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# FROM *MULTUM* TO *BEAUCOUP* : BETWEEN ADVERB AND NOMINAL DETERMINER<sup>1</sup>

Anne Carlier  
University of Lille / North of France, Lille 3  
CNRS UMR 8094 – STL

[Anne.Carlier@univ-lille3.fr](mailto:Anne.Carlier@univ-lille3.fr)

## Abstract

The morphosyntactic status of the French quantifying expression *beaucoup* ‘a lot / much, many’ has been extensively discussed in the literature. Three hypotheses have been put forward: *beaucoup* has been categorized as an adverb, as having a double categorial status, both a determiner and an adverb, or as an expression which is underspecified as to its categorial status. This paper reconsiders the question from a diachronic viewpoint. It highlights two parallelisms between *multum* in Classical Latin and *beaucoup* when it becomes a quantifying expression in Middle French: (i) both quantifying expressions can combine with a noun or a verb, but never with an adjective or an adverb; (ii) they occur in direct object position (expressed in Latin by an accusative NP not headed by a preposition) or in subject position in combination with unaccusative verbal predicates, but they are unattested in other syntactic positions. These similarities can be explained on the basis of the nominal origin of *multum* and *beau-coup* ‘beautiful knock’. Being nominal expressions, *multum* and *beaucoup* are used for quantification of the direct internal argument of the verb and may occur with a genitive complement or a prepositional complement introduced by *de*. Since they quantify the direct internal argument of the verb, they also quantify the verbal process as such and become in this way full adverbs without saturating an argument position. It is only in a later stage that they can quantify a NP external to the VP and that they become full-fledged nominal determiners. They keep however their hybrid status, between adverb and nominal determiner, when they quantify the direct internal argument of the verb.

The diachronic perspective of this study offers a better understanding of the use of *beaucoup* in Modern French: (i) from a distributional viewpoint, it explains why *beaucoup* used as an adverb can modify a verb but not an adjective or an adverb; (ii) it offers a fine-grained account of the morphosyntactic categorization of *beaucoup* in its different uses in Modern French and clarifies its syntactic differences with respect to quantifying determiners like *plusieurs* ‘several’; (iii) from a semantic viewpoint, it explains in which contexts *beaucoup* behaves as an ordinary quantifier, having normal scope relations.

Although substantial research effort has been devoted to the question, the morphosyntactic status of *beaucoup* in its uses exemplified by (1a) and (1b) is still under debate.

- (1) a. Il mange *beaucoup de* pain.  
He eat-PRST.3SG a lot of bread.  
b. Il lit *beaucoup de* livres.  
He read-PRST.3SG a lot of books

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<sup>1</sup> This research on quantification has been initially conducted in collaboration with L. Melis (cf. Carlier & Melis 2005, Carlier & Melis 2006). Earlier versions of this paper have been presented in Paris, Lyon, Strasbourg, Valenciennes and Antwerp. Thanks to my audience at this different occasions for their suggestions and critical comments. The paper has also benefited from the insightful comments of Lucia Tovena, Christiane Marchello-Nizia and of two anonymous referees.

The present study intends to shed new light on this topic by introducing the diachronic perspective.

*Beaucoup* belongs, together with *peu* ‘little, few’, *assez* ‘enough’, *trop* ‘too much/many’, *tant / tellement* ‘so much/many’, *plus* ‘more’, *moins* ‘less’, ... to the paradigm of expressions quantifying both extension (1) and degree or ‘intension’ (2) (Doetjes 1997, Abeillé & Godard 2003, Abeillé *et al.* 2004).

- (2) a. Il aime ***beaucoup*** cet auteur.  
 He like-PRST.3SG a lot this author.  
 b. Il éprouve ***beaucoup*** de respect pour son père.  
 He feel-PRST.3SG a lot of respect for his father.

Recent studies insist upon the categorial flexibility of these quantifying expressions. As illustrated by (3), *beaucoup* can be used as an adverb (3a), for nominal determination (3b/3c) and even as a pronoun (3d). Finally, it can reinforce another quantifier (3e-f).

- (3) a. Marie a ***beaucoup*** dansé.  
 Mary has a lot danced.  
 ‘Mary danced a lot’  
 b. Marie a lu ***beaucoup*** de livres.  
 Mary has read a lot of books.  
 ‘Mary has read a lot of books’  
 c. ***Beaucoup*** de filles ont dansé.  
 A lot of girls have danced.  
 ‘A lot of girls danced’  
 d. ***Beaucoup*** ont assisté à la réunion.  
 A lot have assisted to the meeting.  
 ‘Many attended the meeting’  
 e. Marie a lu ***beaucoup*** (plus / moins / trop / trop peu) de livres.  
 Mary has read a lot (more / less / too many / too less) of books.  
 ‘Mary has read much more/less/... books’  
 f. Marie a ***beaucoup*** (plus / moins / trop / trop peu / mieux) dansé.  
 Mary has a lot (more / less / too much / too less) danced.  
 ‘Mary danced much more / less /...’

How can we conceptualize this flexibility of the grammatical categorisation of *beaucoup* and of the other members of its paradigm? Section 1 provides a critical survey of the previous accounts (§ 1). The following sections offer a diachronic perspective on the problem of the morphosyntactic categorization and specifically focus on *beaucoup* (*de*) and its predecessors *multus* / *mult* / *moult* in Latin (§ 2), in very Old French (§ 3), in Old French (§ 4) and in Modern French (§ 5). The final section (§ 6) will highlight the parallelism between *multum* in Latin and *beaucoup* in Middle French and suggest some directions for further research.

## 1 The morphosyntactic categorization of *beaucoup* in Modern French: three hypotheses

In order to account for the categorial flexibility of *beaucoup*, *peu*, *trop*, *assez*, *tant*, ..., several hypotheses have been explored. Firstly, these quantifying expressions have been described as underspecified with respect to their morphosyntactic categorization (§ 1.1). Secondly, they have been analyzed as adverbs in all their uses (§ 1.2). According to the third hypothesis,

these quantifying expressions are ambivalent as to their morphosyntactic status: they can be either adverb or nominal determiner (§ 1.3).

### 1.1 Hypothesis 1: *Beaucoup* is categorially underspecified

The hypothesis of the categorial underspecification has been defended by Doetjes (1997: 1-2), on the basis of the following observation: contrary to *souvent* ‘often’ (4) and *plusieurs* ‘several’ (5), *beaucoup* does not impose categorial restrictions and can be used with both NPs and VPs.

- (4) a. Les linguistes ont *beaucoup* dansé la salsa.  
The linguists have a-lot danced the salsa.  
b. *Beaucoup* de linguistes ont dansé la salsa.  
A lot of linguists have danced the salsa
- (5) a. Les linguistes ont souvent dansé la salsa.  
The linguists have often danced the salsa.  
b. \**Souvent* (de) linguistes ont dansé la salsa.  
Often of linguists have danced the salsa.
- (6) a. \*Les linguistes ont *plusieurs* dansé la salsa.  
The linguists have several danced the salsa.  
b. *Plusieurs* linguistes ont dansé la salsa.  
Several linguists have danced the salsa (Doetjes 1997: 1-2)

Therefore, *beaucoup* is analyzed by Doetjes as having the syntactic status of an adjunct. The only distributional constraint characteristic of *beaucoup*, as well as of the other similar quantifiers like *peu* ‘little, not much/many’, *assez* ‘enough’, *trop* ‘too much/many’, *(au)tant* ‘as much’ etc., is of a semantic nature: they are only compatible with open-scale predicates, and do not accept non gradable (7) or closed-scale (8) predicates (Doetjes 1997<sup>2</sup>; Kennedy & McNally 2005):

- (7) a. \*Elle est *peu* enceinte / morte.  
She is not-much pregnant / dead.  
b. \*Une carte *trop / assez* géologique.  
A map too/enough geological.
- (8) a. La bouteille est *à moitié / complètement / \*peu* vide.  
The bottle is half- / completely / not-much empty  
b. Cette image est *partiellement / complètement / \*peu* invisible.  
This picture is partially / completely / not-much invisible

The hypothesis of categorial underspecification accounts for the flexible distribution of *beaucoup* and the similar quantifying expressions, *i.e.* their ability to combine with different categories. But it fails to explain the limits of this flexibility. For instance, if it is true that all quantifiers belonging to the paradigm of *beaucoup* lack in the same way categorial selection, why is the adnominal position more natural for *beaucoup* than for *assez* in example (9)?

<sup>2</sup> A more fine-grained analysis of the specific distributional constraints of the different quantifiers or degree-markers is offered by Doetjes (2008): on the basis of their compatibility with different morphosyntactic categories, she establishes a typology of the English, Dutch and French quantifiers or degree markers.

- (9) a. **Beaucoup** de filles ont dansé.  
 A-lot of girls have danced.  
 b. ??**Assez** de filles ont dansé<sup>3</sup>.  
 Enough of girls have danced.

