Postprint

This is the accepted version of a paper published in *In-Traduções Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Estudos da Tradução*. This paper has been peer-reviewed but does not include the final publisher proof-corrections or journal pagination.

On the Expression of Modality in Old Italian

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Abstract: My aim is to provide an exploratory study of the expression of modality in Old Italian language, a topic that – with some rare exceptions– is underestimated among the scholars of Italian linguistics. In order to do this, primarily, I will provide my theoretical frames (*epistemic*, *deontic*, *dynamic*, *buletic*, *teleological*), and secondly, I will focus on the means, both grammatical and lexical, that are used to express these modal meanings in Old Italian (conditional mood, modal verbs and adverbs, periphrases, particular adjective and nouns, explicit performatives, etc.). Using the *CorpusOVI*, it will be possible to elicitate important data about the distribution of modals across text types.
From a diachronic perspective, particular attention will be dedicated to those phenomena that highlight changes and constants in the system of modality. As an instance, already in Old Italian language we can find a high degree of polysemy of modal expressions (e.g *dovere* 'must', which is both deontic and epistemic); but some peculiar modals (e.g. *è mestieri che* 'it is necessary that') are not used anymore. On the other hand, in Modern Italian there is a higher number of adverbs expressing a modal meaning.

Keywords: Modality. Old Italian Language. Evidentiality. Diachronic Semantics

1. Foreword

The notion of modality – so crucial in the study of any linguistic system as to be considered a "super category" (Nuyts, 2006) – refers to the speaker's attitude towards the propositional content of what s/he say; in brief, it expresses the speaker's subjectivity; in philosophical logical terms, an utterance is modalized if it expresses a given content in terms of possibility or necessity.[i]

   A key problem, in the historical perspective, is the fact that, although the notion of modality is properly conceptual, the comparison can happen only in written language, in which the study of modality and its expressions focuses mostly on how a

reasoning is structured and how it is expressed the degree of knowledge one has on a specific event. In written texts modal linguistic markers seem to carry out a hedging strategy, a way to propose hypothesis and avoid supporting positions in an absolute way.

Modality manifests through the use of various devices: modal verbs (*potere* "can" or "may", *dovere* "must", *volere* "will"), verbal moods (conditional, subjunctive, future), modal particles and adverbs (*certamente* "certainly", *probabilmente* "probably", *forse* "perhaps", etc.), lexical elements differently adapted to the circumstances (*è possibile che* "it is possible that", *è vietato* "it is forbidden"). As known, a peculiarity of epistemic markers is their polysemy as for the verb *dovere* in (1):

(1) *Maria deve essere a casa* "Mary must be at home"

Who speaks can express both the uncertainty of the event, based on previous knowledge or a simple intuition (epistemic modality) and an order or the will that Mario must be home at a stated time (deontic/buletic modality). Often the context determines the modal nature of an enunciation, as our language does not have own grammatical means to express a precise category of modality. So far the investigation on Old Italian (O.I.), though with relevant exceptions (Squartini, 2010), appears rather limited and it lacks. The general overview I'm trying to sketch in this contribution, which is the starting point of a wider project aimed to the study of the expression of modality in Italian in a diachronic perspective. Regarding the issue about "What is Old Italian?", here, I reject the "strong" hypothesis (Salvi/ Renzi, 2010-2011), according to which the O.I. is, in substance, a language different from the modern one and has to be intended only as the Old Florentine (before 1327). On the contrary, I follow the hypothesis that among O.I. and Modern Italian there is a substantial and proven continuity; and that the O.I. includes not only the variety used in Florence during the thirteenth century, but also other vernaculars close to the Florentine (Dardano, 2012; Tomasin, 2013).

In the following pages, I will describe, according to the classification by Von Fintel (2006) how the different types of modality – *dynamic* (or *circumstantial*), *epistemic*, *deontic*, *buletic*, *teleological* – manifest   in ancient texts between XIII and XV century. The examples will all be taken from the *CorpusOVI*.[ii]

2. Dymanic modality

This kind is traditionally considered a "root modality" (Bybee/Pagliuca/ Perkins, 1994) or "event-oriented" (Palmer, 2001),[iii] since it does not focus on the subjectivity of who speaks and concerns the relationship between the empiric circumstances that determine the necessary or possible happening of an event. Such a category is expressed in O.I. mainly through the verb *potere* and its derivatives (*impossibile*, *possibile*):

(2) Ma quando la femina è pregna, e adimandasse a Dio che mettesse l'anima in quel corpo, questo è *possibile*, e *puossi* fare, e puòssene pregare Idio e la Vergine Maria ["But when the woman is pregnant, and asked God to place the soul in that body, this *is possible* and *can be done*, and God can be prayed for that and Virgin Mary"] (Giordano da Pisa, *Quaresimale fiorentino* [1305-1306]);

(3) E sì come il vecchio, il quale non à senno né intendimento, non die essere signore, così il garzone, il quale à senno e intendimento e vuole usare ragione, *può essere* signore e governare altrui ["And since the old man, who has neither sense nor forethought, must not be Lord, so the young man, who has sense and forethought and wants to use the reason, *can be* Lord and govern the others"] (*Reggimento de' principi* [1288]);

(4) Or questa paraula *potrebbe* avere tre mali intendimenti, ma non si de' intendere segondo quelli ["Now this parable *could* have three misunderstandings, but it must not be interpreted acconding to them"] (Giordano da Pisa, *Sul Terzo capitolo del Genesi* [1302]);

(5) Comacci si è in India, da la quale contrada *si può* vedere alcuna cosa della tramontana ["Comacci is in India, Country from which *one can* see something from the North"] (*Milione* [1310]);

(6) e l'uomo *può* bene udire, e vedere, e odorare le cose che sono da longa di lui, ma elli non *può* gustare, né toccare, né tastare, se non le cose che sono congiunte a lui. ["And the man *can* well hear, and see, and smell the things which are far from him, but he *cannot* taste, nor touch, nor feel but the things *which are* close to him"] (*Reggimento de' principi* [1288]);

(7) Onde ogne omo ch'è in peccato *è impossibile* che sia savio: matto è, e ha perduto il senno. ["Thus any man in sin *it is impossible* he is wise: crazy, he is, and he has lost sense"] (Giordano da Pisa, *Quaresimale fiorentino* [1305-1306]).

