



# The *Jeu d'Adam*

MS Tours 927 and the  
Provenance of the Play

Edited by Christophe Chaguinian



EARLY DRAMA, ART, AND MUSIC

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# The *Jeu d'Adam*: An Anglo-Norman Text?

Catherine Bougy

## Abstract

Although traditionally considered by linguists as an Anglo-Norman text, the *Jeu d'Adam*, when subjected to close dialectal and linguistic analysis, shows itself to be a complicated work. Originally written in a twelfth-century variety of continental French bearing features typical of the Western *Langue d'oïl* (rather than Normand-Picard) dialects, the text is the product of multiple subsequent revisions undertaken—consciously or unconsciously—by insular copyists, but also, in all likelihood, by actors taking pains to adapt it to the English public for which it was to be performed.

ANGLO-NORMAN, SPOKEN AND WRITTEN in England after the Norman Conquest and up through the beginning of the fifteenth century, is one the dialects of *Langue d'Oïl*, and more specifically, a Western *Langue d'Oïl* dialect, due to the origins of the conquerors of England in 1066: Normans, Bretons and individuals from the Northwest of France. It becomes a second language by the end of the twelfth century.<sup>1</sup>

The *Jeu d'Adam*<sup>2</sup> is referred to as an Anglo-Norman text by Pope<sup>3</sup> and by Ian Short,<sup>4</sup> while Geneviève Hasenohr considers it as “un texte de l'Ouest (au sens large)” (a text from Western France (broadly defined.))<sup>5</sup> All modern editors have considered this text to be an Anglo-Norman work, basing their own studies on the work of Studer, an English editor of probable nationalistic motivations,<sup>6</sup> who, in turn, drew on the work of Grass.<sup>7</sup> In 150 years, our knowledge of Old French and of Anglo-Norman has progressed, and a linguistic analysis undertaken by a specialist in the History of the French Language who is also a dialectologist may shed new light on this question.

We will first identify the major characteristic features of the language of the *Jeu* and comment on them. Following this, we will establish the date of the work and its geolinguistic provenance and conclude with the question of its possible Anglo-Norman origins.



## The Major Characteristic Features of the *Jeu d'Adam*

What immediately strikes the reader of this text is the coexistence of linguistic features which are contradictory both in geolinguistic terms (Anglo-Norman and Continental French) as well as in historical terms (old and new forms). These features include spelling conventions as well as phonetics, morphology and morphosyntax.

### Spelling Conventions

The text presents equivalent and concurrent spelling systems which belong to both Anglo-Norman and Continental French.

1) [k] (result of Latin [kw]<sup>8</sup>), spelled *k*, *ch* / *qu*

In old Continental French, the spelling *qu* is typical for the relative pronouns *qui*, *que* and for the conjunction *que*, while the connector *car* (Latin *quare*) is most often written with a *c*. *Onc* (Latin *unquam*) is spelled *onc* or *onques*. In the *Jeu*, these forms occur in combination with others identified as Anglo-Norman.

a) *k* “appears in the earliest AN MSS” (Short 116): “*Ki* me trara d’itel dolors?” (v. 338) / “*Ke* as tu fet?” (v. 391). The use of *k* occurs a total of 10 times.<sup>9</sup>

b) *ch*, “a common alternative to *k*” (Short 116), is used 17 times, including 8 occurrences of *chi* and 4 of *char* ‘for, because’ (Modern French “*car*”): “*Chi* avrad mais de moi memorie” (v. 347); “*Char* de Israel Cristus istera *Qui* ert estoille de clarté” (vv. 822–23).<sup>10</sup>

*Unches* (vv. 327, 519, 684) and *onches* (vv. 373, 615), alternate with the French forms *unc* (v. 304), *onc* (v. 915), and *onques* (v. 741).

However, the preponderance of French spellings is evident given that we can identify 41 examples of *qui*, more than 100 of *que*, and 11 of *car*: “*Car* fust arse iceste coste *Qui* m’ad mis en si male poste!” (vv. 359–60); “Mort, *car* me pren! Ne suffret que jo vive!” (v. 573).

2) *u* / *o*

The Old French spelling *o* corresponds most often to *u* in Anglo-Norman. The following lines illustrate various examples of the use of these two spelling conventions: “*Escut* Adam entent a moi Je te *conseillerai* en fei *Que* *porras* estre senz *seignor* E seras per del *creatur*. Je te dirrai *tute* la *summe* Si tu *manjues* la *pome*” (vv. 187–92).

It is to be noted that *u* can have different values, as the result of the French spelling system.

- a) *u* represents, in Anglo-Norman, the result of a tonic closed unchecked *o* in Latin: *creatur* (Lat. *creátore*). The latter, diphthongized into [ou] in the sixth century, evolves into [ø] in Old French, written *eu*, in the twelfth century: *createur*. In the same period, it reduces to [u], spelled *ou* in Western d’Oïl dialects on the Continent, and *u* in Anglo-Norman: *creatour/creatur*.
- b) The letter *u* can also represent the result of a closed checked *o*: *tute* (Classical Lat. *tóta*, Late Lat. *\*tótta*, with gemination); a closed *o* checked by *l* + consonant: *escut* (Lat. *\*ascólta*), phonemes which closed to [u] in Old French in the twelfth century and which were then written *ou*. It also represents *o* + nasal: *summe*.
- c) In Anglo-Norman, *u* can represent [y] as in French: *tu, manjues*.  
In the passage cited above and throughout the text, the Anglo-Norman spelling *u* (*creatur, tute, somme*) and the French spelling *o* (*seignor, porras, pome, conseillerai*) are interspersed.
- d) As a result of hypercorrection, alternations between *o* and *u* can occur in the diphthongs *ui* (which represents [yi]) and *oi* (which yields [we]): *froit* (vv. 472, 776, 2 occ.) written for *fruit* (form attested in v. 19); *cruiz* (v. 810, 1 occ.) for *croiz*<sup>11</sup>.

These alternations suggest an imperfect knowledge of the phonetic values of letters in Continental French. They are very likely the work of insular copyists.

## Phonetics

- 1) The rhyme *criator : dur* (vv. 231–32)

This rhyme is often considered irrefutable proof of an Anglo-Norman origin of the text.