A second problem relates to the presence of *de* when the quantifier is in an adnominal position. The explanation offered by Doetjes (1997: 157) is based on a comparison with the English quantifying expression *a lot of*:

- (10) a. Jean a lu **beaucoup / peu** *de* livres.  
 b. John has read **a-lot / few** *of* books.

Doetjes argues that *a lot of* is a classifier construction. In the framework of generative grammar, where every NP has to receive case, it is assumed that case is assigned to the nominal classifier, leaving the NP *books* without case. The insertion of the genitive case marker *of* allows complying with the requirement to assign case to the NP *books* (Chomsky 1981). According to Doetjes (1997: 158) and Battye (1991: 32), the presence of *de* when *beaucoup*, *peu*, *trop*, *assez*, ... are used in adnominal position has to be explained along the same lines: given that the quantifier absorbs the case assigned by the verb, the use of *de* is necessary in order to assign case to the NP *livres*.

It should however be noted that this analysis of *beaucoup*, *peu*, ... as nominal classifiers absorbing the case assigned by the verb is incompatible with their syntactic status of adjuncts, since adjuncts do never receive case from the verb. Hence, the hypothesis of the categorical underspecification leaves unexplained the presence of *de* when the quantifier *beaucoup* is adnominal.

## 1.2 Hypothesis 2: *Beaucoup* is an adverb

The morphosyntactic category of the adverb is heterogeneous, in part because it served as ragbag throughout the history of grammar. In this perspective, it is not sure that the addition of the quantifying expressions like *beaucoup* to the category is judicious, because their adverbial status is far from unquestionable in all their uses.

Let's focus on two particular cases.

- Quantifying expressions like *beaucoup* can hold on their own the position of preverbal subject, which is a typically nominal position :

- (11) **Beaucoup** ont participé à la manifestation.  
 A-lot have-PRST.3PL participated in the demonstration.

- They can serve as a NP governed by a preposition :

- (12) Pour **beaucoup**, le vocabulaire et la syntaxe qu' ils utilisent en famille  
 For a-lot, the vocabulary and the syntax that they use.3PL.PRST in family  
 n' ont rien à voir avec le vocabulaire en usage à l'école.  
 not have-PRST.3PL anything to do with the vocabulary in usage at the school.  
 'For a lot of people, the vocabulary and the syntax they use in their family have  
 nothing to do with the vocabulary used at school.' (F. Dolto, *La cause des enfants*)

<sup>3</sup> This acceptability judgment was empirically assessed by a small corpus study on the basis of *Frantext*: in comparison with the number of preverbal subjects introduced by *beaucoup*, the frequency of *assez* in this same syntactic context amounts to only 1 %.

These pronominal uses are difficult to explain if we accept that *beaucoup* is an adverb, but they naturally follow from its categorization as a nominal determiner, since it is not exceptional that a nominal determiner has a parallel use as a pronoun.

### 1.3 Hypothesis 3: *Beaucoup* is both an adverb and a nominal determiner

The hypothesis of a double morphosyntactic categorization, as an adverb and as a nominal determiner, has been defended, among others, by Gross (1977), by Milner (1978a) and by several descriptive grammars. The distinction between the adverbial use and the determiner use is however complicated by the existence of an intermediate structure, illustrated by (13b), which has been labelled ‘remote quantification’ (‘quantification à distance’).

- (13) a. Il a lu ***beaucoup*** de livres.  
           He has read a-lot of books.  
       b. Il a ***beaucoup*** lu de livres.  
           He has a-lot read of books

This structure has been identified by Milner (1978a-b) and has been analyzed as the result of a derivation :

- (14)  $V_{[SN Q de N^*]} \rightarrow Q_i V_{[SN \emptyset_i de N^*]}$

According to this analysis, remote quantification would be the result of an extraction of the quantifier from its adnominal position and a movement towards the typically adverbial position between the auxiliary and the participle. In support of this analysis, Milner (1978b) observes that the only adverbs compatible with remote quantification are those that can be used in adnominal position, as is illustrated by (15).

- (15) a. J’ai ***énormément / abondamment*** lu.  
           I have enormously / abundantly read.  
       b. J’ai ***énormément / \*abondamment*** lu *de livres*.  
           I have enormously / abundantly read of books.  
       c. J’ai lu ***énormément / \*abondamment*** *de livres* (Milner 1978b)  
           I have read enormously / abundantly of books.

In this perspective, remote quantification is basically a nominal quantification bearing on the NP « *de N*’ ».

Milner’s hypothesis has been re-examined by Obenauer (1983) and by Doetjes (1997). Both convincingly show that the scope of quantifier in adverbial position in (13b) is not restricted to the NP « *de N*’ », but includes the verb. They argue that the so-called remote nominal quantification is in fact a quantification of the VP, including the nominal direct object. Since this quantifying structure is related both to the verb and to the nominal object, it could be the missing link between the adverbial use of *beaucoup*, *trop*, *assez*, ... and its use as a nominal determiner, allowing us to understand why these expressions can express nominal and verbal quantification.

The quantifying structure « *Q V de N*’ » is rather uncommon in Modern French, but had a high vitality in older stages of the French language (Buridant 2000, Marchello-Nizia 2000, 2006, Carlier & Melis 2005)<sup>4</sup>. This suggests that the determiner use and the adverbial use of expressions like *moult / beaucoup*, *peu*, *assez*, *trop*, ... separated progressively throughout

<sup>4</sup> The positional constraints and interpretation of the structure « *Q V de N*’ » in Modern French will be detailed in § 5.

history. Hence, the diachronic viewpoint can shed a new light on the problem of the morpho-syntactic categorization of these quantifying expressions. It is in this perspective that we will examine *beaucoup* and its antecedents *multus / multum* in Latin and *m(o)ult* in medieval French.

## 2 *Multus / multum* in Classical Latin

In Classical Latin, the quantifier *multus* is an inflected form and agrees in gender and number with the noun. Latin does not have a clear distinction between determiner and adjective. As is illustrated by the following examples, quoted from Menge (2000: § 263), *multus* can be coordinated to an adjective (16) or can occur without coordinating conjunction, in the way of a determiner (17).

(16) **Multi** *ac summi viri* (Cicero, *Catil.* 1: 10)  
'numerous and important men'

(17) **Multi** *docti homines* (Cicero, *Fam.* 9,6,5)  
'numerous learned men'

Moreover, *multus* is used in a very flexible way as pronoun.

(18) *Occident nonnullos, vulnerant multos* (Cicero, *Pro Sextio* 75, 8)  
kill-PRST.3PL several-ACC.M.PL kill-PRST.3PL many-ACC.M.PL  
'They kill some of them, they injure many of them'

One of these pronominal uses is precisely the nominative or accusative singular neutral form *multum*, also labelled adverbial. This form can be complemented by a genitive (19-20-21) or by a prepositional phrase introduced by *ex* 'out of' or *de* 'from, of', taking the ablative case (22). This last case is the ancestor of Modern French pattern *beaucoup de N*'.

(19) **Multum** *operae dabam Quinto Scaeuolae Publii filio*  
a-lot-ACC.SG.N work-GEN.SG give-IMPF.1sg Quintus-DAT.SG Scaevola-DAT.SG Publius-GEN.SG son.dat.sg  
'I worked a lot with Quintus Scaevola, son of Publius' (Cicero, *Brutus*, 89, LXXXIX, 304)

(20) *ne multum operae impendas*  
in-order-to-NEG a-lot-ACC.SG.N work-GEN.SG devote-CONJ.PRST.2SG  
'in order to avoid that you devote much work to ...' (Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*, V, 1:6)

(21) *Tu uero multum sanguinis fusum est.*  
Then however a-lot-NOM.SG.N blood-GEN.SG shed.PST.PTCP be.PRST.3SG  
'Then a lot of blood has been shed' (Quintus Curtius Rufus, *History of Alexander the Great*, I, 3,11)

(22) *Proximo bello si aliquid de summa grauitate Pompeius, multum de cupiditate Caesar remisisset, et pacem stabilem et aliquam rem publicam nobis habere licuisset.*  
a-lot-ACC.SG.N of cupidity-ABL.SG Caesar-NOM give up-CONJ.PQPF.3SG  
'During the last war, if Pompeius had given up a little bit of his noble gravity and Cesar a lot of his cupidity, we could have kept a stable peace and a shadow of the Republic'. (Cicero, *Philippics*, 13 (2)).

This adverbial use of *multum* obeys to strict syntactic constraints: it can occur in syntactic positions that correspond to the nominative case (21) and to the accusative case not governed by a preposition (19/20/22). In the other syntactic functions, it is replaced by the inflected form. The examples (23a-b) illustrate this same distribution of the inflected form and the

uninflected form for *tantus*: *tantum* combined to a complement in the genitive case can be used as the object of *dare*, but the inflected form is required for an accusative governed by a preposition.