Examples (6) and (7) could ascribe also to a particular type of modality: alethic, i.e. expressing something possible, impossible or necessary in a logic or metaphysic perspective. Even if, in ordinary language, the enunciations expressing such a modality are not many, the enunciation in (6) will always be true, as "taste" and "touch" are the senses manifested only through physical contact: it is a judgment not depending on the subjectivity of the speaker. In (7) instead religious and metaphysical believing are involved since they concern transcendental truths. It has not grammaticalized yet *possibilmente* (lit. "if it possible"), which occurs with other senses like "in any way":

(8) L'uomo fece loro, e colui a cui fu prestata la vita. Nullo uomo potrà *possibilmente* componere Iddio simile a sè ["The man made them, and those to whom life was lent. No man will *possibly* [= be able to] compose God similar to him"] (*La Bibbia volgare* [1500]).

Contrary to what happens with Spanish equivalent *posiblemente* the Italian adverb does not assume an epistemic meaning ("possibly"), but it is strongly anchored to the essentially dynamic one. Modern examples as the following one are found only in not fully standard contexts and it is not excluded the influence of English *possibly*;[iv] while, as we will see over in (2) the adjective *possibile* already assumes an epistemic function. In accordance with what recently said, we talk of dynamic modality when in the enunciation appears a conditional construction that indeed determines the "circumstance" in which something can happen or not; in such an event in the apodosis appear different modal markers, i.e. verbs (*potere*), adverbs (*necessariamente*) or the phrase *è mestieri che* "it is necessary that" (dal fr. ant. *estre mestier*), no longer used in modern Italian:

(9) Neuno *può* essere grazioso se non dispregia quello che fa impazzare i popolarii ["Nobody *can* be refined unless despising what the commoners adore"] (*Fiori e vita di filosafi e d'altri savi e d'imperadori* [1275]);

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(10) Adunque sanza gramatica [= se non ci fosse la grammatica] non *potrebbe* alcuno bene dire né bene dittare ["So whitout grammar [= if there was no grammar] nobody *could* well speak nor write"] (B. Latini *Rettorica* [1261]);

(11) e così se fosse rationale *necessariamente* siria corporale e materiale ["and so if it were rational *necessarily* it would be corporal and material"] (*«Questioni filosofiche» in volgare mediano* [1298]);

(12) e questo potarea èssare emperciò che li savi ponono che 'l capo del cancro se move enverso settentrione e enverso lo mezzodie, e *è mestieri che* 'l capo del capricorno per oposito lo seguisca. ["and this could be because the wise men state that the head of the Cancer moves towards the North and towards the south and it is necessary that the head of the Capricorn in opposition follows it"] (Restoro *Composizione del mondo* [1282]).

Nevertheless when speaking of dynamic modality we traditionally refer also to the attribution of a capability of the speaker participating to the action expressed by the main verb of the proposition (Nuyts, 2006: 3). Such form of modality is expressed with the verbs *potere* and *sapere*:

(13) elli *sa* convenevolmente istare in tutti gli stati che li possono avvenire ["he can [lit. *knows how to*] conveniently stay in all the conditions which can happen to him"] *Reggimento de' principi* [1288]);

(14) Niuno peccato di niuno uomo *può* venire altrui; ma l'uno *può* peccare per l'altro; e simigliantemente può venire da figliuolo a padre, *egli può* gastigare e non lo gastiga ["No sin of no man can come from others; but one can sin for the other; and in the same way can come from father to son, *he can* punish him and he does not punish him"] (*Il Libro di Sidrach* [1383]).

A particular type of dynamic modality we have in the following passages, where the subject of the action is the same who is speaking:

(15) Lois el pregò molto ch'onor fesse a Guilielmo e al suo lignaggio, e Tebaldo ridendo ei rispuse: «Eo el *debbo* fare ch'ei so· mmiei parenti» ["Lois much prayed that he paid honor to Guilielmo and his descent, and Tebaldo laughing answered: «I *must* do it because they are relatives of mine»"] (*Conti di antichi cavalieri* [1300]).

In a certain way these examples would contradict the no-subjectivity principle we said to be at the basis of the dynamic modality: this is not properly true, as the will or obligation to carry out a certain action are determined by external circumstances (Nuyts, 2006).

