

## Ripping romance to ribbons: the French of a German knight in the *Tournament at Chauvency*\*

In the Middle Ages, as now, considerable comedy can be produced by an author choosing to represent someone speaking a foreign language badly, particularly if they believe themselves to be fluent. Of such medieval occurrences, the relatively common ‘jargon anglo-français’, that is, Insular speakers of French, satirised as linguistically incompetent and/or unintentionally obscene in Continental French literature, has received most scholarly attention.<sup>1</sup> The present article concentrates, instead, on what Jean-François Courouau has noted as the earliest work to contain an extensive depiction of a German speaker speaking French, Jacques Bretel’s *Le tournoi de Chauvency*.<sup>2</sup> While this example is thus known to modern scholarship, it is not one that has been much analysed, since it occurs in a text that contains much else of interest: more recent studies of this text have concentrated on the work’s personnel and their heraldry, and/or on the two refrain-interpolated dances and their relationship with the chansonnier section of one of the manuscripts in which it occurs.<sup>3</sup>

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\* I would like to thank Daron Burrows, whom I have consulted on multiple occasions while preparing this article. I am, of course, culpable for any remaining errors or misperceptions. I would also like to thank the Editors and the anonymous readers for this journal for suggestions and improvements from the initial drafts.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Daron Burrows, “‘Ele boute son doi en son con...’: The Question of Anglo-Norman Obscenity”, *Reinardus: Yearbook of the International Reynard Society*, 27 (2015), pp. 33-57 and Ardis Butterfield, *The Familiar Enemy: Chaucer, Language and Nation in the Hundred Years War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), both of which give full details of earlier scholarship. For Anglo-Norman per se, as both a spoken idiolect and a language of literature and record in the British Isles, see Ian Short, *Manual of Anglo-Norman*, Anglo-Norman Text Society Occasional Publications 7 (London, 2007), pp. 11-35.

<sup>2</sup> Jean-François Courouau, ‘L’invention du patois ou la progressive émergence d’un marqueur sociolinguistique français XIIIe-XVIIe siècles’, *Revue de linguistique romane*, 69 (2005), pp.185-225 at p.191.

<sup>3</sup> See Alison Stones, ‘Le contexte artistique du *Tournoi de Chauvency*’, in *Lettres, musique et société en Lorraine médiévale: Autour du Tournoi de Chauvency (Ms. Oxford Bodleian Douce 308)*, ed. Mireille Chazan and Nancy Freeman Regalado (Geneva: Droz, 2012), pp. 151-204; Samuel N. Rosenberg, ‘Le *tournoi de Chauvency* et le chansonnier du ms. Douce 308 reliés par le chant’, in *Lettres, musique et société en Lorraine médiévale*, ed. Chazan and Regalado, pp. 423-33; Regalado, ‘Les ailes des chevaliers et l’ordre d’Oxford Bodl. MS Douce 308’, in *Lettres, musique et société en Lorraine médiévale*, ed. Chazan and Regalado, pp. 47-69; eadem, ‘Picturing the Story of Chivalry in Jacques Bretel’s *Tournoi de Chauvency* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 308)’, in *Tributes to Jonathan J. G. Alexander: Making and Meaning in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Susan L’Engle and Gerald B. Guest (London: Harvey Miller, 2006), pp. 341-52; Margherita Lecco, ‘I *Jeux cavallereschi de Tournoi de Chauvency* tra rappresentazione scenica e lirica cortese’, *Les Lettres Romanes*, 67 (2009), pp. 147-65; eadem, *Testi, strutture, immagini in tre manoscritti francesi del XIV*

A German speaker speaking French is speaking it as a foreign language and not as a dialect or patois. Differences between German and French are thus qualitative in a way that those between Anglo-French and Continental French are not, but the literary depiction of the former apparently shares some elements of the latter. This may imply that a consideration of ‘tyois-romans’ (‘German-French’, what I will call here ‘Frallamand’) might inflect our understanding of the relative levels of realism and comic exaggeration present in literary-comic depictions of both kinds of linguistic incompetence, a theme I return to in the conclusion.

*Le tournoi de Chauvency* is the only known work of the otherwise obscure author Jacques Bretel.<sup>4</sup> The poem details the events from Sunday to Friday of a tournament held at what is now Chauvency-le-Château (dépt. Meuse) at the start of October 1285 and is verisimilitudinous enough in its inclusion of real historical persons that it is at least conceivably based on a real event. The poem dates its own composition to shortly after the date of the events it chronicles and is found in two different recensions in two early fourteenth-century manuscripts, one of which has a direct later copy; further fragments also survive in another medieval source.<sup>5</sup> When M. Delbouille edited the work in 1932 he chose

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*secolo* (Milan: LED, 2009); Steen Clemmensen, ‘Le Tournoi de Chauvency: 31.09 – 6.10.1285. Poème de Jacques Bretel. An armorial of the knights, ladies, and heralds mentioned from the edition by Maurice Delbouille, 1932’, (2007: online at <http://www.armorial.dk>); and Mary Atchison, ‘Two versions of the *Tournoi de Chauvency* and their connections to the Chansonnier of Oxford, Bodleian MS Douce 308’, in *Lettres, musique et société en Lorraine médiévale*, ed. Chazan and Regalado, pp. 71-104. Exceptions that treat the issue of the German knight speaking French are found in the scholarship of the earlier twentieth century; see Maurice Delbouille, ed., *Jacques Bretel: Le Tournoi de Chauvency*. Vol. 49, *Bibliothèque de la faculté de philosophie et lettres de l’université de Liège* (Liège: H. Vaillant-Carmanne, 1932), pp. xxxix, xlvi-xlvii and Otto Damm, *Der deutsch-französische Jargon in der schönen französischen Literatur*. Romanische Studien (Berlin: E. Ebering, 1911), pp. 181-194.

<sup>4</sup> See Delbouille, ed., *Jacques Bretel: Le Tournoi de Chauvency*.

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. xi-xiv. Delbouille considers *Mons* to have been copied in western Lorraine on the basis of dialect and in the early fourteenth century on the basis of script. Its direct copy in Florence Palatinus CXVII was made by Jean-Jacques Chifflet in the seventeenth century. The second independent copy, an abbreviated recension in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 308, is described further below. Fragments in Reims, Bibliothèque municipale no.1007, which formed guard leaves of a thirteenth-century *Liber Viaticus de Medicina* (I, 697-703), were signaled by P. Meyer in his description of *D308*; see P. Meyer, ‘Troisième rapport sur un mission littéraire en Angleterre et en Écosse’, *Archives des Missions Scientifiques et Littéraires, série 2*, 5 (1868), pp. 139-272.

Mons, Bibliothèque de la Ville 330-215 (hereafter *Mons*) as his base text, since this manuscript contains all seventeen of the jousts on the Monday and Tuesday (although it is incomplete at the end because the last two folios of the manuscript have been lost). The copy in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 308 (hereafter *D308*) is abbreviated extensively in several places, so that it contains only five jousts for each day, possibly to aid the visual depiction of the heraldry, since the jousts by unnamed knights are among those that are consistently cut.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the *D308* version was copied in Metz, so is thus broadly from the linguistic area to which the author and the event he chronicles belong. It is also the only illuminated copy, with the careful depiction of the heraldry of the participants showing, as Nancy Freeman Regalado notes, that the artist knew more about this subject than could have been gleaned just from reading the text.<sup>7</sup> For present purposes it should be noted that *D308*'s copy contains all of the sections that involve Conrad Werner, the German knight who is described as ripping romance to ribbons, using the verb 'depaneir' and whose speech is the subject here. My examples thus represent first the readings of *D308* with variants from *Mons* given in a separate column. The *D308* and *Mons* texts for this depiction often differ in ways that sometimes suggest that the scribes of *D308* understood that the errors in the French for his speech were intentional and should be preserved (while the *Mons* scribes, by contrast, often resort to hyper-correction), although sometimes the reverse is true (see the examples, below). Somewhat ironically, given the critique of Frallamand and the belittling of other French dialects like Picard in *Chauvency* (see below), the issue of Lotharingian French is not raised explicitly, despite the Lotharingian aspects of the *D308* copy and the probable influence of German on some aspects given the dialect's geography. Again, I will return to this issue of Lotharingian French in the conclusion.

