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# Fordham Medieval Digital Projects (https://medievalomeka.ace.fordham.edu)

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French of Italy TimeMap

Go to the fullscreen view (https://medievalomeka.ace.fordham.edu/neatline/fullscreen/french-of-italy-timeline) . (Best viewed in Google Chrome (https://www.google.com/intl/en/chrome/browser/desktop/index.html#brand=CHMB&utm_campaign=en&utm_source=en-ha-na-us-sk&utm_medium=ha) .)

Click and drag the timeline at the top of the map (or hover over it and scroll) to see where and when different French-language texts were created in Italy. The genre key explains what kinds of texts were produced, and hovering over individual items will reveal the title of each text and the provenance of each manuscript. Clicking on the item will open a pop-up box.
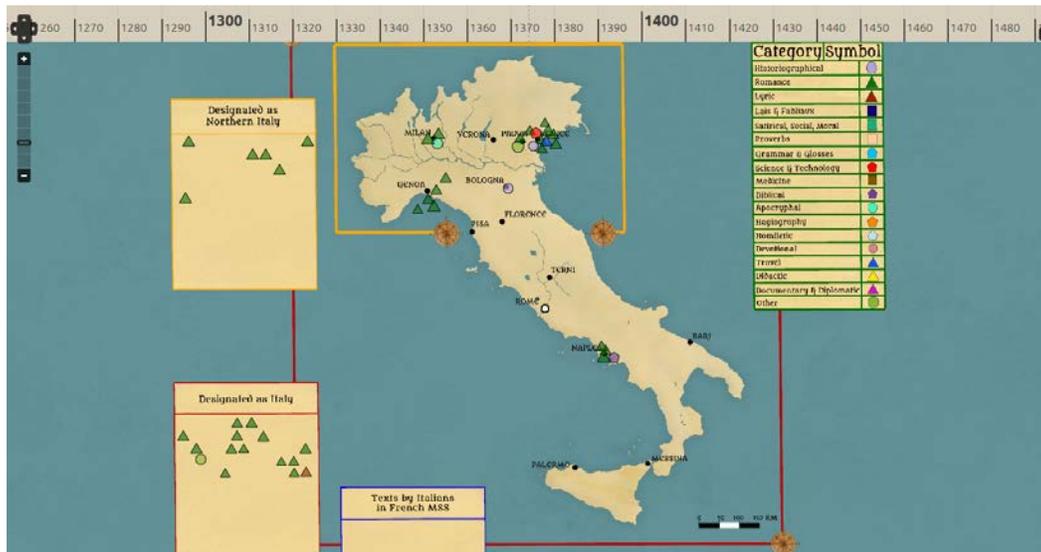
(https://medievalomeka.ace.fordham.edu/neatline/fullscreen/french-of-italy-timeline)

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The Concept

The goal of the French of Italy TimeMap is to chart, both chronologically and geographically, the French-language texts created in Italy or by Italian authors from around 1250 until roughly 1500. One of the main goals of the project is to investigate how the French language functioned for Italian authors and audiences, and to present the entire corpus in a visual rather than traditional narrative format. The map visualization relies on current scholarship, and presents the findings of philologists, literary scholars and historians whose engagement with discrete texts and manuscripts is profound. Our hope is to offer a visual narrative of this scholarship which may in turn suggest new perspectives or conclusions about the corpus as it is currently understood.

As with any research project, methodological choices were made as we constructed the visualization. Among the most important of these are the following: the unit of mapping, the breadth of the corpus, and the representation of geographic and temporal incertitude.

Textual Witness as the Unit of Mapping: Where other projects may focus on the text as the unit of analysis, we have decided to use individual instances of French-language writing — what can be called the textual witness — as the unit of mapping. By mapping each individual instance of French-language writing, we are able to demonstrate where the language was used over time and how the different areas in Italy might have been connected by common French-language textual traditions, genres, or writing practices.

Breadth of the Mapped Corpus: Although this question is addressed more generally in the French of Italy project website, our inquiry looks to all kinds of French-language production in Italy. Previous scholarship has prioritized literary sources over other types of writing, so we are especially interested in finding ways that French was used in Italy in sources that have received less scholarly attention. French-language administrative documents, commercial agreements, epigraphy, and saints' lives all shape our understanding of the kinds of linguistic choices that Italians were making and how French might have fulfilled their literary or communicative needs. We often come across new examples of French-language writings that have been ignored by traditional scholarship, so are continuously updating the site and map to reflect these discoveries.

Geographic and Temporal Incertitude: Many of the texts included in our collection provide clear evidence of where and when they were created, but the majority of them do not. In these cases, we rely on the work of philologists and literary scholars who offer their ideas about the date and geographic origin of the textual witness in question. We have therefore fashioned the map and located the points keeping the inexact nature of these determinations in mind. In our data spreadsheet, we have also coded the certainty of these determinations, ranging from a high degree of certainty about the place and/or time of production, to a medium level of confidence, indicating some incertitude in the secondary material, to a low level, which often indicates an outright disagreement in the scholarship concerning the textual witness in question.