3. Epistemic modality

Traditionally considered a "proposition-oriented" modality, it expresses the degree of probability of the propositional content of an enunciation or "the evaluation of the chances that a certain hypothetical state of affairs under consideration (or some aspect of it) will occur, is occurring or has occurred in a possible world" (Nuyts, 2001: 21). In O.I. this kind of modality is expressed mainly via modal verbs (*potere*, and partially *dovere*, mostly conditional), epistemic future and parenthetic (or epistemic)[v] adverbs *forse* and *certo*. It must be pointed out that it is not always possible to set a clear distinction between epistemic and evidential modality, so described by Palmer (2001: 8):

> *The essential difference between these two types is [...] that with epistemic modality speakers express their judgments about the factual status of the proposition, whereas with evidential modality they indicate the evidence they have for its factual status.*

Nevertheless I will further discuss evidentiality in a specific paraghrap.[vi]
Let us start with the expression of certainty. O.I., generally considered more ritualized, expresses epistemic modality more frequently than Modern Italian via a propositional attitude verb that designates the act of a speaker who undertakes the expression of a content s/he knows/believes to be true. So, as in M.I., also in O.I. a not full certainty is expressed via epistemic verbs like *credere* and *pensare* (roughly "to think"):

(16) Disse lo leone: Io *credo* che tu menti, e inperciò se tu dici vero, dimi quanti die stetisti quie. ["Said the lion: I *think* you lie, and so if you say the truth, tell me howw many days you stayed here"] (*Bestiario toscano* [1300]);

(17) Ma e voi questo ordine avete passato, la qual cosa *penso* ch'abiate fatta perché credeste ch'io fosse molto corrente a dar quel ch'adomandate, o perché non siete savio nell'arte d'amore. ["And you this order have passed, thing I *think* you did

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because you believed I was very prompt to give what you ask, or because you are not expert in the art of love"] (*De Amore di Andrea Cappellano volgarizzato [*1310]).

Here the presence of the epistemic verb helps mostly to mitigate the strength of the statement; in O.I. the verb *credere* often takes indicative, as in (16), to testimony a reduced degree of uncertainty. In (17) the epistemic verb has a hedging function: it mitigates the tone of the statement, does not stress a degree of uncertainty. The fact that in O.I. the verb *credere* often takes indicative could be considered the proof that this verb, as in M.I., mostly has a role of pragmatic *hedge* and does not manifest a not full certainty on a determined set of things. Indeed, uncertainty and doubt are mostly expressed with the negative form of *sapere* ("to know") and with *dubitare* ("to doubt"):

> (18) Io *non so* se voi vi conosceste Talano d'Imolese, uomo assai onorevole. ["*I do not know* whether you knew Talano d'Imolese, a very honorable man"] (Boccaccio *Decameron* [1370]);

> (19) Doni so bene che a questo non t'hanno tratta; ma io *dubito* che l'animo tuo, il quale solea essere grandissimo, sia impicciolito. ["I know well that were not gifts to lead you to this; but *I doubt* that your fortitude, which used to be great, has diminished"] (Boccaccio *Filocolo* [1338]).

But it is appropriate to go back to verb *credere*, which, in the first person of the present tense, already in O.I. can act as a simple epistemic marker without having a governing role. In the following passage the verb appears with a clear parenthetic function that the modern editor of the text stresses using commas:

> (20) Io mi levai, *credo*, più di cento volte già da sedere, correndo alla finestra quasi d'altro sollecita, in giù e 'n su rimirando, avendo prima a me medesima *pensando* scioccamente fatto *credere*: «Egli è *possibile* che Panfilo ora venuto ti venga a vedere». ["I stood, *I believe*, more than a hundred times from sitting, running to the window almost alert of else, looking down and up, having first *thinking* to myself foolishly *made believe* «It is *possible* that Panfilo right now arrived comes to see you»"] (Boccaccio *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta* [1334]).

The first person of the verb *credere* in free position and, then, syntactically independent, prove how these forms already in O.I. have assumed a lexical

autonomy as to be considered epistemic indicators in all respects. Moreover, (20) is particularly interesting stylistically: around the modalized sentence a series of epistemic expressions (*pensando*, *credere*, *egli è possibile*) are gathered, which prove how th first person narrator reveals the degree of uncertainty.

The expression of epistemic modality, which in O.I. manifests above all through a syntactic construction of the kind just seen, is rarely expressed via modal verbs, which are mostly oriented to the deontic modality or in case to the dynamic modality, as seen with the examples in § 2. This does not mean that modal verbs with epistemic value are not recorded but they are scarcely attested; in the following passage we have a *dovere* (indicative mood) and a *potere* (conditional mood):

> (21) Multo ci è da pensare quando è papa francesco, e molto *de' essere* amico del re Carlo, e *potrebbe essere* troppo grande danno. ["Much there is to think when the pope is French, and much *he must be* friend of king Charles, and *it could be* a too great damage"] (*Leggenda di Messer Gianni di Procida* [1298]).

It is not possible to put forward the hypothesis that such a polysemy is somehow Latin heritage.[vii] Still it must be noted that modal markers fall in a not properly epistemic but inferential context; then it will be more correct to attribute them to the domain of evidentiality. Moreover, conditional mood is in any case the mood dedicated to the representation of the different degrees of factuality of an event; but apart from the cases in which such a form appears in the apodosis of a conditional construction, where then the situation itself is bound to determined circumstances, we do not have many records of a conditional expressing uncertainty on events coincident with the moment of the enunciation. In the following passage, we are in a context oriented to the future and the not full certainty is expressed by *forse* and by the locution *per avventura*:

> (22) Ma non per tanto a tentare alcuna altra via *forse* non *sarebbe* reo, e per avventura ci *verrebbe forse* il nostro intendimento compiuto. ["But not so much in trying any other way he *maybe would not be* guilty, and by chance our intention would *maybe come* to us accomplished"] (Boccaccio *Filocolo* [1338]).