- a) The rhyme does not stem from the spelling, but rather from phonetics. Indeed, in the verses “Mal cuple em fist li *criator*: Tu es trop tendre e il trop *dur*,” the author rhymes the product of a Latin [u] which palatalized to [y] in the eighth century (*dúru*: ‘hard’, Mod. Fr. “dur”) with that of a tonic closed unchecked *o* which diphthongized to [óu] in the sixth century and which simplified to [ø] in Old French at the beginning of the twelfth century (*creátore*). In Central French, therefore, *criator* and *dur* cannot rhyme.

- b) In contrast, in the Western dialects of Langue d'Oil, which includes Anglo-Norman, the diphthong [óu] simplified to [u] at the beginning of the twelfth century. In these dialects, *criator* (popular form of *creator*, with closure of an unstressed *e* in hiatus to *i*) can therefore be pronounced [kriatur]. On the other hand, the [u] in *dur* underwent the Anglo-Norman velarization of [y] to [u]: [dur]. We can therefore consider that *criator* and *dur* may in fact rhyme in an Anglo-Norman context.

Is this an original or secondary rhyme? For his part, Short maintains that this is not “of itself a sufficient condition to qualify a word as AN.”<sup>12</sup>

With regard to this rhyme, we will consider a hypothesis offered by Christophe Chaguinian,<sup>13</sup> that this line of verse was reworked by one of the actors of the play, seeking to render its language more accessible and more familiar to the Anglo-Norman public for whom he was performing.

- 2) The absence of palatalization of *n* to [ɲ] and of [l] to [ë]

In French, an *n* followed by a yod ([j], unstressed *i* in hiatus) palatalizes starting in the second century A.D. and remains unchanged through the present intervocalically. Similarly, an *l* followed by a yod palatalizes in the third century into [l] (only simplifying to [j] at the end of the seventeenth century). In Anglo-Norman, the palatalization of *n* and *l* is rarely observed in the texts.

- a) This phenomenon is revealed in the spellings *verguine* (v. 94), *vergoine* (v. 399) ‘shame’ Mod. Fr. “vergogne,” and in the rhymes *lignee* : *maisnee* (vv. 857–58); *cumpainun* (‘companion’, Mod. Fr. “compagnon”); *noun* (vv. 9–10) which associate a palatalized *n* and a non-palatalized *n*.

It is also present, in only three occurrences, in the rhymes *merveille* (*mirabilia*) : *(e)steille* (*stélla* v817–18); *pareil* (*pariculu*) : *fiel* (‘faithful’, Mod. Fr. “fidèle,” Lat. *fidèle* vv. 11–12).

Pope explains this by “the absence of the palatal sounds in the English sound-system.”<sup>14</sup>

- b) Nevertheless, if it is correct to state that the absence of palatalization of *n* (like that of *l*) is indeed an Anglo-Norman phenomenon, we may also consider, as does Richard Ingham, that this may be an instance of a neutralization of the rhyme (poetic licence), such as one also finds in popular song.<sup>15</sup> One will also note that the

Normand Guillaume de Saint-Pair, a likely contemporary of the author of the *Jeu d'Adam*, in his *Roman du Mont Saint-Michel* (Basse-Normandie, ca. 1155), rhymes *montaignes* ('mountains', Pop. Latin \**montánea*) et *pleignes* ('plains', Mod. Fr. "plaines," Lat. *plana*, vv. 782–84); *essoigne* ('excuse', Mod. Fr. "excuse," Pop. Latin \**exónia*) and *moine* ('monk', Pop. Latin \**mónicu*, vv. 101–2).<sup>16</sup>

- c) Finally, it will be noted that certain palatalized forms are present in the text: *engingna* (v. 442); and in the rhyme: *enseigne* : *se feigne* (vv. 619–20). Numerous rhymes also attest to the palatalization of *l*, such as *mail* : *travail* (vv. 483–84); *pareil* : *conseil* (vv. 265–66, 355–56, *parail* : *conseil* (*parail* : *conseil* in italics) vv. 373–74); *vaille* : *faille* (vv. 341–42), etc.

It is therefore not beyond consideration that the few non-palatalized 'Anglo-Norman' forms are due to the work of insular copyists, who substituted them for preexisting French forms.

- 3) The reduction of the diphthong [je] (*-ier, -ié*) to [e]
- a) In French, the final diphthongized [ié] in *mangier* (v. 177), *pecchié* (v. 328), only simplifies to [je], then to [e], in the thirteenth century, following the palatal consonants [ʃ] [ʒ] [ʎ]. The appearance of this phenomenon in the spelling system does not occur until the fifteenth century.
- b) In Anglo-Norman [ie] evolves early into [e] at the end of the eleventh century, regardless of the phonetic environment, following a palatal consonant, *manger* (v. 148), *tocher* (v. 516); or a non-palatal consonant: *l'autrer* : *provender* (vv. 175–76).

The two evolutions occur alongside one another and are even associated in the text, a fact that suggests a reworking of the original text. Thus, in the rhyme *pité* ('pity', Mod. Fr. "pitié") : *esleecié* (vv. 803–4), the form *pité* may be considered a secondary rhyme.

- 4) The question of centralized *e* (or 'e caduc')

The centralized *e* is the result of an unstressed vowel (often *a*) which weakened in the development of Latin into French. It is realized in continental versification, but disappears when it occurs in hiatus in front of a word beginning with a vowel or at the end of the last syllable in a line. The Continental poets generally mastered its use. A good

number of the verses of the *Jeu d'Adam* conform to the versification norms for Continental Old French:<sup>17</sup>

“Tu es *fieblett(e) e tendre chos(e)*, E es plus *fresche que n'est ros(e)*” (vv. 227–28).

“Tel *homm(e) istra de ma semenc(e)*, Qui *changera nostre sentenc(e)*” (vv. 763–64).

However, many of these have an unbalanced number of syllables, either due to the presence in a word of an *e* which would not be realized in French versification, or conversely, due to its deletion in a word where it would usually be pronounced. This treatment of the central *e* is considered “one of the most notorious AN characteristics.”<sup>18</sup> This is explained by the fact that this phoneme is unknown in Anglo-Norman.

a) Deletion of central *e*

– “Nel *fra* pas car nel *crerai*” (v. 285, -1 syllable) = *fera(i)*; “Dunt tu *duses* vergunder” (v. 396, -1) = *deüsses*; “*Tut* ta force et tot tun sens” (v. 32, -1) = *tute*.