The *D308* copy is now bound with two other French narrative poems, a prose work, a fragment, and over 500 lyrics, sharing scribes and illuminators, although it is unclear which of these items were part of the original plan for the volume.<sup>8</sup> *Chauvency* is physically part of

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<sup>6</sup> See Regalado, 'Picturing the Story of Chivalry' and the discussion in Atchison, 'Two versions of the *Tournoi de Chauvency*'.

<sup>7</sup> See Regalado, 'Picturing the Story of Chivalry', 344, citing Delbouille.

<sup>8</sup> See Alison Stones, *Gothic Manuscripts 1260-1320*, ed. by J. J. G. Alexander and Christian Heck. 2 vols, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in France* (London: Harvey Miller, 2013-2014), II.i, 50 and Karlyn Griffith, 'The Codicological Histories of Two Metz Compilations (MSS Douce 308 and Harley 4972) and the Implications of Owner Manipulations', *Pecia*, 17 (2016), 93-127.

the same structure as the *grands chants* that begin the collection of lyrics, and it seems likely that, at the very least, *Chauvency* was designed to sit alongside the song collection in the original conception of the book. The pairing of *Chauvency* with large number of French lyrics is significant because these lyrics, arranged somewhat unusually by genre and provided with an internal table of contents, are a careful curation of over a hundred years of French song, whose breadth suggests that they were designed as a meaningful and useful compendium. They also exhibit some intertextual relationships with refrains cited in the narrative poem.<sup>9</sup> Among these French songs are *unica* as well as concordances with other Metz sources that can be localised to Lotharingia, the linguistic and political borderline in what is today the *dép.* Meuse.<sup>10</sup> Traces of multilingualism exist in *D308*, both in *Chauvency* and in the *chansonier*, in its unique and thus presumably local contents. In the period that the manuscript was copied, most likely the 1310s or 1320s, this region was one that was ruled by the Counts of Bar, the Counts of Luxembourg, and the Dukes of Lorraine. Through these important families the region looked both East and West, to the Empire and to the Kingdom of France, as well as north to Flanders and Brabant, and, through the marriage of the heir to the Bar County, to England too.

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<sup>9</sup> Ardis Butterfield, 'The Musical Contexts of *Le Tournoi de Chauvency* in Oxford, Bodleian MS Douce 308', in *Lettres, musique et société en Lorraine médiévale*, ed. Chazan and Regalado, pp. 399-422.

<sup>10</sup> See Eglal Doss-Quinby, Samuel N. Rosenberg, and Elizabeth Aubrey, eds., *The Old French Ballette: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 308* (Geneva: Droz, 2006), pp. lvi-lvii.

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FIGURE 1: Conrad and the narrator at the opening of *Chauvency*. The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Douce 308, f.107d recto.



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The comic German in *Chauvency* is Conrad Werner, that is, Conrad Werner [III] von Hattstatt (fl.1267-1274 d.1324), Landvogt (or Bailli) of Haute-Alsace.<sup>11</sup> He is the very first person the narrator meets in the poem, a meeting depicted in the opening miniature which shows Conrad on his horse and—as described in the text—holding the stump of a great, broken lance in his hand (see Figure 1). Although he is a relatively small character in a poem that names nearly a hundred persons, he appears and, importantly, speaks at three places, spread throughout the poem, making him one of the more pervasive noble characters. The present article will give details of these encounters and Conrad’s speech, particularly the opening one, which sets the tone (and one of the key themes) for the poem as a whole. After this exposition, I will consider the relations of Conrad’s Frallamand to the more common Franglais of Insular French speakers, including one in the lyrics of *D308*, before suggesting a possible rationale for the prominent opening placement of Conrad in *Chauvency* and *Chauvency* in *D308*.

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<sup>11</sup> He married Stephanie de Ferrette, daughter of Ulric II de Ferrette before her death in 1276; see [http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/ALSACE.htm#\\_ftnref433](http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/ALSACE.htm#_ftnref433).

## 1. Conrad Werner's 'desrainier' in the *Tournoi de Chauvency*

The encounter between the narrator, the author-figure Jacques Bretel, and Conrad Werner takes place almost immediately after an opening prologue in which the author asks for God's blessing on his work and notes that he began it eight days after the end of August in 1285 and finished it in the house of the noble Count Henry, at Salm-en-Alsace.<sup>12</sup>

The poem proper starts at l.43, as the narrator gets up at dawn and goes into the woods to put his thoughts in order and write a few lines of poetry about love. He is diverted from this purpose when, instead, he meets a man carrying the stump of a huge broken lance whom he recognises 'by his appearance and his way of speaking' as Conrad Werner. Conrad's way of speaking is then immediately described and then finally exemplified as he greets the narrator (see Conrad 1 in Example 1).<sup>13</sup>

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### EXAMPLE 1

line	speaker	D308	<i>Mons</i> variants
43	narration	Lou jour de feste Nostre-Dame	
44		<i>Ke</i> puet saveir et cors et arme,	Qui
45		Cant la gaite ot lou jor corneit,	
46		Me levai droit a l'anjerneit;	
47		Permi les boix alai <i>juant</i>	jouer
48		<i>Et</i> mes pancees <i>remuant</i> ,	Pour; remuer
49		Faisant d'amors .ij. petis vers.	
50		Esgardant lou païs divers,	
51		Asseis pansai, <i>a</i> mon taixoie.	si
52		<i>Et au</i> panseir ke je faisoie,	En mon
53		Choixi .i. chivalier venant,	
54		.I. tronson en son poing tenant	
55		D'une grosse lance brixie.	
56		A sa maniere desguixie	

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<sup>12</sup> See [http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/LUXEMBOURG.htm#\\_ftnref474](http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/LUXEMBOURG.htm#_ftnref474), which says 'The castle of Salm in the Ardenne, also known as Nieder-Salm, was situated in the commune of Viel-Salm, arrondissement Bastogne, in the present-day Belgian province of Luxembourg'. See J. Vannérus, 'Les comtes de Salm-en-Ardenne 1029-1415', *Annales de l'Institut archéologique de Luxembourg*, 52 (1921), pp. 53-170.

<sup>13</sup> Italics show the words and phrases that are different in *Mons*, with those variants given in the last column. A translation of the poem into English can be found in *The Tournaments at Le Hem and Chauvency*, trans. Nigel Bryant (Woodbridge: Boydell, forthcoming 2020).

line	speaker	D308	Mons variants
57		Lou conu et au desrainier:	
58		Si l'apelle on Coinrart Warnier.	
59		<i>Il meïsmes</i> bien me conut	Quant il me vit
60		Tout maintenant k'il m'aparsut;	
61		Lors commensait a <i>tiaxier</i>	fastroillier
62		Et lou boin <i>romans</i> axillier;	fransoiz
63		<i>En .j. romans</i> tout depaneiz	Et d'un walois
64	Conrad 1	M'ait dit: 'bien <i>serais vous venez</i> ,	soiez vos venei
65		'Sire Jaiquemet, bien <i>vaigniez!</i> '	volentiers
66	Jacques	---'Dex vos saut, sire chevalier,'	
67		Fi je, et 'A Deu vos comant!'	
68		Lors dist en son <i>füoix</i> romans:	
69	Conrad 2	'Sain Marie, ou <i>welz</i> vos aleir?	volez*
70		<i>Laisse</i> moi .iiij. mos parler!	Laissez mi
71		'Conte <i>moi de vos</i> novelier.	moi vos de
72		'Qui <i>sont</i> <i>devenut si</i> chevalier?	sont il devient
73		'Ou seront il <i>venut</i> la prou?'	trestout
74	Jacques	---'Sire, de ceu ne sai je prou,...	