As to other verbal forms, already in O.I. one gets epistemic/inferential hints in the use of future, mostly if it has the compound form (Squartini, 2010: 539):

(23) e ancora di ciò *avrete saputo* e ragionato con Bindo Squarcia e co· lLapo Chiari quando giunsero costà, onde in ciò non fa mistiere più di sscrivere. ["and more of this *you must have known* and discussed with Bindo Squarcia and with Lapo Chiari when they arrived there, then about this there is no more reason to write"] (*Lettera di Consiglio de' Cerchi* [1291]).

In O.I. the expression of epistemic modality privileges lexical rather than morphological means (as indeed the use of conditional); it is not rarely found the structure "*essere* + possibile", already seen in (20). In O.I. we do not have "sentence modal adverbs" (Ricca, 2010) but *certo* and *forse*:

(24) Sire – disse Ascalion, – io imagino che sia alcuna donna, la quale *forse* era moglie d'alcuno del morto popolo, e così mi pare avere inteso da' compagni, e similmente la sua favella, la quale io intendo bene, il manifesta. ["Sir – said Ascalion – I imagine that [there] is a woman, who *maybe* was the wife of someone of the dead peole, a so I think I have understood from the mates, and similarly her speaking, which I well understand, shows that"] (Boccaccio *Filocolo* [1338]);

(25) Ma, *certo*, amore mi conducerà a simigliante effetto, e come io ti sono stato cagione di morte, così *mi credo* ti sarò compagno. ["But, *surely*, love will drive me to similar effect, and as I have been reaosn of death to you, so *I believe* I will be your mate"] (ivi).

In (24) we note a crowding of epistemic markers: before the adverb *forse* we have indeed the verb *imagino* (already at that time having epistemic value) then the verbs *mi pare* and *manifesta* (this one more properly to be intended as an evidential marker) follow (see § 4). But it must be added that only through the linguistic context the modal values of these markers we analyze here become clear. The *certo* adverb itself (as in 25), frequent in O.I., in addition to the function of modal adverb has the one of discourse operator: it is a connective which stress the link between two textual sequences.

Also other adverbial locutions seem to have as a *scope* the whole sentence:

(26) Ascalion cominciò così a dire: – *Sanza dubbio* niuna cosa è tanto da Florio amata quanto Biancifiore. ["Ascalion started saying so: – *Without doubt* nothing is by Florio so loved as Biancifiore"] (Boccaccio *Filocolo* [1338]).

The adverb *certamente* seems instead to have a specifically modalizing function only when it precedes the apodosis in a counterfactual conditional sentence:

(27) e se non fosse per la tema d'Uguiccione, *certamente* la parte del re Ruberto n'arebbono cacciata fuori della città. ["and if it were not for the fear of Uguiccione, *surely* the part of King Ruberto they would have banished out of the city"] (G. Villani, *Cronica* [1348]).

In O.I. there is no distinction between a "high probability level" (= "probably") and a "general non-certainty level" (= "perhaps"), but the adverb *probabil(e)mente*, albeit rarely, is effectively attested:

(28) Santo Tommaso descrive, capitolo vigesimo primo, *quarti libri*, questione prima, e dice, che del luo[go] di Purgatorio non si truova alcuna cosa espressamente determinata nella Scrittura, nè ragioni efficaci si possono a questo inducere; ma *probabilemente*, e *secondo che suona* per li detti de' Santi, e per revelazioni fatte a molti, il luogo di Purgatorio è doppio. ["Saint Thomas describes, Chapter 21st, *quarti libri*, questio prima, and says that on Purgatory there is nothing expressly determined in the sacred writings, nor effective reasons can to this be inferred; but *probably*, and *according to what sounds* from the sayings od the Saints, and revelations made to many, the place of Purgatory is double'] (*Ottimo Commento della Commedia t. II Purgatorio* [1334]).

In such a context it would be more correct to talk of evidentiality (see § 4), as it also suggests the proximity of the expression *secondo che suona* (lit "according to what sounds"). In any case the episodic recording of this adverb does not prove an actual passage from the *manner* meaning ("in a provable manner") to the *modal* ("presumably") one; moreover, it is really hard to find records of *probabilmente* with a certain epistemic value in texts earlier than the XVIII century (Ricca, 2008).

4. Evidentiality

The evidential markers are used by the speaker to show the "evidence" s/he has available to assert the truth of a proposition. In other words, belong to the domain of evidentiality all the expressions showing the origin, the source, of the information given in the utterance. Some scholars do not distinguish between epistemic modality and evidentiality and consider the first included in the latter (or *viceversa*); in fact an epistemic judgment can be based on an *evidence* and an utterance with evidential elements always shows the expression of a certain degree of probability.[viii]

According to the origin of the information we can have three different types of evidentiality: *experiential*, *inferential*, *reported*.[ix] The first one manifests when an event is directly perceived through the senses. This kind is not specifically expressed with linguistic markers both in O.I. and in Modern Italian, but mainly through the first person of verbs like *vedere* "*io vedo*" or *sentire* "*io sento*". "Inferential" evidentiality, instead, is the one expressing an information indirectly inferred on the basis of another information (and not a directly perceived fact) and can be expressed with the verb *sembrare* "to seem" (29) or *dovere* (30), here used in the conditional mood in order to stress, maybe, the not full certainty about the result of the reasoning process:

> (29) Tutto altrementi li convenia di fare a così alto re com'egli è: perciò che di stranio paese semo, ci doveva egli honorare; ma egli mi *sembra* che di ciò fare non *à* elli talento. ["All different it was convenient doing to such a high King he is: because of a strange Country we are, he had to honor us, but *it seems* to me that of doing this he *has* no inclination"] (Binduccio dello Scelto *La storia di Troia* [1322]).