The addition of an *e* in the words cited above makes it possible to reconstitute them to their expected forms and to give to the verse the number of syllables necessary to create balance.

b) Insertion of a svarabhaktic *e*, based on the model of *-er* verbs (of the type *amerai*)

– “Ja n'avras faim, por bosoing ne *beveras*” (v. 53, +1); “Ja n'averas frait, ja chalt ne sentiras (v. 54, +1);” “Est il tant bon? Tu le *saveras*” (v. 295, +1).

The substitution of *beveras*, *avras*, *savras* balances each of the verses cited above.

Should one attribute these imperfect verses to the author himself, possibly uninformed about the metrics of Continental French? It is doubtful since in the stage directions, he warns the actors against errors of metrics which could compromise the rhythm of his verses: “*Et in rithmis nec sillabam addant nec demant sed omnes firmiter pronuncient et dicantur seriatim que dicenda sunt.*” (and in the verse they shall neither add nor omit away a syllable but pronounce all clearly and say in proper order what they have to say).<sup>19</sup>

Our hypothesis is that these forms could have been introduced into the text by copyists or actors who chose a diction which conformed to Anglo-Norman pronunciation, more natural and more familiar to the ears of the insular public, even at the risk of sacrificing the regular rhythm of the verses.<sup>20</sup>

## Morphosyntax

## 1) The system of declensions

According to Geneviève Hasenohr, the distinction between *cas sujet* and *cas régime*<sup>21</sup> was rarely made in Anglo-Norman: “L’anglo-normand a de tout temps si peu respecté les règles de la déclinaison qu’on a pu affirmer qu’elle n’avait jamais été en vigueur en Angleterre” (Anglo-Norman so consistently ignored the rules of the declension system that one could state that it was never in effect in England.)<sup>22</sup> In the *Jeu d’Adam*, numerous examples of nouns, adjectives and of determiners used in a case or with a form that does not correspond to their function illustrate this fact, with a few exceptions worth explaining.

a) The confusion of *cas sujet* (CS) - *cas régime* (CR)

- “Tu es *mi freres* li ainez” (v. 675): expected CS singular form *mi(s) frere*.
- “Od vos serra cum *homme* mortals Li *sires le* celestials” (vv. 873–74): expected CS singular form *huem* or *hom*; *li sire li* celestials.
- “*Li fel serpent* [...] me fist mangier” (v. 575): expected CS singular form *li fels serpent*.
- “*Le fouc* estoit molt *fier e grant*” (v. 935): expected CS singular form *li fous*; *fiers e grant*.
- “De *tuit le fruit* de Paradis Puis jo manger?” (v. 147): expected CR form *tot*.
- “A ton *bels cors*” (v. 253): expected CR singular form *bel*.
- “Tu as *li bien*, ne seiez joir;” “*Li ton* pecché ploreront;” “Ne de tocher *li fruit* de vie” (vv. 125, 460, 516): expected CR singular *le* in these three verses.
- “*Tes emfanz* en dolor naistrunt” (v. 455): expected CS plural *ti emfant*.

We observe nevertheless that, if the forms in these verses display a constant declensional ‘shortcoming’, they all respect the meter without exception.

## b) Two-stem nouns

- Certain two-stem nouns, such as CS *sire* / CR *seignor* and CS *traître* / CR *traïtor*, present forms that correspond to their function:

- “Tu es mon serf et jo ton<sup>23</sup> *sire*” (v. 405, connected to the rhyme in v. 406 *contredire*); “Il volst traïr ja son *seignor*” (v. 289, connected to the rhyme in v. 290 *halzor*).

The *Jeu* presents 12 occurrences of the form of *cas sujet sire* and 11 of that of *cas régime seignor*, all regular.

- (Adam) “Ne creire ja le *traïtor*! Il est *traïtre*. (Eve) Bien le sai” (vv. 280–81). *Traïtor* is connected to the rhyme in *honor* (v. 279).

These *cas sujet* and *cas régime* forms which conform perfectly to the declension are, according to all evidence, the work of the author who demonstrates mastery of the nominal morphosyntax of this category of morphologically complex nouns. Copyists did not rework them, since they were essential to the rhyme (and to the meter). Contrasting with the erroneous forms present in the text as a whole, they attest to the earlier state of the work as well as the extent of the subsequent modifications.

- c) The masculine singular possessive adjectives: two concurrent patterns

The French possessive *mes*, in *cas sujet*: “*mes* pecchiez me dehaite” (v. 565, 1 occ.) occurs alongside its Anglo-Norman equivalent *mis* (in front of a vowel) or *mi* (in front of a consonant): “Cil serra *mis* amis” (v. 84, 1 occ.); “tu es *mi* frères<sup>24</sup>” (v. 675, 3 occ.).

- d) The connector introducing hypothetical clauses

Old French *se* and Anglo-Norman *si* are employed concurrently: “*Se* de bon cuer le voloms obeïr N’averont nos almes poür de perir” (vv. 601–2, 7 occ.); “*Si* tu le fais ne peccheras de rien” (v. 72, 16 occ.). *Si* is the predominant form in the *Jeu*.

Since *si* only becomes generalized in French in the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries, we shall consider it here as an Anglo-Norman form.

Metrically equivalent to *se*, and not appearing in rhymes, *si* can easily result from a simple inconsequential adaptation of the text toward the speech habits of its intended public. The same is true of *mis* / *mi* with regard to the French form *mes*.

The *Jeu d’Adam* thus presents many of the characteristic features of Anglo-Norman. These features are attested in a small number and always occur concurrently with their French realizations. A certain number of these fea-

tures may be attributed to the author, but their coexistence with the regular forms of French suggests rather that they are the work of one or more scribes who, in copying the text, consciously or unconsciously, introduced into it elements of their own writing and linguistic habits, which were also those of their audience.

Certain details of the text allow us to distinguish between the original linguistic elements and those which can be analyzed as secondary. They also permit us to narrow down the date of the work as well as the place of origin of its author.

### The Linguistic Situation of the Original Text (Date, Geolinguistic Zone)

*Ço, jo, hom*: archaic forms

- 1) *ço* < \**ecce hoc* (38 occ.) is the archaic form of the neuter demonstrative “ce”  
“N’ ai nul bosoing de *ço* saveir” (v. 123).

