**ERC Advanced Grant
Research project (Part B)**

Signs and States

SAS

The Research Project (**max 15 pages**)

i. State-of-the-art and objectives

i. 1. It all started from what struck me as a serious deficiency in the "Modern State" model. Its main features are now well-known. Sovereignty and territoriality of power fuelling competition in the second half of the thirteenth century and wars flaring in consequence, western kings turn to taxation to find new resources to meet their growing needs. Some of them had already tried, rather unsuccessfully, to raise money in this fashion: there were precedents, and besides, the Church (as a consequence of the funding of the Crusades) and the Italian cities – not to mention the Iberian kingdoms engaged in the *Reconquista* – had already a considerable fund of know-how at their disposal. Taxation is nothing else than the transfer of private money or goods belonging to individuals or communities for public use, a process approved by lawyers and theologians as justified because it is in the interest of all and because it is accepted (though they usually gave no details on how this acceptance could be made explicit). Of course, these private goods might simply be taken away by force: Jews, Italians, foreigners were, here and there, victims of such spoliations; but this was a tactic with a limited future since, once this had been done, the resource had disappeared, at least for some time. Worse, arbitrary spoliation could prove counterproductive in terms of credit. That is how the western kings rediscovered politics, a set of practices and principles which had vanished since the end of the Roman times, until it was reinvented and reintroduced in the West by the Italian cities (and to a lesser extent, those of Flanders, Languedoc and Catalonia). All the decisions about justice, war and taxation had to be "accepted" by those who were directly, and even in some cases indirectly, concerned by them. Politics implies that the legitimacy of a decision has to be based upon two pillars: first, the legitimate status of the decision-maker and his legitimate right to decide; and second, the legitimate nature of the decision (more precisely, the need to show that the transfer of goods from private hands to the public treasure was justified). Participation in the discussion of such matters was gradually extended from the vassals of a given lord as a group to what may be termed the "political society", just as it had been extended from the bishops vassals to the members of the militia and later to the *popolo* in the Italian cities. However, the emergence of political societies meant no break with the practices and structures of feudalism, most of which survived, many of them being incorporated and transformed through the concepts of help and council in the new organization. Dialogue indeed there was, sometimes institutionalized through representative institutions (parliaments, *Cortes*, *États*, or simply informal local assemblies), sometimes not, sometimes it even degenerated in revolts or rebellions, which may be considered as an extreme mode of social dialogue: but though this dialogue is taken for granted, only institutional dialogue has been thoroughly examined, and both the necessary

conditions for the existence of such a dialogue and its cultural implications have been neglected. Therefore, we are in presence of a political structure which depends upon dialogue, but the modalities and both the cultural and the social forms of this "public" dialogue are practically unknown. It is on these points we intend to concentrate.

i. 2. Some may disagree with this outline summary, either *in toto*, or in part. The Modern State model has indeed been challenged: most often for the improper use of the word "modern" which may engender confusion, but also by those who stick to the models of Norbert Elias (the disciplining of the nobility) or of Max Weber (the monopolization of violence and the growth of administrative bureaucracy). For me, the real difficulty lies elsewhere, in this notion of "dialogue", which raises two problems.

The first is the nature of the "publicity" of the dialogue. In fact, the concept of political society only makes sense if it is linked with that of public sphere, a concept which was firmly rooted by Jürgen Habermas in modern England but which, with some others, I would like to transfer to the central Middle Ages. However, to link the development of the public sphere in the medieval period with that of the state would be an anachronism: this development started within the Church and the new vision of the *ecclesia* which the Gregorian reformers vindicated and imposed. The gradual transformation of the public sphere dominated by the Church is one of the essential points which needs to be discussed; in relation to it, the question of public opinion is also important.

The second of these problems is that to dialogue implies the existence of a common language, that is a language which conveys ideas, principles, images, even dreams, which are precise enough to support transactions between individuals of different status, different professional groups, different education and breeding. These transactions produce and make manifest in the public sphere a certain degree of consensus, tacit or explicit, among the members of the political society.