> (30) Dilli che non mucci, domandalo per qual colpa è dannato in questo luogo, ch'io vidi già uomo di sangue e di corrucci, sicché *dovrebbe essere* tra' violenti. ["Tell him not to escape, ask him for what guilt he is damned in this place, because I already saw man of blood and worries, so *he should be* among the brutes"] (Francesco di Bartolo da Buti *Commento all'Inferno* [1395]).

Evidential markers appear with a certain frequency in argumentative contexts where we have reasoning leading to conclusions, that is when we deal with inferences having more or less a logic validity:

(31) Ancora, ciascuna femmina, non solamente giovane, ma vecchia, e più che vecchia, con sommo istudio lavora di volersi fare e mostrare bella. Per la qual cosa *manifestamente appare* che femmina non *potrebbe* pienamente avere buoni costumi. ["Furthermore, each woman, not only young, but old, and more than old, with maximum application works to make herself and show beautiful. For that reason openly appears that woman *could not* fully have good mores"] (*Trattato d'amore di Andrea Capellano volgarizzato* [1372]).

The semantics of the verb *apparire* is strenghtned by the presence of the adverb *manifestamente* which nevertheless acts as modifier of the predicate and does not "modalize" the propositional content of the enunciation; such a modalization is given by the presence of the conditional in the subordinate clause (*potrebbe*), even if it is not possible to state whether the epistemic dimension is affecting the all utterance. A cognate locution, "*manifesto è che/è manifesto che*" instead, represents a particular evidential marker: indeed it does not occur in contexts in which one has the perception or the direct experience of an event, but it is useful in stressing the truth of a proposition at the end of a reasoning.

Finally, reported evidentiality, for intrinsic reasons, occurs mostly in chronicles, is achieved in O.I. through various lexical means:

(32) E cierto questa principalità già ddetta, del vescovo e della chiesa de' romani rappellata per aventura per alquni de' succiessori di Ghostantino, ristabolito lo 'nperadore Focas alla chiesa di su ddetta, siccome della cronicie di Martino de' vescovi di Roma e inperadori *evidentemente appare*, ov'è letto intra ll'altre cose: «Bonifazio iiij di natività di Maser». ["And surely this superiority already mentioned, of the bishop and the church of the romans recalled by chance by some of the successors of Constantine, replaced the Emperor Focas to the above mentioned church, as of the chronicles of Martin of the bishops of Rome and Emperors *evidently appears*, where it is read among other things: «Boniface iv of nativity of Maser»"] (*Il Libro del difenditore della pace e tranquillità volgarizzato* [1363]);

(33) e trassono a casa Giano de la Bella loro caporale; e elli, *si dice*, gli mandò col suo fratello al palagio de' priori a seguire il gonfaloniere della giustizia. ["and brought home Giano de la Bella their corporal: and he, *they say*, send them with his brother to the Palace of Priori to follow the gonfalonier of justice"] (G. Villani, *Cronica* [1348]).

(34) Ora *appare che* quando lo re Carlo ricevette la corono in Roma da papa Urbano, promettesse al Papa per lo nipote del Papa ufici e Terre, le quali poi avuto lo reame, non parve che lo re Carlo gli osservasse la promessa. ["It appears that when King Charles received the crown in Rome by pope Urbanus, he promised the Pope for the nephew of the Pope offices and lands, which had then the realm, it did not seem that King Charles honored to him the promise"] (Marchionne di Coppo Stefani *Cronaca fiorentina* [1385]);

(35) E per questa cagione i' *ho sentito* che 'l detto Giache trattava e tenea certe mene con alcuna persona che non v'ama. ["And for ths reason *I heard* that the mentioned Giache dealt and held some traffics with some person who does not love you"] (*Lettera di Giachino a Baldo Fini e fratelli in Firenze* [1313]);

(36) E *forse* l'autore piglia *secondo che suona la fama*, ch'elli [Nembrot] desiderasse con quella torre montare in cielo. ["And maybe the author *holds according to how fame sounds*, that he [Nimrod] desired with that tower to climb in heaven"] (Francesco di Bartolo da Buti *Commento all'Inferno*[1395]);

(37) Et *certo* Ulixes fue, *secondo che contano le storie*, il più savio uomo de' Greci e 'l milior parliere. ["And surely Ulysses was, *according to what tales narrate*, the wisest man of the Greeks and the best speaker"] (B. Latini *Rettorica* [1261]).

In (36) the textual sequence is started by the epistemic adverb *forse*, while in (32) to the innate evidentiality of the verb *apparire* is added the adverb *evidentemente* "evidently", having however not a modalizing but evaluative value "with evidence". The same evidential function is played by *verisimilmente* "likely":

(38) E per certo se non fosse suto la detta mortalità e' detti accidenti, egli era ancora sì forte e atante, e sì buono mangiatore, e sì fresco e sì sano, che *verisimilemente dovrebbe essere* vivuto uno grande tempo. ["And surely had he not been the mentioned mortality and the mentioned misfortunes, he was still so strong and robust and such a good eater, and so fresh and so healthy, that *most likely he should have lived* a long time"] (Velluti, *Cronica domestica* [1370]);

(39) Rispondendo a le lectere vostre, abbiamo sollicitato l'accordo tra cotesto Comune et messer Ricciardo sança perdere tempo: et per Sandro, il quale domane parte di qua, informato di nostra intentione, vi sarà raportato. Et, per quello che crediamo, a questi facti abbiamo dato ordine che *verisimilemente dovrà piacere* a' Pistolesi.

