THE FRENCH SOURCES OF MIDDLE ENGLISH ALLITERATIVE ROMANCE

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DECLARATION

I, William Raymond Johnston Barron, declare that the following dissertation has been composed by me, that the research of which it is a record has been carried out by me, and that the dissertation has not been accepted in any previous application for a Degree.

For the purposes of the present dissertation I was admitted as a Research Student in the University of St. Andrews in October 1950. During the academic session 1950-51 I carried out full-time research in Yale University, U.S.A., and during the session 1951-52 in the University of Strasbourg, France. Since that time the work has been continued on a part-time basis and I have been credited with nine terms of higher study and research.

CERTIFICATE OF SUPERVISOR

I certify that William Raymond Johnston Barron has spent nine terms in higher study and research in the field of Medieval English Literature and Language, that he has fulfilled the conditions of Ordinance No. LXXIX of the University Court, and that he is qualified to submit the following dissertation in application for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Director of Studies
THE FRENCH SOURCES OF MIDDLE ENGLISH ALITERATIVE ROMANCE

Being a dissertation
presented by

W.R.J. BARKER, M.A., B.Phil.

To the University of St. Andrews
in application for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the following dissertation is to study the Middle English alliterative romances known or believed to be based upon French sources, in order to determine, as exactly as circumstances permit, the methods adopted by their authors in re-shaping and reinterpreting French material to conform to their own tastes and interests and those of a contemporary English audience. The thesis is intended as a contribution to the study of French influence upon Middle English literature in general, of the relation of the alliterative school to contemporary English poetry in other forms, and of the distinctive nature of alliterative romance. In addition to these basic themes, it is hoped to suggest answers to a number of subsidiary questions: did the authors of alliterative romance make use of French sources more or less frequently than non-alliterative poets of the same period?; where they used such sources, were they dependent upon them to a greater or lesser degree than their contemporaries?; to what extent were they sensitive to the artistic influence of French romance and to the social concepts expressed there?; can the use of the alliterative medium be associated with a particular audience, whose tastes and interests differed from those of other Middle English readers? It is hoped, also, that the study of individual renditions from French
sources may add something to our knowledge of the redactive process in Middle English literature as a whole, a subject upon which many generalizations have been made, not always supported by the evidence of specific examples.

A project of this kind implies a contrast between the alliterative redactions of French romance and those in other media based upon material from the same source. The function of the opening chapter is to provide the necessary basis for such a comparison by summarising received opinion—in so far as it has been formulated—on the relation of Middle English to French romance. This has involved consideration of relevant aspects of the general literary situation in England following the Norman Conquest, of the nature, range and variety of French romance, the character of the redactive process by which the Middle English romances were produced, and the distinctions between these and the alliterative romances which have so far been pointed out. These are topics upon which there is much uncertainty and difference of opinion, and the survey given here has been designed to reflect a wide range of views, consistent with the scope of the dissertation.

The body of the thesis is devoted to the study of individual alliterative redactions based upon French sources. It was originally intended to include all alliterative works derived from French originals, but it was found that the study of individual redactions, and even the identification of their sources, was not yet sufficiently advanced to make possible a comprehensive survey within reasonable limits of space. The scope of the examination has therefore been limited to the romances, and to those alliterative examples whose French origin has been determined with sufficient certainty to provide a
reasonable basis for the analysis of the redactive process. To these
has been added Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, since, although the
question of a French source remains undecided in this case, the various
investigations so far made have thrown interesting side-lights on the
creative process and the contrast with Middle English romance in gen-
eral is particularly significant.

In each of these individual studies the intent has been
to survey the evidence as to source previously produced, to determine
as far as possible the original of the alliterative romance, and to
identify the form which approximates most closely to that used by the
redactor. On the basis of this -and, where necessary, other represent-
tative forms - the relationship between original and translation has
been examined in detail, with the object of demonstrating the process
involved in the production of the alliterative version, the selection,
ordering and interpretation of source-matter, and the technical conduct
of the redaction. It was hoped that, in so far as the surviving texts
can be assumed to represent the work of individual redactors, such an
analysis would throw light on their methods of composition, literary
aims and creative ability, and illustrate the tastes and interests of
the audiences for whom they worked.

The nature and scope of the examination in each case has
been varied according to individual circumstances. No distinction
has been made between the various romances on grounds of literary
quality or historical importance, since it was felt that even a clumsy
or unsuccessful redaction might provide valuable evidence of the aims
and methods of alliterative authors. In the case of two poems, Joseph
of Aramathia and Chavalare Assen, both brief and rather inexpert
examples, the nature of the redactive process, involving much omission,
rearrangement and re-casting of material, has required a more detailed treatment than is justified by the quality of the product. The analysis of original and redaction in parallel sections is designed to demonstrate the process of composition, even where it was a mechanical rather than a creative process. In the case of Colagrus and Gawain such a minute analysis is justified both by the technical complexity of the redaction and by the important and distinctive product. The comparatively timid and unoriginal nature of the redaction and the existence of an earlier examination made such an analysis of William of Paleme unnecessary, and it has been replaced by a more general summary and illustration of the redactive process. Neither analysis nor illustration was possible in the case of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, where lack of agreement as to source and the absence of any feasible original necessarily restricts discussion. It seemed, however, possible, by reviewing the various theories as to the origin of the poem and considering what would be involved in creating the existing version from sources of the kind indicated, to distinguish what is original in Sir Gawain from the traditional components of romance. The results are, inevitably, limited and imprecise, but not, perhaps, less valid than the more sweeping conclusions sometimes based upon a dogmatic identification of source.

The order of these detailed studies is roughly chronological, but, in view of the very inexact dating of the romances, they have been grouped on the basis of their relation to the general theme of the dissertation. Without wishing to anticipate the conclusion, the chapters have been arranged to show an increasing maturity and control in the conduct of the alliterative redactions. The first poem, William of Paleme, exemplifies a timid, conservative type of redaction, adhering
closely to the original, while Chevalers Asaigne and Joseph of Armeshe show courageous, if largely unsuccessful, attempts to deal independently with French material. Galagrus and Gawain, much later in date, suggest a fundamental process of redaction, designed to produce a romance very different in conception from the original, which yet succeeds within its own criteria. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight has been considered last, partly in view of the light thrown upon it by the redactions from known French sources, partly because, whether or not it derives from a French original, it displays in a fully developed form features characteristic of the alliterative romances, which appear sporadically and to a limited degree in the other examples considered here.

For illustrative purposes it has been necessary to quote extensively both from the redactions and from their sources. In citing the alliterative poems, a definitive edition of each has been selected, from which the text is reproduced throughout. For the sake of uniformity the idiosyncrasies of the various editors have been ignored, lines have been given with initial capitals and without the caesura in all cases. The editors' indications of doubtful words and letters and of variant forms have also been ignored in the interests of textual clarity. In the case of the Latin and French texts involved, where a modern edition exists the editor's presentation of his text has been accepted, while material from early printed texts and manuscripts has been given, according to modern editorial practice, with the minimum of diacritical apparatus.

The preparation of a dissertation of this kind inevitably involves reference to a wide range of studies and reference works. The Select Bibliography given here has, however, been confined to works cited or referred to in the thesis, with the exception of those listed
as Bibliographies and Works of Reference. In the opening chapter, which is concerned with the opinions of individual scholars, references are given in full on each occasion, elsewhere in abbreviated form only, subsequent to the first occurrence within a particular chapter.

In presenting this dissertation I wish to record my gratitude to those who have directed my work upon it and given me generously of their time and their knowledge: to the late Professor E.J. Manner, who directed my research at Yale; to the late Professor Ernest Hoepffner, under whom I worked at Strasbourg; and, in particular, to Dr. J. P. Calden of the University of St. Andrews, who has guided the project throughout with unfailing patience and helpfulness.
The question of the interrelations of French and English romance during the Middle Ages is part of the wider issue of literary relations between the two countries in the centuries following the Norman Conquest. Opinions on this, as on all aspects of English life during the period, show the most extreme divergence, ranging from a conception of the Conquest as a cultural cataclysm in which English literature and even the English language were swept away and replaced by French, to a virtual denial that it had any literary influence whatsoever.

Que devient l'anglais? Obscur, méprisé, on ne l'entend plus que dans la bouche des francophones dégradés, des ouvriers de la forêt, des porcheres, des paysans, de la classe basse. On ne l'écrira plus ou on ne l'écrira guère. Les gens qui ont assez de loisirs et de sécurité pour lire ou écrire, sont Français; c'est pour lui que l'on invente et qu'on compose; la littérature s'accroît toujours au goût du cœur qui peuvent la goûter et la payer. Même les Anglais se travaillent pour écrire en français... (H. Taine, Histoire de la littérature anglaise, Vol. I, Paris, 1863, pp. 116-7.)

For it must never be forgotten—though it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that it has seldom been remembered—that France had little or no literature to give England; and that what she had (a chevas de poste or two, and some verse sainte-livres rather less forcible than England's) were things of little importance and less influence. It is
an audiable but entirely unhistorical imagination to suggest that French literature was brought to England by the Conquest. There was little or none to bring.  

These are extreme judgements upon limited aspects of the subject. The gradual accumulation of knowledge on the period as a whole has made possible a more balanced estimate of the literary repercussions of the Conquest, and something approximating received opinion has begun to emerge. One result of advancing research has been, without minimising the ultimate importance of French influence, to modify earlier views of its immediate effect of the Norman invasion. It has been emphasised that the events of 1066 brought no abrupt change in the English literary tradition, no even-slight substitution of French culture.

Undoubtedly the comparatively little evidence which still exists does suggest that the transition from Old to Middle English, in both literature and language, was a gradual development and not the sudden change introduced by a conquering army, which it is sometimes presumed to be.  
(H. R. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, 2nd ed., London, 1951, p. 290.)

English culture had been exposed to French influence even before the Conquest took place, but the ultimate importance of the settlement lay, not in the limited Norman contribution to English literature, but in

1) “The invasion of English literature by French influence did not begin on the autumn day that saw Harold’s leviathan defeated by Norman archers on the slopes of Senlac. It had begun in the time of Edward the Confessor, who was the grandson of a Norman duke and had spent five years of exile in Normandy” (G. Sampson, The Complete Cambridge History of English Literature, Cambridge, 1941, p. 18.) Such influence was admittedly slight and difficult to detect. See E. J. Chater, From Saxon to Print: An Introduction to Medieval Literature, Cambridge, 1945, p. 2, and H. R. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, 2nd ed., London, 1951, p. 59.

2) “The Normans were not apostles of culture, and very little of the vernacular literature of France was transplanted to English soil at the Conquest” (G. Sampson, The Complete Cambridge History of English Literature, Cambridge, 1941, p. 10.)
the extension of that influence as a result of the ensuing political connection established between England and France.

There is a fact too often forgotten by students of English writing and even of English history. It is that until Chaucer's time England was only a portion of the King of England's dominions; the rest was on the Continent, in France.

This fact of the oneness of England and much of France in a very great importance to early English literature. The court and official tongue, and, in a large degree, the literary language, of England were in any case French. The intercourse between England and the langue d'oïl, and (though less continued) between England and the langue d'oc, moreover, intense and frequent. The writers and translators were, in a considerable measure, common to England and to both northern and southern France. The channels of communication were constantly open, and the current flowing and obbing through.


It was not until the Twelfth century, when the Conquest had matured into a political union in which England was the dominant member, that intercommunication between the two cultures became fully operative.  

That the literary interchange was so largely one-sided was due to the undoubted pre-eminence of French literature, which, just at this period, experienced a renaissance whose repercussions were felt far beyond the national frontiers.

French literature in the twelfth century had burst suddenly into flower and was enjoying one of its great periods. It was the leading literature of Europe, rich and varied in theme, polite and urbane in spirit, easy and confident in performance. This literature circulated as freely at the English court as in France. In time it furnished a large body of raw material for English poets and gave them new models and standards for imitation and emulation.


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1) "The twelfth century is that in which the change from Old to Middle English finally takes place. The continued union of England and Normandy, and equally important, the later French conquest of the Anglo-Saxon kings and opened the way for the unrestricted entrance of French literary influence into England? (E. M. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, 2nd ed., London, 1951, p. 259.)"
The effects of the cultural dominance of France were more profound and far-reaching than Norman military conquest; the variety of French literature, the novelty of its forms and the quality of its achievements carried it where French political authority could not reach and inspired reproduction and imitation all over Europe.

In Italy and Spain the fashions were taken up; in Germany they conquered even more quickly and thoroughly; the Danes and Swedes and Norwegians learned their ballad measures from the French; even the Icelanders, the only Northern nation with a classical literature and with minds of their own, were caught in the same way. Thus French poetry awakened up theSlav countries, and gave new ideas to the Teutonic; it brought the Teutonic and Italian nations to agree, and that was much more important, to produce new works of their own which might be original in all sorts of ways while still keeping within the limits of the French tradition. Compared with this, all later literary revolutions are secondary and partial changes.

("F.Y.Ken, English Literature: Medieval, London, 1912, pp. 64-5.")

\[1.\] Though the Normans in their military adventures and their pilgrimages were the agents through whom French literary influence reached other countries than England, their own literature, largely confined to the didactic and the militarist, had little of comparable value to contribute. Consequently, the chief cultural effect of the Conquest was not the immediate substitution of a superior Norman literature for an inferior English one, but rather the incidental result of the fact that, at a

\[2.\] "It seems probable that the Normans had a good deal to do as agents in this revolution. They were in relations with many different people. They had Greeks on their borders in Normandy; they conquered England, and then they touched upon the Welsh; they were fond of pilgrimages; they settled in Apulia and Sicily, where they had dealings with Greeks and Saracens as well as Italians." (E.Y.Ken, English Literature: Medieval, London, 1912, pp. 64-5.)

time when France was about to become the literary centre of Europe, it introduced a dialect of French as the political, social and cultural language of England. By the end of the Twelfth century French had established itself as an international literary medium comparable only with Latin, and as such its influence would inevitably have penetrated to England as to every other European country. -the social conditions established by the Conquest merely speeded the process and made its effects more profound.

No doubt that influence would have been considerable even in an Anglo-Saxon England, as it was in fact in Thirteenth century Germany, but matters were simplified by the presence of a foreign aristocracy in Church and State.

(S.S. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, 2nd ed., London, 1951, p. 289.)

Yet, paradoxically, the unusual degree to which England was exposed to French influence, though it made English readers familiar with the new forms and ideas in the original, inhibited their reflection in the native literature as such.

Indeed it might be said that the Norman Conquest made it less easy for the English than it was for the Germans to employ the French ideas when they were writing books of their own in their own language. The French influence was too strong in England; the native language was discouraged; many Englishmen wrote their books in French, instead of making English adaptations from the French. The Germans, who were independent politically, were not tempted in the same way as the English, and in many respects they were more successful than the English as translators from the French, as adapters of French "natives" and ideas.

(W. F. Rendall, English Literature: Medieval, London, 1912, pp. 16-17.)

whereas in countries where the cultural influence of France was not associated with political dominance, native authors were free to enrich

the national literature with whatever they found valuable in the French tradition, the Conquest, by introducing a Normanish aristocracy, whose patronage extended only to works in their own language, forced English writers to abandon the native literature and work only within that tradition.

...it is necessary to remember that for the first two centuries after the Conquest English was culturally a province of France. It was in this country as well as in France that French poets found patrons and cultivated the new poetry of courtly love and adventure. Educated readers in England read, not English, but Latin and French.


Circumstances in the two centuries following the Conquest, when both French and English authors produced works in French and Anglo-Norman which circulated with equal acceptance in both countries, demonstrate the essential artificiality of the whole issue of literary influences under medieval social conditions. However unavoidable in literary history, it is nonetheless misleading to speak of French culture as a concrete force operative in English society of the Twelfth and Thirteenth centuries, at a time when France was not yet a political unity, nor, consciously, a cultural one. A common conception of social cohesion reflected in the feudal system, and a common educational basis rooted in a common faith, gave to Western Europe a sense of unity which

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3) "On this common basis—the Bible, the Church, and the Latin language—was then established the education of Western Europe, and the form it then assumed it retained for over a thousand years almost without change. By this a common seat was given to the intellect, and the nations were disciplined by a common spiritual teaching" (J. Carlyle,
So far as there is such a thing as nationalism in literature it is wholly modern, while in medieval literature and art there is hardly anything of it. This may seem strange to those who imagine that it is only the railway and the steamship which have brought the world together, but the truth is that the movement of ideas and fashions was probably at least as rapid in the Middle Ages as it is today. However this may be, the fact is, I think, clear, that when we come to examine medieval literature we find that it is practically homogeneous, that whether we look at it in England or France, in Germany or in Scandinavia, it has practically the same qualities.


This uniformity of social and cultural backgrounds does much to account for the readiness with which French literature was accepted in other countries and to explain why its influence was not restricted by awareness of its national affiliations.

Medieval French literature is the expression of a feudal and Christian society, and as European society in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was based upon the same principles, nations were prepared to welcome French literature as expressing their own social feelings and aspirations.

(M. J. Chaytor, Upon Servant to Prince: An Introduction to Medieval Literature, Cambridge, 1945, p. 3.)

In an age when the means of communication were severely restricted, the diffusion of intellectual ideas and literary forms was aided by the existence of such international cultural centers as monasteries, courts and universities, and by the relative ease with which linguistic


1) "The court, feudal, episcopal, or royal, is important primarily for the circulation of the courtly type of literature, through the intermediary of jongleurs, trouvères, and Goliards, those "jongleurs of the clerical world". Such composers and collectors required patrons, and only the richer courts could offer them permanent support, so that they were forced migratory, passing from court to court or moving about with a migratory patron... In this way the subject-matter of French poetry spread over western Europe, original French
barriers were surmounted. Literary inter-communion was furthered by the international nature of much of the subject-matter and by the absence of the personal and subjective element in medieval writing as a whole.

There was a general harmony of poetic impulses. Men everywhere sang under the same inspiration, and enjoyed one another's song. Their themes being usually much as same from an indistinct past, being in no wise more the possession of one race than another, nation did not rise up against nation to assert exclusive claims. In all lands primitive myth, Aryan folklore, the fables of remote ages, were handled with the freedom of acknowledged right, without a thought of dispute. Rarely do popular medieval works seem to have been called forth by the inner, the subjective feelings of their authors. They indicate prevailing ideals, tastes, or needs, but seldom the peculiar aspirations of an individual. We scrutinise them not so much to discover the genius of particular men as the development of types; not so much to find out the qualities of him who wrote as those of the society that suggested the writing.

(J. C. S. E. Schofield, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, London, 1906, pp. 5-7.)

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the literary influence of France continued to operate almost unabated in medieval England, when the linguistic effects of the Conquest had already faded and even the upper classes were once again English-speaking. The nobles, both lay and clerical, and the scribes who catered for their literary interests, continued to feel that their

(Cont.) and Provengal lyrics acquired currency in Italy; and French became the courtly language of a large part of Latin Christendom.


1) "In the Middle Ages, early and late, there was very free communication all over Christendom between people of different languages. Languages seem to have given much less trouble than they do nowadays. The general use of Latin, of course, made things easy for those who could speak it; but without Latin, people of different nations appear to have travelled over the world picking up foreign languages as they went along and showing more interest in the poetry and stories of foreign countries than is generally found among modern tourists." (W. P. Ker, *English Literature: Medieval*, London, 1912, p. 50.)
natural cultural affiliations were with France, and that French was the only appropriate medium for sophisticated literature.

In French a large body of poetry was written in England or for English patrons and constituted for over two hundred years the literary entertainment of the English court.

For more than half of our period it is possible to distinguish between what was intended for the aristocratic class and what was intended for the people merely by the language in which it is written. Even after English had regained its position at court numerous works shew their author's intention of writing for 'low men', that is, the ignorant. Seldom outside of the Middle Ages in literature quite so class conscious.


When English again became a literary medium it was chiefly used in popular works intended for the lower classes, while, almost to the end of the period, French remained the language of aristocratic literature, a distinction which is reflected in the number and quality of the surviving manuscripts. With the reappearance of works in the vernacular a triple tradition, in French, Latin and English, was established and continued to the end of the Middle Ages, but inevitably the cultural inferiority of the native language was indicated by the extent to which the literature written in it was subsidiary to and dependent upon that in French and Latin.

The long and difficult struggle of the English language to recapture social and artistic prestige after the Norman Conquest has its parallel in Middle English literature.

1) "The splendidly illuminated manuscripts produced in England during the fourteenth century were in French or Latin and were acquired by wealthy nobles and ecclesiastics; manuscripts in English were, as a rule anything but éditions de luxe; they were intended for readers who could afford nothing elaborate" (E. F. W. Chavasse, From Scribe to Print: An Introduction to Medieval Literature, Oxford, 1949, p. 47).

2) "Henceforth there were three traditions, three bodies of thought and inspiration articulate and inarticulate, each possessing its own appropriate matter, language and technique: the Latin, the French,
In the circumstances it could scarcely have been otherwise. Since the language of the court was basically French until the beginning of the fifteenth century and the language of the Church was Latin throughout the period, and particularly since court and Church were the only important influences bearing upon the literature that has survived from the age, the literature in the vernacular necessarily occupied a secondary position during most of the Middle English period.

...it is no exaggeration to insist that, until the age of Chaucer, when the Middle English period had clearly passed the halfway mark, there was no important piece of English literature written in the vernacular that was not a translation, an imitation, perhaps an outright translation of a French or a Latin original.

(R.Craig, History of English Literature, New York, 1950, p.45.)

Though general opinion upon the period accepts the dependence of English literature upon foreign models, there has been much speculation as to the underlying continuity of native traditions during the post-Conquest centuries and the part which these may have played in giving a certain individuality to the derivative Middle English works. The theory sometimes advanced that the Old English tradition was exhausted and moribund before 1066, is not generally accepted, and, indeed, there is some reason to think that it retained its vitality for a considerable period after the Conquest.

One indication that interest in the older literature did not die with the Conquest is the fact that Old English


1) "...when all external influences are allowed for, the fact remains that the Anglian tradition was not advancing. It was already a fully-developed tradition when the English brought it to England, and no later poet achieved the stylistic security any more than the grave dignity of Beowulf, or its clear pictures of sea and shore and seaman's work...lessness of the verse and stiffening of the style betray a tradition on the decline, and it may be that little of value was being done when the Normans landed" (E.L. Ramsay in The Beginnings of English Literature to Skelton, with H. Orton), 2nd ed., London, 1932, p.11.

2) "On the whole, whatever may have been the case politically, there is no reason to suppose that literature was decadent in eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon England. The prose was certainly vigorous
manuscripts continued to be copied. Two of the six MSS. of the West Saxon Gospels belong to the twelfth century and we have twelfth-century copies of King Alfred's Beowulf, the Distichs of Cædmon, the Gospel of Nicodemus, numerous homilies of Ælfric and others, to mention only a few. Another indication is that the Old English hymns were kept up for nearly a hundred years. Finally there is a good bit of evidence that ballads and poems on historical and legendary themes were still being sung in the time of William of Malmesbury (c. 1125) and Henry of Huntingdon (d. 1155).


There is evidence also which points to imitation of Anglo-Saxon models during the early Middle English period, particularly in the field of religious and homiletic writing. But it is at the sub-literary level, in the oral repetition of folk-tales and popular ballads, that the secular tradition is most likely to have survived until English again became a literary medium.

The early glossmen had been represented, no doubt, by an unbroken line of story-tellers and amusers who were welcome at the firesides of the people, chanted songs of adventure, and miracles of saints by the wayside and at village ales, and whatever there was holiday resort of men. But the literature of the people was, for more than a hundred years after the Conquest, left to perish on their lips. They who were rich enough to pay for written transcripts cared only for works addressed in Latin to the educated world, or to the court in French. Till the end of the twelfth century there was no demand among the rich, in castle or cloister, for written copies of the legends, tales and songs that passed from lip to lip among the people. But when the fusion becomes more complete, when French and Latin literature of the twelfth century has become more and more national, the stream of native literature that had for a time been flowing underground, rises again to the surface and flows on and broadens, and becomes the mainstream into which all others flow.


(Cont.) enough and though we can speak less confidently of the poetry, the little evidence available suggests that the present lack of texts is due largely to accident. (E.A. Wilson, *Early Middle English Literature*, 2nd ed., London, 1951, p. 7.)

1) "The evidence available seems to indicate that though the Old English homiletic tradition continued to exist in the south-east
The tendency of modern scholarship has been to stress this element of continuity and, consequently, to minimize the disruptive effects of the Conquest.

Old English literature had attained to such a pitch of development that foreign influences, however strong, could only transform and not extinguish many of the characteristic features.

The ultimate effects of the Conquest on English literature, either for the better or the worse, were exceptionally important, but today it is the essential continuity between Old and Middle English literature, rather than any differences, which needs emphasis.

(2.2. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, London, 1931, p. 269.)

But when all allowance has been made for the continuity of the native tradition, received opinion on the period regards Middle English literature as largely dependent upon French for forms, themes, and often, indeed, for the detailed treatment of the matter.

A great part of Middle English literature, for whatever class intended, must be recognised as derivative, secondary and imitative. English writers eagerly adopted the themes and fashions of French literature, offering hospitality to the Song of Roland and showing a nice impartiality towards heroes of the French national epic. All through the thirteenth and much of the fourteenth centuries the literature of England was constantly indebted to French originals and followed French examples.


(Cont.) More or less vigorously until the beginning of the thirteenth century it was then completely lost and the Old English models replaced by French. In the west, however, the old traditions retain more of their vigour and French influence encounters a stronger resistance. In that district a Middle English homiletic prose is developed, drawing its inspiration and style from the West Saxon models of the late Old English period, but using a western dialect which seems to have been in long tradition of literary use.

(2.4. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, 2nd ed., London, 1931, p. 154.)

1) "But what is certain is that in English at this time really original writing — writing not of a man's own head — is so rare as to be, in important instances, almost unknown. When a man did act as the eponymous majority of the romance-narratives and not a few others certainly did, merely translate, more or less loosely a single precedent work, he either compiled from several or ....... wrote on subjects which had been so frequently handled, and which had such a large stock of prescribed and expected commonplace and solemn forms appertaining to.
It is now realised, however, that the dependence of English authors upon French models cannot be attributed solely to the conditions of literary subservience established by the Conquest, and that the derivative nature of their work must be interpreted in the light of medieval conceptions of creative originality and the general practice of their continental contemporaries.

Originality was not a major requirement of medieval authors. Story material in particular was looked upon as common property and the notion that one could claim property rights in ideas is seldom encountered. To base one's work on an old and therefore authoritative source was a virtue which led Geoffrey of Monmouth and even greater writers to claim such a source where none existed. It is not surprising that such an attitude raised translation to the level of original creation.


It is recognised that, despite the rareness of original and creative writing, medieval literature shows great diversity of development, continual evolution and much inventiveness in matters of detail.

Nothing is more singular, more characteristic, or more pleasing in medieval literature than the immense mass of its additions to the literary stock of the world, not merely in mere bulk of writing, but in new themes, new touches, new handling of all sorts—contrasted with the almost impossibility of attributing any large original increments of the kind to single persons. It is not made, it grows. .................

If writers seldom absolutely created for themselves, they are as a rule careful never to leave any capital that may come into their hands entirely unimproved, if it be only by fresh borrowings and combinations. And it is perhaps not less reasonable and more fair to suspect that their additions were, in many cases at any rate, not borrowings at all, but original gifts—that the creative fancy, too shy to go altogether alone, took its opportunity of exercise under cover and with the assistance of what existed already.


(Cont.) Then, that his work has almost the character of a translation, or at least compilation? (G. Saintsbury, A Short History of English Literature, 3th ed., London, 1937, p. 112.)
The dependence of so much Middle English literature upon French originals did not, therefore, differentiate it absolutely from other contemporary literatures, and the general practice of the day provided some opportunity at least for the expression of native tastes and interests and the reflection of those elements of the earlier Anglo-Saxon tradition which still persisted.

English poetry had acquired a wealth of material for fiction. It showed, as yet, few traces of intellectual mastery, or artistic moulding of them. The English taste itself still lacked development in form. Hence its power of assimilation could reveal itself in but a limited degree. It was manifested in the first place in the choice of matter; one theme was preferred, or another set aside, according to the writer's craving for strong and lasting excitement. It was further manifested in the skill with which concrete detail was adjusted to the costume of native conceptions, or in the boldness with which the popular poet drew the substance from the artistic form that enveloped it, and clothed it in new and ruder garb. It was manifested in the humour that now and then broke forth, in the intimate relationship with the life of nature that we have observed, in the moral earnestness pervading the poems of didactic writers and satirists, in a certain melancholy inherited by the Englishman from his fathers; finally in graphic directness and simplicity of expression. All in all, the old Teutonic spirit was still discernible.


Viewed in the context of the literary conditions established by the Conquest, the displacement of the Old English epic by the French romance appears inevitable.

It was inevitable that narrative should have been one of the earliest types of literature to feel the effects of the Conquest. The older heroic poetry was essentially aristocratic in tone; it may have appealed also to the common people, but only as aristocratic literature had it any chance of a written existence. This was the class which felt the fullest effects of the Conquest, and which was mainly replaced by Normans with but little interest in the literature of the conquered. We have no reason to suppose that heroic poetry ceased to be composed, but it certainly ceased to be written down, and when narrative poetry was again written in English it had been greatly influenced by contemporary French fashion.
Even when the old subjects were still used they had been completely remodelled and the result was romance and not heroic poetry.

As in most other branches of English literature the immediate effect of the Conquest was a negative one: social changes having removed those who had patronised the Old English epic, the native literature remained devoid of secular narrative verse so long as the Normanised aristocracy was capable of reading the contemporary French counterpart.

The romance in its beginning was an aristocratic type appealing to the tastes of the upper class. As long as French remained the normal language of the English ruling classes the romances that circulated in England were French and those written in England were written in French. This means that romances in English are not to be expected until English begins to displace French as the language of polite society, that is, until the middle of the thirteenth century.

And, inevitably, even when English again became the medium of aristocratic literature, the interim decay of the native tradition of narrative verse forced English authors to rely almost wholly upon French models.

In England, when, after the Anglo-Norman poetry, it became possible again to use the vernacular, even in poems or prose works meant for cultivated society—that is to say, from the latter half of the twelfth to the end of the fourteenth century, almost all the poems of any length were translations, paraphrases, or adaptations of French romance....

Yet, paradoxically, the earliest romances to appear in the English language are concerned, not with the familiar matters of the roman courtois, but with themes drawn from the Germanic and Scandinavian past of the nation and with the deeds of contemporary

English heroes, the so-called Matter of England, with its stories of Horn and Havelok, of Beues of Hamtoun and Guy of Warwick. It is true that, though we know of the existence of a considerable number of such native legends, only those which achieved literary form in French or Anglo-Norman were eventually made use of by English redactors. The introduction of popular folk-lore into the reviving literature of England was apparently a specifically Norman contribution, made at a time when French romance was still known only in the original and had not yet begun to influence the English narrative tradition. And despite the immediate origin of their matter the extant examples are distinctly English and popular in tone, reflecting the tastes of an audience lower in the social scale than the courtly circles for which the French romances were produced. Indeed, these relatively brief

1) I...we cannot help noticing that most of the romances, and certainly the most popular, written in English before 1300 were concerned with English subjects and that only after 1300 do we find stories of the Charlemagne and Arthurian cycles, or of classical legend being adapted for a public that now preferred its entertainment in English rather than in French (A.C. Baugh in A Literary History of England, ed. A.C. Baugh, London, 1950, p. 175.)


3) "The English writers of romance seem to have been dependent on French originals; only when they came across French versions of the English tales would they write them down, though they might prefer to give the current English version rather than translate the French. This dependence of English romancers on French originals may explain why, in the 'Matter of England', only those romances of which earlier French versions are extant have been written down in English? (R. M. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, 2nd ed., London, 1951, p. 26.)

4) "There are those who would still deprive the Normans of much participation in propagating the 'Matter of Britain'; but none can deny them the credit of making considerable English tradition accessible to the world: the extant French romances of Horn et Rimondild, Havelok, Guy de Warwick, and Beues de Hamtoun are the work of Normans in England? (R. H. Schott, English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer, London, 1906, p. 117.)

5) "Though both King Horn and Havelok are based on earlier French
popular tales have so little in common with the sophisticated romans courtois that the conventional classification which, on formal grounds, ranks them together, is misleading and unsatisfactory. The relations of such works to their Anglo-Norman originals, where they can be studied, are therefore, largely invalid as evidence of the influence of French romance upon English redactors.

Apart from this special category of popular narrative, the Anglo-Norman contribution was as indirect as in other departments of English literature: the Conquest merely reinforced the influence of French romance which would, inevitably, have made itself felt in Medieval England whether or not the Norman settlement had taken place.

No doubt the Conquest facilitated the growth of medieval romance in England. Equally certainly French subjects would have made their way into Middle English literature whether the Conquest had intervened or not. The attraction of French subjects and of French models was all pervading during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and is to be found in most European countries.

(R. M. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, 2nd ed., London, 1951, p. 20.)

But the Conquest, by displacing English as the language of the upper classes, ensured that, throughout the period when romance production in France was at its best and most characteristic, the originals could be read in England with equal ease and acceptance. The second half of the Twelfth century with the first half of the Thirteenth is generally regarded as the classic period of the romans courtois, whereas the majority of the English romances were produced in the latter half of

(Cont.) narratives, they seem to reflect the spirit of the English middle class, or to be the work of minstrels little acquainted with the ways of the court. It is among such that we might well look for the authors of romances at a time when the upper class was just beginning to adopt English in numbers. (A. C. Baugh in A Literary History of England, ed. A. C. Baugh, London, 1950, p. 177.)
the Fourteenth and in the Fifteenth century. Intercourse between
the two literatures took place at a period when the romance had already
become widely diversified in form, in subject-matter and in interpreta-
Any consideration of the influence of the French romance upon its
English counterpart must take account of this diversity.

The inevitable evolution of the roman courtois between
its birth in the middle of the Twelfth century and its ultimate emer-
gence in the new narrative literature of the Renaissance makes any
precise definition of the form impossible.

Il faut donc admettre une formule aussi large que possible
et embrasser sous une même dénomination tous les romans
habituellement distincts: ce sont de longs poèmes rimes en
vers octosyllabiques, dont l'étendue, rarement inférieure à
8,000 vers, en dépasse parfois 30,000, et consacrés à des
aventures de chevalerie et d'amour.
(R. Boesmert, Le moyen âge de la littérature française,

In the course of its long reign the French romance displays much
greater variety, even in external aspects of medium and scope, than
such a definition would suggest. The earliest examples of the form,
variously dated in the mid-Twelfth century, are not in the familiar
octosyllabic couplets but employ short rhymed laisses, reminiscent of
the contemporary chanson de geste, whose verses have sometimes eight,
sometimes ten, sometimes as many as twelve syllables. So far as can
be judged from the extant copies, those poems were comparable in length

1) Wells, Manual (pp. 5-7) provides a useful summary of the approximate
dates of extant Middle English romances. Excluding examples of
the Matter of England, but including the English lais, they number:
composed between 1250 and 1350 (mainly after 1300), 19; between 1350
and 1400, 23; after 1400, 30. Not including such prose recensions as
Escoty's Forte Darthur and the early printed editions of Caxton.

2) The Alexander of Albéric de Besançon (or Briançon), generally recog-
nised as the earliest of the surviving romances, is in octosyllabic
lines grouped in monorhymed laisses; its later reworking was carried
with the earlier epic, but within a few decades the form was inflated
to number many thousands of lines. At the same time the flexible
cotounribable couplet made its first appearance as a secular narrative
medium. The facility with which it lent itself to detailed and connected
narration and the demonstration of its capabilities by Chrétien
de Troyes established the short couplet as the paradigmatic medium
of romance. But the period of its ascendance was comparatively brief;
already in the voluble continuations of Chrétien's Perceval, which
extended the cycle to some 5,000 lines, the romance had burgeoned into
formless excess, unrestrained by the poetic medium. Necessarily, the new
elastic prose medium was substituted to cope with the demand for more
and more copious and extensive treatments, making its first appearance in the
vast Langueott or Vulgate cycle of the first quarter of the Thirteenth
century. But the formal development of the romance was not a simple
progression; the development of the prose cycle did not displace the
poetic forms and the two continued to flourish side by side throughout
the Thirteenth century. With the Fourteenth, however, the prose romance
attained the ascendency and retained it until the early presses fixed
the form at the moment when it was about to be merged in the narrative
literature of a new age. These later examples, in prose, may be regarded

(Gent.)ent in decasyllabic lines similarly grouped; while the grand
Roman d'Alemanie, which grew from these, achieved such success with
the decasyllabic line, used as the medium of at least one chanson
d' Hector, as to stamp it thereafter as the Alemanie. See R. Massant,
Le moyen âge (Histoire de la littérature française, (ed. J. Calvet), Vol. I)
1) The Roman de Thèbes, dated c. 1156, numbers over 10,000 lines; the
Roman de Gareme dates c. 1150, not long than 30,000.
2) See C. Paris, Recherche historique de la littérature française au
3) See R. Massant, Le moyen âge (Histoire de la littérature française,
as less perfect, less characteristic than the verse romances of the Twelfth century, but they are not less important in their influence upon Middle English narrative literature.

The range of narrative forms employed in the French romances is matched by an equal variety in their subject matter. The Arthurian legends of the Matter of Britain are commonly thought of as typical romance matter, yet the characteristic features of the *roman courtois* first appear in treatments of the Matter of Antiquity, in the Twelfth century romances of Alexander and Aeneas, of Troy and Thebes, derived from classical sources.

Les *romans* bretons of Chrétien and his contemporaries, though they established the primacy of Celtic story matter, neither displaced the Matter of Antiquity nor excluded material of other origins from treatment by romance authors. Even the Matter of France, whose stories of Charlemagne and other national heroes had furnished the subjects of so many *chansons de geste*, was eventually drawn into the stream of romance and reinterpreted in terms of the new literature.

(See *romans* courtois, don deuques oeuvres antiques avaient fourni la matière, offraient pour la première fois une poésie narrative conforme au goût nouveau, faite pour être lue, et non plus chantée, ils étaient destinés aux classes qui cherchaient à se polir et à se raffiner, particulièrement aux femmes. Ils eurent certainement une influence décisive sur la forme que prirent alors des récits en vers d'une origine différente, notamment les *romans* bretons et les *romans* d'aventure, que nous voyons pulluler de toutes parts peu après l'apparition des premiers *romans* antiques.

As the Middle Ages advanced, romance writers grew more and more catholic in their choice of subject-matter and even at the beginning of the Thirteenth century the diversity of sources employed was too great to permit any rigid classification. The category of the *roman d'aventure* is usually reserved for stories derived from the popular literature of the East.

Les histoires de ce genre paraissent être nées dans les imaginations orientales; elles ont passé aux romanciers grecs; mais à côté des formes pédantes et conventionnelles que ceux-ci leur ont données, elles continueront de vivre dans la tradition orale et pénétreront ainsi dans le monde gréco-romain, où la mythologie enfantait des fables parfois analogues;... Il est impossible, dans la plupart des cas, de dire à quelle source précisément ont puisé nos romanciers français du XIIe siècle; nous retrouvons les motifs de leurs fictions un peu partout, principalement dans cet Orient qui reste toujours le grand réservoir originaire des fables; souvent nous sommes fondés à supposer un intermédiaire byzantin....

(See F. Passy, *Histoire littéraire de la littérature française au moyen âge*, Paris, 1927, pp. 120-21.)

Other romances, similarly classified, are believed to reproduce incidents from contemporary life in fictional form. Such variety of matter within a single category of romance illustrates the attitude of French authors who were clearly prepared to accept material from any source, provided that it was capable of the interpretation they wished to put upon it.

So far as interpretation is concerned, our general conception of the French romance implies a relatively consistent treatment

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of the story-matter, a persistent interest in certain types of incident illustrative of contemporary social codes and reflecting the life of a particular section of society. In fast, however, the characterization of the romance in respect of its presentation and interpretation of narrative material is even more difficult than the definition of its form and subject matter. Clearly, the first essential is to distinguish the *roman couthois* from the narrative form which had preceded it and continued to compete with it for the attention of the medieval audience. But in terms of content and interpretation no absolute distinction between romance and *chanson de geste* is possible.

In form both are metrical narratives and in subject-matter fictions dealing with heroic adventure and achievement. There is, to be sure, a general preference for a martial theme on the part of the epic author and for an amatory or adventurous theme on the part of the author of romance. But since neither the epic author holds exclusively to the one nor the author of romance to the others, the mere choice of theme cannot be employed as an infallible means of distinguishing the two.


The frequency with which military adventure features in the romance and the presence of romantic elements, admittedly ambivalent, in the *chanson de geste* prevents any rigid classification on this basis. Yet it is possible to detect a certain progressive development, whereby French narrative, from having been very largely concerned with military incident and heroic virtues, gradually admits an ever-increasing element of the romantic and sentimental. Both the old forms and the new catered for the tastes and reflected the interests of a society which, in the Twelfth century as in the preceding age, was fundamentally military in organization, in occupation and, therefore, in its codes and ideals. In the course of the century, however, gradual changes in the
life of the feudal aristocracy modified some elements of their military
code and introduced others which were foreign to it.

La diminution des guerres laisse quelques loisirs aux barons;
la vie intérieure des châteaux se fait plus intime et plus
familiale, et pour honorer la mère de Dieu, les moines
ont appris à honorer leur propre mère et celle de leurs
enfants. Sous l'influence des idées chrétiennes, cause essen-
tielle de l'abaissement des mœurs, le rôle de la femme
s'accroît et s'embellit. Délée de plus en plus à la vie des
hommes, elle impose ses goûts et ses curiosités et c'est
souvent à sa demande que le pont-levis s'abaissa pour livrer
passage aux jongleurs errants qu'elle se plaît à recevoir.
(R. Bossuat, Le moyen âge (Histoire de la littérature française,
(ed. J. Calvet), Paris, 1931, pp. 81-2.)

The ready response of French poets to the changing interests of their
aristocratic patrons is reflected by changes in their selection and
interpretation of story-matters, and it is this, rather than any signifi-
cant alteration in poetic form or narrative sources, which marks the
early romances as a new departure in Medieval literature.

It is true that the change in interpretation is associated
with the introduction of the Matter of Antiquity, but the new material
derived from the classical epic and its fundamental appeal was closely
akin to that of the Matter of France. It is not the presence in the
original sources of such romantic incidents as those concerning Ionesco,
Dido and Lotusile, Jason and Medea, Achilles and Polyxena, Troilus and
Briseida, which differentiates the new literature from the old, but
the eagerness with which these have been seized upon, exploited and
expanded by the French authors. The influence of Ovid, evident in the
highly formalized, analytical treatment of love, in the duplication of
conventional psychological situations and in the exploitation of emotion
for its own sake, did more to create a form expressive of the new
interests of French society than the substitution of classical epic
for national epic could have done. The extent to which the classical matter was made the vehicle of contemporary interests is reflected not merely in the emotional content of the romances but in the thoroughness with which a version of medieval life, architecture, dress, manner and social usage has been superimposed on it. As a result of this ready response to the tastes of the age, the earliest examples of the roman courtois contain most of the elements which characterise the form throughout its existence.

Despite the lack of inhibition with which the matter of antiquity was romancised, the fact remains that the fully developed roman courtois only appears with the introduction of the matter of Britain, whose interpretation was not influenced by earlier literary associations. Christian and his contemporaries were at liberty to use the Arthurian legends for the exposition of their patrons' way of life in all its aspects, social, moral and physical. The narrative of adventures gave them ample opportunity to demonstrate the code of chivalry, not only in its active military aspects but in its influence upon the social conduct of the knight as champion of the weak and


2) The adaptation of the Roman de Thèbes from the Thèbaid of Statius provides a good example of the change of emphasis by which the romance evolved distinctive characteristics differentiating it from the chanson de geste. [...]. Le sujet avait de quoi plaire au moyen âge par les aventures extraordinaires qui en forment le tissu, par l'abondance des récits de batailles et l'histoire du long siège de Thèbes. Notre auteur l'a traité fort librement en en beaucoup altéré, s'en tenant à l'élément mythologique. Il y a gagné à plaisir mais les improvisateurs il y a introduit des épisodes de son invention, d'un caractère tout féodal des descriptions détaillées de la vie la plus sombre et de ses personnages, de la réalité même et surtout il a développé des épisodes d'amour à peine discrétion dans le poème de Statius et a donné aux héros un rôle beaucoup plus saillant. Autant de traits qui se retrouveront chez ses imitateurs et deviendront pour le roman médiéval les motifs en soi. (C. Paris, Écoles historique de la littérature médiévale, 1900-01, pp. 151-5.)

3) It was only by gradual and imperceptible stages that the epic
defender of his own and his lady's honour. But in their hands the

Courtly Love received equal attention with Chivalry, exercising its control upon the hero even more rigidly than the heroic code had formerly done and exalting the heroine whom the epic had virtually ignored. To them the narrative interest of their material was not more important than the opportunities which it offered them of examining aspects of these courtly codes in operation and applying to the discussion of social and ethical problems the elaborate system of analysis which they had evolved.

They aimed to show the true nature and the emotional phenomena of *fins amors*, that irresistible, compelling, amorous affection of the heart, which enchains mind and body, subdues the will, refines the manners, inflicts agonies of doubt, fear, and despair, works havoc with physical health, but repairs its ravages with its joys, and rewards devoted loyalty with lasting happiness. For their purpose the trouvères of the twelfth century fashioned the machinery of *fine- spun* analysis, reflection, complaints, pleas, symptoms, and stereotyped subtleties of thought and imagery, which marks the medieval society romance.