\* Error (one syllable too many); see Damm, *Der deutsch-französische Jargon*, p.182.

The narrator has warned the reader or listener what to expect: Conrad begins to Germanize [*tiaxier*] and mutilate [*axillier*] good French [*romans*]. The verb used here, 'tiaxier', may be designed to ridicule Conrad's upcoming speech, although it can just mean 'speak German', as in *Guillaume de Dole*, where 'Il oit les barons tïeschant'.<sup>14</sup> Here the version in *Mons* offers a more standard verb, 'fastroillier' (mutilates), which partly misses the joke (by anticipating the warning that will follow in 'depaneiz' (l.63)), but has pedigree in that it is found in other descriptions of bad French by foreigners, including in *Les Deus Anglois*, where the butcher assumes the Englishman who mutilates his French in precisely this fashion to be either from the Auvergne or a German [*Tiois*].<sup>15</sup> While this substitution in *Mons* is weaker, the text there avoids the direct repetition of 'romans' for the language the German is attempting to speak by

<sup>14</sup> Cited in Tobler-Lommatzsch, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*, vol.10:300; see 1.4664 of Félix Lecoy, ed., *Jean Renart, Le Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dole* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1893). Frankish \*theudisk > OF *tiois*; hence, 'Germanise'; see *Französischen Etymologischen Wörterbuches* vol.17: 393b-394b.

<sup>15</sup> See ll.48-51 of *Les deus Anglois et l'anel* in Willem Noomen, ed., *Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux (NRCF)*, vol. 8, no. 90 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1994): "'Que vas tu, fait il [the butcher], fastroillant? / Ge ne sai quel malfez tu diz: / - Va t'en, que tes cors soit honiz! / Es tu Auvergnaz ou Tiois?'" ('What are you on about?' he [the butcher] said, 'I don't know what rot you're speaking: bugger off and sod you! Are you from the Auvergne or German?').

eschewing this term entirely, using ‘fransoiz’ (French) in line 62 and ‘walois’ in line 63.<sup>16</sup> While this might at first glance seem preferable, the conclusion below will advance the idea that this poem in its *D308* version sets out a stall for correct ‘romans’, an idealised version of a specifically literary vernacular that is not linked expressly to France.<sup>17</sup>

When Conrad is finally given a passage in direct speech (the very first in the poem), his words show elements that will remain markers of his language (mis)use throughout *Chauvency*. Usually, the gist of the enunciation is generally fairly clear, but the exact details are often derailed by grammatical errors. Here, it is clear that Conrad simply welcomes Jacques (ll.64-65) but uses a future (‘serais’ = ‘serés’ i.e. ‘serez’) for present subjunctive and then forms the past participle of ‘venir’ as if it were a first conjugation verb (‘venez’, rather than *venuz*). Typically here, as throughout Conrad’s direct speech, there is considerable variation between the two manuscript sources, with *Mons* failing to get the joke and adjusting Conrad’s French to make it more correct. In this case, the part of ‘estre’ given in l.64 is ‘soiez’ in *Mons*, which is correct, and while the error of treating ‘venir’ as first conjugation is preserved also in *Mons* (where it is spelled, ‘veni’), this is presumably because the scribe felt boxed in by the rhyme with ‘despannei’ in the previous line. The fact that *D308* is more erroneous actually makes it the better source, given that the point is to represent a speaker of French who is speaking a tattered kind of French.

Jacques greets Conrad back and commends him to God, as if taking his leave, but Conrad detains him with a series of questions in his ‘tïox romans’ — that is, his ‘German-French’, his ‘Frallamand’ (see Conrad 2 in Example 1).<sup>18</sup> These questions open with Conrad swearing by ‘Sain Marie’, failing to provide gender agreement for a clearly female ‘Sainte’ (a mistake confirmed as intentional by the meter). Both frequent swearing of oaths and lack of gender agreement in adjectives are features of Continental French satires of Insular French. For Insular French satire the latter is clearly potentially realistic, since English does not have such

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<sup>16</sup> Tobler-Lommatzsch 4:74-5 cites this example and glosses ‘Welsch, Kauderwelsch’ (Welsh, gibberish); it is difficult to know whether the term retains any sense of ‘Gaulish’, i.e. Cf. \**walhisk* in *FEW* vol.17: 490b-491a.

<sup>17</sup> The evolution of a standard French in the second half of the thirteenth century is outlined in Martin-Dietrich Glessgen, ‘La genèse d’une norme en français au Moyen Âge: mythe et réalité du “francien”’, *Revue de linguistique romane*, 81 (2017), 313-98.

<sup>18</sup> This description is reprised almost verbatim in lines that are only present in *D308* (see below).

gender agreement, which, in conjunction with uncertainty about the status of atonic ‘e’ in French, contributes to the hesitations and inconsistencies in the marking of feminine concord in Anglo-Norman. And the former (swearing) is arguably part of a comic stereotyping of the English as foul-mouthed.<sup>19</sup> While it may be that Conrad’s swearing is intended realistically (as a stereotype of Germans or, more broadly, the non-French foreigner, lacking the courtly speech of native Francophones), the issue of gender agreement is more complex. While ‘Heilige Maria’ would show such agreement, ‘Sankt Maria’ does not have a terminal ‘-e’, potentially making it, at least phonically and in the context of French or Latin norms, seem grammatically masculine.<sup>20</sup> But the terminal ‘-e’ in ‘sankte’ in German has a different status from French or Latin (being part of the word in its archaic form), so perhaps the suppression of gender agreement with ‘Sain’ in Conrad’s French represents a realistic phonic/semantic confusion between the two languages?

Conrad asks, swearing by this gender-disagreeing ‘Sain Mairi’, why Jacques wants to go, mixing the ‘tu’ and ‘vous’ conjugation of the indicative present of ‘vouloir’ (‘ou welz vos’). This confusion of ‘tu’ and ‘vous’ forms of the verb is frequent in parody and satire of Franglais, where it realistically represents a feature that is genuinely found in Anglo-Norman texts.<sup>21</sup> While mixing of ‘tu’ and ‘vous’ as forms of address is common in all French at this time, since the conventions were not then fully codified, what is problematic in Conrad’s speech is his inability to conjugate correctly. The confusion of ‘tu’ and ‘vous’ forms continues in lines 70 and 71 as Conrad begs Jacques for ‘novelier’, which represents a sterling (not impossible, but in this case wrong) attempt to nominalise an adjective—it is merely the wrong one, since it should be the substantive from the feminine ‘novele’.

The questions that follow in lines 72-73 are so full of errors that it is difficult to piece together what the right form of them should be. The word ‘devenut’ is seemingly an archaic form, correctly masculine nominative plural but with the terminal ‘-t’ suggesting an obsolete

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<sup>19</sup> See Burrows, “‘Ele bouste son doi en son con...’”: The Question of Anglo-Norman Obscenity’.

<sup>20</sup> Lexer, *MHD* vol. 2: 603, typically gives the headword with these earlier forms, so here with ‘-e’ (‘sancte, sante, sente’). The subsequent entry indeed includes masculine saints, showing that the final ‘-e’ is an integral part of the word, rather than the result of any feminine inflection.