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["'Answering your letters, we have urged the agreement between this Comune and Sir Ricciardo without wasting time: and as to Sandro, who tomorrow departs from here, informed of our intention, you will be reported. And, for what we believe, to these facts we have given order *which will most likely please* the Pistolesi family' (*Lettere e istruzioni della prima metà del secolo XIV* [1350]).

It must be remembered that in (32) and in (38)-(39) the adverbs *evidentemente* and *verisimilmente* do not act as evidential, but they cooperate in making evidentiality inner to the semantics of the verb *apparire* either the future and/or conditional of the modal verb *dovere* "must". Ricca (2010: 733) stresses the fact that in O.I. we do not find clear examples of adverbs in *-mente* with epistemic or evidential value: it is probable that the proximity, in context, to verbs like *sembrare* or *parere/apparire* has then led them to a later reanalysis.[x] Nevertheless, O.I. allowed the possibility to use (epistemic-)evidential adjectives like *probabile*:

(40) *verisimile* e *probabile* cosa è, che sia alcuna somma e perfetta ragione, la qual regga e governi il corpo universo di tutta la macchina mondiale. ["*credible* and *probable* thing is, that there is some maximum and perfect reason, which hold and governs the universe body of the whole world machine"] (Cavalca *La esposizione del simbolo degli Apostoli* [1342]).

5. Deontic modality

This kind of modality, connected with the notion of duty, concerns what is "possible", "necessary", "permitted", "compulsory", given a system of laws or moral principles; more in general it shows the degree of moral desiderability of the condition of things expressed in the enunciation. In O.I., deontic modality is carried out mostly through the use of directive performative verbs like *ammonire* and *imporre*:

(41) All'ultimo *v'ammonisco* di questo, che quando alcuna visione vi apparisce, arditamente addimandiate chi sia e onde e a che sia venuto, e incontanente, se sia buona cosa, sentirete una grande sicurtade e consolazione. ["Finally *I urge you* this, that when some vision appears to you, bravely you ask who he is and from where and for what he has come, and immediately, if it is a good thing, you will feel great confidence and consolation"] (Cavalca *Vite di eremiti* [1330]);

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(42) Questo *t'impongo* che ttu facce, e questa è la penitenzia ch'io t'impongo, che ttu ponghi mente e guardi bene che ttu non pecchi più, acciò che non ti intervenga peggio. ["This *I impose you* to do, and this is the penitence I impose you, that you have in mind and consider not to sin anymore, so not to happen to you worse] (Giordano da Pisa, *Quaresimale fiorentino* [1305-1306]).

A directive act can also be a prohibition or a permission; O.I. does not seem to have a performative use of *proibire*; permission, instead, was conveyed explicitly via the verbs *concedere* (43) and *permettere* (44):

(43) Io *vi concedo*, che voi andiate a chiedere mercede al senato, ed egli riceverà le vostre preghiere, come a lui parrà. ["I grant you, that you go and ask mercy to the senate, and it will receive your prayers, as it will like it"] (*Deca prima di Tito Livio volgarizzata* [1350]);

(44) *Io permetto* che eglino stiano di fuore, ma non che entrino dentro. ["*I allow* them to stay out, but not to enter inside"] (Caterina da Siena *Libro della divina dottrina* [1378]).

We must talk of deontic modality also in those cases in which the order comes from a king or a leader, as the one who says the enunciation has the moral responsibility of it:

(45) Sengnori, io sì *vi comando* che voi sì vi dobiate tornare ali vostri paviglioni e dobiate tutti prendere l'arme e montare a ccavallo. ["Gentlemen, I *so command you* that you so must come back to your pavilions and must all take weapons and ride"] (*Tristano Riccardiano* [1300]).

The verb *ordinare* instead seems to make explicit only a conventional illocutory act, i.e. it never appears in interactional contexts, but only in statutes and constituions:

(46) Unde, nel nome del nostro Segnore Iesu Christo, *ordiniamo* che tutti quelli dela Compagnia si confessino il mese una volta ["Then, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *we order* that all those of the Company confess once a month"] (*Capitoli della Compagnia di San Gilio* [1248]).

In Medieval statutes the double normative and directive nature of the juridical act is almost always expressed through what we can define a binary performative or the

kind *statuiamo e ordiniamo*, "we decree and order"; indeed, we find even three or more performatives in sequence:

> (47) Ancho *dicemo*, *stantiamo* e *ordenamo* che onni persona debbia venire ala compania ella festa de Santo Antonio. ["Also we *say*, *decree* and *order* that every person must come to the company in the feast of Saint Anthony"] (*Capitoli Disciplinati di Sant'Antonio* [1366]).

A recurring feature is the presence of several performative formulas, all synonyms:

> (48) Anche *ammoniamo e ordiniamo* che se alcuno di questa Compagnia morisse, sia tenuto di lasciare per la sua anima ala Compangnia iij libbre di candelotti. ["Also *we urge and order* that if any of this Company died, he is obliged to leave for his soul to the Company iij pounds of candles"] (*Capitoli della Compagnia di San Gilio* [1248]).

As I considered mainly normative texts, we can say that prescription can be an obligation, a permission, and a prohibition. According to the prescriptive status we have a different choice of the verb; as to the choice of the mood, the verb is subjunctive present (with jussive value, deontic then), often in the form "modal verb + infinitive":

I. Obligation (*dovere* "must"):

> (49) Et se essi, a le mani de li quali deverranno, sanno scrivere, overo alcuno di lor sa, neuno notaio *debiano* seco *avere.* ["And if they, to the hands of which they must, can write, or some of them can, no notary *they must have* along"] (*Costituto del comune di Siena volgarizzato* [1310]).

