenth century.

**Teaching and learning** — Producing or using of a play in a pedagogical context (parish or town schools, pedagogies (a *pedagogium* is a primary boarding school) (20), colleges (54), convents (10)(44)(45) in order 'to teach while delighting' (*docere delectando*). For those manuscripts, it is very difficult to distinguish if they were produced by *magistri* or nuns for teaching (while entertaining), or by *scolares* for learning, or simply kept as models and memory of the event.

**Textus** — The formatted text: versified weft (*textus, trame*) to be memorized, copied, recited or performed, exclusive of any other textual element (belonging to the didascalical apparatus).

**Theatre performance practices** — Body, voice and mental techniques instrumentalizing the gestures, vocal and transformative capacities of a professional player (i.e. a person earning his living from these practices), transmitted as know-how through family links or apprenticeship.

### 3. *Performed Layers: the Textual Tradition of Maistre Pierre Pathelin*

The relation between text and performance among companies of players is best exemplified by *Maistre Pierre Pathelin*, the most celebrated play of medieval French theatre.<sup>9</sup> Generally coined a 'farce', the play was already considered a 'comedy' in the sixteenth century because of its complex plot.<sup>10</sup> Its tremendous success is testified by the existence of three manuscripts and a continuous flow of prints from the mid-1480s

<sup>9</sup> The most remarkable English translation of *Maistre Pierre Pathelin* has been given by the Scottish poet Edwin Morgan (1920-2010) who kept the verbal fantasy of the play within the original rhythm of octosyllabic couplets (Morgan 1983). Modern French translations of the Levet print has been done by Rousse (1999), and of manuscript Bigot (Smith and Dominguez 2008).

<sup>10</sup> The play, about 1.600 lines, is three times longer than most of the farces. In 1578, Henri Estienne writes in his *Dialogue du nouveau langage françois italianisé*: 'Il me semble que je luy fais grand tort en l'appelant une farce et qu'elle mérite bien le nom de comédie' ('It seems to me that I treat it quite unfairly if I call it farce, and that it merits the the name of comedy').

to the 1560s,<sup>11</sup> by continuations (*Le Nouveau Pathelin*, *Le Testament Pathelin*),<sup>12</sup> by scenes and neologisms quoted in contemporary plays (*Le Mystère des Actes des Apôtres*, *Le Mystère du Viel Testament*, *La Folie des Gorriers*), some of these having made their way into modern French, such as ‘revenons à nos moutons’ (‘let’s get back to the subject’), and ‘c’est lui tout craché’ (‘he is the very spitting image of him’).<sup>13</sup> Nothing is directly known about the composition and performance of the work, believed to have emerged during the 1460s in Paris or at the court of King René d’Anjou.

Both manuscripts Bigot (36) (46) and La Vallière (53) are miscellanies written in the mid-1470s.<sup>14</sup> The former is a book of meditation,<sup>15</sup> presenting exemplary men – saints or sinners, historical or literary – confronted with death and Man or God’s Justice, where *Pathelin* is included with sixteen other texts, its two main characters being utmost demonstrations of Pride (Maître Pierre) and Greed (Guillaume). The latter is a miscellany with exclusive theatre content: two moralities, followed by a long farce, a dyadic disposition emphasizing the performative nature of its content, as in the Hulthem manuscript (6),<sup>16</sup> with five characters in the plays’ cast of the first dyad (*Moralité à V personnages*, *Maistre Pierre Pathelin*), and six in the second dyad (*Moralité à VI personnages*, *La Pipée*). The third manuscript, Taylor (59), is a copy of a lost incunabula (Smith 2002, 80). Between these manuscripts, the text of *Maistre Pathelin* shows many variations. Not only are there hundreds of minute changes of vocabulary and word order, but also sixty-one interpolations (Figure 5 below). The longest of these interpolations is a 54-line scene<sup>17</sup> (‘Interpolations 5’,

<sup>11</sup> The most ancient known incunabula of *Pathelin* was printed in Lyon by Guillaume Le Roy, ca 1485-1486. The Parisian printings begin to be issued in the early 1490s, but it is not impossible that there had been some before. Up to 1560, at least 22 editions are known (Chartier and Martin 1982, 220), most of them preserved by a sole copy, which means that a great number of editions have completely disappeared.