<sup>21</sup> See Mildred K. Pope, *From Latin to Modern French with Especial Consideration of Anglo-Norman: Phonology and Morphology*. 2nd edn, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1952), §1315.

articulation of the final dental (< UTI), a feature that is also found in Insular French. What the ‘si’ that follows means is less clear, though. The precise sense of the overall question that lines 72-73 ask is obscure, something about the whereabouts of a group of brave knights.<sup>22</sup> The basic gist, however, is discernible: Conrad wants news about knights and about where worthy people are to be found. His questions are ‘who’ and ‘where’, but the exact content is a little sketchy.

Jacques’s reply is the sort of thing one might indeed say to be polite when it is clear that a non-native speaker has asked a question but his native speaker respondent is slightly doubtful as to what the precise question is. The answer is vague enough that it could be read as Jacques modestly denying knowledge when it will be clear to the Francophone audience for the poem that he is really saying that he has no idea what he has really been asked. But, given the ‘who?’ and ‘where?’ questions and the mention of knights, Jacques takes a gamble by telling Conrad, whether in answer to his questions (if that’s what they were asking) or as a legitimate change of subject (following disavowal of knowledge of whatever it was the questions were actually asking), about the forthcoming tournament at Chauvency. This, says Jacques, is to be held on the feast of Saint Remi (1 October) with jousts and tourneying, dancing and entertainment, at which women and young ladies will be present to be petitioned for love. Jacques advises Conrad not to delay but to go and see this great festivity for himself.

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#### EXAMPLE 2

line	speaker	D308 text	Mons MS variants
88		Lors comence a croleir lai teste	
89		Et respondi faiticement:	
90	Conrad 3	'Savrai je bien pairleir romans,	
91		<i>'Lou boin fransois et trestout sai;</i>	La bon fransoise trestout sai
92		'Moinné j' é baicheleir d'Assais,	Ausai
93		'Si grosse lance an sa main porte,	Sa
94		<i>'Josterie fist toute morte.</i>	Jousteri fu trestoute
95		'Et par <i>lou cors</i> Deu, di je voir'.	la jour
96	Jacques	---'Sire, bien lou poreis savoir!'	
97		Et puis li dit a un soul mot:	
98		'Je paierai tous les escos,	
99		'Combien qu'il me doie cousteir,	
100		'C'il ne trueve a cui josteir.'	
101	Conrad 4	---'Deus aie vos, <i>poieiz voir dire;</i>	pues bien voir dire
102		'Or conte <i>moi</i> qui fut lai sire,	mi
103		<i>'Et les dames et les pucelles,</i>	La bel dame et la bel pucel

<sup>22</sup> What Conrad is aiming for might be, ‘Que sont devenu ti chevalier? / Ou sont il venu, li prou?’. The second line here would be a little clumsy, but basically correct, with ‘prou’ being the substantival form of the adjective ‘prou’ (brave/worthy).

104	<i>'Et j'an conterai les nouvelles</i>	Et je conte tout la novel
105	<i>'Au roi et a ces chivailiers;</i>	son chevalier
106	<i>'Et a tres tout ces baicheleirs'.</i>	Ci vient trestout li bachelier

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In response Conrad nods his head and replies, according to the antiphrasis of the narrator, 'faiticement' (elegantly). His 'elegance' (see Conrad 3 in Example 2) starts with the wrong tense (future for indicative present) combined here with a syntactical error, since the placement of the verb before the subject 'je' suggests an interrogative when Conrad's sentence is a declarative, ironically, the boast that he knows how to speak romance and good French well, with the masculine article and adjective 'Lou boin' failing to agree with the incorrect feminine form 'fransoise' (mis-heard as 'fransois et' by the scribe of *D308*?).<sup>23</sup> What Conrad says next is riddled with errors, but in the main comprehensible: he is going to bring (his past tense is wrong) a young man from Alsace with such a huge lance that he'll be deadly jousting with it. From what transpires later, this is Conrad's first reference to his son, Conradin, whom he will assist in his joust on the first day of the tournament. The phrase 'josterie fist toute morte' is particularly puzzling: the tense of 'fist', the feminine ending of 'toute morte' and the syntactical connection with the preceding line are all unclear.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, the basic boast that his Alsatian 'baicheleir' is deadly in a fight is understood, although it might well be undermined by its proximity to Conrad's earlier boast about his own excellent French.

After Jacques replies, offering to pay a forfeit, whatever it might cost, if Conrad doesn't find an opponent against which his Alsatian champion can fight, Conrad's next set of questions (Conrad 4 in Example 2) is to demand that Jacques tell him which lords, ladies, and young women will be there so that he can take this news (this time, correctly 'nouvelles' in *D308* at least) to the King, his knights, and his 'baicheliars'. Example 2 makes it plain how Conrad's direct speech is the locus of the greatest variation between the two copies of the text, while when Jacques speaks, the two manuscripts agree. In Conrad's fourth utterance, unusually,

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<sup>23</sup> The *D308* text appears to have an error in this line (l.91), with 'fransois et' instead of the (incorrect but intentional) feminine 'fransoise' (found in *Mons*). It is possible that this indicates the scribe mis-transcribing the sounds from dictation or an aural memory in their head, a feature implied by other errors and variants in the manuscript.

<sup>24</sup> The possibility that 'morte' qualifies 'josterie' (implying that his jousting will be completely deadly) is possible if the adjective 'mort' can have this sense (properly, it would be 'mortel'), but this reading would involve Conrad in a more poetic word order that he ordinarily seems to command.

more errors are present in the *Mons* version in terms of gender mis-match, ensconced in the rhyme ‘la bel pucel / la novel’.<sup>25</sup>

Conrad’s direct speech from here on in this first meeting continues to make many of the same errors already observed and also continues to inhabit a threshold of comprehensibility at various points as his thought flies ahead of his ability to express it accurately in French. In terms of the plot, once Jacques has listed the personnel likely to be at the tournament, Conrad swears to come with the best knights from Alsace and the Rhine and thanks Jacques for telling him about it all. Jacques recommends Conrad return to his castle right away and prepare; Conrad says he will and says he will bring his son back with him, and they go their separate ways.

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EXAMPLE 3

line	speaker	<i>D308</i> text	<i>Mons</i> variants
330	Bruiant (the herald):	<i>'Et voi delai Coinrairt Wernier,</i>	Et vez vos la
<b>330a</b>		<b>'Qui bel desraine son fransois</b>	<b>LINE OMITTED</b>
<b>330b</b>		<b>'Moitiét romans, moitiét fïois;</b>	<b>LINE OMITTED</b>
331		<i>'Entor lui sont li Assizain,</i>	Ausisain
332		<i>'S'i est Cunes de Brekehain,</i>	Barquehain
333		<i>'Aimmes de Linange et Ferris,</i>	Admes de Lunenges et Ferçi
334		<i>'Rogier de Munesainne ausi.</i>	Miriessai

Once the action of the poem shifts to Chauvency where the tournament is to take place, Conrad is re-introduced in an initial survey of the personnel in the room given to Jacques by the herald Bruiant, as the two of them sit discreetly near a pillar to assess the guest list. This moment does not involve direct speech from Conrad, but the listener is reminded who he is by reference to his manner of speaking.

The herald Bruiant first points out Pérart de Gailly, the Lord of Esch, Philippe of Flanders, surrounded by knights from Hainault, and then Conrad, surrounded by knights from Alsace. At this point, *D308* has a couplet that is not present in *Mons*, clarifying the identity of Conrad, in case the audience of the poem had forgotten, and implying that his manner of speech is so marked that even the independent witness, Bruiant, cites it as his defining feature: he is the Conrad who ‘has a handsome manner of speaking French: / half *romans*,

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<sup>25</sup> It should be noted, too, that *Mons*’s ‘bel’ scans without the concordant ‘-e’, confirming its absence as intentional rather than a scribal omission.

half German’ (see Example 3). In repeating the verb ‘desrainer’ (1.330a), the poem has the herald echo the narrator’s own opening description of knowing Conrad by his manner of speaking (1.57), a factor Jacques will reiterate when recounting the initial meeting to his own master, Count Henry of Salm, in the interim between the initial scene and journeying to Chauvency (1.257; see further below). Bruiant’s explanation of how Conrad ‘bel desraïne son fransois’ also replicates the authorial antiphrasis mentioning the elegance of Conrad’s reply to Jacques (1.89) combined with additionally expanding and glossing the narrator’s description of Conrad’s ‘tïoix romans’ (1.68).

