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Manuscript Transmission, Reception and Canon Formation: The Case of Chrétien de Troyes

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**David F. Hult**

*Manuscript Transmission, Reception  
and Canon Formation:  
The Case of Chrétien de Troyes*



University of California, Berkeley  
1998

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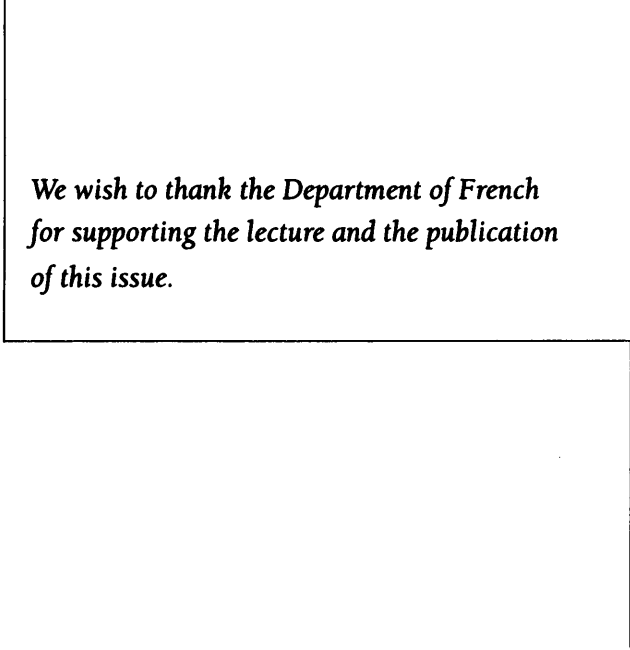
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## PREFACE

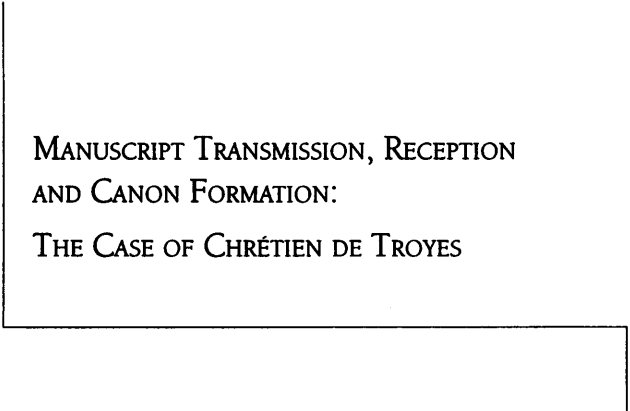
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MANUSCRIPT TRANSMISSION, RECEPTION  
AND CANON FORMATION:  
THE CASE OF CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES





As readers and interpreters of medieval texts, we don't often confront the multitude of issues stemming from the evolution in fictional modes or fashions, particularly in the earliest periods (for the French Middle Ages, the XII<sup>th</sup> century), regarding which documentation itself is fragmentary, information about audience and reception largely hypothetical, and contemporary interpretive speculation virtually non-existent. My general strategy involves an attempt to refocus an understanding of what is implied in and by the manuscript legacy of medieval works, not with a goal of simply discovering what a given scribe or scribes saw in these works but rather a more devious and admittedly self-serving one of disrupting the simplicity of that reception scheme so as to reinsert modern interpreters' understanding as a meaningful segment of a continuum rather than the belated or anachronistic gesture it is frequently accused of being. The case of Chrétien de Troyes is the case of a XII<sup>th</sup> century author about whose personal existence we know virtually nothing, but whose fictions were read and revered by succeeding generations for reasons that might very well have differed from those that were valid for his contemporary audience. How might XIII<sup>th</sup>-century reception have diverged from that of his contemporaries? Can our own modern understanding of Chretien—our own hermeneutic processes—shed some light on what might have taken place during the first generations of audiences that listened to, transcribed, or perhaps even read his romances of love and chivalry?

In saying that I believe it does, I am necessarily taking issue with a certain brand of medievalism that accords ultimate authority to what medieval readers articulated or *might have* articulated regarding a particular work. And this “might have” is important here, in view of the dearth of medieval glosses on non-religious works and what it suggests about the positioning of the modern critical voice. By thus deferring to the hypothetical interpreters of the past, such an approach imposes our passive submission before these authorities. Even if we place aside the perhaps obvious excesses of the Robertsonian school, which sought to explain vernacular fictions according to the writings of the Church Fathers,

more recent—and considerably more nuanced—critics have continued that tradition. I am thinking of an important recent book published by John Dagenais entitled *The Ethics of Reading in Manuscript Culture*,<sup>1</sup> which nominally follows in the path illustrated most fully in Sylvia Huot's books devoted to the exegesis of the manuscript context of medieval courtly fictions.<sup>2</sup> Dagenais, however, has a different agenda: He rejects both traditional philology (for its unwavering preoccupation with authorial intention as a yardstick for interpretation) and the so-called "new" philology (for its uninformed solipsism) in favor of what he considers a more properly medieval view, one which would emphasize the text's "utility" as a spur to what he terms a "system of values," issuing in the ethical interpretation referred to in his title. In this, Dagenais closely follows the work of Judson Boyce Allen, for whom "Historical scholarship does not exist to permit modern readers to imitate medieval ones, but rather to achieve in relation to them a profitably analogical reading."<sup>3</sup>

To be sure, Dagenais' careful readings of the manuscript traces of the *Libro de Buen Amor* uncover an important ethical facet of specific late medieval readings (late XIV<sup>th</sup> and early XV<sup>th</sup> century) of a text written in the first half of the XIV<sup>th</sup> century. And yet what seems to be missing in such an analysis is a sense of the complex hermeneutic situation that associates medieval author, scribal transmitter, and modern interpreter in a continually moving dynamic. To use Hans Robert Jauss's important concept of the "horizon of expectations",<sup>4</sup> we must admit that with each manuscript exemplar (and each reading thereof) we have a fusion of at least three such horizons, involving the author's original (and perhaps unretrievable) intention, the scribal incorporation/interpretation, and the modern reader's own competence, lacking which the manuscript would be nothing but a voiceless artifact. The minute we make a medieval reading *the* medieval reading, as does Dagenais, we have significantly limited the scope of our enquiry and eliminated from our consideration such issues as the variety of medieval audiences or the differing appeal of various works to a modern audience, their diverse fortunes on undergraduate course cur-



ricula, Ph.D. reading lists, or in publication ventures. The reduction of an author's "meaning" to the understanding of a particular reader or set of readers amounts to the substitution of the historical study of reception for the critical work of interpretation. This is not to say that such reception is not important or useful in formulating an interpretation—it is indeed crucial—but that we must be able to show how it represents a response, how it enters into dialogue with the original work. Inasmuch as interpretation is never exhaustive, never closed—an assessment which, curiously, Dagenais endorses—varieties of reception should be understood as symptoms, not only of what a work or its author might have been trying to express, but also of the ways texts can be misinterpreted, either through negligence, faulty apparatus, or even design. But of course the very formulation of *misinterpretation* bears a dialectical relationship to what we may consider a correct one, as, in the work of the textual editor, the discrimination between an authorial original and a scribal alteration.<sup>5</sup>

The hermeneutic impasse, according to which *no* interpretive stance can escape its own situatedness, its own predetermined and predetermining historical moment, is summarized by Tzvetan Todorov as follows:<sup>6</sup>

Aucune interprétation n'est libre de présupposés idéologiques, et aucune n'est arbitraire dans ses opérations. La différence demeure cependant dans la distribution de la partie éclairée et de la partie obscure de l'activité.

