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1. Introductory Remarks

This study will present a comparison of three early 13th century prose chronicles--among the first lengthy prose works in vernacular French to come down to us--the Fourth Crusade chronicles of Robert de Clari (Clari), Geoffroy de Villehardouin (Villehardouin), and Henri de Valenciennes (Valenciennes). As a tool for studying these texts from a componential perspective, I have used a framework for narrative analysis (hereafter termed the *Labovian* framework) that was first proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1967). In addition, this study will also look at certain stylistic features that occur outside of the structural components described in this framework.

My particular interest in comparing these three chronicles relates to what has been said about the connection of these early prose works with the strong oral performative orientation so often remarked upon in earlier epic narrative. Only two of the three chronicles, those of Clari and Villehardouin, have actually been studied from this perspective, with a particular focus upon tense and aspect patterning. The contemporary Valenciennes chronicle has not been included in any such studies, and what I would like to show is that it provides evidence for a less radical departure from a narrative style closely associated with oral performative contexts.

All three texts are thought to have been first recorded in the latter half of the first decade of the 13th century. All provide historical accounts of the Fourth Crusade, which centered upon the European conquest of Constantinople. Each of the three original manuscripts may very well have been dictated to recording scribes by the chroniclers, perhaps relying to some degree upon notes kept in the course of the Crusade. The text excerpts that I have used are all of approximately 11,000 words in length, drawn from single-manuscript edited versions of extant manuscripts (see the bibliography). This 11,000-word count does not include incorporated direct and indirect discourse, which were not subjected to an internal analysis.

2. Orality In Written Texts

The notion of orality and oral texts and their relation to writing has been discussed and rediscussed in a number of scholarly disciplines. What principally concerns me within the context of this paper is the potential for variability in textual stylistics as a function of a more or less oralizing, interactional orientation. The strongly dichotomous view of oral and literate texts espoused by Parry and seconded by Lord in his early work (see, for instance, Lord, 1960) has given way in the last two decades to interest in a continuum model, operative among texts in both spoken and written formats.

Tannen (1989) has even proposed a change in terms to accommodate this new fluid view of communicative modes, with texts showing more involvement focus or more message focus depending upon the distribution of various stylistic correlates. The degree of involvement focus increases with the presence of involvement strategies, stylistic features that allow a communication to reflect a more conversational or interactional tone. The other end of the spectrum, message-focus, concentrates attention on the meaning of the

word, the content of discourse and, consequentially, is more impersonal in orientation.

In her critique of Tannen, Brandt (1990) has argued that the use of the terms involvement-focus and message-focus does not reflect a substantive reorientation away from the old oral-versus-literate polarity, which was in fact Tannen's original model as well (see Tannen, 1982). However, the change in terms does contribute to less confusion and thereby offers a means of strengthening the concept of permeability, which is central to Tannen's theory: the fact that involvement strategies can be used to varying degrees in both oral and written modes to provide for a more or less interactional communicative channel.

As a result, using Brandt's interpretation of Tannen, that which contributes to a more oralizing text within the context of this study also contributes to more involvement-focus and vice-versa. This allows for the discussion on an equal footing of those stylistic features that have been associated with oralizing tendencies in texts and those that have been associated with heightened involvement. Since the texts here are narratives, the more oralizing/involving the text, the more closely it approximates a storyteller's performance with a listening audience. This perspective is reflected in the use of the term *performative* that will occur from time to time.

3 .   The Labovian Analytical Framework

As mentioned above, the framework used to analyze the text excerpts involved in this study was first developed by Labov and Waletzky (1967) based upon the examination of a number of oral narratives of personal experience. An example of one of these narratives is provided in (1) below with a brief analysis illustrating the more pervasive components of the framework. This analysis is not intended to be exhaustive, but is provided to give the reader an idea of those aspects of the analysis that will be useful in understanding the study at hand.