*Ço* weakens to *ce* before 1150. The form *ce* is rare in the *Jeu*: “Por *ce* perdrunt lor oncïon” (v. 838, 4 occ.).

- 2) *jo* (< *ego*) “je,” is very frequent in the text (100 occ.); *hom* (< *homo*), ‘one,’ Mod. Fr. “on,” is rarer (3 occ.)

“Que *jo* guerpi le seignor que *hom* aure” (v. 521)

In the twelfth century, *jo* weakens to *je*: “*Je* te mettrai od lui en gloire” (v. 39, 3 occ. in the *Jeu*) and *hom* replaced by *on* (no occurrences).

Let us clarify that neither the Anglo-Norman forms *ceo*, *jeo* nor the Norman forms *cen*, *jen* are attested in the *Jeu d’Adam*. The archaic French forms are thus the dominant ones.

### The Distribution of the Forms of the Neuter Negator *nen* / *ne*

*Nen* constitutes, in all of the dialects of Langue d’Oil, the weakening of the Latin negation form *non*.

- 1) In front of a vowel, the negation retains the form *nen*

“Le fruit que Deus vos a doné *Nen* a en soi gaires bonté” (vv. 245–46)

There are 10 occurrences of *nen* in the *Jeu d'Adam*.

2) In front of a consonant, the final *n* is lost (*non* > *nen* > *ne*)

“Em peril sui, *ne* puis venir a rive” (v. 574); “Si jo misfis, *ne* fu merveille grant” (v. 465, 82 occ.).

3) Use of elided *ne* (*n'*)

The *Jeu* contains 67 elided forms of *ne* (instead of *nen*) in front of a vowel: “*N'* porras ja changer li toen eage” (v. 98, 10 syllables); “E lor chastel *n'*iert pas vilains” (v. 762, 8 syllables). The original character of the elided negation is confirmed by the metrics.

Present from the time of the *Chanson de Roland* alongside *nen*, the elided form competes with the original form from the time of the first French texts. The distribution of *nen* / *ne* is still attested in texts of the twelfth century. *Nen* disappears in the thirteenth century and is replaced by *n'*.

### Vocalisation of *l* in Front of a Consonant

In central French and the dialects of Langue d'Oïl, an *l* vocalizes in front of a consonant in the second half of the eleventh century: *volerât* > *voldrât* > *voudrá*.

In the *Jeu d'Adam*, this vocalization is evident in a very small number of spellings. Thus, the forms of the future of the verb *voloir* are *voldrai* (v. 42), *voldras* (vv. 126, 416), *voldra* (vv. 186, 590, 11 occ.), with no examples of the base *voudr-*. Similarly, *oisels* (v. 62); *mielz* (v. 115); *voels* (v. 198) appear only in their archaic form.

There are only 3 occurrences of *au*: *au roi* (vv. 348, 360), *au sablon* (v. 704), along with *al*: *al mond* (v. 91), *al soir* (v. 652, 14 occ.). *Altre* predominates: “De l'*altre* fruit rien ne lui chalt” (v. 155, 7 occ.), but one finds also *l'autrer* (v. 175) and *l'autrier* (v. 395), literally ‘the other yesterday’, Mod. Fr. “l'autre hier.”

The conservative spelling of *l* is thus the dominant one, and we can consider *au*, *autr(i)er* as results of later changes to the composition of the work.

The Evolution of Tonic Closed Unchecked *e*  
or of a Closed *e* + yod from Latin;  
That of a Tonic Closed Unchecked *o* from Latin

- 1) Tonic closed unchecked *e* diphthongizes to [ei] in the sixth century: Latin *mé* > [méi]
  - a) In Old French, the diphthong [éi] develops into [ói] of the beginning of the twelfth century: [méi] > [mói] spelled *moi*.
  - b) In the Western dialects of Langue d’Oil, where this evolution does not occur, [ei] simplifies to [e], also at the beginning of the twelfth century: [méi] > [me]. The product of the diphthong is written *ei*, *ai* or *e*: *saveir* (Lat. *sapére*) (vv. 123, 136, 158), *saver* (vv. 115, 116, 237, 251, 284, 296); *feï* (Clas. Latin *fide*, Late Latin *fède*, v. 186), *fai* (v. 236).

In the *Jeu*, the product of the diphthong is present in its French form and that of Western Langue d’Oil, including its use in rhyme: *tei* : *moi* (vv. 13–14); *toi* : *fai* (‘faith’, Mod. Fr. “foi” vv. 235–36); *rois* : *trais* (‘three’, Mod. Fr. “trois” vv. 853–54); *moi* : *feï* (vv. 187–88); but also *toi* : *foi* (vv. 287–88).

One passage in the manuscript presents the rhyme *savoir* : *aver*, with a correction of *savoir* to *saveir*: Adam: “N’ai nul bosoing de ço *savoir*!” (corrected with a subscript *e*: *saveir*) Diabolus: “Kar tu ne *deiz* nul bien *aver*!” (vv. 123–24). We will consider that this is a question of rectification, undertaken by a copyist, of a form that he had written *-oi-*, while the original rhymed *saveir* et *aver*.

We can analyze these spellings either as conservative, with the author pronouncing [oi] but continuing to write *-ei*, *-ai* or *-e*, or as dialectal and revealing of the origin of the author in the Western d’Oil geolinguistic zone, where the diphthong [ei], undifferentiated, simplified to [e] in the twelfth century.

- 2) Latin tonic closed unchecked *o* diphthongizes to [óu] in the sixth century
  - a) In Old French, [óu] evolves to [éu] in the second half of the eleventh century, then to [øu] in the first half of the twelfth century, and monophthongizes to [ø], spelled *eu*, in the first half of the twelfth century.
  - b) In the Western dialects of Oil, [óu] is undifferentiated, and monophthongizes in the twelfth century to [u], spelled *ou* in continental texts, *u* in Anglo-Norman.

The product of Latin tonic closed unchecked *o* is represented by different spellings in the *Jeu d'Adam*:

- Latin-based spelling (archaic): *dolor* (vv. 96, 200, Lat. *dolore* 8 occ.).
- Anglo-Norman spelling: *merveillus* (v. 877).