<sup>12</sup> *Le Nouveau Pathelin*, *Le Testament Pathelin* (Tissier 1993-1994, vol. VIII).

<sup>13</sup> For the analysis of ‘c’est lui tout craché’ (‘he is the very spitting image of him’) to describe an absolute resemblance between two persons, see Väänänen 1981 and Smith 2002, 74-79.

<sup>14</sup> These manuscripts were given their names according to their last owner before integrating the King’s Library (today’s Bibliothèque nationale de France). It is only at the end of the twentieth century that MS Bigot and La Vallière have deserved real attention: they had been disregarded as late-sixteenth-century copies by the first scholarly editor of *Maistre Pierre Pathelin*, Richard T. Holbrook, and subsequently by all scholars up to Michel Rousse for La Vallière (1973) and Darwin Smith for Bigot (2002), who showed that they were not only anterior to the incunabulas but keys in understanding the history of the textual tradition.

<sup>15</sup> When bought in 1706 by the abbot Louvois, Curator of the King’s Library, the three quires of *Pathelin* in the Bigot’s manuscript were extracted from the rest of the miscellany (which became Regius 7669<sup>2</sup>, then fr. 1707) to be stored secretly with a stock of other works of particular interest, without being cataloged or registered anywhere. The existence of this stock, only known to chief Curators, was accidentally uncovered in the 1840s by a reader who caused a public scandal, which led the Ministry of the Public Education to order its integration and cataloging in the regular collections of the Library. The *Pathelin* quires were then bound and given the shelf mark ‘fr. 15080’ (for the details of this story and the meditative structure of the original miscellany as a whole, Smith 2002, 10-11, 37-68).

<sup>16</sup> The Hulthem manuscript is the most celebrated Flemish miscellany. These dramatic dyads, four *abele spelen* (‘ingenious plays’) and six *sotternien* (‘farces’) – two *abele spelen* are lacking – are considered a possible link with companies’ repertory (Westphal 1999, 82-84).

<sup>17</sup> We use the word ‘scene’ to qualify the smallest unit of a distinctive action of a character/group of characters in the same location (Smith 2017, 164, n. 39). Structural parts are never indicated, excepting in long plays, where formal addresses to the audience (*prologues finaux*)

MS Bigot, 978-1031), where the lawyer Pathelin, having swindled the tight-fisted Draper Guillaume out of a large piece of costly cloth, proudly announces that he will do still better and obtain a year's worth of bread from their neighbor's baker without paying a single dime. Shocked by these delusions of grandeur, Guillemette exclaims: 'Haro, vous voulez un royaume! Oncques mais je ne vy nul tel.' (*Au secours, vous voulez toujours plus! Je n'ai jamais vu quelqu'un comme lui.* 'Lord, you want ever more! I have never seen such a man').