[No interpretation is exempt from ideological presuppositions, and none is arbitrary in its operations. The difference, however, resides in the balance between the portion of the activity that is illuminated and the portion that is kept in the dark.]

For our purposes today, I am less interested in discussing Todorov's ideological preconditioning, which understandably maintains the highest profile in hermeneutic investigations, than the other side of the hermeneutic problem, what Todorov refers to when he uses the term interpretive "operations." I take these operations to include not only interpretive method *per se* but also the

impress of the literary institution itself: the canons of literary history, the singling out of great or important authors—namely the choice of *what* to interpret—as well as the very decision, itself historically and institutionally grounded, *to* interpret. What this means is that while interpretation needs to take stock of its own remove from the historical contexts of the works it seeks to elucidate, it must also assess its own received judgments of canonicity by attending to various works' changing status and fortune in the intervening period, uncovering, to use Fredric Jameson's felicitous expression, the "sedimented layers of previous interpretations."<sup>7</sup> Jerome J. McGann, quite rightly in my opinion, shows how an insight of this sort necessarily coalesces the frequently disparate fields of literary interpretation, on the one hand, and bibliography or textual criticism, on the other:<sup>8</sup>

The interpretation of literary works, then, does take its ground in textual and bibliographical studies [...] because these studies are the only disciplines that can elucidate the complex network of people, materials, and events that have produced and that continue to produce the literary works history delivers into our hands. Current interpretations of literary works only acquire a critical edge of significance when they are grounded in an exegesis of texts and meanings generated in the past—in an exegesis of texts and meanings gained, and perhaps also lost, over time.

Although McGann's remarks are aimed at a post-Renaissance corpus (he is himself a scholar of XIX<sup>th</sup>-century British literature), they are, if anything, even more relevant to the study of medieval texts and their manuscript transmission: the material manifestations of these texts bear no direct contact with the author's hand, real or metaphorical, prior to the middle of the XIV<sup>th</sup> century, and the manuscripts themselves encode their own hermeneutic frame via the intermediary agency of the scribe.

Furthermore—and this is a point I would like particularly to emphasize—when McGann refers to "meanings gained, and perhaps also lost, over time," he is pinpointing an important disruptive aspect of reception that literary history, as a carefully scripted

narrative of succession and continuity, manages to register only with some difficulty. Which is to say that discontinuities tend to be reconceived as continuities within a larger master narrative. Revolution is inevitably recoded as evolution. As new publics are formed, it does happen that works are understood in new ways just as prior ways of understanding them (more or less authentic—who can say?) are either forgotten or suppressed. The humorously suggestive self-image that the XII<sup>th</sup> century might have had of its own intellectual progress—dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants, being themselves not so great in stature but managing to see a little bit further—would thus prove to be an idealizing but ultimately unsatisfactory metaphor for the way literary history works. This is why, I think, it has been so difficult for us to perceive what can only be called the mixed fortune of Chrétien's romances in the century following their composition.

You might readily ask what possible novelty might be found in the manuscript tradition of Chrétien de Troyes, one of the most closely scrutinized of all authors in the medieval French tradition. Most recently, a massive two-volume study—indeed, a lavishly produced summa—co-edited by Keith Busby, Alison Stones, Terry Nixon and Lori Walters, has set out to encompass all that we know about the manuscripts: elaborate new descriptions and datings, information on owners, and, perhaps most important, reproductions of every illuminated miniature found in the manuscripts as well as at least one page, if not several, from each manuscript, displaying scribal hands and decoration.<sup>9</sup> As I have been working on problems of interpretation in Chrétien's romances and more specifically on this seminal author's reception in the XIII<sup>th</sup> century and beyond, it has struck me that the point of view informing this volume's reverent attitude toward Chrétien is quite possibly at odds with what a critical reading of his manuscript legacy appears to suggest. Working from a conception of the literary canon that extends back at least as far as the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, the editors assume a continuous and cumulative view of literary history according to which the immortality of authorship, once bestowed, never recedes, never disappears. Along with that, however, and somewhat

paradoxically, the correspondingly independent status of the discrete work or poetic *oeuvre* risks taking precedence over its medieval contextualization. It is precisely the manuscript evidence for a different narrative of literary history, one suggesting rather the disappearance of Chrétien and perhaps even his rejection and/or suppression in the latter Middle Ages, that I would like to discuss with you today. What is at stake here is the confrontation between our own approaches and those of various medieval audiences, regarding authorship, literary property, and the dissemination of discrete works in a form that inevitably subsumes them under larger ideological priorities.

I can best illustrate the point I am attempting to make regarding the excesses to which reverence of authorial figures can lead by quoting Alison Stones from the Introduction to *The Manuscripts of Chrétien de Troyes*, wherein the art historian makes an unremarkably formulaic *captatio benevolentiae* through her praises of Chrétien's greatness—one, I might add, that is obliquely designed to justify such a costly undertaking:<sup>10</sup>

The literary fame of Chrétien de Troyes has earned him a special place in medieval studies. Commissioned by distinguished patrons, drawn upon by other writers, transmitted in extant copies within a generation of his lifetime and into the Renaissance, owned by notable collectors during the centuries of the enlightenment, studied from the beginnings of the revival of interest in medieval literature in the nineteenth century, the texts of Chrétien still figure prominently in contemporary critical writing and translation.

At first blush, few of us would disagree with any parts of this encomium. Yet when submitted to some scrutiny, one finds that this thumbnail sketch bears little relation to the story (or history) of Chrétien's reception which itself is abundantly available in the pages of these massive tomes. I would thus rewrite it in the following manner:


Although commissioned by distinguished patrons, drawn upon by other writers, transmitted in extant copies within a generation of his lifetime, Chrétien's popularity dwindled to such an extent that his name seems virtually to have disappeared by the year 1300, and his romances ceased to be copied after about 1350. Not only were none of his romances printed during the Renaissance but the first complete romance to find its way into print did not do so until 1838—well after such other medieval works as the *Romance of the Rose* or the fabliaux. During that period of some 500 years, manuscripts containing his romances were either ripped apart to serve as bindings for books deemed more important or preserved as treasured objects in the libraries of wealthy collectors, undoubtedly little read or simply unreadable. The first complete modern edition of Chrétien's romances was not brought to term until 1932. In spite of this relative neglect, the texts of Chrétien figure prominently in contemporary critical writing and translation.<sup>11</sup>

All humor aside, we do I think need to ask why and how it is that two such divergent descriptions could be made regarding a cultural and historical phenomenon the coordinates of which are widely known and have been so carefully sifted through.