(See Barrow, *The Medieval Society Romances*, New York, 1924, pp. 8-9.)

Just as this analytical treatment of contemporary codes represents the development of a process initiated in the romances of Antiquity, so the projection of the contemporary setting as a backdrop to the action, introduced there, serves to give reality and immediacy to the vague world of Arthur and his followers. But by the very nature of romance the picture of contemporary society presented by in the *romanes scolaires*

(Continued.) Suffered *romantic* transformation. The author was the radical in the process—be it was who felt free to undertake the alteration and the audience the conservative. Only in an occasional cycle—such a cycle as that of Arthur, that dealt with the heroic traditions of an obscure and despised people—was it possible to overcome completely the influence of epic tradition. (W.S. Griffin, "The Definition of Romance", *J.R.S.*, LXXXVIII, pp. 30-70, Cambridge, Mass., 1923, p. 52.)
is idealised rather than realistic, representing both its codes and its physical setting not as they were but as men would have liked them to be.

One of their merits in the eyes of those for whom they were written must have been that they provided an escape from the failures or partial successes of life as it was lived by showing them that life idealised. The dresses and armour, the feasts and hunts, were cut to the pattern of things known, but on these patterns the romancer embroidered every splendour his imagination could conjure up. In the romances, everything must be of a gorgeousness to which real life could not attain. Hence the length and monotony of some of the descriptions.

This idealisation of ordinary life is found in other than material things. Doubtless, in fact, knights did not always act in accordance with the highest conceptions of chivalric conduct. In the Middle Ages, wife-beating was not unknown, even among the nobler classes of society. But in the romances, the hero is a superman.

(D. Everett, Essays on Middle English Literature, Oxford, 1955, p. 8)

The codes celebrated in the courtly romance were essentially amoral and, despite the formal observance of such religious ceremonies as those connected with the making of a knight, the earlier examples, at least, were more secular in their interests than the chansons de geste. With the appearance of the Grail motif in Chrétien’s last work, still more with its elaboration in the Perceval Continuations and the prose Lancelot, a fundamental change of emphasis took place.

The Christian basis of Chivalry, hitherto ignored or taken for granted, became the dominant concern of many romance authors and to it all other elements were related. Love and adventure in arms remained, but they were incidental to the quest for the Grail and the fulfilment of manifold services in defence of Holy Church, and of the weak and oppressed, which his faith laid upon the knight. New story-matter made its appearance within the traditional framework: in tracing the history of the Grail from its rescue after the crucifixion by Joseph of Arimathea...
to its 'achievement' by Celtic, Irish, and Frankian matter was linked with the transmission of the Christian faith to Britain. As part of this process the springs of action, those mysterious events upon which the latter of Britain depended for the development of its narrative and which the authors of secular romance had accepted without question as convenient plot-machinery, were interpreted as divine intervention and their significance expounded at length. Events were no longer taken at their face value or enjoyed for their own sake; their allegorical significance must be discovered and their symbolism explained. It their best these moralised romances represent an imaginative extension of the *roman courtois*, restraining the excesses of Courtly Love and giving wider validity to chivalric ideas, but at their worst they are mechanical and artificial, with a transparent didacticism very foreign to the true atmosphere of romance.

Such works represent a collateral development of the form and the secular romances continued to compete with them, both types showing the ever-increasing complexity and the cyclic evolution characteristic of Thirteenth century narrative. Amongst other divergent forms one at least is sufficiently distinctive to require separate classification as the *roman d'aventure*.

Les romans compris sous ce nom ont pour objet, comme les romans grecs (qui d'ailleurs ont suggéré quelques-uns des nôtres), d'éveiller la curiosité ou la sensibilité par un tableau des traversées que la fortune apporte dans les vies humaines; ils ressemblent encore aux romans grecs, et un général à tous les romans romanesques jusqu'à nos jours, par certaines conventions; le dénouement y est toujours heureux, et les vicissitudes de l'action naissent des obstacles de tout genre qui retardent l'union de deux amants; ces conventions venaient de loin, et se sont continuées.

(3, Paris, Jeanne, histoire de la littérature française au moyen âge, Paris, 1907, p.120.)

1) See H.Bousquet, Le moyen âge (Histoire de la littérature française, (ed. J. Delvet), Vol.1), Paris, 1911, p.133.)
Amidst the endless adventures which characterize such romances, military and amorous incidents play an important part, but they are included for their intrinsic interest, not merely as a means of demonstrating the codes of Chivalry and Courtly love. Here story-telling claims pride of place over social or moral exposition and the presentation of contemporary life bears a much closer relation to reality than the idealized conception of the roman courtois, despite the fact that the narrative content is often equally fantastic in nature.

The success of the romance in all its variant forms did not entirely displace the chanson de geste, but its influence brought about a change in the content and treatment of the older narrative form.

Après 1150, le caractère primitif de la chanson de geste s'est beaucoup altéré. La technique devient plus savante, l'art prévaut sur l'inspiration, une tendance se marque à adopter les idées du roman en formation; aristocratie, analyse psychologique, merveilleux, utilisation de thèmes amoureux.

(F. Panther, Histoire littéraire de la France médiévale (VIe - XIVe siècles), Paris, 1954, p. 190.)

The military adventures and heroic ideals of the older literature had not lost their attraction for the readers of romances, and the cyclic evolution of the epic, extending the originals to include the youth and ancestry of familiar heroes and tracing the careers of their descendants, allowed the introduction, within a traditional context, of those elements which the contemporary reader had come to expect.


(Die deutsche Nachklang der mittelalterlichen Dichtung (romanische Literatur), 1. Heft, Berlin, 1933, p. 90.)
Despite these attempts to bring the epic into line with contemporary tastes it was progressively neglected by the sophisticated classes and fell into the hands of an audience which saw in it qualities other than those for which it had originally been valued.

Au XIIe siècle, la clientèle change avec la politique et les rapports sociaux. La bourgeoisie qui s'est guérie jusqu'à la cour, veut prendre part à ses divertissements. Mais pour elle et pour le peuple dont elle n'est que l'avant-garde, il est inutile de se mettre en frais. Avec la tourmente d'esprit didactique qu'elle manifeste à tout propos dans tous les domaines, elle n'est pas éloignée de voir dans la matière épique la forme la plus accessible de l'histoire. Et si, pour accélérer l'habileté, des poètes arrivent à la flatteur en célèbrant son triomphe avant la lettre, ils n'ont pas à s'en repentir.

Le succés de la bourgeoisie réaliste et positive était d'avoir pour corollaire la disparition d'un genre où le merveilleux suppose une crédulité qu'elle n'a plus et les thèmes généraux, le respect d'une aristocratie qu'elle surprise d'autant plus que sa résistance est plus faible et sa consistance plus discutable. Et pourtant cette décadence n'implique pas la disparition totale, mais une transfor- mation à laquelle il faut convenir que les chansons n'ont rien gagné.


The patronage of the new mercantile class brought about many changes in the traditional chanson de geste; increased emphasis was laid upon adventure for its own sake, to the neglect of heroic ideals which could have no meaning for those delivered by their station from practising them, and the necessary variety of incident was achieved by drawing on material quite unconnected with the Charlemagne legends, often involving fantastic elements foreign to the nature of the epic. Significantly the classic heroes are partly replaced by others who act as they did, who display the same courage and skill in arms, but who, unlike them,

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are the sons of merchants, and win honour in a sphere where a century
earlier, they could have played only a menial role. The appeal of such
popular figures for members of their own class is obvious, but the
fantastic adventures in which they engage and their failure to adhere
to any accepted code of conduct, are as foreign to the original concep-
tion of the chanson de geste as the rambling prose cycles in which
these bourgeois versions are cast.

The romance proved equally susceptible to the effects of
social change and from the latter half of the Fourteenth century ex-
perienced a similar decadence. The preoccupation of the military
nobility with the bitter realities of the Hundred Years' War constitu-
ted an unfavourable climate for the cultivation of romantic idealism.
True, the prose romances of the Thirteenth century retained their pop-
ularity; the cycles were frequently re-copied and even extended through-
out the Fifteenth century (2). But the tradition was no longer living and
developing and the new additions were no more than pale imitations of
earlier incidents. No longer at liberty to celebrate the social ideas
of a dominant class, the romance ceased to be selective, but absorbed
material from every available source, yet, despite its heterogeneous
nature, grew increasingly artificial and mechanical in composition.

Le cadre général est alors tiré d'un conte populaire, le plus
souvent d'origine orientale, et les épisodes, comme les person-
naages, réunissent sous les genres narratifs: légendes hagi-
ographiques, chansons de geste, romans bretons et romans d'avent-
ures.

1) For an account of the 'villain' as an epic hero see J. Groszland,

2) See E. Sannaz, Le moyen âge (Histoire de la littérature française,
The growing influence of the bourgeoisie was still more fatal to the romance than to the chanson de geste. Their realistic approach to life was fundamentally antipathetic to the subtle idealism of Chivalry and Courtly Love and in response to their taste a new literature, essentially different from the old, began to emerge.

Tournant le dos aux ruines des temps révolus, elle s'applique à refléter la réalité présente, l'image de la société que cent ans de guerre ont produite. Et s'il s'y trouve là des survivances du passé, c'est que, précisément, la lutte continuait entre l'idéal chevaleresque et le vent du réalisme qui soufflait la bourgeoisie.


The result, so far as the romance was concerned, were works which continued to exploit the traditional machinery and even to celebrate the traditional ideals—though with inappropriate didacticism—but introduced a note of cynicism and mockery, a realistic appraisal of courtly convention and a barely-concealed contempt of the decadent nobility.

They reflected the spirit of a new age, an age cynical to romance in any of the forms in which it had flourished since the middle of the Twelfth century.

By the end of the Fifteenth century the influence of French

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1) The most striking example of such 'anti-romantic' romances in the Petit Jean de Saintré of Antoine de la Sale in which the ideals of Chivalry are expanded and ridiculed in a spirit of earthy realism. See, R. Bossuet, La moyen âge (Histoire de la littérature française, (ed. J. Calvet), Vol. I), Paris, 1931, pp. 301-4.)
literature upon that of other European countries was already in decline. The special circumstances which governed its relations with English literature remained in operation, however, late enough to make it probable that the numerous variations of the romance, in form, subject-matter and interpretation, should be represented there. No obvious reason for discrimination against any particular category of romance suggests itself and it can be assumed that when English versions began to appear towards the close of the Thirteenth century examples of the diversified French production were readily available for translation or imitation, and that subsequent developments would also be represented in English libraries. In effect, it has been generally accepted that, throughout the period, most English romances were directly based upon French versions available within the country. (1) The assumption has been challenged, but, though it represents an imaginative extension of existing evidence, views to the contrary tend to be even more subjective in nature. (2) Under these circumstances it is recognised that any attempt to evaluate the work of

1) "By far the greater number of the verse-romances are based upon French originals? (A. H. Billings, A Guide to the Middle English Metrical Romances, [Yule Studies in English, IX], New York, 1901, p. 4.)

"practically all the extant versions are based on French originals? (Sells, Manual, p. l.) "Although originals of many English romances have not yet been discovered, it is practically certain that nearly all existing romances were based on French versions? (A. B. Taylor, An Introduction to Medieval Romance, London, 1930, p. 149.)

"most of our English romances belong to the fourteenth century and nearly all of them are translations or adaptations from French originals? (A. G. Baugh in A Literary History of England, (ed. A. G. Baugh), London, 1950, p. 174.)

2) J. Swire, (Medieval English Poetry: The Non-Chaucerian Tradition, London, 1957, p. 109) "even the distinctive character of most English romances, but without producing any evidence as to their sources which would refute the common assumption: "Several of the English romances have been recognised to be renderings from earlier French romances; others have been guessed to be so; and the tendency has been to assume that almost all are, yet several of the English romances - notably those of the Gawain cycle - are in some respects very different in character from the French romances?"
English romance writers must necessarily involve "the huge task of demonstrating, wherever an individual author is identifiable or 'separable', and the sources of his work are known, whether he has shown himself to be a good or bad artist in relation to those sources." And, similarly, it is accepted that the distinctive tastes and interests of English readers can best be appreciated by contrasting the romance production of France and England, and, where possible, by comparing individual romances with their French originals.

Such a process reveals no clear-cut contrast so far as the choice of medium is concerned. It is true that in England as in France, though with a time-lag of over a century and a half—, the verse romance eventually gave place to prose versions, but only the most general classification can be applied to the various poetic forms employed.

The metre of the English romances is commonly the short couplet. Several early romances are in the twelve-line tail-rime stanza, and from about 1350 both the shorter and the longer tail-rime were popular. The pieces of this later period are generally inferior, and, as Chaucer's Sir Thomas indicates were probably realized to be so by the cultivated. From about 1350, too, the alliterative verse, sometimes rime and commonly bound up into stanzas, was employed. This revival and these modifications of the old measures were used in some of the best of the English poems. The English prose romances are all after 1400.

(J. E. Wace, A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400, New Haven, 1926, pp. 3-3.)

The octosyllabic couplet, as the medium of the classic French romance, is generally associated with sophisticated versions, the tail-rhyme stanza with more popular redactions, but they appear, in effect, to have been used indiscriminately and to an equal extent. Though it need not

1) G. Kane, Middle English Literature, London, 1951, p. 11, Note.
2) Of the romances listed by Wace's Manual, Ch. I) 25 employ the short couplet and 26 tail-rhyme stanzas of various length, while a small number of others use decasyllabic couplets and mixed verse forms.
be assured that couplet versions derive from originals in the same medium, the use of the tail-rhyme stanza, with its native and minstrel associations, does suggest more thorough assimilation of borrowed matter and greater originality of adaptation.

...the native and popular element of the early English romance, as compared with its French model, appears at best advantage in the twelve-lined strophe. Foreign materials do not seem to have been quite naturalised until they had taken this shape. The reason is plain. Deviations of form compel and invite greater freedom of treatment. A strophe structure leads to a fixed manner of presentation which is most acceptable to popular poetry, especially the Germanic. (B. ten Brink, History of English Literature (trans. H. M. Kennedy), Vol. I, London, 1893, pp. 249-50.)

Even if it is accepted that the tail-rhyme romances were intended for a more popular audience than those in other forms, nothing can be assumed as to the success of the redaction or the skill of the English author in handling his chosen medium.

To classify the romances by their prosody is of little advantage in a literary evaluation. The tail rhyme stanza in which many of them were composed seems a measure uniquely unsuited for narrative use; its unrobust and mincing pace constantly breaks the flow of the narrative, and it is quite without dignity or importance. Yet two of the best romances are written in this medium, and some of the others attain a certain degree of excellence despite it. The octosyllabic couplet, probably the measure most suited to the purpose and material of the romances, light and rapid in its motion, with wide ranges of pace and mood, by no means guaranteed success to its users. It could become irritatingly breathless or, conversely, have its back broken by being made to carry heavy or involved ideas. Its very virtue of ease of use sometimes led poets to give it insufficient attention, and in consequence to write loose and slipshod verse. (C. Kane, Middle English Literature, London, 1951, pp. 8-9.)

Classification of the English romances with regard to their subject-matter is equally impossible and pointless. A general contrast with the French romances is apparent since there has been no conscious discrimination between epic and romantic material, no association of the Matter of France with the distinctive form of the chanson de geste, and no progressive emergence of new types of narrative.
The various 'matters' made their appearance more or less simultaneously and were accepted indiscriminately.

It was as if the full cornucopia of romantic poesy had been shaken out over the English people. As from a cornucopia everything streams in motley disorder, so the English seized at random the rich treasures of French poetry, bringing forth what was valuable or worthless, ancient or modern, popular or courtly, in order to adapt it for the home public. No organic relation between form and matter, such as we find in the French epic, existed in these English imitations. The chanson de geste was not handled differently from the roman d'aventure, nor the romance of Alexander otherwise than the romances of the Arthurian cycle.


The extent to which the French romance had already proliferated in form and content before English authors began to draw upon it made this inevitable. As a result, the dating of the Middle English romances does not relate to any general evolution of the form or indicate a progressive maturity of treatment.

Few of the romances can be dated with assurance, and, in addition, the surviving versions are not necessarily the latest or the most authoritative forms of their stories or the best that were current. Even so it is possible to observe that there was no general steady development of quality in the English romances; that the exceptional romances, for instance those of Chaucer, had little influence on the genre as a whole; and that the date of a romance, if we are able to fix it, need have no relation to its quality.

(G. Kane, *Middle English Literature*, London, 1951, p. 7.)

So far as the surviving versions indicate, there is equally little connection between the dating of the Middle English romances and the subject-matter with which they are concerned. Apart from the significantly early group of popular tales on the Matter of England, none of the major categories of narrative can be associated with any particular period. Nor do the English romances reflect any consistent choice of one category in preference to the others, and the number which cannot be assigned to any of the conventional divisions of romance material
is considerable.

Generalisations upon the choice of story-matter by Middle English redactors tend to ignore the distinctive nature of each category of material as it originally appeared in French literature.

There is an important distinction between the 'matter of France' and the 'matters' of Britain and Rome; this distinction belongs more properly to the history of French literature, but it ought not to be neglected here.

The poems about Charlemagne and his peers, and others of the same sort, are sometimes called the old French epics; the French name for them is *chansons de geste*. Those epics have not only a different form from the French Arthurian romances and the French *Roman de Troie*. What is of more importance for English poetry, there is generally a different tone and sentiment. They are older, stronger, more heroic, more like *Beowulf* or the *Vulcan* poem; the romances of the 'matter of Britain', on the other hand, are the fashionable novels of the twelfth century; their subjects are really taken from contemporary polite society. They are love-stories, and their motive chiefly is to represent the fortunes, and above all, the sentiments of true lovers. Roughly speaking, the 'matter of France' is action; the 'matter of Britain' is sentiment. The 'matter of Rome' is mixed;.....


In effect, the distinctions between the 'matters' have largely been obscured in Middle English literature by the failure of redactors to recognise them in their selection or treatment of source material.

English romance writers sometimes took French epics for their sources and dealt with them as far as possible as they did with other narrative material. There is never, it is true, the same sophistication as in the Arthurian romances. Descriptions are fewer and shorter and not concerned much with fashionable contemporary life. The stories are mainly about fighting, and ladies and love-making mostly play a small part;.....

In these ways the English Charlemagne romances bear the traces of their origin; but apart from these things there is no difference between these romances and others.


It would, however, be unwise to suppose that English authors confounded

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1) According to Wells' classification (Manual, pp. 3–4) the numbers are:
   - Matter of Britain (omitting Le Jamal's *Brut*), 22; Matter of France, 15;
   - Matter of Antiquity, 19; miscellaneous, 29.
distinct forms or deliberately romanticised the French epic since this, in effect, was what took place in the later development of French narrative literature. The relatively late versions current in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth centuries had already undergone a degree of adulteration.

Fashioned by French and Anglo-Norman poets and reciters from material supplied by popular or literary tradition, modified by each successive generation to suit prevailing tastes, these legends reached the English-speaking people of England for the most part in late and elaborately wrought forms. There is no English version of any of the Charlemagne legends that reproduces the grave and unadorned simplicity of the French chansons de geste of the eleventh century.


Some authorities interpret the inclusion of such romanticised epics amongst the English versions as a concession to the tastes of a popular audience, while others attribute it to a fundamental national preference, whose influence they detect in all English romances, both popular and courtly.

...English medieval romancers turned less to pure romance of adventure and more to epic legend. Pure romance had been well developed on English soil, but in the French tongue. When English literature came to its own again it showed a much stronger recollection of old epic traditions than obtained in French literature. Romantic the English literature of the later middle ages is certainly; but as a whole it is less purely romantic; it breaks less with its past.

(C. S. Baldwin, *An Introduction to English Medieval Literature*, New York, 1914, p. 117.)

Lack of agreement as to whether features which distinguish English from French romance are national or social in origin affects every aspect of this subject. In contrasting French and English audience...

1) "The English Charlemagne romances, many of which are late, give the impression that they were written for a popular, not a fashionable, audience, or by writers who were driven to this somewhat uncongenial material by the insatiable demand for romances" (D. Everett, *Essays on Middle English Literature*, Oxford, 1955, p. 20, Note 2.)
for example, it seems impossible to decide whether differences of
totality or of social status are of greater importance. It is
generally assumed that everything which differentiates the English
romances from their French counterparts stems from the fact that the
redactions were prepared for readers much lower in the social scale
than those for whom the originals were produced.

Throughout this chivalric literature a difference is apparent
between the more polished and sophisticated poems meant for
refined circles, and the ruder lays on the same subjects seasoned
to the taste of the vulgar. With some exceptions the English
versions are of this more rustic type.

(S.A. Baker in A History of English Literature (ed. J. Buchan),
London, 1923, p. 616.)

Such a generalisation might safely be applied to the early Middle
English period, during which French was still a living literary language
amongst the upper classes. But it is scarcely applicable to the latter
part of the age of romance, when, except within the narrow circle of the
court, French was no longer acceptable as a literary medium. The assu-
umption that the authors of the Middle English romances were literary
hacks of little education or social standing, common minstrels who knew
their French originals only at second-hand, is an over-simplification of
the same type. In so far as it refers to redactors of the earlier

1) In romance, as in other forms of literature, such a contrast is char-
acteristic of this early period. “The two literatures exist side by
side and for essentially different classes of readers. This becomes
clear when we examine the versions of some of the romances which are
to be found in both languages. Those in Anglo-French are obviously
written for a higher class than are the English versions of them.”
(R. H. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, London, 2nd ed. 1951, p. 12.)

2) “...the crudity of most existing versions seems to indicate authors
of little culture, though not, of course, uneducated. Some will have
been clerks, men of the lower classes educated by ecclesiastics be-
cause their intelligence was above the average, and others merely
minstrels who made their compositions not from French, but from
earlier English versions written sometimes in a different dialect
and therefore unintelligible to the audience of another district.”
period it is, no doubt, appropriate enough.

For a century and more after Layamon, romance in England fell into the hands of journeymen minstrels, whose work is of small account in comparison with the finished poems and the strange and wonderful prose romances written during this period in France. These minstrels had as little ambition as originality, and were content to paraphrase, in a matter-of-fact way and in the pedestrian ballad style of oral recitation, the less recondite adventures in the French romances, without troubling their heads about shades of sentiment, codes of love ethics, or mystic symbolism. They no doubt worked in fresh material now and then from current folk-tales; the many lays, for instance, in which Gawain is the predominant figure are peculiarly English in manners, temper and scenery. But even the romances that seem most English may possibly have been adapted from French originals now lost; and where the insular derivative can be placed side by side with a Continental story we find ourselves comparing a rustic rhymester with a poet two centuries ahead of him in literary accomplishment.


But such a characterization, however appropriate to the Thirteenth century, is scarcely applicable to the age of Malory, of Carton and Lord Berners, nor, indeed, to the age of Chaucer.

Opinions based upon an overall view of the English romances tend to discount the value of generalizations of this kind, finding in them a diversity of subject-matter, a variety of interest, and a range of literary ability as great as that displayed by their French counterparts.

They seem to reflect almost every stage of development and every shade of literary cultivation or crudity discernible in the French originals upon which their authors and adaptors or translators drew. The English borrowings were made over several centuries, after the great models had been created by the French poets, and while the nature of the romances in French was being repeatedly changed. From this bewildering variety the English romance writers selected and refashioned, or simply translated with no apparent system, as their own inclinations or those of their patrons or public moved them. All kinds of stories, French, Norman-French, native, oriental or classical, were apparently equally acceptable. Combinations of subject, kind of treatment and quality occur in no generally predictable relationship. Extremes of good and bad occur even within the several versions of a single story.

(G. Kane, *Middle English Literature*, London, 1951, pp. 6-7.)
Such restatements of the complexity of the situation are a valuable corrective to generalisations based upon the comparison of certain Middle English romances with the classic French form represented by the works of Chrétien de Troyes. They provide a necessary reminder that, in England as in France, "there was not one literary public then any more than now; the available literature had its long range from tragedy to trash, and the minstrels themselves, who were not merely the singers and actors, but the journalists and gossips of their day, resembled the modern 'professional' in extremes of success and mediocrity."

And in this connection it must also be noted that though the most polished and perfect of the French romances are those originally produced for aristocratic audiences, by comparison with which the bourgeois versions appear crude and debased, no clear-cut distinction can be made upon this basis in the case of the English romances.

The division between popular and courtly romances is of little value as an index of quality. The fault which we would most confidently expect to find in the romances composed for uncultivated audiences, namely the reduction of stories to their simplest elements until they become bare accounts of incidents, occurs also in treatments evidently designed for a courtly public. In absurdities of exaggeration the courtly romances can offend as badly as the popular.

"G. Kane, Middle English Literature, London, 1951, p. 7."

Any attempt to attribute the success or failure of English redactors to the influence exerted upon them by a particular social class can only be misleading.

The problem of defining the nature and conduct of the English redactions is further complicated, not only by the difficulty

of determining, in many instances, which of several existing French versions most closely represents the source of the English work, but also by the realisation that the extant text of the latter may bear only a remote resemblance to the redaction as it originally appeared. It is necessary to take into account many factors which may have obscured the redactor's original intentions.

Particularly we have to allow for the injury which many of the versions have evidently suffered in oral transmission or at the hands of copyists. We have to remember that such of the English romances as have survived have done so mostly as 'versions'—like the folk-ballads—in varying states of completeness. A number have survived in a very broken-down and fragmentary condition. Generically, therefore, we have to think of each romance that has survived rather as a 'version' than as the one and only, the unique original.


The concern of scholars with textual study has tended to obscure the part played by oral transmission in an age when the private reader was in a tiny minority, and to conceal the extent to which the existing romances are the result of a cumulative process of growth and adaptation.

All over we must think of hearers, not readers; and in poetry, once heard or read, there was no property or copyright, no accepted relation between poet and poem. In a more ambitious work there would be a presentation copy for the patron who commissioned it or whose favour was sought, there may have been others for private friends, but the circulation which mattered was due to surreptitious copies passing from hand to hand. Thus no authentic or standard text could exist. In the result we find incorporation, alteration, variation, extension. This is notorious in the text of romances. Behind may lie not an original but a skeleton more or less articulated. These romances pre-eminently were heard, not read; and the rival minstrel who heard, even if only once, a new story, plot or complication was able to appropriate it to his own use and build out the details at his pleasure.


So, just as the haphazard selection of English romances which has been preserved to us cannot automatically be accepted as representative of
the total romance production throughout the Middle English period, the redactive process cannot be exemplified by any individual text, even where the textual history has been determined with greater accuracy than is normally possible.

Even allowing, however, for the fact that existing copies are probably at several removes from the original version produced by the English author, they suggest that he regarded his function as that of an adaptor rather than a translator of French material.

The term 'adaptation' expresses much better than translation the actual relation between French and English romances. 'Translation' has a suggestion of Bohn, but the real parallel is the adaptation of French plays to the London stage. The adaptor seldom approaches his models with the reverence, the loving and conscientious devotion, of a disciple. He was a man of business anxious to meet the taste of his customers; and, speaking generally, he regarded the whole body of romances as new material to be exploited in any way he deemed proper.


Adaptation is, however, a term of wide reference which must cover a variety of operations, including, in the earlier period, a process of redaction which took place at a sub-literary level.

...sagas like those of Charlemagne and the twelve peers were carried, in the first third of the thirteenth century, from the hall of the Norman baron to the servants' rooms, and thence to the neighbouring village; but it is very doubtful whether literature had anything to do with such transference of intellectual possessions. Of pieces sung or recited at that time by English harpers and singers, *sagas or discors*, there remains to us but little; and indeed nothing in the original form. We do not know what their attitude was towards their gentler Norman colleagues. Their service as mediators between two heterogeneous spheres of thought and material is, for that epoch, almost entirely beyond the reach of our judgment. In the field of literature the task of mediation fell, in the first place, to the ecclesiast and the literary activity of the clergy, if not its concern, was for a long time confined to theological and didactic subjects.

The linguistic circumstances of the period had an important bearing upon the conduct of romance redactions.

The process was, we know, complicated for medieval English poetry by the fact that there was undoubtedly in early medieval England a phase of bilingualism—a phase when many people were both French and English speaking. During this phase, we may guess, the redactions from French into English were made. We have no right to assume, however, that such redactions were necessarily what we think of as translations, involving the intervention of reading and writing. As poems were made and shaped orally by minstrels, the redactions could be (and possibly often were, up to the fourteenth century) made orally.


Even in the Fourteenth century, when the increasing confinement of bilingualism to the aristocratic and educated classes implies the existence of a redactor-in-chief working directly from a French text, the process of oral adaptation may well have continued in the mouths of those who made his work available to popular audiences.

The poet did not always recite his own work. Frequently he was a cleric and gave his poem to some sagger, who made his fortune from it. With favourite subjects, competition sometimes called forth more than one version. Parts of different renderings were welded together by necessity or accident. The sagger himself oftentimes felt the throbbing of a poetic vein, and even when possessing little talent, he understood somewhat the technique of form, and was able, in an emergency, to help himself out with a fixed formula. At all events he knew his public, and had learned by long experience what was pleasing and what was not. Hence he omitted passages involving finer shading of analysis in concession to a coarser taste, and lingered with stronger emphasis on those parts where he was sure of his effect. Mutilations were still more frequently owing to weakness of memory and misconception. In the mouths of the saggars, therefore, the form of these poems diverged ever more from that of the original text.


Under these circumstances, many, if not the greater number, of Middle English romances must be regarded, not simply as copies of French originals, but as products of a complex process in which a
variety of elements, native as well as foreign, have been combined.

Although presumably all English romances were based on French versions, not all existing versions derive directly from the French; some are copies or adaptations of earlier English versions, now lost, and of others the direct original is unknown. Where two or more MSS. of the same romance are still preserved, the variations are often so great that mechanical copying from a written version cannot be assumed. There are at least three possible reasons allowing for almost indefinite variations: (1) deliberate incorporation of new episodes to suit new or local interests; (2) transference from one dialect to another, in which poets would not always trouble to give an exact rendering; (3) the copying of a romance from memory. Not only would an enterprising adapter of a French romance be sometimes inspired to incorporate elements of local interest—local anecdotes and traditions—but later English poets of other districts might similarly alter passages in copying an English version.

(A. B. Taylor, in Introduction to Medieval Romance, London, 1930, pp. 159-60.)

This type of literary creation in which a work was regarded, not as the product of a single intelligence, inalienable and unalterable, but as a natural growth in whose evolution many minds played a part and in which all men claimed common property, was responsible for the haphazard and unfinished appearance of so much medieval literature in all forms and languages. But the derivative nature of the Middle English romance and the fact that, in the earlier period at least, it was left to the

1) See also A. H. Billings, A Guide to the Middle English Metrical Romances, (Yale Studies in English, IX), New York, 1901, pp. x-xi.

2) "Why, we ask, this rough incompleteness in poems when cathedrals are so finished and fine? Perhaps the best men did not give themselves up to literature, since there were so many other ways of imaginative achievement. Intellectual giants devoted abundant energy to the construction of systems of theology, carefully reasoned and most subtle, to the successful administration of vast enterprises, to the harmonious control of masses of men. Possibly the external conditions of book-making also worked to the disadvantage of literary art. The new methods of reproduction, the difficulties of rapid reading, the serial style of rendition, militated against proportion and unity. Scribes, we know, interpolated, combined, transformed at will. Redactors often 'improved' until the original design was obscured. Theirs surely is the discredit of confusing many a clear narrative, of making turbid many a poet's thought. Had we medieval works as they left their writers' hands, had we all they wrote, our estimate of their merit might be quite different? (W. H. Schöfileld, English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer, London, 1906, pp. 22-3.)
care of those whose literary interests were negligible, who cared only for action and incident and not for the manner in which they were conveyed, gave full force to its effects. As a result, many of the surviving romances cannot be regarded as definitive texts, representative of the creative skill of an individual author or of the tastes and interests of a particular audience. They represent rather a single stage in a process of evolution, of which, even where we possess several related texts, we can trace only the vaguest outline. In the case of such composite romances, generalisations upon English redactions, the working-methods of English authors and the formative influence of their audience can only be accepted where they are supported by evidence from a variety of sources. And such evidence can indicate only the more obvious and general features of the redactive process, those which were common to the majority of Middle English romance writers, rather than the creative talents of an individual.

There is, however, sufficient evidence to suggest that in almost every instance redaction was a process of omission and abbreviation. Despite considerable disparity of length the English romances are, on the whole, much shorter than the French examples. But the degree of abbreviation must necessarily have differed greatly in individual cases, and, as the success or failure of the redaction often depends upon the skill or clairvoyance with which omissions have been made, generalisation is particularly inadequate in this connection. Most statements of the kind assume that the process was haphazard in operation and unfortunate in effect.

Since the French originals have usually been adapted by mediocre poets the drastic rehandling which they felt to be necessary often resulted in clumsy and inartistic work.
The main thread of the story is retained, but the imperfect appreciation of artistic detail often leads to the omission of points of vital significance, or of explanations essential to a full understanding of the story.


Such generalisations suggest that the use of abbreviation was entirely indiscriminate, intended merely to lighten the redactor's task and reduce the original to a bare narrative outline. Individual examples show, however, that though many English authors may simply have failed to appreciate the artistic function of the features they omitted, others had in mind a personal conception of the romance to which much in the original version was superfluous. The Fourteenth century Gawain and Gauain reproduces every incident of Chrétien's *Yvain, ou le Chevalier au Lion*, but reduces its 6,800 octosyllabic lines to just over 4,000 of the same length.

What is compressed, modified, or even omitted is the detail. Since Chrétien's detail is not merely added for richness, but spent to bring out setting, character, or mood, a change here is a change in the total effect, a shifting of interests from the persons to the events. Nor is the omission stupid. The translator threw the emphasis where he felt his own interest, in the movement of the story. Such touches, few though they are, show that the English translator could not have been insensible to Chrétien's use of detail for the suggestion of character or mood. He translated with unusual intelligence and spirit, not literally, but with substantial accuracy. His omissions must have been deliberate. Nevertheless, they help us to see better Chrétien's delicacy of art. Chrétien is superior, not only in verse and style, but in clear fullness of personal detail and in finer touches of characterisation. The translator keeps the whole value of the plan and transitions which hold the tale together; he does not keep the whole value of the situation. His work is like a strong black-and-white copy of a painting.


In other instances, where no guiding principle is apparent the very nature of the French original, over-loaded and cumbered by extraneous narrative detail, means that the balance of profit and loss resulting
from policy of abbreviation almost inevitably weighs in favour of the English redaction. The Thirteenth century Floris and Blancheheffer provides an example in point.

The French original seems to have been followed fairly closely, though with a constant abridgement which results in a version of only about a third of the length of the original. The descriptive passages, the illustrative scenes and episodes are usually omitted with the result that the English romance often seems disjointed, and the lack of artistic detail occasionally leads to awkward confusion. For example, the translator tells of the disguise adopted by Floris, but omits the details which show him acting his part, and the whole episode of the discovery of the lovers is spoilt by unimaginative cutting. Occasionally these omissions improve the story, as when the artistic elaboration or philosophical moralisation of the French poet are avoided, though one suspects that the improvement is unintentional.

Nevertheless, he succeeds in telling a simple unaffected story and in emphasising the pathos which most medieval authors found so difficult. Most of the critical passages retain their dramatic effect and are skilfully told without any of the frequent moralising which so often spoils a medieval tale.

(R. E. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, 2nd ed., London, 1951, pp. 228-9.)

In this case the relation of the English version to its French source is of significant interest.

In France, the original version took two forms—the 'aristocratic version', developed for a select audience, and the 'popular version' composed for the lower orders. The former emphasises the effiminate, the amorous, the sentimental, the decorative; the latter neglects sentiment, cares little for description, and presents Floris as a hero of physical prowess winning his lady by force of arms. The English piece is one of the most charming of the extant English romances. It lacks the characteristics of the 'popular' French version. Close parallels with the texts preserved show that the writer followed very closely, and frequently translated word for word, the main element of some lost French original of the 'aristocratic' type, antecedent to any text now extant. But this poem has probably but two-fifths the length of the French pieces. With English feeling, for an English audience, the author qualified the sentiment of his original; he condensed the descriptive matter.....; and he omitted non-essential decorative pieces.....

(J. E. Wells, A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050-1400, New Haven, 1916, pp. 140-41.)
The circumstances in this instance illustrate the difficulty of defining the redactive process, in general or in a specific example, on the basis of the existing French and English texts. They suggest, also, the inadvisability of equating French romance solely with aristocratic refinement of taste and English romance solely with the crude and simple interests of a popular audience. We are reminded that French authors also catered for a popular audience and produced abbreviated redactions which concentrated upon action to the neglect of evocative description, subtlety of characterization and refinement of sentiment. Yet an English redactor, faced with the choice between courtly and popular versions of a French work, would not necessarily have considered the latter most in keeping with his own conception of romance. Nor, more significantly, would his own version, though intended for a popular audience, have aimed at the same effects or achieved the same results as a French popularization. It would be an over-simplification to conceive the relations between English and French romance solely in terms of the contrast between audiences at opposite ends of the social scale. The range and variety of French romance are so great, the time-lag before the appearance of English versions and the total period of romance production so long, and the social context in both countries so diversified as to postulate a process of redaction scarcely less varied and complex in aim and in achievement.

In the light of these considerations, one fundamental issue presents itself: to what extent can the English romances, so largely and directly derived from French works, be said to reflect the tastes and interests of native readers.

In spite of its varied and incongruous sources, French romance faithfully reflects French sentiment and ideals because it was based largely on oral legends and written by skilled poets who
were able to adapt those legends to suit French tastes. English romance was written largely by poets with far less skill and adapted from the written versions of Frenchmen; for both reasons, therefore, it could not be easily fashioned to suit English tastes, and so reflects less faithfully English sentiment. French romance was also written for and reflects the ideals of the educated classes, ideals which, except in decadent periods, will reflect the genius and character of the nation more closely than those of the illiterate. The bulk of English romance was an adaptation of literature designed for the higher classes of a foreign race to suit the tastes of the lower classes in England. To reflect accurately the ideals even of his audience the romancer would need more than skill and experience in adapting themes from foreign writers; he would have to select suitable themes. Since English poets were unable or unwilling to compose romance except from a written version, their choice was limited; the result, therefore, was that they reflect English sentiment only very indirectly.


This statement is typical of many on the subject, but as well as adopting an over-simplified view of the social affiliation of the romances, it assumes a dichotomy in the literary tastes of the various classes of society.

One fact, however, deserves emphasis here, namely, that in former times the tastes of the different ranks of society were not so unlike in character as in quality; that the lower classes enjoyed the same sort of literature as the nobility, only in a ruder form.

(N.H. Schofield, English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer, London, 1908, p. 8.)

The unified nature of medieval society made it possible for individuals to recognize and accept aspects of the social picture as reflected in contemporary literature, whether or not they formed part of their own way of life. The unity of Western civilization was sufficient to give the social concepts celebrated by the romances equal validity in France and England.

England shared with the rest of Western Europe during the Middle Ages a certain uniformity of development. Historians recognize this. Chivalry, one of the major directing influences of the period, for instance, was an international ideal. Moreover, since the relations of France and England were very
close from the time of the Norman Conquest to the time when the romances were written, it is natural that the two countries should have many developments in common. For the same reason we may expect that some concepts in the English romances will be of the general native characteristics of an age in a number of ways homogeneous, and that at times they will even express individual French attitudes. But this does not mean that they are completely un-English.


There was no reason, therefore, why the material of French romance should have been less acceptable or comprehensible to those for whom the vernacular versions were made than to their compatriots who were able to read the originals. The diversity of French romance was sufficient to cater for a wide variety of interests, and the tastes of English audiences are reflected, to a certain extent, by the selection of source material, and, more fully, by the treatment accorded to it by English redactors.

Since the English romances are not generally slavish translations of their originals, we can hardly doubt that English authors shaped the material of their sources to the expression of their own temperament. The forms which folktales and older legends take in the English romances, and the comparison of the English romances with their French originals demonstrate the freedom with which the English adapted their story matter.


In studying the forms taken by the expression of English taste and temperament in the romances it is essential to keep in mind the diversity of the surviving examples.

It is very interesting to see how the English translated and adapted the polite French poems, because the different examples show so many different degrees of ambition and capacity among the native English. In the style of the English romances—of which there are a great many varieties—one may read the history of the people; the romances bring one into relation with different types of mind and different stages of culture.


The necessity for literary historians to concentrate upon general
characteristics of the form has led to neglect of this diversity, in favour of generalizations based upon features common to most of the romances.

Amongst these the statement frequently recurs that English redactors, in drawing upon French romances for their story-matter, were uninfluenced by the technical and artistic mastery in the treatment of narrative, the analysis of character and sentiment, which constitutes the distinctive achievement of the originals at their best.

It was in the Arthurian cycle, as an ideal representation of high life, that the French court-epic attained its highest technical perfection. In the English imitations this art is, for the most part, ignored; and instead of heightening the courtliness of his version by all the resources he might have learned from Chrétien de Troyes, the adapter makes shift with some long-winded prose romance, and chimes it into poetry by the light of nature.


The assumption is that such redactors were catering for audiences to whom neither the courtliness nor the artistry of French romance made any appeal. Social circumstances made it impossible for such elements to appear, unaltered, in English works, at least during the earlier part of the period.

As long as the use of French in every-day life was counted a sign of higher rank and greater refinement, it was impossible for a strictly artistic tendency completely to enter the national poetry. The English chivalric poetry hardly ever appeared in pure court-curb. It was more or less affected by a popular element. We rarely discover that purity and finish of form which is wont to flourish in art schools. Generally, those liberties were taken in which the folk-song delighted. There were contrasts, but they were so variously connected and indistinctly defined that they seemed to blend; as in English society no impassable chasm separates the peer from the commoner, the gentry from the free landowners and citizens.


1) It has been suggested that this lack of interest in courtly ideals and literary qualities accounts for the apparent neglect of the most polished and sophisticated of French romances, those of Chrétien, by English redactors. See J. A. Taylor, An Introduction to Medieval Romance, London, 1930, p. 150.
But the great range of literary ability displayed in the French romances, and the existence of 'popular' versions in which the courtly element has been ignored or vulgarised, prevents any clear-cut contrast with the English examples, amongst which some, at least, show a certain refinement of literary taste and awareness of social codes.

It is, however, generally recognised that the English romances as a class contain some persistent features which suggest a contrast in basic tastes and interests. Of these the most fundamental is the selective treatment of French sources, by which narratives of adventure, designed to cater for those interested in action and swift-moving incident, were separated from the description, characterization, and emotional analysis, which, for the original readers, gave depth and conviction to the stories.

...the successful French novelists of the twelfth century appealed to both tastes, and dealt equally in sensation and sentiment; they did not often limit themselves to what was always their chief interest, the moods of lovers. They worked these into plots of adventure, mystery, fairy magic; the adventures were too good to be lost; so the less refined English readers, who were puzzled or wearied by sentimental conversations, were not able to do without the elegant romances. They read them; and they skipped. The skipping was done for them, generally, when the romances were translated into English; the English versions are shorter than the French in most cases where comparison is possible. As a general rule, the English took the adventurous, sensational part of the French romances, and let the language of the heart alone.

(W. P. Ker, English Literature: Medieval, London, 1912, p. 72.) (1)

The degree of selectivity varies greatly from case to case, but in general the Middle English romances are characterised by the tastes of an audience whose interest lay in adventure, in action and in variety of incident.

Generally speaking, their taste was easily satisfied. What they wanted was adventure - slaughter of Saracens, fights with dragons and giants, rightful heirs getting their own again, innocent princesses championed against their felon adversaries. Such commodities were purveyed by popular authors, who adapted from the French what suited them and left out what the English liked least. (G. Sampson, The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature, Cambridge, 1941, p. 40.)

And, by contrast, it is the elements most characteristic of the roman courtois - exposition of the aristocratic codes of Chivalry and Courtly Love, analysis of sentiment and portrayal of character - which are scamped or ignored by English redactors, in response, it is assumed to the dictates of a popular audience.

Unfortunately, whilst the French romances were written for an aristocratic audience, the English versions seem to have been adapted by ruder poets for a lower class. The result is that the French emphasis on the ideals of chivalry and the conventions of courtly love is entirely absent. The different audience was interested more in adventure and fighting and cared little for the sentimental analysis so dear to the noble patronesses of the French romancers; Lancelot, the typical hero of courtly love, never became popular in England. In the English versions the love interest is almost always quite straightforward and only rarely are the feminine characters of much importance. Whilst the sentiment is omitted or bungled, the adventures are reproduced in full, often indeed even duplicated. (R. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, 2nd ed., London, 1951, p. 229.)

Such conclusions reflect the majority opinion amongst those who have studied the romances, and, no doubt, constitute a valid statement of the general contrast between the French and English versions. But, in this as in other aspects of the subject, there is a risk of oversimplifying the situation. Just as the generalization which equates French romance with a courtly and English romance with a popular audience is manifestly inapplicable in certain cases, so also there are exceptions to the statement that English redactors confined their attention to the narratives of adventure in their French originals, entirely neglecting the emotional elements they contained.
In the first place it is not always true that the French romances are adventurous. Some of them are almost purely love-stories—sentiment from beginning to end. Further, it is proved that one of these, *Armedas et Ydoine*—a French romance written in England—was much liked in England by many whose proper language was English; there is no English version of it extant, and perhaps there never was one, but it was certainly well known outside the limited refined society for which it was composed. And again there may be found examples where the English adaptor instead of skipping sets himself to wrestle with the original—saying to himself, "I will not be beaten by this culture; I will get to the end of it and lose nothing; it shall be made to go into the English language".