- (23) a. *Tantum operae mihi ad audiendum datis*  
 So-much.ACC.SG.N work-GEN.SG me-DAT to listen-GERUND.ACC give.PRST.2PL  
 You give me so much work to listen' (Cicero, *De oratore*, 2: 122)
- b. *Propter tantam operam.*  
 because-of so-much.ACC.SG.F work-ACC.SG  
 'because of so much work'

It has been argued that the distributional constraints imposed upon *multum* are due to the fact that *multum*, although analyzed as an adverb, is originally a nominalised neuter adjective in the nominative or accusative case and has to respect the constraints of its case marking (Maurel 1985: 126). However, this hypothesis does not explain why *multum* can be used for direct objects but not if the accusative case is governed by a preposition.

The hypothesis that will be put forward in this paper in order to account for these distributional constraints of *multum* relies on a structured representation of the arguments of the verb. I will adopt the distinction, established by Williams (1981), between the external argument, outside the VP and which takes the syntactic function of subject, and the internal arguments, included in the VP. I will further distinguish between the direct internal argument and the indirect internal arguments (Marantz 1984): the direct internal argument is directly governed by the verb, whereas the indirect internal arguments are governed by a preposition or, in case inflected languages, have a case marker which is not the nominative or the accusative. This structured representation of the verbal arguments allows us to establish a typology of the major verbal predicates: the direct transitive verbs have both an external argument and a direct internal argument, the intransitive verbs split into the inergative verbs, having only an external argument, and the unaccusative verbs, whose unique argument is a direct internal argument. (Perlmutter 1978, Levin & Rappaport 1995)<sup>5</sup>.

The argument structure has been correlated to the aspectual properties of the verbal predicate (Dowty 1979, 1991, Tenny 1994, Grimshaw 1994, Van Valin 1990). Relevant for this study is the fact that only the direct internal argument, whether it is the direct object of the transitive verb (24a) or the subject of the unaccusative verb (24b), plays a crucial role in aspectual structure: only the direct internal argument can 'measure out the event' to which the verb refers (Tenny 1994: 10). The delineation of the external argument, be it the subject of a

<sup>5</sup> Argument structure is also put into service by Kratzer (1995) in order to distinguish between two types of verbal predicates: **stage-level predicates** such as *standing on a chair*, *available* would have an extra argument position for an event argument or for spatio-temporal location, whereas **individual-level predicates** such as *altruistic*, *having long arms* lack this argument position. This locative argument is conceived of as an external argument in the sense of Williams (1981).

The hypothesis of an argument of spatio-temporal location occupying the external argument position contributes to define the correlation between aspect, information structure and the referential interpretation of indefinite NPs. However, as has been observed by Grimshaw (1994: 64) and by Fernald (2000: 44 ff), it is unclear how to articulate this hypothesis with the theory of argument structure. Williams assumes that only one argument can be external to the VP. According to Kratzer, all stage-level predicate have an argument for spatio-temporal location and this argument will be necessarily the external argument. From this hypothesis, it follows that all 'stage-level' predicates are unaccusative insofar as their subject is an internal argument (Fernald 2000: 44-45). In this perspective are considered as unaccusative not only the verbs that have been identified as such (*come*, *leave*, ...), but also those that are commonly recognized as unergative (*cry*, *dance*, *work*...) and even agentive transitive verbs (*hit*, *kill*,...). In order to accommodate the hypothesis of the locative argument to the theory of argument structure, it would be necessary to clarify the exact status of the locative argument, a debate which is beyond the scope of this study.



transitive verb (24c) or the subject of an intransitive verb of the unergative type (24d), does not have this effect. This can be shown by the test of compatibility with telic and atelic aspectual complements introduced respectively by the prepositions *en* ‘in’ and *pendant* ‘during’.

- (24) a. Marie a bu *trois verres* en une heure / \*pendant une heure.  
 Mary drink-PST.3SG three glasses in one hour / during one hour.  
 ‘Mary drank three glasses in one hour / during one hour’
- b. *Trois hommes* sont arrivés en une heure /\* pendant une heure.  
 Three men arrive-PST.3PL in one hour / during one hour.  
 ‘Three men arrived in one hour / during one hour’.
- c. *Trois hommes* ont apporté des caisses \*en une heure / pendant une heure.  
 Three men bring-PST.3PL of-the boxes in one hour/ during one hour.  
 ‘Three men brought boxes in one hour / during one hour’.
- d. *Trois hommes* ont travaillé \*en une heure / pendant une heure.  
 Three men work-PST.3PL in one hour/ during one hour.  
 ‘Three men were working in one hour / during one hour’.

This ‘measuring-out’ of the verbal process by means of a quantified internal argument is not characteristic of all verb classes. As has been noted by Verkuyl (1972), for static verbs, the boundedness of its direct object does not have any incidence on aspect (25a). Moreover, even in combination with certain dynamic verbs, the boundedness of the direct object does not yield telicity (25b).

- (25) a. Pierre connaît / apprécie *les voisins*.  
 Peter know-PRST.3SG like-PRST.3SG the neighbours.
- b. Pierre caresse *le lapin*.  
 Peter stroke-PRST.3SG the rabbit.

The quantification of the direct internal argument is relevant for the aspect calculus only if there is a homomorphism between the spatial properties of the internal argument and the temporal structure of the verbal process, in such a way that the referential properties of the internal argument carry over to the temporal constitution of the verbal process. This homomorphism has been analyzed in detail by Krifka (1992) and by Jackendoff (1993) for verbs that describe the coming into being and disappearing of their internal argument (26), a change of the properties of the internal argument (27), or that conceive the internal argument as a path (28).

- (26) a. Pierre construit *une maison*.  
 Peter build-PRST.3SG a house
- b. Pierre mange *une pomme*.  
 Peter eat-PRST.3SG an apple.
- (27) a. Le cuisinier caramélise *le sucre*.  
 The cook caramelize-PRST.3SG the sugar.
- b. *Le sucre* caramélise.  
 The sugar caramelize-PRST.3SG
- (28) a. Pierre joue *un concerto*.  
 Peter play-PRST.3SG a concerto
- b. Pierre monte *l’ échelle*.  
 Peter climb-PRST.3SG the ladder

I argue that the argument structure is the relevant factor to explain the distribution of *multum* in Latin. An expression like *multum*, having the form of a singular neutral nominative or accusative can quantify the direct internal argument, be it the direct object of a transitive verb

(19/20/22), the subject of an intransitive verb of the unaccusative type or the subject of a passive predicate (21). On the contrary, it is not used for indirect internal arguments, neither for adjuncts (23b). Upon this quantification can be grafted a genitive complement (19-21) or a prepositional complement (22).

This syntactic constraint is crucial for understanding how the nominal form *multum* could evolve into an adverb. According to the hypothesis of a correlation between argument structure and aspect, the quantification of direct internal argument can amount to a quantification of the verbal process as such. Hence the quantification by *multum* in structures like *multum operae dabam* (19) or *multum sanguinis fusum est* (21) offers evidence for the double nature of the quantification. On the one hand, this quantification is nominal, because *multum* fills an argument position whose nature is specified by the genitive or the prepositional complement. On the other hand, this quantification is also verbal, insofar as the quantification of the internal argument yields a quantification of the verbal process<sup>6</sup>.

In this way, *multum* tightens its relationship with the verb. It becomes a full-fledged adverb when it occupies no longer a syntactic position corresponding to a NP (28). Witness the fact that it can be coordinated in this use with forms endowed with the adverbial suffix (29).

(29) *Multum te amamus* (Cicero, *Epistulae ad Atticum*, 1,1,5)  
 Much you-ACC love-PRST-1PL  
 ‘We love you very much’

(30) *longe multumque superamur a bestiis* (Cicero, *Fin.* 2,11)  
 long-ADV much-and surpass-PASS.PRST.1PL by animal-ABL.PL  
 ‘Animals are by far and in many respects ahead of us’

However, it is not attested in all the contexts of use of the adverb. It only sporadically occurs with an adjective (31/32) (Menge 2000: § 360). Moreover, the consulted corpora did not contain any occurrence in combination with an adverb.

(31) *Hac in re scilicet una multum dissimiles*  
 This-ABL.FEM.SG in thing-ABL.SG of-course one-ABL.FEM.SG much different-NOM.PL  
 ‘In this respect only, they are very different.’ (Horatius, *Epist.*, 1,10)

(32) *medicus multum celer atque fidelis* (Horatius, *Satira*, II: 3, 145)  
 doctor-NOM.SG much swift-NOM.SG and faithful-NOM.SG  
 ‘a very swift and faithful doctor’

As a matter of fact, in Latin, high degree quantification in relationship with an adjective or an adverb is expressed by a synthetic superlative (e.g. the adjective *celer*, *celerrimus* ‘swift’ / ‘very swift’ or ‘the swiftest’; the adverb *celeriter* / *celerrimē* ‘swiftly / very swiftly’ or ‘the most swiftly’). The form *multo*, analyzed as an ablative of measure, is however used to reinforce the comparative or the superlative of adjectives and adverbs (*multo crudelior* ‘much more barbaric’, Cicero, *Pro Roscio Amerino*, 53 (153); *multo/longe optimus* ‘the very best / by far the best’ cf. Ernout & Thomas 1951: §§ 117 & 190).