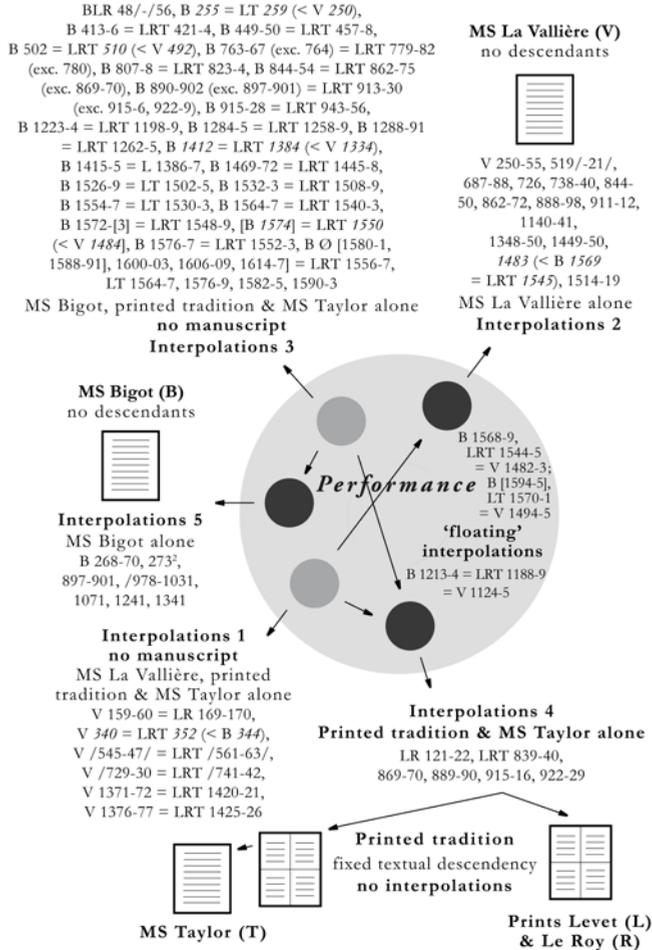


Figure 5 – The textual tradition of *Maistre Pierre Pathelin* as based on the interpolations between the different versions of the play (cf. Smith 2002, 79-101; 2012, 139)

acknowledge the ending of the performance, announcing the matter of the next part or day; in some originals, even the place of this separation can vary, and may be indicated by a sole line across the page, or a note of the type: 'hic potest pro eo die sufficere' ('It can suffice for this day').

Although the interpolation emphasizes the moral drift of the lawyer in the very perspective put forward by the miscellany, it fits the general design of the action as thematized in the opening of the play, when the quarreling Guillemette complains bitterly that they don't have anything more to eat nor to dress decently. Thus Pathelin is answering the first of her reproaches, the second one having driven him to look for cloth to swindle at the market. He then goes away, not behind the back curtain of the stage but through the spectators, as if leaving for the baker, and ends the first part of the play addressing the audience: 'PATELIN [*to Guillemette*] — Or gardez tres bien à l'ostel, je m'en vois par ycy devant. [*to the audience*] Messeigneurs, à Dieu vous command!' ('*Restez donc à la maison, je m'en vais par devant. Chers seigneurs, je vous recommande à Dieu!*'; 'So now stay at home, I'm going out frontway. Mylords, God be with you!'; Bigot, 1021-1023). The interval to follow, before the second part of the play, produces a strong dramatic effect by letting the spectator wonder, with Guillemette, how Pathelin could achieve such a task.<sup>18</sup>

All the other sixty interpolations show a link to theatre performance practices: jokes on stereotyped formulas, commented looks (Smith 2002, 83-99), mini scenarios built on gags of *lazzi* type with contrastive diastatic effects repeated according to different diatopic colors in the famous delirium scene (Smith 1989).<sup>19</sup> This link helps understand how, in opposition to the central idea behind most stemmatic research in medieval text traditions – i.e. that the exclusive presence of a singular element in one branch of the stemma, as opposed to the others, makes it independent –, in this particular case, all elements are working together in a circular way. The five groups of interpolations are five different written 'takes' of a *textus* performed by the same company of players, of the kind operating at that time (see Appendix I), the 'floating interpolations' being short dialogical gimmicks inserted independently of the main layers of variation (Smith 2002, 97-98; 2012, 138-140). The textual tradition of the play is thus transmitted in its repeated but not identical performances through five distinct written sedimentations.

On a broader time scale, we observe the same kind of process within the Shakespearian tradition, where the companions of the Poet, who had kept the body of their textual material under different forms – foul papers, prompt-books, drafts, the Book, plots, parts, memory – produced a *First Folio* presenting plays, notably *King Lear*, with many minute changes as well

<sup>18</sup> The end of the first part (we would call it an 'act') is clear in the couplet (*aa*) ending the Advocate's last speech, the following speech of the Draper beginning with a couplet on a new rhyme (*bb*), the speeches are not linked by the rhyme: 'LE DRAPPIER: En dea, maugré saint *Mathelin* ! Et mestre Pierre *Pathelin*...', a structural gap such as always occur between two days or two structurally independent episodes of a multi-days' play.