II. Permission (potere "can", essere lecito "be licit"):

> (50) Et se contra ciò facessero, *sia licito* ad uno del consiglio ragunare il consiglio et sei buoni huomini dela Compagnia insiememente col frate, e privare questo cotale, osia questi cotali capitani, del loro officio. ["And if against that they acted, *it is licit* to one of the council to gather the council and six good men of the Company and the friar, and deprive this man, or those captains, or their office"] (*Capitoli della Compagnia di San Gilio* [1248]);

(51) Et se vorrà el signore mesurare o vero fare mesurare dal fante, o vero fanti, *possa* et *sia licito* a llui. ["And if he Lord wanted to measure or make the infantryman measure, or infantrymen, *may and be licit* to him"] (*Costituto del comune di Siena volgarizzato* [1310]).

III. Prohibition (non potere "cannot", essere vietato "be forbidden"):

(52) Et se non pagasse, *sia divietato* dell'arte in fine a tanto che pagasse. ["And shouldn't he pay, be him forbidden form the art until he pays"] (*Breve dell'arte della lana di Pisa* [1304]);

(53) Et se avenisse che missere lo capitano del Comune et del Popolo di Siena andasse nell'oste, overo cavalcata per lo Comune di Siena, overo ad altre parti, non possa essere a·llui ordinato overo conceduto magiore salario che di sopra *sia detto.* ["And should it happen that the captain of the Comune and the People of Siena went to the host, or ride throughout the Comune of Siena, or elsewhere, cannot him be ordered or granted more salary than above *it is said*"] (*Costituto del comune di Siena volgarizzato* [1310]).

As noticeable, in all these examples the modal occurs within a conditional construction. This does not mean that we have an overlapping of two modal categories, dynamic (a circumstance is presented) and deontic (it is stated what it is necessary to deploy in case such circumstance occurs), simultaneously expressed by the enunciation. As remembered by Von Fintel (2006: 26)

> *[…] it is a mistake to analyze such structures as involving two layered operators: a conditional construction embedding or embedded in a modal construction. Rather, the idea has been to say that in such sentences, the if-clause does not supply its own operator meaning but serves as a "restriction" on the modal base of the modal operator.*

Then, the modality expressed here is the deontic one: the conditional protasis has the only function to "restrict" among all the possible circumstances the one in which a precise juridical norm has validity. In any case, not necessarily a norm has a value of prescription; in case of "possibility" it is the semantics of the verb in the protasis that determines this situation, while the apodosis still has the verb in the subjunctive mood (which in normative contexts has often imperative meanings):

(54) Et queste cose *si facciano*, se *piacerà* a li omini de le dette contrade. ["And these things *shall be done*, if it please the men of those contradas"]

In the statutes the deontic modality is expressed by "*essere + da* + infinitive" (55) and "*avere + a* + infinitive" (56):

(55) Et nel detto consèllio proponere che *sia da fare*, di comprare grano per lo comune et di fare dogane di grano, o non. ["And in the mentioned council propose what it is to be done to buy wheat for the Comune and to make customs of wheat, or not"] (*Costituto del comune di Siena volgarizzato* [1310]);

(56) E per saramento el notaio de' consoli ogne mese riduca a memoria loro *quello che gli hanno a fare.* ["And upon oath the notary of the consuls each month reminds them *what they have to do*"] (*Statuto dell'Arte di Calimala* [1334]).

Nowadays, these periphrases are no longer present in standard Italian; this reflects the fact that, historically, markers expressing deontic modality tend to vanish.

6. Buletic modality

It concerns what is necessary or possible, considering the desire or will of the one who speaks the enunciation, and manifests mostly via the use of the performative of the verb *volere*; but also other verbs (*chiedere* "to ask", *clamare* 'to call', *domandare* "to ask", etc.):

(57) Io *voglio* che tu mi dichi cui figliuolo io fui. *["I want* you to tell me to whose son I am"] (*Novellino* [1300]).

These examples prove that it is not always clear the boundary between deontic and buletic modality (the latter is often considered within the first). In a old venetian *testamento*, last will and testament, personal will and moral obligation are tied:

(58) Item *voio et ordino* que la dita mia muier sia tenuta da far cantar messe per anima mia. ["Also I *want and order* that the mentioned wife of mine is compelled to make sing masses for my soul"] (*Testamento Marino da Canal* [1282]).

Already in O.I. will or desire could be expressed using the hedging function of the epistemic markers:

(59) E inpercioe sì *mi pare* che noi abiamo a rrimanere in questo diserto, inn uno bello luogo e dilettevole, lo quale uno barone di Cornovaglia lo fecie fare per una sua donna. ["And so *it seems to me* that we have to remain in this desert, in a nice place and pleasant, that a baron of Cornwall had done for a woman of his"] (*Tristano Riccardiano* [1300]).

One could speak of a counter-buletic modality in the cases where it is expressed the non-will to perform an act; we then have the conditional usage of the verb *potere*:

(60) Io *potrei* nominare assai principi, che diritta via lasciarono senza ragione, però che ira, o pietà gli ha presi senza ragione. Ma io voglio meglio parlare di ciò che i savi uomini anziani hanno fatto di questa. ["*I could* mention many princes, who left the right path without reason, as anger or pity has taken them without reason. But I better want to talk of what wise old men have done of it"] (B. Latini *Rettorica* [1261]).

Another form of buletic modality is the one which can be expressed also via commissive explicit performatives:

(61) vi *prometto* che io anderò al grande diserto a servire a Dio. ["I promise you that I will go to the grat desert to serve God"] (*Tavola ritonda* [1350]).