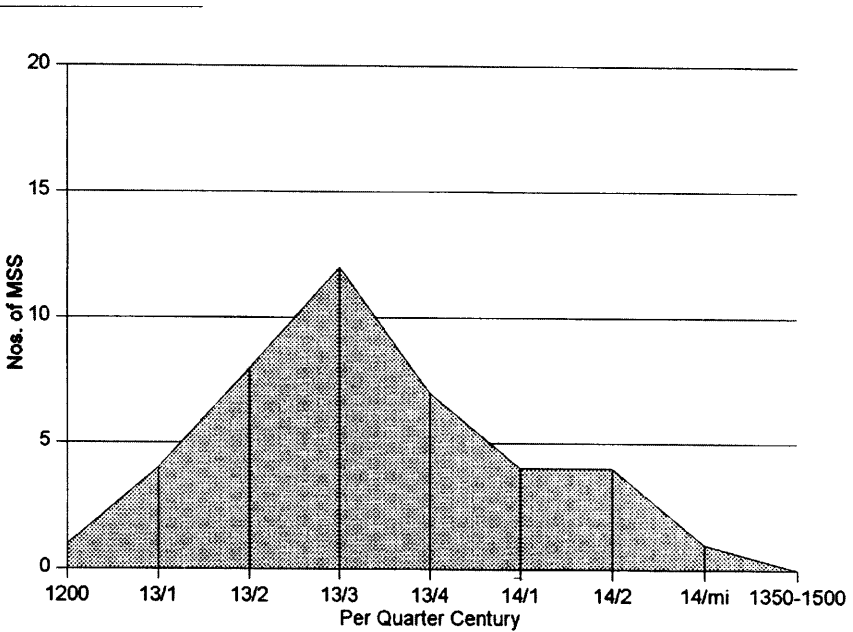
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Let me start by sketching out the nature and the general chronological frame of Chrétien's literary activity. Chrétien was the author of five verse romances which are among the first to tell of the knights of the Round Table; his name is also associated with two lyric *chansons* and a short translation of an Ovidian tale, which I will place aside here because of the thorny questions of attribution they pose. Thanks largely to the romances' relation to other datable works of the XII<sup>th</sup> century as well as to what we know about the patrons to whom two of them are dedicated, all five can be dated in the period extending from 1170 to 1190: *Erec et Enide*; *Cligès*; *The Knight of the Cart (Lancelot)*; *The Knight of the Lion (Yvain)*; and *The Story of the Grail (Perceval)*. While no contemporary manuscript transcriptions have survived, extant manuscripts have been dated to as early as about 1200, and the last surviving transcrip-

tions seem to have been made in the mid-XIV<sup>th</sup> century at the latest. The numerous references to Chrétien or his works, the imitations, quotations, and continuations, nearly all of which occur in the first half of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century, attest to his notoriety as an author, as well as to the great popularity of the fictions that he was the first to set down in one of the Western European vernaculars. The descriptive catalogue of the *Manuscripts* volume lists 45 items consisting of whole manuscripts and fragments.<sup>12</sup> On the face of it, the count would seem to be exceptionally large for a XII<sup>th</sup>-century author; however, if we consider the numbers by individual romance rather than by the corpus, we must conclude that Chrétien's works seem to have had only an average diffusion in the written tradition. Each of the first four romances has come down to us in approximately eight to twelve whole or fragmented manuscripts, while only the *Perceval*, Chrétien's story of the Grail quest, attained the moderately successful survival count of eighteen. I realize that these figures are well nigh meaningless in a vacuum, and that there are certain pitfalls involved in gauging popularity by numbers of extant manuscripts. It is thus of some utility to compare these numbers with those pertaining to the vernacular "best-sellers" of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century (*Prose Lancelot*—ca. 100; *Prose Tristan*—ca. 80; Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame*—ca. 80; *Le Roman de la Rose*—ca. 300; the *Faits des romains*—ca. 60)—all, with the exception of Jean de Meun's continuation of the *Rose*, probably composed within forty to fifty years of Chrétien's last romance. But even some of Chrétien's XII<sup>th</sup>-century contemporaries rivaled or outshone him on the basis of manuscript count: Wace's *Brut* has survived in more than 20 MSS, Marie de France's *Fables* in about 25, Herman of Valenciennes' verse translation of the *Bible* in about 35, and Benoît de Sainte-Maur's *Roman de Troie* in over 35. Aimon of Varennes' *Florimont* and Alexander of Paris's *Roman d'Alexandre* are each found in 17 extant mss. The numbers for the *Roman d'Eneas* and *Partonopeu de Blois*, neither of which benefited from an authorial association, equal those of Chrétien's first four romances with roughly ten extant manuscripts apiece.



How do we explain the gap between Chrétien's mediocre showing in written transmission and what appears to have been a pre-eminent position among the first generations that patronized and composed vernacular works? We may surmise that Chrétien's initial renown, regarding which we have virtually no written record, was due to a primarily oral diffusion of the written romances (what D. H. Green, refers to as a "mixed" or "intemediate" mode of reception) in the early decades, taking the form of a public reading along the lines of the famous scene in *Yvain* of the adolescent female reading a romance out loud from a book to her parents.<sup>13</sup> This mode of diffusion, which certainly characterized most vernacular works—verse or prose—well into the XIII<sup>th</sup> century, does not however lead to the conclusion that Chrétien's romances were orally produced or that they were not from the start copied in book form. On the one hand, the lack of any manuscripts dating from before 1200 is typical for XII<sup>th</sup>-century secular works, owing as much to the predominance of monastic scriptoria before that time as to the relative neglect visited upon those manuscripts that were copied. Whereas the overwhelming majority of extant XII<sup>th</sup> century vernacular manuscripts represent the religious, archival or scientific domains, as the list published by Brian Woledge and Ian Short clearly shows,<sup>14</sup> phenomena such as the early adaptations and translations of Chrétien's romances, as well as of Thomas's *Tristan*, in Germany and Norway during the period 1190-1225 are unthinkable without some kind of written link. Furthermore, even if we can consider the multiple prologue references to written sources as a well-worn topos, Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's reference in his *Lanzelet* to the French book that he claims to have received from Hugh de Morville during the latter's captivity in Germany (which occurred in 1194) suffices to establish what must have been a not uncommon means of transmission. An early testimony (ca. 1135-40) to the bookish nature of translation activity, albeit in the domain of historical writing and not imaginative fiction, is available in Geffrei Gaimar's epilogue to his *Estoire des Engleis*, "the oldest extant example of historiography in the French vernacular."<sup>15</sup> There, Gaimar refers not only to books in Latin and English that served as sources—that were literally passed around from per-



**Table 1. Extant Chrétien Manuscripts by Period**

son to person—but also to a metrical account, undoubtedly in French, of the reign of Henry I attributed to a poet named David, of which both Henry’s wife, Queen Adeliza, and a certain Lady Constance had ordered books to be made. Judged from an entirely different angle, internal rather than external, the relative textual integrity of Chrétien’s romances in their surviving manuscripts, characterized by widespread variation predominantly at the level of the textual detail, also suggests a transmission in written form.<sup>16</sup>

A further issue of no little significance is the dating of the extant manuscripts in which the romances are found. In Table 1, you will find a graphic representation of the apportionment of Chrétien’s manuscripts by date, distributed in quarter-century periods, based upon Terry Nixon’s recent redating (which, although it adds several fragments to the list of thirty-one manuscripts catalogued by Alexandre Micha, and offers a few radically different datings based upon paleographical and artistic evidence, does not substantially alter the global apportionment as to chronological slot).<sup>17</sup>