<sup>19</sup> In this famous scene, Pathelin is getting rid of the Draper by mocking him in different forged languages imitating regional dialects (diatopic), each of them structured according to various levels of language (diastatic), and simulating successively a too polite person, a braggart soldier, a dying man, etc.

as added lines and speeches in respect to the preceding *Quarto* (Taylor and Warren 1983). If nothing is known of the companies' performances and writing practices that could explain the various sedimentations of *Maistre Pierre Pathelin*, one can surmise that it happened in a way similar to the repertory of the King's Men. The death of their leading playwright caused publishing of what was their shared property, the text. That it happened for *Pathelin* in the mid-1470s, when both miscellanies were written down, fits with the departure of Triboulet, its leading performer/author,<sup>20</sup> following his master, King René, who left Anjou for Provence during Autumn 1471.<sup>21</sup> In this period of time, vernacular texts of the sort had not yet entered the printed book market,<sup>22</sup> and the five different sedimentations could correspond to a disbanded company of five players, each one having or producing his share of the common property through its own textual form. Repertories accumulated as textual treasures of companies over generations are certainly the source of the *Recueil de Florence*, the *Recueil Trepperel*, the *Recueil du British Museum*, and the *Grand Recueil La Vallière* (52), all printed or copied between 1515 and the 1570s, and constitute the bulk of the French *farces* and *sotties*.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4. *Writing and Performing Process of the Mystère des Trois Doms*

With the *Mystère des Trois Doms*, played at Romans in 1509, thanks to an account register of all the expenses of the performance, it is possible

<sup>20</sup> In 1980, Bruno Roy began to argue that *Pathelin* had been written by Triboulet, King René d'Anjou's fool (Roy 2009), and the principle of an Angevin origin has gained strong support from a thorough diatopic analysis (Greub 2003, 295-302). Today, on a different basis, the author of the present article agrees with Roy (Smith, Parussa, Halévy 2014, 511).

<sup>21</sup> It also fits chronologically with numerous quotes of *Pathelin* in the *Mystère des Actes des Apôtres*, in the dialogue between Ananie and his wife Saphire, work begun in 1473 (Smith, Parussa and Kanaoka 2009, 1<sup>er</sup> jour) by Simon Gréban and 'composés par le commandement du feu roy René de Cecille, duc d'Anjou et comte du Maine' ('composed by commission of the late King René of Sicily, duke of Anjou and count of Maine'), which indicates a possible channel by which Simon Gréban could have had copy of a text which had not yet widely circulated.

<sup>22</sup> The first printed vernacular books in Paris are the three volumes in-folio of the *Grandes Chroniques de France* (1475-1477) by Pasquier Bonhomme and only in the mid-1480s there appear the first small vernacular in-4<sup>os</sup> and in-8<sup>os</sup> of vernacular texts, such as the *Danse Macabre* by Guy Marchant (1485).

<sup>23</sup> Though the *Recueil de Florence* (53 texts, Koopmans 2011), the *Recueil Trepperel* (35 texts, Droz 1966), and the *Recueil du British Museum* (64 texts, Lewicka 1970) are gatherings of independent booklets (i.e. *recueils factices*), they are obviously constituting ensemble of their own, printed in the same span of time and, for the most part, produced by the same librarians and printers (see *Préfaces* of these editions and facsimiles), as is also the case for the 74 manuscript texts of the *Grand Recueil La Vallière* (Viollet Le Duc 1854).

to follow, together with the original (64), how layers of text, emendations and interpolations sediment in the writing process between author, town authorities and players. The only surviving manuscript shows all the features of an original (Figure 6, below), but detailed chronology of the work establishes it is but a second clean copy of a first one, integrating the emendations of commissaries in charge of censoring the text, as well as changes due to rehearsals, the first original having been made from the author’s draft by a copyist (Figure 7, p. 52). This second original integrates new performative emendations<sup>24</sup> and in particular long interpolations resulting from the wish of the commissaries to have the Tyrants’ parts – key roles due to their violent acting and coarse language – reviewed by a known playwright, with whom an initial collaboration had aborted.