7. Teleological modality

Teleological modality concerns those actions which can (or it is necessary to) be performed in order to achieve a stated purpose: in such sense it represents a particular type of dynamic modality. The linguistic expressions of this modality are the same characterizing deontic modality and in particular the verb *dovere* or other expressions recalling the semantic area of "necessity":

(62) Non *vi déi ritenere* li dolori mondani, li quali affliggono l'anima e sono acqua salsa, che non fa pro', ma danno. Ma *devi tenere* buone acque, cioè l'acqua del dolore de' peccati. Quella è buona acqua *da tenere* nel giardino dell'anima tua. ["You

must not keep there the secular pains, who afflict the soul and are salty water, which makes no good but damage. But *you must keep* good waters, that is the water of the sorrow of the sins. That is good water *to keep* in the garden of your soul"] (Giordano da Pisa, *Prediche sul Secondo capitolo del Genesi* [1308]).

It shall be stressed that teleological modality undergoes the semantics of the so-called "anankastic conditionals"[xi] and manifests when one wants to give instructions or advice:

(63) E quello a che s'accorda la maggior parte della gente che sono nel consiglio, *debbe* essere fermo e stabile, e così *dee* scrivere il notaio, *se è mestieri* per meglio chiarire la bisogna. ["At on what agrees the majority of the people who are in the council, he must be firm and stable, and so must write the notary, *if it is necessary* to better clarify what needed"] (*Tesoro Volgarizzato* [1300]).

(64) se tu *vuogli essere* partefice di questo beneficio, o maleficio che sia, tu te ne *puoi andare* dritto nella camera, e là sanza parlare punto, entra nel letto, e fa' ragione d'essere me, ché quanto io, n' ho assai per istanotte. ["If you *want to be* part of this benefit, or disadvantage it may be, you *can go* straight to you room, and there without talking at all, enter the bed, and pretend you are me, because as to me, I have had enough for tonight"] (Sacchetti *Trecentonovelle* [1400]).

As noticeable, the apodosis is characterized by modal expressions conveying a "need", but also a possibility. To be ascribed, finally, to the teleological (not deontic) modality are those enunciations in which "weak" directive performatives appear:

(65) E però, carissima in Cristo, mi *vi raccomando* che voi preghiate Cristo per me misaro peccatore And yet, dearest in Christ, ["*I advise you* to pray Christ for me miserable sinner"] (Colombini, *Lettere* [1367]).

Here the authority of command is not present; the subjunctive sentence "che voi preghiate" governed by the performative verb expresses a content which is desirable for the gaining of a specific goal.

8. Conclusions

What I tried to provide with this short contribution is a description of the main means Old Italian had available to the expression of modality. In the light of the data here commented, it is possible to conclude that in O.I.: *a*) modality prefers the use of lexical means, in particular the use of propositional attitude verbs (epistemic modality) and performative formulas (deontic modality); *b*) conditional mood and compound future can express epistemic modality (even if the range of functions is much reduced compared to present situation); *c*) it is strongly diminished the number of adverbs expressing epistemic modality (basically, *forse* and *certo* only) and there are no clear evidences that O.I. had developed the tripartite system of the certainty scale ('certainly', 'possibly', 'perhaps'); *d*) it is not possible to state with absolute certainty, given the so far very rare records, that the modal verbs *potere* and *dovere* have developed, in the ancient phase of Italian, full epistemic-evidential values;[xii] *e*) the polysemy of the markers of modality is, despite that far in time, already remarkable.

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[i] It is not possible here to consider all the various theories, some of them in strong opposition, ensued in the years; for a short overview see Narrog (2012) and Cornillie/Pietrandrea (2012), who also propose a new textual and interactional account of modality. See Traugott (2006) for the study of modality from an historical perspective.

[ii] In the quoted examples, I will mention only the author (when not anonymous works) and the title of the work with no other bibliographical references as they are easily obtainable by the archive itself.

[iii] In the examples quoted, I will mention only the author (when not anonymous works), the title and the presumptive of the work with no other bibliographical references as they are easily obtainable by the archive itself.

[iv] Here a record obtained via Google: « falle fare una visita, *possibilmente* sta male...» 'tell her to go to the doctor, *possibly* she is ill'.

[v] On the expression of epistemic modality in Italian see in particular Pietrandrea (2005) and Rocci (2005). For O.I. see Squartini (2010: 583ff).

[vi] Nuyts (2006: 11): «That the relation between evidentiality and epistemic modality should be problematic is not surprising: there is a logical connection between them in the sense that epistemic judgments are conceptually based on evidence, and evidentials refer to types of the latter». For studies on evidentiality in Italian, see, among the others, Squartini (2001, 2004, 2008).

[vii] Magni (2010: 215) gives to *potest* an epistemic value*: non esse seruos peior hoc quisquam potest / nec magis uersutus nec quo ab caues aegrius* 'a more rascally servant than this one of mine cannot be found, or a more wily one, or one harder to guard against' (Plaut *Asin* 118-119, English Translation by Magni). Nevertheless this interpretation, given the co-textual information, does not seem possible.

[viii] On this topic see, among the others Kronning (2003) who stresses the fact that these markers are inherently bi-categorial.

[ix] This tripartition is roughly inspired to the schema provided by Willet (1988).

[x] See also Ricca (2008) for a wide overview on the diachrony of some epistemic and evidential adverbs in Italian.

[xi] See Stechow / Krasikova / Penka (2006). For the anakastic *dovere* : Kronning (1996).
[xii] In English, the first record of *must* with clear epistemic value appears only in the XVII Century (Traugott 1989: 42).