Recent discussions of Chrétien's manuscripts have in my opinion oddly misinterpreted the thrust of these statistics. Alison Stones asserts that Chrétien manuscripts were "at the height of their popularity" between 1250 and 1350, while Keith Busby, in the same volume, states that most of the extant manuscripts "date from the late XIII<sup>th</sup> and early XIV<sup>th</sup> centuries."<sup>18</sup> In a separate discussion, Sandra Hindman concurs: "none of the manuscripts of Chrétien's romances are contemporary with the author's lifetime: instead, most date from nearly a century later, about 1275 to about 1325."<sup>19</sup> The above figures, which must, furthermore, be taken with extreme care, seem to point to a different conclusion. Even though, as I have mentioned, assessing popularity through numbers of extant manuscripts is highly conjectural, the fact that a greater proportion of early manuscripts is likely to have disappeared than later manuscripts—that is, that numbers of *extant* manuscripts will tend to over-represent later periods and, correspondingly, under-represent earlier ones—further accentuates the importance of the significant number of transcriptions dating unquestionably from the first half of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, even if we make allowances for lost manuscripts, it is much more likely that the period of Chrétien's greatest popularity in a written format was the middle half of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century (1225-1275) and that a precipitous drop is in evidence as of the turn of that century. This conclusion is further substantiated by the figures represented in Table 2, which show that the peak of production by individual romance (rather than by manuscript) actually occurs in the second quarter of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century. This reflects the fact that, as we will be discussing below, the earlier manuscripts tend to include more than one romance while the later ones tend not to.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, lest one assume that the disappearance of verse Arthurian romance as a genre was part of a trend either away from the Arthurian material in general or verse narrative, Table 3 shows very clearly how the period of verse romance's decline was precisely the one in which prose romances and metrical *chansons de geste* alike flourished in manuscript compilations—at least through to the early XV<sup>th</sup> century. The slight dip in the figures representing

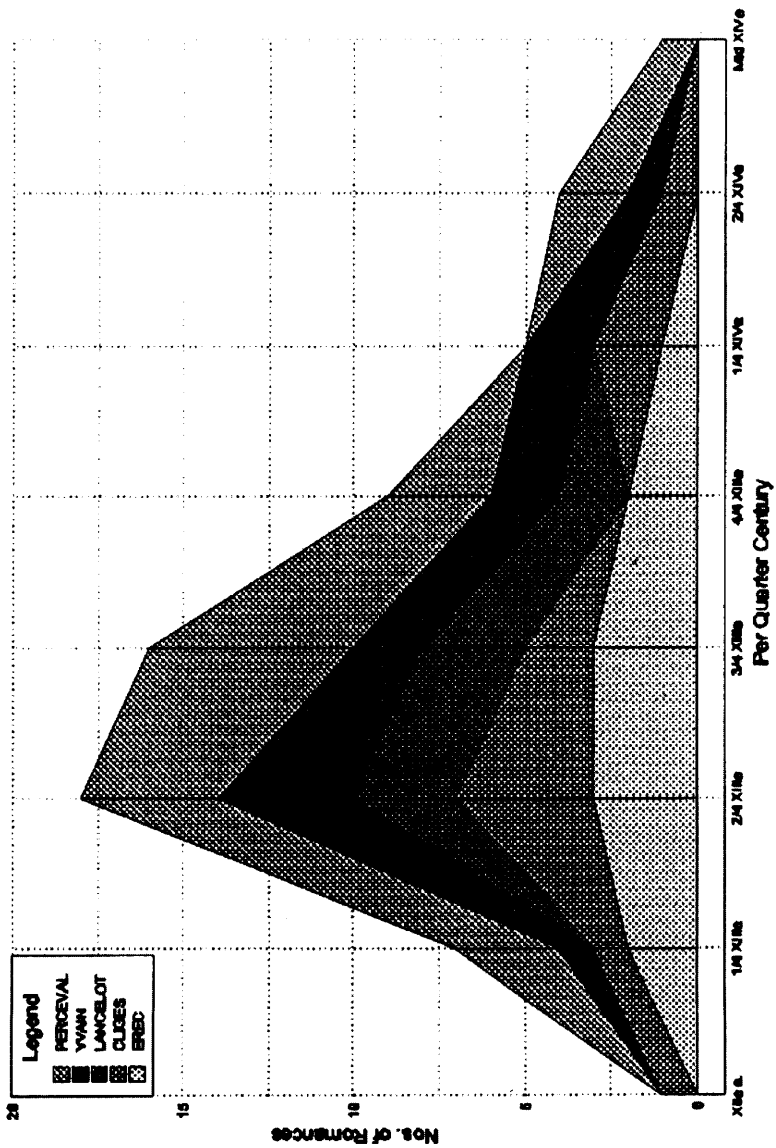
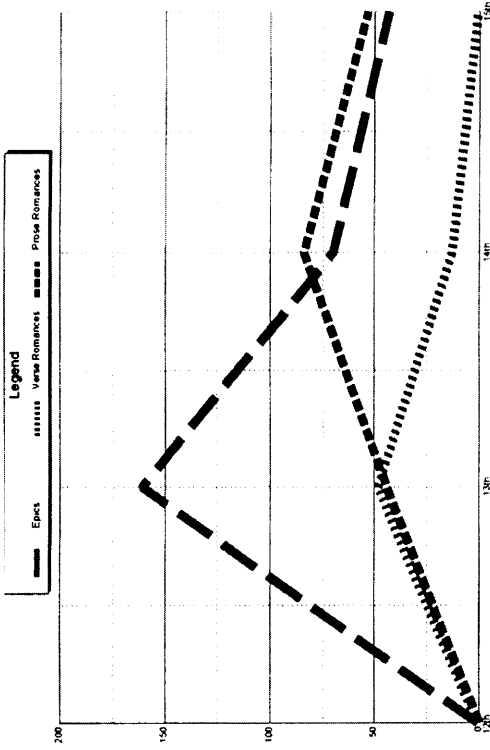


Table 2. Romances copied by Period



**Epic:** Includes Figures compiled by Joseph J. Duggan, "The Manuscript Corpus of the Medieval Romance Epic," in *The Medieval Alexander Legend and Romance Epic: Essays in Honour of David J. A. Ross*, ed. Peter Noble, Lucie Polak, and Claire Isoc (Millwood NY: Kraus International Publications, 1982), pp. 29-42.

**Verse Romance:** Figures include those on Chretien's MSS above, supplemented with those for the other Arthurian verse romances supplied by Beate Schmolke-Haselmann, *Der Arthurische Versroman von Chrestien bis Froissart*, Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, Bd. 177 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1980), p. 179.

**Prose Romance:** Figures include data from Alexandre Micha, "Les manuscrits du *Lancelot en Prose*" *Romania* 81 (1960), 145-87; 84 (1963), 28-60 and 478-99; Emmanuèle Baumgartner, *Le «Tristan en Prose»: Essai d'interprétation d'un roman médiéval* (Geneva: Droz, 1975), and Roger Lathuilière, *Guiron le Courtois: Etude de la tradition manuscrite et analyse critique* (Geneva: Droz, 1966).