The two spellings can be rhymed: *signor : creatur* (-*ore* vv. 189–90).

- Western Langue d'Oil spellings: *dous* 'two', Mod. Fr. "deux" (Lat. \**dós* < *dúos*): "Por quei avra entre nos *dous* tençon?" (v. 609, 5 occ.).
  - A single French spelling: "Entre nos *deus* ait grant dilection" (v. 607).
- c) The product of tonic free closed *o* also rhymes with that of an unstressed *o*, which closed to [u] in the twelfth century: *glorius : vos* ('you', Mod. Fr. "vous," vv. 871–72), and with that of a checked stressed *o*, also closing to [u] in the twelfth century: *errur : jor* ('day', Mod. Fr. "jour," Lat. *diúrnu* vv. 903–4).

Such associations in rhyme of the phonemes studied above, however they may be spelled, are strong indications of the monophthongized pronunciation [u], characteristic of Western Langue d'Oil.

The presence of spellings from Western Langue d'Oil, the product of a tonic closed unchecked *e* and that of a tonic closed unchecked *o* leads one to consider these spellings as representative of the author's usage, and the French forms as secondary ones.

### Conclusion: The Date of the *Jeu d'Adam*? Its Geolinguistic Source?

- 1) It is to be noted that the spellings of the text present few etymological letters or superfluous spellings (*surcharges graphiques*).
  - a) Etymological letters
    - *tempter, tempta* (vv. 332, 751), in Old French *tenter, tenta*, based on Latin *temptare*, 'to tempt', Mod. Fr. "tenter" (see *temptandum* in the stage directions).
    - *contreditz* (v. 753), *netz* (v. 865); *escutetz* (v. 913); *quartz* (v. 941) present the redundant spelling *tz* (4 occ.), the spelling *z* noting the cluster *ts*.

– But *fruit* (vv. 19, 245) / *froit* (vv. 472, 776, 17 occ. + 2), *fait* (vv. 235, 315, 9 occ.), *noit* ('night', Mod. Fr. "nuit" vv. 438, 638, 2 occ.) are spelled without etymological *c*: Manjas le *fruit* sans mon *otroi* (v. 424 < *fructu*; \*verb *otroier*, Lat. *auctorizáre*).

b) Use of diacritical or ornamental *y*

This is limited to a few uses:

– *ymage* (v. 409); but *imagine* (v. 5).

– *Chaim* (vv. 623, 722) is also written *Chaym* (v. 591). In the stage directions figure the name *Moyse* (1 occ.) and that of the prophet *Isaias* (1 occ.), also represented by the abbreviation *Y* (10 occ.), as well as the Latin adjective *hylaris*.

– But *sai* (v. 119 *jo ne sai quant*, 13 occ.), *sui* (v. 316 *Or sui mort*, 31 occ.), *moi* (*Donat le moi e jo mangai*, v. 419, 34 occ.) are not rendered with a final *y*.

This general simplicity of spelling is to be attributed to the author. It conforms to the habits of French before the fourth century. We will consider etymological letters as suggestive of a later reworking of the original text.

- 2) In addition, considering various archaic characteristics, such as the general conservation of *l* before consonants, the predominance of the pronominal forms *ço*, *jo*, *hom*, which disappear in the twelfth century, the distribution of the unstressed negation *nen* / *ne* (*nen* disappears in the thirteenth century), we can establish the period when the text was written.

But if one considers the fact that the author of a literary text often demonstrates a certain conservatism in terms of spelling and language, these characteristics as a whole lead one to situate the composition of the *Jeu* in the second part of the twelfth century.

- 3) We have identified in the text the presence of linguistic characteristics from the West of Langue d'Oil. This vast linguistic zone includes Normandy, Romanized Brittany, Maine, Anjou, Poitou and Saintonge, which have in common the phonetic and morphological characteristics which we have identified in the *Jeu d'Adam*.<sup>25</sup>

In addition to the lack of differentiation of diphthongs [ei] and [ou] studied above (*mei*, *saver*, *trais*; *merveillus*, *dous*), characteristic of Western Langue d'Oil, we can identify three morphological phenomena unique to this geolinguistic zone:

- a) Final *-om* for the first person plural of the verbs: *alom* (vv. 642, 665), *preom* (v. 637), *rendom* (v. 600), *seom* (v. 594), *tendrom* (v. 910) (6 occ.); it alternates with the Anglo-Norman ending *-um*: *donum* (v. 60), *issum* (v. 667), *seum* (v. 595), *pernum* (v. 294), *purrum* (v. 86), *servum* (v. 596, 6 occ.) and with a 'mixed' ending *-oms / -ums*: *aloms* (vv. 629, 635), *conquerroms* (v. 596), *eisseroms* (v. 106), *serroms* (v. 672), *voloms* (v. 601), *irrum*s (v. 671, 5 + 1 occ.), to which an analogical *s* based on Old Central French *-ons* could be added later. There is only one form ending in *-ons* in the *Jeu*: *serrons* 'we will be', Mod. Fr. "serons" (v. 606).
- b) The present subjunctive form ending in *-ge*, present in texts "à l'Ouest et en Picardie" ("in the West and in Picardy"), according to Gaston Zink<sup>26</sup>: *dorges* (v. 740, subjunctive of *durer*); *dunge* (v. 208, from *donner*); *prenge* (v. 226, from *prendre*); *tienge* (v. 748 from *tenir*); *vienge(z)* (v. 203, from *venir*, 4 occ.). Brigitte Horiot notes that this present subjunctive, "attesté depuis la *Chanson de Roland* [...] est caractéristique des anciens textes normands et anglo-normands comme de ceux du Nord-Ouest" (attested since the *Chanson de Roland* [...] is characteristic of old Norman and Anglo-Norman texts like those of the Northwest).<sup>27</sup>
- c) The imperfect formed with *-ou-* for verbs of the first group (Lat. < *-āba-*)

This "forme de l'Ouest (dont l'anglo-normand)" (Western form (including Anglo-Norman))<sup>28</sup> appears in one sole occurrence, which must be cited in its context: "Les trois emfanz *fasoient* joie grant La ou il furent al foug ardent. *Chantouent* un vers si bel (Lat. *cantābant*). *Sembloit* li angle fuissent del ciel. Cum jo m'en regart, si vi le quartz Chi lor *fasoit* molt grant solaz. Les chieres *avoient* tant resplendisant, *Sembloient* le filz de Deu puissant" (Lat. *simulābant*) (vv. 937–44). Could *chantouent*, in a series of imperfect forms using *-oi-*, have been 'forgotten' by a copyist who might have corrected *\*semblout / semblouent* to *sembloit / sembloient*? Was it, conversely, introduced into the text secondarily? Did it result from a simple confusion of spelling between *i* and *u*?