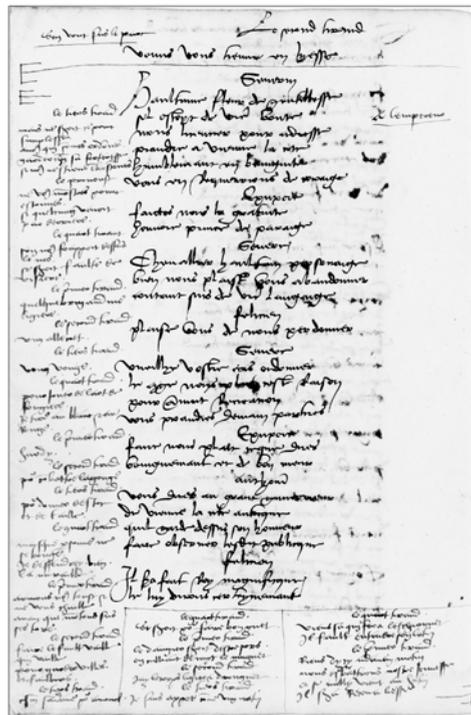


Figure 6 – *Mystère des Trois Doms* (1509), 2nd original, f. 162r, showing interpolations (in the margins) for the revised Tyrants’ parts (see Figure 7)

<sup>24</sup> Emendation of an original immediately after a rehearsal is reported for the 1573 *Passion* play in Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne: ‘Et après ledict records, iceulx commis ont baillé à moy, secrétaire subsigné, le livre dudict mistere pour iceluy mettre au net’, Runnalls 2003, 171, 27r (‘And after the said rehearsal, those in charge of it have given to me, undersigned secretary, the Book of the aforesaid mystery to make a clean copy’).

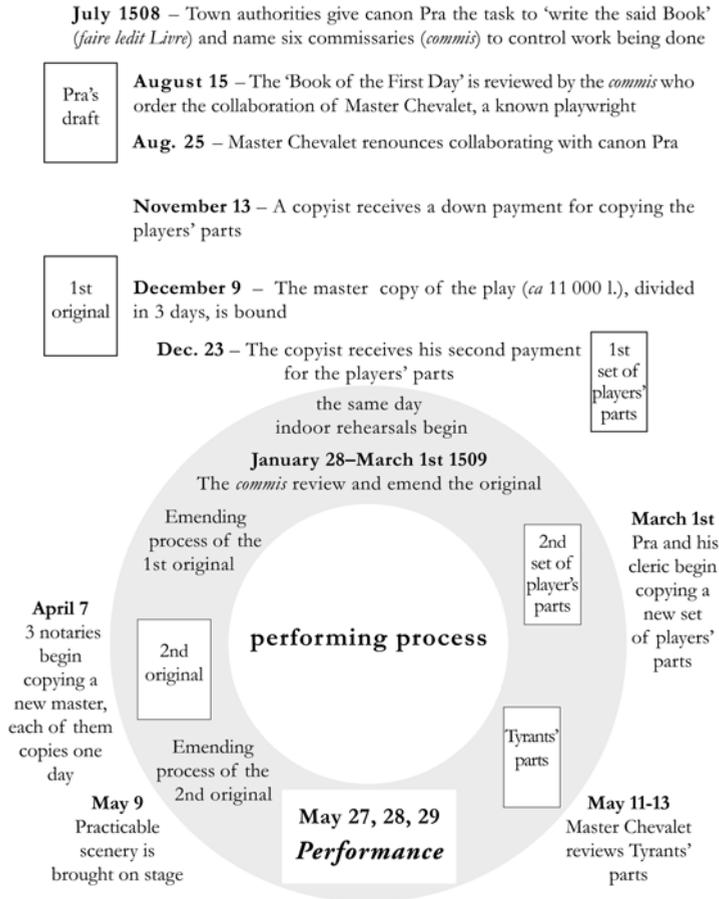


Figure 7 – Chronology of the writing and performing process of the *Mystère des Trois Doms* in Romans (sources for this chronology in Appendix II)

The whole process illustrates the necessity of having the reference book constantly updated with all wanted modifications, whether authorial, institutional or performative, in view of the expected performance, up to the moment when a new clean copy has to be produced and modified in its turn for the same reasons. It means that for a single performance different reference texts of the same work are produced, bearing witness to various moments of the process, apart from an author’s draft, or a conservatory original as model, or a printed copy used as a reference text, as occurs in the first half of the sixteenth century (Koopmans 1996).

