Jus: A portrait of a verb particle in Medieval French

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The present study is part of a larger investigation of the behaviour of verb particles in Medieval French. Burnett and Tremblay (2009) argue that the three basic interpretations of simple verb particles in Medieval French are dependent on the type of verb with which they occur. A particle such as *arrière* 'back' has a locative interpretation when used with a stative verb, a directional interpretation with verbs of motion, and an aspectual interpretation with dynamic verbs that do not denote motion. However, attestations of the aspectual interpretation of particles are not common; as a result, the three-way complementary distribution of these interpretations is only empirically supported by two particles, *avant* 'ahead' and *arrière* 'back', and to a very limited extent, by *hors* 'out' (Buridant 2000). In fact, very little is known about the aspectual interpretation of such particles, especially the possible perfective interpretation.

   Our study presents a detailed account of the interpretation and time course of change of just one particle in Medieval French, *jus* 'down', in order to test Burnett and Tremblay's prediction about the distribution of particles and to track the time course of its change (Modern French does not have a verb particle system). From 1100 to 1599 and across three databases consisting in all of over 11.5 million words, we confirm some of Burnett and Tremblay (2009)'s predictions regarding the syntactic distribution of simple particles. *Jus* appears to only have a directional interpretation with directed motion verbs (1), and a locative interpretation only appears possible in a stative construction (2). However, we found no clear cases of a perfective reading similar to the examples of *hors* cited in Buridant (2000). In fact, *jus* is not attested at all with unergative verbs. Nevertheless, it could have a telicizing function with accomplishment verbs (3). As for the time course of change of *jus*, it coincides with the loss of *arriere* and *avant* as particles (Troberg and Burnett 2013), suggesting a unified account of the particles – which one might expect – but more interestingly, it also suggests a unified account of its various interpretations.

(1)   *Ains **descent** tout maintenant **jus** de son ceval*   Trispr, p. 127
      then descends all   now   down from his horse
      'He then dismounts from his horse'

(2)   *Quant Boorz **le** vit **jus**, il le regarde et dist: 'Traïtres, desloiax…'*   Artu p. 255
      when Bors   him sees down he him looks   and says traitor   disloyal
      'When Bors sees him on the ground, he looks at him and says, "Traitor, disloyal…

(3)   *Le sanc **jus** de ses plaies **tert***   Charette p.89
      the blood down of his wounds
      'he wipes the blood off of his wounds'

References
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