Because work on these texts by individual scholars is still in progress, the map visualization is by no means a definitive representation of French-language writing in Italy. Rather, we consider the existing map to be a starting point that reflects, as closely as possible, the current state of scholarship on each text or manuscript tradition. We invite interested scholars to engage in the project by downloading our data and commenting upon and even offering corrections to the information as it now appears. Because of the nature of digital projects, the TimeMap can serve as a center-point for discussion on the French of Italy corpus. In the future, we hope to be able to represent ambiguities within the scholarship by simultaneously offering multiple versions of differing data as the scholarship requires.

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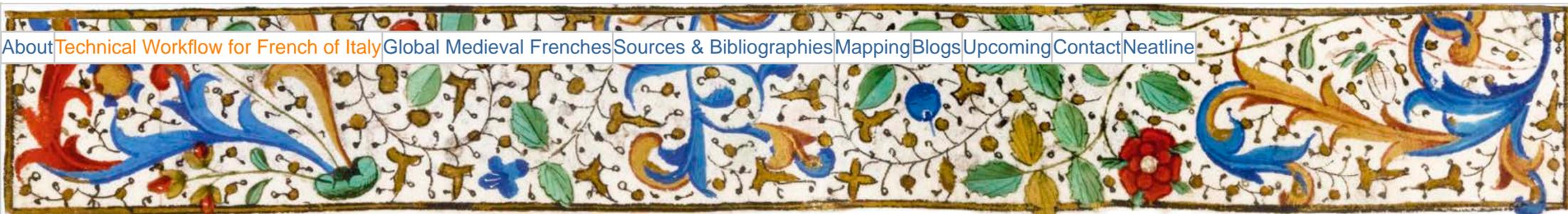
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TECHNICAL WORKFLOW FOR FRENCH OF ITALY

Omeka used for our exhibit

Omeka is primarily a platform for presentation. Because our exhibit is Neatline-centered exhibit, however, we used Omeka as a holding-ground for the records we would eventually put onto the Neatline map.

Entering items into Omeka requires a description based on a standard meta-data system called Dublin Core. Because our textual witnesses do not have metadata that corresponds to Dublin Core standards, we decided (for simplicity's sake) to use the fields provided for Dublin Core data, and simply assign certain categories of our own information to each field.

Once some of our textual witness had Omeka records, we were ready to work on the map. Beginning work on the map before entering all our items into Omeka facilitated the distribution of work between multiple people, and prompted us to improve our choices about the structure of the Omeka records.

The Neatline Map - Entering the Items

We found that the most effective way to enter the items into Neatline (our primary goal) was to enter them into Omeka first, then to import those records into Neatline, break the links between the two to allow us to edit the Neatline records, and then change the layout as we wished.

The Neatline Map - Using Simile

We chose to use a Simile timeline and Neatline Waypoints to add a temporal dimension to a Neatline map. By default, the timeline not only points out the date and controls what date the map is showing, but also includes "event tape" for each record running from that record's start to finish dates. For our project, the timeline quickly became cluttered, so we modified the css rules for the public version of the map, setting the size of the event tape and of the text for the timeline events to 0. We also moved the timeline from the bottom of the map to the top, and changed its size and color. Most of these modifications are discussed on the Omeka forums.

The Neatline Map - Using Tags

Because we chose to use different shapes and colors for our icons to designate different genres, we used the Tags in the Neatline editor extensively. Tags act as css selectors, and allowed us to edit the color, opacity, line style, and other style effects of all the items in a single genre simultaneously using Neatline's stylesheet and a dialect of css.

The Neatline Map - The background Image

Because modern maps show anachronistic regions, and because we wanted to define areas for manuscripts of ambiguous provenance, we used a custom background for our map by creating an image in Photoshop and georectifying it. For most of this process, we followed David McClure's instructions. We found, however, that some of them were out of date (for example, NeatlineMaps no longer exists, and its capabilities are now included in Neatline), and some seem to have been overly complicated for people with very little background in this type of work.

To georectify the map, instead of using ArcMap, we used mapwarper.net. Users can create a free account, upload an image, and "pin" it onto Open StreetMap (OSM), then save it and download it as a GeoTIFF (an image file with geospatial data included). This method is less sophisticated, but was sufficient for our needs, and bypassed the more complicated parts of the instructions -- we did not need to modify the "header" or add transparency as suggested in Part 2 of the instructions (we skipped Part 2 altogether).

Finally, we followed David McClure's instructions to use our Geoserver to pull that GeoTIFF from our files and prepare it for use online. (When we were trying to use ArcMap to create our GeoTIFF, we ended up with an incorrectly saved GeoTIFF, and Geoserver was "unable to list layers for this store".) Once the file was a public-facing layer in Geoserver, we were able to use it as our basemap by creating a new item in our Neatline editor and setting the WMS address as that of our geoserver /the-workspace/the-layer-name for the specific GeoTIFF we wanted, and the WMS layers as the-workspace:the-layer-name.