And as well as the redactions which select other elements than that of adventurous incident from their sources, there are some, particularly amongst the prose versions of the later Middle English period, which reproduce the originals closely and in full. As almost literal translations of French works these have usually been discounted as evidence of 

(1) As almost literal translations of French works these have usually been discounted as evidence of English tastes and interests. But they may, with equal justification, be interpreted as reflecting the tastes of an audience to whom all elements in the original were equally attractive, Englishmen of a type and class which, until that time, had been able to read such romances in the unexpurgated French versions.

Romances which have come to terms with those elements in their sources reflecting the codes of courtly society, are, however, regarded as exceptions to the general rule, represented by selective redactions which confine themselves to the narration of adventures.

1) "Finally, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries prose translations of French romances were made, sometimes by scholars like Carton, sometimes for patrons, and sometimes by noblemen themselves like Lord Berners. This group may be ignored here because, being for the most part close translation, it cannot be regarded as English literature reflecting English sentiment" (A. B. Taylor, *An Introduction to Medieval Romance*, London, 1930, p. 149.)
To the readers of such romances it was the hero of action, physically robust, skilled in sports and arms, who made most appeal, rather than the perfect knight of the *roman courtois*, polished in manner and subtle in his observance of aristocratic codes.

The audience of French aristocratic romance, composed largely of cultured women who lived in an atmosphere of courtliness and gallantry, were more attracted by courtly heroes than by heroes famed for physical prowess, by knights who made devotion to women their chief duty, not devotion to the service of the State. The audience of early English romance were more attracted by physical activity and feats of strength. Even today the Latin races stress etiquette and chivalrous conduct, whereas the English race stresses prowess in outdoor sports.


Inevitably, English readers were more interested in the hero himself, and in his doings, than in his relation with the heroine, whose person, emotions, and influence upon the knight in her service, occupy such a large part of French romance.

The French poet was more often preoccupied with the question of courtly love — fine amour he calls it. His heroes and heroines love according to the formula laid down by the troubadours, and their conduct and characters are moulded by it. There are fewer giants but many more nice points of love casuistry in the French society romances, and the heroine, if never quite as important as the hero, is essential to every stage of plot development. Her character is also more varied in its shadings; she is proud, petulant, capricious one moment, yielding and submissive the next, as the well-defined traditions of courtly love decreed. She is thus at the same time more complex and less individual than we find her in the representative romances in English.

(A. E. Harris, "The Heroine of the Middle English Romances", *Western Reserve University Bulletin, New Series, XXXI (Western Reserve Studies, Vol. 2, No. 3)*, Cleveland, Ohio, 1923, p. 6.)

And similarly, though the English redactor may find space in which to describe the physical attributes of his hero, particularly where they are displayed in action, he shows little patience with the elaborate descriptions of the heroine's person and dress, which occupy the skill and attention of French poets at such length.
The English poet of this age is too much interested in the progress of his narrative to pause for long on its ornamentation. He is inclined to dispose of the question of his heroine’s beauty in a terse, sometimes prosaic, phrase: "the fayrest wyoom under mone". Frequently he introduces her with the assertion that she is peerless in beauty, and then considers the matter closed.

"...for the most part the romancer assumes that his lady is fair and is unwilling to devote to the elaboration of the fact space that might be better spent on the prowess of the hero. Like-wise the description of the lady’s costume does not delay the story for long. The general effect is one of richness, gained chiefly through beautiful fabrics and jewels, some of which had been recently introduced from the Orient."

(A. E. Harris, "The Heroine of the Middle English Romances", Western Reserve University Bulletin, New Series, XXXI (Western Reserve Studies, Vol. 2, No. 3), Cleveland, Ohio, 1928, pp. 15-16.)

It should not, however, be forgotten that this type of negative redaction, dependent upon its source for narrative incident, yet rejecting the elements which reflect the ideals of courtly society, as well as passages of description and analysis, is not confined to English literature. The redactor of the prose Bérimus, for example, achieved much the same effect as the authors of many Middle English romances.

He appears to have had in view a public which was not greatly interested in "la courtoisie" and much that the term implied; an analysis of the nature and effects of love is cut short; detailed descriptions of combats and ceremonies are summarised with the object of maintaining rapidity of action and of suppressing the various devices, the circumlocutions and padding which the jongleur used in the interests of rime. Otherwise, he follows the original pretty closely and does not hesitate to repeat it almost verbatim.

(H. J. Chaytor, From Script to Print: An Introduction to Medieval Literature, Cambridge, 1945, p. 94.)

Though in the hands of English authors the redactive process was largely one of omission and abbreviation, their attitude to the social concepts inherent in the romances is not entirely negative. Their treatment of French originals occasionally suggests not merely failure to appreciate but positive dislike and disapproval of the codes of behaviour illustrated there.
...examples tend to indicate that though the English stories generally reproduce the French, the English point of view is frequently demonstrated in the variations made in the didactic use to which the incidents are put. Many situations or modes of conduct accepted by the French are either modified as if they were distasteful to the English mind, or are used as the basis of expressions of shame, chagrin or regret.

(A. D. Dist, Love and War in the Middle English Romances, London, 1947, pp. 7-3.)

The omission or modification of much material concerning Courtly love, in particular the unhealthily introspective passages of emotional analysis and self-questioning, makes the English romances appear less artificial, if psychologically less profound, more natural, if also more naive, than their French originals. To the modern mind, at least, they seem, by their neglect of esoteric moral situations and emphasis upon rational behaviour, to have greater sincerity and give a more realistic picture of contemporary society.

In spite of all their distortions and exaggerations, the English romances are frequently more direct and sincere than the French, even though less attractive to an educated reader by reason of their crudity. They lack the deep significance of the best French versions, but they also refrain from lingering over the details of love-making and social etiquette. Their constant aim was to record the deeds of a brave man, to relate how he served the State, or won his wife by daring exploits, and in spite of their crude exaggerations and misplaced emphasis, they are almost invariably wholesome. They rarely have as subject any theme which idealised or even countenanced a code of conduct which was opposed to generally recognised moral conventions.


To what extent the English romances reflect the moral viewpoint of their readers, rather than their lack of familiarity with the ethical system celebrated by the romans courtois, is difficult to determine. Informed opinion suggests that their treatment of French originals expresses an aspect of native tradition which was deeply opposed to much found there.

The study of Kurt Lippsmann (Das ritterliche Persönlichkeitstheil in der mittelenglischen Literatur des 13 und 14 Jahrhunderts,
The acceptance of an ethical code based upon marriage rather than illicit love is most clearly reflected in the behaviour of the heroine.

The morals of the English heroine are essentially sounder. The contrast between French and English literature throughout the history of their development had here its beginning. For the most part the moral issue is disregarded in the French genre, and when it is raised the sophisticated tone and atmosphere preclude its being taken seriously. The heroine's scruples are concerned almost entirely with her reputation. Flammans, Fenne, and the fair lady of Fayel, once assured of secrecy, accepted lovers with little or no hesitation. With them love has nothing to do with marriage. With the English heroine, on the other hand, marriage is always the goal.

Evidences of laxity, at least on the part of the lady, are too few to be seriously considered. There is some plain speaking, a few voluptuous scenes, here and there a hint of coarseness; but on the whole the heroine of the English romances is not an unworthy prototype of the heroine of the first English novel—the virtuous Pamela.

(A.E. Harris, "The Heroine of the Middle English Romances", Western Reserve University Bulletin, New Series, XXI (Western Reserve Studies, Vol. 2, No. 3), Cleveland, Ohio, 1926, pp. 6-7.)

Despite the relatively minor importance of the heroine in the English romances, this difference in the moral basis of her relationship with the hero has affected the tone and atmosphere of the entire narrative.
The French romances are most frequently praised for their fertility of invention, regularity of construction and the controlled organization of their story-matter, though it is admitted that these qualities are more apparent by comparison with the more haphazard English versions than by any absolute standards. Their superiority in psychological penetration, subtlety of characterization, vivid evocation of the social context, and general literary polish is unchallenged by the English romances, whose virtues, admittedly, lie elsewhere.

The early English romance did not, as a whole, reach the level of its French model. Not only the honour of invention must be ascribed to the French (invention in composition, not in material), but also that of a more delicate execution and more harmonious presentation. The frequently abridged English versions are, as a rule, poorer, ruder, and of a less complete logical structure; and their excelling qualities, a more popular tone, a more vigorous painting within narrower compass, do not make good these defects. But we are charmed by the joy they manifest in nature, in the green forests, and in hunting, and we contemplate not without satisfaction this rude primeval force that does not
excluded deep feeling, even if it often indulges in coarseness. Thus the English muse, if less delicate and dainty than her French sister, was less artificial; if more passionate was less lascivious; and in her enthusiasm for what is grandly colossal, her joy in the actual, she showed, even when repeating foreign romances, many of the features that were to characterise her in the time of her full splendour.


Though it is admitted that a few amongst the later English romances attained a literary standard comparable with the best French examples, such generalisations as this are widely accepted. The virtues on which they comment in the English redactions are largely negative, in particular the neglect of elements in the French originals which, to the modern taste, seem distorted and artificial. For the most part, however, they assume that the French romances represent the form at its most perfect and criticise the redactions for their failure to reproduce them fully and without flaw.

The imperfections of the redactions are attributed partly to the intractability of their source-matter and partly to the ineptitude of their authors.

The French romances usually consisted of a medley of ideas, borrowed from various sources, but walled together harmoniously. Even an accomplished poet would therefore experience great difficulty in making drastic abbreviations and alterations without bungling, unless he recast the whole theme. The average English romancer was not an accomplished poet, rarely attempted any systematic recasting, and so, in attempting to reduce his original to half or less than half-size and eliminate such episodes as would not be attractive, he produced clumsy and inartistic work. Sometimes features of vital significance were omitted, and sometimes explanations essential to the full understanding of the theme or of an individual episode.


To the influence of a popular audience, unfamiliar with the underlying social concepts of the *roman courtois*, is attributed the neglect and debasement of the idealistic content which made the best of French romances more than mere narratives of incident and adventure.
In medieval romantic poetry the English verse-romance has always been assigned a humble place. As an expression of the ideals of the feudal society in the days of chivalry, it is inferior to the verse-romance of both France and Germany. Even in its better representatives it has lost something of the chivalric, and has gained a more popular tone, a natural result of its origin among a simpler, ruder, more democratic people than the French, and in a period when the heyday of chivalry was past. (A.H. Billings, A Guide to the Middle English Metrical Romances, Yale Studies in English, IX, New York, 1901, p. xix.)

The somewhat shop-worn and jaded effect conveyed by many of the redactions, their lack of conviction and spontaneity, is regarded as the inevitable result of a literary inheritance received at second-hand, in an age when the social forces which had originally given it meaning and vitality were no longer in operation.

Arthurian romance enjoyed its great creative period in the latter part of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth, particularly in France and Germany. It was the period of Chrétien de Troyes, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Gottfried von Strassburg, and others only less great. As the thirteenth century wore on, the impulse lost some of its force. The English Arthurian romances follow later, and, since their sources are nearly all French reflect this earlier development. But to read them without knowing their French background is like seeing a play in which we have missed the second act. It might seem reasonable to expect that the English romances, built on so solid a French foundation, would reach an equally high level. Unfortunately, the great days of medieval romance were past, and English poets, with a few notable exceptions, were unable to recapture the spontaneity and fire of their Continental predecessors. (A.C. Baugh in A Literary History of England, ed. A.C. Baugh, London, 1950, p. 189.)

These comments, like so many on the Middle English romances, are concerned to explain the comparative failure of the redactions. They are, perhaps, too often based upon the contrast with Chrétien's works, which are surely representative of the French romance in general, too rarely upon the detailed comparison of individual examples with their sources. But even those who can only praise the negative virtues of the English romances, their modification of artificial features in the French
originals or isolation of a simple, straightforward narrative by
neglect of its complicated descriptive and analytical context, readily
admit that, in most instances, the process of redaction was sufficiently
fundamental to make the English author responsible for the selection
and control of all major elements and to reflect the tastes and
interests of English readers.

In the study of the Middle English romances little distin­
ction has been made between the alliterative and the non-alliterative
examples. Yet there is a sufficient body of opinion to suggest that
not all the generalisations made about the romances as a whole are
applicable to those in alliterative verse. This impression is ultim­
ately based upon an awareness of the native origins of the medium and
the continuity of tradition which links it with a period of English
literature unaffected by French influence. The history of English
verse in the early post-Conquest centuries is obscure but the survival
of the alliterative medium is undoubted.

Unrhymed alliterative verse suddenly reappeared in the middle
of the fourteenth century as a vehicle for romance. Where the
verse came from is not known clearly to anyone. The new allit­
erative verse was not a battered survival of the old English
line, but a regular and clearly understood form. It must have
been hidden away somewhere underground—continuing in a purer
tradition than happens to have found its way into extant manu­
scripts—till, at last, there is this striking revival in the
reign of Edward III. Plainly more went on in the writing of
poetry than we know, or shall know, anything about.

(G. Sampson, *The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature*.
Cambridge, 1941, p. 42.) (1)

1) What is the explanation of this revival, and this sudden great
vogue of alliterative poetry? It cannot have been a new invention,
or a reconstruction; it would not in that case have copied, as it
sometimes does, the rhythm of the old English verse in a way which
is unlike the ordinary rhythm of the fourteenth century. The only
reasonable explanation is that somewhere in England there was a
tradition of alliterative verse keeping in the main to the old rules
of rhythm as it kept something of the old vocabulary, and escaping
the disease which affected the old verse elsewhere? (W. P. Ker, *English
Literature: Medieval*, London, 1912, pp. 58-60.)
The record of alliterative production prior to the Fourteenth century is tenous but sufficient to suggest the uninterrupted use of the medium. The poets of the alliterative revival inherited not only the basic features of the traditional medium but also something of the native literary spirit originally associated with it, to which their work gave new meaning and impetus.

On the purely literary side there is no real gap in continuity from Old English times. At least three streams of influence, the heroic, the homiletic and the popular, had never died, but were destined to make their influence felt at the revival. At various points they came into touch with foreign influences, but at heart the works of the Alliterative Revival are traditional. While there is no break in literary tradition, there is in a real sense a revival, a renewed poetic vitality and inspiration. Doubtless something may have been lost between Beowulf and the earliest alliterative poems of the fourteenth century, but there cannot have been anything very extensive. About 1350 there is in the west a new outburst of feeling, a new interest in poetry. Doubtless the inspiration had spread from the south and east.

(J.F. Oakden, Alliterative Poetry in Middle English: A Survey of the Traditions, Manchester, 1935, p.86.)

The date and area of the alliterative revival are related to the slowness with which French influence penetrated to the more remote areas of England and to the particular vigour with which native traditions survived in the West. The vitality of the movement is attributed, in part, to a resurgence of national feeling in reaction against foreign domination in English life and foreign influence in


2) "In the West.....the old traditions retain more of their vigour and French influence encounters stronger resistance" (W.M. Wilson, Early Middle English Literature, 2nd ed., London, 1951, p.11c.) The strength of native literary traditions in this area is often associated with the revival of the Wessex Anglo-Saxon dialect as a literary medium upon the decay of West Saxon. In any case the appearance in post-Conquest times of a literary prose in the West, which must have years of use behind it, seems to demand some such explanation. It is in this dialect that the Old English homiletic prose, as well as the alliterative
English literature. The new poetry therefore emerged from a region which was still in touch with native literary traditions, at a period when English authors had gained sufficient self-confidence to approach foreign material with a degree of independence.

In the works which they produced new and old, native and foreign, traditional and extraneous elements are mingled in a way which seems to many commentators the distinctive characteristic of the alliterative revival.

...the contrast between form and content is still more marked. For the ideal world into which we are transplanted by this noble alliterative poetry is by no means an Old Teutonic or Old English one. Manner and sentiment, costume and mounting, essentially belong to cultivated, medieval society, powerfully influenced by France. The same is true of the subject-matter. It is the atmosphere of the later Middle Ages that we breathe in these romances; many of them are patterned directly from French models.

Verse and diction, however, stamp the imitations with originality. The national vesture of the foreign material does not suggest that the material is borrowed. Even the poet cannot escape the influence of form; the altered style brings with it a new spirit. Something old-fashioned and serious, a touch of austerity or of piety, pervade the poems, and sometimes this tone does not fully accord with the themes adopted. This is not all: the peculiar form of presentation also brings with it a certain independence in the adaptation of the original. It appears mostly in details; but the charm of a poem depends very largely upon details. (B. ten Brink, *History of English Literature* (trans. H. M. Kennedy), Vol. I, London, 1893, pp. 331-2.)

The distinctive English character of alliterative poetry is displayed, not by its neglect of current forms and conventions, introduced as a result of French literary influence, but by the characteristic manner

(Cont.)

poetry are carried on little influenced by the continental models, until they culminate in the prose of the Angren Hwele and the alliterative revival of the fourteenth century. (103, p. 111.)

1) "The wave of patriotism that swept through England in the early phases of the Hundred Years' War stirred the soul of the nation to the depths, and brought about another revival of the old alliterative poetry. (B. ten Brink, *A History of English Literature* (ed. A. Buchan), London, 1933, p. 610.) "It is not strange, then, that a minor verse form was tried which, though old, was the whole national character was yet felt. It is no wonder that this attempt was made at a time when the native life, as a whole, was beginning powerfully to react against the foreign!" (B. ten Brink, *History of English Literature* (trans. H. M. Kennedy), Vol. I, London, 1893, p. 330.)
Fashionable formal devices such as the dream or the debate are employed, and alliterative poets become as addicted as any others to describing spring mornings, hunting scenes, and elaborate feasts. Yet their poetry remains distinctive in manner and feeling, as well as in metre. Some of the most striking differences between Middle English alliterative poetry and poetry written in other metres are in manner, a liking for specific detail resulting in solid, realistic description; in feeling, a seriousness of outlook which gives unusual strength and purpose, at least to the best of the poems.

(D. Everett, Essays on Middle English Literature, Oxford, 1955, p. 47.)

Despite the origin and associations of their medium the alliterative poems are in no sense antiquated, nor does their treatment suggest that the Western authors were isolated from the fashionable literary movements of the day or devoid of taste and refinement.

...the odd thing is that some of these poems are not at all what we should expect a provincial poem to be. They have a self-assured air, as if their writers, who were evidently familiar with polite literature, knew what they wanted to achieve and how to set about it. In the no doubt extreme case of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight there is a knowledge of aristocratic society as complete as in Chaucer's poetry. Such a poem must have been written for a cultural society of some kind, and it is possible that some great families of the west who were in opposition to the king—the Mortimers, Bohuns, and Beauchamps, for instance—may deliberately have fostered verse of native origin as a rival to that poetry, more closely dependent on French, which was written for the court by Chaucer and others.

(D. Everett, Essays on Middle English Literature, Oxford, 1955, p. 48.)

Informed opinion, therefore, views alliterative poetry as an integral part of Middle English literature, yet possessing certain distinctive characteristics: cast in the common forms of the age, yet original in manner and treatment; using a traditional medium, yet neither imitative nor archaic; native in spirit and idiom without being crude or 'popular'.

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1) Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight or the poem of the Morte Arthure are certainly not 'popular' in the sense of 'uneducated' or 'simple' or anything of that kind, and though they are written in the old native verse, they are not intended for the people who had no education and could not speak French (W. P. Ker, English Literature: Medieval, London, 1912, p. 90.)
In so far as any attempt has yet been made to distinguish the alliterative romances from other works in the form, they too appear to display this characteristic combination of familiar and distinctive features. In general form and content they are related to the body of medieval romance and each of the major 'matters' is represented amongst them. But in their choice of subject-matter the alliterative authors appear to have been particularly attracted by episodes in which the pseudo-historical background of romance predominated over purely romantic elements.

The poets seem, in general, to have avoided love-romances and to have preferred historical or pseudo-historical subjects such as the Trojan war, the life of Alexander, the conquests and death of Arthur.


Much of this material, whatever its national associations, closely resembles the subject-matter of Old English poetry; it is realistic in conception and epic in spirit. In their treatment of it the alliterative poets have, consciously or unconsciously, introduced into their romances something of the atmosphere of that earlier narrative literature in the traditional native medium.

As a literary phenomenon they represent a highly curious reversion to pre-Conquest methods, with certain modifications consequent upon their date of composition. The old alliterative line, remodelled and less restricted, makes a reappearance, together with much of the old epic phraseology and the old epic humour. The enthusiasm with which battle and sea-passage are handled, links these poems of the Middle English period with their Anglo-Norman predecessors, but the culture represented is a product of the new period, a period of amalgamation between Englishman and Norseman and

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1) It must be admitted, however, that the sole representative of the latter of France—Haut Guillaume—has only a peripheral connection with the legends of Charlemagne. "In general, the French themes made little appeal to their imagination. The Arthurian, the Troy and Alexander subjects offered more scope for the description of battles and encounters, for which these poets had a special aptitude."

Frenchmen. Together with the old enthusiasm for nature in her wilder aspects, a delight in hunting and architecture, in decorative material and precious stones, makes itself felt.

(P. G. Thomas, *English Literature before Chaucer*, London, 1924, p. 128.)

This fusion of cultures in the alliterative romances, the interpretation of foreign material in the spirit of the native tradition, typifies that independence and self-confidence which allowed poets of the school to treat borrowed forms and borrowed matter without sacrificing their individuality and creative control to the same degree as other Middle English authors.

In the romance-form the results are on the whole much more successful than the attempts of their southern and eastern predecessors and contemporaries. The treatment is more realistic, and more definitely English. There is no attempt to imitate the peculiarly French features of the romances, such as the elaborate analysis of feeling, the numerous digressions, and the extreme sentimentality. The works are, however, not so popular in tone as many of the non-alliterative romances. At their best they excel in vigour and realistic treatment, though, in common with all romances, they deal with life 'in a heightened degree'. They are not afraid to introduce giants and all the stock-in-trade of the romance, but the final impression is that of a chronicle....


The unusual degree of realism which characterizes the alliterative romances is, apparently, typical of the whole approach of alliterative poets to the form. It is reflected in their preference for chronicle-matter and in their detailed narration and use of description to give reality and substance to the more fantastic elements in their stories.

.... this approach takes the form of an effect of singular richness that is the product of the application of a deliberate, leisured, reflective and recapitulative attitude of mind as well as medium to remote and incongruous material. This attitude seems partly to be induced by the prosody, for the Middle English alliterative long line has commonly the effect of bringing the writer's subject close up to his eye for minute examination. His presentation of detail can therefore, if he chooses, be prolonged and intimate, is with difficulty detached and made impartial, and is swift
only when some kind of violence is implicit in the subject. (G. Kane, *Middle English Literature*, London, 1951, p. 57.)

Greater freedom of interpretation, more realistic presentation, some preference for historical themes and the evocation of an epic rather than a romantic spirit: these are the features most frequently mentioned when any attempt is made to distinguish the alliterative romances from other Middle English romances.

One of these characteristics is responsible for some difficulty in classifying the alliterative romances. The attraction which historical or pseudo-historical themes had for alliterative poets has resulted in a number of works which might equally well be classified as romances or as chronicles. Of these Laȝamon's *Brut*, despite the predominance of its Arthurian material and other romantic episodes, is essentially a chronicle in intent and in literary affiliation. Others are so factual and realistic in their narrative content and so close to epic literature in spirit as to suggest a distinct category of 'chronicles in the epic manner'. They include the alliterative fragments on the legend of Alexander the Great (*Alexander A* and *B*), *The Saga of Alexander*, the alliterative *Morte Arthure* and *The Destruction of Troy*, while *The Destruction of Jerusalem* has more in common with them than with the conventional romance. Together they form a significant proportion of the total of narrative literature in alliterative verse.

The importance of this distinction between the romance

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1) This classification originated with Dr. J. P. Ockden. See his *Alliterative Poetry in Middle English: A Survey of the Traditions*, Manchester, 1935, pp. 24-38.
proper and the chronicle-romance is apparent in connection with the
question of sources. Of the Middle English alliterative poems class-
ified as "chronicles in the epic manner" all, including The Destruction
of Jerusalem, are believed to derive from Latin originals, though, in
some instances, with the addition of minor features from other sources.
Amongst the romances proper two cannot be related to any known literary
source, though one, The Asventh of Arthur, is, in part, a moral tale of
a type commonly associated with Latin literature in the Middle Ages,
while the other, Ranf Coilear, makes use of a traditional legend common
to the folklore of many countries. The remainder are either demon-
strably of French origin, in the case of William of Paley, Chevalere
Assaigne, Joseph of Aramathie, and Galagrus and Gawain, or, in the case of
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, there is sufficient probability of a
French source to provide a basis for discussion. It is with the
alliterative romances of this category that what follows is concerned.
CHAPTER II

WILLIAM OF PALERME

The romance of William of Palerne is generally regarded as one of the earliest products of the Alliterative Revival: "The date is certainly not much later than 1350." The dialect forms of the unique manuscript, King's College, Cambridge, 13., are confusingly mixed, but analysis suggests that the poem is the work of a S.W. Midlands author which has been copied by a N.Midlands scribe. There is some internal evidence to support these conclusions as to date and area of composition. At the end of the first of the passages into which the poem is divided the alliterative poet makes the conventional call for a prayer from his audience:

pus passed is be first pas of pis pris tale,
  a je pat louen & lyxen to listen an morr,
Alle wi3tn on hol hert to be heli3 king of neuene
Preleth a pater noeter priusly pis time
For pe hond egl of Herford, Sir Rumfray de Swayne,
pes king Edwardes newe, at Glouester pes liggas.
For he of Frensche pis sayre tale fesr dode translate,
In ese of englysch men in Englyson speche; §
(11.164-5.) §

2) Ibid., p. 56.
3) Line references throughout are to the edition by A.W. Shant, William of Palerne, B.M., T.S., 3.5.1, London, 1867.
and again at the end of the poem:

In pise wise nap William al his werke ended,
As fully as Pe Fremscha fully wold ake,
& as his witte him wold serue, pouh'it were febule.

But,faire frende, for goddes loue, & for your owne menak,
Je Pat likken in lous swilche Ringes to here,
Preljes for Pat gode lord Pat gart Pias do make,
Pe mende Eri of hereford,Humfrey de Boune;
Pe gode king Edwardes douther was his dere moder;
He let make Pia mater in Pia maner especne,
For hem Pat knowe no Fremsche,he neuer vnderston.

(1.5521-3 and 5527-33.)

Nothing more is known of the poet William, but Humphrey de Bohun has
been identified as the sixth Earl of Hereford, whose mother was Eliza-
beth Plantagenet, daughter of Edward I. He is known to have served the
king in France at various times and to have died in 1361. Since the
poet’s references make it clear that de Bohun was still alive when
the translation was prepared, his death provides a terminum ad quem
for the poem. And, similarly, the poet’s association with the earl may
suggest that the dialect in which he wrote was that of Hereford or
Gloucester.

In such a factual context the references to “Pe Fremsche”
can probably be accepted at their face value, though there seems no
necessity to suppose, as has been suggested, that the French original was
obtained by Humphrey de Bohun on one of his visits to France. In an
age when a knowledge of French was still a natural accomplishment
amongst the English upper classes it may well have formed part of the
earl’s library or have circulated amongst a sophisticated audience for
many years before the alliterative version was commissioned. And, without

1) See the Introduction to Sir Frederick Madden’s edition of the poem,
2) “As Bohun died in 1361, and in 1349 returned from a trip to France,
the date of the translation may be fixed at about 1350” (Wells,
Lament, p. 19.) See also, Kenrick and Orton, p. 356.
3) See Madden, Alliterative Poetry, Vol. 1, p. 56.
doubt, the story of the romance had existed in at least one French
version for well over a century before William of Palerne was composed.
The French texts which have survived to the present give
the story in two distinct, though similar, forms. Of these very much the
elder is the romance of Guillaume de Palerne, of 9,663 lines in octo-
syllabic couplets. The story which it tells is not associated with any
of the great romance cycles of the Middle Ages, and, probably on this
account, very little scholarly attention has so far been paid to it.2) The author is unknown, but, judging from the dialect of the poem, he seems
to have belonged to North-Eastern France.2) The romance has been very
variously dated in the second half of the twelfth century and the early
years of the thirteenth. Linguistic evidence apart, the problem of dating
turns largely upon the identification of the patronage for whom the poet
worked. At the end of the poem he prays:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Gil qui tes fers fu et sans fin} \\
&\text{Bien et parfaic bie mant} \\
&\text{Il part sa cent ans Tolest} \\
&\text{La boic, danc, in leial} \\
&\text{Et il desent son cors de mal} \\
&\text{Dent lige et diter et faire} \\
&\text{Et de latin en roman trair.} \quad (11.9651-9.)
\end{align*}
\]

To the modern reader the reference is imprecise and the countess has
been identified with various historical figures: by Littre with "Islande,
contesse de Novara, qui épousa, en 1865, Jean Tristan, fils de saint Louis,

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1) The unique edition, by A. Michelbaut (Société des Anciens Textes Français),
Paris, 1876, lacks critical apparatus. The linguistic apparatus is
partly supplied by A. Basset in Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie,
XI, Hall, 1879, pp. 241-56, and by W. Bulp, Études sur la langue de
Guillaume de Palerne, Paris, 1907.

2) For a modern guide to critical work upon the romance see—
Medieval Period, Syracuse, N.Y., 1947, pp. 82-1, and R. M. Basset, Manuel
bibliographique de la littérature française du moyen âge, Moulins, 1951,

3) A. A. Dumas, un pêche anonyme, peut-être originaire du nord-sud (près de la
Iolanthe, oldest daughter of Baldwin IV, Count of Hainault, who about 1178 married as her second husband Hugh Sandavene IV, Count of St. Paul. Madden's identification has been generally accepted, but it has proved impossible to date the poem more precisely within the lifetime of the countess Iolanthe.

This version of Guillaume de Palerne has survived in a single manuscript, Arsenal 6568, in which it is preceded by the

(Cont.) Frontière de la Flandre et de l'Ile de France) 3(II.F. Williams, "Les Versions de Guillaume de Palerne", Revue de Littérature Comparée, XXXIII, Paris, 1952, p. 64.)

See also H. Michelant, op. cit., p. xxii.


4) Madden (op. cit., p. ix) suggested a date between 1175 and 1200.

Roman d'Enfoufle. There are indications, however, of the existence at one time of other manuscripts containing a poetic text of the romance.(1)

If, as there is some reason to think, Guillaume de Palerne underwent the normal process of being recast in prose during the later Middle Ages, the redaction is now unknown.(2) Much later, however, about the middle of the Sixteenth century, another French prose version was made, and of this a number of printed copies have survived. And in this instance the redactor is not anonymous: "at the end of the volume in an sarcastic of twelve lines, the first letters of which form the name of Pierre Durand, who, no doubt, is the compiler.(3) Durand has not been identified with certainty, and his version of the romance cannot be precisely dated. But it is obvious from his comments on the old-fashioned form and incomprehensible language of the original that his own redaction

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1) Madden (op. cit., p. vii) cited three copies in Fifteenth Century inventories of the libraries of the Dukes of Burgundy. It is apparent one of these which has survived as Arsenal 8568. The others are described by Richelais (op. cit., pp. xiv-xlvi) who concludes "qu'il existait en XIV siècle deux manuscrits contenant le roman de l'Enfoufle et celui de Guillaume de Palerne, complètement identiques entre eux et avec celui de l'arsenal... selon toute probabilité il se a existé encore deux autres qui ont servi à l'auteur de la traduction anglaise et à celui de la translation en prose!"

2) "Paulin préte avoir trouvé l'histoire dans un manuscrit en prose du XV siècle (Glanos, tirés d'une grande bibliothèque, Paris, 1761, Vol. II, pp. 43-50) et en donne un résumé. Il signale des vers despliantiques cachés dans la prose. Cela fait aller à l'existence, jadis, d'une version française en prose du XIII siècle, aussi bien que d'une version en prose du XIV siècle, qui sont aujourd'hui perdus? (R. P. William, loc. cit., p. 6.)"

3) Sir T. Madden, op. cit., p.x.

4) "Any further information respecting him I have been unable to obtain, unless he is the same with the Pierre Durand, Seill of Nogent le Rotrou, on Feschol, mentioned by LaCroix de Maize/Bibliothèques François, Paris, 1772, Vol. II, p. 272) who adds, that he was an excellent Latin poet, and composed many unedited verses both in Latin and French. No notice is supplied of the period at which he lived." (Ibid., p.x.)"
cannot be much earlier in date than the earliest of the editions in which it is preserved(1).

Very little attention has so far been paid to this prose version of Guillaume de Palerne. H.F. Williams, the only scholar who has done any detailed work upon it, lists seven surviving texts which he classifies in four groups(2).

I: Two copies printed by Olivier Arnoulet, Lyon, 1552:

- Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 4288;

II: Three copies printed by Nicolas Bonfons, Paris, n.d.:

- Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce D 232;
- Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Library, 27263.28.21;
- London, British Museum, C 97.b.5.

1) "Tout ainsi comme la vigne qui nest de toutes façons latourée/ facilement est subiecte à mauvaisies herbes / et si elle nest bien et consomablemment taillé / le fruit en est moins sauvourieux / si la conmiet amanier & ameliorer autant, a la envie & sauvourablement dansourtoit en frische. Ainsi est des histoires antiques et choses dignes de mémoire qui sont profitables et sauvourzes comme le bon vin / et augmentent a izmes gens le cuer et souerain. Molt valent pour le passe temps des seignures dames et damoselles / en suvant oynmente recisi de tous mauly. Et servent de tresgrande recreacion & delicacation aux visaulx & plus anciens / oyans parler des choses antiques qui dignes sont de grande veneracion. A ceste occasion par aulent bien ane / fut a moy humble translanture et traducteur de la presente histoires presents lancia men livre / auquel elle estoit contenue quasi comme en frische / envoyant danger destre perdue : anichellese & enroilllez doublly. Et io considerant la langage qui estoit romain antique / rymoire en sorte non intelligible ne lisible a plusicure favorissant a leur requeste comme de chose trescommable / ay tradit & transfere le langage de ceste dicto histoire en langage moderne francoys. Pour a chauss qui lire le voulra este plus intelligible" (Quoted from the extracts printed by H.F. Williams, loc.cit., pp. 72-3.)


3) "Esté 1550 par Harvard, 1560 par le Bl., Mudden, Skeat, etc., considerant cette edition comme la plus ancienne. Mais Brunet [Manuel du libraire et de l'amateur de livres (II, 1817)] estime que l'édition d'Arnoulet, 1552, est la premiere. Tout semble en faveur du jugement de Brunet" (Ibid., p. 55, Note 2.)
Having examined the inter-relations of these seven texts Williams concludes:\footnote{1} Une comparaison des versions en prose française révèle un grand nombre de différences orthographiques, des changements de syntaxe, des omissions ou insertions de mots, mais rien n'est opposé à l'hypothèse que tous les exemplaires communs ........... dérivant d'un prototype. Les éditions successives furent probablement copiées sur la première, l'imprimeur modernisant la langue et faisant de petits changements à sa guise.\footnote{4} In effect, therefore, despite the fact that they represent different editions separated by considerable intervals, the existing prose texts give a uniform version of Guillaume de Baوة in its Sixteenth century recension.

Having compared this prose version\footnote{2} (which he identifies as FP) with the verse text printed by Michelant (identified as ?) Williams concludes:"Il semble........ que le traducteur ait pris des libertés avec son modèle, comme presque tous les conteurs du XVI° et du XVII° siècle le faisaient avec la vieille littérature, sinon il faudrait...

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1) "Daté c.1620 par Le Brus, ce qui doit être plus ou moins exact, car Louis imprima de 1611 à 1613...? (Ibid., p.67, Note 1.)

2) "Daté par Cresassee Présor de Livres rares et précieux, "II, p.182,c.1634. En effet, la vente de L.Costé imprima de 1613 à 1631..."(Ibid., p.72, note 2)

3) Williams indicates(Ibid., p.67, Note 3) the existence in 1681 of an eighth text, printed by David Peronard at Rouen, n.d., amongst the ISS and rare books collected by A.F.Didot.

4) Ibid., p.72.
suppose que son modèle n'était pas notre version métrique P de
Guillaume de Palerne? But so far as the evidence cited by Williams
is concerned, the differences between the prose and verse texts seem
slight by comparison with the general uniformity of the two versions.
In all essentials the story is identical in both, involving the same
situations and the same characters. As for the differences, "lettraiteur
de F substitut au début de P un prologue, et à la fin de la traduction
de trouvent (contrairement à P) un poème de douze vers donnant en acrosti-
tique le nom de Pierre Durand. Dans le prologue on mentionne Baudouin
et sa sœur Yolande; c'est à elle que F est dédié, en quelques vers à
la fin. A part ces deux différences, F suit P avec assez peu d'entarts"
"Le traducteur, dans l'esprit de son temps, insère des propos nomsis-
ateurs qu'on ne trouve pas dans P. Il y a moins de dialogue dans FF.
Celui-ci ajoute ou néglige de menus détails? Apart from the introduction
and tailpiece supplied by the prose redactor, his additions to the story
proper, seven passages in all, cover less than three pages as printed by
Williams.

So far as the study of William of Palerne is concerned the
relations between the French verse and prose texts are of importance
not because it can be conclusively shown that the latter was derived
from the existing text of the former but because these two versions
provide our only guide to the nature of the source on which the English
poem was based. Of the two scholars who have examined the relation of
the alliterative work to Guillaume de Palerne, Madden compared it with
Durand's prose redactions: "By the assistance of Durand's version we are
enabled to judge of the accuracy of the English versifier, since they

1) Ibid., pp. 71-2.  2) Ibid., p. 71.  3) Ibid., pp. 74-7.
both translate from the same text, and it is surprising how closely the latter has adhered to his original. Kalusa, on the other hand, accepted the verse text edited by Michelet as the most reliable guide to the nature of the source used by the alliterative redactor, though admitting it as sag namentlich in detail in 3. and it may be said that the Thraensänischen vorlage herbergenommen sein, aller sich in der uns erklarung redaction von F. nicht findet und den wir daher als original ansehen. There is no question here of a conflict of evidence since neither scholar made any comparative analysis of the existing French texts. Hadden, writing in 1832, had seen only short extracts from the verse Guillaume, then inedit. While Kalusa, who did not have access to any of the prose copies, made his study of the process of redaction on the basis of Michelet's edition alone. Although, as Kalusa's comments suggest, it cannot be shown that the alliterative epic is derived directly from the verse Guillaume, it seems reasonable to accept this as most nearly reproducing the form of the original on which William of Palerne was based. The French prose version, produced some two centuries later than the English redaction, would only be acceptable as a more reliable guide if it could be shown that, as Hadden suggested, both were based upon a common original. Since Kalusa,


3) Hadden was naturally impressed by the close similarity of the English poem and the French prose version in general outline. But the general conformity of the two poetic texts is equally impressive, and there are details in which they agree in differing from the prose Guillaume. In both William's nurses are called Gloriands and Aelone, whereas in the prose version they are Gloriands and Angilantine, and neither contains the passage in which the latter tells how Pellicor in her flight carries off her jewels. See H.F. Williams, op. cit., p.71.
the verse Guillaume may reasonably be accepted, not as the immediate source of William of Palermo, but as the only available example of these forms of the original which are likely to have been in circulation when the English reduction was composed in the mid-fourteenth century.

The comments of both Nadler and Palma would suggest, however, that the general nature of the reduction greatly reduces the importance of this issue; since the alliterative poem has so much in common with both versions of the French the minor distinctions between the prose and verse texts are not likely to throw much light on the process by which the English work was prepared. The narrative common to both the French and the English romance centers round a certain William, son to Lucrum, King of Apulia, and his wife Falcio, daughter of the Emperor of Greece.\(^1\)

As an infant William was confided to the care of two ladies who were bribed by the king’s brother to kill the boy and so assure his own succession. Before they could act, however, the prince was carried off by a wolf, who snatched him up while at play in Palermo, even the straits of Messina with the boy and took him to a wood near Rome. The beast was in reality a werewolf, once Alphonse, heir to the Spanish throne, whose step-mother, Ismaud, had enchanted him so that her own son, Ismaudin, might succeed in his place. Wishing William no harm he saved for him faithfully until one day, during his absence, a shepherd found the boy in the wood, took him home and adopted him.

Some years later, the Emperor of Rome, having lost his way during a hunt, comes upon William and takes him to be page to his daughter Belier. Feeling herself attracted to her servant Belier seeks

\(^{1}\) To avoid confusion I have employed the English character names, in a standardized spelling, in referring to both the French and the English poem.
the advice of her confidante, Alissaundrine, who sounds William's feelings and ultimately brings them together in a secret betrothal. Then Rome is threatened by an invasion of the Duke of Saxony, the Emperor knights William, who is largely responsible for repelling the enemy. At this point, when all looks well for the lovers, Helior's hand is demanded by the Emperor of Greece for his son, Partouzon, and, with her father's consent, preparations are made for the marriage. In desperation the lovers consult Alissaundrine, who sews them into two white bear skins, and in this disguise they escape from the court and take refuge in a cave. There they are discovered by the werewolf, who feeds them by robbing passersby of their provisions. When, on the wedding-day, the bride is missed, Alissaundrine is questioned and admits that Helior will be found wherever William is. The lovers are pursued and change their disguise, dressing now as hart and hind, and, guided by the werewolf, they cross the straits of Messina to Palermo. King Belron is now dead and Queen Felice is besieged in the city by the King of Spain, who seeks to force a marriage between his son, Braundinias, and her daughter, Florence, William's sister. Felice has a dream of deliverance and, seeing the hart and hind in her park, goes out similarly disguised and begs William's assistance against the besiegers. He captures the King of Spain in battle and, as a condition of peace, forces Queen Braundia to disenchant the werewolf. Restored to human form, Alphonsus reveals William's parentage and is betrothed to his sister, Florence. The Emperor of Rome arrives accompanied by Alissaundrine, who is married to Braundinias in a triple ceremony which sees the union of Alphonsus with Florence, William with Helior. Shortly afterwards the Emperor dies and William is elected to succeed him while Alphonsus follows his father as King of Spain.
Even from this brief synopsis it is evident that Guillaume de Palerne is composed of characteristic mixture of romance elements: the adventures of a 'vale Chimerella', a hero whose noble birth is concealed until he has won back his rightful heritage by his personal ability, combined with a story of true love which triumphs over all opposition. Amongst the various sub-types of the medieval romance it has usually been classified as a *roman d'aventures*. The term has not been precisely defined and is often used to refer to miscellaneous, non-cyclic romances not associated with any of the major "maitres";... tous ceux dont l'action ne se situe ni dans l'antiquité ni en Bretagne, et dont les personnages ne furent reçus dans d'autres ouvrages: 1. It has more validity when applied to the characteristic content of the romance, though even in this association its reference is inevitably somewhat imprecise. It has been objected that the title "might better be applied to medieval romance in general, for the knightly heroes always arrive at success by way of hazardous enterprise, whether in the pursuit of glory or of happiness in love": 2. But the complexity of the genre invalidates such a use since "in many of the stories adventure itself is of secondary importance, yielding in interest to sentimental psychology and to social refinement and picturesque detail." 2. The two elements of love and adventure are not mutually exclusive, but in most instances one or the other predominates to an extent which identifies it either as a romance of sentiment or a romance of incident. In the typical *roman d'aventures* love is at best an incidental element in the life of the hero: "If the

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1) E. Rembert, op. cit., p.156.

savior of a beautiful lady in need of a champion wins his her favor; he usually accepts it with chivalrous grace or with human complacency, taking it as an agreeable by-product of knightly spirit, not as the goal of his ambition. In the romances of sentiment, on the other hand, adventure; however abundant and creditable to knighthood, is subordinated to love. The hero may travel extensively and accomplish much, but unchanging devotion to the heroine is responsible for his going, for his return, and for most of what he does along the way. Valor, the call of adventure, the impersonal obligations of chivalry cannot long distract the course of the true lover's duty from his lady. As for her, she holds her place as heroine by right of love alone; she has no other excuse for being. And upon the lovers all things converge. On this basis a legitimate distinction can usually be made between the roman d'aventures and the more generally recognized roman courtois.

In Guillaume de Palerne, however, the situation is by no means clear-cut. The keynote of the poem is adventure: repeated flight and pursuit, escapes and hurried journeys, sieges and battles. And it employs the characteristic plot-machinery of the roman d'aventures: mistaken identity, disguises, enchantments, and prophetic dreams. Yet, clearly, the emotional element is of fundamental importance in the romance: love is the moving force of the plot, the lovers, William and Belleor, are at the heart of the action and everything turns upon their feelings for each other. The definition of the roman courtois seems no less appropriate than that of the adventure romance, but it is this problem of classification which underlines the individual character of Guillaume de Palerne.

1) Ibid., p. 4; 2) Ibid., pp. 4–5.
...nous devons distinguer dans ce roman deux choses: d'une part, l'esprit continental qui fait de lui un roman d'amour courtois, de l'autre, l'esprit d'aventure qui traverse en fil rouge tout le récit.