Table 3. Manuscript Production by Genre

those two genres for the XV<sup>th</sup> century is most certainly due not to a decline in popularity but of course to the spread of the printing press, which greatly affected manuscript production in the final three decades of that century. No, the disappearance of Chrétien and his epigones is an isolated phenomenon within the development and transmission of vernacular works through the last centuries of the Middle Ages.

More significant perhaps than brute numbers of manuscripts or their chronological spread for an evaluation of Chrétien's medieval legacy is the manner in which individual romances were collected, including the varying associations among them separately and as a group, which evolved markedly during this period. The first four romances, which have survived, as I mentioned earlier, in roughly similar numbers of manuscripts, are associated with each other in a uniform and mostly random fashion. The only significant sub-grouping can be inferred from the marked tendency to associate *Yvain* and the *Charrete*, which are found together in six manuscripts (B.N. f. fr. 794, B.N. f. fr. 1450, B.N. f. fr. 12560, Chantilly, Musée Condé 472, Vatican, Reg. Lat. 1725, and Princeton, Garrett 125).<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, in all but one of these (B.N. 794), the two romances are copied in sequence, *Charrete-Yvain* in the Vatican MS, and *Yvain-Charrete* in all the others. The *Perceval*, for its part, developed a tradition of its own, being found unassociated with the other romances in thirteen of the sixteen surviving complete, or nearly complete, manuscripts containing it. Indeed, with the exception of the three "collective" manuscript editions of Chrétien, which I will be discussing in a few moments, (B.N. f. fr. 794, B.N. f. fr. 1450 and the Annonay fragments), the *Perceval* is never associated with another of the romances. The unfinished *Perceval*, as is well-known, attracted several continuators—four in all—whose additions brought the work up to a total of approximately 60,000 lines, considerably longer than Chrétien's norm of 6 to 7000. The separation of *Perceval* from the rest of Chrétien's corpus can certainly be considered a material consequence of the work's augmented form, bringing it to a length that was sufficient to "fill" an entire codex, but the evidence suggests also that the theme, and not the authorial identification, was re-

responsible for the work's rather abundant and individual legacy. Indeed, fully eight of the *Perceval* manuscripts seem to have been conceived as complete single-romance volumes. In the medieval *imaginaire*, the Grail story formed a book, whereas the other romances seem rather to have been pieces requiring some higher informing principle.

One might foreground these observations with reference to the important development in vernacular manuscript compilations recently adduced by Sylvia Huot, namely the trend toward increasingly more elaborate collections of works from the XIII<sup>th</sup> to the XV<sup>th</sup> centuries, accompanied by authorial identification as a significant form of classification.<sup>22</sup> In the evolution of manuscript "types" containing Chrétien's romances, the tendency is in the opposite direction, that is, toward increasingly fragmented and heterogeneous associations of texts, with an accompanying effacement of Chrétien's "authority." Two and only two manuscripts contain all five romances of Chrétien (B.N. f. fr. 794 and 1450), and both are dated to the second quarter of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century at the very latest. The Annonay fragments, which represent four of the romances and which could have come from a similar collection, are among the very earliest extant transcriptions and are typically dated to the first decade or so of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century. B.N. f. fr. 12560, which I would call a quasi-collective manuscript, contains three romances copied in sequence but is unlikely to have contained any others, in spite of its fragmentation. It is typically dated to the middle of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, the two "complete" collections, vast manuscripts containing other works, collect the romances in a very specific way. Both of these compilations associate Chrétien's romances with a version of the corpus of so-called "antique" romances: B.N. 794 includes the *Roman de Troie* and *Brut*, along with *Athis et Prophilias* and *Les Empereurs de Rome*; B.N. 1450 adds to *Troie* and *Brut* the *Eneas* and *Dolophathos*. Even more intriguing, the scribe/compiler of the latter manuscript, as many scholars have noted, inserts Chrétien's five romances in the middle of Wace's *Brut*, thus subordinating them structurally to a historicizing genealogical project. What has been less often ac-




known is that it is precisely these manuscripts, the principal ones that have given form to the idea of Chrétien as an author and to a sense of his five romances as a poetic *oeuvre*, that contextualize him not so much as a writer of fictions but as a contributor of fragments to what amounts to a universal history. Such a view of Chrétien's early reception, as a writer of history or pseudo-history, rather than of courtly romance, as we would classify the genre today, finds some support in the noteworthy fact that not a single surviving manuscript collects his romances with other XII<sup>th</sup>-century narratives that we now place in the "courtly" canon: the *Tristan* romances, the *Lais* of Marie de France.

The thematic and authorial unity of such early collections is somewhat diluted in later vast anthologies or rather modified in order to construct a new type of unity. Correspondingly, the cohesion of Chrétien's romance corpus tends to be effaced. The well-known collection contained in B.N. f. fr. 375, copied at the extreme end of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century, has been described by Sylvia Huot as a "literary compendium" providing "encyclopedic coverage of the Old French literary and cultural heritage."<sup>23</sup> Following upon the two manuscripts we have just looked at, it maintains the historical context with the *Roman de Thebes* preceding *Troie* and *Athis et Prophilias*, along with the *Roman d'Alexandre* and Wace's genealogical account of the dukes of Normandy, the *Roman de Rou*, but it includes only two of Chrétien's romances, *Cliges* and *Erec*, while ending with a heterogeneous series of texts ranging from courtly narrative to devotional works to a *fabliau*. The equally famous Chantilly collection (Musée Condé 472; mid-XIII<sup>th</sup> century) seems oriented toward Arthurian romance as a genre, and collects *Erec*, *Yvain* and the *Charrete* (not, however, copied as a group) with a half-dozen other works, including a sizeable fragment of the prose *Perlesvaus* and ending with several branches of the *Roman de Renart*. The large miscellany currently housed in the Burgerbibliothek in Bern, MS 354, redated by Nixon to the middle of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century, includes over seventy-five short narrative works in verse, ranging from *fabliaux* to allegorical poems, along with Chrétien's *Conte du graal* (minus the continuations).

Finally, two late manuscripts—both extensively illuminated, unlike the earlier ones—suggest the ultimate fate of Chrétien's romances and perhaps show where manuscript production of Chrétien de Troyes' romances might have been headed had there been any continued interest in verse romance in the latter part of the Middle Ages. The scribe responsible for B.N. f. fr. 24403 placed *Erec et Enide* between two epics, *Garin de Monglane* and *Ogier le Danois*. The volume is illustrated throughout and, as Sandra Hindman has shown, concentrates on depictions of the chivalric episodes of all three works.<sup>24</sup> Thus, contrary to the "courtly" context juxtaposing marriage, prowess and kingship which has become the most common frame of reference for understanding Chrétien's first romance, this late compiler, through the selection of texts and choice of subjects for illumination, accentuated its martial aspects. B.N. fr. 1433, a relatively small (at only 118 folios and two medium-length columns per page) but lavishly illustrated book dating from approximately 1300, contains two romances related through their courtly and chivalric themes and perhaps also through the character of Gauvain, who appears in both romances: the anonymous *Atre périlleux* and Chrétien's *Chevalier au lion* (both, I might add, are likewise included in the much larger Chantilly collection, though not directly associated with each other).<sup>25</sup> What is striking about this volume is that not only is there no longer any sense of Chrétien's collected works, but even Chrétien's name has disappeared in the final lines of his text. In place of the epilogue identifying author and title, "Del chevalier al lion fine/Crestiens son romant issi/Onques plus dire n'en oi [...]", we find a rather garbled "De si vaillant rommans ne fine/Chertains soient rommancheour/C'onques plus conter en nul jour/N'en oyrent ne ja n'orront [...]" Either an unknowing or dyslexic Picard copyist took *C[h]restien* for *Chertein* and then rewrote the entire sentence to make sense of it. Whether Chretien's name was thus misconstrued by the copyist of this manuscript or the model being copied is for our purposes irrelevant: the scribe was clearly interested in the text itself and remained ignorant of its author. Indeed, by this point we can safely say that "Chrétien" had for all intents and purposes disappeared.