## 5. Conclusions

In looking at different processes of text production such as those of *Maistre Pierre Pathelin* and the *Mystère des Trois Doms*, one has to recognize that the author is quite as much corporate as individual, and though in all types of playing a *textus* was certainly memorized, the voiced text remained plastic in performance, at least for some moments, some types of scene, some characters. *Fous, Stulti* or *Sots* had a central role in this plasticity. Appearing in the fifteenth century as masters of the juggler's tradition of singing, reciting, miming and playing, their role crystallized as commentators of the actions on stage as the world's scene, probably because their presence developed in parallel with the monumental forms of dramatic texts structured by the scholarly models of the *glossa* and the *ars oppositorum* (Smith 2017, 157, 170-172).

The *lazzi*-type of extemporization from a memorized *textus*, which appears in thirteenth-century France and continued throughout the end of the fifteenth century, and the existence of repertories kept by professional companies of players, challenge on the one hand the textualistic approach with which the written word has been taken at face value for the voiced text in performance and, on the other hand, the admitted frame of modern professional theatre's beginnings with the scenarios, playing practices and contracts of the Italian troops of the *commedia delle maschere* in mid-sixteenth-century Italy. What Jean-Auguste Desboulmiers describes, in 1769, as the 'jeu à l'impromptu' of the tradition known today as *commedia dell'arte* in his *Histoire anecdotique et raisonnée du théâtre italien*, is in accordance with what we understand about extemporizing in the French medieval playing traditions of companies. He concludes saying that 'l'impromptu, quant au fond, devient une affaire de mémoire, où l'Acteur ne fournit que des liaisons et un langage bien ordonné, dont il doit avoir l'habitude' (Taviani and Schino 1984, 33-35; 'extemporizing, basically, becomes a matter of memory where the actor gives only links and a well-ordered language which he must have mastered'). Our history of the theatre cannot be built on the literality of the written texts. Written diacritic signs and textual *mouvance* of the performance have to be understood through an effort to reconstruct playing practices that were viewed, heard, repeated over generations, and probably metabolized between two countries which had experienced dense cultural, individual and collective exchanges during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in all other fields of artistic activity.

\* \* \*

**Appendix I** — Company's contract between four players in 1486 (translation); original text in Smith (2002, 152), and with contexts in Bouhaïk-Gironès and Lavéant (2011).

Jehan Brebion, Jehan Dondez, Philippot Huibost et Jehan Toustain, all inhabitants in Paris, acknowledged of having associated in a company, beginning today and for

a whole year, to play together farces and all other forms of entertainment, including banquets, dances and other feasts, in any places during the aforesaid period of time. They engage themselves to share among them in an equal way the profits that shall come out of it, each of them receiving its right share and portion. They also promise to declare to one another in a loyal manner all obtained benefits, without hiding any of them.

It was agreed between parties that all income earned by any of them ... either individually or all together shall be shared in an equal and fair manner and no one shall play in another company without consent of the other associates. Similarly, if one of them could not or didn't want to play and, by his absence, others could not play, he shall be bound to retribute to the others the money share they would have earned from the aforesaid performance; and if, in the aforesaid situation, they play without him, he would not have any of the obtained profits.

Each of the parties promise to respect what was establish above, under penalty of prison and a fine of two gold crowns, half of it payable to the companions. With the consent of all and without any objection, they promise to keep this contract in its form and force for any infraction whatsoever. Obliging ... Renouncing ... Done in Paris, Thursday 2 March 1486, four copies.

**Appendix II** — Sources for the writing and performing process of the *Mystère des Trois Doms* (Figure 7), from the account register of the performance (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouvelles acquisitions françaises 1261, edited by Giraud 1848).