Even if this description of the process of dialogue is, once again, a simplified sketch, it bristles with unresolved questions which historians have neglected, with the exception of that of the progression of the use of writing (including pragmatic writing) in medieval societies. What language to focus on? Latin is, at the close of the thirteenth century, the only language with a recognized and universally admitted grammar, vocabulary, and semantic consistency. However, it is precisely in the second half of the thirteenth century that the importance of the vernacular for public use is recognized: the Castilian and French kings encourage translations, and Dante initiates the reflection on the transition of the vernacular from a dialect to a fully fledged language. If historians have been interested in the transformation of Latin in romance languages, they have paid little attention until recently to the sociolinguistic transformations of vernacular languages, leaving the field to linguists without acknowledging the importance of this process for the development of a political culture.

The same may be said for semantic systems other than the languages of words, spoken or written: images, sculptures, architecture, music, liturgies, sounds, rituals, public performances, bodily gestures, clothing, heraldry (no claim to exhaustiveness) are all systems (in the sense of Saussure) of signs, who may be read both in synchrony and in diachrony. Although this is not enough: these systems of signs have only a limited autonomy, and each one is linked to the others (for example, the semantic equivalence of portrait and blazon has been recently demonstrated), though the necessary specialisation and the specific skills required in each field usually obscure this basic truth. We are therefore confronted with what semiologists would describe as a global system of signs, and it is in the mutation of this global system of signs that lies the key to the understanding of the renascence of politics in the Latin West, the transformation of feudal society into political society, and the development of this generalized dialogue without which the legitimacy of state and city powers cannot be proved and made efficient (in military and fiscal terms).

i.3 However, there is a level at which this unity in depth of all these systems may be recognized: the level of symbolic power, a concept which has been developed by Pierre Bourdieu and, in a slightly different way, by Maurice Godelier, who used the term "idéel" (Godelier's "idéel" has been translated in English by "mental" and in Italian by *ideale* but both translations may be utterly misleading. I shall use the French word in what follows) to encompass in a single term both the production of symbolic signs or forms, and what remains imaginary in the individual mind (but may be unconsciously expressed). The imaginary has neither social existence nor efficiency without the symbolic, it is nonetheless distinct from it. Bourdieu applied this concept first and foremost to language, but he was from the start conscious that it was not restricted to language alone (hence his interest in Panofsky's symbolic forms) and he extended it to media studies and the whole of the communication system; Godelier's addition provides added room for anthropological and psychoanalytic analyses.

These concepts of symbolic power and "idéel" lead us to the crux of the problem. The fall (or rather the gradual effacing) of the Western Roman Empire has left to the Church (Southern's and Le Goff's "global institution") something close to a monopoly of symbolic power. This enabled the early medieval Church to assert gradually her moral authority on the barbarian *reges*, to divert Germanic peoples from Arrianism, to supervise the pagans' conversion and to reach a workable compromise with both the Carolingian and Ottonian emperors. But by the tenth century, the development of feudalism appeared to some as a new challenge to the Church. A strong movement of reform (the so-called Gregorian Reform) developed and in the end triumphed, and one of its main objective was to enforce even more strictly this monopoly of symbolic power.

The Reformers intervened on both its main components. The first is the theological and dogmatic one and revolves around one central tenet, this debt incurred b mankind towards Christ for committing himself from his own free will to martyrdom in order to redeem humanity. This was considerably reinforced by the Gregorians: the centrality of Eucharist and of transubstantiation helped to emphasise individual rather than collective salvation, a salvation made a more conceivable prospect by the "invention of Purgatory" and the multiplication of the prayers for the dead. Each man had through his prayers, participation in mass and religious ceremonies, involvement in parish activities, all processes controlled through compulsory confession prior to Easter communion which confirmed one's position in Christian society, to try to pay his own debt. To achieve this, the *ecclesia*, the social body of all Christians, was divided into two strictly distinct elements, the lay and the clerical. It was the duty of the clerical element, totally detached from the *carnalitas* which could only prevent *spiritualitas*, *amicitia* and *caritas* to pervade Christianity, to lead the lay element on the difficult path of salvation, a path marked by sacraments, an absolute monopoly of clerks. This necessitated a numerous and well educated clergy, with a strong (and therefore territorial) organization and acting with discipline within a well framed structure under the supreme authority of the papacy, which would rely on lay rulers for dealing with secular – inevitably carnal and bloody – matters, provided they followed the spiritual guidance of the Church.