One will observe that imperfect forms containing *-oi* predominate in these verses. In verbs other than the *-er* group, the imperfect originally had an ending based on *-ei*, which could have been the original vowel of the other imperfects in the passage: *\*faseit*,

*\*faseient*, *\*aveient*. A general modernization of the forms of the imperfect could have been undertaken in this passage, all while sparing the form *chantouent*.

As part of the vast Western Language d'Oil region, Normandy had historic ties to England, with important linguistic consequences. Norman-Picard features, characteristic of the Northern part of Normandy (the Northern and Central parts of the Departments of Manche, Calvados, Seine-Maritime and the northern part of the department of Eure) are present in the Anglo-Norman dialect and even influenced English<sup>29</sup>.

#### 4) Norman-Picard features

- In Central French, [k] and [g] followed by an *a* underwent palatalization in the fifth century, which led to their evolution to [tʃ] and [dʒ] and simplification to [ʃ] and [ʒ] around the year 1200: *castéllu* > *chastel*, *gámba* > *jambe*.

When followed by *e* or *i*, [k] palatalizes to [s]: *céra* > *cire*.

- These evolutions are also attested in the south of Normandy (south of the departments of Manche, Calvados, Orne, and the south of the department of Eure).
- In the Northern part of Normandy, [k] and [g] undergo a particular evolution in front of a palatal vowel: absence of palatalization in front of [a] (*castéllu* > *castel*; *gamba* > *gambe*), a weak palatalization to [ʃ] of a [k] occurring before *e* and *i* (*céra* > *chire*). This phenomenon is frequently attested from the time of the first medieval texts originating in this zone<sup>30</sup>, which is called Norman-Picard. This evolution does not appear in the *Jeu*.

##### a) [k] + a > [ʃ] (French) / [k] (Norman-Picard)

There is no palatalization of [k] in front of *a* in the Norman-Picard zone. Indeed, the forms *chastels* (v. 762) and not *\*castels*; *chardons* (vv. 432, 545), and not *\*cardons*, *chantouent* and not *\*cantouent* (v. 939), appear in the *Jeu d'Adam*.

##### b) [g] + a > [ʒ] (French) / [g] (Norman-Picard)

*Gardin* (v. 244) may be the only trace in the *Jeu* of the Norman-Picard phenomenon of non-palatalization of a [g] occurring before *a*. It is necessary however to emphasize the ambiguity of the letter *g*: inasmuch as it corresponds to a [ʒ] occurring in front of *e* and *i*, it may also be used to represent this same phoneme [ʒ] in front of an *a*

(see *mangai* 'manjai' v. 419)]. *Gardin*, for its part, occurs in the text along with *jardin* (vv. 82, 88) and *jardenier* (v. 182).

- c) [k] + [e], [i] > [s] (French) / [ʃ] (*ch*, Norman-Picard)

One will note an absence of forms in *-ch-* in the text, which would attest to the weak Norman-Picard palatalization of [k] in front of *e* or *i*. *Cil* (vv. 247, 789, 790), *cels* (< \**ecce illi*, \**ecce illos*, vv. 555, 801, 834, 9 occ.); *face* (< *faciat*, vv. 367, 510, 2 occ.), *face* (*facies*, v. 402, 1 occ.), are the only French forms.

These phonetic details allow us to determine the geolinguistic origin of the author to the West of Langue d'Oïl (where one says *mei*, *dous*), but not to the Norman-Picard area (where one says *castel*, *gardinier*). These corroborate the analysis of Geneviève Hasenohr regarding the *Jeu d'Adam*: "Un texte originaire de l'Ouest (au sens large) [...] recopié à plusieurs reprises, sans doute par des clercs d'origine insulaire" (A text originating in the West (broadly defined) [...] recopied several times, undoubtedly by scribes of insular origin.)<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the changes made to the text subsequent to its composition, as we have discussed in the preceding paragraphs, is useful at this point to add a certain number of other features, the extent of which we will analyze.

### Anglo-Norman "Coloring" Reworking by Insular Copyists

Several details reveal, in the work of the scribes, specific Anglo-Norman spelling habits which appear to be later than the presumed period in which the text was composed:

- 1) The evolution of *s* in front of a voiced consonant
  - a) In Old French, *s* in front of a voiced consonant voices to [z] and disappears. This phenomenon occurs even before the Norman Conquest of England (1066).  
The rhyme *dismes* 'tithes', Mod. Fr. 'dîmes' : *maïmes* (vv. 657–58, Lat. \**metipsimu* 'same, self', Mod. Fr. 'même') connects a conservative spelling and a phonetic spelling of the phenomenon.
  - b) In Anglo-Norman, one of the attested treatments of *s* in front of a consonant is that of the voicing of *s* to [z] and of its spirantization to [d]. The *Jeu* presents only one attestation of the phenomenon

in *brudlee* Lat. \**brus(tu)lāta* ‘burned’, Mod. Fr. “brûlée”): *meslee* (vv. 361–62).

- c) In the participle (*femme*) *deavee* (v. 357 = *desvee* ‘mad, crazy’, Mod. Fr. ‘folle’), the loss of the *s* entails the addition of the spelling *ea*, “Old English digraph to represent [e]”<sup>32</sup>.

The Old English diphthong *ea* reduced to [e] in the eleventh century<sup>33</sup> but copyists continued to use it in English texts as the equivalent of [e] and they transposed this usage into Anglo-Norman texts as well.

These isolated forms, which represent various evolutions of *s* in front of a consonant, are probably due to different copyists, some of who were Anglophones.

- 2) The Anglo-Norman diphthong [ou] in *oun*

“Je t’ai duné bon cumpainun, Cē est ta femme, Eva a *noun*” (vv. 9–10, ‘name’, Mod. Fr. “nom”).