In so far as its inclusion amongst the romans d'aventures tends to obscure this characteristic mingling of elements the conventional classification of the French poem is confusing rather than helpful.

More important, perhaps, than achieving an exact definition of the romance is the consideration of what constituted its appeal for the original audience and to what extent its individuality is due to the circumstances under which it was produced. The poet's choice of a story divorced from the familiar cycles of romance, with an unusual geographical and 'historical' background, has been attributed to the influence of his patroness. The countess Yolanda of Hainaut's identification was aunt to Baldwin VII, Count of Hainaut and Flanders, who in 1204 was elected Emperor of Constantinople. A narrative which introduced the Emperor of Greece and made frequent references to the power and splendour of his realm would have a special appeal for those connected with the reigning house. Further, a romance with a Sicilian setting would be of particular interest to the Countess of St. Paul, whose husband is known to have passed the winter of 1180–81 in the island, on his way to the Holy Land. It has even been suggested that there is a parallel between incidents in the story and certain events to which the count could have been a witness during his stay in the island.


in Sicily\(^1\). It might be objected that the French poet makes specific reference to a written original which he has translated from Latin at the command of his patroness: So such original has been discovered and some scholars dismiss the reference to it as the conventional claim of a romance writer seeking to give an air of authenticity to his fictions.\(^2\) But, even if the claim is accepted at its face value, this does not necessarily conflict with the theory that the romance is related to historical fact, since it is not suggested that the author of Guillaume de Palerne wrote a roman à clef upon contemporary events. "He simply chose and retold an old story which would serve to suggest the situation and events uppermost in the mind of his auditors."\(^3\)

In the absence of any identifiable original for the French poem it is impossible to determine the process of redaction by which the author attempted to cater for the special interests of his audience. We cannot tell whether his source supplied him with all the necessary elements, or to what extent he supplemented it from his

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1) The correspondence between history and romance are somewhat vague. In 1190 Richard II (whose name is believed to have served in Palestine) landed in Sicily and rescued his sister Joanna, widow of William the Good, King of Sicily, who had been held prisoner at Palermo by Tancred, pretender to the throne. He was later joined there by his mother and his betrothed, Berangaria of Navarre, and, having arranged a marriage between Tancred's daughter and Arthur of Brittany, moved on to Syracuse where his own wedding took place. In Guillaume de Palerne the hero comes to Sicily accompanied by his betrothed, rescues his mother and sister besieged in Palermo by a king, whose defeat leads to a series of dynastic marriages. For details see J.P. Mahasen, "Guillaume de Palerne: A Medieval 'Best Seller'\(^4\), P.N.I.L., XXI, Cambridge, Mass, 1928, pp. 503-7.

2) See 11, 18-22; 11, 7649-52; and, in particular, 11, 9653-9.

3) "L'usage n'est pas trouvé de cette version latine, il se peut bien qu'elle n'ait jamais existé; l'auteur cherche seulement à donner plus d'autorité à son conte en nous assurant qu'il la trouve chez les anciens? (K.P. Williams, loc. cit., p. 64, Note 2.)

4) J.P. Mahasen, loc. cit., p. 505.
own imagination. It is particularly unfortunate that we cannot know the form or extent of the love element in his original. The love of
William and Melior is so thoroughly integrated in the plot that it
can scarcely have been an innovation introduced by the French redactor.
Yet it is surely not fanciful to see the influence of his patroness in
the prominence which has been given to it and the manner in which it
has been treated in the romance prepared at her command. "Ingrained
with the doctrines of *l'amour courtois*, it constantly analyses the emoci-
tions and emphasizes the agonies of love-sickliness and the joys of lovers
in one another's company. In style it is somewhat *precieux*, verbally
prolix, full of formal speeches, of interminable digressions and marked
by occasional allegorical tendencies, especially in the consideration of
love. Though all this is incongruous when combined with the rapid
action and fabulous incidents of a typical *roman d'aventure*, the style,
no less than the contents was probably designed with special reference
to the taste of that "boine dame" the Countess Yolande... (1) The special
interest given to the story-matter by the countess's associations with
Greece and Sicily would not preclude that normal feminine preoccupation
with the psychology of love which so strongly influenced the content of
the *roman courtois*, and we may assume between her and the poet something
of the relationship between Chrétien and Marie de Champagne. Like Marie
she would expect the poems produced for her pleasure to reflect her own
aristocratic tastes and interests: "...selbst von einem feinen, künstler-
ischen Geschmack und hohem Interesse für Kunst und Wissenschaft und
allen Fragen der Galanterie...[21], wegen Anteilnahme an der geistigen
bewegung jener zeit und dieselbe zum sichersten dadurch beweist, dass

In this respect, at least, the English redaction may be expected to provide a direct contrast with the original version. The redactor’s references to his patron’s object in having the translation made—

He let make his water in his manner spoken,
For heart that know no French, he never understand,

suggest that the Earl of Hereford was not acting in the interests of those who belonged to his own social sphere. There can have been few members of the English aristocracy in the mid-fourteenth century incapable of understanding the French romance in the original version, and the audience of William of Palerne would, most probably, be confined to the non-noble classes. It was an audience for which the incidents of the story could have none of the extra-literary significance which they are said to have held for the countess Yolande and the love element and the courtly associations common to her world and that of Humphrey de Bohun. In so far as the English redactor was responsive to the true and interests of his audience the influence which it exerted upon him would, presumably, have differed considerably from that exercised upon the French author by his noble patroness. And as the contrast between the French and English audiences is so clear-cut we might reasonably

1) M. Kaluzan, loc. cit., p. 269.
2) See also 11.167-3.
anticipate fundamental differences between the alliterative work and its French prototype in scale, in content, and in interpretation.

It is immediately apparent that the radical abbreviation which we have learnt to associate with Middle English redactions of French romance has not taken place in this instance. 

Guillaume de Palerne is complete in 5540 octosyllabic lines rhyming in quatrains, each completet being roughly equivalent to one of the long, unrhymed, alliterative lines which vary in content from eleven to thirteen syllables. The English poem, as it has survived, contains 9540 verses, but the unique manuscript lacks four leaves, corresponding in content to some 330 lines of the French text, and the complete work must originally have numbered about 3700 lines in all, suggesting a version of somewhat greater bulk than its French counterpart. This is unusual, but need not in itself preclude a process of redaction in which the whole balance of elements has been significantly altered and the character of the romance completely changed.

The example of other Middle English romances translated from the French suggests that the element likely to be most profoundly affected by such a redaction process is the element of love. In Guillaume de Palerne the love-scenes form a long, integrated sequence early in the romance. At the point where they begin, with a passage in which the Emperor of Rome, when presenting William to his daughter Melior as her page, suggests that the boy may be of gentle birth, the English version is closely in touch with the French:

"Je suit quarante ans et quarante ans, quarante quatre ans de forte, quarante quatre ans de faiblesse. "For mi lof lokin his wel, for hil we pynkes, De cora, de vis, et de faiteurs, hi his mervifull manners is his man-mede,"

1) The missing leaves are the first three and the tenth. See M.W.Bright, op.cit.,p.vi.
Encore erreurs par aventure, &c. he is lose of god kin, to Ghost, hope.
De quex gos est entrainès.
Ma douce fille, or retenès.
Li enfant que je veu amain ci.

(11.528-99.)

Here, unfortunately, the alliterative text is broken by the loss of a single leaf, corresponding to some 140 lines of the French. They compose a transitional passage in which William grows from a boy to a handsome youth, frank and courteous, equally skilled in chase, in hunting and in bearing, bold in arms, loved and honored by all—

N'en toute la terre de Rome
Ti a vallet, fil a haut home
Ti na ricke prino, natural,
Quant Guillaume sit a cheval,
L'asne au col, al poing la lance,
Tant par soif de fiero semblac,
Si gosse se si amavís.
Ne sai que plus vos en dagis,
Que tuit semblent a lui vilain
Si li Lambart et li Romain;
Bien mali a tons estre lor sire,
Et tot la regne n'en l'empire
Ti a un soul, ne ben ne haut....
A cui il soit, de ce me want;
Dous bien de lui que la gosse sante;
Chacuns en fabole et raconte
Tous li peuples communement;
Et l'empereur emament
Li porte honor, aime et tisan chier,
Comme le fil de sa moilien. (11.755-54.)

Heaving the ladies of the court groan his, Helier feels her heart

drawn to William:

Ce est ai tres pensée et noun
Qu'il ne n'entent a autre chose.
Son oeu regant et blamus et chose
Et dit souvent:"Cense, que ne tu?
Qu'an tu achari ne veu?
Que c'est ai cel monstre me fait,
Qui m'as enladies en eust plaint,
Que je ne sai que pulima auoir
Ne quel arror me fait doloir
Ne plaisantre plus que je non sui.
Diez! quex meus est donst tant me duel,
Qui ai me fait estendilier (11.625-67.)

1) Fr. 700 - 937.
And here, in the middle of Helior’s soliloquy, the English text resumes:

"a seppe alse I a sing, samien to-gedere,
a melit holi for monryng, a moche hole make.
Min bert hol. I hase now for al pat hard y fele,
Saue a fere saintse folwes me oft,
& takes me so benefully, to talk al pe soppe,
pat I make al marred for monryng neijh nounes,
But rodeleche in pat res pe recuenere pat me folles,
As when I hase al nap to here of pat barne,
For whan syn bert is so hampered & alde so nobul,
pat flour is of alle frekes of fairnes & milt.
Prince is now his pers, ne in paradisem sungel,
As he sene in al aij, so faire is pat burns.

(11, 433-44.)

According to the folio numbering reproduced in Skeat’s edition each leaf of the English manuscript contains some 70 lines or more and verse together. The equivalence between the alliterative long line and the octosyllabic couplet suggests that the missing page gave a full account of the corresponding 140 French verses. The redactor may, of course, have substituted matter of his own invention, but his general treatment of the remainder of the episode makes it unlikely.

At the point where the English text resumes, the love interest is already well established and developing upon conventional lines. The heroine’s love having been awakened by hearing others praise the hero’s qualities (F 751-53), the French author has followed the well-established method of the roman courtois by giving Helior a lengthy soliloquy in which she examines the state of her feelings (F 926-945), and by connecting upon the tortures of love which she endures (F 950-70). To develop the situation a new character is now introduced,—Aliassuirine, Helior’s cousin and confidante, who persuades her to reveal the cause of her distress (F 974-1076). She tells her of a herb which brings relief in such cases, while at the same time considering how best to inform William of the love which his mistress feels for him (F 1077-1117). One night the unsuspecting William has a dream
in which Helior appears and offers herself to him (F: 1118-1144); he takes her in his arms, but, on waking, is disappointed to find that it is only a pillow he holds (F: 1145-83). It is now William's turn to ponder on the love with which his dream has inspired him, but of which he feels himself unworthy (F: 1184-1270). His longing drives him to haunt the garden under Helior's window (F: 1271-1338), where, one day, she and her cousin come upon him (F: 1337-1436). Questioned by Alixandrine, he describes his sufferings (F: 1437-1562), and Helior, recognizing her own symptoms, reflects again upon the nature of her feelings towards him (F: 1563-1586). Ultimately Alixandrine brings the lovers together in mutual confession of their love (F: 1627-1762).

The episode as a whole is based upon a classic pattern which the English reductor has done nothing to alter. But there are some relatively minor differences between the two versions which suggest a certain independence of approach on his part. Of these the most significant is the combination of Helior's two soliloquies into one extended monologue. Though, in the original, both are concerned with her feelings for William, the first deals primarily with the cause of her awakened emotion, the second with the propriety of bestowing her love on one so much her inferior. At the point where the mutilated English text resumes it is engaged on a faithful account of the former. Helior reproaches her heart for betraying her into the painful situation in which she finds herself, tortured by love, unable to rid herself of the image imprinted on it. Yet, since she would not even if she could, her heart is not to blame, but rather her eyes. And yet her eyes are no more than messengers to the heart. Is she, then, no longer mistress of her own feelings? No, she is not responsible for her behaviour, though
she knew that people will blame her for it. At this point (1.907 / 3.475) the alliterative poet, prompted perhaps, by the suggestion in the French of objections to her love for William, gives Helion's own judgement of the impropriety into which her heart has betrayed her—

...pan has my hasty aert wolly be wrong,
Him wol I blame & bannum, but ne my balas smande,
Patt nap him so strangely set in awione strange bums,
Patt wol never in his world whannes pat he come,
But as mi fader him fond in pe forest an herde,
Keping, sonnis kin of pe kintre a-boute.
What? fy! scrold I a scuddling for his fairenesse tak?
May, my, wills wol nout a-sent to my wicked aert.
Wel kud kingses a kayseres krauen we 1-now,
I nel lele mi love so low, now at pis time;
(II.475-54.)

There is nothing to correspond to this in the first French monologues and it has clearly been paraphrased from some lines in the heroine's later passage of reflection:

"Aino mais pucelle de mon lin,
De mon caloie ne de mon feur
De mist en si fait lino son suer
Come j'ai fait, bien le puis dire
Bien me devoirs li mons despire,
Quant j'ai laissé douc et cœurs
Et rois et fix d'emperoers
Et ceux dont je puisse honores
Pour un vallet d'autre coutre,
Que ma x act, n'il onsenent,
De quel terre est me de quel gent;
Aime ne comait qui le porta,
M'onces ne vit qui l'engendra? (II.1574-86.)

At this point in the original Love speaks in Helion's heart, warning her that he pays no regard to nobility of birth, preferring nobility of nature, beauty, intelligence and courage. Was not William all these qualities? If one found a golden coin would one value it less because one did not know where it came from or to whom it belonged? These arguments find their place in the English poem within a few lines of the doubts which they are intended to dispel (II.400-520), but in a version so loosely paraphrased as to bear no more than a general
semblance to the French. There is no intervention of the interior voice to state the logic of the heart or point out William's virtues, and the falling image of the golden coin has disappeared. Instead, Melior's doubts are resolved by what she herself has heard and observed; by the recollection of her father's description of the rich clothes in which the infant William was found (Ps 672-73; Ec 421-23):

"a poujhe as fundeling, were fonde in pe forest wilde, a kept wi pe ownderde kin, to karp pe aspe. Eche creature may know he was wone of gode. For first when Pe fre was in pe forest founde in his denne, In comlye clypes was he dad for any kinges sone."

(11.502-6.)

and by her own knowledge of his behaviour and the regard in which others hold him—

"When he kom first to his court, til kynde pan he schewde, His maners were so sensaful, a-venge he was miȝt none. A seppe froscape till pis time non wrotoche as he wrought. But nap him bore so blyumly pat ich burn him prayepe, A von a burn of pis worme worshiped him one. Kings & aud dukis, kene kniȝtes & other. Poujhe he were kowen of no ken but of kene charles, As I wot witerey so was he neuer! But wiȝ worchape I wene I miȝt him wel loue."

(11.507-15.)

The whole effect of the millesimative version is forthright and explicit where the French is allusive and general, and where the original author allowed the decision to which Melior is brought to be implied by her immediate acceptance of William's love, the redactor has stated it bluntly and directly:

"I wol here-after witerey wiȝ-coute more streue, Wirche holly mi hertes wille, to harde & to nasche, A leye my loue on Pat lud, lelly for suere. To God here I giȝ a gift, it gat enchal newer gær, Wile him lastepe Pe lilly my loue I him grante."

(11.533-37.)

Once the heroine has come to terms with her heart the English version returns to the sequence of her earlier soliloquy, where she reflects on
the practical dilemma in which it has placed her(22, 932-49 / 21, 536-70). How is Gillian to learn of her love for him? She dare not tell him, he would think her mad, and both versions use the same image to express her miserable condition:

"Or va en née sans generally, Si va par haute mer majest.; Reuteanker or ore or ane sækkabe agle. Sans mort, sans voile ou stait. But beij busee kint gie le saumam saumai, Dian je laist & bænne vendt. Opur lacks of his deposit a little time."

(11, 946-9.)

Why should the English reductor have been at such pains to combine two widely separated passages in this way? He had reason to be dissatisfied with the sequence of the original. Helier's first soliloquy is weakly but inconclusive and does nothing to advance the plot, while the second shows her still unsure of her feelings immediately before accepting Gillian. By his rearrangement the alliterative poet has given point to Helier's soul-searching by allowing her to reason away the objections to the match so that we know what her decision will be when the opportunity to declare her love occurs, and the action need not be delayed by admitting doubts at the last moment. The result is dramatically more effective and more convincing in human terms than the original version, and the means by which it has been achieved suggest that the reductor was not without artistic resource. By interweaving, rather than merely combining, the two monologues he has achieved a more coherent sequence of thought in which the two themes are significantly related. Helier reasons: "My heart has betrayed me, and yet the object of my love is a worthy one, so I will trust my heart and obey its dictates!

But though the passage was well planned the clumsiness with which it has been carried out has done much to spoil the total effect. The point at which the English poet returned to the sequence of the first soliloquy is marked in both versions by a momentary inter-
The heroine reflects that she ought not to blame her heart for something which gives her so much pleasure; henceforth she will obey it without question. The passage in the original is brief (F: 909-31), but the redactor, having concentrated it as an introduction to his eulogy of William (B: 491-7), uses it again at greater length as a conclusion to this phase of the monologue (B: 516-37). The effect of these unnecessary repetitions is to suggest, contrary to the skill with which the sequence has been planned, that the alliterative author was unsure of himself, fumbling for expression and unable to judge when he had achieved his purpose.

Throughout the remainder of the love-epistle, he has been less ambitious, following the sequence of the French, with only occasional independence in minor matters. His version makes no use of a passage in which the original author comments upon Mellor's sufferings (F: 356-70), a reasonable economy in view of the attention already given to them in the heroine's own account—but gives a full account of the physical symptoms which attract Alessandrina's attention (F: 571-83 / B: 571-89), adding a few details of her concern for her cousin. The succeeding section, in which Mellor confesses her love-lorn condition (F: 634-1076 / B: 590-628), provides a good example of the manner in which the English poet conducts his redaction when he chooses to adhere closely to the original. The general context and the sequence of ideas is identical in both versions, yet in any particular passage their relationship is partly disguised, not merely by linguistic differences but by the divergent verbal and syntactical requirements of two verse forms so essentially different. For example—
Quant laisne entent le bon,
La parole de la partie
Qui si li raccon et demeure
S'apportèrent sius servis;
Que l'œil se ferait main
Vidie doulx de consquences.
Ne m'entendie pas nar girant,
Car me sembl il plait et agit
La parole qu'avo as oie.
Si li responz "Madame amie,
Bleu comine, douce chiere,
Voirment sui de grand maner
Aigre de tres grant malage.
Laisse tes estes et prenez et sage
Et francoe et vaillante et aceste
Et sait que frayver peut
De coal ral qui si fort soigne,
Que tous son par va diur ete.

(1.1013-30.)

This somewhat vague relationship is as close as the two texts come to identity of expression, and even where the alliterative poet follows the French narrative in general outline he frequently takes liberties with fact as well as with phraseology. For example, the role which Aisemantyne plays in the love intrigue has been curiously altered in one respect. In both versions the confidante promises her mistress a herb which will rid her of love-longing, but secretly considers how to inform William of Melior's feeling for her(F. 1077-1116 / E: 629-52).

The French poet comments laconically:

Duis par tans le caavra, je suit.
(1.1117.)

and proceeds to describe the dream in which William's love is aroused by a vision of Melior(F. 1116-53). The English redactor, however, credits Aisemantyne with magic powers and makes her responsible for the vision:

Ful conynge was sonc a conynt a coupes fele pinges,
Of charmes & of chantemens to shewe arde castis;
So purlyr pe craft pat sonc coupes to carpy pe sepe,
As William pat worpi child on a nijt alsept,
Soute burn in his bour but him-self one,
A ful selcoupes sweuyen set sonc him to mete;

(11.653-6.)
and this is not an isolated occurrence when Melior again refers to
the herb Alisaundrine replies vaguely that she has not yet been able
to obtain it (Ps 1390-5). The English poem reproduces this rather
pointless passage (Ps 797-802) and thereafter nothing more is heard of
the mysterious herb in either version. But when the two ladies come
upon William asleep in the garden and he is wakened by dreaming that
Melior give him a rose which relieves his torment (Ps 1450-9), the allit-
ervative text attributes this vision also to Alisaundrine's magic arts:

Alysaundrine pan a-non attelle here pouyter,
a wisty lip hery whilleso dede William to mete
Pat Pat time him Pouyter Pat Melior Pe nende
And Alysaundrine al-one com him Po tille,
& Pe mayde Melior ful mayly him brouyjt
A ful real rose and redly it lit him takes.
(11.361-6.)

This hint of witchcraft is not out of place in a romance where a woman
plays such a prominent part, but this interpretation of Alisaundrine's
role seems contrary to the normal process of development in which the
later redactions tend to rationalise supernatural elements so far as
the plot permits. It is quite possible that Michaelant's text of
Guillaume De Palerne represents such a redaction and that the English
version was translated from a slightly more primitive form of the poem
in which Alisaundrine still retained some remnants of her original
magic powers. (1) This, indeed, may explain her knowledge of herbs, though
in the extant French poem her promise to provide one which will relieve
Melior of her love-sickness is inconsistent with her secret intention
of bringing the lovers together. If, however, we accept that the English

(1) It has been suggested that the various animal disguises employed by
the lovers and by Queen Felice were originally actual transformations
similar to the enchantment of the werewolf. See K.G.Tibbals, "Wargs in
the Romances of William of Palerne", N.S. Phil., Chicago, 1940, pp.20-4.
Alisaundrine, who procures the non-thing, may well have been the
agent of the enchantment in an earlier form of the romance.
Redactor was responsible for the element of magic here, so may well have invoked it to resolve this contradiction by clarifying Alisaundrine's motives and showing her at work to make a match between William and Helior. The narrative sequence which arises naturally from this association of cause and effect was well planned, but mired in execution by the fact that it conflicts with an earlier innovation made by the alliterative poet. In *William de Paizant* Helior seeks Alisaundrine's aid in Eamgeing a love which she has judged unworthy of her, but as the English version has already brought her to the point where her only thought is how to reveal her love to William, the herb can have no function there and the redactor would have been well advised to omit all reference to it.

In both versions the earlier of the two dreams has the same function: to awaken William's love for Helior. The French text, however, has some erotic details which are not in the English:

*Paies li laisset, ce li art vis,*  
Et bouches ot mise et iex et vis;  
Et il il tot ai faitement,  
Con sel tenant aparenment  
Tot nu a nu entre sa brace,  
Li retaisoit la sois face,  
Son col le blanc et sa poitrine.  
Sauve l'escor a la machina,  
Souvant embrace l'orillier,  
Quant Helior ovide baisier;  
Sovent entre ses bras l'a prise,  
Sovent l'estraint contre son pia,  
Soventes feis l'assas et baisse,  
Ne set en quel lieu miz li plaisme;  
(11.1145-58.)

The alliterative text, on the other hand, dwells on the incongruous detail of the pillow which William clamps in his sleep:

*Pat puluere closep he curtisely a kissit it ful ofte,*  
*a made per-wip pe most merepe pat and man schold;  
But pan in his saddest solas softall ne a-waked.  
Ak so likid him his layk wip pe lihi to pleis,  
Pat after he was a-waked a ful long. Prowe,  
He wenis ful wilerly ake were in 1s armes;  
Ac Peter! it nas but is puluere, to proue pe cope.*  
(11.875-81.)
The love soliloquy which immediately follows is divided into two parts.

The redactor has patiently followed his original through the first of these (F: 1104-1240 / E: 62-730), in which William reflects on the impossibility of one who has neither kin nor friends to plead his suit gaining the love of an emperor's daughter. The second, much shorter, section (F: 1255-70), in which the hero speaks of himself as struck by love like a hunted boar, has left no trace in the English version.

It is much more effective than the rambling reflections which precede it, but after some 40 lines of such matter the alliterative poet may have felt that he had done ample justice to the lover's feelings.

His description of William's sufferings as he sits day after day gazing up at Melior's window (F: 1271-1316 / E: 731-75), bears very much the same relation to the original, giving a faithful, even repetitive rendering of the emotional details, but paraphrasing the amount of how the hostess at his lodging tempts the hero to eat (F: 1300-36 / E: 766-75) so vaguely as to lose the human interest which, in the French version, relieves a somewhat tedious passage of love-longing.

This combination of repetitions and abbreviations suggests a redactor not fully in control of his material, and what follows shows something of the same inability to distinguish between essentials and incidentals. When Melior and Illissandrine come into the garden the French version makes a conventional reference to the beauty of the setting which the English poet has elaborated far in excess of its function:

1104-1240

1255-70

1300-36
But immediately afterwards he marts the subtlety of the French in his haste to reach a climax in the action. Allissandrine, recognizing William asleep under a tree, points him out to Helior as though he were a stranger and, judging the state of her heart by the way in which she changes colour, urges her to go to him (F: 1350–1416), but the Helior of the English version no sooner sees William than she runs to him without encouragement from anyone (E: 534–51). After the directness of this episode it is somewhat surprising that the redactor has left Allissandrine to question William while Helior listens to the account of his symptoms, faithfully translated from the French and inevitably including much which the reader already knew (F: 1470–8022/ E: 926–925). A much briefer version might have served the practical function of the original, which is to show Helior that William is in the same plight as herself. Yet, in contrast, intelligent planning on the redactor’s part has meant that Helior’s brief comment on the situation (F: 1563–73 / E: 926–939) is the only part of her second soliloquy which remains to be dealt with at this point. Its isolation gives it added emphasis, and the alliterative poet, by expanding it verbally, underlines the only remaining obstacle to an understanding between the young lovers:

“But weilaway! Pat he ne wist what wo y dreve, a hauo do lelly for is love, a wel long while: a but he wistly wits, y-wisse, y am done; For y dar nou3t for a Shame scheue him mi sille, But if he wold in and wisse him-self scheue farmest” (11.935–9.)

The barrier of reserve is broken by Allissandrine, who, at William’s request, pleads his cause with Helior and then discreetly leaves them in each other’s arms until the approach of night forces them to part. The redactor, recognizing a climax in the action, has
given a full account of the original (F: 1627-1732 / E: 240-1066),
emitting nothing of importance and elaborating some details imaginatively.
One of his additions shows a pleasant sense of humour: Alixandreine,
when she returns to find the lovers in an embrace, refers slyly to the
herb which she had promised Melior for her relief:

"Hauie je geten pe gras pat J jou geynliche niest?
I trowe trewil be pis time jour sorwe be passed;
Elpe of jou,as y leve,as god laxes til oper,
Alle pe surgynes of Salerne so sone ne couyen
Hauie jour langoure a-legget,Y leve for sope."(L 103-4.)

It is possible, of course, that the alliterative author found this detail
in a variant form of the original, but it is more in keeping with the
spirit of the English poem than with the somewhat earnest manner in
which the French author treats the love element throughout the whole
of this episode.

With the establishment of mutual understanding between
the lovers only the practical difficulties remain to be solved. A reader
experienced in the conventions of the roman courtois might well expect
a further sequence of love episodes, secret assignations, frustrations,
emotional analyses and renewals of vows. In Guillaume de Palerne,
however, the conventional development is inhibited, first by the rebellion
of the Duke of Saxony, which parts the lovers temporarily, and then by
the proposed match between Melior and the Grecian prince, which threatens
to part them for ever. The author has found occasion for only one brief
interview between them (F: 2512-37 / E: 1392-1403) in the interim. An
opportunity to revive the theme of the conflict between love and duty
occurs when, at the news of the Emperor's consent to the Grecian alliance,
William falls ill and Melior debates with herself the propriety of
visiting her servant publicly. But the struggle between love and honor
is brief (P: 2787-2800), and the English redactor has chosen to ignore it in favour of some frank advice from Aliscampsine (8: 1517-21). The eventual interview between the lovers (P: 2801-36 / E: 1522-33) is practical rather than sentimental in effect: they renew their vows, and, when Melior’s wedding is about to be celebrated, they appeal in desperation to Aliscampsine. She devises the means by which they escape together, and from this point until their marriage, almost at the end of the romance, William and Melior are companions in adventure rather than lovers, and the poet is too preoccupied with their escapes, disguises and journeyings to pay any further attention to their emotional relationship.

The love element in Guillaume de Palerne is, therefore, strictly localized, but, within the limited section devoted to it, the English redactor has apparently been faithful to his original in most respects. He has accepted the classic pattern of events: the conception of love by each of the lovers, the timidity which prevents them from avowing their feelings, and the intervention of a go-between to bring them together. He has adopted the conventions of emotional expression used by the French author: the self-analysis to which the lovers submit their feelings, and the descriptions of the physical symptoms, sighing and sleeplessness, change of colour and loss of appetite, which attest the violence of their passion. But his version betrays some impatience with the most characteristic of these conventions,—the soliloquy of emotional reflection. Significantly, he has not omitted Melior’s two monologues, but, by interweaving them, has attempted to give her train of thought a more logical development, leading to a practical decision with a bearing on the action. In the content as in the context
of this reconstructed monologue he has emphasised practical considerations at the expense of the more esoteric elements in the French text. For example, in his version it is not the voice of love which convinces Valior of William's worthiness but her own observation of his behaviour and her shrewd guess as to the mystery of his origin. Something of the same desire to provide an explanation, rational or irrational, for developments in the action may possibly underlie his divergence from the extant version of the French poem in the matter of the second stanza's magic versus, since, without her intervention, William's love originates abruptly and accidentally. Considered individually these are relatively minor changes, but collectively they suggest an approach to the element of love which is in significant contrast to the spirit of the original...der englische bearbeiter die Erscheinungen motive zu sehr betont und für die tieferen regungen des herzens kein grosses verständnis sat.

This difference in emphasis is reflected in the contrasting atmosphere and tone of the two versions, the French more in keeping with the conventions of amour courtois, the English more forthright and realistic. But the contrast is by no means clear-cut. Contrary to what one might expect, the alliterative poet has omitted some of the human details, the attempts of William's hostess to persuade him to eat, for example, which relieve the artificiality of the original. And, on the other hand, he has not reproduced the full extent of the soliloquies, the descriptions of love-languages, or the images used by the French author to express the violence of passion. Yet, despite omission and abbreviations and the defective opening of the episode, the

1) E. Kalusa, loc. cit., p. 257.
love-scenes in the English poem are rather longer than in the French version. There are no lengthy additions to account for this difference in scale. It is due almost entirely to a fundamental contrast between the types of expression entailed by the French and English verse forms. The octosyllabic couplet is a relatively plastic and expressive medium and the author of Guillaume de Palerne has handled it with considerable freedom, giving it movement and flexibility and frequently varying his treatment of it in keeping with the varying subject-matter of the romance. The more restricting criteria of the alliterative line make it a more rigid, less accommodating medium, which has clearly inhibited the English poet in attempting to follow his original faithfully, reproducing each of the ideas so rapidly sketched in the French. The contrast is particularly evident in the conversations and soliloquies which make up such a large part of the love episode. The French version is lively and volatile, posing queries and answering them within the same line, in a way which the less elastic alliterative verse can imitate only in a more ponderous, slow-moving version:

Els li disit tot souvet:
"Por Deu,eisques fetzorvan"  
"Bela, je mirtet a estronc?"
"Morés?" "Voire, jo mairvin.
Se Dier ne prange a boine fin,
Bela, ne quit que vale un croy?
"Elsens vos dant al tred dromes,
Bier zhier enfulent le poucel.
"Cortes, en douce damoisel,\nOil,ande plus que ne dis?"
"Convers? Nit el, nit el azul."
"Oil? "Convers vos pistils douez?"
"Slege, sertex, say I coust, seor aze greuze."
"Por une mitque meisques \al pis nochol noezze, a nitig I vits, su
d'ale avint a non caeuent? pat ne son o a azcurs se p at tinat
"Convers vos griz?" "Slege, en dross! Foro hirbous hau eold ne appe,\ne on o nant," "Sis que voselz, put I not in bo world what in se to rote?"

1) The French version is complete in 1081 octosyllabic verses while the mutilated English text numbers 633 alliterative long lines.
"Bele, par tout le cm de ma"!
"Par tol loops?" "kore! "Cememt."
"Une mervelleur gras en grént, Qui maltais ait un gare de droite, Un-tume it hentie se wip bete asht an ad fume, Une eure dincart, nickname froit,But quiculiche de bone a ad come per-afet, Une sure su, et autre trame, Sun time I sit & singe samm to-goder, Li suuer do mai sept et smel: A Pan on proli poules purlon my herte, No sai ou va, ne sai ou vissant, Pat I ne wot in pe world where it bl-comes, Na sai qui est qui le saltet scrampf in my-self y folia it nojnt paneal,
Sovent no bat, sovent on lance, Panne Alisaundrine a—non per-af ter saide, Sovent ne fait au cemerence, "William, I wold Pe pray Peow revolut tele Sovent baai et estendail, Bi what can al Pe eane anaed tu eawours?" "Tai surtes, suetings" "in added aradal I Years, Per no masche? on mols put me may falle! Po de penser ne ne pense, Po bullying d'fais la langur pole, Po je I for drejig o'Pic and sat Pe lady, Per amel no with o'Pe erdade at it caeal!" (11.388-520.)

The atmosphere generated by the mercurial style of the French is most suited to the treatment of love, but the more stolid English is not without a certain charm. The prominence which its emphatic expression gives to minor details—such as the affection which William lavishes on his pillow—and the air of unmotivated directness created by its occasional omissions—as with Helior's rush to meet William in the garden—combine to produce an impression of variety which is quite appropriate to the story of youthful love. And there is a pleasant undertone of humour not to be found in the French romance, whose author views love as a serious matter; in some instances it may be unintentional, but incidental touches,—such as Alisaundrine's sly allusion to the

1) For further examples see: F: 962-99 / E: 434-77; W: 1185-1240 /
E: 690-730; F: 1665-1702 / E: 967-1061.
lovers' therapeutic effect upon each other—suggest that the degree of verbal independence imposed upon the alliterative poet by the nature of his medium may have led him unconsciously to express something of his own, less skeptically attitude to matters of sentiment.

Though he is no less faithful to the original in his treatment of adventurous incident, here, too, the English redactor has found opportunities to express personal tastes and interests. And in this context such self-expression is deliberate rather than an incidental result of the insinuatibility of the French and English verse forms. The contrast between octosyllabic couplet and alliterative long line is less apparent in direct narration of events than in the expression of complex emotional states, and the English poet has been able to reproduce his original more closely, without the same degree of verbal inflation. The passage in which he gives the early history of Alphons the werewolf (F: 274-340 / E: 109-69) provides an example in point. The French narrative moves rapidly and its situations are not complicated by incidental detail, so that the alliterative poet has been able to follow it with comparative ease and accuracy:

Li leus garor dont je vos di
M'iert nie beste par nature,
Si con raconte l'escriture;
Angois ent hem et fix a roi
Et sait vos lien direncert,
Com li avrit et qui li fist,
Si con l'orsc le nou dist
Il estoit fix le roi d'Espaigne
De sa feme la prezornaine,
De lui estoit morte samer;
Feme revoit le rois parz,
Fille le roi de Portugal,
Hault et sa seine englanc et sal:
Branf eus se fust baid genu de humas y-a-ty
Sorceries et Ingramance
Avoit salt en se de l'amance,
Bien sai que Branl eus
(11.274-89.)
But even in such an episode the English version shows some verbal expansion, though without introducing anything extraneous.

This early passage indicates the general nature of the redaction so far as its treatment of adventurous incident, the major component in the French romance, is concerned. There are no large-scale additions or omissions; the English version painstakingly adheres to the sequence of the original, and the narrative maintains a more or less constant balance with the French, without drastic abbreviation or excessive expansion. There are, however, a number of passages in which some slight deviation from this norm can be detected; where the alliterative text shows a looser relationship to its source and a greater degree of verbal inflation than is usually involved. The incident which opens the second passage of the English poem, William's first meeting with the Emperor of Rome (F: 341-328 / E: 170-183), is a case in point. There is no difference in content between the French and English narratives. Both relate how, as William kept his foster-father's cattle in the forest, the werewolf lured the Emperor away from a hunting party and led him to the child, and how, learning that the boy was a foundling, he determined to have him educated at court. But there is a marked difference in proportion: the French text gives the incident in 287 verses; the alliterative version occupies 213 lines of almost double length. This difference of scale is due in large part to the insistence of the alliterative poet upon stating certain ideas in the original as emphatically as possible, by repetition and elaboration, rather than by the addition of extraneous matter. The details upon which he has concentrated in this way have a certain community of interest. The French author describes how William was beloved by his forest companions for his generosity of nature, and
The redactor stresses the sound practical basis for their feelings towards him:

Le nuit quant a l'hostal repaire, Whanne he went his cheveur in dresse of hert, 
Vient trechamaged li danoisier He con him-self pacharged wi' crops & hares, 
De lievres, de command, d'oisir Et de portrast de faisans, Pat po herde à his hands wi' all his wealthy 
Milt est ames de tos chimins, Pat held barm wi' his bowe by pat time fedde, 
Car quant ses oisins avoit pris & hit blesse feloedemeins foirot soles soes; 
Poemoes deduit et person pris, 3ong barm bernes Pat bestes al-so haped, 
Ses compagnons les donatives Ja n'en rataest a son us De sa flete et son avoient & folse him for his frendes & for his faire pues, 
Ja n'en rataest a son us. Qui en sa compagnie estoient. For what King William tau a-day wi' his bowe, 
Milt leur chultetons et cuites, Were it sepered foul or four-ducted best, 
Et milt le frait volatiers, He saulde William seuward & held to his-salve, 
Car droit le recint creation Til alle his bernes was first faite to here pois, 
Qui paves toute creature So kynde & so cortees cinned he pare, 
A condretet a son usage. Pat alle ledes him loudes pat loxet on binaies, 
(11.370-55.) & blisate Pat him hae & brouit in-to favorlde, 
Again, when the Emperor asks him to fetch the cowherd, William rushes until So mache banched a mype schowed Pat child suere. 
assured that no harm is intended him, and the English version emphasizes the child's concern for his supposed father by extending this idea:

"Ae perauenture purch Goddys grace to gode may it turns, For-di bring, him hider, faire barm,y prye!"
"I schal, sere", seilde pe child, "for saflicles y hope I may worche on Your word to wite him fro harm."
"Be, saflicles," seilde pemenour, "so God biff be lois!" 
(11.254-8.)

And where the French version merely mentions that William weeps on learning that he is a foundling, the English adds a speech in which he expresses his feelings for his foster-parents:

Whan William pis worpi child wist pe so pe, Whan William pis worpi child wist pe so pe, 
And knew Pat pe commande nas nou3t his kinde fader, And knew Pat pe commande nas nou3t his kinde fader, 
He was wistliche a-wondered & gan to wepe sore, He was wistliche a-wondered & gan to wepe sore, 
A seilde saddele to him-self sone per-after, A seilde saddele to him-self sone per-after, 
"Al gracius gode God! Poul grettest of alle! "Al gracius gode God! Poul grettest of alle! 
Mocn is pi mercy à pi mikt,pi menake,a pi grace! Now post I neuer in pis world of whan y am com, 
Now post I neuer in pis world of whan y am com, 
Ne what destene me is di3j, but God do his wille! Ne what destene me is di3j, but God do his wille! 
Ac wel, y wot witerly wip-oute wome, Ac wel, y wot witerly wip-oute wome, 
To pis nun a his meke wip most y am holde, To pis nun a his meke wip most y am holde, 
For pat ful faire hae me fostered a fed a long time, For pat ful faire hae me fostered a fed a long time, 
Pat God for his grete mikt al here god hem selde. Pat God for his grete mikt al here god hem selde. 
(11.303-19.)
The redactor has also made much of the passage in which the cowherd
passes on to William the good advice for his conduct in life given to
him by his own father (P: 544-51 / §§ 328-44) and has added a few lines
in which the boy's sorrow at the parting is removed by his delight in
riding behind the Emperor on horseback:


He child wept al-way wonderliche fast,
But pampierour had god game of pat gomee lore,
& comande pe cowherde curteyll and fayre,
To have vp pat hendz child bi-hinde him on his stede.
& he so dode deliuerely, Pou3h him del Pouzt,
& bi-kanned him to Crist Pat on crolice was payned.
Panne pat barn as billue by-gan for to glade
Pat he so reily schould ride, & reedell as swipe
Ful curteysle of pe cowherde he cauce his leue,
(11.543-53.)

And he has retained William's farewell message to his forest playmates,
even though their names cause havoc in the alliterative verse and he,
or his copyist, was apparently puzzled by some of the forms in his
source, — which may, however, have been corrupt:

"Salute moi Euet le main, " a gode air, for Godes loue, also gote P and oft
Et Hugenet et Aubolot, Alle my frendes ferme pat to his forest loue;
Et Martinet le fil Hugot, Han partilych in many places plaide wp ofte,;
Et Akarin et Cristiani, Hugenot, a Euet, et hendz litel drem,;
Et Thumassin le fil Paen, & Aubolot, a Martynet, Hugenon gnie sone;
Et tos me ens ains compagnons, & se Cristen Akarin pat was ni kyn fore,;
(11.594-9.)

In general the redactor has concentrated on those incidents
in the original sequence which express the good-hearted simplicity of
the cowherd, the naïvety of William and his genuine affection for his
foster-parents. His version stresses the human background to the action,
and the natural actions involved, rather than the elements of most
importance for the development of the plot, paying comparatively little
attention, for example, to the account of how the fouling was discovered.
the rich clothing in which he was dressed, etc. (P: 485-511 / B: 289-326),
and recasting it as reported speech, for the sake of brevity. Elsewhere
in the alliterative work where the degree of verbal expansion is greater
than normal, it is usually in scenes which have a potential human interest
of this kind. At the end of the story, for example, when William has
been restored to his heritage, he sends for the cowherd and his wife and
rewards them for their kindness (P: 5355-430 / B: 5359-97). The English
redactor has not introduced anything foreign to the French poet's con-
ception of the passage, but he has almost doubled its length, taking an
obvious pleasure in detailing the rewards heaped on the faithful couple,
and adding to the original grant of a rich castle:

........al pat touched perto,- a tidi crldome, (1.5364.)

He shows an equal interest in William's magnanimity towards the ladies,
Gloriana and Asclione, who plotted to kill him in infancy, when they came,
dressed in sackcloth, to throw themselves on his mercy (P: 5339-98 /
B: 4767-306).

These are scenes in which human interest is largely an
incidental element. In others it is integrated with the action, which
turns upon human reactions, and, here too, the English author's interest
in such situations is reflected by a somewhat fuller treatment of them
in his redaction. He appears to have been particularly intrigued by
the way in which those who are not in the secret react to the various
animal disguises assumed by the hero and heroine. As William and
Malior escape from the Emperor's palace, ensased in white bear-skins,
they are seen by a Greek attendant on the wedding embassy:

Pei went a-wai a wallop as pei wod aemad. 
& waij wod of his witt he wax neij for drede. 
A fled as fast homward as fet mi5t drle. 
For he wend witterly pei wold nime nane sewed, 
To have end of him mete a surpered him to de pe. 
(11.1779-74.)
The alliterative version doubles the original passage (F: 3145-66 / E: 1764-35), dwelling on the terrors of the Greek, not with any serious purport, but rather in the jocular spirit of his fellows to whom he recounts what he has seen:

Panne were his felawes fain for he was adradde, & laujeden of Pat gode layk; (11.1783-4.)

And later, when the lovers are missed and the French text recalls this incident, the English version brings the Greek before the Emperor to enlarge on the terrifying appearance of the bears (F: 3792-504 / E: 2154-73). When, in their flight, William and Melior take refuge in a quarry and are discovered asleep there by the workmen, (F: 3930-75 / E: 2241-77) there is a further opportunity for the redactor to dwell on human reactions to the unexpected. He has expanded the single speech of the original, in which one of the quarrymen announces that there are the bears for whose capture the Emperor has promised a reward, into a lively exchange amongst his workmates, who swear to stand guard fearlessly while he fetches help. Nothing of any importance is added, but the alliterative version gains momentary independence from its source, and expresses itself with a colloquial freedom appropriate to this particular context. Finally, there is something of the same ease and naturalness about the brief scene (F: 5309-29 / E: 3175-92) in which the Queen of Sicily calms the fears of her waiting-maid when she sees her mistress accompanied by William and Melior, all three disguised in deer-skins. In each instance the redactor, by emphasising the human context has given an air of conviction to some of the more improbable moments of the story. It would not be advisable to overstate the importance of these momentary variations in the pace and intensity of his redaction, but it is, perhaps, significant that they involve scenes of this kind.
and that their effect tends to this particular end.

It is notable that they represent extensions and variations of material contained in the original, and that in no instance has the redactor drawn on his own invention to any significant extent. This is true also of the only incident in which the English version appears to have made a substantial addition to the matter of the original. It occurs when the fugitive lovers, disguised as hart and hind and guided by the werewolf, cross the Straits of Messina to Palermo (F: 4561-684 / B: 2713-355). They secretly board a vessel in the harbour of Reggio and conceal themselves among the cargo. On nearing the Sicilian coast, the werewolf creates a diversion to cover the lovers' landing by leaping overboard, swimming ashore and making off pursued by the ship's crew. Up to this point (F: 4615 / B: 2766) the English redaction follows the French with its usual fidelity, but there follows a short scene (B: 2767-81) for which the original provides no warrant. As William and Helior creep from their hiding-places they are discovered by the only member of the crew left on board, the ship's boy:

But when pe bote of pe barge pe beastis of-salpe, He was neij wod of his allt, witow, for fere, a be-ouns. him were pe bestes for to quale. a happill to Pe hinde he hit panne formest, a set hire a sad strok so more in pe necke, Pat some top over tall tombled over pe haches. But pe hert ful hastill hent hire vp in armes, a bare hire forp over-bord at a brod planke, a nas bold wip pe boye no debate make, But sayn was a-way to fle for fere of no gestes, Fer away fro pe see or he stynyt wold.