The second component was the mastery of the material elements through which symbolic power gains efficiency. From the early Middle Ages, the Church had kept, besides sacraments, a monopoly of access to the sacred text, the Bible: by the tenth century, only clerks knew enough Latin to read and explain the biblical text. It had also something as a monopoly of education, even though this was challenged early on by the need for scribes, notaries and lawyers consecutive to the precocious start of economic growth in Catalonia, Provence and Italy. However, its new mission implied that the Church had to train a huge number of clerics whose duty was no more to pray in the seclusion of a monastery but to preach ceaselessly and to council and educate their flock. Cathedral schools soon surpassed

the monastic ones, became more or less autonomous (not least that of Paris where the main theological innovations of the period were and universities appeared. This development was not restricted to texts and language: the enormous movement of rebuilding of churches, Romanesque first, Gothic (as adapted to transubstantiation, "to see the invisible"), the lavish decoration of their facades, windows and porches by sculptures and paintings, a new kind of music invented by the Parisian scholars and chanters for the new gothic vaults of Notre-Dame and quickly adopted throughout Europe, all this created a new word of words, sounds and images.

If the Church was the *primum movens* in these momentous changes, which she initiated to fulfil her own objectives, she was soon overtaken by her own success. It is true that economic growth, if it had fuelled the coffers from which this educational and artistic development was paid, had also made the skills of reading and writing, for instance, much in demand for profane – and often profitable – uses, such as administration and trade. As has been amply demonstrated for Catalonia, Italy and even England, lettered laymen (a contradiction in terms, *laicus* being equivalent to illiterate) ceased to be a rarity by the middle of the twelfth century. The Church was quick to see the danger: heresy, practically eradicated since the suppression of Arrianism, reappeared in the West, first with the theological difficulties involved in the definition of transubstantiation, but perhaps more damagingly at that stage with the claim of lay people to have direct access to the Bible and the contesting of the clergy's specific position in the Christian society. To close the gap, the Papacy let loose the mendicant orders: but St Francis's legacy was to prove a dangerous one, with its advocacy of absolute poverty, which made the richness and the secular splendour of the Church appear so questionable. By and large, even if by the middle of the thirteenth century the collapse of the Hohenstaufen had left the Church the undisputable winner of her secular struggle against the Empire, the only other claimant to universal power, its control over lay society had weakened and despite some dazzling victories (such as the christianisation of chivalric epics and romances through the Graal myth) it left ample space for other actors.

i.4 The lay powers' urgent need for a legitimacy which conditioned their resources – we are coming back here to point i.1 – forced them two choose between two possible roads: either to rely on the symbolic and legitimizing power of the Church, a road followed by the Carolingians (but Charlemagne at least retained is superiority on the pope, as the Eastern Emperor on the patriarch) or to set up a legitimizing process of their own. Confronted with the papacy's claim to supremacy, while exploiting some remains of the Carolingian past (unction and coronation) and developing some Christian themes such as the tree of Jesse, parading their saintly ancestors or parents, making the most of titles such as *rex christianissimus* or *defensor fidei*, western kings chose nonetheless the second road, as the crisis between Boniface VIII and the two kings of France and England makes it abundantly clear.

But why was this road opened? The answer lies in the changes in the system of communication, of which we have briefly analyzed the causes in point i.3: it is these changes which made it possible for the king of England and for the king of France to appeal to the political society and, especially in the second case, to launch again the papacy a propaganda campaign of exceptional magnitude, including the writing and diffusion of false pontifical bulls; as a result, the Church's monopoly of symbolic power could be challenged.

A provisional answer could be at that stage that from the end of the thirteenth century, the changes in the communication system created a culture in which symbolic power was shared between the Church and political societies (some would say political powers, but I think this would be premature) and which created the necessary conditions for a political dialogue in the public sphere. As was said before, this dialogue may be institutionalized, but it may exists at other levels, and before receiving a political expression, it must have its language, its words, its images, to solve the fundamental questions of legitimization and acceptance (consensus).