In French, tonic closed *o* underwent diphthongization to [ou] in the seventh century and nasalized in the tenth century, something “qui n’est pratiquement jamais notée dans l’écriture” (“which is practically never noted in writing.”)<sup>34</sup> The French nasalized diphthong [ōũ] reduces to [ō̃] in the eleventh century, and to [ō] in the twelfth century, as is attested in the text by the spelling of the noun “nom” (Lat. *nómen*): Ce fu Adam, la mere ot *non* Evain (v. 591, 3 occ.); Cum ad *num?* (v. 82, 1 occ.).

Short comments on this form: “The distinctive AN graphy introduced in the later thirteenth in the wake of *aun* had become current by the middle of the fourteenth century.”<sup>35</sup>

In *noun*, the sole example of the diphthong [ou]<sup>36</sup> bears witness to the later reworking of the text by an insular copyist.

Moreover, there are no examples of *-aun-* in the *Jeu d’Adam*.

- 3) P1<sup>37</sup> finals in *-a*

“Jo t’en *crerra*, tu es ma per” (v. 330); “Ne *sa* que die” (v. 367).

According to Pope, in Anglo-Norman, “In the later period, *ai* was often reduced to *a*.”<sup>38</sup>

These forms (5 occ. in all) were introduced into the text later. They stand in opposition to French forms: “N’en *serai* trait por home né” (v. 377); “Ne *sai* si tu voldras gabber” (v. 416), which reveal a good mastery of French verbal forms on the part of the author.

These three phenomena are probably the result of unconscious changes made by copyists, influenced by their own writing habits.

However, certain other details lead one to think that the scribes deliberately made changes to the forms of the text, at times deleting certain letters, at other times retaining them.

## An Anglo-Norman Adaptation of the French Text?

### 1) Deletion or retention of prosthetic *e*

The vowel *e*, pronounced in front of the initial ([sk]), *sp*, *st* from the second century in order to facilitate the pronunciation of the cluster, is not observed in 7 nouns where it is present in Continental French. This deletion of a prosthetic *e* is widespread in Anglo-Norman<sup>39</sup>.

#### a) Deletion of prosthetic *e*

– “O cele *spee* qui flamboie” (v. 517); “Mais ne porquant en Deu est ma *sperance*” (v. 587).

– = \*O cel(e) *espee* qui flamboie; \*Mais ne porquant en Deu est *m'esperance*.

In metrics, a prosthetic *e* elides when it follows a word with a final vowel. We observe that in these verses, the final vowel of the preceding word, which would be elided in front of the *e*, is pronounced: the verse thus retains its metrical balance.

We also observe, however, in other metric contexts, that the prosthetic *e* was retained.

#### b) Retention of prosthetic *e*

After a word with a final consonant, prosthetic *e* is not deleted, the preceding word not being able to undergo elision.

– “Qui ert *estaille* de clarté” (v. 823); “En ce devez tenir *espeir*” (v. 930) (14 occ.). The copyists therefore only transformed terms with prosthetic *e*, according to the Anglo-Norman linguistic model in effect, when metrics allowed them to do so. Otherwise, they retained the French forms.

### 2) Deletion of central *e* (or ‘*e caduc*’)

a) “Moi aime *honor* ton creator” (v. 29); “Lui serf *e aim* par bon coraje” (v. 37)

In *honor*, *aim* (“honore,” “aime”), the poet employed epic caesura: the final *e* in *honor* is not taken into account, and the copyist did not write it. In contrast, he retained the *e* of *aime*, which naturally elides in front of the initial *o* of (*h*)*onor*.

- b) “Tu la prendras en molt *bon ore*” (v. 312); “Par le conseil de *mal uxor*” (v. 322)

The final *e* of *bone*, *male*, which elides in front of an initial vowel, is not written.

These forms without *e* could, as a number of others noted above in this article, represent indications of pronunciation intended for the actors, or introduced in the text by the actors themselves.<sup>40</sup>

These indications, which do not all follow the same norms for deletion and retention, are probably the work of different scribes.

- c) “*Tut ta force et tot tun sens*” (v. 32) -1 syllable; (Eva): “Go sui *mesfait*, ço fu par folage” (v. 461) -1 syllable: deletion of the final *e* in *tute*, *mesfaite*, corresponds here to Anglo-Norman pronunciation, which does not contain the central *e*.

Similarly, in “Tu *n’avois* rien l’autrier” (v. 395, -2); “Si jo poeie jo *frai* par offrende” (v. 570, -1), for *avoies*, *fraie*, we observe the deletion of *e* in the endings of the imperfect and the conditional, begun in Anglo-Norman at the end of the twelfth century and generalized in the thirteenth.<sup>41</sup>

Once again, here we will seriously consider the hypothesis that copyists sought to adapt the pronunciation of the verses to Anglo-Norman usage, choosing a more natural pronunciation in their estimation, at the risk of disrupting the metrics, to which their public was perhaps not very attuned.

## Occitan Characteristics?

Certain features, traditionally interpreted as Occitanisms, are worth being examined carefully and contrasted with usages found in texts contemporary with the *Jeu*.

- 1) Thus, the penultimate *a* in *lassaras* (v. 55, Lat. *laxâre*) ‘you will leave, permit’, Mod. Fr. “laisseras,” the final *a* in *natura* (v. 780) ‘nature’, Mod. Fr. “nature;” *terra* (v. 783) ‘earth’, Mod. Fr. “terre,” and the form

*foc, foc* (vv. 934, 935, 938, Lat. *fōcu*) 'fire', Mod. Fr. "feu," without diphthongization and with the retention of the original final consonant, rather than being Occitanisms, could be considered Latinisms due to the constant back-and-forth of the copyist between the Latin of the stage directions and the French of the text.

The text itself begins with a switch from French to Latin: "Fourmé te ai *de limo terre*" (v. 1–2).

- 2) *Tazera* (v. 918) / *tarzera* (v. 558, 'it will take a long time' Mod. Fr. "tardera," Lat. *tardicāre*)

Is the letter *z*, which transcribes the affricate [dʒ], an Occitan spelling? One finds this convention for the same verb in the *Chronique des ducs de Normandie* of Benoît de Sainte-Maure: *tarzier* (II 10465); *tarzierent* (II 2177). In the *Roman du Mont Saint-Michel* of Guillaume de Saint-Pair (Normandy, circa 1155), *clerzie* (v. 11), *clerzum/clerzon* (vv. 844, 918) are written for "clergie, clergeon" ('lower cleric', Mod. Fr. "petit cleric"). Beaulieux, in the *Histoire de l'orthographe française*, describes the *z* as a letter used to "parer à une déféctuosité de la graphie" (remediate an imperfection of the spelling.),<sup>42</sup> the phoneme [ʒ] usually spelled *i*, with all of the ambiguities that this entails.