These data show how *multum*, the (pro)nominal use of the adjective-determiner *multus*, enters into the verbal sphere and acquires the status of an adverb. As we will see in sections §§3-4, in the shift from Latin to Old French, the categorial status of the adverb *mult* strengthens; on the contrary, the inflected form of *mult* moves towards its decay.

<sup>6</sup> Le Goffic (1993: § 17), observes « an important contact area [...] between the adverb and the preposition-less NP in the domain of the quantificational expressions » (my translation). The hypothesis defended in this paper ties up with this observation.

### 3 *Mult* in very Old French

*Mult* in very Old French retains some morphological and syntactic features of *multus* in Latin even if there is evolution on some points.

Firstly, in the oldest French texts, predominantly Anglo-Norman<sup>7</sup>, *mult* is still inflected according to case, gender, and number: the examples (33) and (34/35) contain respectively a masculine and feminine plural.

- (33) *Mulz malades guari de sun relief demaine.*  
 Many-REG.M.PL sick-REG.PL cure-PST.3SG  
 La fille a un riche humme en devint tute saine,  
 Qui out esté fievrose mainte lunge semaine  
 ‘He cured a lot of sick persons of his domain obtained by relief. The daughter of rich man, who had been feverish during several long weeks, fully recovered’ (Guernes de Pont-Saint Maxence, *Life of Saint Thomas Becket* [1173], v. 3671)
- (34) Pantere est de *multes culurs* : neire, ruge, verte, pale, purple, ...  
 Panther is of many-FEM.PL colors  
 ‘The panther has a-lot of colours : black, red, green, pale, purple.’ (*Lapidary in prose*, middle 12<sup>th</sup> C.)
- (35) Par *multes terres* fait querre sun amfant  
 throughout many-FEM.PL country-PL make-PRST.3SG search-INF his child.  
 ‘he made look for his child throughout many countries’ (*Life of Saint Alexis* [1050], v. 112)

The singular form, however, has lost its gender agreement: the feminine form is not attested<sup>8</sup>. As will be shown below, this at first sight enigmatic asymmetry between singular and plural, inexistent in Latin, can be explained by the specific conditions of use of the inflected form at this language stage.

Contrary to its Latin homologue, the inflected quantifier cannot be coordinated with an adjective and behaves in this respect as a determiner:

- (36) *Tanz riches reis*  
 So-many-REG.PL.M rich-REG.PL.M king-REG.PL.M  
 ‘so many rich kings’ (*Song of Roland* [1100], v. 527)

Like *multus* in Latin, the inflected form *mult* is used not only as a determiner, but also as a pronoun.

- (37) A *molz* l’ ai veü avenir  
 to many-REG.M.PL this have-PRST.1SG seen happen’  
 ‘I have seen happen this to many’ (Thomas [end 12<sup>th</sup> C.], *Tristan & Iseult*, v. 397)

<sup>7</sup> This study is based on the corpus *Corptef* (<http://w7.ens-lsh.fr/corptef/>). All the inflected forms of *mult* have been taken into account. Outside the Anglo-Norman area, the inflected form of *mult* also occurs in the *Passion de Clermont* (end 10<sup>th</sup> C. or beginning 11<sup>th</sup> C.). The much debated question of the language of this poem will not be dwelt upon in this paper.

<sup>8</sup> It has however to be noted that the feminine singular form *multe* is attested in one single text, namely the *Psalter of Oxford*, with no less than seven occurrences. On the basis of the other linguistic features of the text, it can be reasonably assumed that the use of this form is due to an interference with the translated Latin source.

Alongside this use as a pronoun or a determiner, *mult* in its uninflected form fulfils also the role of an adverb and, unlike *multum* in Latin, it occurs in the whole range of contexts characteristic of the adverb: it can modify not only a verb (38), but also an adjective (39) or an adverb (40). Finally, it is used to reinforce the analytical comparative or superlative, in a similar way as *multo* in Latin (41).

- (38) Jo vos *aim* **mult** (*Song of Roland* [1100], v. 634)  
I you-2PL love-PRST1SG much  
'I love you a lot'
- (39) Si fut *Ionas* **mult** *correcious* (*Sermon on Jonas* [940], cf. Marchello-Nizia 2006)  
be-PST.3SG Jonas much angry  
'Jonas was very angry'
- (40) **Mult** *dulcement* a regreter le *prist* (*Song of Roland* [1100], v. 2036)  
Much slowly to regret-INF him-ACC.SG take-PST.3SG  
'very slowly, he began to regret it'
- (41) Car **mult plus** *grief* *martyre* *suffri*  
because much more serious martyr suffer-PST.3SG  
'because he suffered a much more serious martyr.' (Guernes de Pont-Saint Maxence, *Life of Saint Thomas Becket* [1173], v. 5811)

Though more properly adverbial than its Latin predecessor, the uninflected form *mult* can also serve as a quantifier in the nominal domain. *Mult* can be contiguous to the noun it quantifies (42/43/44), but it is often separated from this noun (45/46).

- (42) E **mult** *ennois* ad a traire  
And much difficulties has to endure  
'and he has to endure a lot of troubles' (Benedeit, *saint Brendan* [1120], 614)
- (43) **Mult** *gemmes* et mult or esméré i *posa*  
Much gems-PL and much gold there put-PST.3SG  
'he put there a lot of gems and pure gold' (Guernes de Pont-Saint Maxence, *Life of Saint Thomas Becket* [1173])
- (44) Par la mer **mult de** *morz* en gist (*Wace, Brut* [1155], v. l3093)  
Throughout the see much of dead lay-PST.3SG  
'in the see were laying a lot of corpses'
- (45) **Mult** unt oüd e *peines e ahans*. (*Song of Roland* [1100], v. 267)  
Much have-PST.3PL had and sorrows and torments.  
'They had a lot of sorrows and torments'
- (46) **Mult** sunt *de malvais estres* (Philippe de Thaon, *Bestiary* [around 1130])  
Much be-PRST.3PL of bad creatures  
'There are a lot of bad creatures'

This existence of an uninflected form for nominal determination raises two questions.

- Which is its categorial status in the examples (42) to (46)?
- How to account for the respective distribution of the inflected and the uninflected forms of *mult*?

A first principle which determines the distribution of the inflected and the uninflected forms is of a syntactic nature: in the oldest French texts, only the inflected form is used in the case of a NP headed by a preposition.

- (47) Escuz unt genz, **de mult-e-s** cunoisances (*Song of Roland* [1100], 3090)  
 Shields have-PRST.3PL nice, of many-FEM.PL armorials  
 ‘They have nice shields, adorned with many armorial bearings’
- (48) **De multes** choses unt entr’els dous desputé  
 Of many-FEM.PL things have-PRST.3PL between them two discussed.  
 ‘Ils ont discutés entre eux de beaucoup de choses’ (*Guernes de Pont-Saint Maxence, Life of Saint Thomas Becket* [1173], v. 4391)
- (49) li pains est fait **de mulz greins** (*Elucidaire*, 3<sup>th</sup> translation [ca. 1200])  
 the bread-SG.NOM is made of many grains  
 ‘Bread is made of a lot of grains’

In the very same way as *multum* in Latin, the uninflected form *mult* does not occur in this context: be it in adverbial position (45/46) or in adnominal position (42/43/44), the uninflected form *mult* can quantify a nominal constituent when this NP is the direct object of a transitive verb (42/43/45), or the subject of an unaccusative verbal predicate (44). This constraint shows that even in adnominal position, *mult* is not a full-fledged nominal determiner, but still behaves as an adverb: the uninflected quantifier applies to the VP and can in this way quantify the internal argument of the verb. Hence, the syntactic structure of the examples (42) à (46) corresponds to (50a) rather than (50b).

- (50) a. Q [V N’]  
 b. Q<sub>i</sub> [V] [N’]<sub>i</sub>

A second principle accounting for the distribution of the inflected and uninflected quantifiers is of a semantic nature: the use of the inflected form tends to evoke a distributive plural, whereas the uninflected form expresses a collective plural<sup>9</sup>. For instance, (33), containing an inflected form, suggests that the sick are cured one by one, whereas the verbal process in the examples (42) and (43) affects the troubles and the gems as a collection without individuating them.

- (33) **Mulz** malades guari de sun relief demaine.  
 Many-REG.M.PL sick-REG.PL cure-PST.3SG  
 La fille a un riche humme en devint tute saine,  
 Qui out esté fievrose mainte lunge semaine  
 ‘He cured a lot of sick persons of his domain obtained by relief. The daughter of rich man, who had been feverish during several long weeks, fully recovered’ (*Guernes de Pont-Saint Maxence, Life of Saint Thomas Becket* [1173], v. 3671)
- (42) E **mult ennois** ad a traire (*Benedeit, Saint Brendan* [1120], 614)  
 And much difficulties has to endure  
 ‘and he has to endure a lot of troubles’

<sup>9</sup> This semantic opposition between inflected and uninflected forms meaning ‘a lot’ also exists in other languages. In Dutch, the inflected form expresses an individuated plural, whereas the uninflected form allows a collective apprehension of the quantified set.