I hesitate to draw absolute conclusions from the material I have just presented, and hesitate even more to present some of the hypotheses that might explain the disaffection that, particularly in the medieval context, followed Chrétien's initial fame. That would be the topic for another presentation. I will therefore close with the description of one final manuscript which, I believe, proves emblematic—in its own structuration and reception history—of the idolatry of the immaterial textual object compromised by the reconstructive violence of the interpretive moment. This tension in turn calls into play another one that is commonly encountered in modern philological and editorial formulations: that of the immaterial, ideal, disembodied work, sought after but never attained in practice, juxtaposed with the inevitably flawed individual exemplar. Any published description of B.N. fr. 12560, will tell you that, as I mentioned above, it contains three romances of Chrétien copied in the following order: *Yvain*, *Lancelot* and *Cliges*. That description might also mention that the first recto of the volume in its current state, reproduced here, has on its left-hand column a “fragment de pénitentiel”, with *Yvain* starting on the right-hand column of that same recto and written in the same hand. Penitentials, as is well known, are works destined principally for priests, instructing them on the penances to be imposed for various sins. The description is less likely to go into more detail, leaving out the fact that the penitential of which we have only the final lines is identified in the colophon with the title “Li ver d'aumone”, that it is in prose, that the first word on the recto side of the folio, and therefore the introduction to the volume as it is currently constituted, is “sodomites”, and that what follows are the various penances assigned to that form of perceived misbehavior as well as to such others as masturbating, sleeping with nuns, or abandoning one's infant. I will leave it to you to consider the implications of a prescriptive text dictating the years of penance to be imposed upon “any sodomite or anyone who has had carnal relations with an animal” [“sodomites ou il ait geu a beste charnelment”] immediately followed by a romance that tells of a knight who, having abandoned the marriage bed, conceives a deep and loving friendship with a lion.

B. N. 12560 currently numbers 122 parchment folios. Codicological evidence tells us that the present volume is missing its first 53 folios, but I have yet to find any published speculation on what might have occupied those folios.<sup>26</sup> We do however know quite a bit about the manuscript's modern history, recently outlined and supplemented by Roger Middleton in the *Manuscripts of Chretien* volume.<sup>27</sup> Georges Doutrepoint was perhaps the first, back in 1906, to demonstrate that this manuscript—undoubtedly in its complete form—is the same as one referred to as early as 1405 in the inventory of the books belonging to Marguerite de Flandre which would henceforth become a part of the magnificent collection amassed by the dukes of Burgundy.<sup>28</sup> In the so-called inventory of Philippe le Bon, compiled in 1420, when Jean sans Peur left his collection to his son Philippe, the description reads as follows: “Item, ung autre livre nommé le livre des auctoritez, du chevalier au lion, et d’autres histoires, couvert de cuir vermeil, commençant ou II<sup>e</sup> fueillet *En leur cuers*, et au derrenier fueillet *tant le quidrent*.”<sup>29</sup> The last quoted line is indeed the first line on what is currently the last folio leaf of B.N. 12560.<sup>30</sup>

As for the hypothetical contents of the first part, a little bit of detective work turns up, in an early XIV<sup>th</sup> century manuscript containing a collection of some thirty verse and prose devotional texts, B.N. f. fr. 24429, the following sequence of prose texts: the “Livre des Auctoritez” (a collection of prescriptions taken from the Church Fathers), ff. 28v-34r; the “Moralitez” (moral lessons), ff. 34r-45v; and the “Vers d’aumosne,” ff. 45v-49r.<sup>31</sup> Not only does the concluding portion of the latter work in the devotional collection correspond almost word-for-word with the concluding fragment of the penitential on folio 1 of the *Chrétien* manuscript, but the identifying phrase quoted in the Burgundian inventories of 1420 and 1487, “En leurs cuers,” is found in a spot roughly equivalent to the second folio of the “Livre des Auctoritez.”<sup>32</sup> A similar devotional collection found in the British Library, Egerton 745, likewise compiles the three works with a diverse collection of moralizing and hagiographical works, both in verse and in prose, although not in sequence.<sup>33</sup> A third manuscript that is very closely

related to B.N. f. fr. 24429 in terms of its contents, Vatican Reg. Lat. 1682, includes the “Auctoritez” and the “Moralitez” but not the “Ver d’aumosne.”<sup>34</sup> While the ordering of the pieces in these manuscripts, and the variety of those chosen for inclusion, do not justify the conclusion that the one was copied directly from the other, they do suggest the existence of a type of generically focussed miscellany intended for the instruction of a lay or a religious audience in the vernacular.

Now, turning back to our Chrétien manuscript, B.N. f. fr. 12560, unless we assume that some other secular text, perhaps still another romance of Chretien, was sandwiched between the two religious works framing the now-lost introductory section of fifty-three folios—itself highly unlikely—or, even less likely, that the manuscript had already been dismembered when it entered the library of Marguerite de Flandre in the XIV<sup>th</sup> century (that is, that the “Livre des Auctoritez,” rather than opening the original manuscript, might have opened, say the third or fourth gathering, from which the preceding ones would have disappeared), then the inevitable conclusion is that the original codex, highly unusual in this regard, consisted of a large section of devotional texts, either exclusively in prose or a mixture of verse and prose, occupying the first third, some fifty-three folios, followed by the three Arthurian verse romances filling out the final two thirds (121 complete folios). What we undoubtedly had at one time was an amalgam of two otherwise autonomous types of vernacular collections: a devotional collection containing didactic treatises and perhaps hagiographical or Biblical narrative; and a collection of secular romance. But unlike many codices the heterogeneous qualities of which are due to the piecing together of previously unrelated quaternions, in B.N. f. fr. 12560, most uniquely, an implicit unity of intention subtends the whole by virtue of the single scribal hand as we find it on folio 1 recto, identical as it passes from the prose lines of the penitential to the verse of Chrétien’s romance.