**July 1508**, Giraud 1848, 41: '... fut donné charge à monsieur le chanoine Pra de Grenoble de fere ledit livre ...'. — **August 15**, Giraud 1848, 43: '... quant les commys visitarent ce que monsieur le chanoine Pra avoyt fait o livre du premier jour ... fut conclu par les comis d'aller à Vienne pour amener mestre Chivallet pour estre coajuteur avesque ledit chanoine Pra pour fere le livre des Troys Martirs ...'. — **August 25**, Giraud 1848, 43-44: '... le 25 d'ost à mestre Chivallet, fatiste de Vienne, tan pour sa venue que pour son retour pour ce qu'il ne volit pas besognier avesque ledit chanoine Pra ...'. — **November 13**, Giraud 1848, 45: 'Payé le 13<sup>e</sup> jour de novembre à Ponson Rollan en deducion des roles dudit livre monte à la part de la ville la somme de 2 fl.'. — **December 9**, Giraud 1848, 45: 'Payé le 9<sup>e</sup> jour de decembre à mestre Jehan Astier pour ugne peau de parchemyn pour covrir les livres des Troys Martirs ...'. — **December 23**, Giraud 1848, 45: 'Payé le 23<sup>e</sup> de decembre à Ponson Rollan en deducion des roles dudit livre et ... Payé ledit jour pour charbon pour porter o Courdelliers pour faire les records ...'. — **January 28-March 1st 1509**, Giraud 1848, 47: 'Payé le 28 de janvyer pour ugne colacion fecta en la meyson de la ville en relevant plusieurs fautes o livre du segond jour ... Payé le 24 de fevrier pour despance fecta en la meyson de la ville et autre part pour ce que l'on a vaqué certains jours et nuys pour adresser le livre du premier jour... Payé le 1<sup>er</sup> jour de mars pour despance fecta en la meyson de la ville et autre part pour ce que l'on a vaqué certains

jours et nuys pour adresser le livre des deux jours ...'. — **March 1st**, Giraud 1848, 47-48: 'Payé ledit jour pour apointement fet avesque monsieur le chanoyne Pra pour refere les rolles des troys jours enclus les rolles de la translacion ...'. — **April 7**, Giraud 1848, 64: 'Payé ledit jour à mestre Perdrychon, notere de Romans, pour copier le livre de la seconde journee, la somme de 2 fl. 4 s. ; Payé ledit jour à mestre Jaques Beille, notere de Romans, pour copier le livre du premier jour, la somme de 2 fl. 4 s.; Payé ledit jour à mestre Girard Rostaing, notere de Romans, pour copier le livre du tiers jour des Martirs, la somme de 2 fl. 4s.'. — **May 9**, Giraud 1848, 76: 'Payé ledit jour pour fere porter tours, tornelles, pourtaux et autres choses neceseres pour le jeu, monte 3 s.'. — **May 11-13**, Giraud 1848, 81-82: 'Plus ay demeuré à Vienne au Trois Roys 4 jours, que monte à 8 fl. par jour, 24 fl.; Plus pour 6 repas à mestre Guillaume et à Chevallet, 12 fl.; Plus bayhé à mestre Chevallet, 7 fl. 2 s. 6 d.'. 'Plus pour fere rabilher mon rolle particulier en aulcuns passages, dernièrement en venant de Lyon, ung reston, que fait 9 fl.'; 84: 'Payé ledit jour par le comandement de messieurs les commys à noble Estienne Combez pour aller à Vienne pour fere radouber les roles des quatre Tirans, comment coste par sa parcelle que monte 12 fl. 3 s.'.

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One asterisk\* indicates a digital scanning of a black and white microfilm, two asterisks\*\* a direct digital colour image of the manuscript. Any date or period of time refers to the copying of the text/manuscript; unless otherwise specified, it gives the present author's estimation. 'Jonas' indicates that the content of the miscellany is detailed online by the site <<http://jonas.irht.cnrs.fr>>. Bibliography refers to editions.

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