(i) Ik heb vele<sub>[+inflected]</sub> mensen gegroet op de receptie. ‘I greeted a lot of people at the reception’ (one by one)  
 (ii) Ik heb veel<sub>[-inflected]</sub> mensen gezien op de receptie. ‘I saw a lot of people at the reception’

- (43) **Mult** *gemmes* et mult or esméré i posa  
 Much gems-PL and much gold pure there put-PST.3SG  
 ‘he put there a lot of gems and pure gold’ (Guernes de Pont-Saint Maxence, *Life of Saint Thomas Becket* [1173])

This correlation between the inflection of the quantifier and the concept of distributive plural in very Old French accounts for the fact that the inflected forms exist only for the plural and are not attested for the singular, since inflection does not have no ‘raison d’être’ in the singular.

The following table shows the frequency of *mult* in the different uses listed above in a corpus composed of the six following texts: *The Passion of Clermont* [980], *The Life of Saint Léger* [975], *The Life of Saint Alexis* [1050], *The Song of Roland* [1100], *The Comput*, written by Philippe de Thaon [1113], *The alphabetic Lapidary* [1<sup>st</sup> third of the 12<sup>th</sup> C.]. It should be mentioned that the frequency of the inflected form is unequal in the different texts. For instance, there are few occurrences in the *Song of Roland*.

TABLE 1:  
 Absolute frequency of *mult* as a determiner / pronoun and as an adverb in a very Old French corpus (980-1130)

TOTAL NUMBER OF OCCURRENCES OF <i>MULT</i>	<b>292</b>
DETERMINER / PRONOUN	<b>22</b>
Inflected form in a PP	8
Uninflected form in a PP	0
Inflected form in a NP, which is a direct object or a subject of an unaccusative predicate	3 (+3) <sup>10</sup>
Uninflected form in a NP, which is a direct object or a subject of an unaccusative predicate	8
ADVERB	<b>270</b>
Adverb modifying a verb	38
Adverb modifying an adjective	174
Adverb modifying a PP (often a genitive of quality)	7
Adverb modifying an adverb	51

#### 4 *Moult* in Old French

From the 13<sup>th</sup> century on, the inflected form of *moult*, already infrequent in very Old French, disappears. The example (52) corresponds to the last occurrence in the corpus.

- (52) Sire, fet li rois, de vostre venue avions nos mout grant mestier por **moltes** choses  
 for many-FEM.PL thing-PL  
 ‘Lord, said the King, we needed very urgently your arrival for many things. (*Quest for the Holy Grail* [1220])

<sup>10</sup> These three occurrences are undecidable, since the inflected form appropriate in the context corresponds to *mult*, which is also the uninflected form.

Only subsists the invariable form *moult*, which extends its use to NPs headed by a preposition.

- (53) Vraiment a Moysi fut offert ke ilh seroit sires  
 Really to Moses be-PST.3SG offer-PST.PTPC COMP he be-COND.3SG lord-NOM.SG  
de mult de genz  
 of a-lot of people  
 ‘really, Moses has been proposed to be lord of a lot of people’ (Saint Bernard, *Sermones in Cantica*, last quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> C.)

This evolution shows that within the category of quantifying determiners, a new categorial borderline emerges: only nominal determiners like *maints* ‘many’, *plusieurs* ‘several’ that exclusively apply to count nouns endowed with a plural form remain inflected, whereas determiners that are not specified according to this feature become invariable.

In parallel to the disappearance of the inflected form, there is a rise of the pattern *mult de N*. It has been argued that this rise of *de* before the quantified noun phrase is a sign of reanalysis: the quantifier which primitively applies to the entire VP (54a) would have its scope limited to the object NP (54b) and would become in this way a remote nominal quantifier:

- (54) a. Q [V N’]  
 b. Q<sub>i</sub> [V] [*de* N’]<sub>i</sub>

In Carlier & Melis (2005), this hypothesis was rejected on the basis of the following arguments.

- Firstly, the empirical data offer no evidence for the fact that the presence or absence of *de* corresponds to a difference in scope. For instance, it seems unlikely that in the two following examples, quoted from the same text, the quantifier has a different scope according to the presence or absence of *de*.

- (55) Cil Ewruins **molt** li vol miel  
 That Ebroïn much him-DAT want-PRST.3SG harm  
 ‘That Ebroïn intends to harm him a lot.’ (*Life of Saint Léger* [975], v. 101)

- (56) Por quant il pot, **tan** fai **de** miel  
 For as-much he can-PRST.3SG,as-much do-PRST.3SG of harm.  
 ‘He does as much harm as he can’ (*Life of Saint Léger* [975], v. 135)

- Secondly, in Old French, the presence of *de* is more systematic when the quantifier is in adnominal position than when it is separated from the nominal object by the verb. Yet, in adnominal position, the marking of the scope of the quantifier is superfluous because there is no risk of ambiguity.

- (57) mostreir **mult de** signes (*Li Dialogue Gregoire lo Pape*, end 12<sup>th</sup> C.)  
 ‘show-INF a-lot of signs’

- Finally, if *de* has the role of a scope marker, why does it never appear when the quantifier modifies an element which does not have the morphosyntactic status of noun, such as an adjective, for instance?

- (58) Entre les dous oilz **mult** out large le front (*Roland*, [1100], v. 1217)  
 Between the two eyes much/very had large the brow’

Since the presence of *de* is conditioned by the morphosyntactic category to which *moult* applies, the reason for its emergence seems to be a gradual shift of the categorial status in the evolution from *multus* in Latin to *moult* in Old French.

As pointed out before, *multus* in Latin is endowed with a great categorial flexibility. It appears not only in its inflected form, but has also developed the pronominal form *multum*. *Multum* as a pronoun quantifies the verbal process by quantifying its internal argument (e.g. *multum operae dabam* (ex. 19) or *multum sanguinis fusum est* (ex. 21)). It has however shifted towards the category of the adverb when it quantifies the verbal process as such, without saturating an argument position (cf. *multum te amamus* (ex. 29)). In the evolution from Latin to Old French, the inflected form is lost and the uninflected form has strengthened its adverbial status: it extends its distribution to adjectives and adverbs. Given that *moult* is an adverb, it loses its capacity to appear freely in combination with a noun, in the way of a nominal determiner, unless *de* is inserted. Hence, *de* fulfils a syntactic role: it enables an adverbial quantifier to combine with a noun, whether it is contiguous to the noun or separated from it by a verb. This explains why *de* does not occur when the quantifier applies to an adjective (cf. example (58)). The syntactic role of *de* also accounts for the fact that *de*, in the stage where it is still optional, occurs more readily when the quantifier is in adnominal position (59) than when it is in adverbial position and quantifies the nominal object at a distance (60).

(59) Avec *assez de pain* (Gaston Phébus, *Le livre de chasse*[=The book of hunting] [1387])  
with enough of bread

(60) Car *assez ont pain et victence* (F. Villon, *The Testament* [1461], p. 38)  
Since enough have-PRST.3PL bread and food  
'Since they have enough bread and food'

Eventually, the use of *de* will become obligatory, at the time when the partitive article is no longer optional. It thus appears that *de* has a double role: it is not only a relator but it also partakes in determination (Carlier & Melis 2006).

In conclusion, *moult* in Old French has two distinct uses. On the one hand, it quantifies the VP and can take into its scope the NP corresponding to the direct internal argument of the verb. On the other hand, after the disappearance of the inflected form, the invariable form *moult* acquires a role in nominal determination: it becomes part of a complex nominal determiner and can also quantify an NP external to the VP.

## 5 *Moult* / *beaucoup* in Middle French and in Modern French

Besides the 'obligatorification' of *de*, two major evolutions occur in the period of Middle French.

- The form *moult* is gradually replaced by *très* 'very' and *beaucoup* 'a lot'. The rise of *beaucoup* is dramatic: although its frequency becomes significant only from the 15<sup>th</sup> century on, it has, along with *très*, already spread by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to all contexts of use of *moult*, which in turn becomes obsolete (Marchello-Nizia 2000; 2006: 140-141) (§ 5.1).
- The pattern Q V N' becomes rare and is replaced by V Q N' (§ 5.2).