How do we explain this compilation? If we take seriously an anecdote such as that recounted by Cesarius of Heisterbach regarding an abbot who rebuked his monks for dozing off while

he spoke of God and yet immediately awakening when he merely *sounded* the name of King Arthur, then perhaps we could see in this volume some clever monk's attempt to slip Arthurian romance into the monastery, or, alternately, some noble patron's desire to lend gravity to his or her reading material. Within the codex, quite literally and physically, the frequently decried frivolity or vacuousness of romance would be masked by the seriousness of moral prescription. At the very least, in scrutinizing vernacular devotional works of this period one finds frequent mention of the seductive yet vapid, because useless, appeal of secular fictions when measured against the seriousness of their own works, as though they felt the need to defend the latter and at the same time attract readers away from these rival texts. Altogether typical is the following portion of a prologue to John of Paris's translation of the *Distichs of Cato*, which is found, coincidentally, in the devotional manuscript mentioned above:<sup>35</sup>

Seingnors vos qui metez voz cures  
Es fables et es aventures  
Que vos content cil losangier  
Por decevoir et losangier  
Dites moi com bien vos profite  
La fable quant el vos est dite  
Prandre i povez une risee  
Tandis com ele est devisee  
Mes puis qu'a conter est remese  
Nen vaust le profit une frese  
Car comment porroit profit estre  
De ce qui nest ne ne puet estre  
Dont vos feroit meillor entendre  
A conte ou peussiez aprendre  
Afaitement et cortoisie ...

[Lords, you who devote your attentions to the fables and adventure tales that those lying storytellers recite to you in order to deceive and to flatter, do tell me what sort of profit you get out of the fable once it has been told. You can get a little laugh as it's being spun out, but once the storytelling is over the profit you get isn't worth a strawberry. How

indeed could there be any profit from something that neither is nor can not be? It would therefore be better for you to listen to a tale where you might learn good manners and courtly behavior ...]

But there is still another side to the volume's reception: How to explain the current shape of the manuscript? Medievalists are abundantly aware of the frequently fragmentary state of the manuscripts they deal with, due to the loss of folios randomly at beginning or end, the disappearance of gatherings when bindings begin to fall apart or disintegrate. But that is not the case here. There is no random fate or *hasard* behind the fact that the first page of what had been the romance section is now the first page of the entire volume, especially since the break occurs *within* a gathering. In short, the current manuscript was "tailored" with a purpose.

Presumably in the first years of the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, when the volume received its current binding, and certainly by the time it appeared as Volume Two of a two-volume set in the sale catalogue of the estate of Charles-Jerome de Cisternay du Fay in 1725, its owner had eliminated the devotional material and in effect remade the book in order that it better correspond to a particular notion of generic and thematic unity.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, the the binding currently identifies it as "ROMANTS DE CHEVAL MANUSC" (Romances of Chivalry–Manuscript). Its binding was also imprinted with the label "TOM. II" and it was coupled with what would be designated Volume One of the auction lot, an otherwise unrelated collection of *chansons de geste* that had also been a part of the collection of the Burgundian library.<sup>37</sup>

The reconstructed history of this manuscript serves as an apt metaphor not only for the way that canons of literature can be (and constantly are!) re-formed and deformed, but also how the resulting anachronistic formations can on other occasions be ceremoniously enshrined, as in the rich leather binding of a codex. In this way the XVIII<sup>th</sup>-century confection of Volume Two of Lot 1891 in the du Fay sales catalogue of 1725—the future B.N. f. fr. 12560—represents a move of generic purification that runs counter to the eclectic—dare I say—intentions of the scribe who copied and per-

haps organized the book. Tellingly, the sexual crimes condemned by the penitential provide the only clues to the volume's violent fate. We of course would never deface a manuscript in this way, but is it not just such a symbolic defacement we perform when we remake an author's reputation, as it were, placing him in the canon of immortals even when we know the fact, yet strike it from the records of literary history, that for many centuries the author was virtually unread, unappreciated, unknown?

## FOOTNOTES

1. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994.

2. *From Song to Book* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1987); and *The Romance of the Rose and its Medieval Readers* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993).

3. *The Ethical Poetic of the Later Middle Ages: A Decorum of Convenient Distinction* (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 290.

4. See especially Jauss's "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," reprinted in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti, *Theory and History of Literature*, Vol. 2 (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press, 1982), pp. 3-45.

5. On this topic see my "Lancelot's Two Steps: A Problem in Textual Criticism," *Speculum*, 61 (October 1986), 836-58; and "Reading it Right: The Ideology of Text Editing," *Romanic Review*, LXXIX, No. 1 (January 1988), 74-88.

6. *Symbolisme et interprétation* (Paris: Seuil, 1978), p. 162. English translation is mine.

7. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981), p. 9.

8. "The Monks and the Giants: Textual and Bibliographical Studies and the Interpretation of Literary Works," in *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press), 180-99 [191].

9. *The Manuscripts of Chrétien de Troyes*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam/Atlanta: RODOPI, 1993).

10. *The Manuscripts*, Vol. 1, p. 1.

11. For information on the manuscript tradition, see the discussion below. The first "edition" of any of Chrétien's romances to appear in print, a transcription of one manuscript version of *Le Chevalier au lion*, took the form, interestingly enough, of an appended analogue to the primary Welsh text of the "Lady of the

Fountain" in Lady Charlotte Guest's *The Mabinogion, from the Llyfr Coch o Hergest and other Welsh Manuscripts*, Vol. 1, Part 1 (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green and Longmans/Llandoverly: W. Rees, 1838), pp. 134-214. Editions of other romances appeared haphazardly over the following decades in France, Germany, and the Netherlands (P. Tarbé, *Le Roman du Chevalier à la Charrette*, Collection des Poètes de la Champagne antérieurs au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, Vol. 7 [Reims, 1849]; W.J.A. Jonckbloet, *Le Roman de la Charrette d'après Gauthier Map et Chrestien de Troies* [The Hague: Belinfante, 1850]; I. Bekker, "Des Chrestien von Troyes *Erec und Enide*," *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum* 10 [1856], 373- 550; W. Holland, *Li Romans dou chevalier au lyon* [Hanover: Carl Rümpler, 1862]; Ch. Potvin, *Perceval le Gallois, ou le Conte du Graal*, 6 Vols. [Mons: Dequesne-Masquillier, 1866-71]) prior to Wendelin Foerster's undertaking of the "complete works" with his critical text of *Cligès*, based upon all manuscripts known at the time, in 1884 (Halle: Niemeyer). By the turn of the century, Foerster had published the first four romances, but the entire *Grosse Ausgabe* was only brought to completion with the publication of Alfons Hilka's edition of *Perceval* in 1932 (Halle: Niemeyer).

12. Terry Nixon's descriptive catalogue is found in Volume 2 of *The Manuscripts*, pp. 1-85.

13. D.H. Green, "The Reception of Hartmann's Works: Listening, Reading, or Both?" *Modern Language Review* 81 (1986), 357-68; see also his "Orality and Reading: The State of Research in Medieval Studies," *Speculum*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (April 1990), 267-80. In this latest article, Green, p. 277, refers to this as the "intermediate mode of reception."

14. "Liste provisoire de manuscrits du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle contenant des textes en langue française," *Romania* 102 (1981), 1-17.

15. Ian Short, "Gaimar's Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Liber vetustissimus*," *Speculum*, Vol. 69, No. 2 (April 1994), 323-43 [323].

16. The classic discussion of the textual remnants of Chrétien's



romances and the relations among the manuscripts transmitting them remains Alexandre Micha, *La tradition manuscrite des romans de Chrétien de Troyes*, Publications Romanes et françaises 90 (Geneva: Droz, 1966 [1939]).