(11.2771-31.)

The scene closes with a momentary reversion to the sequence of the French text, in the prayer which the lovers, after making good their escape, offer for the safety of the werewolf (F: 4616-32 / B: 2792-2804).
This is immediately followed by a further interpolation(2: 2305-29), in which the boy tells his ship-ener of his encounter with the two
dead, who leapt ashore and went off on two feet. Finally, the two versions
come together again in their account of how William and Helier take
refuge in the royal park under the walls of Palermo, where they are
rejoined by the werewolf(7: 4633-34 / 8: 2630-55).

This omission, unique in William of Palermo, might be
explained either as an original addition by the English author or as
a variant in which his text of Guillaume de Palerne differed from the
copy which has survived. If it represents an afterthought by some
French redactor he was careful to insert a second reference to the
incident at the point where Alphonse, freed from his enchanted form as
the werewolf, recounts the various adventures in which he had helped the
lovers, since the English version again mentions the encounter with the
ship-boy during this recapitulation(3: 4698-701). Or if, on the other
hand, it formed part of the original composition there seems no valid
reason why the copyist who made the existing text should twice discrim-
inate against this incident and this alone amongst many similar adven-
tures. But it would not be difficult to see it as the work of the
English author, striking out for once upon his own to add a further
(1)
complication to the matter furnished by his original. Indeed, his source
itself might have furnished him with the model on which to create such

1) "Es ist freilich nicht unmöglich, dass diese abweichende Darstellung
schen in eine späteren Redaktion des französischen Gedichtes eingang
gefunden hat, allein wahrscheinlicher ist doch, dass sie von englischen
bearbeitet hervorbrachte. Nachdem derselbe schon die früheren Abenteuer
der beiden Flüchtlinge mit großer Ausführlichkeit wiederzählt
hatte, will er nun aber auch dieses letzte Abenteuer möglichst aus-
schmücken und zu einem weit gefährlicheren umgestalten! (M. Valuna,
loc. cit., p. 260.)"
an episode. The situation when the lovers are confronted by the
ship-boy is closely paralleled by that when they are trapped in the
quarry (P: 4030-67 / S: 2332-56). As the searchers close in on them
William wishes for weapons with which to make a break for freedom:

"But God for his grace and I hadde now here
Horse a alle harneys pat be-moues to werre,
I wold send hem tille wip-oute ane stint,
and do what I do miȝt or lych pe dethe seiff."  
(11.2340-51.)

On the later occasion the alliterative poet has given his hero a speech
which sounds very much like an echo:

"Wold God for his grace a his gret miȝt,
pat I hade here pat to werre falles,
Pee boyes pat pe barne james a-boyes scold sore;
For pe dinte ne pe dalt his dep were marked."  
(11.2750-91.)

But, in effect, the parallel proves nothing, except the tendency of the
alliterative author to repeat verbal formulas wherever the similarity
of narrative situations permitted. The repetition of a narrative motif
cannot, with confidence, be attributed to the redactor since the original
itself is characterised by just this kind of duplication. Guillaume de
Palerne is constructed on a single formula, involving a series of parables,
- inevitably somewhat similar in nature - , to which hero and heroine are
exposed, repeated use of a traditional plot-machinery of animal disguises
and prophetic dreams to bring about these situations, and recapitulation
of all the main incidents in Alphoun’s final speech. Such an imitative
complication as the encounter with the ship-boy is entirely in keeping
with the principle on which the original romance was composed. And the
issue has, in any case, no vital bearing on the evaluation of the English
redaction: whether the redactor retained the incident from his source
or invented it on the model of similar episodes there, his use of it is
entirely in keeping with his attitude to the narrative of adventures
at a whole. His careful reproduction of all such incidents in the original and his expanded treatment of those in which the element of human interest is prominent (most notably those which, like the episode of the ship-boy, concern reactions to the animal disguises of the plot), suggest that the combination of improbable adventures and credible emotions in the French romance was entirely to his taste.

Had he translated all the episodes of Guillaume de Palerne with similar fullness the alliterative poem would have come near to equalling the 10,000 lines of the original. But he has discriminated between the central plot and incidents which are merely incidental to it, and his treatment of the latter does much to show where his interest in the romance was centered. The French text contains two long sequences dealing with warfare: the Duke of Saxony's rebellion against the Emperor (F: 1784–2410 / E: 1067–310), and the siege of Palermo by the King of Spain (F: 5455–7035 / E: 3261–934). Both are essential to the structure of the romance in that, by his exploits against the Duke, William demonstrates his inherent heroic ability, wins his knighthood, and shows himself worthy of the Emperor's daughter, while, by defeating the King he unknowingly rescues his own mother and wins back his heritage. But the original author treated them as having an interest of their own quite apart from their relevance to the hero's career, and his addiction to the repeated formula led him to duplicate a number of incidents in each and even to include similar situations within the same episode.

The English retranslator, who dealt faithfully with such duplications in the body of the romance, has been less patient here, as his comparatively brief version of the two episodes suggests. His method

1) The French text devotes 627 and 1577 lines to the two episodes respectively; the English version 244 and 674 lines only.
of abbreviation appears somewhat erratic, yet sufficiently consistent to indicate that he had a specific aim in view. Passages in the original which relate the battle-scenes to the general theme of the romance and advance the action within the episode itself, such as for example, as the outbreak of the rebellion when the Emperor calls on his vassals to aid him against the Duke of Saxony, knights William and asks his advice in prosecuting the war (F: 1764–376 / B: 1067–1156), are retained at equal length in the alliterative version. General engagements between the armed forces of both sides, such as that which opens the attack in this instance (F: 1877–350 / B: 1157–65), are abbreviated in a brief outline, which gives the essence of the original without any of its descriptive detail. Only when William is mentioned does the English text fill out its source with any degree of verbal expansion, and this is true even here (F: 1951–92 / B: 1166–93), where he is not personally engaged in the struggle, but moved by the Emperor’s prayer for divine aid, in urging his companions to prove worthy of their knighthood. Typically, the general attack which follows (F: 1993–2014) has been omitted from the alliterative version, which, logically and effectively, continues to concentrate upon the hero, returning to the sequence of the original when he takes the field in person (F: 2035–142 / B: 1189–200). But even in dealing with events which reflect all credit on his hero the redactor often betrays impatience with the length at which they were originally narrated: the French recounts William’s struggle with several knights in turn, naming each individually (F: 2035–96), and describes his defeat of the Duke’s nephew (F: 2057–142), whereas the English summarizes the action without descriptive detail of any kind:

William wip his owne hend so wyllyliche pleide,  
Pat he slow six of pe grattest, sop forto talle,
The remainder of the battle-sequence concentrates upon William's personal exploits,—his capture by the enemy, rescue by his own men and encounter with the rebel Duke, when he defeats and leads in submission to the Emperor (F: 2143-362 / E: 1261-69), but this, too, the redactor has abbreviated severely, omitting the description of violent action which enlivens the French narrative. The practical outcome of the war, the final flight of the rebel army, and general submission to the Emperor (F: 2363-410 / E: 1265-1310), though it makes duller reading, is given at greater length than in the original, and so assumes undue importance in its abbreviated context. The sequence as a whole suggests that the English author attached more importance to the issue of the war than to the action it involves, that he tolerated the latter only where it displays the hero in a favourable light, and that even then he was only prepared to give the essence of the French narrative and not to translate it in detail.

His handling of the later sequence, the siege of Palermo, suggests the same conclusion, and here he has employed an even greater degree of compression. The circumstances leading up to William's rescue of his mother are necessary for the appreciation of what follows, and are given at equal length in both versions (F: 4400-500 / E: 2620-94). But thereafter the English passes rapidly over everything preliminary to the hero's own appearance in the action, barely mentioning the devastated countryside and the besieging forces camped about the city (F: 4641-71 / E: 2630-1 & 2856-64), and omitting a preliminary attack upon it (F: 500-83). For the redactor the battle begins when William takes command of the Sicilian forces, but even in describing how he arms himself for the field...
(F: 5459-571 / E: 3261-314), details of human interest, such as the humility with which the hero's horse kneels to him, occupy his attention to the neglect of more relevant military details. And when William rides out and defeats the Spanish seneschal in single combat (F: 5574-606 / E: 3515-98), the English version is comparable in length with the original, yet even here battle-field orations receive as much attention as the real business of warfare, and the combat is narrated rather than described. When the focus shifts to the opposing force, and the seneschal's nephew attempts to avenge his defeat (F: 5697-782 / E: 3395-420), the reduction becomes a mere outline of the original, returning to a more liberal version when he in turn is overthrown by William (F: 5783-901 / E: 3422-45). In the French romance the battle continues at length, repeating the pattern of the earlier conflicts: general attacks are interspersed with personal combats in which the hero, having killed the seneschal's nephew, as he had earlier killed the Duke's, now captures the Prince of Spain as he captured the Duke himself. The English version retains the pattern in its entirety, but increasingly abbreviates all episodes in which the hero is not personally involved. It omits entirely the Spanish king's exhortation to his flagging troops (F: 6455-92) and compresses two similar speeches into one (F: 6572-89 & 6722-30 / E: 3832-41); makes only the barest mention of general combat (F: 6549-69 / E: 3627-39) and of actions in which the enemy leader is prominent (F: 6570-698 / E: 3824-6); and virtually ignores the periodic fluctuations in the fortunes of both parties (F: 6639-704 / E: 3827-30). As a result, William's role becomes still more prominent, and to heighten the effect the English author has gone so far as to make minor alterations in the narrative outline; in the French text William retreats in the face of enemy reinforcements (F: 6338-72), but in the English he rallies his men successfully before
making a temporary retirement (P: 3635-51); and the enemy leader, instead of urging resistance to the death (P: 6907-42), faints with fear and flies from William before making a reluctant last stand (P: 3877-92). But even his wish to exalt the hero has not prevented the redactor from further reducing the scope of his version as the war nears its protracted end; William's defeat and capture of the Spanish prince is greatly abbreviated (P: 6156-237 / B: 3600-30), and his encounter with another enemy knight is summarised in a few lines (P: 6704-391 / 3: 3842-66).

The contrast between these two battle-sequences and the remainder of the redaction is evident. The redactor was reproduced every incident in the wanderings of William and Meliwr, even those involving the repetition of earlier situations, did not find the same interest in military adventures. Recognising their relevance to the plan of the romance, he has paraphrased them, erratically and with signs of impatience, maintaining narrative continuity, but omitting much which was obviously designed to appeal to the tastes of the original French audience. He has done his duty by the hero, realising that convention makes military success an essential feature of his career, and has even tried to compensate for omissions and abbreviations by heightening William's role in some minor particulars. But his personal interest is excited by such bizarre incidentals as the homage paid to William by his horse, not by the military action with which the original is chiefly concerned, and his relatively free redaction is evidence that his attention was less closely engaged than in the preparation of the faithful, if somewhat pedestrian, version characteristic of the remainder of the alliterative work. And, significantly, he has made little or no attempt to reproduce the descriptive passages in the French poem which gives the battle-sequences life and interest.
His approach is purely that of a narrator, summarizing the descriptions by which the original author conveyed the violence of war in lines devoid of motion and variety:

Quant d'amours par s'entremoeuissent Blini a bold burn was some brount of laws, Unques riens plus n'i atendirent, & many a staf stede stilled pae to dethe, Mais les escus a lor eux pantant, No man upon mould migst ayme Pe monter Poignant et precusant et destendant, Of wiles pat in a while were shyn on love's side. Tote la terre font fruvoir. (11,617-20.)

La vaisiés a lor venir
Tante quie fraindre et tante esua
Et tant haubere maillié menu,
Tant elme a or quasser et fraindre
Et tant vassal a terre empaingre,
Noises lever,espées traire
Et gens entrecrere et defaire,
Testes et poins et pieds voler,
L'un mort sor l'autre graventer,
Et la terre de sans couvrir
Et par le champ destriers fuir,
Basses routes,seles sanglantes,
Dont gisent mortes les joyeuses
Dont li cheval les ore heulissant
 Qui amonés les i avoient,
Par les presses, a grant dolor.

(11,6549-69.)

Even where the alliterative poet has made some attempt to reproduce the spirit of the original in such passages, the narrative element preponderates over the descriptive:

At pe e-coupyng pe knijetes spares alper brak wipper,
Swiftli wip hire swordes swinge pei to-geder,
A delten duelful dentes deluerli pat strende.
A William was pe wijtere & wel sarre amot,
A set so hard a strox cone after on pat oper,
Purth helm & hed hastili to pe brest it grint,
Pee awerd swathili swenged Purth pe bode euan,
Pat tlt. ouer his noru-tail he tumbled ded to grounde.

(11,3436-45.)

And there is a repetitiveness in these attempts which betrays a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the redactor.

(1)

1) Compare, for example, 11,1152-65; 1189-1200; 1213-26; 1233-44; 3308-96; 3408-17; 3602-12; 3615-23.
The narrative and descriptive elements exercise conflicting claims upon the reader's attention throughout the whole of Guillaume de Palerne, but his reaction has not always been so clear-cut as in dealing with the battle-sequences. Descriptions of ceremonial have been retained, in most instances, at a length comparable with the original; the triple wedding (F: 2801-2942 / B: 5001-76), for example, and William's coronation (F: 2332-38 / B: 5324-51). Yet even here he has tended to avoid reproducing the full extent of the details in his source, declaring himself unworthy of the task or suggesting that it is beyond the skill of any writer:

Of here a-tir for to telle to budde is my withe, For alle pe men upon mold na mjest it descriue A-redili to pe ristes, so riche it were alle. (11.5924-5.)

This method of excusing his omissions has been more frequently employed in some contexts than in others, indicating the redactor's preferences and dislikes. For the most part he has discriminated against descriptions of dress and armour. Though he has retained the passage in which William arms himself and his steed for battle (F: 5495-551 / B: 3275-93), his abbreviated version is largely concerned with the erratic behaviour of the horse. And he has given little space to the rich clothing prepared for Melior's wedding to the Prince of Greece (F: 3411-500 / B: 1930-64), still less to the dress of the Greek ambassadors (F: 2573-90 / B: 1426-8), excusing himself as though conscious that he has failed in his duty to his original:

It were tor for to telle al here atyr riche. (1.1426.)

Even where dress has some bearing on the plot, in the scene where Alphouns

1) Similar remarks include 111.241-6; 3005-7; 5344-8.
figure in a romance of this kind receive the same summary treatment. But here the contrast between the two versions is less apparent, since the French author has not given these occasions anything comparable to the detailed attention which he paid to dress and ceremonial. His references to them curiously resemble the redactor's treatment of such detailed descriptions: they are narrative rather than descriptive, and the English poet has not added anything which could give them more interest or reality.——

Elsewhere the original has anticipated the redactor's method of avoiding

1) See also, F: 5310-15.
such descriptions by declaring that his powers are not equal to the occasion:—

Per his no clerk with Christ at once Pe half demes Pe results Pe was guarded in Rome for bat fast, No Pe tip del of hire atr to tell Pe best; For all Pe saw you and it amended no sight. But Pe faul to roche a fast, Amope half a site. (11.3344-8.)

In one or two instances, indeed, the redactor has been more specific than his source. Where the original reference to a festival is so general as to leave its nature vague the redactor's conception always includes eating and drinking:—

Tant ont eu treter et le soir & manl male has atcheve wip alle note notably Com il veulent et am potphire; & wip pe devoues dektes of drinking et were No veul autre devise faire To snngo more his no ned, nooutened pe janne. (11.5402-4.)

And on three occasions, where the original narrative turns awkwardly and abruptly to a new incident, the English author has rounded off the earlier scene by stating, without descriptive elaboration, that all involved sat down to tables:—

Pue drue pea forp pe day with diverse mirth, a treuil when it was time turned to note, a serued were of serves an hemself liked; But speke we of pe Spaynola, what hime stide after, (11.3727-30.)

This is evidence of his concern for the efficient conduct of the narrative but there is nothing here or elsewhere in the redaction to suggest that he had any interest in the description of such festivities for their own sake.

1) See also, F's: 6923-36 / B's: 5053-9.
2) See also, B's: 3524-7; 4324-6.
3) Talmud (loc. cit., p.262) cites a number of incidental references, some without original counterparts, but they are mostly alliterative tags with only doubtful reference to feasting: 11.1338; 1382; 1398; 1456; 4851; 4944-5; 4957-70.
In contrast, there are some signs that the alliterative poet paid more attention to the natural setting of his story than the original author. He has expanded the description of the garden in which William and Malior meet (F: 1379-36 / E: 816-24), and elaborated the scene in which his foster-father discovers the child in the werewolf’s den (F: 137-213 / E: 3-64), by describing the cowherd at rest in the sun:

Pe herd sat. Pan wip hound apon pe note sunne, 
Nouȝt fully a furlong fro pat fayre child, 
Clouȝt and kyndely his schoon as to here craft fulles.  
(11.12-14.)

and how William is tempted into the open by the beauty of the place:

Lonely lay it a-long, in his lonely denne, 
& buksesde him out of pe busounys pat were blowed grene, 
& lewed ful lovely pat leant grete schade, 
& briddes ful bremely on pe bowes ainge. 
What for melodys pat pei made in pe may sesoun, 
pat litel child lissely lorked out of his caue, 
Faire floures forto facche pat he bi-fore him seys, 
& to gadere of pe grases pat grene were a fayre. 
& whan it was out went so wel hit him liked, 
Pe sauor of pe swete sesoun & song of pe briddes, 
pat he ferde fast a-boute floures to gadere, 
& layked him long while to lesten pat morpe. 
(11.20-31.)

But in both instances the French text supplies the initiative for the redactor’s additions, and in the latter scene they reflect an interest in the human situation rather than in the natural setting for its own sake. Elsewhere in the redaction there is nothing to differentiate his treatment of Nature from the brief, conventional allusions of the French poet. And, indeed, this is true of his handling of the descriptive element.

as a whole: despite variations which might suggest a greater interest in one aspect of the setting than in others, his general reaction is either to reproduce the French text uncritically or, more frequently, to abbreviate it by omitting as much of the descriptive detail as possible. The few exceptions are noteworthy only because they contradict the usual conformity of the redaction. But none of them are sufficiently sustained to indicate that the alliterative poet felt himself competent to describe any feature of the setting independently and creatively. There he has displayed a certain independence,—as in his free abbreviation of the Battle sequences,—his approach has been a purely negative one, contributing nothing personal or distinctive to the English version.

He has scarcely shown more individuality in his attitude to the characters who figure in the romance. Kalusa, in his study of the process of redaction, found evidence to suggest that the English author took considerable liberties with his original in the matter of characterization: er hielt sich auch hier für befugt, nach eigenem ermessenen, zu andern, stimulierend, auf die ihm unwahre English erschienenen, Minervas, Beobachtungen, daz erfür unpassend hielt, wegzulassen u. s. w. (1) It must be admitted, however, that much of the evidence cited is fragmentary in nature and of limited significance. Grouped together in Kalusa's minute analysis it may appear impressive but scattered here and there throughout the 5,500 lines of the alliterative poem, the various additions and alterations introduced by the redactor do very little to differentiate it from the French original. There are no major commissions, no large-scale importations of new material, and, consequently, no radical changes in the presentation of the characters.

1) Loc. cit., p. 263.
But in this, as in other aspects of the redaction, the
degree of verbal independence forced upon the alliterative poet by the
inability of his medium to reproduce the French text word for word,
has led him to introduce a number of minor additions to and deviations
from the original. The influence of the alliterative medium is most
apparent at a rudimentary level, where the narrative requires the mention
of a character by name and the redactor, to complete the alliteration of
the line, adds a tag of a personal nature: "William, hat worpI chilD" (1.696);
"William, hire worpI nory" (1.511); "Welior, hat menschful nay" (1.659);
"Mi menschful ladi Heliora" (1.694). But a practice so mechanical as
this, which inevitably labels William as "worpI" and Heliora as "menschful"
can scarcely be regarded as evidence of characterization. And many of
the passages, two or three lines at a time, which Kaluza listed as evi-
dence of the redactor’s wish to present his characters more vividly
than the original author has done, are merely extensions of this principle.
The French poet, in describing how William grew from infancy to boyhood
in the forest, thought it necessary to stress his heroic qualities, hands-
some appearance, strength and skill with the bow (F: 359–59 / E: 170–79),
and the redactor followed him in this method of introducing the hero,
without significant variation. But in translating a subsequent passage
with the same function, in which the Emperor is struck by William’s
bearing, he has slightly extended the original version:

L’enfant regarda, s’empressa; Baume bi-hold he a-boute a pat harnes-scape,
la grant serville ne seign no fair, how fayn it es, a freliche solanen;
Ca n’biend le us menshams. So fair a sight of seg he save he never are,
Si en a noble contenance. Of lere no of lykams lik his man none;
Serville exquill jest entre. No of no nae a semblant pat coul haver ay silver.
Sade galant ne de juda. Semppour ward utiterly for venedor pat child,
Sala choze fade soit. Pat foilcely it wore of fayrny for Semppour.
Fo-se que semshams is vont. A fo pe curtseys conterne ma pat hidee pare.

(11:427–28)

1) For further examples see: 11:808; 844; 1051; 1136; 1179; 1636; 5171.
The fullness of the English version gives greater weight to this description of the hero, but it represents a verbal elaboration rather than an imaginative extension of the French, and nothing has been added which deepens our appreciation of the character. And this is true of such passages throughout the redaction: the alliterative poet has given added emphasis to certain traits of character, but he has not introduced anything novel or anything which conflicts with the original characterization.

But though one may suspect that many of the opportunities to add such details were thrust upon the redactor by the nature of his medium rather than sought by him, yet through them he has, consciously or unconsciously, stressed those aspects of personality which seemed to him most important. The characterization in Guillaume de Palerne is neither very profound nor very subtle. We have already seen how the French author used the battle-scenes to display the hero's courage and skill in arms, and how the redactor heightened the original effect by selective abbreviation, concentrating on those incidents in which William appears to most advantage. This effect reaches its culmination in the scene where William delivers the defeated Duke of Saxony to the Emperor (F: 2353-62 / E: 1259-71) and, later, the Prince of Spain to the Queen of Sicily (F: 6287-8 / E: 3660-6), both of which have been slightly expanded by the redactor. But even the French romance, with its lengthy battle-sequences, pays little attention to the hero's knightly character by comparison with other aspects of his personality. Both versions stress his compassionate nature and his readiness to help others, but the English poem is somewhat more emphatic in statement. These qualities express themselves particularly in his concern for Melior during their

1) When the Queen of Sicily appeals to William for help he gives his promise unhesitatingly and in a more forthright manner in the English than in the French text (F: 5231-36 / E: 5142-71).
flight: when they are surrounded in the quarry he blames himself for
the danger into which he has brought her, and urges her to save herself
by revealing her identity (F: 4058-67 / E: 335-47), while earlier, during
a discussion on how they are to live in the forest, the narrator has
added a few lines in which William regrets that a delicately-bred prin-
cess should be forced to eat hips and have, scorns and hazel-nuts (F: 120-
35 / E: 1800-31).

By comparison with William the other characters, even Maleor
herself, have received scant attention from either author, and there is
little to distinguish them from the conventional figures of romance.
Apart from her self-revelation in the love-scenes, Maleor is characterised
mainly by William's attitude towards her. Their relationship throughout
the greater part of the romance is pleasantly natural and unsophisticated,
and the colloquial tone of the alliterative version is well suited to
scenes such as that in which they laugh together over their bow-dimples:

Quant de la pel ròvre
Et bien fu selè sa mie;
S'an apelò sa douce amie;
"Delejat fù le selè mia;
Biter de dòque ve enxide?!
"Cortes, streLouors a tramite,
Quant vos esgapat ambi:] fue!
(11.3099-9.)

Later, when she becomes express, Maleor is more conventionally presented,
as the great lady loved by rich and poor alike for her goodness:

Aliumainrms is presented in a similar fashion. Up to the
point of the lovers' flight she is a lively and interesting character,
and the English author, having established her more fully than the French
post (F: 990-4 / E: 556-50), adds a touch of wit and hints at magic powers

1) The English version is even more convention than the French here (F: 535-
93; 5485-50), and where the latter allows Maleor to comfort herself on
hearing of her father's death by the thought that now William will be
imperial in his stead, the English replaces this by the prior reflection
that death is the lot of all men (F: 572-6 / E: 536-71).
which are not mentioned in the extant version of the original. But when she reappears towards the end of the romance it is merely as a stock figure, required to complete the triple marriage which rounds off the plot. The English author treats her even more summarily than the French, omitting William’s enthusiastic welcome to her (l. 599-617), and abbreviating her re-union with Meller (l. 667-69 / B. 4909-14). None of the other human actors occupy the scene long enough to command even this degree of personification, and even the werewolf, though he figures prominently, is characterised by his good-hearted efforts to help the lovers rather than by anything which either poet has to say of him. (1)

In a redaction less closely bound to its original than William of Palerne these minor changes in characterisation would not be worthy of comment. But though, under the circumstances, they suggest a certain interest on the redactor’s part, the alterations are inconsistent and do not reflect any general conception of the characters which is at variance with the original interpretation. At one point the redaction appears to stress natural behaviour, compassion and good-humour, while elsewhere it becomes even more conventional than the French version. The details involved are, in any case, so slight that in the context of the whole they do little or nothing to differentiate the two versions or distinguish the personalities of the two authors.

In one other incidental aspect, however, the contrast between original and redaction is sufficiently clear-cut to suggest such a distinction. The French author occasionally interrupts the narrative

1) Kalmus (loc. cit., p. 280) thought that the role played by the werewolf and the degree to which he is guided by human reason had been made more positive by the redactor, but this impression probably owes more to the same with which, in the lines he cites (l. 1810; B. 253-26; etc.), "dist", "war", and "nitty gallicrate with "werewolf", than to any special significance intended by the redactor.
to comment on the situation in which the characters find themselves, in the light of circumstances known to the reader but not to them.

For example, when William learns from the Queen of Sicily of her plight:

\[
\text{ult par li grieve de son maine}
\text{Et de li a\'on a tort domine;}
\text{Mais s'il soient qui\'el faut en mesure,}
\text{ult li faut plus en parto amore,}
\text{Bien sevet rien, ale nos il,}
\text{Que il ait mere n\'ele fil; (11,5283-8,).)}
\]

The English author has reproduced these comments on two occasions only (F: 3926-9; E: 2290-1 & F: 4530-5; E: 2705-6), suggesting that though they formed part of his original he chose to ignore them elsewhere.

He has also omitted a number of lengthy passages in which the characters reflect upon their condition and the workings of Fate. These, aside from delay the narrative and, in some instances, weaken its effect by foretelling future action, and the redactor's general rejection of them is further evidence of his preoccupation with narration to the neglect of other elements.

The technical conduct of the redaction also reflects this preoccupation. The English poet has been at some pains to make his method of story-telling as competent and effective as the original and to improve upon it in some respects. He accepted the original construction and conduct of the narrative in all major particulars and

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1) See also: F: 537-8; 1117; 2114; 2116; 2198-2200; 2704-5; 3331-3; 3450-4; 1526-30; 3756-66; 1915-20; 3924-7; 5418-20; 5560-2; 6454-7.


3) These include: F: 599-907; 1531-52; 1588-1626; 4031-47.

4) As Kalusa examined the technical conduct of the redaction with particular thoroughness I have attempted only a general summary here.
confined his manipulation of it to matters of detail, making, however, so many minor adjustments as to suggest a deliberate policy on his part. His conception involved greater attention to narrative continuity than the author of the French version had thought necessary; where the latter turns abruptly to a new situation the alliterative poet has frequently tried to show, in a line or two, the connection between this and the previous incident. Similarly, when a new character appears the redactor indicates immediately his connection with the action in hand, whereas the original author allows this to become apparent as the story develops. Such additions indicate a more punctilious, yet, at the same time, less mature technique of narration. Where the French author proceeds in full confidence that the reader will have no difficulty in following the development of his story, the redactor, uncertain of his effects, pauses to forge additional narrative links and to stress the relationship of characters to the action. The former allows the grammatical relationship between neighbouring sentences to indicate the connection between events, whereas the latter interrupts the narrative sequence to make an explicit statement relating the incidents in time.

Hit tidde after on a time, as tellus eure tokes,(1.198.)

In the same punctilious spirit the redactor opens or closes a detailed account with a line or two indicating the general effect of the passage, and summarises the content of a speech in the same way. To prepare the reader for developments within a sequence he prefixes it with a summary of relevant information. And where the French text alludes to previous

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incidents, the English reminds the reader of them by inserting a resume,
—burt the redactor apparently realised that this could be tedious if
carried too far, and where the original recapitulates past action at
length he has given a brief paraphrase rather than a translation.

In culmination these relatively minor features suggest
that the English poet either distrusted the technical competence of the
original or doubted his own ability to reproduce it effectively. All
his measures are intended to make the story clear, explicit and easy to
follow without altering the narrative structure fundamentally, but they
have resulted in much needless repetition, clumsy transitions, over-
emphasis and unnecessary obtrusion of the narrator upon the scene.
The French version is not free from these faults: a skilled redactor
making an independent approach and rehandling the story according to his
own conception of it might have removed them, but they have merely been
magnified by the alliterative poet's subservience to his source, his
timidity in redaction, and fussy concern to emphasise what was already
abundantly clear.

In many ways the technical aspect of William of Palerne is
characteristic of the redaction as a whole. Broadly speaking the whole
content of Guillaume de Palerne has been treated with the same timid
conservatism which marks the context of the narrative in the English
version. The alliterative poet has accepted the French romance very
much as he found it, and has reproduced it without excessive expansion
or abbreviation, without structural alteration, and without significant
change in characterisation. In effect the English work remains, both in

2) Ibid., pp. 220-2.
general plan and in the great majority of its details, very much what its original must have been, if we are to judge from the surviving texts of Guillaume de Palerne. The obvious implication is, at first sight, somewhat surprising: that no fundamental alteration was required in adapting a romance produced over a century and a half earlier to the prescription of a French aristocrat, for the entertainment of a Fourteenth century English audience, linguistically debarrled from contact with contemporary Anglo-French culture. The explanation of this apparent community of tastes in two types of reader so different in social status, education and intellectual interests may lie partly in the composition of the English audience, partly in the nature of the French romance.

By the mid-Fourteenth century it is no longer appropriate to conceive the English audience in terms of social conditions during the earlier post-Conquest period, when it consisted of the aristocratic minority whose education and literary interests were exclusively French, and the vast, unlettered majority who found their entertainment, largely at a sub-literary level, in the resources of native folklore. As the decay of Anglo-Norman increasingly confined the use of French to courtly circles the potential audience for literature in the native language must have included a growing number of those whose social standing and literacy gave them a degree of refinement and intellectual interest, the members of the emergent Middle Class. Many of them may have been attracted by what they knew at second hand of the roman courtois, but they would be debarrled from full appreciation by the fact that it celebrated social conventions which were not part of their own experience. This difficulty did not exist in the narrative literature most readily available to them in English, the so-called 'English' romances of Horn and
Havelok, Athelston and Gawelyn, Guy of Warwick and Haue of Hautoum.

These tales have many features in common: they are centered upon a hero, often of noble birth, who makes his way in the world, winning lands and honours, or regaining his ancestral heritage, by virtue of his personal ability, quickness of wit and physical strength. They involve supernatural elements, magic rings and prophetic dreams, but they move, for the most part, in the natural world of everyday experience and often at a humble social level. They are 'popular' in that they make their appeal by the narration of adventures for their inherent interest, not for their continental significance or in celebration of an ethical code, either heroic or romantic. And there are indications that they were appreciated by a popular English audience when the romans d'artois were still confined to those who could read them in the original.

William of Palerne has commonly been classified amongst these 'English' romances. (1) So far as the origins of its story-matter are concerned the classification is misleading, but its association with the popular tales which reflect the tastes of the English lower classes is a valid indication of its basic appeal. The title of roman d'aventures applied to Guillaume de Palerne distinguishes it from the romans d'artois by emphasising the element of adventurous incident which constitutes its chief attraction. The career of William, the 'male Cinderella', who, by innate ability, wins his way from the humblest rank to the throne which is his birthright, gains a well-born bride and with her an empire, aided, to a certain extent, by supernatural agencies, has obvious affinities with those of Horn, Havelok, and the other 'popular' heroes.

1) By Wells (Manual, pp.7-27) and by Dewick and Orton (pp.351-9) amongst others.
Although we have no record of the story in its pre-literary form, its folk-lore elements are as apparent as those which underlie the Matter of England. And though we cannot tell whether it was these fundamental features or the Sicilian setting and personal associations of the story-matter which attracted the attention of the Countess Yolande, the author of Guillaume de Palerne clearly recognised that its appeal lay in the adventures which form its core. He treated them fully and with evident enthusiasm, without attempting to disguise their popular associations by glossing over the scenes of William's humble childhood, or to make them more sophisticated by rationalising the werewolf's role and omitting the beast-disguises, or to avoid the characteristic duplications of the folk-tale.

Whether or not this aspect of the romance was entirely to the taste of the Countess Yolande and her courtly circle, it met with the complete approval of the English redactor. His treatment of the French text makes it obvious that he accepted it at the author's evaluation, that he regarded the adventurous incidents as its chief interest, and was not deterred by its repetitive nature from reproducing it at full length. It is not remarkable, in view of the contemporary attitude to literary form, that he did not attempt to alter the episodic structure of the original, but it is significant that, as a translator working in a demanding medium, he did not shorten his task by omitting some of the duplicated incidents in the main plot. He clearly expected that the composition which met with the approval of the Earl of Hereford would also be approved in its entirety by his humbler countrymen. Such wholesale acceptance of French matter is, however, a rather negative indication of English tastes and interests. Traces of a more positive and personal attitude on the part of the redactor are extremely limited; a preference
for incidents which have a high degree of human interest, and a somewhat
self-interest in reactions to the animal disguises, expressed by slight
verbal expansion of the original and by one, admittedly doubtful, addition
to it. But, just as nothing of importance has been omitted, nothing has
been added which suggests a creative urge or a desire for originality
on the redactor's part. When all allowances have been made for his
contribution, William of Palerne remains substantially what Guillaume
de Palerne originally was: a narrative of adventures linked by the
familiar motif of a popular hero's rise to power.

But Guillaume de Palerne contains two additional elements
which, in the form they have here, would not have figured in the unsoph-
isticated tales of the Matter of England. The roman d'aventures did
not exclude the contemporary codes of Chivalry and Courtly Love to
which the roman courtois was wholly consecrated, and here the one is
represented by the hero's knightly feats against the Duke of Saxony and
the King of Spain, the other by his wooing of Melior. The latter, at least,
would be approved by the Countess Yolande as an element familiar to her
in the more conventional romances of the period. But the love of
William and Melior is not merely a romantic interlude superimposed upon
an adventure story to suit the taste of the French redactor's patrons.
It is a basic element in the narrative, the primary cause of all its
adventures, so integrated that it must surely have been part of the story
in its folk-lore form. The English folktales, too, did not exclude an
element of this kind: the love of Ryenbild for Horn, which, like that of
Melior, is a tribute offered to the hero by his social superior; of Guy
and Felice, which is the cause of wanderings, adventures and heroic shriv-
lings; of Bevis and Jonian, who, like the other lovers, have marriage as
their sole aim. The love element in Guillaume de Palerne is essentially
of this kind, both in circumstance and in the emotional relationship involved, frank, natural and with *legiti mains* marriage as its goal. Only the conventional expression given to it is alien, and that bears all the signs of having been imported by a poet steeped in the literature of *amour courtois*. Its artificiality conflicts with the essentially natural relationship between hero and heroine and the realistic atmosphere of the romance as a whole, and the disparity is underlined by the complete disappearance of all conventionality, of timidity and lovesickness, of sighs and self-examinations, once the lovers embark on their adventures together.

The localized nature of the love-scenes would have made it easy for the English redactor to omit them, prefacing the lovers' flight by a direct statement of their feelings for each other and the barriers to their marriage. Alternatively, the unsympathetic sophistication imposed upon them by the French poet could have been expurgated by abandoning his conventional treatment in favour of one more in keeping with the genuine emotions involved. The alliterative poet chose to do neither, but to retain the incident essentially in its original form, with respect both to content and expression. Yet it is clear from his version that he was not entirely at ease with the conventions of *amour courtois*. He has made alterations aimed not only at the abbreviation of the love-monologues, but at injecting into them a practical logic which is foreign to their nature. His attempts are limited and have resulted in some confusion, but in a redaction otherwise so conservative they are not without significance. Combined with conventional omissions of conventional matter which give the lovers' actions an unmotivated directness more in keeping with the true nature of their relationship, the colloquial tone which his alliterative medium has superimposed upon the emotional
exaltation of the original, and the under-current of luxurious malice
which runs through his version, they have done something to modify this
importation from the essentially foreign world of the *roman courtois.*
His measures are timid and partial, but their tendency towards the simple,
natural treatment of love in the tradition of the folk-tales is perceptible.

Something of the same tendency is apparent in the redactor's
attitude to chivalrous exploits, but here it has found expression in more
swerving alterations to the French romance. No romance writer of the
Middle Ages could dispense with the element of personal heroism, displayed
in action and in conformity with the codes of the society for which he
wrote. But it took widely different forms according to the differing
conventions of the age: in the *roman courtois* the knight displays his
skill in the use of knightly weapons, on the battle-field or in the lists,
adhering strictly to the code of Chivalry and fighting for his lady or
his greater glory in her eyes; in the popular tale the hero fights with
fist or club, against all odds and under no code of fair play, for survival
and his own greater renown. Personal heroism in *Guillaume de Palerne*
takes neither of these two extreme forms of expression. The hero en-
gages in two lengthy campaigns, fighting as a knight, and in implied
shadiness to the code of Chivalry. But he fights for honour not for
love, first in justification of his knighthood and then in aid of his
mother and for the recovery of his patrimony. And the French version
is primarily concerned with the realistic portrayal of the action and
the practical success of the hero. Though it pays occasional tribute
to the conventions of Chivalry in descriptions of ceremonial array, and
accounts of battle-field orations, here, as in the body of the romance,
the narration of incident for its own sake predominates.
The English redactor, however, has not accepted even this degree of compromise with the conventions of Chivalry. Despite the lively action and variety of incidents which the battle-scenes contain, they have not held his attention to the same extent as the non-military adventures in his source. And in abbreviating them he has discriminated particularly against the conventional incidentals to warfare, the speeches and ceremonials—ever where they immediately concern the hero himself. So far as his loyalty to the original permitted he has concentrated upon those incidents which show William in action, emphasising their contribution to the success of his career rather than his personal prowess or skill in arms. The redaction as a whole evinces none of that preoccupation with the technical details of warfare, with the practice of knighthood, which marks the roman courtois, written for those whose profession it was. The detailed descriptions of combat, by which the author of Guillaume de Palerne catered for such an interest amongst his readers, have been ignored or paraphrased with evident lack of enthusiasm. The English poet has not attempted to popularise the battle-sequences, by displaying his hero's ability in unequalled combat involving brute strength rather than skill, but by the negative nature of his redaction he has largely neutralised the chivalric element which, to a limited extent, characterised these scenes in the original.

If the redactor's treatment of chivalrous exploits, more individual than anything else in his version, can be described as negative, the term might equally well be applied to the redaction as a whole. The modifications made to the original are so limited in extent and so indeterminate in nature, that its appreciation in a largely unaltered form by an audience very different from that for which it was composed can
only be understood by considering the extent to which Guillaume de Falerne represented a compromise between two literary extremes and the community of interests which existed between different social classes. The *roman d’aventures* combined a lively narrative of the type of incident whose appeal is universal and perennial with a limited recognition of contemporary social codes. But in this particular example, though the author used certain episodes in his adventure story to celebrate the ethics of the society to which his patroness belonged, the two elements have not been fused. The exposition of Chivalry and Courtly Love is partial and mechanical, and adventure remains the keynote of the romance. To the redactor working for a popular English audience one element at least would present no difficulties; his readers would readily accept an adventure narrative of the kind with which they were already familiar in native literature and folklore. That he also expected them to accept a modified version of those incidents designed to cater for the social interests of the Countess Yolande and her circle, probably indicates that the English audience was no longer confined to the popular circles for whose entertainment the Matter of England was exploited, but included many members of the new Middle Class. Their social aspirations and interest in the manners and ethical codes of their superiors may explain his retention of matter which might easily have been omitted in the process of redaction. Whether or not his estimate of the widening tastes of the English audience was immediately justified it is impossible to tell, but the existence of an early sixteenth century printed text of a prose recension of *William of Palerne* suggests that its admixture of vigorous adventure and formalised sentiment was well calculated to appeal to the new literary patrons in the age of the commercial press.
But when all allowances have been made for the undecided tastes of the developing English audience and the insalubrity of the original composition, 

William of Palermo must be judged an essentially negative example of the reductive process. Though the limited modifications made to the scenes of love and war suggest dissatisfaction with their treatment in the French romance, it has not found expression in any clear-cut form. The alterations made have affected the degree of emphasis placed upon Chivalry and Courtly Love, but there has been no attempt to displace them or to substitute a more natural ethic.

Where the redactor has supplemented the original material, by extending some incidents of adventure, his version shows little originality or invention, and only limited ability in the creation of imaginative detail. His failure to visualise scenes and characters clearly is marked by an insalubrity wavering between expansion and abbreviation, which now seems intended to create an effect not designed by the French author, now falls back into conformity with his intentions. Momentary attempts to write creatively, as in the description of natural settings, are counterbalanced by a general reluctance to fill in the necessary background to the action, even where the material is supplied by the

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1) This Sixteenth century prose version is represented by four consecutive printed pages, discovered in Sutherland in 1892, and first reported by B.B. Nichol ("An Unknown English Prose Version of William of Palermo", Lateratur, No. 1083, London, 1893, p. 223), who suggested that it came from the press of Wynkyn de Worde at some time between 1520 and 1535. Having compared the text with the corresponding portion of the other versions of the romance, he concluded that the printed edition derived, not from the French, but either from the alliterative poem or from an English prose redaction of it. F. Klein, who edited the two leaves ("Zwei fruhneuenglische Pressausgaben", Archiv, 118, Braunschweig, 1907, pp. 313-26), came to the same conclusion. The enduring popular appeal of the story is demonstrated by the
French text. The redaction as a whole is characterised by timid adherence to the original and a noted reluctance to attempt independent description or narration on a significant scale. Even the minor changes which have been made in the technical conduct of the narrative reflect the redactor's lack of self-assurance: patently anxious to improve upon the original presentation of the story-matter he lacked the confidence to do more than tinker ineffectually with his source.

Since so much in William of Palermo has been contributed by the French author and so little by the redactor, the English composition can scarcely be judged as such. Critics have found fault with "the essential incongruity in a story which attempts to combine a courtly love intrigue with a typical Roman d'Avventure", but the English author is to blame only in that, though troubled by the incongruity, he lacked the initiative to deal with it fundamentally. Others have objected that the improbability of the animal disguises, which does more violence to the imagination than the supernatural elements in the plot, destroys its effectiveness as a whole. It is an objection which probably would not have occurred to the medieval reader, and the redactor does not seem to have been aware of any defect: the fullness with which he has treated all incidents concerning the disguises suggests approval of the device and a genuine interest in human reactions to them. It has been thought possible that a keen sense of the ridiculous on his part, turned to irony, is responsible for the acceptance of the disguise there, which looks to us like his most serious error of taste and judgement. But it exist in a Seventeenth century manuscript of an Irish version, which, according to its editor (C. O'Sahilly, ed. Sachtra William, Dublin, 1949, p. xvi), was derived from an English prose text of the type and, most probably, of the period of the early print.  

(Cont.)
may be doubted that a reductor who considered the central motif in
his source ridiculous would give such a full and faithful account of
it, or, if he intended to parody it, that he should not make his ironic
intention more apparent.

Nevertheless, the suggestion underlines something of
major importance in the English poem: the pervasive undertone of
humour, which attracts everyone who reads it as the most characteristical
and most unusual feature of the romance (1). It is an element impossible
to isolate or define precisely since it is not expressed in sustained
passages written with deliberate humorous effect or intended to ridicule
situations which the original author treated seriously. It consists,
rather, of a multitude of slight touches, a verse here, a few lines there,
which suggest a consistent attitude of mind: the sly humour with which
Aisamundrime views the effects of love upon William and Helie (2), the
Emperor's amusement at the naivety of the young cowherd (3), the narrator's
humorous exaggeration of the terror inspired by the appearance of the
werewolf and the other beasts (4). The consistency with which the element
appears shows that it is not a measure of characterisation, but rather
an expression of the reductor's own personality, which, in an unobtrusive
way, diffuses itself through the alliterative poem (5). It is his most im-
portant contribution, giving the reductio a character of its own quite
distinct from the French version (6). I am especially

1) See K. W. Tilak, loc. cit., p. 256; G. Kane, op. cit., p. 52.
2) See, for example: 11.334-43; 1015-21; 1023-34; 1727-33.
3) See, for example: 11.345-6; 368-70.
4) See, for example: 11.1775-84; 1859-9; 1866-96.
5) "William, the English imitator, impresses one as a modest, naively good
humoured, and by no means untalented personage. He is especially
attracted in William of Palermo by the author's mind, which is
of the plot with a good-natured acceptance, which carries more conviction than the most soberly factual narrative, and endowing the whole with unusual human appeal.