As a matter of fact, although the Church remained in many ways the most conspicuous holder of symbolic power, this had now to be shared with others. Kings, Cities, but also social groups such as lawyers, while at times even sections of the political society, either informally (the nobility, the peasantry for instance) or through institutionalized intermediaries (such as guilds, fraternities, military orders etc.) became conscious or unconscious providers of symbolic goods. Cities, states, social or institutionalized groups also became the producers of symbolic power, competing into a public sphere which was no more exclusively defined in ecclesiastical terms. The object of this competition is obvious enough, though often elusive: it is the determination of that legitimacy, without which power remains unstable. Historians have too often considered this problem in purely legal terms: however important the juridical determinants of legitimacy may be, the acceptance of the legitimacy of a government and of its demands in crucial issues (just wars, taxation, succession) was the privilege of political societies. Murders of kings, usurpations, "*coups d'État*", are a flagrant testimony of the uncertainties of legitimacies at the moment when the modern state emerged, and we have to go below the surface of political events to look for the fabric of legitimacy. My own experience with the King's recourse to the sacred led me to suspect compromises between the ecclesiastical masters of the symbolic monopoly and those who expected to exercise it in the new political conditions.

This is precisely the objective of the research project which is presented here. It refuses the traditional paths (which have their virtues and advantage) of political history, of the history of ideas (and especially of political ideas) running the risk of anachronism by using concepts such as those of "propaganda" or "public opinion", and of a cultural history truncated into the separate and barely connected fields of art history, musicology, literature and linguistics. What we want to do is to study the interplay of the communication system, analyzed from the level of the signs it transports, with political societies. The present project is based upon a semiotic hypothesis, which is that, in any society, the communication system has a functional structure similar to that of the language (which is part of it): each component can only be understood in relation with others, in a global and synchronic approach necessary to study the symbolic power and the *idéel* as defined by Godelier as a combination of the imaginary and of the symbolic. Because culture has no borders, because local situations are extremely different, the detailed study of the relation of the different political societies' sections to the components of the communication system has to be done on a comparative basis; because the position of the Church becomes very unstable from the fourteenth century onwards (with the Avignon papacy, the Great Schism and the conciliar crisis), it has to be made on the long term, as long as the Latin Church struggles to defend or to recover her position as the unique legitimate holder of symbolic power in the West, that is as long as the consequences of the Council of Trent, by which the Papacy still thought that she could regain her ascendancy on Protestant lands, are felt directly. As in the case of the Modern State's programs, there needs not be geographical limitations imposed from the start, but special attention has to be paid to Italy: the rise of humanism, the pictorial and architectural revolutions associated with the Renascence, represent the major cultural upheaval of the period which transformed the communication system of practically all European political societies.

From these premises and definitions, it is now possible to determine appropriate methodologies, based upon comparative history and the use of computing techniques (prosopography, textometrics, statistics).

ii. Methodology

ii.1 General principles The purpose of this program is therefore to try to reach a new level of understanding of the related developments of political societies in the later Middle Ages by analysing the combined structures of the public sphere and of the communication system through the study of the signs (a generic term under which are to be found words, sounds, gestures, forms etc.) which convey what the anthropologist Maurice Godelier calls the "idéel" (the "idéel" being also opposed to the "material" through which it is expressed) by which societies hold together and through which the power of the dominant is ultimately accepted. It may be described as a research on the semiotics of the modern state. Several prerequisites must be met to analyze and understand the interplay of all the different elements (political societies, symbolic power, dialogue, communication system, public sphere, legitimacy, consent) we have mentioned so far, which determine in the long run the transfer of part of the Church symbolic authority and power to both states and political societies : they will determine our methodology.

First of all, to work on the communication system means that all its components have to be considered in relation with each other: words, texts, sounds, performances, liturgies, rituals, sculptures, architectures. We have therefore to consider medieval culture as a whole : easy to say, difficult to achieve, since academic specialities obscure the global unity of medieval culture. Moreover the distribution of sources between historians (archives!), students of literature, philosophers, lawyers, theologians, musicologists, art historians of all kinds etc. is especially misleading and this division of work may obscure essential elements. These specialisations are indeed justified by the specific expertise which each "craft" – to use a medieval metaphor – possesses; nonetheless we must consider that a global approach is mandatory: it means not only that the work has to be collaborative, inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary , but that we have to devise a common agenda and attempt at common answers. This leads to the organisation of inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary workshops and conferences which will made contacts and debate possible.

