Apparant variation in non-restrictive relative clauses in the Middle Low German dialects

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This paper focuses on non-restrictive relative clauses (NRRCs) with a first or second person head in the Middle Low German (MLG) dialects. In these clauses, agreement needs to be established between antecedent, relative pronoun and finite verb in the relative clause. An extensive corpus study shows that MLG has two alternating options: In some cases a resumptive pronoun is added in the relative clause (1), while in other cases there is a gap (2). Both types display $1^{st}/2^{nd}$-person agreement on the verb.

(1) meer warhen sal ick van dy vlein **de du allerwegen Jegenwordich byst**
    but where.to shall.1SG I from you flee REL you everywhere present are.2SG
    `But where will I flee from you, who are present everywhere'
    (*Ey(n) Jnnige clage to gode*, 1480)

(2) van dy solue(n) **de van allen dyngen bist een schepper vn(de) een regerer**
    by you REFL REL [   ] of all things are.2SG a creator and a ruler
    'by yourself, who are a creator and a ruler of all things'
    (*Dat myrren bundeken*, 1480)

Agreement with the relative pronoun, as is common in Present-day (High) German, seems to be impossible. This raises the question whether the clause-introducing *de* in MLG NRRCs, which always appears at the left periphery of the relative clause, is a relative pronoun at all, or a relative particle in C. Evidence from the Eastphalian dialects, which shows a clause-introducing *de* with an optional, alternating relative particle (*dar*/*de*) in C, leads us to believe that *de* is a relative pronoun in SpecCP which is maximally underspecified for relevant features (gender/number/person). We present how agreement in these clauses consequently gets established by a checking and matching chain, in which there is always local agreement with a (null) clitic clitised to C.