

Numerals in French language represent very rich and to a large extent complicated grammatical system. This thesis focuses on the ordinal numerals which represent a very interesting subject of research, especially in terms of their historical development. As a preface to this problematic, we will, at first, generally characterize numerals in contemporary French normative grammar, explain their classification and then further focus on the cardinals and ordinals that are closely related from a diachronic point of view. This BA thesis aims to explain the development and functioning of ordinal numbers in French from their Latin origins to the present and also their specifics. Using the Frantext, we will illustrate the competition between different forms of ordinal numbers as well as their competition with the cardinals. Numeral “the second” with its two forms: *second* and *deuxième*, represents a specific case in this category. Its usage requires certain rules, which are however not always respected. By the means of a questionnaire designed for native speakers, we will try to analyze this phenomenon and consider whether the ordinals represent a category in decline.