(1) A Brief Analysis of a Representative Oral Narrative
     (text taken from Labov and Waletzky, 1967, 19-20)

What was the most important fight you remember? [seed
     question]

Narrative: a   When I was in the fourth grade
                    b   - no - it was third grade -
                    c   there was this boy,
                    d   he stole my glove.
                    e   He took my glove,
                    f   and say
                    g   that his father found it downtown on
                               the ground.
                    h   I told him
                    i   that he - it's impossible for him to
                               find downtown,
                    j   'cause all those people were walking
                               by,
                    k   and just his father is the only one
                    l   that find it?

m   so he get all upset.
n   Then I fought him.
o   I knocked him out all in the street.
p   So he say he give.
q   And I kept on hitting him.
r   Then he start crying
s   and run home to his father.
t   And his father told him,
u   he ain't find no glove.

Orientation: a-c
Complicating Action: d-m, o-u
Evaluation: e (repetition), i-l (extended logical argument), m & o (use of the lexical
        intensifier)

Only those components illustrated in (1) will be mentioned in the context of this study: complicating action (the backbone of temporally sequenced events that constitutes the core of the narrative), orientation (descriptive information concerning setting, participants and events recounted), and evaluation (additional comments or smaller segments reflective of the storyteller's view of the relative significance of the events being related). The complicating action is more frequently referred to in the linguistic literature as the foreground of a narrative. As regards the evaluative component, there are many more types of evaluation than those illustrated in (1). I will discuss this component in a bit more detail later in this study.

The changes that I have made to the original Labovian analysis are most significant as regards the determination of the events to be included in the complicating action or, if you will, narrative foreground. A great deal of literature has been published concerning the determination of narrative foreground since the work of Labov and Waletzky, and I have tried to incorporate insights from various significant participants in this discussion in my analysis, particularly relying upon the ideas of Couper-Kuhlen (1989). Hers is a relatively restrictive approach, excluding, for example, most subordinated clauses from foregrounding consideration.

In what is to follow, I will first compare the functional distribution of the narrative present in the three Crusade chronicles. I will then look at other stylistic features that have been associated with more or less oralizing tendencies in textual materials, particularly those emphasizing the interjection of the chronicler's persona or opinion into the story being recounted.

4.   The Narrative Present Tense

The use of the present tense in medieval narrative has long been a topic of interest in both literary and philological circles. Explanations for its seemingly indiscriminate distribution vis-à-vis a tense form inherently more connected with the past (e.g., the preterite) range from simple medieval indifference toward such distinctions to that of a conscious stylistic device, allowing the storyteller to emphasize certain points of the narrative or simply to add vividness to the story being told.

Fleischman (1990) argues that tense-aspect patterning in medieval Romance texts (e.g., medieval epic poetry) parallels observations of tense-aspect use from studies of oral

narrative and that this patterning is probably reflective of the oral performative habits of that time. The particular focus of her study is also the present tense used in narrative contexts. She contends that the use of the present in both oral and medieval contexts often has an evaluative function, providing the storyteller with a means to highlight certain aspects of the narrative at the expense of others, in other words, a device for secondary foregrounding. An example of NP usage taken from the Valenciennes chronicle is provided in (2).

> (2) Instances of the Narrative Present in the Complicating Action
>   (taken from Valenciennes; NPs in boldface and underlined)

>> *Et si tost comme Blac et Commain connurent la desconfiture qui sor eus t ornoit si mortelment et si cruelment, il **se metent** au fuir sans plus atendre, et **s'espargent** antre soy, li uns cha et li autres la...*
>> And as soon as B. and C. were aware of the debacle that was turning their way so devastatingly and cruelly, they **begin** to flee without waiting any longer and **scatter** among themselves, some here and some there...

The use of some narrative present (NP) in Clari and Villehardouin leads Fleischman and others to assume a certain debt to oral performance in their compositional orientation. Referring to Villehardouin, Sutherland (1939) remarks that "he still has a fair proportion of present tenses, a usage which may be attributed...to his *oral style of narration*" (86). However, when compared to earlier poetic narrative or even the contemporary prose *Lancelot*, the NP is a relatively minor element in the historical narratives of Clari and Villehardouin, and its spartan use has led to the characterization of these chronicles as transitional or residually-oralizing texts (see, for instance, Blanc, 1964).

In the table in (3), we can see the relative distribution of the narrative present in the three Crusade chronicle excerpts.