**5.1.** The disappearance of *moult* and its replacement by *beaucoup* and *très* have been investigated in detail by Marchello-Nizia (2000; 2006, chapter 4). In the context of this paper, only some elements of this evolution, relevant for the analysis, will be mentioned. Marchello-Nizia's analysis offers evidence for the fact that the loss of *moult* is due to the



tendency towards higher morphosyntactic specialization. *Très* (< Latin *trans* ‘through’) is primitively a prefix or preposition with the spatial meaning ‘through’, but it can also express high degree (*tres-tot* ‘absolutely everything’, *tres-fremir* ‘tremble entirely’). Furthermore, as a degree marker, it can also be used as an adverb modifying adjectives or adverbs. In this use, it enters in competition with *moult* from the 12<sup>th</sup> century on. *Beaucoup* develops in complementary distribution with respect to *très*: whereas *très* is restricted to adjectives and adverbs, *beaucoup* combines with nouns and verbs. According to Marchello-Nizia (2006:250), the replacement of *moult* by *très* and *beaucoup* introduces in this way a new marking of a grammatical distinction: nouns and verbs are first level units, since they are head of an immediate constituent of the sentence, whereas adjectives and adverbs are units of an inferior level.

On the basis of the empirical data of Marchello-Nizia’s study (2006: 147) and in accordance with the observation of Le Goffic (1993: § 166), I will argue that the nominal origin of *beaucoup* (< ‘beautiful knock’) can contribute to account for its specific distribution in Middle French. In the same way as for *multum* in Latin, the (pro)nominal form of the adjective-determiner *multus*, the first uses of *beaucoup* are those where it fills the direct argument position of the verbal predicate, *i.e.* the direct object of a transitive verb<sup>11</sup> (61) or the subject of an inaccusative verbal predicate, most often in inverted position, behind the verb (62/63). It may occur with a complement of the form « *de N*’ ».<sup>12</sup>

- (61) Et leur pel est moult bonne pour fere **biau coup** de choses quant elle est bien conreiee et prise en bonne sayson.  
 ‘Their skin is very good to do plenty of things when it is well finished and taken in the good season.’ (Gaston Phébus, *Le livre de chasse* [‘the Book of Hunting’][1387])
- (62) Et cest livre j’ay comencié a ceste fin que je vueil que chascuns sachent qui cest livre verront ou orront que de chasce je ose bien dire qu’il peut venir **biau coup de bien**.  
 ‘I wrote this book because I want that everyone who sees or hears this book knows that from the hunting – I dare say it – there can come a lot of good things.’ (Gaston Phébus, *Le livre de chasse* [‘the Book of Hunting’] [1387])
- (63) En la ville de Malignes vinrent **biaucop de signeurs**  
 In the town of Malines come-PST.3PL a-lot of lords  
 ‘In the town of Malines, there came a lot of lords’ (Froissart, *Chronicle* [1400])

Next, *beaucoup* develops its use as a degree marker of the VP without saturating an argument position.

- (64) Et pour ce, chieres amies, veu que ce ne vous puet riens valoir et **beaucoup nuire**, ne vous vueilliez en tieulx fanfelues moult delicter. (Chr. De Pisan [1405])  
 ‘and therefore, dear friends, given that this can offer you nothing and harm you **a lot**, please do not delight in such banalities.’
- (65) Vous m’avez **beaucoup celé** les amours d’une telle et de vous.  
 ‘you have much hidden the amorous adventures of Mrs so-and-so and of yourself’ (*Cent nouvelles nouvelles*, p. 229, quoted from Marchello-Nizia, 2006: 147)

<sup>11</sup> Marchello-Nizia (2006: 186) spots one early occurrence of *beaucoup* in an indirect or prepositional object :

Et parlerent ensamble de **biaucop de choses** (Froissart, *Chronique* [1400])  
 And speak-PST.3PL together of a-lot of things  
 ‘And they spoke together about a lot of things’

<sup>12</sup> On the basis of the similarity with *beaucoup* [...] *de N*’, Muller (1995: 266-267) offers an analysis along this lines of the negation *pas ... de N*’.

*Beaucoup* appears only later on as a quantifier of a NP headed by a preposition.

- (66) et **en beaucoup** de lieux en France, et mesmement en la viconté de Paris, femmes en ligne collateral ne succedent point en fiefs nobles (Jean Juvénal des Ursins, *Audite celi* [1435])  
 ‘**in many** regions of France and even in the viscount of Paris, women in collateral lineage do not inherit noble fiefs.’

Hence, the same evolutionary stages are observed as in the case of *multum* > *m(o)ult* : nominal form > adverb > nominal determiner. Moreover, *beaucoup* as a nominal determiner gives rise to a pronominal use:

- (67) **Beaucoup** furent esbahiz de ceste fantaisie  
 ‘Many were surprised by this fantasy’. (Ph. De Commines, *Mémoires* [1489], quoted by Marchello-Nizia 2006)

Besides, like *multo* in Latin and *moult* in Old French, *beaucoup* appears early to strengthen the degree morphemes ‘more’/ ‘less’. (Marchello-Nizia 2000: 5).

- (68) **biaucop plus** de signeurs de France  
 much more (of) lords of France (Froissart, *Chroniques* [1400])
- (69) L’autre chemin, a dextre, par ou je montay, est assez plus longs,  
 mais il est **beaucoup plus** aysié (A. de la Sale [1442])  
 but it is much more easy  
 ‘the other path, on the right, by which I went up, is longer, but it is much easier.’

**5.2.** A second evolution occurs in Middle French : the pattern Q V de N’ (70a) declines and is replaced by the pattern V Q de N’ (70b)<sup>13</sup>.

- (70) a. En celle assemblee **moult** en y ot de mors et de navrez  
 de chascune partie  
 in that melee, a-lot of-themthere have-PST.3SG of dead and of wounded  
 at each side’  
 ‘In that melee, there were a lot of dead and wounded at each side.’ (*Bérianus* [1350], p. 128)
- b. en y ot **moult de mors** de chascune partie  
 of-them there have-PST.3SG a-lot of dead at each side.  
 ‘There were a lot of dead at each side’ (*Bérianus* [1350], p. 123)

<sup>13</sup> According to Hopper’s principle of layering, the emergence of a new grammatical pattern does not yield the elimination of the older one (Hopper 1991). In the case of the shift from Q V de N’ to V Q de N’, the old pattern continues to occur sporadically during a very long period, especially with the quantifier *tant*. Witness the following example from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, where the quantifier *tant* applies to the whole VP, composed by an inaccusative verb and its inverted subject in the internal argument position.

On eût dit sous le chêne un essaim de frelons,  
**tant** arrivaient d’esprits, d’ombres et d’âmes folles pour recueillir le miel des savantes paroles.  
**so-much** arrive-IMP.3PL of spirits, of shadows, and of foolish souls ... (A. Brizeux, *Marie* (1840))  
 ‘There arrived so much spirits, shadows, foolish souls to gather the honey of the wise words, you would have said a swarm of hornets under the oak’

In the new pattern, the quantifier is next to the NP *de N'*. This positional shift has been analyzed as a sign of reanalysis: the quantifier would no longer apply to the entire VP, but would be restricted to the NP *de N'*. In this way, *moult* would have reached the status of a nominal determiner.

- (71) a. Q [V [*de N'*]]  
 b. V [Q *de N'*]

- (72) a. *moult* a *de dolour*  
 a-lot has of sorrow  
 'He suffers a lot' (Eustache Deschamps, *Miroir de mariage* ['Mirror of marriage'] [1385])  
 b. il eut *beaucoup de chagrin*  
 he had a-lot of sorrow  
 'he felt very upset' (Antoine Galland, *Les mille et une nuits* ['Thousand and one nights'] [1715])

It is important to note that this positional shift of the quantifier is linked to a more general change of word order. On the basis of the description offered by Marchello-Nizia (1999; 2006: chapter 3), this evolution can be summarized as follows. From Latin to French, the order of the constituents radically changes. In Latin, word order was relatively free, even though there is a tendency towards SOV (subject – verb – object) (Adams 1976, Bauer 1995, Pinkster 1991). Old French is dominantly V2: the verb is in second position and the theme is before the verb, i.e. TVX (T=theme). From the 13<sup>th</sup> century on, the nominal object is fixed in the postverbal position (Combettes 1988), which results in the order TVO. The preverbal position is nevertheless not only available to the subject, but is also open to other thematic constituents, often anaphoric elements (Marchello-Nizia 2006: 48).

- (73) *Lors* appella un chevalier chipprien qui bien savoit toute la contree, et lui dist :  
 Then call-PST.3SG a knight Cyprian who well know-IMPF.3Sg whole the region and  
 him.DAT say-PST.3SG  
 'Then he called a Cyprian knight who knew well the whole region and he said to him : ...'  
 (Jean d'Arras, *Mélusine* [1392])

It is in this position that we can also find an adverbial quantifier linked to the nominal object behind the verb.

- (72a) *moult* a *de dolour*  
 A-lot have-PRST.3SG of pain  
 'He suffers a lot' (Eustache Deschamps, *Miroir de mariage* ['Mirror of marriage'] [1385])

During the period of Middle French, word order shifts from TVO to SVO. The subject tends to be systematically expressed and to occupy the preverbal position. As a result, whereas Middle French still allows Q V (*de*) N', with Q in front position, this pattern is gradually replaced by V Q (*de*) N', with the subject in front of the verb.