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#### EXAMPLE 4

line	speaker	<i>D308</i> text	<i>Mons</i> MS variants
906	(narrator)	Atant ez vous <i>Coinrair Wernier</i>	vos Conrat Warnier
907		Son <i>peire, ou vint et dit ainsi:</i>	pere et li
908	Conrad 13	'Vai devant, biaux filz, vez <i>lou</i> ci	le
909		' <i>Lou chivaillier ke jostre toi.</i>	Le chevalier qui jouste a toi
910		'Por <i>lou</i> cors monsignor <i>de</i> roi	le; dou
911		'Ne par Saint Piere de Coloigne,	
912		'Se tu ne <i>fais</i> bien la besoigne	fas [corrected by Delbouille]
913		'Ne vindre vos mie an maixon;	
914		'Je <i>chaiseir</i> fors a grant tixon,	chascier
915		Que vos n' <i>antreis</i> dedens les mois'.	
916	(narrator)	Ansi <i>forfixoit</i> son fransois	fastrouioit
917		<i>Coinrardin Wernier con</i> son fil.	Conrat Warnier contre

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While a minor noble and a relatively minor character in the later scheme of the poem, Conrad appears twice more, making him a fairly pervasive and recognisable presence throughout the work. Importantly, and, again, comically, he is present when he assists his son, Conradin, who is one of the knights contesting the fifth joust of the first proper day of the tournament, Monday.<sup>26</sup> This is the last of Monday’s jousts in *D308*’s version (*Mons* has two more).<sup>27</sup> We are given not only the battle cry of Conradin but, in the next line, a translation of it, ‘Hastat’ (1.903), as ‘haute cité en romans’ (1.904). The effect of one Germanophone knight speaking in bad French to his equally Germanophone son is clearly designed to continue Conrad’s comic turn and is akin to the satirical topos of English speakers conversing in mangled French as

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<sup>26</sup> It is possible that as well as featuring in the opening miniature, Conrad is one of the figures depicted looking on in the miniature on f.114r, which depicts his son Conradin fighting Henri de Briey in this joust, ll.847-941; see <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/f2d7b337-b9e3-4fc9-a198-88735002bd8d>.

<sup>27</sup> These include an unnamed Limburger and an unnamed German who fight named nobles from Bar and Lorraine respectively; see the list in Clemmensen, ‘Le Tournoi de Chauvency’.

they do, for example, in *Les deus Anglois*.<sup>28</sup> Conrad's speech is once more riddled with typical grammatical and syntactical errors, while being broadly understandable (see Conrad 13 in Example 4). He bids his son go forth and points out the knight who will joust against him using an invented verb ('ke jostre toi'). He then swears by Saint Peter of Cologne that if Conradin doesn't do what is necessary he should not think about coming home — he, Conrad, would chase him off with a big stick (and an infinitive rather than a finite form of the verb 'chaiseir') if he were to try to come home within a month. When Conrad is finished, the narrator once more comments that 'Ansi forfixoit [Conrad] son fransois' (thus was [Conrad] violating his French).<sup>29</sup> As at the opening when *D308* used 'tiaxier' (l.61), *Mons* opts instead for the verb 'fastrouioit' (l.916).<sup>30</sup>

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#### EXAMPLE 5

line	speaker	<i>D308</i> text	<i>Mons</i> MS variants
3415	(narrator)	Ancoste lou jantil vasaus,	
3416		Estoit <i>monteis sus</i> son chival	armez sour
3417		Conrars Wernier atot sa teste,	
3418		Prous et hardis, <i>nice</i> com beste,	ruste
3419		Et dist an son <i>roman baistars</i> :	tyois bastart
3420	Conrad 14	' <i>Vou, por de cors de Saint Lienart,</i>	Voirs, por la cors sainte
3421		' <i>Font il si tost</i> lou jor musier.	Fait; tout
3422		'Alons <i>ces logeris</i> brisier,	li sa loge
3423		'Et waignerons trestot <i>la dame</i> .	sa
3424		'Se je <i>l'avoï une bel feme</i>	l'avé un bien bel dame
3425		'Qui fut an cel chafet laval,	
3426		'Je quiterai bien lou cheval.'	
3427	(narrator)	A cest mot fut grant li risee	
3428		Qui an mains leus fut devisee.	

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The final appearance of Conrad is three days later, when he comes out ready for the Thursday *mêlée* fight and speaks in his 'roman baistars' ('bastardised *romans*' or 'bastardised vernacular'; see Conrad 14, Example 5), an adjective that emphasises the illegitimacy and hybridity of his French. In *Mons* his language is conversely described as 'tyois bastart' ('bastardised German') so that between them the variants in the two main manuscript witnesses make it plain that his speech is, as described, half one and half the other. In addition to flagging his direct speech in this way, he is described as 'worthy and brave,

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<sup>28</sup> See, for example, *Les deus Anglois*, ll.16-30.

<sup>29</sup> This suggestion takes this as being 'forfixoit' for 'forfesoit' in this scribe's copying norms, i.e. from 'forfaire' as a transitive verb, meaning to cause injury to someone or violate a body.

<sup>30</sup> *D308* has an error here and the reading of l.917 in *Mons* is correct: it is Conrad, not Conradin who is speaking.

gauche as a beast' (l.3417), a line that starts with standard knightly praise, but ends with a joke that emphasises his lack of refinement, and perhaps also his stupidity. When he opens his mouth to speak, he immediately swears and in doing so additionally exemplifies the German origins of his speech in what appears to be the only direct representation of a German word, some version of the definite article 'der', sneaking into his French.<sup>31</sup> In line 3420 Conrad swears on 'de cors' ('der body') of Saint Leonard that the others are going to spend the whole day messing about. He instead urges his hearers to break into the loges and take the ladies hostage. Here, the two sources hyper-correct different aspects of his speech, *Mons* removing the representation of the German article 'de' and *D308* having him correctly refer to 'une bele feme' when *Mons* has him make a typical gender error ('un bien bel dame'). At his words there is pervasive laughter, with ambiguity as to whether that is at what he says, how he says it, or both.

In describing Conrad as cutting the French language to ribbons, Bretel chooses a verb that has a more common usage as a verb describing the result of armed combat. As well as inviting this parallel, *Chauvency* makes it explicit by using the verb to describe what happens literally in the mêlée fight to Henri count of Blâmont (Blankenberg), the seneschal of Lorraine, nicknamed 'Maxcervaius' ('bad brain'). This cousin of Henri Count of Salm, the narrator's master, whose war cry is the German version of his name ('balquenbert'), is described as being 'thus ripped to ribbons [*depaneis*] and beaten down' (l.3572). In the metaphorical mêlée fight between Conrad and the French language, the latter comes off worse, with the triumphant Conrad worthy and brave in so far as he has won, but also gauche as a beast in so far as he has fought something that should be submitted to gracefully, that is, the speaking of proper French in a courtly context.