Whether this element was wholly an unconscious reflection of the writer's light-hearted attitude to his function, or was due, in part, to his conscious attempt to create an atmosphere appropriate to the romance, it is impossible to determine. It has been suggested that much of the humour is an unintentional by-product of the essential incongruity between the alliterative line and the subjects to which it is applied here. But though the suggestion might reasonably be accepted where the love-scenes are concerned, the English verse is quite competent to carry the adventurous incident which makes up the bulk of the romance. On the whole it has been competently handled, though it is true that in the battle-scenes its peculiar merits have not been exploited to the full. Yet undoubtedly the whole nature of the reduction has been


1) William of Palermo relies for its effect less upon the story than upon the appeal of the breadth of humanity that it generally displays. For this reason it seems to have more sensibility, substance and dignity than the general run of the romances. Its characters expand under a painstakingly sensitive treatment that seems to spring from happy and unembittered understanding of human nature? (G. Kane, op. cit., p. 51.)

2) "He does his best, too, to convey the sentiment, but he is defeated by the essential unsuitability of his medium. Passages meant to be moving.............are made ludicrous by the heavy insistence of the alliterative lines? (D. Harvey, Some Aspects of Middle English Literature (ed. E. Keen), Oxford, 1935, p. 54.) See also W. F. Kor, English Literature: Medieval, London, 1912, p. 73.

3) He uses a good, plain style of the alliterative long line with a freedom and skill that increase as he goes on? (G. Kane, op. cit., p. 51.) It shows great skill in managing the alliterative verse and his apology to the reader for the choice of this metre quite unnecessary? (B. ten Brink, op. cit., p. 135.)
affected by the use of the alliterative medium. The difficulty of reproducing the content of the octosyllabic couplet with precision has forced upon the redactor a degree of independence, in matters of expression and in minor details of narration, which he was unwilling to practise in his general conduct of the redaction. In so far as his medium permits he is a patient and faithful transmuter, but the inflexibility of the alliterative line constantly forces him to forsake the guidance of the French text and write creatively, drawing on his own imagination to fill out the matter in hand. Through such momentary self-expression, in single lines and half-lines scattered throughout the whole, his personality has left its imprint on William of Palerne.

The process is cumulative and the total effect more apparent than the study of individual instances would suggest. The personality projected by the English narrator is peculiarly suited to the character of the romance. The fantastic nature of the plot, the frank realism with which it is presented, and the unsophisticated simplicity of the characters, harmonize effectively with his unquestioning acceptance of improbabilities, his naïf interest in overworked narrative devices, and sympathetic identification with the human situations involved. And, despite the artificiality of certain passages, the colloquial tone conveyed by the alliterative medium is perfectly in keeping with the fundamental nature of the folktale. The total effect is much more than a matter of style, much less than a reinterpretation and fundamental lack of originality in the general conduct of the redaction suggest that the English author had no conception of recreating his source in personal terms. But merely by his choice of an alliterative medium—a choice which in itself reflects a certain independence
from the literary tradition represented by his source—he made possible the production of a work which indicated something of the developing tastes of the contemporary English audience and is marked by the personality of an individual author. The artistic success of *William of Palermo* is limited and it cannot be called a native creation, but in an age when English literature lacked originality and an individual character it represents a certain advance.
CHAPTER IX

CHEVALERS ASSIGNE

The romance of Chevalers Assigne cannot be precisely dated, but has generally been assigned to the end of the Fourteenth century. The mixture of linguistic forms in the text makes the area of composition more difficult to determine: it has, however, been identified as an East Midland copy of a North West Midland original. The single surviving manuscript, British Museum Cotton Caligula A.ii, has been three times edited, but none of the editions includes a full critical apparatus and only limited attention has so far been paid to the poem.

There is little doubt, however, as to the origin of the story-matter. The poet makes the common allusion to a literary source,—"as pe book telleth", which in this case appears to be more than a mere convention. Utterson, the first editor, identified this source as a

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1) See Wells, Manual, p. 96.
4) Line references throughout are to the edition by Gibbs. See here 1.7 and again 1.270.
French romance contained in Royal MS.15 E.vi of the British Museum.

Gibbs was more precise in describing the alliterative work as "an epitome of the first 1083 lines of the French poem" in the Royal MS.

French and Hale, in their very brief Introduction, merely repeated this ascription, which has come to be generally accepted.

The section of Royal 15 E.vi referred to, ff.272-272-, consists of a French romance de geste, in about 5500 alexandrines, called La Chevalier au Cane. This title properly belongs to the opening section only of a cycle of poems, three of which are found together in the British Museum Manuscript. The cycle owes its origin to the enthusiasm aroused by the First Crusade and the desire to give its events widespread circulation in literary form. The order in which its various component parts were written can only be determined approximately, but the earliest

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There is some discrepancy between the different accounts: French and Hale say that the English version corresponds to "about the first 1100 lines" of the French poem. It actually corresponds to the first 1065 lines of the French. Gibbs' figure of 1083 lines is probably due to inaccuracy in counting the closely written lines of the manuscript, and that given by French and Hale may represent an approximation based upon this.


branches seem to be those most closely concerned with historical events,

the Chanson d'Antioche and the Chanson de Jérusalem. It is generally
accepted that these were written by an Artois poet, Richard le Clerc, early in the Twelfth century. The originals have, in any case, been lost, and the two poems survive only in a recension made by Graindor de Douai
between 1180 and 1200. As well as recasting Richard's work, Graindor
inserted between the two existing sections a new episode of the Chétifs,
"sans fondement historique,......consacrée aux aventures fabuleuses de
quelques barons français capturés par les Turcs, au cours de la malheureuse
expédition de Pierre l'Évêque."

This trilogy, of over 23,000 lines in monorhymed alexandrine
laisse, was evidently conceived as a finished whole, but the process
began by the interpolation of the fictitious and fantastic Chétifs in
the factual narrative of the Crusades was inevitably continued: "certaines
de leurs épisodes, saisis par l'imagination populaire ou romanesque,
subissent la contamination d'éléments folkloriques ou merveilleux."

1) "Den Hitaster, Kern des Syklaus haben wir in der Chanson d'Antioche zu
sehen, der bald bei Chanson de Jérusalem und unser Gedicht (i.e., the
Chevalier au Cygne-Epienne Godefroy), folgten, während das Chétifs und
La Laisse au Chevalier au Cygne, die von vielen Wundern berichteten, erst
nach dem XII. und zu Anfang des XIII. Jahrhunderts entstanden
sein durften" (E. Hainz, "Beiträge zur Überlieferung des Chevalier
au Cygne und der Enfances Godefroy", Romanische Forschungen, 11,11,
1911, p.72f). Most scholars, however, place the composition
of the Chétifs before that of the Chevalier au Cygne-Enfances Godefroy.

2) See R. Jaffroy, The Two Knights of the Swan; Lohengrin and Héloise,

3) R. Bonnett, Les Lais des Ems (Histoire de la littérature française, Vol.2)
Paris, 1921, p.97.

4) F. Marchant, Histoire littéraire de la France médiévale (VI-XII siècles),
In keeping with the common practice of the period, attention is concentrated upon a central figure amongst the leaders of the crusade, and his career becomes the thread on which are hung countless incidents with little or no relation to the original subject of the chanson de geste: "de l'origine le véritable héros de la croisade s'est dégagé. C'est le vice de Rome-lorraine, Godefroy de Bouillon. Auteur de ce personnage historique se développe, du début du XIIIe siècle, un réseau de légendes qui fournissent la matière des Héroïnes, et surtout du Chevalier au Cygne, vivant plus tard de la Héroïnes du Chevalier au Cygne.  

Our knowledge of this process of development is imperfect, and there is disagreement as to the order in which the various sections were composed, and whether the Chevalier au Cygne should be regarded as an independent poem or merely as an introduction to the Héroïnes Godefroy. There is little doubt, however, that this elaboration of the Crusade Cycle belongs to the early Thirteenth century, and that it was compiled by a jongleur named Renaud or Renaud. The existence of a considerable number of manuscripts suggests that the cycle in its extended form was extremely popular, while the variant texts which survive show that it was several times reworked and elaborated to enormous lengths,—over 55,000 lines in some versions. Ultimately, towards the end of the Thirteenth century, it reached the final stage of medieval literary development in a prose recension containing all the original matter, historical and fabulous alike.

1) R. Roussat, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

2) See J. T. Holmes, *A History of Old French Literature*, revised ed., New York, 1948, p. 125. An one manuscript containing the complete cycle (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal 3139) is specifically dated 1265; the various branches must have been unified by this period.

In this process of evolution the opening sections of the
narrative were probably the last to be added to the cycle, at a period
when the original literary inspiration of the chanson de geste had
already been greatly adulterated by the influence of romance.

Concentration upon a single epic hero and celebration of his fame by
adding an account of his early career to his crusade adventures, by
recounting his noble birth and the great deeds of his ancestors, leads
ultimately to the inclusion of their ancestry and early adventures, as
much for their narrative interest as for the reflected glory which
they throw upon the hero himself. As a result, the narrative sequence
which ends in the historical present opens in the fabulous and unstable
past, with a mass of incident quite unconnected with the crusades and
the real Godfrey of Bouillon, fantastic in nature and romantic in tone.

This is the stage represented by the Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne,
the opening section of the Godfrey cycle, though probably the last to
be attached to it, and the only one with which we need be concerned in
seeking the source of Chevalere Ausigne.

The story of the strange birth and early adventures of the
Surn-Knight, whose the supposed ancestor of Godfrey of Bouillon, gives
his name to the Chevalier au Cygne, is believed to have had an existence
quite apart from the cycle, to be considerably older in origin and to
encompass mythological and legendary elements. The germ of the narrative
appears to have been a legend of the marriage of a mortal to a

1) " Ces compilations ne présentent aucune homogénéité. Elles portent
la marque de plusieurs auteurs, la trace de plusieurs époques.
la fantaisie la plus déréglée s'y mêle à l'histoire la plus
authentique! (A. Flaten, op. cit., p. ix.)


swan-nymph, a mythical creature, half-human, half-bird, common to the
folklore of the Greeks, the Celts and the primitive Germanic tribes.
In Germanic legend the swan-nymphs have the power of transforming
themselves into swans at will by donning wings, a veil, a necklace, or
some garment made of swan’s plumage. In this instance the power of
transformation is inherited by the seven children of the union, born
miraculously at one birth, and wearing the silver necklaces which enable
them to escape the death planned by a wicked grandmother.

The evolution of the Swan-Children legend in its folklore
form can only be guessed at, but scholars are generally agreed in
attributing it originally to the region of the lower Rhine. Its
earliest recorded appearance in literary form is in the work of a
Lotharingian monk, Jean de Haute-ville, who included it in his Dalmaison,
a collection of Latin prose tales made about 1130, and translated into
French octosyllabic couplets by the poet Herbert, sometime in the first
decade of the Thirteenth century. Although Jean de Haute-ville claims
an oral rather than a written source, the story of the Swan-Children as
told by him is already somewhat remote from its folklore form and such

edition of Le Dalmaison de Chevalier au Cygne, Revue de Belge, xix, Paris,
Belgique, xxvii, Brussels, 1903, p. 167.
3) Id., A. Hille, Heidelberg, 1913.
5) Id., C. Brutus and A. de Montaignon, Paris, 1856.
of its mythical significance has been obscured. And already it has become associated with the story of the Swan-Knight, though his adventures are only referred to, not narrated, and there is no mention of his relationship to Godfrey of Bouillon.

Yet we know that the association between the historical Godfrey and the legendary Swan-Knight already existed in the mid-

(3)

Twelfth century, and the next appearance of the legend is as an integral part of the Crusade Cycle based on Godfrey's campes"ou allez voir apparaître maintenant des textes plus explicites, ses œuvres faisant déjà partie du grand cycle de la chevalerie, où la soudure est complètement faite entre les deux légendes. La forme la plus ancienne nous en est donnée dans le poème édité par H. Todd, ....... et désigné par Gaston Paris

---

1) G. Paris (loc. cit., p. 326) considered that "l'histoire du Chevalier au Cygne, telle qu'elle se lit dans le Dolopathos, avait été empruntée directement à un récit oral, à un conte? G. Mast (Sur quelques Formes de la légende du Chevalier au Cygne, Thom., XXXIV, Paris, 1905, pp. 206-14) believed that the story had previously attained literary form. The essential point is, that in the Dolopathos, if not before, the process of medievalisation was already begun, the legend being accepted for its narrative value, freely handled and combined with other, extraneous material.

2) "Aucun manuscrit français ne nous a transmis la légende du Chevalier au Cygne indépendante de celle des Enfants Cygnes. Le souvenir des deux contes est bien antérieur au XIIIe siècle (F. Blondeaux, loc. cit., Vol., XXVII, p. 233). "Toutefois le conte qui fait l'objet de notre poème n'a en réalité rien à faire avec celui du Chevalier au Cygne; il a existé indépendamment avant d'être soigné à l'autre...." (G. Paris, loc. cit., p. 315.)

The manuscript from which Todd's edition of the
Maiam ne is taken (Bibliothèque Nationale 12558) contains all branches
of the Cycle du Chevalier au Cygne including "une version anonyme des
Enfants-Jymes qui est certainement la plus ancienne et qui presente
de nombreux traits communs avec le Conte du Dolopathanes" Though the
exact relationship of this version to the Dolopathanes has not yet been
determined, it is generally agreed that it represents the earliest known
attempt to adapt the legend of the Swan-Children for a specific function
in connection with the histamy of Godfrey of Bouillon. And here the
process of medievalisation has gone even further than in the Latin
version and the mythological associations of the original story have
been still further obscured. The mysterious nature of the swan-maiden
has been completely forgotten, she is as human as her husband, now a king,
and the transformation of their seven children into swans on the removal
of their necklaces is left without explanation, as one incident in a
long chain of adventures. As part of this process of rationalisation

2) H. A. Todd, La Maiamne du Chevalier au Cygne, in P.M.L.A., IV,
    Baltimore, 1899.
4) The date suggested for the version of c. 12558 by H. A. Smith
    ("Studies in the Epic Poem Godfrey de Bouillon"P.M.L.A., XXVII,
    Cambridge, Mass., 1922, p. 189), 1180-70, could make it even earlier
    than the Dolopathanes, and J. Pigeonneau (le Cycle de la croisade et
    de la famille de Bouillon, Saint Cloud, 1877, p. 121 and p. 241) thought
    that Jean de Sainte-Seille may have drawn his material from it. Most
    commentators, however, agree in general with G. E. Paris (loc. cit.,
    pp. 313-20), who considered that the composition could not be earlier
    than the end of the Twelfth century and that: "Les deux récits ressortent
    à une même source, et les divergences qu'elles présentent sont dues aux altérations inévitable
    de la tradition orale.
5) See A. Jeffrey, op. cit., p. 37; P. Paris, Histoire littéraire de la France,
the characters are individually named, the mother of the swan-children being called Blinxe.

Gaston Paris adopted this name for the version of B.5.12558, in order to distinguish it from another in which all the characters are differently named and the mother is called Béatrix. The Béatrix version of the Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne, like the Blinxe, forms the introduction to a complete Crusade Cycle: Renaut, the jongleur who produced this definitive version early in the Thirteenth century, though he probably drew his material from a text similar to that of B.5.12558, shaped it deliberately for this function. This involved one fundamental alteration: whereas in the Blinxe version the swan-children are saved from the machinations of their grandmother by the one girl amongst them, in the Béatrix her role is taken by one of the boys, who becomes the swan-knight of the later parts of the cycle.

This form of the Naissance became the prototype from which many French redactions were taken throughout the Middle Ages, and on which most of the foreign language versions were based. There can be no doubt that it is the source of Chevalerie assignée in general narrative outline, in the roles played by the various characters and in the names given to them; the English poem is a Béatrix version of the Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne. Unlike the Blinxe, however, this version exists

3) "La forme toute chevaleresque que nous offre le poème de Béatrix a fait oublier les autres et a fourni la matière de la réduction en prose des versions étrangères...." (G. Paris, loc. cit., p.327.)
in several variant forms and in a considerable number of manuscripts. Which, if any, of these was the original of the English work remains to be determined.

The problem of finding the exact source is complicated by the limited amount of information on the manuscripts of the Renaissance at present available. Although much scholarly attention has been given to the *Cyle de Chevalier au Cygne*, its opening section has largely been neglected and no critical text has yet appeared. The manuscript tradition of the cycle has been only very generally examined and, although individual scholars have attempted to classify the texts of the particular branch in which they were interested, there is as yet no thorough analysis of all the existing manuscripts of the Renaissance.

Such an analysis is beyond the scope of this study, but it is possible by drawing together the evidence available on the various texts to make a general grouping sufficient for the purpose in hand.


All those who have attempted to classify the manuscripts of the Crusade Cycle, whether or not they are concerned with the *naissance*, agree in distinguishing two groups of texts so different in content as to constitute separate reductions. Despite this difference, and a wide degree of variation between individual manuscripts within each group, both reductions contain Béatrix versions of the *naissance* and both are therefore potential sources of *Chavalere Assises*. The oldest of these is Jeanot's compilation of the early Thirteenth century, and his name appears in a number of the manuscripts:

A


This manuscript, variously dated in the mid- and late Thirteenth century (R.A. Smith, loc. cit., p.150; A. Hatem, op.cit., p.23) is generally considered to be the oldest of the Béatrix texts, presenting Jeanot's reduction, comparatively unaltered, in its original form (P. Paris, Les Manuscrits français de la bibliothèque du roi, Vol. VII, p.153; Laroux de Limy, Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes, Vol. II, p.441). It is regarded as the prototype with which the other manuscripts in this group are to be compared and to which they are said to conform in general content and narrative outline. Several of the opening leaves have been torn away, and the greater part of the *naissance* is missing, so that it has been necessary to rely on this conformity between the texts: "Il est facile de combler cette lacune en consultant les autres manuscrits et la traduction en prose qui, dans la première partie, paraissent s'accorder fort peu du texte du n° 1521" (R. Picqannenau, op.cit., p.154). Recent commentators have been more sceptical of the identity of the manuscripts within the group. Hippeau, in his edition, supplied the missing pages by printing the corresponding portion of B.8.1256 (vide infra) without indicating other than verbal differences between the two texts!...weshalb es den gedruckten Text nicht allein orthographische, sondern auch inhaltliche Unterschiede gebe in sich sind (A.O. Krüger, Die Quellen, etc., p.29).


"Le récit de ce manuscrit se confond avec celui du 1821" (A. Hatem, op.cit., p.103.).


This manuscript is usually classed with the preceding one: "La version qu'il nous donne du arthe des Enfants-Cyrene est très voisine de la version précédente. "En général le récit est plus abrégé que dans les deux manuscrits précédents et nous avons observé de nombreuses omissions" (A. Hatem, op.cit., p.106).


"La version des Enfants-Cyrene... voici ici des versions précédentes... "(A. Hatem, op.cit., p.113). Hippone considered this as the verbal equivalent of E.11.1621, the manuscript edited by him, but others have had some doubts as to the identity of the two texts (vide supra).


This text has been the cause of some confusion in the classification of the Renaissance manuscripts. For the first 1345 lines it follows roughly the text of B.N.12556, giving an Eléna version, then switches to a Béatrix form: "À partir du fol. 9, le 1139 suit le 1621, le 706 at 11, 12589" (A. Hatem, op.cit., p.109). According to Caston Paris (Lond. I,IX,p.328) this compilation is the work of a copyist who wished to transcribe Béatrix from a manuscript imperfect at the beginning. "Il s'est tênu d'affaire en empruntant le texte d'Eléna jusqu'à l'androit où commençait son manuscrit précédant de Béatrix, s'effortant d'adapter le commencement à la suite en y changant le caractère même et en supprimant les contradictions du plot. Le silence de l'éditeur a donc été loin de lui faire échapper les contradictions incomplètes." This can, therefore, be considered as a Béatrix text of the same general group as E.11.1621.


This manuscript, badly damaged by a fire at the Turin Library in 1710, survives in fragments only. According to a catalogue description of 1749 it begins with lines very similar to the invocation which opens Hippone's text (at this point, B.N.12569, cf. IX,11-12) (A. Krüger, Die Erzählungen, etc., p.30) and may be tentatively included in this group.


The discrepancies between the various accounts given of this manuscript exemplify the difficulty of making even a tentative grouping of Renaissance texts. Jaffray (op.cit., p.53) describes it as "giving a version which corresponds in general with the manuscripts at Paris and Pigeonneau (op.cit., p.245) as "une reproduction à peu près textuelle du n°1251 de notre bibliothèque nationale". Yet it is obvious even from the catalogue description (B.N., end, Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum, Vol. I, London, 1883, pp.706-10) that it must
contain a much abbreviated form of the Crusade Cycle. "Es sind
in der handschrift fast alle brachen der kranzgangzyklen
wiedergegeben, aber in starker verdrangung, und zuhere die einzelnen
gedichte in dieser bearbeitung, hang zusammen nur ca. 5860 verse" (A.O. Krüger, Die Quellen etc., p. 36). Even within the short section
to which Chevalier assige correponds this abbreviation is
apparent: in Hippeau's edition of B.M. 15509 and B.M. 1621 it
extends to 1807 lines, whereas in the British Museum manuscript
it is only 1665 lines. From the transcript which I have made of
this portion it is clear that Royal 15 B. vi follows the general
narrative sequence of the poem edited by Hippeau, both in
incident and in descriptive detail, and that it has many verbal
parallels. It can therefore be legitimately included in the same
manuscript group. Yet its difference in scale, its many omissions
of detail and abbreviations of narrative, suggest that other texts
included in the group may conceal equally individual versions
beneath their external uniformity.


This manuscript, which represents the normal process of recasting
the long poetic cycles in prose during the later Middle Ages, is
considered to be the oldest among such reductions of the
Chevalier au Cygne (R. Jaffray, op. cit., p. 55). It gives a much
abbreviated form of the cycle, based according to different opinions,
on Royal 15 B. vii (H.A. Todd, loc. cit., p. viii) or on NL. 15021
(A. Hippeau, op. cit., p. 185). "Cette dernière assertion est fort
douteuse et n'a pas été suffisamment démontrée. II est un effet fort k
commode cette traduction en prose ne soit faite sur une
autre version perdue (A. Rates, op. cit., pp. 97-8). In spite of
disagreement as to the exact original on which it is based, it
seems likely that this is a Béatrice text of the same general type
as the others listed here.


This text, considerably later in date than the others in the group
(as Reiffenberg (op. cit., p. 98), dates it as sixteenth century) was
selected by A.O. Krüger ("Zur mittelhochdeutschen Romanze Chevalier
Assign"
Archiv LXXVII, Braunschweig, 1957, p. 172) as providing, in
many circumstances, a closer parallel to the English poem than
Royal 15 B. vii, identified by Ribes (vide supra, pp. 59, as its source.
He admits, however, that there are details in which the English
version disagrees with the Latin and suggests that both probably
derive from a common form, distinct from, though related to, the

1) Edited, in part, by H.A. Todd, Le Roman de Chevalier au Cygne,
in F. His., IV, Baltimore, pp. 95-102.

2) Edited by Baron de Reiffenberg, Le Chevalier au Cygne et Jodefrid
parent version of Royal 15 E.vi. In general outline the Latin follows the French text edited by Hippeau, though it is more fully elaborated (ibid, loc. cit., p.211), and may be included with the other manuscripts of this group.

A(2)


Nothing is known of this manuscript apart from the description of it given in the British Museum catalogue (Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in the years 1899-1905, London, 1907, pp.157-8) according to which it contains a full Crusade Cycle, and gives a form of the Naissanca distinct both from the Hippeau text and from that edited by de Reiffenberg. Substantially, though with many variations, the text is, for Branch I, that of Le Naissanca du Chevalier au Cygne, ed.H.A.Todd... But the characters bear the same names as in Hippeau's edition: "a form which combines the incidents of Elioce with the nomenclature of Beatrix (op. cit., pp.157-8). I have examined the manuscript itself, but it would be difficult to analyse thoroughly without some weeks of work as the opening section is in very poor condition. "The first eight leaves are wrongly bound, the proper order being ff.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Then comes a lacuna, probably of sixteen leaves. After ff.9-13 is another lacuna, apparently of seven leaves (op. cit., p.158)." Furthermore, the opening leaves are so darkened and spotted by damp as to be scarcely legible. The Naissanca apparently begins with the meeting of a king and a puella beside a fountain. La voeuxHeart return to the court, are married with great rejoicing, and, while the king is absent at the wars, the queen bears seven children at one birth. Here the first major lacuna begins. In Hippeau's version the couple are already married before the story opens, and the king is not absent at the time of the birth, so that Add.36615 cannot be regarded as a Beatrix text, although that is the name given to the queen and the other characters are also named as in the manuscripts of group A. It seems best, therefore, to classify it separately from the two main groups discussed here.

B


This manuscript, and the others classed with it, contains a version of the Crusade Cycle differing so widely from those listed above

1) In the Catalogue of Additions kept in the British Museum Manuscript Room this passage has been altered in ink. I give the revised account which is presumably official.

2) Edited by Baron de Reiffenberg, Le Chevalier au Cygne et Godofroid de Bouillon, Vol.1, Brussels, 1945.
as to constitute a distinct redaction. The manuscripts are comparatively late (mid-fifteenth century according to E. Roy (loc. cit., p.419)), and the version of the Chevalier au Cygne which they give was composed in the mid-fifteenth century.

(1) No manuscrit de la manuscrit du Cygne apparently served as the basis of the new redaction but it was so freely handled that scholars are agreed in regarding this as a distinct form and not merely as a recopying of the earlier one.

Lyon, Bibliothèque municipale: 744. French prose.

This manuscript is regarded as a copy of the preceding one, made about the same time (E. Roy, loc. cit., p.419), and, apart from some minor variations, giving the same text (A. J. Krüger, Rom., XXVIII, p.422).

Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek: fondet Thott 416. French prose.

According to the catalogue description (E. G. L. Abrahams, Description des manuscrits francais de la koven de la bibliothèque royale de Copenhagen, Copenhagen, 1944, pp.122-7), this is a manuscript of the sixteenth century containing a prose redaction of the early sections of the Crusade Cycle, made c.1465-75 by Barthault de Villersme. It is apparently an abbreviated form of the version published by H. Pigonnet (loc. cit., p.424) and can, therefore, be included in this group of manuscripts.

In addition to the surviving manuscripts a number of early printed texts are also known. They contain another prose redaction of the cycle made in 1459 by Pierre Desray de Troyes printed at Paris by Jehan Petit in 1500, and several times reprinted in the course of the

1) We have information that in addition to the Brussel and Lyon 1558 a third text of the same redaction was copied at the same period (A. J. Krüger, Rom., XXVIII, p.426). This has now disappeared: "Mais il y a eu bis d'autres manuscrits, consultés et cités jusqu'au commencement du XVIIIe siècle." (E. Roy, loc. cit., p.419). A large number of references to lost texts are given by H. Pigonnet (loc. cit., pp.419-20) and no doubt many manuscripts of both redactions of Béatrix have disappeared without leaving any trace.

2) For details of these texts see E. W. de L'Isle, Bibliographie des romans et nouvelles en prose française antérieurs à 1550 (Société de bibliographes romans et français, III), Genova, 1934, p.12.

Sixteenth century. This, like the version by Berthault de Villebresme, was based on a form very similar to that contained in the Brussels manuscript, and can, therefore, be classed with the texts of group B.

The surviving manuscripts and printed texts are no doubt only a small proportion of those which originally existed, and there may well have been other redactions of the Crusade Cycle which are not represented amongst them. They provide, however, the only available guide to the forms in which the Heldenleben des Chevalier au Cygne may have reached the author of *Chevaleres Arriere*. This is the story of the **Sean-Children** as recounted by him in the alliterative poem:

As a punishment for doubting that twins might be fathered by one man, Betryna, wife of King Cryne of Lyon, bears seven children; six boys and a girl, at the same birth, each wearing a silver chain about the neck. Hatabryne, the king's mother, instructs her servant Laicus to drown the children and presents her son with seven new-born puppies as his offspring. She urges him to burn the young queen and he, at last, unwillingly consents to the imprisonment of his wife. Meanwhile Marcus, finding himself unable to kill the children, leaves them in a forest where they are discovered and cared for by a hermit. Eleven years later a forester, Wlikadrau, coming upon the children by accident, informs Hatabryne and is sent by her to kill them and bring back their silver chains. But on his return he can find only six of the children, one boy being absent with the hermit, and when he cuts off their chains they

1) Desrée's version was re-issued at Paris in 1511, again in 1523, and as Lyons by Amouillet, in 1550 (P. Blondevaux, loc. cit., XXXIX, p. 372).

2) According to Pigemans (op. cit., p. 255): "Son premier livre est la traduction exacte de la première partie du poème publié par Made Reiffenstberg?"
become swans and fly away. Batacryne orders a goldsmith to make a
cup from the chains, but, finding that one is more than sufficient for
the purpose, he secretes the remaining five. Now the queen-mother
prevails upon Oriens to have Beatrix burnt. On the night before the
execution an angel warns the hermit that he must send the surviving
child to champion his mother in her need. Coming to court the child
offers to fight a judicial combat against Balkedras, the old queen's
champion, to prove the innocence of Beatrix. He is baptised and
christened Anyas, is knighted by the king and armed for battle. In the
duel Anyas' horse attacks his opponent's mount, and Balkedras, having
mooked at the cross on the child's shield, is blinded by an adder which
springs from it, and finally beheaded. Anyas reveals the whole story
to his father, the chains are recovered from the goldsmith, and five of
the other children are restored to human form and baptised, while the
sixth remains a swan.

In general outline the same incidents and the same sequence
of events are found in the manuscripts of group A, at least in so far as
these are represented by the texts available for examination. And the
same narrative outline is also to be found in the manuscripts of group
B, at least in so far as they are represented by de Heffenberg's
edition of the Brussels MS. They, too, contain a Beatrix version of the

1) That is to say- B.N.1256 (ed. Hippeau), B.N.1621 (ed. Todd),
Rawlinson Misc.356 (ed. de Heffenberg), and my transcript of
Royal 15 B.vi.
parents; his own wooing of Betryce is recounted; after the multiple birth a council of nobles dictates the punishment of the queen; the hermit prophesies to Eynas that his descendant, Godfrey of Bouillon, will capture Jerusalem and Antioch; before the count Ories visits the hermitage and vows to build a monastery on the spot. There have also been numerous alterations of detail which do not affect the narrative outline; Betryce makes her unfortunate remark about the origin of twins after, instead of before, her own conception; Daphryne has a female accomplice in substituting the pups for the new-born children; the role of the forester is divided; Dulcaderas remains the old queen's champion, but it is a new character, Savaris, who takes away the silver chains; etc., etc. No trace of these additions to the story appears in Chevalere Ausegne, and in every case where there is significant variation in matters of detail the English poem agrees with the published texts of group A, and not with de Reiffenberg's edition of a group B manuscript. If we did not know of the existence of the former group it would be logical enough, in view of the general narrative similarity, to suppose that the additional material of B had merely been ignored by the English redactor in making an abbreviated version of the Baisseau, and that the disagreement in detail was due to deliberate alteration on his part. As it is, however, it seems more reasonable to suppose that he obtained the common Béatrix material from a text which had neither the additions nor the alterations of the B group. And, similarly, it seems unlikely, since Chevalere Ausegne has no admixture of Mioxe material, that it can have been based on a hybrid text of the type represented by British museum, Add.36615.

Though it would seem from this that the source of Chevalere
Assigns is most likely to be discovered within group A; it would be unwise to accept any single manuscript as representative of the group as a whole. The basic plot of the alliterative poem is common to them all, but there are variations peculiar to each; some are differences of detail, others more extreme. On the basis of such variants it has been possible, so far as individual branches of the Crusade Cycle are concerned, to establish sub-divisions within the general classification (1) of texts. Such classifications do not necessarily apply to the Naissance section of the manuscripts, but B.M.786, B.M.785, B.M.12569 and the Arsenal Ms. have been tentatively identified as containing a version different from that of B.M.1621, with which they are generally grouped. In the absence of a critical text and a definitive classification of the manuscripts it is necessary, in seeking the source of Chevalere assigne, to consider all the versions at present available.

The variants amongst the proper names indicate the general nature of the problem:

Chevalere Assigne

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1) H.A. Smith (loc. cit., XVIII, p.78) from his examination of the Godfroi de Bouillon MSS. concluded: "Our classification shows, then, that there are four versions which have lines of derivation from the original independent of one another, and which are consequently of distinct and coordinate value in establishing a critical text.

2) It is certain that the relations of the various MSS. of the Cycle of the Crusade are often different in the different branches, even in those so closely related as the Swan-children, the Swan-knight and the Godfrey branches, of which the last two are usually treated as one (Ibid., Note, p.75).

3) See R. Jeffrey, op. cit., p.51.
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Some of these names are so similar in all versions as to be obviously related, though faulty transcription by redactor or scribe has altered them slightly from text to text: 'Oriens', 'Catabryne', 'Betryse', 'Rose',—these at least would suggest a common source for all the versions, English, French, and Latin alike. A few are so distorted in the English version as to suggest that the translator either took considerable liberties with the forms in his original, or used a text which differed in these particulars from the manuscripts under consideration: 'Lyor', 'Valkedras', 'Aunthepas', 'Gadyfera'. But in general the forms are
conflicting, each of the texts listed having some which associate it with the English and others which militate against it. MS. Royal 15 E. vi (R) has a general similarity of forms, but omits the minor character Salamore, who is found similarly named in the composite text (H) edited by Rippeau, and presumably, therefore, in the version used by the English poet. But that version cannot have been R as we know it: Rippeau’s text gives the name of the hero’s horse as ‘Baucant’, while the English poem has ‘Feraunce’, a form which is supported by R and by the Latin version of Rawlinson A. 353(1). The abbreviated prose version edited by Todd from B.M. 781(T) lacks a number of names which are found in Chevalere Assaige, and are authorized by their presence in one or other of the remaining texts. The Latin version, and presumably, therefore, the French text from which it was derived, provides a closer parallel to the English forms ‘Markus’ and ‘Enyas’ than any of the others cited, but it is discounted as a possible source by the names ‘Belefort’, ‘Sampson’ and ‘Peterus’. This evidence, so far as it goes, suggests that none of the texts available for examination contains the version of the Naissance used by the English translator, since that version must have contained some form of the names ‘Enyas’, ‘Salamore’, ‘Feraunce’, ‘Vryens’, ‘Oryens’, ‘Assalmyre’, together with the names common to all the manuscripts considered here.

Some minor variations in detail amongst the texts suggest much the same conclusion—

1) Nababryne, when she shows the pups to her son, makes no specific charge against Betryce in the English version—

“Some paye pe with py qwene, a se of her berthe.”

(1:35.)

The R text is equally vague, though in different terms—

“Elle a fait contre Diu et contre toute gent,
Elle n’est pas lolois, pour voir le vous creant!” (11:214-15.)
In B, however, there is a direct charge of bestial inanition:

"Ille s. ou vii chiens, il n'y a aulcun enfant. 
Vos les voi tous vii, ouils sent en mon devant; 
A vii chiens soit livrés, vous ci le provoquant? (11.140-42);"

while in L this idea is strongly underlined and several times repeated, during a long scene which has no counterpart in the other texts examined:

"...scio sine dubio quod a septem canibus sit sedata? (p.134,1.3).
"Vides modo, fili, hoc septem catalos de homine semi ne potulisse produci. Trescul dubio non est aliud nisi quod cum canibus est adulterate...? (p.134,11.15-16.)"

In T the charge seems oddly confused:

"Veschi le present que vo semo vous a sporté, et s'est delivree de ches vii cayau comme le plus desolins qui enques fast, n'ainde de molui ne se garde, et par mantes fois l'aia trouve aise autrui que aise vous. Maiu pour yotre hounnor m'en taleins. Or s'est delivree de (1) ches vii kiens que vous idi de vos. (p.96,11.4-5)."

Although the direct accusation is made elsewhere in H(11.893-4.), and is found in the corresponding section of the English poem (1.234.) it seems most reasonable to presume that here the redactor followed a text which did not contain the direct charge, and certainly not alliterative version like that of L.

II) The versions also differ as to the length of Beowulf's imprisonment, which the alliterative poem gives as eleven years:

"And pus pe lady lyuede þere alleuen þere, (1.59.)
which is the period named in X-

Or lurres de le dame, qui a tort est en rue, 
xi ans fut en la chartre, poi et poi manjus, (11.190-91.)

At the corresponding point in L no specific period is mentioned, but elsewhere a similar passage occurs:

"Interam innocans regina, carcere clausa manu et 
undecim annis injuriis et languoris tollerans.... (p.130,11.5-6.)"

1) The references to H(Stevenson Misc.358) and T(B.P.761) are to the page and line in the editions of Horae du Heiffenbergh(Le Chevalier au Cygne et Cedefrode de Bouillon, Vol.1, Brussels, 1846, pp.101-205), and B.A.Todd(Le Meissaens du Chevalier au Cygne, in P.E.L.A., IV, Baltimore, 1889, pp.95-102) respectively.
H, on the other hand, has:

Et la dame est remise dolente et irascue.
xy ans fu en la cartre, poi boit et poi manfée. (11.295-6.);

with which T agrees, though at a slightly different point in
the story:—

....et avoit ja esté en chartre bien xy ans a'coues
saule n'f fu. (p. 97, 1.32.).

The forms as a whole suggest that though the English poem
might be based on R or L it can hardly have obtained this particular
detail from either R or T.

III) According to the English text, Marce, when sent to drown the
children:—


wente borow a foresete sowre longe myle,

which appears in the R version as:—

Et va par la forest bien iiiii lieues grans, (1.193.).

The H text gives a different reading:—

Et va par la forest plus de ii lieues grans. (1.294.);

while L and T mention no specific distance. Though the units
of measurement do not correspond, the English version seems more
likely to have been derived from R than from L or T, or even
from H.

IV) In the English poem Batahryne asks the goldsmith to make her a
cup from the silver chains, and this he does from half of one
of them, keeping the reminder:—

He toke pat opur fyue & fro pe fyer hem leye,
And made nollye pe cuppe of naluendelle pe sixte.

(11.159-50.)

But in H he makes two cups:—

Celo fondi si bien,ce oii tesmongñer,
*) Il en fist ii grans coopes,caps point de delaier.

(11.374-5.);

and keeps one for himself. Similarly in R:—

Et elle pont si bien,ce ouy tesmongñer,

(*) Il en fist deux grans coopes,quar Disu lui voult aider.

(11.349-50.);

and in L:—

ennut liquefacit cepit argentum illud in brevi sic
cregere et multiplicari quod argentarius ille de dioto
metallo duas magnas crateras excubiit.(p.159,11.9-10.).
But in T, as in the English version, only one cup is mentioned:—

Adont print une des caïnes et la forge, et en fist une
m'lt riens soupons. (p. 97, 11.22-23.)

This may merely represent a simplification of his source on the
redactor's part, but it may equally well suggest that that source
was T rather than H, L, or R.

V) Amongst his other commands to the hermit the angel says:—

.....A loke pat ne be uristened;
And calle hym Enyas to name, for aw te pat may be-falle,
(11.203-4.)

There is nothing to correspond to this in H, L, or R, but in T
the same command is given at this point,—though the form of the
proper name differs:—

Et li quemande qu'il se fache baptisier et qu'il ait
non Helyas. (p. 97, 11.45-6.)

This again would suggest T rather than the other texts as a
possible source of the English redaction.

VI) When the hermit tells Enyas that he must fight on horseback
the child asks:—

"What beste is pat?" quod be chylde, "lyons wyld? or elles wode? or watur?" quod be chylde panne.
(11.214-15.)

This is roughly matched by the passage in H:—

"Quel beste est-ce cheval?" ce respon, "pie extant?
Samle leu ou lion? va-il sanslement? (11.739-40.)

But the essential reference to the horse as resembling a lion
or other wild beast is lacking in H:—

"Et quel beste est cheval? ne le colez neant? (1.461.)

and there is nothing corresponding to this passage in L or T.
This would suggest H, rather than any of the other texts
examined here, as the source of the alliterative poem.

VII) The hermit's reply to the question about the horse is:—

"I seye neuer none," quod be hermyte, "but by pat mater
of boke:
They seyn ne hath a fayre hedde & fowre lymes nye;
(11.210-17.)

This denial of personal knowledge is found in H:—

"Certes! fait li hermites," je ne sai son samblant: (1.741.)
but there is no description of the horse, whereas in B there is some description but no denial of knowledge on the hermit's part-

"Certes, dit li hermite, "c'est belle haste et grant!" (L. 462.)

This passage, like the preceding one, is missing in L and T. It is possible that the English poet was inventing here, but the combination of details found separately in two of the French versions is curious. It may suggest neither B nor H as the source but some combination of them, and certainly not L or T.

VIII) According to the English version Eneas is attended by two godfathers and a godmother at his christening:

The abbot made the nym a fonte & was his godfader, The earle of Amthepeas he was another, The countes of Salamere was his godmoder; (11. 207-9.)
as in H:--

L'abbe en est parrins et li dux de Montbas, Et une rice dame qui et non Salomna. (11. 1157-8.);

whereas the R version makes no mention of the godmother:

L'abbé si fut parrain et le dux de Maudras. (1. 716.);

and neither of the prose versions, L and T, mentions any godparents at all. This would suggest H, rather than the other texts examined, as the source of the redaction.

IX) The description of Eneas' shield is also significant:

And a wnyte aneld with a crosse upon pe posse honged, And nit was wryten per-vpon Pat to Eneas nit anoldre: (11. 201-2.)
The same general description is found in R:--

Les armes appertoront les deux varles aval, Et l'escau et la croix de Dieu l'esparital; (11. 734-5.);

and more fully, in H:--

A l'entred de la sale part i escau listés, Que Dix i envia par ses saintes bontés. Il estoit prestout blans,n'ert autrement dorés; D'une grant crois vermale estoit enluminées. Li blans de cel esca estoit enargentées La crois qui er vermale,ce assiéd de vertés, Benefie justicce,hardement et fiertés. Par desous fu escrit:"De par Diu fu donnés" (11. 1094-1202).
This passage is lacking altogether in T and the essential detail, that the shield was destined for Bryam, is found only in L:—

This would suggest L, rather than any of the other texts, as the source of the English redaction.

X) The mention of Matabryne's flight in the English poem makes it clear that she is on horseback:

Thenne sawe pe qwene Matabryne her man so murdered;
   Turned her brydelle & towarde pe towne rydetue;

Similarly, in H:

S'en va grant aelire fuissant parmi la jant,
   Sor i ronci sans sole est montée plorant;
   Ains ne fins de corre desa a Malbruiant, (11,1684-6.);

In L:

.....et, ascenso calallo, celerius fugit ad quoddam
   castellum nomine Sounthwante..... (p.196,11.21-2.);

and in T:

.....eile moute et s'en va a un castel que eile avoit qui
   a non Malbruians. (p.99,1.37.);

whereas R lacks this detail:

S'en ala grant aelire, fuyant entre la gent,
   Onc ne fins de courre si vint a Malbruiant, (11,282-3.).

Something apparently suggested the idea of a flight on horseback to the redactor, and it certainly cannot have been a text of the R form.

XI) The alliterative poet's description of the swan which could not be restored to human forms:

Hir was doole for to se pe sorowe pat ne made;
He bote nym self with his bille Pat alle his breste bledd, And alle his fayre federeas fomede upon blode, And alle formerkne pe water par pe swanne swymmatue; (11,359-62.)
is closer to the **comparatively full version** of M:

iii fois c'est passé, puis bientôt a longue alaïne;
A son bec se déplie; toute la chair H méine: (11.1750-51);

or L:

Sextus remanit cignes qui cathecanon non babebat, et illico
occidit velut mortua pro dolore, et ila verberavit aquas
alis suis quod aqua descortata fuit, multa fletibus et
lamentantibus vices aquis qui ad spectaculum convenerunt.
Sicque percessit semetipsum restro suo quod oruer ubertum
de corpore suo fluit.

(p.197,11.28-32)

or T:

.....qui n'a demenk grand dolour d'estrance maniere,
et se debat de ses eles et deplume del bec et domaine
grant dolour.

(p.100,11.25-30)

than to the single line given in M:

Far trois fois c'est passé et bientôt a longue alaïne,
(1.1051.).

The English poet might have invented the descriptive details
here, but the similarity between his version and that of L
suggests that the Latin text, rather than N or T, may have
furnished the passage, which, at all events, can scarcely have
come from R.

This evidence seems, at first sight, contradictory: each of
the Naissances texts examined has some detail or incident in which it
provides a close parallel to the English version than any of the others,
but each is, conversely, invalidated as a potential source by a number of
the other passages cited. The negative aspect of the evidence is,
however, the more important. In a few instances it is of doubtful
validity, but taking into account only those cases which are clear-cut,
there is sufficient evidence to show that none of the four texts
examined can have been the immediate source of **Chevalere Assigne**;
H is ruled out by examples II, III, IV, V and IX; L by I, III, IV, V, VI, VII
and VIII; R by IV, V, VI, VIII, IX, X and XI; and T by II, III, VI, VII, VIII,
and IX. Whatever the nature of the original used by the redactor it
must have contained something analogous to the English reading in all eleven of these passages, together with the combination of proper names indicated above.