- (72b) il eut *beaucoup de chagrin*  
 he have-PST.3SG a-lot of sorrow  
 'he felt very upset' (Antoine Galland, *Les mille et une nuits* ['Thousand and one nights'] [1715])

If it is true that the positional shift of the quantifier has to be understood in the light of a more general change of word order, the tightening of the link with the NP *de N'* can not be invoked as the determining factor. Moreover, this shift does not necessarily place the quantifier immediately before the nominal object. In the case of complex verbal predicates where the finite verb form, inflected for person and for tense, is followed by a non finite verb form, i.e.

an infinitive or a participle, this non finite verb form can be inserted between the quantifier and the nominal object *de N'*.

- (74) se vous me voulez **tant** feré de courtoisie  
 if you-PL me want-PRST-2PL so-much do-INF of courtesy  
 'si vous voulez me faire tant de courtoisie' (*Bérinus* [1350])
- (75) depuis monpartement, ilz auront **beaucoup** aprin de nouvelles  
 since my-departure, they have-FUT.3PL a-lot learn-PST.PRTC of news-PL  
 'since I left, they will have got a lot of news. (*Jean de Bueil, Le Jouvencel* [1461])
- (76) Et vous en avez **beaucoup** ouÿ dire d'exemples  
 and you-PL of-it have-PRST.2PL a-lot hear-PST.PRTC say-INF of examples  
 'and you heard mention a lot of examples' (*Jehan Bagnyon, L'Histoire de Charlemagne* [1465])

This pattern is still possible in Modern French (*cf.* § 1.3), although it is less frequent.

- (77) On doit **beaucoup** gagner d'argent ici.  
 One must-prst.3sg a-lot earn of money here.  
 'You probably earn a lot of money here' (*M. Barrès, Mes Cahiers* [1902])
- (78) On a **beaucoup** écrit de poèmes en prose depuis trente ou quarante ans  
 One has a-lot written of poems in prose since thirty or forty years. (*M. Jacob, Le cornet à dés* [1923])

It appears even possible to insert another constituent between the quantifier in postverbal position and the nominal object *de N'*.

- (79) Ils ont **assez** pour lui de respect dans le cœur  
 They have-PRST.3PL enough for him of respect in the heart. (*Georges de Brébeuf* [1655])

These data lead to the conclusion that the positional shift of the quantifier – although it decreases the number of occurrences where the quantifier is separated from the nominal object *de N'* in the linear surface order – is not necessarily correlated to a categorial change of this quantifier: if the quantifier is analyzed as an adverb applying to the entire VP in (72a), it lends itself to the same analysis in (72b).

- (72) a. **moult** a de douleur (*Eustache Deschamps, Miroir de mariage* [1385])  
 a-lot has of sorrow  
 b. il eut **beaucoup** de chagrin (*Antoine Galland, Les mille et une nuits* [1715])  
 he had a-lot of sorrow

It seems at least necessary to consider two possible analyses

- (72a) Q [V] [de N']
- (72b) [V] Q [de N'] OR V [Q de N']

and to explore if there are independent arguments in favour of one or the other analysis.

Several studies, conducted on the basis of Modern French data, have been devoted to the relationship between the so-called remote quantification, where the quantifier is separated from the object NP *de N'* by a non-finite verb form (*cf.* 80a) and the adnominal quantification illustrated by (80b).

- (80) a. Pierre a lu **beaucoup** de journaux.  
 Peter has read a-lot of newspapers  
 b. Pierre a **beaucoup** lu de journaux.  
 Peter has a-lot read of newspapers

As shown in § 1.2, Milner (1978) argues that (80b) is derived from (80a), without any semantic difference. Disputing the validity of this hypothesis, the studies of Obenauer (1983), Haïk (1982), Doetjes (1997), and Carlier & Melis (2005) offer evidence for the fact that the position of the quantifier in surface structure is significant<sup>14</sup>: the so-called remote quantification and the adnominal quantification are different with respect to the syntactic constraints and from a semantic point of view. The quantification is nominal in (80a), whereas it applies to the VP and in this way on the direct object NP of the verb in (80b). The following arguments corroborate this opposition:

- In order to account for the fact that the quantifier in adverbial position can take scope over a nominal object of a coordinated VP, we have to postulate the analysis Q [<sub>sv</sub>V (de N') & V de N'] (Carlier & Melis 2005: 373).

- (81) Nous avons **énormément** mangé ou pris d'alcool.  
 We have-IMPF.1PL enormously eaten or taken of alcohol.  
 'We have eaten enormously and we have drunk an enormous quantity of alcohol (oral example quoted by Damourette & Pichon, § 2761)
- (82) Ils ont **trop** lu de BD et regardé de feuilletons.  
 They have-PRST.3PL too-much read of cartoons and watched of serials  
 'They have read too many cartoons and watched too many serials'

- As has been observed by Haïk (1982: 79), contrary to the adnominal quantifier (83-84a), the quantifier *beaucoup* in adverbial position (83-84b) does not allow that the referent is conceived as a set of individuals.

- (83) a. Pierre a fumé **beaucoup** de cigarettes l'une après l'autre.  
 Peter has smoked a-lot of cigarettes one after another  
 b. \*Pierre a **beaucoup** fumé de cigarettes l'une après l'autre.  
 Peter has a-lot smoked of cigarettes one after another
- (84) a. Amélie avait raconté **beaucoup** d'histoires dont la première était incompréhensible.  
 Amelia had told a-lot of stories of which the first was incomprehensible  
 b. \*Amélie avait **beaucoup** raconté d'histoires dont la première était incompréhensible  
 Amelia had a-lot told of stories of which the first was incomprehensible

Therefore, *beaucoup* in adverbial position cannot have wide scope. (85a), where the quantifier is in adnominal position, has a double interpretation: either *beaucoup* does not take scope over the plural subject, with the meaning 'Peter and Mary have found together a lot of proofs', either *beaucoup* takes in its scope the plural subject, which results in the meaning 'Peter has found a lot of proofs and Mary has found a lot of proofs without these proofs being identical'. This second interpretation is not available in (85b), where *beaucoup* is in adverbial position (Azoulay-Vicente 1989: 93; Carlier & Melis 2005).

- (85) a. Pierre et Marie ont trouvé **beaucoup** de preuves.  
 Peter and Mary have found a-lot of proofs.

<sup>14</sup> For the quantifiers *tout* 'every' and *chaque* 'each', the necessity of an interpretation *in situ* has also been invoked. A first version of this hypothesis has been formulated by Haïk (1982) for the analysis of *tout*. It has been further developed by Junker (1995) for *chaque* and *tout* and by Zimmermann (2002) for *each* in English and *jeweils* in German.

- b. Pierre et Marie ont **beaucoup** trouvé *de preuves*.  
 Peter and Mary have a-lot found of proofs.
- (85') [Peter & Mary]<sub>x</sub> [[a lot of proofs]<sub>y</sub> [x has found y]] - (86a/b)  
 [a lot of proofs]<sub>y</sub> [[Peter & Mary]<sub>x</sub> [x has found y]] - (86a)

- In comparison with *beaucoup* in adnominal position, *beaucoup* in adverbial position brings about aspectual restrictions, which have been analyzed by Obenauer (1983) and Doetjes (1997). Obenauer (1983: 78) observes that, in the example (86), *beaucoup* in adverbial position is only acceptable in the interpretation *beaucoup de fois* 'a lot of times/often'. Witness the example (86b), where the gerund construction *en soulevant le couvercle* blocks this multiple event-reading and makes the sentence unacceptable. This requirement of a multiple event-reading shows that the quantifier applies to the entire VP.

- (86) a. En soulevant le couvercle, il a trouvé **beaucoup** de pièces d'or.  
 When lifting the lid, he has found a-lot of coins of gold.  
 b. \*En soulevant le couvercle, il a **beaucoup** trouvé de pièces d'or.  
 When lifting the lid, he has a-lot found of coins of gold.  
 c. En cherchant partout, il a **beaucoup** trouvé de pièces d'or.  
 While looking everywhere, he has a-lot found of coins of gold

In line with this observation, we can understand why the existential predicate does not accept the quantifier *beaucoup* in adverbial position<sup>15</sup>.

- (87) \*Il y a **beaucoup** eu de personnes chez nous hier.  
 3SG.PRON LOC have-PRST.3SG a-lot have-PST.PTC of persons with us yesterday

These constraints did not exist in the older stages of French. Witness the following example from the 16<sup>th</sup> century:

- (88) **Beaucoup** y a de païs en nostre Europe.  
 A-lot LOC have-PRST.3SG of countries in our Europe  
 (Charles Estienne, *L'agriculture et maison rustique* [1564])

Taking up the investigation initiated by Obenauer (1983), Doetjes (1997: 261 ff) notes that an example like (89) does not necessarily express the meaning of different events of oil-streaming through the pipeline, this is the *beaucoup de fois* 'a lot of times' reading.