Second, the research must be comparative. Though most medieval societies had by the thirteenth century a common past and shared a common heritage, Christianity to begin with, there were wide differences between them. And the modern state itself, in its early phase of development, is far from being a clearly defined and current political form: it shares many of its attributes with principalities, cities, city states, some of which will become modern states permanently or temporarily. There are also wide cultural differences. However, as has been said earlier, Italy must be at the heart of the comparison process: though its cities and regional states did not become modern states in the strict definition of the term, there financial and political institutions had an important influence and it was also the strongest and most dynamic centre of cultural change (and therefore of transformation of the communication system) in Europe from the end of the thirteenth century to the end of the sixteenth century. of general. Therefore, all workshops and conferences will be not only inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary, but also comparative, with a special emphasis, with those dealing with primarily cultural matters, on the Italian case.

Third, one must avoid restricting the analysis to "political ideas", "political literature" or "political propaganda". These are largely anachronisms, the more so since a distinctive "political" field (to use Bourdieu's words) did take much time to appear, and because the Christian vision always remained the global frame in which every other elements had to find a place for themselves: it is precisely one of the advantages of the concept of symbolic power that it stresses the fact that what is implicit is probably of much greater consequence to the shaping of the human mind than what is explicit (precisely these political ideas and this propaganda upon which so many historians – including me – have hitherto concentrated their research. To achieve this, we need to work at a deeper level to reach the semantic element in each medium. Given our own specialisation, we shall mostly work on texts and languages, but

we intend to extend our research to performance in general, with a special attention paid to theatre, and to urbanism and the increase of the monumental presence in the urban space.

This may sound pretentious and over-ambitious. Ambitious it is, but it is above all an expression of a conscious attempt to avoid the pitfalls of anachronism in casting a new glance at medieval sources and in dealing with them as a system of signs which are to be understood in their complex inter-relations. The program which is presented here is organized along four main orientations, each of which having its own methodology, so to speak. The first two (ii.2 and ii.3) are devoted to the main problematic and deal with theoretical and comparative problems. They are based upon international conferences (which we expect to publish) and workshops, allowing some time for research in primary sources. The third and fourth ones (ii.4 and ii.5) are devoted to research work in the laboratory work, including the development of the necessary computing methods and tools.

ii.2 "Les vecteurs de l'idéel" The first part of the project is an entirely new program, which I have called "Les vecteurs de l'idéel", a title which, once again, it is difficult to translate into English. Written culture has always been at the centre of my researches, but, during the past six years, we have multiplied the angles under which we could try to explore medieval culture. Boucheron's thesis (*Le pouvoir de bâtir*) and his paper in the *Annales* on the Sienna's frescoes (*Il Buon Governo*) may give an idea of his orientation. I have myself read papers on music (in relation with an exhibition in the Cité de la Musique in Paris in 2004), archives (for one of the Franco-British conferences), the status of texts (one of the seminar's workshops), the problem of the legibility of the frescoes in Rome and Assisi (to be published in Elizabeth Mornet's *Festschrift*) and the expression of psychic affects at the end of the fifteenth century, specifically based upon Botticelli's paintings. We have also invited scholars coming from different countries and working in different academic spheres (literature, art history, musicology, philosophy etc.) to deliver papers and lectures on related themes.

The present project therefore originated in our seminar and is both multidisciplinary and covering several historical periods, since it extends from the Gregorian Reform to the aftermath of the Council of Trent, and has even been extended to the 1640's, which seems to us the best period limits. It has been prepared by a number of workshops organized within the seminar since October 2007 (eight have taken place or are due to take place until June 2009) which dealt with several types of semantic systems (text, music, performance, town and urban structures) and the relation of the Church with the public sphere (Church and space, the presence and functions of religious painting in the public space), despite difficulties caused by the disruption in university life in Paris this year. These workshops have been the occasion of discussions and exchanges with colleagues from several research groups (Centre d'Études supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours, Laboratoire Roland Mousnier in Paris IV, Groupe d'Anthropologie Historique de l'Occident Médiéval) in France and elsewhere, and we have agreed on a multidisciplinary and collaborative program, to cover as fully as possible the different fields of enquiry. The French School of Rome has agreed to help us to start with this project, and we have received some funds from the School and from the LAMOP for this purpose, which is also made possible a meeting between Jean-Claude Schmitt (GAHOM), Florence Alazard, Paul-Alexis Meillet and Philippe Vendrix (CESR, Tours), Caroline Callard (Centre Roland Mousnier), Patrick Boucheron and myself (LAMOP) with Italian colleagues (Sandro Carocci, Giorgio Chittolini, Pietro Corrao, Amedeo De Vicentiis, Laura Gaffuri, Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur, igor Mineo, Pierangelo Schierra, Paola Ventrone, Andrea Zorzi with Cristina Jular from Spain) to discuss in depth the problems of comparison between Italy and other European countries; Andrea Zorzi, from the University of Florence, has agreed to help us in this respect with the coordination of the "Italian comparison". We are mainly concerned with the organization of a cycle of five multidisciplinary international conferences,