We note nevertheless that Occitan features would not be surprising in a text circulating around the Plantagenet Empire, where there was constant contact between Language d'Oil and Langue d'Oc.

## Conclusion

We reiterate here the analyses and hypotheses proposed in the different parts of our study:

The *Jeu* was originally a text written in Continental French, with dialectal coloring from the West of Langue d'Oil.<sup>43</sup>

It was copied, in different periods, by one or more insular copyists, who inserted into the text various divergent Anglo-Norman traits, and some characteristics of English (*brudlee, deavee, noun, spee*), each attested in a small number of examples. Some of these were also modified by actors for whom the text was their working script and who consciously adapted the text to conform to the linguistic practices of the insular public for which it was performed for the purposes of facilitating comprehension of the text.

Aside from constituting a play of great interest, the *Jeu d'Adam* is a fascinating linguistic artifact: in appearance an Anglo-Norman text, in reality, quite probably a work composed by a Continental author and made into a version accessible to the Anglo-Norman public by its insular user(s), copyists and actors, and testifying to the multicultural nature of the Plantagenet world.

Translated by Joe Price

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ingham, *Transmission*, 26.
- <sup>2</sup> Christophe Chaguinian's edition of the *Jeu d'Adam* supplies all quoted texts.
- <sup>3</sup> Pope, *From Latin to Modern French*.
- <sup>4</sup> Short, *Manual*.
- <sup>5</sup> Hasenohr, "Philologie romane 2004," 158.
- <sup>6</sup> Studer, *Mystère d'Adam*.
- <sup>7</sup> Grass, *Das Adamspiel*.
- <sup>8</sup> International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols are used in this article.
- <sup>9</sup> *Occurrences*: hereafter abbreviated *occ*.
- <sup>10</sup> For each phenomenon discussed, we offer examples chosen from the text for their distinctive traits.
- <sup>11</sup> The form *croiz* does not appear in the text.
- <sup>12</sup> Short, *Manual*, 60.
- <sup>13</sup> Chaguinian, *Jeu d'Adam*, 151 note 34.
- <sup>14</sup> Pope, *From Latin to Modern French*, § 1182.
- <sup>15</sup> Ingham, *Transmission*, 61.
- <sup>16</sup> Guillaume de Saint-Pair, *Roman du Mont Saint-Michel*.
- <sup>17</sup> The *Jeu d'Adam* is written in octosyllabic and decasyllabic verse.
- <sup>18</sup> Short, *Manual*, 92.
- <sup>19</sup> Chaguinian, *Jeu d'Adam*, 72.
- <sup>20</sup> On this topic, see Chaguinian, *Traces de la représentation*.
- <sup>21</sup> *Cas sujet* (CS), form of the noun when it is the subject, attributive adjective as a subject complement, or when used in exclamations; *cas régime* (CR), form of the noun when it is a complement.
- <sup>22</sup> Hasenohr, *Introduction*, 27.
- <sup>23</sup> *Mon serf, ton* (sire): the expected forms of the CS are *mes* (or *mis*) *sers, tes* or *tis* (sire).
- <sup>24</sup> *Mi frères*: the regular CS form is *frere*.
- <sup>25</sup> In this regard, see Gauthier and Lavoie, *Français de France* and more specifically in that volume, the article by Gauthier and Lavoie entitled "Les traits phonétiques communs," as well as that by Horiot, "Éléments morphologiques

communs.” René Lepelley, *Normandie dialectale*, called this zone the “Grand Ouest,” 46–47.

<sup>26</sup> Zink, *Morphologie*, 155.

<sup>27</sup> Horiot, “Éléments morphologiques communs,” 71.

<sup>28</sup> Zink, *Morphologie*, 172.

<sup>29</sup> The terms *cat* ‘cat’, Mod. Fr. “chat”; *car* ‘carriage’, Mod. Fr. “voiture”; *garter* ‘garter’, Mod. Fr. “jarretière”; *chives* ‘chives’ (Mod. Fr. “ciboulette”) are, in Modern English, some examples of the influence of the Norman-Picard dialect on the Anglo-Norman dialect.

<sup>30</sup> As attested, for example, in the *Chanson de Roland*, the form *Carles* for the first name of the emperor Charlemagne.

<sup>31</sup> Hasenohr, “Philologie romane 2004,” 158–59.

<sup>32</sup> Short, *Manual*, 51.

<sup>33</sup> Pope, *From Latin to Modern French*, § 1212.

<sup>34</sup> Zink, *Phonétique*, 86.

<sup>35</sup> Short, *Manual*, 58.

<sup>36</sup> See verses 332: “D’emfer m’estoet tempter le *fond*” and 394: “Cum entrerai od toi en *conte*?”

<sup>37</sup> P1 = first person singular.

<sup>38</sup> Pope, *From Latin to Modern French*, § 1157.

<sup>39</sup> For a more detailed treatment of this topic, see our study in Chaguinian, *Jeu d’Adam*, 190–91.

<sup>40</sup> On this subject, see Chaguinian, *Traces de la représentation*.

<sup>41</sup> Pope, *From Latin to Modern French*, §1292.

<sup>42</sup> Beaulieux, *Orthographe*, 12.

<sup>43</sup> Three Latin *rondeaux* latins suggest a continental origin as well. Two of them, *Procedenti puero* and *Qui passus est pridie*, refer to *Gallia* which in other manuscripts is replaced by another geographic name. See in Mary Channen Caldwell’s contribution the section “*Pax Galliae*: Signals of Place in Latin Song,” 119–25. In *O sedes apostolica*, the term *mannetica* could be a faulty spelling of *nennetica* “Nantes.” It should be noted that Nantes is located in the Romance-speaking area of Brittany and belongs to the Western Langue d’Oïl linguistic zone which is the geolinguistic zone of the author of the *Jeu d’Adam*.