As has been shown, Conrad's speeches are characterised by errors of agreement and conjugation, the invention of verbs, and generally odd locutions that result in a lack of precision and clarity. In addition, he often begins his utterances by swearing an oath, and in one case this must be such a familiar expression in German that he inadvertently uses a German article for the body of the Saint in question. As mentioned in the introduction, many of these features are also seen in continental French depictions of speakers of Insular French. It is worth considering, therefore, which (if any) of these features are meant to be

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<sup>31</sup> Assuming accusative after 'pour' (Conrad thinking 'für') it would theoretically be 'den'.

verisimilitudinous depictions of a German speaker speaking French and which are merely utilising long-established tropes for depicting the bad French of foreigners in general. Alongside these questions, the further question of Conrad's role in *Chauvency* is worth exploration, since it arguably sheds light on the rationale behind the copying of *D308*.

## **2. A literary topos for the French of any foreigners?**

It is far more common that French texts represent English speakers speaking French ('Franglais') than that they represent Germans speaking French ('Frallamand'). Given this fact, commonalities between the two kinds of representation could suggest that Conrad's Frallamand is based not on any form of reality, howsoever exaggerated for comic effect, but on the already-established comedy turn of the English French speaker. The earliest study of Conrad's speech takes this idea into account, but concludes instead that both forms of French spoken by foreigners share the kinds of errors that an uneducated person might make, meaning that the Anglo-French texts are not necessarily serving as a model.<sup>32</sup> However, Conrad is a nobleman, who, while no scholar, might be expected to be sufficiently educated in speaking a language that is used at noble events like a tournament and its associated cultural activities; indeed, he explicitly makes claims to just such knowledge (see Conrad 3 in Example 2). It is therefore worth re-visiting the question of the extent to which Conrad's French replicates elements found in texts representing English French speakers and to what extent any shared (or unshared) features can be credibly attributed to realistic traits rather than being literary topoi.

The belittling of Insular French by Continental French writers certainly appears to contain some elements of realism, albeit exaggerated for comic effect. In particular, it would be believable that an English speaker would not necessarily know the correct gender of nouns or remember to make adjectives agree with them in gender and number given that English lacks these features. While from a non-Insular French perspective these are mistakes, once Anglo-Norman is accepted as its own dialect form of French, these are legitimate features of Anglo-Norman. In addition, the inadvertent use of the obscene 'foutre' for parts of 'fut', is believably part of the assimilation of Continental palatal /y/ to Insular velar /u/ and thus

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<sup>32</sup> See Damm, *Der deutsch-französische Jargon*, p. 194.

legitimately part of the pronunciation of Anglo-French dialect.<sup>33</sup>

One of the songs in the section of ‘sottes chansons’ in the lyrics of *D308* gives us a ready example of a depiction of an English speaker speaking comic bad French in the orthography of this particular manuscript (see Example 6). Here, resonating with the situation in *Chauvency*, an English knight has come across the Channel for a tournament; encountering a French maiden, he asks her to marry him, but she refuses.<sup>34</sup>

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EXAMPLE 6, Anonymous, *sotte chanson* no.21 (RS1851) in *D308* (ed. Doss-Quinby)

I

Se je chant con gentil home,  
Il fut bien raison de coi;  
Car il fut bien en la some  
Plus de .ij. mil on tornoi  
Qui fut vous de mes linaige.  
Por cel je chant de coraige  
    Et vairai l'amer  
Se je ving de l'outremer,  
Un porcel a grant mamel.  
Di je bien, sire Danel?

II

Lai .i. bel porcel demoinne,  
Bien l'ame tres ans pas foi,  
N'ai de li ke vaille .i. poume.  
Cant s'amor li pri, dist: "Oi,  
Bouf, bel freire, il fut l'outraige  
Se je don me pucelaige;  
    Se vous voil jueir  
Et mes con faire baeir  
Come goule de porcel,  
Si me bouse de l'ainel.

III

Mais, par saint Piere de Rome,  
Vos devés pas boussier moy.  
J'ai .i. freire c'ait non Tome,  
Ke fut escüer au roi,  
Qui porter l'oisel plumaige

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<sup>33</sup> See Burrows, “‘Ele boute son doi en son con...’: The Question of Anglo-Norman Obscenity”, pp. 35-37.

<sup>34</sup> See Eglal Doss-Quinby, Marie-Geneviève Grossel, and Samuel N. Rosenberg, “*Sottes chansons contre Amours*”: *parodie et burlesque au Moyen Âge*. Vol. 46, *Essais sur le Moyen Âge* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2010), no.22.

Por prandre mailart rivaige.

Vos ne despenser  
En si gentil leu monter  
Vos, boin dan, avuil travel!  
Male chance vos musel!"

[MS: Male meschance]

IV

Amors ains qui me asoume  
Va noier d'ome l'otroi  
De servir mon dam qui tome  
De païs ou .ij. ou trois  
Chascun jor par vaselaige,  
Car sans boussei servirai ge  
De qui sans fauser  
Voil ma vostre amor doner  
Toi, boin dam, car je fu bel  
Et s'ai boin cheval morvel.

[MS: ou .ij. fois ou]

V

Se je boin dame te nome,  
J'ain boin droit, par saint Aloi,<sup>35</sup>  
Car vous fus, par saint Gerome!  
Toi c'an tien, mai c'ai a toi,  
Porcel, qui de vous fiz saige!  
Vos traué tout me quilage;  
Cant vos me garder,  
Por vous me quel sopirer,  
Car nul singe crouperel  
Ne fut ain si bel porcel.

[MS: dam]

E

A roi inglis qui fut saige,  
Qui Francis mander  
Fait por son sele trauer  
Por bouter bourilunel  
Envoi mon chant par revel.

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As Doss-Quinby notes, the errors in this depiction of Insular French are similar to those found in the *Français* of the count of Gloucester in Philippe de Remy's *Jehan et Blonde* and other similar texts: using the infinitive of the verb instead of conjugated forms, incorrect conjugation in general, using simple past of the verb to be to express various tenses, odd syntax, getting genders wrong, and the indifferentiation of vowels 'u' and 'ou'. Indeed, some 'errors' are in both texts, such as 'porcel' for 'pucelle', 'bouse' for 'espouse' and 'fous/fout'

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<sup>35</sup> Saint Eligius was treasurer of Dagobert I, bishop of Noyon-Tournai in the seventh century, and the patron saint of goldsmiths and metallurgists.

for ‘fus/fut’.<sup>36</sup> As Doss-Quinby also points out, a direct connection between these two texts is not necessary because they both draw on common features associated with the poor French of Insular speakers.

In his discussion of *Chauvency*, Otto Damm had already noted several of these shared features between *Jehan et Blonde*, the Renart Jongleur episode of *Renart*, and *Les deus Anglois*, as well as features that are lacking compared to the more common Anglo-French ‘jargon’.<sup>37</sup> In terms of shared features, Damm lists the frequency of apocope (the loss of the final ‘e’ or ‘s’), which is often associated with inattention to gender or number agreement, as well as the substitution of feminine articles for masculine ones, and the use in *D308*’s version of ‘de’ (German ‘der’; English ‘the’) for ‘le’.<sup>38</sup> In addition, he notes the use of ‘tu’ with ‘vous’ forms in both kinds of foreign French, which share other confusion in verbal forms, including the use of the wrong conjugation, although Damm claims this confusion is very much greater in Franglais texts, with, for example, only one instance of an infinitive used for a finite verb form in all of Conrad’s utterances.

Some of Damm’s cases can be rejected: the vowel changes that he lists, the lack of nominative inflection in nouns, and the loss of final ‘e’ in words preceding another word starting with a vowel are part of the normal orthography of *D308* and not peculiar to Conrad, giving information about the French of the region in which the manuscript was copied rather than about Frallamand.

In terms of things present in Franglais but missing from Frallamand, Damm notes the substitution of voiced for unvoiced consonants; he also notes that apheresis and the use of masculine articles for feminine ones are very rare in *Chauvency* compared to their frequency in the texts satirising English speakers of French.