and with workshops aimed at promoting collaboration between scholars of different backgrounds and dealing either with specific subjects requiring new research (these will be organised either in Italy or in France) or with more technical topics (these will be organised in Tours). The French School of Rome have expressed her support only until 2011, and that is why a general overview of the project will decide in more details of the contents of the program for the years 2012 and 2013. The organisation of the Milan workshop and of the Roman conference is now practically completed, and we are now starting the discussion of the program of the workshop on Political languages is being discussed with Andrea Gamberini (Milan) and Andrea Zorzi (Florence).

	Workshops in Italy or in France	Workshops organized in Tours	International conferences at the French School in Rome
2009	I. Milan (1-3rd october) [Laura Gaffuri and Paola Ventrone] : Image, culte, liturgie	I. *L'ornemental* (29 octobre)	I. Rome (10-12th december: [Patrick Boucheron] Marquer la ville : les pratiques symboliques de l'espace urbain
2010	II. Florence : Les langages de la société politique	II. Distinction et conflit dans les champs politiques et religieux	II. Les légitimités implicites I
2011	III. Palerme : Exprimer la prééminence sociale	III Pratiques publiques, pratiques privées	III. Les légitimités implicites II
2012			IV Consentement et Refus
2013			V Les vecteurs de l'idéel

ii. 3 Comparative programs on governance. The second orientation is that of comparative research: this not a new orientation for us, since with the LAMOP I have already organized a comparative program on governance in France and in the British Isles, and I intend to go on with the assistance and collaboration of Aude Mairey, John Watts (Oxford) and Christopher Fletcher. François Foronda initiated two conferences centred upon the Castilian and Aragonese Crowns compared with other European kingdoms, whereas and Olivier Mattéoni concentrated upon comparing Northern Italy with Eastern France and the Rhône valley; a Franco-Italian workshop on taxation in France and Italy, organized by Olivier Mattéoni and Guido Castelnuovo, is already scheduled in Chambéry. What we should like to do now is to systematize these comparative confrontations in centring them on precise sections of the political societies and on their reactions to the changes in the communication system. We should like to organize at least a conference a year, starting in 2010, and we have already the support of colleagues in Belgium (Jan Dumolyn), Germany (Pierre Monnet) and the Czech Republic (Martin Nedjely). This project has been presented to many English, Italian and Spanish colleagues and their reactions are very positive. I have no doubt about their willingness to participate.

ii. 4 Texts and prosopography The third and fourth orientations are devoted to laboratory research work, and deal with texts and with cultural prosopography. As regards texts, we have been gathering for years many texts which are expected to have a specific political interest, and integrated them in a large corpus, called MEDITEXT, which includes French, Latin and English texts. The objective is to chart the different stages of the birth of political language in France and England, a comparison we should like to extend to Italy. The proximity of the religious vocabulary in different European languages has often been noted, because of the

weight of the Church and of the many Latin texts it circulated widely, but one of our assumptions is that, in several European languages, many words of this so-called political lexicon may also be more or less common, because they all originated in the same Latin texts of the Middle Ages or of the Antiquity. However the deep structures of language would differ from one vernacular to another: and words may be used in contexts different of those of their Latin equivalents. However, to highlight the characteristics of "political" language we have also to compare these texts with other texts which are not supposed to have a specific bend towards politics: thanks to the work of Monique Goullet, we have an important corpus of hagiographical texts which may be used for comparison and control purposes. We also have important "non political" corpus for English (sermons, gathered by my students, and a most corpus of the prologues of didactic texts, gathered by Aude Mairey) and for French (urban poetry, tracts on marriage, gathered by students of Claude Gauvard).