The type of evidence on which this conclusion is based makes it obvious that, until all surviving texts of the *Renaissance du Chevalier au Cygne* have been fully examined and classified definitively, nothing further can be done to determine the nature of the version used by the author of *Chevalier au Cygne*. The features which associate the alliterative poem with one or other of the published texts can only be matters of detail: all four versions of the original are so similar in outline, and the redaction is so brief that its lack of certain narrative incidents tells us nothing of value about the source, as these episodes may merely have been omitted by the translator from a version identical with those known to us. Only the trifling variations in nomenclature, in factual or descriptive detail, which are paralleled in one or other of the *Renaissance* texts, can indicate the nature of the source, and then only in that particular. Since this evidence is conflicting— not indicating any individual text, but each in turn—it is necessary, in determining the nature of the redaction, to take all four into consideration. Each can throw some light on the content of the original version. In spite of its brevity, it is closer to the English poem in some details (vide supra, examples IV and V) than any of the other texts. And though the references to *Aryas* as 'Chevalier Assigné' suggest that the redactor must have known a French version of the *Chevalier au Cygne*, the Latin text also has some passages (vide supra, examples IX and XI) which provide the closest parallel to the English poem in those instances. But the chief value of these prose texts lies in the indications which they provide of the nature of the earlier metric versions on which they
were presumably based. The general conduct of the reduction is easier
to visualise in comparing the English work with the two verse texts,
H and R, though the difference in scale between these is quite
considerable. It would be unwise to assume that the brief English
poem is more likely
to have been derived from an abbreviated version similar to R, than from
one on the same scale as H,—which, in the relevant section, is some 750
lines longer,—since the English has some details in common with H
(rare supra, examples VI and VIII) which are not found in R. It seems
best, therefore, to follow the sequence of both these versions in attempt-
ing to discover the general nature of the reduction, and to take the
prose texts into consideration wherever they are relevant.

Both the French poetic versions, H and R, begin with a
preamble in which the author, in the manner of a jongleur, calls for the
attention of his audience, states the general nature and content of his
story, vouches for its authenticity:—

Tels y’a qui nous chantent de la ronde table,
Des manteaux angolés de sainin et de cable,
Mais je ne vous diray ne mengange, ne fable,
Que si est en ystoire, c’est chose veritable; (R: 11.3-6.);

and connects its origin with a famous literary figure:—

Emeraude la fist mettre la bone dame Orabile;
Qui meult fu preus et sage, cortoise et amiable.
Dedans les murs d’Orange, la fort cite mirable. (H: 11.18-20.)

Both texts give much the same introduction, but the difference in scale
between them is significant: the 32 lines of H are represented by only
15 lines in the R version. The latter has been abbreviated by omitting
the opening laisse of the H version (the content of which is, in any case,
repeated by the two which follow) and by dropping every line which is

1) Vide supra, pp. 765-6.
not essential to the narrative. This is true of the relationship of
the two texts throughout the section represented by Chevalere Assigne:
the narrative outline in both is very similar, the sequence of ideas is
identical, and almost every laisse in R survives, with the original
scheme of assonance, in R, though often at less than half the original
length. The economy of R is one of detail and expression rather than
of incident. The H text is wordy in the extreme, repeating the same
idea several times in different terms, calling for the attention of the
audience at the opening of each new section in the narrative, and re-
echoing the last lines of one laisse in the opening verses of the next.

By avoiding such reduplication and by economy in expression, rather than
by the omission of incidents, R tells the story of Chevalere Assigne in
1065 lines, whereas H has 1607. Whether or not the version used by the
English poet was closer in scale and proportion to R than to H, the
redaction, with its 370 lines, must represent a drastic abbreviation in
which much of the original material has been ignored. The introductory
verses in the French poetic texts, for example, find no place in the
English work. It is true that neither of the two prose versions contain
such an introduction, but if the translator used a verse text, and there
are some line by line parallels, to be noted later, which suggest that he
did— he most probably found something of the sort in his source. He
may well have felt that the elaborately preamble to a great epic cycle
would be out of place as introduction to the comparatively brief and
trifling episode which he intended to carve from it.

(1-4 : ) He has replaced it with an introduction of a
different type:

Alle welynge God, whenne it is his wylle,
Wele he woret hys werke with hys owne nonde:
For ofte harms were hente pat helpe we ne myste;
Nere pe hyynes of hym pat lengeth in neuene. (11.1-4.)
He substitutes for the bombastic call of the jongleur, with its promise of wonders and excitement, a more sober opening, didactic in tone and moral in intent, announcing the text to be illustrated by the story which follows:

For this I saye by a lorde was lento in an yle, (1.5.)

This conception of the Swan-Children story as a moral exemplum may have been suggested by something in the source. Both the poetic versions contain a few lines in which Oriens rebukes Betrose for refusing to believe that twins may be fathered by one man, pointing out that under God all things are possible:

"Certes," dit-il, "ma dame, vos parlez follement; Dix a de tout pooir; faus est qui ce n'entent! Par son parler se on moulult grant ami souuent, Si con vous erre dire, as l'histoire n'en ment. (2.11.69-72.)

But this is a moral of a very different, neve nature, and it is not developed as the didactic theme of the narrative. Neither is the text chosen by the English poet, though it is briefly echoed in the closing line of the poem:

And pus pe botenynge of God browste nem to nonde. (1.37w.)

Therefore, although the redactor was probably original in choosing the general moral theme of God's all-powerful guidance and protection as appropriate to the episode which he had selected from the Naissance, turning as it does upon divine intervention to assist Right against Wrong, in using it to avoid a bald narrative opening and to give some slight suggestion of formal unity to his poem, he shows no general divergence from the secular tone of the French versions and no marked didactic intention. This passage alone is not enough to suggest that he was more interested in the moral than in the narrative value of his source, and there is nothing analogous to it elsewhere in the redaction.
The narrative proper begins in much the same way in all versions, French, Latin, and English, by introducing the chief characters, establishing their relationship to each other, and outlining the situation in which they find themselves. The English text is only loosely related to the original versions, following H in naming the chief characters at once, and R in stressing the childlessness of the royal couple. Here as elsewhere in the redaction it is not necessary to suppose that the English author found precisely this combination of details in his source. All the essential material could probably have been gathered from any version of the Renaissance; for example, though R speaks at first of "un roi riches et bon" and of "un mere et femme," the character names are given later in the course of the narrative. The arrangement of details may well have been the work of the redactor, who aimed at identifying the characters and putting the reader in possession of the situation as rapidly as possible. The passage is less likely to be a line by line translation of the original than a free reshaping, designed to provide a direct and concrete opening to an abbreviated version in which there can be no iteration, even of fundamental details. As an abbreviation it is far from successful, moving jerkily, switching from topic to topic erratically and incongruously, somewhat vague in meaning and little shorter than the French. Oddly enough, the redactor has preserved the association of the story with the Chevalier au Cygne, naming Orians as "chef de pe kynde de Chevalers assyges" (1.11.), although it could have no significance for readers who were not already familiar with the opening sections of the Crusade Cycle, since the hero does not embark upon his career as the swan-knight until after the portion of the original covered by the English redaction.
A similar clumsiness in abbreviation is responsible for an unsatisfactory version of the lines which follow. All texts of the original begin at once upon the crucial scene in which Betryce doubts the legitimacy of multiple births and is rebuked by the king her husband. The redactor has followed the general sequence of the French poetic versions, but, condensing the material in a somewhat haphazard manner, he has obscured its meaning on several points without achieving any considerable economy in expression. Though he mentions the king's sorrow at the sight of the twins carried by a poor woman he omits the reason for it:

"Oncques Dieu ne nous voult fils ne fille donner. (R: 1.32.),

without which the scene loses much of its significance. It is true that he has previously referred to Oriene's unhappiness over his lack of an heir, but this is a point in which the repetitions of the French are essential and should have been retained. Similarly, by excessive abbreviation, he obscures the meaning of the queen's fatal remark, so that what is explicit in all versions of the original:

"Sire, ce dit la dame," vous parlez de neant,
Que femme avoir peust ensemble deux enfants.
Son deux hommes ne s'est livree charnellement.
Ung en peut elle avoir, pour voir la vous creant,
Mais je plus n'en ara ung engendrament!" (R: 11.36-40.),

becomes confused:

The queen nyarked nym with nay a seyde, "it is not to lawe:
Oon manne for oon chylde & two wymmen for twayne;
(11.26-29.)

and requires a second attempt to express the same thing:

Or elles nit were vnasemelye pytge as me wolde penke;
But oone chylde hadde a faeder, now manye so per were;
(11.30-31.)

Finally, by omitting the suggestion that Betryce's doubts are a denial of the power of God, he deprives Oriene's rebuke of most of its meaning.
This omission, in its turn, weakens the significance of the sequence of events since it is clearly implied in the French that the conception of the seven children—which follows immediately in all versions—was a judgment upon the queen for her lack of faith. In describing the event itself the English work follows the poetic texts, but in a greatly abbreviated version, expressing the essential fact in a clumsy manner:—

He gette on here pat same nyhte resonabulye manye.

(1.34.) In three of the four Naissance texts examined (the exception being the abbreviated prose version T) there follows a short passage in which the news of the queen’s conception is celebrated and offerings made at the altar by Grien and his wife. Most probably this was also in the version used by the English poet, but he has chosen to omit it—a reasonable measure of abbreviation since it is not vital to the development of the story.

(37-45 : H.95-114; R.62-78.) As a result, he passes at once to the birth of the seven children, but the sequence of events is scarcely less abrupt in the original. The four Naissance texts differ in some details of the birth. According to H:—

Au maistre des enfants vii fées i avoit,
Qui les enfans destinent que cascun avenoit. (H: 11.102-3.) but there is nothing to correspond to this in the other three. Since the fairies are not mentioned by the English poet they were presumably absent from his source, though this is precisely the sort of detail, interesting but inessential—which he generally omits from his redaction. A version which aims at a direct and abbreviated

1) Hippeau miscounted the verses on page 5 of his edition and the lines are wrongly numbered from that point onwards, but for the sake of simplicity I have retained the original numbering.
presentation of the story gains rather than loses by omissions of this sort. But other omissions, here as elsewhere, weaken the redaction by obscuring the meaning and suppressing the motivation. At this point, for example, all versions, including the English, show Betryce at her confinement attended only by her mother-in-law. The *Naissance* texts describe Matabryne's hatred of the young queen and sketch her general character. The details differ somewhat from version to version:

But the general picture is of Matabryne as the enemy of God, possessed of a devil, representing the principle of evil in the story and bringing about the action by her motiveless hatred of her daughter-in-law. Although the character of the old queen was of equal importance to the English reader, especially if the poet, as his introductory lines suggest, intended the story to be taken as an example of the power of God in defending Right against the powers of evil, this passage is greatly weakened in his redaction:

Ther moste no womman come her nere, but she pat was cursed, His moder Matabryne, pat causid moche sorowe; For she thowste to do pat byrne to a fowle ence. (11.115-140; R.79-91.) The same mixture of gain and loss, brought about by a somewhat haphazard system of abbreviation is
demonstrated by the complete omission of what follows in the original. Both the poetic texts,—though B to a much greater extent than R,—occasionally begin a new laisse by summarising the action of the previous one. This is superfluous at the best, but would be particularly out of place in the spare, swift-moving narrative of the English version. Here, as elsewhere, the redactor has avoided such repetitions, which, if he used a verse form of the Naissance, were almost certainly found in his source. But he has also ignored the remainder of the laisse, in which Matabryne reminds Betryoe of her foolish remark about the multiple origin of twins:

Or puot dire mon fils, par vostre jugement,
Qu'avec sept hommes avez geit en ung tenant! (K: 11.87-8.)

This scene is found in the four texts of the Naissance under consideration, and there is evidence elsewhere in the English version (vide infra, (75-91: H.249-86; H.165-91.)) that the redactor had something of the same kind in his source. Failure to include it deprives the remainder of the redaction of much of its effect. Since it is not made clear that Betryoe is guilty only in accordance with her own pronouncement, having borne seven children at a birth, and that she knows herself to be innocent of the public charge made against her, of having given birth to dogs, her later sufferings lose something of the bitterness which they have in the original, where she is aware of the deceit practised upon her but powerless to reveal it. And similarly, the full malice of Matabryne in abusing the young queen for one reason and making another, equally false, accusation before the king, is not apparent in the English version. An attentive reading of his source would have shown the redactor that this type of economy in abbreviation was more harmful than helpful.
(46-56 : H.141-95; R.92-126.) Where he aims at narrative compression and economy in expression, rather than wholesale omission, the English author is more successful. Translating the scene in which the old queen instructs her servant Markus to drown the seven children he follows the general outline of the original, but abbreviates it greatly by turning the dialogue between the two into narrative form, leaving only a single speech by Matabryne which contains the heart of the matter. Nothing is lost by this, but some minor omissions leave the character of Markus comparatively undeveloped: in the French, Matabryne exacts a promise of obedience from her servant before revealing her purpose, and without this, his reluctance to obey her is insufficiently stressed to prepare the English reader for his failure to carry out her orders. This weakness may be partly, though not entirely, due to the form of the source employed: H and L make Markus curse his mistress behind her back, but this detail is lacking in R and T, as it may have been in the version used by the redactor. So far, however, as this section of the narrative is concerned, the English version is much closer to H than to R, both in the sequence of events and the arrangement of details.

(57-74 : H.196-248; R.127-68.) An attempt by the redactor to break away from the sequence of the original proves unsuccessful. In the original development of the narrative the old queen procures seven pups, comes to the king and accuses Betryce of unnatural intercourse. The English poem, however, first shows the king anxiously waiting for news of the birth, then returns to Matabryne who kills a bitch and takes her pups, and finally switches back again to Oriens. The rearrangement of events may be deliberate, or it may merely be due to the redactor having forgotten the exact sequence of incidents in translating a lengthy
section of his source after a single reading of the passage. The result is unfortunate, involving disruption in the narrative sequence and abrupt changes of scene within the space of a few lines. And, inevitably, the story seems much more artificial and incredible in the stilted English version than in the more plausible and circumstantial French. The haphazard nature of the redaction is particularly obvious in the argument between Hatabryne and her son as to what shall be done with Betryce. The dialogue form of the original is retained, but the exchanges are so abbreviated as to lose most of their force and even, in some cases, their meaning. The accusation against the young queen, for example, is only vaguely implied:

"Sone, paye pe with py quene a se of her bertne."

though in R the charge is explicit:

"A vii chiens soit livros, ves ou le prouement.
Contre Dieu a ouvre et contre toute gent. (R: 11.142-3.)

Vagueness in a detail of this sort weakens the whole redaction, since it obscures the argument by which Oriens is persuaded to countenance the ill-treatment of his wife. Rather surprisingly, R, normally the fuller of the two verse texts, lacks the crucial line here. This might suggest that it was also lacking in the form of the Naissance used by the English author, but the same charge is made elsewhere in R (H.394-5.) and at the corresponding point in the English poem (1.234.), and, in addition, there is evidence in the passage immediately following to suggest that the redactor found it in his source at this point. (75-91: H.249-36; R.169-91.) Although following in general outline the French account of how Betryce was seized and thrown into prison on the orders of the old queen, the English poet has inserted here a few lines in which Hatabryne abuses her daughter-in-law:
Thou haast by-gylethe my sone; it shalle pe werke sorowe:
Bothe howndes & men haue hadde pe a wylle:
(11.75-9.)

This is a curious combination of the two false charges made by the
Matabryne of the French versions: the accusation of possession by dogs
made before the king, and the suggestion of multiple intercourse made
to Betryoe herself. This confusion can scarcely have existed in the
original: the latter charge was probably recalled to the redactor,—she
had omitted it in its proper place earlier in the story (vide supra,
( : H.115-40; R.79-91.)—by the occurrence of the former in
his source, in the same form and at much the same point as in R. His
attempt to combine the two makes nonsense of both, and suggests either
extreme carelessness or failure to appreciate the full significance of
the dual accusation. As a result, his Matabryne, though equally evil, is
a much less subtle character than her counterpart in the original, whose
scheming duplicity is made fully apparent. This initial confusion has
unfortunate repercussions throughout the redaction. And there are
other instances where association of ideas has caused the redactor to
combine passages from widely separated points in his source. Here, for
example, Betryoe, on her way to prison, prays:—

"Dame sainte Marie, con dolorous torment!
Glorieuse pucate, secour me insilemente. (H: 11.263-4.)

The English poet, combining or confusing this with a later prayer by
the queen (which he omits in its proper place):—

Et la dame s'esarie:"Aidiés, Dieu, par vo mon,
Qui aidastes Suzanne du mauvais faux tesson;
Aidiés me, biaus dous Sire, par vo saintime non? (H: 11.796-8.)
gives, in the context of the former, a version very similar to the latter—
And mony a fayre crysoun vn-to pe fader made,
That saued Susanne fro sorowfulle domus her to saue als.
(11.90-91.)
(92-104 : H.287-313; R.192-214.) A change of scene in the poetic versions of H and R is, as usual, marked by a narrative link:

Or lairons de la dame qui est a tort meserdelle.
Si dirons des enfans qui dolours est creue,
Se Jesus Crist n'en pense que lor viene en ziuie. (R: 11.287-9.)

The English redactor generally ignores such summaries of past action, but occasionally, as in this instance, he makes use of the narrative link in returning to characters who have been absent from the action for some time. The story now returns to Markus who, finding himself unable to kill the children, leaves them in the wood. In condensing this episode the alliterative poet has concentrated upon the essential action rather than on the conflict of feeling in Markus. But he is not so preoccupied with the narrative as to ignore the human interest in the passage and makes one fine line of the way in which the murderer's heart is softened:

And pley ley & low3e on hym, louelye alle at ones; (1.96.)

The idea is not his own, but its expression represents an improvement upon the original.

(105-119 : H.314-80; R.215-57.) At this point the Naissances texts return briefly to KataByrne, whose servant reports that the children are dead, before continuing the story of how the seven are suckled by a hind until discovered by the hermit who cares for them till they are grown. The redactor wisely avoids this break in a straightforward narrative sequence, which carries the action over several years, and he leaves Markus' report to the reader's imagination. He also avoids the distraction of an aside by the French author, in which it is remarked that if the children lose their chains they will become swans. This does nothing to explain why or how the change takes place, and since such
incidents were probably accepted uncritically and unquestioningly in literature of this sort, the English reader lost little or nothing by being unprepared for the transformation. For the rest, the redactor follows the general sequence of the French faithfully enough, striking a happy balance in his abbreviated version between narrative and descriptive detail, which is important here in giving a picture of the misery in which the children are left. At one point, by collecting scattered details and hints in his source, he gives a description which is fuller and more sustained than its counterpart in the versions under examination:—

But alone pe mantelle was vn-do with menginge of her legges; They cryedde vp on-ny3e with a dolefulle steuence, They chyuuered for colde as cheuerynge cnyldren, They 30akened, & cryde out, & Pat a man herde, An holy aermyte was by & toarde hem comethe: (ll. 105-9.)

Where he troubles to make a composite picture out of material scattered through the looser narrative of the original, his redaction has some value as a creation in its own right, but where he takes separate ideas from here and there in the French:—

La biche les alette et ly hermite proie
Dame Dieu chasun jour que mette en droitte voye
Les enfans a nourir, n'est nulx qui le mescroie. (R: 11.249-51.)

L'ermitz leur fait robes de fueilles de loriers; (R: 1.257.)

and runs them together:—

Thus he noryscheth hem vp, & Criste hem helpe sendetze.
Of saunde leues of pe wode wrowyte he hem wedes. (11. 119-12.)

he produces an unfortunate mixture of the generalisations which best suit his brief, rapidly-moving narrative and the particularised descriptions which abound in the more leisurely French.

(120-140 : H. 381-448; R. 258-308.) Some years having passed (though the
interval is not made clear either in the English or in the original texts), the forester Malkedras comes upon the children in the wood, informs his mistress Matabryne, and is sent to kill them, while Markus is blinded by the orders of the old queen. The redactor has altered the sequence of events: Matabryne interrupts the forester's story of his discovery to cross-question Markus and put out his eyes, before instructing Malkedras to return and kill the children. This alteration, which at first sight seems clumsy, is extremely effective in the abbreviated English narrative, giving immediate effect to the old queen's vengeance and allowing the sequence of events to continue unbroken thereafter, the forester's attack on the children following immediately upon the orders given to him. This suggests a deliberate attempt to manipulate the material of the Naissance in suiting it to an abbreviated form. The process of abbreviation in this instance is oddly erratic: the narrative is greatly reduced and some important details, such as the relation between Matabryne and Malkedras, are omitted altogether, while the interrogation of Markus is expanded, a single line in the poetic text—

Markes toute li a la vérité contéc. (H: 1.440.),

becoming:

Whenne she hym asked hadde, he syde, "here be sothe;
Dame, on a ryueres banke, lapped in my mantelle,
I lafte hem lyynge there, leue pou for sotne;
I myaste not drowne nem for dole, do what pe lykes."
(11. 131-4.)

This repetition of something to which the redactor had already given as much space as was consistent with its importance in the narrative seems completely unnecessary. It contrasts oddly with the skilful way in which he abbreviates the lengthy dialogue between Matabryne and Malkedras, keeping to direct narration until he reaches the significant detail, which he leaves in the form of the original:—
He turnede aȝeyn to pe courte & tolde of pe chaunce,  
And meneðe byfore Mæðryne now many per were.  
"And more merueyle penne Pat,dame,a seluere cheyne  
Ech on of hem hath abowte here awrye" (11.123-6.)

This sort of inconsistency in abbreviation is responsible for the  
very uneven nature of the redaction as a whole.  

(141-152 : B.449-82;R.309-334.) As a result of the rearrangement in  
the previous section the redactor passes directly to the attack upon  
the children. Finding only six of them Malkedras cuts off their chains  
they become swans and fly away, while he returns with the chains to  
Mæablryne. At this crucial point the English author has followed his  
source closely,—so far as one can judge from the available texts,—  
retaining everything which is essential to the narrative. Here, as so  
often, his version is shorter than even the less prolix of the two  
poetic texts in French, but his abbreviation is achieved by economy of  
expression and he eliminates only the author's pious asides:—

Or gard Dieu les enfans et as vertu nommee;  
quer leur joye sera jusqu'a pou molt mese. (R: 11.311-12.)

In other respects his version is so similar to both these texts,—but  
to R in particular,—as to suggest that he was following a poetic form  
of the original rather than one in French or Latin prose. For example:—

Il a triaitte l'esper, dont le pom fut deerz,  
Les vi enfans en a si fort espouementz;  
Les chanez leur osta les ouvra desfaiz,  
Et ils batent leur esales tresous s'en sont voles.  
Or sont tous six oyseaulx, si com dire me oys, (R: 11.317-21.),

appears as:—

And he out with his swerde & smote of pe cheynes.  
They stoden alle stylle, for sterre Pei ne durraste;  
And whenne Pei cheynes felle hem fro Pei flownen wp swannes,  
(11.140-3.)

This is as close as the alliterative poet ever comes to literal  
transliteration, and his faithfulness to the original is probably due to
the fact that here, for once, the French narrative advances rapidly and comparatively unhindered by description or comment. He omits only one element of significance,—the sorrow of the seventh child when he finds his brothers and sisters gone,—presumably in order to avoid breaking the narrative sequence, which, in the English version, continues the history of the silver chains from the point where they are handed to Latabryne.

(153-178: H.483-557) At this point the H text contains a lengthy section describing how the surviving child went each day to the palace of Oriens to receive the alms distributed to the poor and saw the six swans swimming in the royal vivier. Without recognising them he feels drawn to the swans and feeds them daily. The poet explains their identity, and takes the opportunity to recapitulate the story up to this point. There is nothing of this in the English work, and as it is not found in R, L, or T it was presumably lacking in the version used by the redactor.

(153-178: H.558-89; R.335-62.) Consequently, the redactor completes, without interruption, the story of the chains which Latabryne gives to a goldsmith, ordering him to make her a cup from them. Finding one chain more than sufficient for the purpose, he is advised by his wife to keep the other for himself. The English work gives a curious version of the original, abbreviating the two scenes in which the goldsmith receives the chains from the old queen and delivers the cup to her in much the usual manner, but expanding the remainder of the section in a novel way. The redactor describes the making of the cup at equal length with the French, and follows this with a conversation between the jeweller and his wife,—in bed (a human touch for which there is no
warrant in the original texts examined here), discussing what has happened in the forging of the silver and what is to be done with the remaining chains. There is no new material of any significance, but some narrative duplication (ll. 165–6 virtually repeat ll. 157–60) and a general prolixity which is very unusual in a redaction where extreme abbreviation is the general rule. The result is a passage little shorter than the French poetic versions. It is difficult to see what special significance the alliterative poet can have seen in this particular incident; others of greater importance to the plot are much more summarily treated.

(179–190 : H. 590–612; R. 363–85.) Confident that she now has evidence of the children's death, Hatabryne renew her efforts to have Betryce put to death and the king at last, unwillingly, consents. The passage in which the old queen plots the next development in her scheme provides one of the rare instances in which the English is close enough to the French poetic texts to suggest that it derived from a version of the type represented by H and R. The H version reads:

"Bien suis de ceulz delivrée, alos sont voirement;
Se leur mere estoit arse ne me chauldroit neant;
Je la feray ardoir, certes, proucheinent,
Puis est mien la terre, a mon commandement. (R: 11.364–7.),

and H has only slight verbal differences. Neither of the two prose texts has anything comparable, and it seems likely that the alliterative lines represent a more or less literal translation from the source:

They be deluyered out of pis worlde; were pe moder eke,
Thenne hadde I pis londe hollye to myne wylle:
Now alle wyles analle fayle but I here dethe werk.

(ll. 130–52.)

Whatever the nature of that source it is unlikely that the redactor maintained this sort of translation for more than a few lines at a time.

Here, and in the slightly abbreviated version of Hatabryne's speech to
her son, he is presenting matter on which the future action depends, and acknowledges its importance by giving a relatively full and coherent version.

(191-206 : H. 619-83; R. 386-431.) His treatment of what follows is much more superficial. The night before the burning of the queen an angel comes to the hermit, reveals everything, and orders him to send the child to defend his mother. Much of the lengthy passage in the Renaissance is taken up with the angel’s recapitulation of the action to this point. It is not the first reduplication in the French narrative, and what might well have been spared there would be entirely out of place in the abbreviated form of the English redaction. The few lines to which the poet has reduced it are in keeping with the general scale of his work, but unfortunately he has selected the wrong details for inclusion: his version tells where the missing children are and who deprived them of their chains, (points which have little bearing on the fate of Bistryce and which, oddly enough, are not contained in the French texts at this point), and ignores the essential warning of the queen’s imminent execution. Even where compression was less essential, in the commands given to the hermit:

Par moy te mande Die, comme a son chevalier dru,
Que lai enfant que tu as o toy xia ans tenu
Gouvient demain sa mere défende au brano roulu,
A esau et saux armes et a cheval charmé!
"Hoe! Dieu! dit li hermite, "que est ce que dic tu?
Il ne vit aqueues armes, ne lance, ne escu;
Cartes s’il se combat le cuide avoir perdu! (R: 11.417-23.)

he has translated, apparently from a text similar to Re-, in such an incoherent way that, though the general sense is clear, individual lines cannot be understood without knowledge of the original:

And Urliate hata fometh pis chylde to fyte for his moder.
"Co-lyuyngse God yet dwellset in neumes, quod pe herdayte Panne,
How sholde he serve for suche a pygge, patneur none sye?"
(11. 200-202.)
But the difficulty of judging the nature of the redaction precisely, here or elsewhere, is illustrated by one detail of the charge given to the hermit: the command that the child is to be christened Enyas. At first sight this looks like an original addition by the redactor, since it is not in the poetic versions of the *Naissance* or in the Latin prose, and it is difficult to understand why he should add anything while eliminating even the essentials of the narrative. But the inclusion of this detail in T(vide supra, p. 77) suggests that it was also in the redactor's source, the individual peculiarities of which may be responsible for much that seems original in the alliterative poem. (207-218 : III.664-756; R.432-77.) The passage which follows presents the same sort of difficulty. The H text has thirteen lines in which the hermit worries and prays over the problem of how the child is to fight in armed combat, while the R version gives only the essential idea of his perplexity:

Lors s'en alla li ange et commence a chanter;
Li hermite remaunt, qui fut en grant penser.
L'ermite demoura et l'ange s'en alla.
Onques puis le preudome de penser ne fina. (H: 11.431-4.)

The English poet, in his version:

The heremyte waxynghe lay & thow3te on his wordes;
(1.207.)
was presumably translating something similar to the latter rather than giving a summary from a text of the H type. Conversely, his redaction has nothing, however brief, to correspond to the next incident in the story, when the hermit wakes the child:

"Ou irons nous, biais porte? ne me l'deves celer.
Irons en la forest pour nos oors deporter?
Je sais de bonne poires pour manger au diner;
C'est le miedres mangier que on puist recouvrer? (H: 11.700-703.)

It is impossible to tell whether this charming passage was lacking in his original, or whether he rejected it. He has not rejected other
material of the same sort, designed to show the innocence and naivety of the child, who, when told that he must fight to defend his mother, asks—

"Sire? fait-il, "Est mort, et a'on la mangera? Sont ce cisel u bestes, ne me color vous ja!' (H: 11.722-3.)

But the English version, less detailed than H, L, or R, presumably represents an abbreviation of the source. The effect of the original is, however, quite well conveyed, though there is the usual lack of proportion, and the balance between general narrative and illustrative incident is not well maintained. For example, in avoiding yet another summary of past action, given by the hermit in H and R, he leaves the child in ignorance of his past history and why he must fight for his mother, thus weakening the motivation of what follows. Yet, so far as one can judge, the redaction is reasonably competent and faithful to the original.

(219-230: R.757-886; R.478-576.) What follows represents a very different approach to the process of adaptation. A lengthy section of the French text—which even in R occupies some hundred lines—describes the child's departure, his wild appearance with shaggy hair and coat of leaves, his wonder as the forest, his home from birth, is left behind:

"Mes or me dites, pere, ou est le bois ales?"
"Beau fils!, dit au hermite, "laissez vos folies!
Il est ou il souloit, a Dieu vous en ales?' (R: 11.497-9.),

and his parting from the hermit. The narrative then switches to the court, where Betryne is being dragged from prison to the stake when the child arrives and is amazed by the sight of Oriana riding on horseback:

"Belle beste est cheval, fait oih, a Dieu m'avanant;
Et mengue le fer qui ainsi va manchont?
"Beau frere, c'est son frain' fait le roy maintenant.
(R: 11.566-8.)
From all this the redactor has selected only a few incidents, and, by rearranging and combining them in a new sequence, has provided a narrative link which represents an extreme abbreviation of the original, carrying on the action with the minimum of fundamental and descriptive detail. The passage is well conceived, following Enyas' journey from the forest until he meets the court procession, and so maintaining the continuity essential to such a slight, swift-moving narrative. But it omits much human detail, which, in the Renaissance, gives an air of credibility to the somewhat improbable legend, while incongruously retaining a minor detail which is not essential for the future action:

When pe heremyte nym lafte an angelle nym swethe, 
Euer to rede pe cnylyde vpon nis ry3te anholder. 
(11.221-2.)

In spite of its inconsistency this extreme condensation is interesting as evidence of an attempt by the redactor to control his source matter, not by slavishly translating one line in every three or four, but by describing a whole scene in a few verses to which there is no direct counterpart in the original:

Thenne he seeth in a felde folke gaderynge faste, 
And a ny3 fyre was per bete pe quyne anolde in brenne, 
(11.223-4.)

and replacing a specific incident:

~auquarré sonne ung cor a soilt grant alene, 
E tut Ratebrune a une trompe sonne, (2: 11.529-30.)

by a generalised description:

And noyse was in pe cyte felly lowde, 
With trumpes & tabers, whenne pey here vp token; 
(11.225-6.)
(231-264 : H.887-582; K.577-645.) Having covered this section, in which there is relatively little development of the plot, by a brief narrative link, the redactor deals less drastically with the important scene which follows. Enyas questions the king as to the charges against
Betrayce declares that he will prove them false, is attacked by Mata-bryne, and agrees to fight her champion Malkedras. Although the general outline of the scene remains very much as in the Naissance, there is some divergence in minor matters which seems deliberately designed to concentrate the narrative and heighten its effect. For example, the redactor has apparently introduced a direct charge by Enyas that Mata-bryne is deceiving the king with false accusations against the queen (11.238-41) and replaced a section of vituperation on Mata-bryne's part with a specific challenge to Enyas to meet her champion in the field (11.260-61). This, together with the retention of an apparently superfluous incident—the old queen's assault upon the child—focuses attention upon the conflict between Mata-bryne and Enyas, and it may well have been the redactor's intention to simplify the issue by bringing the protagonist of evil:

For she is fowle felle & fals, & so she shal be founden,  
And bylefte with pe fend at here laste ends,  
(11.239-40.)

into direct conflict with the champion of good who has divine guidance and protection. The central issue stands out all the more clearly for the removal of a great deal in the original, such as the expressions of sympathy and support for Enyas amongst the courtiers present, which has only incidental importance. This concentration and simplification, whether or not it is deliberately contrived, is much more in keeping with the abbreviated form of the alliterative poem than the confused and diffuse wrangling of the French texts.

The complete omission of what follows adds to this effect. At this point in the four Naissance texts examined, Mata-bryne encourages her champion Malkedras, makes him a knight (a detail not found in T), and sees to his arming for the combat. Though it seems
likely that something of the sort must have appeared in his source, the
redactor has wisely omitted it, since all attention from this point must
be concentrated on Enyas as the champion of Right. He has also omitted
Oriens' promise of arms for Enyas, since the actual arming of the child
will occupy him in due course, at a more appropriate point in the action.

(265–274 : H.1104–75; R.693–719.) Unfortunately the omission has been
carried too far. The English author, perhaps in reading rapidly through
a passage which he saw to be unimportant for his purpose, failed to
notice a few lines in which Enyas asks to be baptised according to the
angel's command, carefully included by the redactor at the point where
it was given (11.203–4). As a result the ceremony occurs at once,
without introduction, and follows rather awkwardly upon the quarrel
with Matabrynne. It is difficult to see what significance the redactor
attached to this incident, which he translates with unusual fullness.
True, it contributes to the moral theme of the story, stressing the fact
that Enyas is to fight as the Christian champion of Right against
Malkedras, who is conceived as the instrument of evil. But this aspect
of the episode is ignored in favour of the material circumstances of
the ceremony, which the redactor describes in unnecessary detail.
Divine approval of the baptism is manifested:–

Et les clocches par alles commencent a sonner,
Se fut signification de joye au commencer. (k. 11.695–6.)

But the alliterative poet, either misunderstanding the reference or
trying to extend its significance to the judicial combat which follows,
gives an altered version not altogether suited to its context:–

Alle pe bellys of pe close rongen at ones
Witne-cyte ony mannes helpe while pe fy3te lasted;
(11.272–3.)

(275–282 : H.1176–1241; R.720–56.) But the redactor has not altogether
failed to appreciate the importance of the preliminaries to the combat. Although he omitted the *Naissance* description of the knight- ing and arming of Halkadras, he has here retained a scene in which Enyas is made a knight and provided with horse and armour by his father, Oriens. It serves not only to concentrate attention upon the hero as the climax of the story approaches, but also to suggest, in certain details of the arms, the supernatural protection under which he is to fight. And the English author has been careful to include the one feature which makes this supernatural association evident: the shield with the inscription "pat to Enyas hit sholde"—a detail which is found only in L amongst the texts examined (*vide supra*, pp. 174) but which was, presumably, in the original of the alliterative version. The use which he has made of this suggests that the redactor had an eye for significant detail. He has selected it from the mass of descriptive matter contained in this passage: the report of the way in which the shield was discovered by the servants sent to fetch arms, the description of the arms themselves, of the ceremony of knighthood, etc., of none of which he makes any use. In an abbreviation containing only the bare bones of the narrative he mentions only those features material to the action which follows: the horse Fenance which plays a vital role in the battle, and the shield which ultimately brings about the downfall of Halkadras. Clearly, his interest lies in action rather than in description, but in this instance at least he has been careful not to weaken later sections of his narrative by eliminating essential details along with the merely incidental.

\[\text{: H.1242-1308; R.757-75.}\] The *Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne* particularly in its poetic version, must have proved extremely irritating to a redactor chiefly interested in a story of action and incident.
At this point, for example, both H and R repeat at some length details of the arming of Enyas already given, and follow this with a scene in which Katabryne exhorts her champion to kill the child, very similar to an earlier passage (vide supra: H. 983-1103; R. 646-92.), omitted in the English text. The redactor has also omitted it on this occasion, together with the reduplicated references to Enyas' arms, and presumably for the same reasons as before: it adds nothing essential to the story, diverts attention from the hero, and breaks the narrative sequence at a point where the crisis is rapidly approaching (283-313: H. 1309-1379; R. 776-829.) The long passage which follows is open to the same objection, since it too postpones the crisis of the story and does little to advance the action. But the redactor was clearly aware that it plays a vital role in the narrative, and has treated it accordingly. Having concentrated the reader's attention upon the youthful hero in the preparations for the duel, the English author follows the original in demonstrating his complete incapacity in combat, and in suggesting the impossibility of his defeating Malkedras and rescuing his mother. Enyas is a hero of a familiar Medieval type: the boy of noble birth brought up in the forest far from court, naturally strong, but ignorant of chivalric practice and untrained in combat. The invariable success of such heroes in joust or battle depends partly upon innate knightly qualities and partly, as in this case, upon divine assistance, given to the pure in heart for a just purpose. The simplicity and innocence of Enyas and his ignorance of everything to do with armed combat is demonstrated in this passage by the naïveté of his questions about every article of his equipment as a knight. This is an extension of the method already used to show how impossible
it is that Enyas should fulfil the angel's command, his childish simplicity being suggested by his questions, "what is a horse?", "what is a mother?", etc. In fact, his first question to the knight appointed to instruct him in the use of arms is a repetition of his query about the horse, which has already occurred twice in the French poetic texts. On its second occurrence, at the point where Enyas meets Oriens riding to the execution of his queen, the redactor omitted the incident entirely (vide supra (219-230 : K. 757-836; K. 478-576)). But it apparently remained in his memory, for when the child now asks again:

"Qu' est ce sur quoy je suis, comment me peut porter?"
(II. 1.788.),

he adds another question about the horse's bit:

"My etethe he yren?" quod pe chylde, "wylle he ete nojthe alles?"
(1.290.)

which, in the original version, appears in the second of the three passages.

Triple use of the same incident is certainly too much, and the redactor was wise to avoid one of the repetitions, but his eye for detail has led him to preserve an effective touch for use, in combination with similar material, at the point where its contribution to the narrative is most essential. This threefold repetition illustrates the tendency of the original author to over-write effective material, stressing the hero's simplicity to the point where it becomes ludicrous, by putting into his mouth a long string of questions in which he naively tries to describe the armour about which he is enquiring. The English poet has abbreviated each of these to a single verse, making effective use of adjectives bearing the alliteration of the line, to show Enyas' ignorance of the terms for arms and armour:

"And what new akyrtyelle is pis, withe noles so thykke? And pis holowe on on my rede, I may noȝt wele here."
"An heime men kalen pat on, a an newberke pat other."
But what broode on is pis on my breste, hit bereth adown my nekke: "A bry2te anelde & a sheene, to anylde pe fro strokes: "And what longe on is pis, that I anelde vp lyfte?" "Take pat lauce vp in pyn monde & loxe pou hym hytte; (ll.294-330.)

And so he makes a natural transition to further questions on how the arms are to be used in battle, of which he gives a slightly fuller translation. The whole is much more concise than the original, but the effect of the French text is well conveyed in a passage which has a certain poetic force and vigour lacking elsewhere in the alliterative poems:

And Penne plukke out by swerde & pele on hym faste, Alle-way aggelynges down on alle pat pou fyndes; His ryche helm nor his swerde rekke pou of neypur; Lete pe sharpe of by swerde schreden hym amalle" (ll.304-7.)

\[\] : II.1350-1430;III.339-62.) The redactor evidently considered that his treatment of this section was adequate to establish the simplicity and ignorance of Enyas. He has therefore omitted a passage in which the hero shatters a lance against a wall in trying it, since it has much the same purpose as the preceding one. Nothing of importance is lost by the omission, though he has also excluded a few lines in which the knight warns Enyas not to let Malkodras strike the cross on his shield. As a result, Enyas, in the English version, has no apparent authority for the warning, when he repeats it to his opponent during the fight. But the warning as it comes from the knight is equally cryptic and unexplained, and the redactor, by avoiding an unnecessary repetition, has postponed it to the point where it is material to the action. \[\]

(314-332 : II.1438-1533; III.363-909.) As a result, he is able to pass at once to the combat between Enyas and Malkodras. The description of
the duel is much more detailed in H than in R, and the English version follows the latter in concentrating upon the two incidents which suggest supernatural intervention on behalf of the hero. Divine assistance is more directly implied by the French text, which introduces the scene where Fersuncn blinds the other horse with:

Or erre le miracle moul marveilleux et grant: (R: 1.870.)

But the alliterative author has given it equal importance in his poem, though without attempting to explain it. His version of the second incident, in which Waledras, despite the warning given him, strikes the hero's shield and is blinded as a result, is highly individual and bears only the loosest relation to the original. In both the poetic texts and in the Latin prose (the abbreviated version of T dismisses the battle in a single sentence) this incident is duplicated at two widely separated points in the narrative. On the first occasion, when Waledras strikes the shield:

Dieu qui a pouoir sur la creature,  
Fist de la croix yssir ung feu tout alume,  
Emmy la vis paruit le couvert purjurer, (R: 11.905-7.);  
but he recovers and, after a long struggle, strikes a second time:—  
Par la force de Dieu, qui n'ayme se bien non,  
Fait de la croix saillir, sans point d'arresttoison,  
Ung serpent a deux testes, onques tel ne vit hom. (R: 11.960-2.)  
Tout droit a Nauquarré a la veile se Lance;  
Les deux testes lui crevent les deux yeulx sans doubtance. (R: 11.968-9.)

The English redactor has combined these two attacks into one, and made both the manifestations occur simultaneously:—

An edder Aprongge out of als sculde & in his body ayyanatne;  
A fyre fruschen out of his croys & frappe out as yen: (11.531-2.)

He apparently missed the significance of the two-headed snake and he has reversed the order of the apparitions, but by telescoping them he
has avoided another instance of duplication which, though it was apparently to the French taste, would have been irritating in the close sequence of an abbreviated version. Though he might have been wiser to choose between the two manifestations, the redactor’s interest in action has made him retain both, while ignoring their dual context.

But clearly he was not interested in action for its own sake, only in so far as it advanced the plot of his story. In the original version the two attacks upon Enyas’ shield are separated by a lengthy passage giving further details of the struggle, in which the hero is often harried, while Betryce prays for him and Natabryne hurls threats. The description of the combat is often lively and interesting:

Lors s’on viennent ensemble pié a pié;
Lauquarré fiert l’enfant ou heaume gené,
Les pierre et les fleurs ont a sus trebuché,
Se Dieu ne la gardast, je l’est et angié;
Le serf a tout son heaume despecié. (R: 11.915-15.)

But it tends to be repetitive, particularly in the very full version of R—, and it delays the inevitable victory of Enyas. By omitting the passage the redactor has made the victory a matter of divine intervention rather than of personal skill on the part of Enyas, but he had probably no deliberate intention of altering the significance of the original, and merely wished to reach the climax of the action as rapidly and directly as possible.

(333-345 : H.1671-1702; R.971-97.) As the end of the story approaches, his treatment of the original becomes more and more summary, and he freely omits, transposes and rearranges the content to suit his purpose. The sequence of events in the French texts is awkward and unimaginative. Enyas strikes down Balkedras and is about to kill him when Natabryne
the author return to the execution of her defeated champion. The re-
dauctor, with his usual care to avoid rapid changes of scene and subject, continues the combat up to the point where the hero cuts off his opponent's head, before describing the escape of the old queen. In the abbreviated form of the alliterative poem the new sequence is an improvement upon the original. The English poet was, in any case, debarred from treating the escape of Hatabryne as incidental to the last moments of the battle by a fundamental alteration which he has introduced at this point. In all four of the original texts examined the old queen takes refuge in her castle of Helbruant, where, later in the story, she is besieged by Enys, captured after a long campaign, and put to death. This siege is the first adventure of the swan-knight after his restoration to his parents, when he has succeeded Oriens as king, and it serves, therefore, as a link between the \textit{Maigence} and the \textit{Chevalier au Cygne} proper. To the redactor, who had apparently decided not to translate the later adventures of the swan-knight, this link could only be an embarrassment. To avoid the difficulty he allows Enys to overtake Hatabryne in her flight, bring her back, and have her burnt on the spot, so breaking the link, tidying up the loose ends of the narrative, and giving his readers the satisfaction of seeing justice done at once. This is certainly a more satisfactory ending than any attempt to summarise the siege of Helbruant could have been.

\( \Delta \)

In direct contrast to this attempt to control his source material in giving a version more suited to the audience for whom he catered, the redactor, by omitting a short passage at this point, leaves an important strand in the story unfinished.
In the original Enyas now asks for Markus, reveals his part in saving the children, and, by a miracle, his sight is restored. The alliterative poet may have wished to avoid the distraction of re-introducing a character so long absent from the action, but his failure to see justice done to Markus weakens the conventional happy ending of the story and spoils its neatness.