The French that we hear from Conrad might be thought to be a qualitatively different case from Franglais. Anglo-French was a regional variety of French, legitimate in its own right with all its particularities of grammar, at least from the British perspective (even if

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<sup>36</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 188-191, especially the notes on pp. 190-191.

<sup>37</sup> See Damm, *Der deutsch-französische Jargon*, pp. 181-194.

<sup>38</sup> For this last example, see l.3420 in my Example 5, Conrad 14 and cf. l.92 of *De deus Anglois*; see also Damm, *Der deutsch-französische Jargon*, pp. 190-191, examples under 7c.

Continental speakers would question that claim). Conrad conversely is a German speaker attempting to speak French as a truly foreign language. But the striking similarity between some of the errors in both cases suggest that the two situations were seen as basically similar from the perspective of Continental French, even by those who were writing and speaking the regional, Eastern variety of French found in Lorraine. The question then arises as to which elements, if any, of the ‘bad’ French of Conrad are a ‘realistic’ depiction of a German speaking French and which may be part of a topos of generic foreigners’ French. This in turn might make some of the elements in satires of Anglo-French appear less part of a potentially realistic portrayal (albeit exaggerated), and which might there, too, be part of a topos of ‘foreigners’ French’.<sup>39</sup>

Damm does not mention obscenity explicitly, but points both to the shared preponderance of ‘fut’ and ‘fu’ in preference to other part of ‘estre’ in both Franglais and Frallamand and then notes that ‘u’ becomes ‘ou’ in the former. The resultant diegetically unintentional obscenity is the main element present in Franglais but absent from Frallamand.<sup>40</sup> Arguably, this is a realistic difference, because, unlike English, German *does* make use of the same palatal /y/ found in Continental French, so the inadvertent mispronunciation of ‘fut’ would not occur. Swearing per se, however, is present: Conrad typically open his speeches with oaths, but these are swearing by various Saints and the Virgin, similar to those found in Continental French. Unlike the typical (again, inadvertent) obscenity of swearing by ‘le cul Deu’ found in Franglais, Conrad swears by ‘lou cors Deu’. In contrast to Franglais, Frallamand, it seems, is not inadvertently obscene or scatological. Even the potential inadvertent use of the verb ‘to fart’ which might have lurked behind Conrad’s use of ‘poieiz’ (l.101, Conrad 4 in Example 2) is not likely to be intended by the author here, because this orthography is used for this part of ‘pooir’ elsewhere in the manuscript in three unique (and thus local, Lotharingian) high-style Marian songs.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Madeleine Jeay has noted that the topos of mockery in the presentation of linguistic confrontation figures mockery for all marginal speakers, whether that marginality is geographical, social, sexual, or moral; see Madeleine Jeay, ‘Le rencontre des langues dans le récit médiéval’, in *Topographie de la rencontre dans le roman européen*, ed. by Jean-Pierre Dubost (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2008), pp. 19-39, at p. 19.

<sup>40</sup> See Burrows, “‘Ele boute son doi en son con...’: The Question of Anglo-Norman Obscenity’.

<sup>41</sup> See grands chants, nos. 44 (RS276), 59 (RS181), and 66 (RS2059) in Mary Atchison, *The Chansonnier of Oxford Bodleian MS Douce 308: Essays and Complete Edition of Texts* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

Conrad's rendition of the name Agnes de Commercy as 'Anel' (ll.156, 164) might recall one of the key Anglo-French homophones ('agnel' (lamb) and 'anel' (ass), resulting from the depalatisation of palatal 'n' in Anglo-Norman) that make for comic misunderstanding with speakers of Continental French in the fabliau *Les deus anglois et l'anel*. If the orthography here reflected performative pronunciation, it may have given additional comedy to Conrad's speech, implying that Agnes is an ass, except that the narrator's use of her name in direct speech is also spelled 'Anel' in line 181.<sup>42</sup>

Speakers of Insular French, like Conrad when he first appears (Example 1), are often introduced with warnings about their mutilation of the language and then go on ironically to boast about their language skills in ways that undermine the terms of the boast, much as Conrad does in Conrad 3 (Example 2).<sup>43</sup> These features are part of the comic topos and also, potentially, realistic in both cases.

One feature that might appear to be a topos in Conrad's French rather than a realistic depiction of a German speaker trying his best is the muddling of gender, since German, too, has gender. Thus Conrad seems not to know that 'Marie' is a 'Sainte'—he calls her the masculine, 'Sain', a feature that is not a scribal error because it is confirmed by the syllable count in line 69. Conversely, this might represent the direct transfer of the German phrase 'Sankt Marie', which did not require a terminal '-e'.

Certain other aspects key to satirical treatment of Anglo-Norman are definitely absent here, for example the inability to grasp a second meaning of something spoken by a non-regional French speaker, or, conversely, the production of an unintended (and often obscene)

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<sup>42</sup> The other mentions of Agnes are all cut from *D308*'s text, mostly in the large cuts made to the action on Monday; *Mons* consistently spells her 'Agnes' (ll.156, 164, 181, 1307,1365, 3255; the last of these examples is a curious and isolated cut of a single line that removes a necessary rhyme from the refrain line that follows, sung by Agnes).

<sup>43</sup> For example, in Branche 1b of *Renart* Renart Jongleur boasts, 'j'aver tot apris françois' (l.2368); see Jean Dufournet, *Le roman de Renard (branches I, II, III, IV, V, VIII, X, XV): Chronologie, préface, bibliographie, notes et lexique* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1970); see also Elisabeth Schulze-Busacker, 'Renart, le jongleur étranger, analyse thématique et linguistique à partir de la branche Ib du Roman de Renart (v. 2403-2580 et 2857-3034)', in *Third International Beast Epic, Fable and Fabliau Colloquium, Münster, 1979: Proceedings*, ed. by Jan Goossens and Timothy Sodmann (Cologne: Böhlau, 1981), pp. 380-91.

secondary meaning by the regional French speaker. Madelein Jeay points out that in these respects, Anglo-Norman incomprehension (with comic consequences) is similar to that in other texts where the social status of the speaker similarly either prevents them speaking comprehensible French or makes them misunderstand what is said to them.<sup>44</sup> This sort of comic mix-up, which frames one party as too stupid to understand properly, is simply not found in *Chauvency*. In part, this is because the social status of Conrad is high, so his linguistic alterity is not satirised as a form of stupidity but merely as something funny. But it may also be because Conrad speaks a foreign language he has learned imperfectly, whereas Anglo-Norman speakers had long referred to their perfectly proficient language as ‘faus francies’.<sup>45</sup>

Similarly, the resort to the animalistic use of onomatopoeia found in *Les deus Anglois* is also distinct from Conrad’s speech. While the shouts and cries of the heralds in the tourney field are frequently animalised through the use of verbs suggesting animal *voces* (‘crier comme bestes’), Conrad is genuinely trying and is described at all times as behaving with the utmost nobility; he just gets his French wrong. In the *Mons* copy, the text gives the contrasting figure of Henri de Laon, who is praised because, as the narrator explains, he ‘ne parloit mie breton / Mais un frainçois bel et joli’ (spoke not a shred of Breton, but a handsome and fine French). While the specific choice of Breton might only serve the necessities of rhyme, the implication is that Henri can keep French and another available language completely separate, speaking a pure form of French and thus contrasting with Conrad’s half-and-half speech.<sup>46</sup> Unlike the English French Speakers, Conrad is not belittled, animalised, or demeaned as stupid. He is simply funny because he treats French how one ought, properly, to treat an opponent in the lists—he engages it in one-to-one combat and cuts it to pieces. His treatment is a comic misplacement, but does not detract from his nobility.