17. I have not considered four of Nixon's 45 items in this table. Three of them (No. 29, No. 37, and No. 44) represent several-line excerpts from one of Chrétien's romances that were clearly never intended to be a part of a full transcription of the romance in question. No. 45 is Pierre Sala's early XIV<sup>th</sup>-century copy and modernization of *Yvain*, "probably written as a gift for François 1<sup>er</sup>" (*The Manuscripts*, Vol. 2, p. 84). It represents a curious (and quite isolated) antiquarian interest rather than the continuous transmission of the poem.

18. See *The Manuscripts*, Vol. 1, p. 228 (Stones) and p. 351 (Busby).

19. *Sealed in Parchment: Rereadings of Knighthood in the Illuminated Manuscripts of Chrétien de Troyes* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 2.

20. Of the manuscript that Nixon dates to the fourth quarter of the XIII<sup>th</sup> century or later, only three (Princeton, Garrett 125; Vatican Reg. Lat. 1725; and B.N. f. fr. 375) contain more than one romance of Chrétien, and in each case it is two.

21. It is intriguing to think that this association is due to what many critics have recognized as intertextual links between the two romances, suggesting even a simultaneous composition of the two works, but this cannot be substantiated. For recent discussions of the multiple internal correlations between these two romances, see Emmanuèle Baumgartner, *Chrétien de Troyes: Yvain, Lancelot, la charrette et le lion*, Etudes littéraires (Paris: PUF, 1992); and Roberta L. Krueger, "The Question of Women in *Yvain* and *Le Chevalier de la charrete*," in her *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance*, Cambridge Studies in French, 43 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), pp. 33-67.

22. See especially *From Song to Book*, pp. 211-41.

23. *From Song to Book*, p. 27.

24. *Sealed in Parchment*, pp. 129-62.

25. A critical edition of this manuscript, along with a full description of its contents, is provided in Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier au lion ou le roman d'Yvain*, ed. and trans. by David F. Hult (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1994). See also *Sealed in Parchment*, pp. 50-77, which includes reproductions of many of the manuscript's numerous illuminations.

26. Signatures in the form of roman numerals are still entirely visible on the bottom edge of several of the eight-folio gatherings, the first of these being the indication .xi. at the bottom of folio 35v. Nine other signatures are visible in the following gatherings of the manuscript. Numbers that have been partially cut off are detectable on folios 3v, 11v and 27v. The current folio 3 was thus the final one in the seventh gathering and therefore the fifty-sixth of the original codex.

27. "Index of Former Owners," *The Manuscripts*, Vol. 2, pp. 87-176; and "Additional Notes on the History of Selected Manuscripts," *The Manuscripts*, Vol. 2, pp. 177-243.

28. See his *Inventaire de la «Librairie» de Philippe le Bon, 1420* (Brussels, 1906), pp. 117-19. Doutrepoint reiterates this point in his *La Littérature française à la cour des Ducs de Bourgogne* (Paris: Champion, 1909), pp. 10, 66; and in *Les Mises en prose des épopées et des romans chevaleresques du XIVe au XVIe siècle* (Brussels, 1939), pp. 263-64. The inventory of 1405 was compiled at the death of Marguerite de Flandre, when the collection passed to her son Jean sans Peur.

29. Quoted from Patrick M. de Winter, *La Bibliothèque de Philippe le Hardi, Duc de Bourgogne (1364-1404): Etude sur les manuscrits à peintures d'une collection princière à l'époque du «style gothique international»* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1985), Catalogue No. 32, p. 251. The 1405 inventory had simply given "Item, le

livre des auctorités du chevalier au lion et d'autres choses" (de Winter, p. 166). A later inventory of the Burgundian collection (Bruges, ca. 1467) gives a slightly more ample description: "Item, ung livre en parchemin couvert de cuir rouge, intitulé au dos: *Livre des Auctorités du chevalier au lyon, et autres histoires*, escriptes en deux coulombes, en prose et en rime; quemenchant, *Or oez que. S. dist en l'Evangille*, et le dernier feuillet, *tant le quisèrent et demandèrent*" (quoted from Joseph Barrois, *Bibliothèque protypographique, ou Librairies des fils du roi Jean, Charles V, Jean de Berri, Philippe de Bourgogne et les siens* [Paris: Chez Treuttel et Würtz, 1830], Item 1356, p. 198).

30. The recent edition of *Cligés* by Charles Méla and Olivier Collet (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1994) is based upon this manuscript, and gives for line 6635, first line of fol. 122 recto: "Tant le quistrent et demanderent."

31. Sylvia Huot has recently commented upon and described the contents of this devotional manuscript in her "A Book Made for a Queen: The Shaping of a Late Medieval Anthology Manuscript (B.N. fr. 24429)," in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press, 1996), pp. 123-43. She posits, based upon the presence of a crowned woman in several illuminated miniatures, that the volume was compiled for a queen, though there is no other evidence, such as a dedication, that would support this claim. In B.N. fr. 24429, the text entitled "les vers d'aumosne" (literally: verses on almsgiving) extends only from 45v to 46r and is immediately followed by instructions for confessors, the vernacular penitential mentioned above, which—most unusual in this manuscript—are neither preceded nor followed by identifying rubrication, on fols. 46r to 49r. Whether or not the two texts were originally separate, whether or not the scribe of B.N. 12560 was incorrect in referring to the penitential in his *explicit* as the "ver d'aumone," is irrelevant to the present enquiry: the latter scribe was clearly working from a manuscript of this type which associated the two. Thus, for the present purposes, I refer to the "vers d'aumosne" as extending from fol. 45v to 49r.

32. In B.N. f. fr. 24429, the “*Livre des Auctoritez*” begins at the top of fol. 28vo and on col. 1 of 29vo (roughly equivalent to the spacing of the “second folio”) we find the following text: “mes cil qui ont pitie *en leurs cuers*” (italics mine).

33. For a description and list of contents, see Paul Meyer, “Notice du Ms. Egerton 745 du Musée Britannique,” *Romania* 39 (1910), 532-69.

34. I have not been able to see this manuscript but am following the detailed description published by Ernest Langlois, *Notices et extraits des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale et autres bibliothèques, publiés par l’Institut de France*, Vol. 33, Deuxième partie: *Notices des manuscrits français et provençaux de Rome antérieurs au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1889), pp. 195-208.

35. My transcription from B.N. f. fr. 24429, fol. 105r, col. 2. English translation is mine. The entire text has been edited by J. Ulrich, “Die Übersetzung der Distichen des Pseudo-Cato von Jean de Paris,” *Romanische Forschungen* 15 (1904), 41-69.

36. Middleton affirms (*The Manuscripts*, Vol. 2, p. 215) that “the last record of [B.N. f. fr. 12560] in Brussels is in the inventory by Sanderus in 1643.” The Burgundian library, which later became the “basis of the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels” (Middleton, *The Manuscripts*, Vol. 2, p. 107), was housed in Brussels as of the early XVI<sup>th</sup> century.

37. Middleton demonstrates clearly that the first volume, now also in the Bibliothèque Nationale as f. fr. 25516, had also been in Marguerite de Flandre’s collection yet had never been associated with B.N. f. fr. 12560 prior to leaving the Burgundian library and being rebound. Cf. *Les Manuscrits*, Vol. 2, pp. 212-15.

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