- (89) Cet oléoduc a **beaucoup** transporté de pétrole.  
 This pipeline has a-lot transported of oil

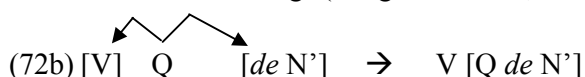
So she adjusts the constraint formulated by Obenauer (1983). In accordance with Obenauer, she argues that the quantification applies to the VP, but she pertinently shows that the interpretation of the quantifier depends upon the referential properties of the nominal object or the internal argument *de N'*. When the nominal object contains a count noun, a 'multiple event'-interpretation is obtained (86b-c). In the case of a mass noun, the quantified verbal predicate can be interpreted as one continuous event (89). There is however a constraint specific to adverbial quantification and ineffective in the case of adnominal quantification: adverbial quantification is only possible if there is a homomorphism between the spatial properties of the internal argument and the temporal structure of the verbal process, in such a

<sup>15</sup> I owe this observation as well as the examples (89) and (90) to one of my anonymous reviewers.

way that the referential properties of the internal argument carry over to the temporal constitution of the verbal process. This is the case in example (90a-b), but not in (90c).

- (90) a. Il a **beaucoup** regardé *de films*. Il a regardé **beaucoup** *de films*.  
 He has a-lot watched of movies He has watched a-lot of movies
- b. Il a **beaucoup** perdu *de sang*. Il a perdu **beaucoup** *de sang*.  
 He has a-lot lost of blood He has lost a-lot of blood
- c. ??Il a **beaucoup** montré *de patience*. Il a montré **beaucoup** *de patience*.  
 He has a-lot shown of patience He has shown a-lot of patience

If it is true that in (80b) *beaucoup* applies to the entire VP and only indirectly to the object NP *de N'*, whereas in (80a) it expresses a properly nominal quantification, this means the situation of contiguity of the quantifier with respect to the object NP *de N'* resulted in a weakening of its relationship with the verb or the VP. Hence, there has been reanalysis in the sense of a 'rebracketting' (Langacker 1975, Haspelmath 1998):



Why does this reanalysis take place? This reanalysis has to be situated in the context of a general typological shift affecting the NP during the evolution from Latin to Modern French (Lehmann 1990, Combettes 2001, Carlier 2004, 2006, 2007).

The hierarchical structure of the nominal phrase in Latin is rather loose, the categorical distinction between adjective and noun (cf. also Ernout & Thomas 1951: § 190), between pronoun and determiner, between adjective and determiner (cf. examples (16)-(17)) is unclear, and the internal cohesion within the NP is low (Lehmann 1990).

From Latin to French, the NP undergoes a gradual evolution towards the tripartite structure: D–N–XP (with XP being a complement or an adjunct). This evolution towards a tripartite structure of the NP goes along with the emergence of a distinct category of nominal determination. Nominal determiners acquire a specific distribution and develop specific forms (hence, the formal differentiation between demonstrative and possessive pronouns and determiners cf. Marchello-Nizia and Combettes 2001). Moreover, the presence of a determiner becomes obligatory. The obligatory presence of a determiner contributes to the dramatic rise of the partitive article in the 15th century, which renders exceptional zero determination in combination with common nouns (Carlier 2007).

I put forward the hypothesis that, in this context of the emergence of independent category of nominal determination, the presence of an adverbial quantifier contiguous to the nominal object *de N'* has led to a reanalysis of the pattern V Q *de N'* and to a recategorization of the quantifier as a nominal determiner.

And yet, as shown in Carlier & Melis (2005), this reanalysis is not entirely accomplished. This can be shown by the restrictions on the cleft structure. Whereas a nominal object determined by an inflected quantifier (e.g. *plusieurs*) can occur in the focus position of a cleft structure, the cleftage of *beaucoup de N'* is not natural.

- (91) a. Pierre a écrit *ce roman*. C'est *ce roman* que Pierre a écrit.  
 Peter has written this novel. It is this novel that Peter has written.
- b. Pierre a écrit **plusieurs romans**. C'est **plusieurs romans** que Pierre a écrits.  
 Peter has written several novels It is several novels that Peter has written.
- c. Pierre a écrit **beaucoup de romans**. ??C'est **beaucoup de romans** que Pierre a écrits.  
 Peter has written a lot of novels It is a lot of novels that Peter has written.

The cleftage of the quantified NP of the type *beaucoup de N'* is blocked only when it is a direct object. In the examples (92) and (93), where the quantified NP in focus is not a direct object, the cleft structure is acceptable.

- (92) Pierre est venu *peu de fois*. C'est *peu de fois* que Pierre est venu.  
 Peter came few of times It is few of times that Peter came
- (93) Cet appareil coûte *beaucoup d'argent*. C'est *beaucoup d'argent* que cet appareil coûte.  
 This machine costs a-lot of money. It is a-lot of money that this machine costs.

This means that the adverbial quantifier, when it quantifies the direct object, even if it is contiguous to this object NP, has still not completely broken its bonds with the verb.

## 6 Conclusion and perspectives for further research

**6.1.** This study showed that the diachronic evolution of *beaucoup* from Middle French to Modern French exhibits salient similarities with the pathway from *multum* in Latin to *moult* in Middle French. The following stages can be distinguished:

Stage I: *Multum* and *beaucoup* are originally nominal forms.

Stage II: This nominal form becomes an adverb: used for quantification of the direct internal argument of the verb, it can quantify the verbal process as such and it acquires in this way the ability to quantify the process without saturating an argument position.

Stage III: Whereas in stage II the quantifier can only apply to an NP in the direct internal argument position, it extends subsequently its context of use to NPs outside the VP and to NPs headed by a preposition. It becomes in this way a full-fledged nominal determiner, with the same properties as ordinary quantifying determiners, such as scope ambiguities (cf. ex. (85)).

The diachronic approach leads to a more accurate synchronic account of *beaucoup* as it functions in Modern French. It explains the specific distribution of *beaucoup*, which, like *multum* in Latin, is a nominal or verbal quantifier, but does not apply to adjectives or adverbs. Moreover, it offers a fine-grained account of the morphosyntactic categorization of *beaucoup* and defines the contexts of use where *beaucoup* is used as an adverb (stage II), as a nominal determiner (stage III), or has a hybrid status, between adverb and nominal determiner. Finally, it accounts for the presence of *de* in its determiner use and clarifies the relationship with respect to quantifying determiners such as *plusieurs*.

**6.2.** Several issues require further investigation. Firstly, it would be interesting to compare *multum* / *beaucoup* with other quantifying adverbs such as *peu* 'little/few', *trop (peu)* 'too much (too little)', *assez* 'enough', *tant*, *tellement* 'so much', *énormément* 'enormously': these have been included in the same paradigm as *beaucoup* because they share the property of quantifying not only nouns but also verbs and some of them even adjectives or adverbs. A comparative analysis of these different quantifiers would reveal that this class is less homogeneous than generally admitted. For instance, whereas *beaucoup* is well-established as a nominal quantifier and has a high frequency in its use as a nominal determiner or even as a pronoun, *assez* remains more anchored in the verbal sphere and is still used in a more flexible way in the so-called remote quantification pattern.

- (94) a. Pierre a *beaucoup* travaillé. Pierre a *assez* travaillé.  
 Peter has a-lot worked Peter has enough worked
- b. \*Pierre a *beaucoup* montré de patience. Pierre a *assez* montré de patience.  
 Peter has a-lot shown of patience Peter has enough shown of patience



c. <b>Beaucoup</b>	de filles ont dansé.	?? <b>Assez</b>	de filles ont dansé. (cf. fn. 1)
A-lot	of girls danced	Enough	of girls danced.
d. <b>Beaucoup</b>	ont dansé.	* <b>Assez</b>	ont dansé.
A-lot	danced	Enough	danced

This more adverbial status of *assez* could be assessed by a diachronic study. More generally speaking, the present analysis dealing with *multum / m(o)ult / beaucoup* should be undertaken for the other quantifying expressions entering into the paradigm of verbo-nominal quantification, in order to identify the peculiar categorial features of each expression of this paradigm.

A second research question that deserves further investigation relates to the tendency towards a categorial specialization, which has been invoked at different stages of the evolution from *multum* in Latin to *beaucoup* in Modern French. In the context of Romance, it is clear that this tendency is in a more advanced stage in French than in the other Romance languages. It would be interesting to consider this evolution in the context of the different typological changes that characterize the evolution from Latin to Modern French.

### Electronic Corpora

Classical Latin: *Itinera Electronica* (Université catholique de Louvain)

Very Old French: « *Corptef* » (ENS-LSH Lyon, CNRS UMR 5191 ICAR)

Old French: *Base du français médiéval* (ENS-LSH Lyon, CNRS UMR 5191 ICAR)

Middle French: *Dictionnaire du moyen français* (CNRS UMR Atilf, Nancy)

Classical and Modern French: *Frantext* (CNRS UMR Atilf, Nancy)

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