Multiple Map Projects on One Omeka Installation

Because our two map projects are significantly different, we found it essential to create a custom theme for each map. Essentially, these themes can contain very little information, simply inheriting everything important from the current public theme. For certain elements, however, such as the font in or style of the popup bubbles, or the size of the map on the page, the separate themes can be useful for creating different visual presentations.

Our exhibits use these plugins:

Neatline

Neatline Widget - NeatlineSIMILE Timeline

Exhibit Builder

SimplePages

CSV Import

SocialBookmarking

Simple Contact Form

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French of Italy Contributors

Laura Morreale, *Project Editor and Supervising Scholar*

Laura Morreale served as final editor for all of the project's embedded text and provided an interpretive context for this new visualization of French-language writing in Italy in her Introductory Essay. Dr. Morreale is the Associate Director of Fordham's Center for Medieval Studies and Editor of Fordham's French of Italy Project.

Elena Putti, *Content Researcher and Archival Liaison*

Elena Putti served as a contributing researcher to discover and analyze archival documents for the French of Italy project. She researched local archive databases to find new sources for the project, and helped to check, examine and input data in the French of ItalyTime Map. She collaborated with the Genoese State Archive where she discovered several undocumented French-language documents from the 14th century, and maintains contact with the Turin Archive in search of further French language witnesses. Elena continues to serve as our Italian correspondent for further research activities in Italy, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Digital Humanities at University of Genoa. She is an assistant professor in Art Criticism at the University of Genoa in and Managing of Cultural Heritage a the Catholic University in Milan.

Abigail Sargent, *Research Lead for Technology and Display*

Abigail Sargent served as lead for the technological and display elements of he French of Italy Time Map project. Using Omeka, Neatline, Geoserver, and cPanel, Abigail created and compiled instructions for use of these platforms with specific project goals in mind. She developed procedures for project contributors as they entered information, edited formatting, and mapped items. Abigail was responsible for importing data via Omeka and mapping it on the site using Neatline. Over the course of the project, Abigail explored the viability of certain Omeka plugins and add-ons, such as Lightbox, to respond to specific project needs. She created a custom theme for the Neatline exhibit, edited the map presentation, and built structural elements of the exhibit to supplement the map display. Her essay on the technological aspects of the project summarizes these efforts. Since the French of Italy project involved researching many of the textual witnesses before they were entered into Omeka, Abigail also worked with resources like Arlima, Rialfri, the Bibliotheque National de France, and many printed catalogues to track down information about contents, provenance, and production date for manuscripts. Abigail has an M.A. in Medieval Studies from Fordham University and is currently pursuing a PhD from Princeton University.

David Smigen-Rothkopf, *Graphic Artist*

David Smigen-Rothkopf served as graphic artist for the French of ItalyTime Map project. Using Adobe Photoshop to design the map of Italy as well as the cartographic elements, he created the visual foundation from which other team members translated raw data from manuscript witnesses into a spatial narrative format. David is currently working towards an MA in Medieval Studies at Fordham University.

David Joseph Wrisley, *Spatial Humanities Content Consultant*

David Joseph Wrisley provided methodological guidance for the visualization, content, and scholarly apparatus of the The French of Italy Time Map. He is also coordinating the inclusion spatial data and map views for the French of Italy project pages. He is at work on a digital project that explores space-time in medieval French texts entitled Visualizing Medieval Places. David is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the American University of Beirut was a Medieval Fellow in the Center for Medieval Studies in the 2014-15 academic year.

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Download Our Data

FOI Time Map Data Sheet.xlsm (/exhibits/show/french-texts-in-italy/item/472)

Follow this link and clink on the "file" icon on the right side of the screen to download the data sheet

Understanding the Data Sheet

-Title of Text: Title of the individual text

-Start Date: Earliest possible date of composition

-End Date: Latest possible date of composition

-MS Source: Manuscript in which this text is found

-Location: Modern city or geographic region where this manuscript was written

-Location Coordinates: Coordinates for this place

-Location Link: URL to source of these coordinates

-Time Map Location: Modern city or geographic region where this text was placed on the Time Map. This may differ from "Location" depending on uncertainty about a manuscript's provenance

-Time Map Coordinates: Coordinates for the "Time Map Location"

-Uncertainty: Type of uncertainty (if any) about a given location

Understanding Uncertainty Codes

1 = Multiple cities have been proposed for the provenance of the manuscript. We have mapped it at one rather than the other

2 = The provenance of the manuscript can only be narrowed to a general region within Italy

3 = The provenance of the manuscript may be from someplace outside of Italy, but the text has been included due to doubts or to some connection to Italy

4 = More research is needed

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Contact Us

We welcome input and suggestions for these collaborative projects. Go to our contact form (http://frenchofoutremer.com/omeka/contact) to offer feedback.

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