## Conclusion

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<sup>44</sup> See Jeay, ‘Le rencontre des langues dans le récit médiéval’, pp. 33-36, which draws parallels between similar forms of incomprehension in *Aucassin et Nicolette*, *Le jeu de Robin et Marion*, and *Le roi d’Angleterre et le jongleur d’Ely*.

<sup>45</sup> The words of a nun of Barking Abbey in the 1160s; see Ian Short, *Manual of Anglo-Norman*. Anglo-Norman Text Society Occasional Publications, 2nd ed (Oxford: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2013), p.20

<sup>46</sup> Lines 2093-2101.

The most recent prosopography of *Chauvency*, Steen Clemmensen's 2007 list of the participants and their heraldry, adduces 61 knights, 14 ladies, and 16 heralds and minstrels. The individual jousts that the poem presents most often involve knights who are from the houses of Bar or Lorraine, with those from Alsace, Luxembourg, Berry, and Hainaut also featured.<sup>47</sup> The location of the tournament, the identity of its hosts (the Chiny family, vassals of the Counts of Bar), and the participants on the home team in the *mêlée* fight on the Thursday, locate the poem squarely in Lotharingia. *D308* was copied in Metz and several of the names in *Chauvency* are repeated or relate parentally to those that feature in the *jeux-partis* of the *chansonniere* section of the manuscript.<sup>48</sup>

While we do know that the *chansonniere* followed *Chauvency* in the original plan for the manuscript because they are part of the same physical structure, we do not know whether they were designed to share a volume with the two works that precede them (the late Alexander romance, *Les Voeux du Paon* and Richard de Fournival's *Bestiaire d'amour*) and, if so, where *Chauvency* and the *chansonniere* were designed to sit in the overall order.<sup>49</sup> As the volume now stands, Nancy Freeman Regalado calls it a 'complete kit of secular chivalry', but even if the original conception contained only the fascicle with *Chauvency* and the *chansonniere*, it is a sizeable representative of the diverse genres of French song (containing around 20% of the known *trouvère* repertoire, including both widely known 'classics' by Blondel de Nesle and Gace Brulé, as well as significant *unica* and genres otherwise very little attested).<sup>50</sup>

A manuscript from a geographical, political, and linguistic borderland that is so highly representative of a major prestigious francophone literature would appear to have the purpose of offering a compendium of 'correct' Frenchness. This repository of French lyrics exhibits various meters and registers, and contains genres suitable for communal dancing as well as lively debate in song and speech (the *jeu-parti* subsection also contains the earliest set of

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<sup>47</sup> See Clemmensen, 'Le Tournoi de Chauvency'.

<sup>48</sup> See the summary of earlier literature on the onomastics of the *jeux-partis* in Mélanie Lévêque, 'Les trouvères lorrains: acteurs d'une identité régionale au cœur de la Lotharingie', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Université de Sherbrooke*, 5 (2012) online at <http://www.rhus.association.usherbrooke.ca/wp-content/articles/515.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> I intend to publish on this issue elsewhere; meanwhile, see Stones, *Gothic Manuscripts*, II.i, 50 and Griffith, 'The Codicological Histories of Two Metz Compilations'.

<sup>50</sup> Regalado, 'Picturing the Story of Chivalry', p. 343.

prose Love Questions). It contains high-style songs for refined listening purposes, which cover topics from courtly loving to Marian praise, while also containing their scatological mirror in the form of *sottes chansons*. The emphasis of the fascicle on the widest range of lyricism in French supports the prestige of French as a literary language in Lotharingia.

One question that surfaces in this regard, however, is to what extent the prestige attaching to some proper kind of French obscures or promotes the specifically regional variety of French exhibited in the linguistic traits of *D308*. Even in trouvère lyrics with a non-local origin, the language of chansonnier has certain Eastern (Lotharingian) features, which are more pronounced in local unica, such as the ballettes, but which occur throughout alongside more central linguistic features.<sup>51</sup> The entire passage in *Chauvency* praising Henri de Laon for his ability to separate Breton and French (noted above) is excised from *D308*, including the lines slightly later when a herald who is speaking Picard dialect is parodied by a minstrel who briefly imitates his speech. Perhaps the scribes of *D308*, thinking not of the Breton that is indeed a separate language but that regional variety of French spoken in Brittany, cut this passage because it seemed to imply a ‘frainçois’ properly distinct from regional varieties of continental French. What *D308*’s combination of *Chauvency* and the chansonnier seem instead to promote is the idea that nobles should be taught French (any French, probably here Lotharingian French) early and well enough as to provide a discrete way of speaking that keeps the language separate from, this case, German. Perhaps for speakers of Lotharingian French, with its geographic overlap with German-speaking lands, this was a particularly acute problem because of the influence of German on French in that region, or the propensity for multilingual speakers to engage in a kind of code-switching, a mixing of the two, which is what Conrad appears to exhibit. Further consideration of this aspect is beyond the scope of this paper, but the presence of Conrad at the outset of *Chauvency* takes on especial significance in this context because he is contrasted with a figure who has a similar geographico-linguistic situation but who does not engage in such code-switching, Jacques’s master, Count Henry of Salm.

Conrad’s initial conversation in a French that is ‘ripped to shreds’ comes right at the beginning of the poem—it is the first long conversation in a long and very conversational

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<sup>51</sup> See the summary in Doss-Quinby, Samuel N. Rosenberg, and Elizabeth Aubrey, eds., *The Old French Ballette*, LXXII-LXXVII; see also the comments in Delbouille, ed., *Jacques Bretel: Le Tournoi de Chauvency*, XLVI-XLIX.

narrative poem. This placement establishes a conversational but comic mode at the outset; it positions the poem on a geographical and linguistic borderland; it insists on French as the language of courtly prestige, while making it amusingly clear that not everyone has complete facility in using it (even if they think they do!); and it places the very sound of language centre-stage. These linguistic sounds will be joined by the poem's later frequent descriptions of the sounds of jousting, singing, dancing, and playing, as well as shouting and weeping. Partly, but not only because of its emphasis on direct speech and dialogue, *Chauvency* is a very sonic poem; the human voices described vary from the barking and animal-like shouting of the heralds, through the ripping to shreds of a foreign language by Conrad, to the refined exchange of sung French refrains by a large number of the characters.

Once Conrad and Jackie part after their initial conversation, the narrator returns to his master at Salm. Arriving slightly late for dinner, he is invited to sit with Count Henry, whom he amuses by relating the meeting which has already been presented to the audience of the poem. We are told that the narrator tells his master of:

Lai venue et lou parlement,  
L'acointanse et lou desrainier  
De moi et de Coinrair Wernier,  
Lou faus romans et les faus dis.  
Asseis an ait li boins coins ris.  
(ll.256-260)

The arrival and the parley, the meeting, and the manner of speech of me and of Conrad Werner, the false *romans* and the false words. The good count laughed heartily at this.

The verbatim reprise of the verb 'desrainier' (cf. l.57 in Example 1) continues the emphasis on the manner of speech of Conrad—his 'faus romans' and 'faus dis'. Given that the audience have already heard this, for them to be reminded of it so soon, suggests that it would have been particularly amusing for them too, but also that it is important to emphasise how amusing a good French speaker—like Henry of Salm—finds it to hear of a bad one. The repetition of 'desrainier' makes Conrad into a figure of fun, the tale of his poor French told twice already within the first three hundred lines—once to the poem's audience and then again, diegetically within the poem, to Count Henry. For amusing the count in this way, Jacques is rewarded with a coat, shirt and green cape, mitten, and a fine squirrel-fur hood.

These gifts confirm that it is a good joke and warn that you, dear reader, do not want to be the butt of such a joke. Better to let yourself be cut to ribbons nobly in a *mêlée* than to cut French to ribbons in your speech in the courtly setting of a wood, a noble hall, or the tournament's lists.