(3)   Distribution of the Narrative Present (NP) in the Three Chronicles

TEXT	Number of NPs (per 100 verbs)
Clari	4.5
Villehardouin	2.7
Valenciennes	20.5

The use of the present in Clari and in Villehardouin is relatively limited given the lengthy excerpts used for this study. In Valenciennes, on the other hand, the present is much more extensively used than in the chronicles of his contemporaries. Valenciennes shows approximately 5 times as many instances of a narrative present as Clari.

(4)   Distribution of the NP Within Structural Components

TEXT (total # of NP tokens)	Event in the complicating action	Timeline event not analyzed as complicating action[1]	Event in other components of the narrative
Clari (62)	52	3	7
Villehardouin (36)	34	1	1
Valenciennes (280)	188	10	82

As to the distribution of the present among the components of the narrative (shown in the table in (4)), its use is severely restrained outside of the complicating action in Clari and Villehardouin, this in spite of the fact that Clari has some very lengthy and significant descriptive passages. On the other hand, almost a third of the instances of present in Valenciennes are found in non-timeline, mostly orientational contexts.

In her discussion of the Villehardouin chronicle, Fleischman (1990) states that "the use of tenses for pragmatic purposes is already coming to resemble that of modern French" (149), in that the use of the present tense is restricted to the reporting of foregrounded timeline events. She notes that in earlier texts, however, the present is not confined to the complicating action. She terms this other, orientational present the *visualizing NP* and assigns to it a secondary foregrounding function of its own within descriptive narrative passages.

It would be difficult to construe all of the NPs external to the complicating action in Valenciennes as the visualizing NP Fleischman describes. Some of these NPs are included in hypothetical statements, for instance, which do not form a part of Fleischman's discussion. A few examples of NPs in Valenciennes that can arguably be identified as visualizing NPs have been included in (5).

(5)   Examples from Valenciennes of Visualizing NPs
          (NPs in boldface and underlined)

a) *Mais Lombart dient, qui dedens **sont**, que il n'en renderont mie.*
    But the Lombarts say, those that **are** inside, that they will not give up.

b) *Pieres de Douay et Ansiaus de Chaeu et Reniers de Trit **sont** devant*
    Phinepople, ensi comme vous avez oï, pour les fourriers garder.
    P. and A. and R. **are** before Phinepople, as you have heard, to watch over the foragers.

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[1] The NPs represented here are found in contexts which do not conform to the criteria used in this study for the determination of foreground. However, they would be included in the foreground when following the criteria used by some other researchers (see for instance, Dry, 1983) and have, thus, been distinguished from the other NPs found in components of the narrative external to the complicating action.

c) *Et de cels ki **chieent**, c'est niens que il mais aient pooir del relever; car tout a fait que li un les **abatent**, **sont** aparellié li autre ki les **ochient**.*
   And of those who **fall**, it's hopeless for them to ever find the strength to get up; for as soon as some **knock** them **down**, the others **are** ready who **kill** them.

d) *car molt a present **desire** le jor que il l'ait espousee; si li **samble** bien que uns seus jors en **dure** 40.*
   for much at present he **longs for** the day that he has wed her; it well **seems** to him that a single day **lasts** 40.

Among the 82 NPs attested outside of the complicating action, at least 59 seem to fit comfortably within her description of this visualizing NP subgroup. This number represents more that one fifth of all NPs in Valenciennes. Turning to his contemporaries, only three NPs in Clari and one in Villehardouin could be so construed; a negligible amount, indeed, in comparison. Therefore, not only does the Valenciennes chronicle show a widespread use of the timeline, complicating action NP found to a lesser extent in the other chronicles, but it also shows considerable evidence of the visualizing NP almost nonexistent in the other chronicles.

Thus, we can see that Valenciennes shows a much less restricted use of the present within his narrative than is the case with both Clari and Villehardouin. Based upon Fleischman's theory, this more liberal use of the narrative present would put less distance between Valenciennes and earlier, more distinctly performative medieval narratives. Are there other stylistic features that might support the thesis of a more distinctly oralizing 13th century prose chronicle?