We intend to complete these collections of texts. Since Dominique Iogna-Prat intends to work on great political and ecclesiological texts of the later Middle Ages, he will add to our library another corpus the content of which has not yet been entirely determined; whereas Benoît Grévin has initiated a most interesting research project on the diffusion of texts through chancery textbooks, such as the so-called letters of Pierre de la Vigne. Aude Mairey is completing her own corpus of didactic prologues. To achieve good results, a lot of work need to be done on most of the texts, and since the LAMOP has some excellent linguists among its members (Stéphane Gioanni, Monique Goullet and Benoît Grévin for instance), specific seminars will be devoted to the philological problems, and difficulties will be checked in libraries on manuscripts or early editions if required. We intend to present some of our results in two large international conferences: the first one would deal with "Fields and Texts" (this will not be the title of the conference), and compare lexical distributions according to the status of texts and the fields ("champs") in which they have been circulated, and the second, in 2012, will try to establish the state of the art on the more general matter of the birth of the political language.

However, the main objective is to use textometrics to reach new results at the semantic level which is our ultimate goal. The texts' statistical and lexical exploitation will be mainly done by computing, with the software we already use. Since the HYPERBASE program of Etienne Brunet and the LEXICO III program of André Salem are being entirely rewritten in connection with the new Weblex system in course of realization at the École Normale Supérieure LSH at Lyon, we will use this new product. We do not know in detail the performances of this new software, but we have no doubt they will be equal or superior to those we use already.

Nonetheless, we would like to seize this opportunity to solve one of the main difficulties with which historians are confronted. Medieval texts are regulated neither by orthographic rules nor by scribal consistency : theoretically, this obstacle may be overcome by tagging, but full tagging on many texts written in at least five (with the probable addition of Italian and Spanish to French, English and Latin) different languages would be far too much time-consuming. What medievalists need is a semi-automatic software for lemmatization of forms and orthographic regularisation and this is what we would like to provide for the scientific communitiy as one of the results of this project.

ii. 5 The fourth part of the project is based on one method, prosopography, but it is split in two part, the first one dealing with the problem of culture and political society in England, where a complex methodology has been developed, and the second one with the medieval University of Paris, which is probably central for the history of the transfer of the monopoly of symbolic power from the Church to other agents as for that of political language! As regards England, there are several issues. The first is to continue my own database on authors

in the fields of history and politics from 1300 to 1600, which has to be revised and corrected: in the course of this revision, I have reached half of the database and added nearly two hundreds of new "authors"; this work can be done only in the British Library, in Oxford or in Cambridge since, if references may be found in secondary literature, they have to be checked, as much as possible, with early editions and manuscripts. In addition, I have also started a new database, in order to get a precise impression of what the English read in the late medieval period and in the early XVIth century; it is far to be complete, but I have already gathered some 30.000 references of book ownership, and the statistical exploitation of these data is extremely interesting. Aude Mairey is also expecting to work in English libraries, since she has designed her own database on manuscripts' descriptions for her own purposes. Here too, mentions of ownerships and published lists have to be tested by coming back to the primary sources and by codicology, which is the subject-matter of a special seminar in the LAMOP, which involves Ezio Ornato, Carla Bozzolo, Émilie Cottereau, and Xavier Hermand.

As regards Paris University, this project would be a wonderful opportunity to start from the prosopographical database which we have developed for pedagogical purposes in Paris I, to incorporate new information derived from the work of William Courtenay and his disciples and of Serge Lusignan, from that of Olga Weijers on the Art Faculty, and from recent work on Paris colleges (Thierry Kouamé, Nathalie Gorochov, Karine Klein-Rebmeister): Thierry Kouamé has become one of the best specialists of Paris University and has already started to work on the project: an enormous amount of data has already been collected and has to be structured, completed, corrected and rearranged. It is a difficult and time-consuming task, but its completion is now within our reach.

However, as in the case of textual analysis, we seem to have reached a level at which our computing methods make it possible to generate a product which could be of use for the scientific community in general. Our databases have been written in structured natural language, and it is easy to convert the dictionary component in XML: this could even be an occasion for starting reflection on a specialized standard prosopographical XML format. Now from this dictionary, we are able, by a semi-automatic software devised by Georges-Xavier Blary, to jump to a MySQL database accessible online. The automatisation of this process is a difficult work, but we are convinced it is possible, with the assistance of a good programmer to do it. We should thus provide the community with a tool-box for prosopography, starting from natural language collection of data to a sophisticated online database. At this point, Stéphane Lamassé has developed a connecting software which creates a link between the database and the R statistical package; it is therefore possible to devise the automatic exploitation of any table retrieved on internet with that package.