5.   Departures From Narrative Time

In his extensive study of 4th Crusade chronicles, Jacquin (1986) includes a great deal of discussion about particular passages in which the storyteller briefly exits narrative time to mark a segment of narrative with explicit comments, offering an organizational aid to the audience. These comments generally include a direct or implied reference to either the storyteller, the audience or to both participants. Jacquin suggests that the prevalence of such elements in these early works of extended vernacular prose represents a debt to the oral narrative tradition, strengthening the bond between storyteller and audience, as well as helping that audience, among other things, to keep track of changes in scene or narrative direction or to distinguish old and new information.

The various types of organizational devices included in this study are listed and briefly described in (6), and the table that follows the listing shows their relative distribution among the three chronicles.

(6) Intrusive Organizational Strategies

    a) trans: for *transition*, prefacing a change of narrative scene.
        "Now let us turn to..."
    b) annon: for *announcement*, tagging information as an anticipation of a
        later inclusion.
        "...as we will talk about later."
    c) remind: for *reminder*, tagging information as a recapitulation.
        "...as I have mentioned before."
    d) omiss: for *omission*, identifying information that has been left out.
        "I don't have time to talk about...
    e) query: prefacing the following material by the interpolation of a question.
        "What more would I tell you?"

Distribution of Intrusive Organizational Strategies

TEXT (total # of tokens)	Trans	Annon	Remind	Omiss	Query
Clari (20)	6	3	6	5	0
Villehardouin (20)	6	0	9	5	0
Valenciennes (70)	5	3	22	6	34

As can be seen, the Valenciennes chronicle contains more than 3 times as many tokens as its contemporaries, with the difference concentrated within remind passages and its exclusive use of queries. Consequently, at least as concerns remind and query organizational passages, Valenciennes utilizes these interactional strategies to a much greater degree than his contemporary chroniclers, arguably forging a stronger link to performative communicative contexts in the process.

As mentioned above, many of the intrusive organizational passages in these chronicles include a direct reference to the storyteller and/or his audience. However, there are other nstances of these references, as well, in which the storyteller mentions himself or his audience directly. It has been proposed that references to the participants in a narrative transaction is a trait associated with oral or oralizing communication (see, for example, Chafe, 1985). The table in (7) shows that the Valenciennes chronicle indeed has considerably higher numbers of both direct reference to the storyteller and to the audience.

(7)   Reference to Storyteller or Audience

TEXT (total # of tokens)	Instances of direct reference to storyteller	Instances of direct reference to audience
Clari (46)	24	22
Villhardouin (44)	37	7
Valenciennes (102)	65	37

Thus far, the various intrusive, interactional strategies that have been examined have set the Valenciennes chronicle apart from the other 4th Crusade chronicles in dramatic fashion. There is one other element involving the storyteller's exiting of the narrative temporal frame that I would like to discuss, that of external evaluation.

The evaluative component in the Labovian schema is divided into two basic types: external evaluation and embedded, or internal, evaluation. Only the latter was illustrated in the analysis in (1) above. External evaluation has the property of interrupting the flow of the narrative in order that the narrator may address comments more directly to the audience. An example of external evaluation has been provided in (8).

(8)   Example of a Passage of External Evaluation
        (taken from Villehardouin; passage in boldface)

Et quant ce vint as lances baissier, et li Greu lor tornent le dos, si s'en vont fuiant et lor laissent le rivage. **Et sachiez que onques plus orgueilleusement nuls pors ne fu pris.**
And when it came to lowering the lances, (and) the   Greeks turn their backs on them, (they) take flight and leave the shore to them. **And know that never was a harbor conquered with greater pride.**

Internal evaluation is more seamlessly embedded into the other components of narrative through a number of quite varied strategies that range from the lexical to the multi-clausal level, such as the use of intensifying elements, negatives, statements of explanation, and repetition. Tannen (1982) suggests a connection between evaluation and text orientation, specifying that internal evaluation is more involving than external evaluation and, conversely, that external evaluation is a strategy that lends itself more to texts that are less involvement focused. Fleischman (1986) echoes these observations, suggesting that external evaluation should be less prevalent in texts that are more closely associated with oral communicative modes.

As can be seen in the table in (9), external evaluation discriminates much more strongly between Clari and Villehardouin than any of the other features I've examined, Villehardouin including 5 times as much external evaluation as Clari.

(9)   Distribution of External Evaluation

TEXT	Instances of External Evaluation
Clari	5
Villehardouin	25
Valenciennes	9

As for the Valenciennes chronicle, there are more external evaluation passages than in Clari, but the number is still quite low when compared to Villehardouin. However, this measure does not successfully discriminate the Valenciennes chronicle from both of the other chronicles.

6.   Direct Discourse

There are other narrative-time features of the Valenciennes chronicle, as well, such as a decreased use of passive, that might also support a stronger connection to oral performative practice for this text. One feature of particular interest is that of direct discourse. As the table in (10) shows, Valenciennes uses direct discourse more frequently than the other chroniclers, showing more than 5 times as many words devoted to it as Clari in otherwise comparable text samples.

(10)   Distribution of Direct Discourse

TEXT	Words in Direct Discourse (per 1000 Words of Text)
Clari	62
Villehardouin	56
Valenciennes	378

This substantially increased use of direct discourse is in itself indicative of a more involvement-focused text in Tannen's (1989) theory.[2] In addition, Valenciennes's direct discourse is generally more strongly integrated into the narrative than is the case for the other chronicles, with inquits, or speech introducing clauses (e.g., "He said:"), often displaced to discourse-internal positions or at times even dispensed with entirely. Tannen (1989) observes that, unlike what might be expected, the use of inquits to maintain a clear and ordered exchange of dialogue is, in fact, less frequent in conversational stories. Furthermore, direct discourse is more often used in Valenciennes to present multiple-party exchanges, rather than the single-participant discourse so characteristic of Villehardouin. Valenciennes devotes 41% of all direct discourse passages to such conversational exchanges as compared to 28% and 22% for Clari and Villehardouin respectively.

7.   Concluding Remarks

I have compared various indices of involvement- or oral performative-focus in these three 4th Crusade chronicles, attempting to show that the little-studied Valenciennes chronicle actually has stylistic features that draw it closer to performatively-oriented texts than had previously been attributed to these early 13th century prose chronicles. I began with an examination of narrative present tense and then added other interactional communicative elements. Of the stylistic features I have examined, only external evaluation does not strongly distinguish the Valenciennes chronicle from those of his contemporaries.

I would not be so bold as to claim that the Valenciennes chronicle represents some sort of anachronistic return to a more epic style of narrative. Considering simply the use of the NP, the 20% figure for Valenciennes is a far cry from that of *Roland*, in which the NP predominates over other narrative tenses. Moreover, a high concentration of the NP is found in other early 13th century prose forms, such as the romance (e.g., *Lancelot*).

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[2] It is also interesting to note that direct discourse is an internal evaluation strategy as well.

However, what is significant here is that an examination of the Valenciennes chronicle may indeed contest existing notions of how the genre of historiographic prose was perceived in the 13th century. Conceptions of historical prose that were distinctly more performative in nature than those of Clari or Villehardouin may indeed have been available to early 13th century chroniclers.

If Beer's (1992) assertions are accurate that 13th century historical prosateurs had not largely *invented* a vernacular prose medium, under the influence of vernacular poetic forms and Latin prose models, but were simply expanding the domain of an already supple and acceptable communicative vehicle, then even the earliest of vernacular historians could have been using a medium with at least some degree of stylistic flexibility. Assuming that one factor in this stylistic variability was a conscious or unconscious orientation toward more or less "involving" (to use Tannen's term) prose, with a more or less performative, oralizing tone, one could conclude that a certain degree of variability with regard to an involvement continuum was available to all medieval prose historians. This view is echoed in Pickens (1979) who contends that various narrative models were available to even these earliest of vernacular French historiographers. This being the case, the historians examined here have each (consciously and/or unconsciously) oriented themselves along an involvement continuum reflecting the gamut of "appropriate" behavior for their respective times in the reporting of historical events. It is information about the direction and degree of stylistic flexibility that comparative studies of this kind can provide. I hope this study has contributed to a better appreciation of the effective range of stylistic variability available to these early vernacular dictating and/or writing prosateurs.

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