(348-70: H.1991-1907; R.1011-55.) The remaining threads of the narrative are rapidly tied off. The redactor is not at any pains to contrive a conclusion of his own: as the Haigange forms a major episode in the Crusade Cycle, once independent from it and virtually complete in itself, he is content, apart from the alteration he has already made, to follow the general outline of the French narrative to the end of the incident. His version is, as always, an abbreviation of the original,—in so far as it is represented by the four texts examined,—one in which the degree of abbreviation varies from passage to passage. In the French text Enyas recounts at length the whole action of the story for the benefit of his parents, and the English author, in attempting to summarise this in a few lines produces a rather incoherent account:

The child come before pe kynge & on-hyde he seyde,
And tolde hym how he was his sone, & of pur sex chilferen,
By pe qwene Betryce, she bare hem at ones,
For a worde on pe wall, pat ana wronge seyde;
And 3ondre in a ryuer swommen pey swannes;
Syten pe foreworne thefe Malkadrae byrafte hem her enyeyses!
(11.346-51.)

He might have been better advised to avoid the unnecessary recapitulation of the French versions, as he has done elsewhere. He gives a less condensed and more comprehensible version of the practical steps by which the remaining chains are disavowed, five of the swans restored to human form and baptised, only omitting descriptive details of the ceremony, the
clothing of the children, etc., after his usual fashion. Having followed his source to the conclusion of its first major episode, he rounds off his redaction by echoing the vague reference to divine protection with which he began:

And puse be botenynge of God browȝte hem to honde; (1.370.)

but without attempting to draw any moral lesson from the story he has just told.

The conclusive note on which the poem ends makes it obvious that the redactor's plan was complete at this point, and that he deliberately rejected what followed in his source. With the siege of Malbruiant, the capture and death of Metaubryne, the Naissanne gives place to the Chevalier au Cygne without any formal division between the two sequences. On the instructions of an angel Enyas goes to the river, where he finds his swan-knight pulling a boat in which he sets off upon further adventures. After an incident closely paralleling the siege of Malbruiant, in which he kills a brother of Metaubryne, the swan-knight rescues the lands of the widowed duchess of Bouillon from the attacks of Rainier, duke of Naissanne, and marries her daughter, exacting a promise that his wife will never ask his name or origin. There follows a series of battles in which Enyas overcomes the various enemies of the duchy. Then, after the birth of a daughter, the young duchess breaks her promise, and at once the swan-boat appears and carries away her husband for ever, leaving her alone with the child who, an angel has foretold, will be the mother of Godfrey of Bouillon and his two famous brothers. This much at least of the Crusade Cycle was most probably included in the English poet's source. Whether or not his manuscript contained the later branches dealing with the birth of Godfrey, his
early life and triumph in the crusade, as well as the great mass of adventures loosely connected with his career, it is impossible to tell.

If it did, then presumably the redactor was not interested in the historical associations of the cycle, or in the claim of a French national hero to be descended from the legendary swan-knight. Strangely enough, this claim, in another form, was responsible for the only other Middle English version of the *Cycki de Chevaliers au Cygne* which has survived.

In the early years of the Sixteenth century, Robert Copland translated into English the prose version of Pierre de Ceury (vide supra, p. 162), "at thynesty sasyon of the puyssant and illustrous Prynce lorde Edward (1) Duke of Buckyngham, who also claimed descent from the swan-knight.

Between the earlier and the later sections of the Crusade Cycle there is a distinction, both in content and in treatment, which may explain the English redactor's preference for the *Hainan* and his neglect of the other episodes. The military career of Godfrey de Bouillon, described in a semi-Medieval record of battles and sieges with the epic tone of the *chaussses de geste*, may have seemed less likely to please the particular English audience for which he was working than the highly-coloured and melodramatic story of the swan-chillies, with its element of the supernatural. In preferring romantic adventure to histoméval epic he was at one with most of the foreign redactors.

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1) This version survives in a single copy, printed by Wynkin de Worde at London in 1512, and in another unique copy of the edition by Copland's son William (London, 1550 ?). See R. Jaffray, op. cit., p. 71. A facsimile of the former was issued by the Grolier Club of New York in 1901, and the latter was reprinted by W.J. Thoms in A Collection of Early Prose Romances, Vol. III, London, 1838. See G. F. Farrar and A. F. Beaz, Bibliography of English Translations from Medieval Sources (Records of Civilization Sources and Studies, No. XXXII), New York, 1943, III. Carton's translation, Godofrey of Bolovme or The Last Siege of Jerusalem, printed 1481, was based on the history of William of Tyre (vide supra, p. 160, Note 3) and is, therefore, distinct from the Crusade Cycle.
enough, the contrast between the original epic and the later additions to it is not absolute. The material of the Renaissance is not unmixed: the fantastic folk-story is set in the court world of the romance and chivalric combat plays a vital part in the plot, but its outcome is divinely predestined and throughout there are religious overtones to the action. The French author evidently found nothing unsuitable in mingling supernatural elements, mysterious transformations and angelic apparitions, of diverse and conflicting origins. The English redactor, equally unconscious of any incongruity, has accepted the mixture very much as he found it, without attempting to select certain elements to the neglect of others or to concentrate on any particular aspect of the story. The opening lines of his version suggest an attempt to present the tale as an illustration of a general Christian dictum, but, though the plot presents him with numerous opportunities to moralise on divine protection of the weak and innocent, there is no other evidence of the same sort and no general effort to give the story moral significance. Indeed, where the original presents another, though more limited, moral (19-32 : H. 56-72; E. 25-45), the redactor has omitted it. The English poet cannot, therefore, be viewed as a didactic author, more interested in the moral than the narrative aspects of his source. And, although


1) pendant l’époque où l’imitation étrangère commence à s’adapter de notre poésie, les branches historiques du cycle de la croisade ont déjà perdu une partie de leur popularité. C’était le temps où les romans de la Table-ronde et ceux du Saint-Graal gardaient encore tout l’œuf de la nouveauté.... La Chanson d’Antioche et celle de Jérusalem paraissaient trop romanesques pour une histoire et trop historiques pour un roman. Aussi les traducteurs et les imitateurs étrangers s’attachaient-ils de préférence à reproduire les
he largely ignores the courtly background to the action, and shows some impatience with the chivalric incidents in the original (H.1514-1670; R.910-70.), while dwelling implicitly on some practical details of the plot (153-175; H.558-59; R.435-62.), he displays no consistent preference for any particular topic and the balance of elements in the French text is not significantly altered.

But, although the redactor shows no general bias in presenting the material of the Renaissance and no apparent intention of re-interpreting it fundamentally, he is somewhat more independent in his treatment of the narrative. Far from following either the sequence or the proportion of the original he appears to have concentrated upon the essential action, upon the narrative which advances the plot, rather than the descriptive details which make up a considerable part of the French text. Where he makes omissions it is the incidental matter, the ceremonial, of thanksgiving (H.88-94; R.53-61.), and of knighthood (H.983-1103; R.646-92.), descriptions of arming (H.1242-1308; R.757-75.), and of the preliminaries to battle (H.1380-1430; R.630-62.), which disappear. And where he abbreviates his source, reducing lengthy passages in the French to a few lines in his version, it is generally the narrative of action which survives at the expense of the descriptive and emotional elements, indications of the setting in which the story moves and the feelings by which the characters are motivated. For example, in condensing the narrative of Enyas' arrival at court (219-230; H.757-56; R.478-576.), he has ignored the hero's wild appearance and the reactions of the courtiers, while in

(Cont.) merveilleuses aventures du Chevalier au Cygne, qui pourvoient lutter sans trop de désavantage contre les fictions des trouvères bretons? (H. Figonnoeu, op. cit., pp. 217-8.)
describing the knightings of Bnyas (275-282 : H.1176-1241; E.720-56.) he has omitted the physical details of the equipment and ceremonial involved. And similarly, in narrating the transformation of the children (141-152 : H.449-52; E.109-34.), he has not described the sorrow of the surviving boy on finding the others gone, just as earlier (92-104 : H.287-313; E.192-214.), he concentrated upon the action of Markus in sparing their lives rather than upon the conflict of feeling in which his decision is reached. So, at the birth of the children, he concentrates upon the musings of Matabyne rather than upon her character and motives as elaborated in the original. Here, as elsewhere, it is action rather than description or analysis of feeling with which he is primarily concerned.

But though the redactor follows his source most closely where the original narrative is most spare and direct, there are some indications that he was not interested in incident and action for their own sake, but only in so far as they contribute to the essential plot of his story. From the scenes of combat he retains the incidents of supernatural intervention and largely ignores the lively narrative of the struggle between the two champions ( : H.1534-559; E.910-70.) interesting in itself but irrelevant to the development of the plot. And he is not so exclusively concerned with action as to overlook the part sometimes played by descriptive detail in preparing for developments in the plot or in illustrating some aspect of the story which cannot be otherwise conveyed. For example, his abbreviated version of the amending of Bnyas (275-282 : H.1176-1241; E.720-56.) retains sufficient

1) See, for example, (141-152 : H.449-52; E.309-34.) and (179-190 : H.590-616; E.363-85.).
detail of the equipment involved and its mysterious origin to suggest the importance of the hero's role in the coming combat and to hint at the divine protection under which he is to fight. Similarly, his retention, in part, of the naif questions which demonstrate the hero's ignorance of the use of arms, shows that the redactor realised the importance of such a passage in preparing for the miraculous victory against all odds, and increasing the surprise of Betryce's escape, by making both seem highly improbable beforehand. So, though the nature of his redaction has forced the English author to concern himself mainly with the narration of action, he is aware of the artistic value of the descriptive element in his source, and where he strikes a happy balance between action and description, as, for example, in 163-119: 15.4-50.2.15-57., he gives an account of his original which has much of its interest and variety without its tiresome loquacity.

Clearly, then, it was not the redactor's intention to present the Naissance in a form comparable to the French prose text of B.N. 781, (T), a bare precis of the plot devoid of human interest and descriptive detail. But there is every indication that his version represents an abbreviation of the original. Any judgement on the degree to which he has condensed his source must depend upon the nature of the text available to him, but even the shorter of the two poetic versions, Royal 15 3. vi., (E), with its 1065 lines, is almost three times longer than Chvalere Assigne. One thing at least is clear: the English poem was not abbreviated by the method which apparently produced R from some version akin to R, by the constant omission of single lines and groups of lines, reducing the expression without altering the sequence or affecting the conduct of the narrative within the poem. So far as it is possible to
judge, the English author conducted the technical side of his redaction with a freedom and originality which suggest an independent approach to his material, and some practical ability in narrative compression.

His independence is most obvious in those instances where he alters the sequence of the French text, displacing passages from their original context in order to fit them more effectively into his abbreviated version. Where, by this means, he achieves continuity in the main action of the story, upon which the reader's attention is concentrated, either by relegating subsidiary scenes to a less awkward position (120-140 : A.181-443; R.253-308.), or by omitting them as irrelevant (105-119 : A.314-380; R.215-57.), he shows that he realised clearly the distinction between the conduct of a narrative on the scale of the Renaissance and his own, more limited, design. These attempts to compensate for his drastic abbreviation by avoiding rapid changes of scene and frequent interruptions of narrative sequence are significant: they suggest some sense of artistic purpose, a desire, at least, to do the work of a redactor conscientiously. But they are extremely limited and not always well conceived or executed: in one instance, at least, (57-74 : A.196-248; R.127-68.), the result is an additional confusion and disruption in the sequence of events, suggesting unthinking alteration rather than the conscious purpose which is evident elsewhere.

The occasional omission of whole episodes from the English poem suggests something of the same confusion of purpose. Much of the matter in the Renaissance is incidental to the story proper, and the omission of ceremonial, ( : A.33-94; R.53-61.) and ( : A.283-1103; R.645-692.), which contribute nothing to the story, and of passages duplicating material already sufficiently stressed, ( :
H. 1242-1303; R. 757-775.) and (  

an obvious method of abbreviating it without in any way weakening the effect of the basic narrative. But other omissions were less well judged. Removal of the crucial scene in which Matabryne admits to Betryce the true nature of the miraculous birth(  

R. 115-40; R. 79-91.) fundamentally weakens the story, and the defect is not repaired by a confused reference to the incident at a later point(75-91; R. 249-86; R. 169-91.). Similarly, the redactor's failure to complete the story of Larkus(  

E. 1703-20; R. 995-1010.), leaves an untidy strand in his version, while a minor omission elsewhere(265-274; H. 1144-75; R. 591-79) causes an awkward break in the narrative sequence of the sort which he has generally tried to avoid.

A similar clash between the twin aims of the redactor—to present the original story in coherent sequence while radically abbreviating it—is evident in the results of another technical method employed by him. He has frequently reduced a passage in the Hainaut to a few verses by selecting from it only those details essential to the plot and re-grouping these in a new, and frequently more effective, order. Where this has been done carefully and consistently, with a view to maintaining continuity in sequences where the French narrative switches erratically from topic to topic and from one setting to another—in (219-230; H. 757-886; R. 478-576.) and in (314-332; H. 1431-1533; R. 863-909.) for example—the English version has a directness and clarity which could not have been achieved by abbreviation alone. The climax of the action(333-345; H. 1671-1702; R. 971-97.) provides a particularly successful example of this technique, where, by concentrating on the essential action and recounting it in logical sequence, the redactor has avoided the
uneven and jerky effect which would inevitably have resulted from strict adherence to the original, which is extremely clumsy in arrangement at this point. Elsewhere, however, the same technique, badly handled, results in just that clumsiness and incoherence which it seems intended to avoid. The important section in which the characters are first introduced and the situation outlined (5-18: H.33-49; R.16-24.) is confused by the erratic association of unrelated topics. And in another passage (105-119: H.314-29; R.215-57.) there are examples of both success and failure: a well integrated picture drawn from scattered details in the original, followed by an incongruous mixture of generalised narration and minute descriptive touches. The general impression is that the redactor, while realising the value of the technique, applied it sporadically and inconsistently.

The most obvious method of abbreviation, by economy in expression and descriptive compression, is employed with a similar inconsistency. In some instances it is used with considerable skill, the lengthy dialogues of the original being recast in narrative form (46-56: H.141-195; R.92-126.) and complex passages (231-264: H.887-962; R.577-645.) simplified by concentration upon essential facts, to the neglect of incidental details. But, while in one instance (283-313: H.1309-79; R.776-829.) an element ludicrously over-stressed in the French text is limited in extent and condensed in expression with increased effectiveness, in another (153-178: H.558-89; R.335-62.) material of minor importance is incongruously expanded in a manner which conflicts with its abbreviated context. And even where the policy of abbreviation is consistently followed it is frequently careless and inept in execution.

1) For similar passages see (141-152: H.449-82; R.309-34.) and (219-230: H.757-656; R.476-574.)
Neglect of minor but important details in one passage (19-32: H.50-72: R.25-46) causes vacueness and obscurity, while elsewhere (191-206: H.619-83: R.386-431) an attempt to avoid duplication of narrative results in incoherence and an inadequate rendering of the original.

In view of this inconsistency in the technical handling of the redaction, it is not surprising that Chaucer's Assises has, in general, been commented upon unfavourably. Due credit has been given for its sporadic success in limited sections: "The behaviour and speech of the forest-reared boy in his efforts to acquaint himself with the common details of sophisticated life, are thoroughly well presented and make a strong humorous appeal;" "The pathetic picture at the end of the poem, that of the sixth swan biting himself with his bill so that his breast bleeds, because of grief that he too could not be transformed..." gives a conclusion that remains firmly imprinted on the reader's memory.

But the general verdict condemns the poem as "artistically incompetent" and "quite unimimaginative." And certainly the judgement seems well deserved; the brief narrative is uneven in outline, crude and unpolished in manner, frequently incoherent in expression, sometimes obscure in meaning, and almost entirely lacking in poetic quality even of the humblest kind. Comparison with the original from which it was derived does little to justify the redactor as a literary craftsman. The unevenness of the redaction is clearly due to the erratic manner in which the process of adaptation has been carried out. Frequent changes in

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2) Wells, English, p.97.
3) G. Kane, Middle English Literature, London, 1951, p.9 and p.20.
the degree of abbreviation, awkward omissions and purposeless retentions or expansions of material, as well as occasional misunderstandings or misreadings of the source, all suggest a careless, unplanned and inartistic treatment by the English author.

Yet analysis of the process of redaction makes one thing abundantly clear: that, whatever his abilities as an artist, the redactor was not entirely lacking in creative spirit. His version of the *Raisaunco du Chevalier au Cygne* is not merely a translation of the French text, passively accepted by the English poet in every particular and reflecting nothing of native literary tastes and interests. It is evident that, whatever the precise form of his source may have been, he has radically reshaped it, freely transposing and omitting, condensing and abbreviating at will, with a single purpose in view. It seems clear that, whatever the scope of his original, he has shortened it considerably, concentrating for the most part on narrative incident and action to the exclusion of the details of characterization, social setting and emotional analysis contained in the French text. Where the redaction succeeds it achieves a direct and closely packed narrative, and where it fails it is in over-sealous or ill-judged attempts to obtain the same effects. The English author may have lacked judgement and literary ability, but he was not without originality in the technical conduct of his redaction.

But analysis of the process employed makes it equally obvious that his originality did not extend to the re-interpretation of the *Raisaunco*: the English poem is in content and meaning, in emphasis, and in the balance of its component parts, more or less identical with its source. It is true that the fabulous and supernatural elements bulk larger, and seem even more improbable, than they do in the French texts, but this is an inevitable result of abbreviation, which isolates
the action of the story from the circumstantial detail surrounding it in the original and serves to rationalise it. This accidental effect apart, everything indicates that the redactor was catering for an audience whose literary tastes were almost identical with those of the French for whom the Naissance was originally written, though one which had less patience with descriptive matter, and presumably less time to spare. In his treatment of the story-matter, as distinct from the manner of his story-telling, the author of Chevalier Asigne has made no significant change in the process of his redaction. But in his choice of subject one thing at least is significant: his decision to translate the Naissance in isolation from the other branches of the Cycle du Chevalier au Cygne. By so isolating it he has returned the story of the Jeun-Enfants to the independent form in which it is represented in the Dolomithes, a tale of fantastic adventures to be enjoyed for their own sake, not because they add reflected glory to the reputation of a French hero of history and legend. Clearly, it was the intrinsic qualities of the story and not its association with Godfrey of Bouillon which gave it value in the eyes of the English redactor. He has not provided his readers with a chanson de geste such as the Crusade Cycle offered him, nor, despite the modern classification of his poem with a Romance: "There is little of the atmosphere of romance, and much of the folk-tale. Strong and effective appeal is made to wonder, indignation, pity, and desire for punishment of villany." It was these elements which attracted the English poet to the Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne. Their presence in the epic cycle of the crusades is explained by the earlier, independent, history of the Jeun-Children legend. That the

alliterative poet chose to translate this episode, and this episode alone, is indicative of his literary interests and the tastes of the audience for whom he worked.
Although clearly one of the earliest alliterative romances in Middle English, *Joseph of Arimathia* is difficult to date with any certainty. Most authorities agree, however, in placing it about 1350 and in assigning it to the West Midlands. The unique copy of the poem, contained in the Vernon MS. (No. 1938) of the Bodleian Library, has only once been edited, and very little critical attention has so far been paid to the work. Skeat, as editor, was the first to identify the source as a portion of *The History of the Holy Grail*, the opening section of a vast French prose compilation known as the Vulgate Cycle of Arthurian Romances.

These romances, in common with the *Roman de Perceval en la Conte del Graal* of Chrétien de Troyes and other French works on the Grail legend, have been the subject of a great deal of controversy in the past.

3) *op. cit.* pp. xiv-xv.
Some measure of agreement as to their date, origin and inter-connection has, however, been established in recent years. Part in chronological order to Chrétien’s Conte del Graal has been placed the work of Robert de Boron, who, at some date between 1191 and 1201, composed the Joseph d’Armorique, a poem of just over 5,500 lines in octosyllabic couplets.

This romance was designed to give the early history of the Grail and with it "Robert wrote a second poem, a Merlin, intended to connect the early history of the Grail with Arthur’s court. "Both the Joseph and Merlin of Robert de Boron were turned into prose almost immediately, and in this reduction the former is usually identified as the Petit Saint Graal.

In addition to these comparatively brief works "there are two great cycles of Arthurian romances in prose:-

1) That which is known as the Vulgate or Walter Map Cycle.

2) That which is known as the Pseudo-Robert de Boron Cycle.

"The Vulgate Cycle is so called because it became the most popular redaction of the romances in the Middle Ages, almost completely displacing all other versions. It is made up of the five great romances, L’Histoire del Saint Graal (or Grand Saint Graal, as scholars have called it, although this title is not found in the MSS.); L’Histoire de Merlin (prose rendering of Robert’s Merlin plus a continuation), 24 Livres (L’Histoire) de Lancelot, La Queste del Saint Graal and La Mort Artus, and it exists either complete or in part in a large number of MSS.,—probably not far from a hundred. The name of Map is, also, given to this cycle, because the MSS. regularly ascribe to him the composition of the last three members of the cycle. This attribution, however, is manifestly a fiction.
and has been generally rejected by recent scholars! From this corpus, which has generally been assigned to the first third of the Thirteenth century, was derived the Pseudo-Robert de Soron Cycle, so called because, though most of the MSS. ascribe it to Robert, it is not thought possible that he could have been the author. It was evidently planned in the same divisions as the Vulgate, but only fragments of the cycle have survived: the section corresponding to the Bataille du Saint Graal is lost and has been replaced in some manuscripts by the prose rendering of Robert's Joseph d'Arimathia.

These two prose versions, respectively the Grand and Petit Saint Graal, together with the original verse form of Robert's Joseph, were indicated by Skant as the only likely sources of the English alliterative poem. His *History of the Holy Graal* is the Grand Saint Graal, the Bataille of the Vulgate Cycle, and there can, I think, be no doubt that his identification of the original is correct. Later writers have generally accepted the ascription, but no one has so far made any detailed

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4) "op. cit., pp. xxi-xxvii.

comparison of Joseph of Arimathea with its French source.

The basis of any such comparison must, of necessity, be the selection of that form of the Histoire del Saint Graal which most closely resembles the version given by the English poet, and which may reasonably be regarded as his immediate source or its closest surviving representative. This is made extremely difficult by the large number of Vulgate manuscripts which exist and the unsatisfactory state of our knowledge about the cycle as a whole and the Histoire in particular. Although much scholarly attention has been devoted to the Grail Romances, both prose and metrical, it has largely been directed to problems of authorship, Celtic and other influences, and the origin of the Grail symbol, to the comparative neglect of the texts themselves. Some thirty years ago J. D. Bruce pointed out the necessity for a proper examination of the manuscript tradition and the establishment of the correct genealogy of the surviving copies: "in the case of the Vulgate Cycle,......we have hitherto had no systematic investigation of this nature" At that time the need seemed likely to be met in the near future as Ferdinand Lot had recently announced, in his study on the Lancelot, a projected examination of the manuscripts of the complete cycle. But this examination, so far as I can discover, has never published, and it is only very recently that Professor Wallis has provided the first list of Vulgate manuscripts

1) For useful summaries of the Grail literature see—
   Methodised bibliographies are also included in—


which can pretend to completeness. Although this represents a great
advance upon the very incomplete and inaccurate account previously given
by H.C. Sommer, it does not list the Etroire texts separately and the
scope of the work does not permit the inclusion of information on indivi-
dual manuscripts which has emerged in recent years. The Etroire is still
the most neglected portion of the cycle, and no critical text has yet
been published. Under these circumstances there may be some value in
a separate listing of Etroire manuscripts, incorporating some material
to supplement that given by Professor Woledge:

a) Amsterdam, University Library: 1.A. 24/24.

b) Bocu, Universitätsbibliothek: 526.

c) Bourg, Bibliothèque Municipale: 35.

d) Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale: 9246.

e) Cambridge, University Library: Add. 7071.

1) E. Woledge, Bibliographie des romans et moralises en prose française
antérieurs à 1500, (Société de publications romanes et françaises, III)
Genève, pp. 72-73.

2) H.C. Sommer, The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances, Vol. I:
L’Etoire, (ed. Saint Ursul), Washington, 1900, p.xvii. See also p.xviii.

3) The following editions contain useful details on Etoire: 1887:
S. W. S. Hayter, Merlin (Introduction by W. S. Hadley) Vol. 1, 2, 3, 8, 15,
London, 1887; J. Pragster, La Mort du Roi Artus, Paris, 1913, and, a new
Paris, 1955. See also the following studies: A. Tauphilet, Études sur
La Quête du Saint Graal, Paris, 1981; N. Th. Far, Le Mort du Roi Artus,
Paris 1913; M. N. L. Jones and J. N. L. Jones, Arthurian Legends in Medieval Art.

4) This MS., though not mentioned by Sommer, is described by Pragster (La
Mort du Roi Artus, Paris, 1913, pp. 24) and Lacombe (op. cit., p. 54.) as contain-
ing almost a complete Vulgate Cycle, including the Etoire.

5) This MS., discovered some ten years ago, was first described by Pro-
fessor Vinaver ("La Genèse de la Suite de Merlin/In Mélanges offerts à
Jเกมenot Hageney, Paris, 1949, (Publications de l’Institut des Lettres
de l’Université de Strasbourg, 12), pp. 255-300) as containing an Etoire
followed by a Berlin of the Pseudo-Robert de Baron Cycle. The manu-

230
vendS: 472, 476, 643.

Collations 1047.

Chicago University Library: 712.

Iarmstadt, Hessische Landes und Hochschulbibliothek: 2534.

Geneva, Library of R. Bodmer: (A MS., formerly Phillipps 1046);
(A MS., formerly in the collection of the Duke of Newcastle).

Crepole, Bibliothèque Municipale: 656.

Novo(Sussex), Library of Dr. D. Colman: (A MS., formerly Phillipps 1043).

Le Mans, Bibliothèque Municipale: 154.

Leningrad, Public Library: Pr. F. v. XV. 5.

London, British Museum: Royal 14. iii; Royal 19. C. xiii; Add. 10292; Add. 32125.

New York, Pierpont Morgan Library; 303; 307.

Oxford, Bodleian Library: Douce 170; Douce 303.

(Cont.) - Script was acquired by Cambridge University Library and is described in the Catalogue as dating from c. 1300 and in the section corresponding to the Vulgate cycle, conforming closely to the text published by Sommer—British Museum, Add. 10292.

1) Late identification is no longer correct as the Phillipps Collection has been dispersed by sale. I am indebted to a letter from Mr. P. J. Brown, Assistant Keeper of Manuscripts in the British Museum, for the following information:—"Phillipps 1046, 1045, 1046 and 1047 were in the Phillipps sale at Sotheby's, 1 July 1846, as lots 14, 5 and 10; 1045 went to Messrs. E. H. Robinson, 1046 to Messrs. Long and 1047 may have gone to a buyer named Schaller. We have no record of 1830 and 1843, but the residue of the Phillipps Collection is now owned by Messrs. W. H. Robinson, 16 and 17 Pall Mall? Two of these are now relocated in other private collections; No. 1045 in that of Mr. D. Colman at Novo Sussex, and No. 1046 in that of R. Bodmer at Geneva,—see below under (1) and (3) respectively. I am informed by Messrs. Robinson that Nos. 3630 and 3643 are still in their possession but that they do not know the present whereabouts of No. 1047.

2) Both these manuscripts are fragmentary and the catalogue descriptions do not make it clear that they contain Letaire texts.

3) These 3633, though not mentioned by Sommer, are listed by an earlier editor of the Letaire (A. Beuter, Le Saint Graal, 1 vol., Le Mans, 1875-76, Vol. I, p. 24). They are more fully described by L. H. Dymott ("Some New Arthurian Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library," L.R., XII (1924), pp. 87-90.)
This list comprises 57 manuscripts, yet it would be unwise to pretend that it is complete. The listing of *estoire* texts has always been complicated by the failure of some cataloguers to distinguish properly between the Grand and Petit Saint Graal, and there may still be some manuscripts wrongly included or omitted here. It is, moreover, highly probable that other texts of the *estoire* exist unnoticed in private collections or wrongly identified in museums and libraries. There are, in addition, two early printed versions of the works:

1) Sommers (op. cit., p.xxx.) also listed No. 1428 as an *estoire* text: "C'est là une erreur; car il ne s'agit d'un texte du cycle, mais tout simplement d'un *Perlesvaus*..." (A. M. de Groc, "Sur les manuscrits du Graal-Lancelot," Rom., LVI, 1930, p. 276). See also Migeon's edition of the *Perlesvaus* (2 vols., Chicago, 1934-37) where this MS is fully described.

2) This MS has only recently been listed amongst the *estoire* texts. It is mentioned by Les. Paton (ed., Les Propheties de Merlin, Vol. I., London, 1925, p. 24) as containing amongst other items an *Histoire du Saint Graal* and more fully described by J. Fulicke, *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale et autres bibliothèques,* XXIII, ii, pp. 219-220.

3) The identification of this as an *estoire* text is uncertain.

4) See P. Laut, *Étude sur le Lancelot en prose,* (Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Sciences historiques et philologiques, No. 225), Paris, 1926, Torte, B. 2) on the MSS. of the Vulgate cycle as a whole: "Enfin les
complex problem in themselves, since the proper treatment of our subject would require the consideration of which, if any, if there was the source of the English poem. It is, indeed, doubtful whether, in view of the large number of manuscripts which must long ago have disappeared, such an identification could be made with any certainty. With the assistance of a careful classification of texts, such as has been attempted for other parts of the cycle, it might at least be possible to select the group or family of manuscripts to which the alliterative poem is most closely related. Since we still lack such a classification nothing can usefully be done in this connection at present. The textual analyses so far attempted suggest, however, that this lack is not such a serious drawback as it might at first sight appear to be. "Les différentes versions... différents presque toutes par un mélange infini de petits pièces qui

(Cont.) bibliothèques partielles et les bibliothèques d'Espagne peuvent sans doute grossir les chiffres précédents d'une manière appréciable;" and A. Daughlaton (op. cit., p. v) on the 1385 of the Quater-"Nous ne prétendons, à notre tour, dresser une liste définitive: il reste toujours possible que quelque bibliothèque ou collection ait échappé aux recherches."


2) In this connection Sommer (op. cit., p. ix) has pointed out: "when he takes into consideration that we do not possess a single manuscript of any part of the cycle of a date earlier than about 1270, although it is reasonably certain to have reached the last phase in its development, i.e., the form in which we possess it, at the very latest by 1215, he will be compelled to acknowledge that a goodly number of manuscripts which came into existence up to 1270 must have perished."
modifient le texte sans l'améliorer. La première feuille, en ne suivant qu'un seul mot, en est couverte à chaque ligne, et cela pour mettre Artus au lieu de le roi, dit-il pour dit-il, furent pour estoient... (1) This particular comment refers to the Queste, but it is equally applicable to other branches of the Vulgate Cycle. "Le texte de La Mort Artu, tout comme celui de La Queste, a été modifié beaucoup de copie en copie par la fantaisie ou le sans gène des scribes; s'ils ont respecté le plus souvent le sens général des phrases, ils se sont largement permis de substituer au texte de leur modèle des expressions équivalentes ou similaires. Ils ont rarement été jusqu'aux remaniements importants et aux interpolations étendues, mais dans des présentations variées ils ont tantôt rongé sur le texte pour alléger leur tâche, tantôt au contraire ils l'ont allongé et ont prétendu l'enjoliver d'additions personnalités. Il résulte de ces faits que les manuscrits de La Mort Artu diffèrent entre eux par un pullulement de variantes minimes et dénuées de signification: au lieu de au lieu de quant pour a celui tend que, sera au lieu de

(2) So far as I can judge from the texts which are generally available this is equally true of the Bataire manuscripts: they differ, for the most part, in minor details only, matters of phraseology which do not affect the narrative outline, and which are not more significant than those from the Queste and the Mort Artu quoted above. Since the English poem is very far from being a close literal translation of the


French prose these variants in matters of wording are not likely to be of much importance, and we may accept the available texts of the *Histoire* as presenting the original which the poet had before him in all its essential features.

Three different manuscripts have so far been published: British Museum, Royal MS 14.8.iii by F. J. Furnivall, the manuscript of Le Mans by J. Bucher, and British Museum Add. 105.10292 by E. O. Sommer, which I shall indicate as F, H and S respectively. For purposes of comparison with the English poem it would be preferable to select whichever of these texts most closely resembles the alliterative work, but, as the general nature of the Vulgate variants would lead us to expect, there is very little evidence on which to base such a choice. A study of the proper names involved shows that they are either those of well-known places, —'Aramathie', 'Babiloyne', 'Brutayne', 'Agipte', 'Galile', 'Jerusalem'—, which are more likely to be presented in a form dictated by the redactor's previous acquaintance with the word than in that given by his French source, or, in the case of names peculiar to the story, that the spelling variants are too slight to have any significance. The following are the only examples of any interest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joseph of Arimathea</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Garboye</td>
<td>Tarabiel</td>
<td>Tarrabiel</td>
<td>Carabel/Charabel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glosmidas</td>
<td>Clismachides</td>
<td>Clismachides</td>
<td>Maramides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nekister</td>
<td>Cungro</td>
<td>Cungo</td>
<td>Ennise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The evidence here is conflicting; and may be explained either on the assumption that the English poet allowed himself considerable liberty in adapting the proper names in his original—reading them, perhaps, rather imperfectly in the French Ed—, or that he had as his source a manuscript other than one of these but, like them, related to the common French version, in which he found his variant forms.

The only other evidence available is equally slight, but serves to support the latter assumption. It is provided by the mention in the alliterative prose of certain concrete facts, references to dates, the numbers of armies, etc., which may serve as points of comparison with the three printed texts of the French prose:

I)

3. sire, he selo, "and sonday is nouwe." (1.1.)

7(12/6):--des venredi jusques a hui et jeu qu'il soit hui dimences....

H(115/20):--des venredi jusques a hui et jeu qu'il soit hui dimences....

S(18/17):--des venredi jusques a hui.

II)

"Hit is two and fourthi winter" nel seijen,"trewely forsope,
Sipen pou sou3teat pis put and to prisn eodest!" (11.3–4.)

P(12/11):--e vous aus ete xliij ans en prisno....

H(116/4):--e vous aus est et xliij ans en prisno....

S(18/20):--qu'il a xliij ans tous accomplish....

III)

Fours pouaend and aseue score was pe summe holden, (1.95.)

P(46/9):--c.mille et xl mile....

H(136/2):--vii vins et iiiii mile....

S(23/21):--vij et iiiij miles....

(cont.) 20, 24, 28, 30 and 25, London, 1774–1705, but the French prose serves only to supply the missing part of Lavelloch's prose and is not reproduced in full as a parallel text.

1) References throughout are to the page and line of the various editions in this instance to Vol. I of Furnivall's text and Vol. II of Nasher's.

2) Note, however, that the fact that the day is Sunday is stated earlier in S, though the exact phrase translated by the English poet...
"I naue felaschype wipouten," seia Joseph, "wel a-boute
fifth, (l. 105.)

F(56/9.):...i en ma compaignis en-chore lxxv....
H(152/17.):...ai en ma compaignie lxxv....
S(26/16.):...ai en ma compaignie lxxv....

Gold and seluer he seils and asur forsoke. (l. 195.)
F(59/29.).....les vnes d'or et les autres d'asur....
H(159/14.).....les unes d'or et les autres d'asur....
S(29/22.).....donte les vnes estoient d'or et les autres d'argent
et les autres d'asur....

pat on beres in his nond a croe of quaynte newe;
pat oper beres in his nond preo blodi nayles;
pe pridde pe corome pat nis ned xeuerde;
pel secrpe, pel lance pat lembedi nis wip-inne;
And pe fyfpe a blodi cloc pat he was inne i-braced,
Whon he lay after slaunt in pe sepulcra.
(11.26-36.)

F(59/29-70/7.) (The relics of the crucifixion listed here are:
a cross, three naiis, a lance, a sponge, and a scourge)
H(174/11-175/3.) (Three naiis, a lance, a sponge and a scourge.)
S(32/15-23.) (A cross, three naiis, a lance, a cloth and a scourge)

With sylt pouesent," he seide,"of cleene men of armas,
And fifth pouesent fot-men pat redi bep to flinte.
(11.400-9.)

F(51/11.):....a nor mille hommes a pie....
H(266/6-7.):....de trente mille hommes chevaliers et de solompto-
dix mille hommes a pie....
S(46/22-23.):....XXX chevaliers et a IX hommes a pie....

The results to be drawn from these few test cases are equally
inconclusively futile, to indicate any one of the three MSS. examined as the
immediate source of the English poem. Nos. I and II suggest either F or H
but not S, while No. III would indicate either H or S but not F, and No. V
points to S rather than F or H. Nos. IV, VI and VII, in which there is no
agreement with any of the French versions, suggest, as before, that the poet
was either highly imperfect in his attitude to the concrete details of his
original or that he used a manuscript which differed from the texts cited

(Cont.)(the imperfect SS. of the alliterative work beginning in the
middle of this sentence) is found only in F and H.
in these particulars. There is nothing surprising in the latter supposi-
tion in view of the large number of 
(1) text of the surviving
copies indicate, must once have been in circulation. The evidence given
above is too slight to be of much value but it suggests at least that
there is no textual justification for selecting any one of the three
printed versions in preference to the others.

There are, however, other reasons for such a preference.

Somner's edition, as the most modern, might seem the obvious choice, but it
has been severely criticised as no more than a transcript without
scholarly apparatus of any sort: "Pour le lecteur ou pour l'étude, elle
n'est point supérieure à celle de Furnivall...." Both Somner and
Furnivall chose manuscripts which have generally condemned as
faulty and frequently unintelligible, and neither editor did much to
correct his text by the provision of variants. On the other hand Hucher,
who had considerable experience of the Vulgate manuscripts, thought highly
of the Bevens MSS. which he printed: "...il est certainement un des plus
anciens qui existent...." In spite of its comparatively early date
his edition, the text of which was carefully compared with a number of

1) A. Paugilet (op. cit., p. xxiv) refers here to the editions of the text
by Furnivall and Somner, but as these are based on the same two cyclic
MSS. utilized by them in their Bishops editions his remark may be
taken as applying equally to the latter. In fairness to Somner it
should be pointed out that it was not his aim to present a critical
edition of the Vulgate romances, but merely to provide a uniform text
from one MS. of the cycle with which all other MSS. could be collated;
a necessary preliminary to a critical edition. He was, however, un-
fortunate in his choice of manuscript.

2) See A. Paugilet (op. cit., p. xxi.

other manuscripts and amply provided with variant readings, seems the
most suitable for our purpose. It is upon a comparison with his text
of the Beatoire del Saint Graal that the following analysis of Joseph of
Armathie is based.

The whole question of the choice of a French text for such
a purpose is greatly reduced in importance by the general nature of
the English reduction. It is a greatly condensed version of the original,
in which the comparatively slight variations between the manuscripts
are not likely to be significant: 57 pages of Sommer's folio edition
and 180 pages of Boucher's text in octavo being compressed into 700 allo-

2) 200 pages of the English manuscript is, however, defective at the
beginning and Short estimated that just under a hundred lines of the
poem have been lost. If this estimate is accurate the missing section
must have been still more highly condensed, covering in about an eighth
of the total work matter contained in the first 114 pages of Boucher's
text. The French prose begins with a lengthy introduction in which the
author attempts to explain how the material came into his possession.

1) Most of the variants are drawn from MS.2459 of the Bibliothèque
Rationale: "...le plus clair et le plus complet de tous les manuscrits
du Saint Graal, mais non le plus exact et le plus représentatif de la
version originale. Celui du Sac, plus obscur, à raison de la suppres-
sion du grand nombre d'articles et de prépositions, la sub-
stitution de la conjonction que au mot que et d'autres archaïsmes
de langage, est bien plus logique et plus voisin du texte primitif.
(N.Boucher, op.cit., Vol.I, p.15). Boucher had not examined all the
Beatoire MS. then known, and others have been discovered since he wrote,
but until the manuscripts as a whole have been analysed in detail his
opinion is probably the best guide available in the choice of a text.

2) In Sommer's edition the relevant portion covers pp.10-79, and in


the first 306 pages of Vol.III in Boucher's edition, but as the section
to which the English poem corresponds does not extend beyond Vol.II
this is always to be taken as the volume referred to here.
Christ, appearing to him in a vision, had given him a little book of his own composition to copy, and in preparation for the task he endured various trials and adventures which he details at length. It may well have been that the English poet, apparently anxious to reduce the bulk of his original, omitted this introduction altogether, though it no doubt served to give the story which follows a sacred significance in the eyes of Medieval readers. It has no essential bearing on the narrative proper. He may, on the other hand, have appreciated the authority which its inclusion would give to his poem, though we can be sure that if he translated it at all it was in an abbreviated form.

This must also have been true of the 75 pages which follow, that part of the *Histoire* proper which is lacking in the extant English version. At the crucifixion Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a follower of Christ, obtains "il vaissima un Phenas sacrifié", in which he collects the Saviour's blood, and, because he buries His body, is seized by the Jews and imprisoned "en une fort saison qui estoit l'envasque Calfac". Many years afterwards the Emperor Vespasian, coming to Jerusalem to avenge the death of Christ, rescues Joseph from the pit in which he has been confined. At this point the existing English text begins in the middle of a line, with Joseph's assurance that his long imprisonment has seemed no more than three days to him.

The opening lines of the poem provide a typical example of one method employed by the poet in reducing and compressing his original. A close verbal parallel indicates the point in the French prose which

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2) Ibid., p.59.
3) Ibid., p.69.
In the alliterative poem this occupies six lines:

"......sire", he says, "and sonenday is nouwe;
Penne alle lawe, whan an nede pat herden his sorde,
"Hit is two and fourth winter", pel selej, "trewely fors ope,
Slpen pou sousteat pis put and to prison eodast!"
"Now I ponke my lord," selec Joseph, "pat lente me of his grace;
He pinkep but preo ni3t al pis like prove."
(31.1-5.)

The essentials of the narrative, as well as the dialogue form, are here retained in a passage which is as brief as possible without being too bald. Two of the details omitted,—the reference to Joseph's service at the crucifixion and the dating by the reign of Tiberius,—the poet could assume to be matters of common knowledge, and the mention of Caiaphas would be superfluous since, as far as one can judge from the surviving portion of the poem, his role in the story seems to have been completely ignored by the redactor. This type of compression, in which the narrative outline is separated from a great deal of incidental detail, is practiced throughout the redaction, usually, however, on a much wider scale than in this brief section, and often with results which are far less successful.
which he seems to have thought suitable for his purposes; the passage is completely omitted and its contents have left no trace in the English work. It is concerned with Vespasian's punishment of Gamaliel, at the head a subsidiary theme, and, since the poet makes the Jews as a whole, rather than any individual, responsible for the ill-treatment of Joseph, one which could be deleted without harming the development of the narrative. This means of abbreviating the original, by omission of lengthy passages, often extending to several pages of Bucher's text, is employed again and again, often, unfortunately, with harmful effects upon the sequence of episodes and upon the meaning of the poem. (/7-11 : 121/10-18 and 144/3-16.) With this omission the English author proceeds at once to the baptism of Joseph and his subsequent baptism of Vespasian and his followers. The matter is drawn from two separate passages in the French, lifted from their context somewhat later in the narrative. Similar alterations in the sequence of the prose text and combinations of disconnected incidents occur constantly throughout Joseph of Arimathea, sometimes with a beneficial effect in the shortened form of the poem, but often resulting in confusion and ambiguity. In this instance the re-arrangement would appear to be without particular significance, except, perhaps, to suggest that baptism was Joseph's first concern on being released. The somewhat haphazard nature of the redaction as a whole may make it unwise to read too much significance into changes of this sort. (/3-30 : 119/3-14 and 144/3-16.) Having earlier omitted all mention of the punishment imposed upon Gamaliel, the redactor now returns to take up the brief general reference to Vespasian's revenge upon the Jews with which that section in the French concludes. In the shortened
form of the poem this general reference is, no doubt, more valid than the particular instance, but the poet loses the fine point of the prose author,—that Christ is revenged upon His own people by a pagsse,—by placing the incident after and not, as in the French, before the baptism of Vespasian. The loss is a minor one, but it serves as an example of the numerous small points throughout the work in which the redactor has failed to understand or appreciate his source, or has confused and altered its meaning in his desire to abbreviate it. The mistake, in this instance, has arisen through his attempt to combine two passages upon the same subject, the second of which refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian, some years after his conversion and baptism. But here, for once, there is no gain in brevity as the poet has seen fit to provide details of the persecution of the Jews which, so far as the three published texts indicate, were not contained in his source. The passage, like others in the poem, is somewhat ambiguous, but the idea of the Jews being forced to leap down fifty feet into the pit where Joseph has been imprisoned since the death of Christ shows a sense of irony, as well as a faculty of invention which scarcely appears elsewhere in the redaction. 

Having already made use of the few lines referring to Vespasian's sack of Jerusalem, the poet ignores the remainder of the context, the main point of which is quite remote from the purpose to which they have been put. It concerns an incident in the attack by which the Emperor's conversion is revealed to his father, from whom he had previously concealed it. This is a side issue even in the French text and, as Vespasian has no further part to play in the story, could safely be omitted without harm to the sequence or significance of the English version.

The story proper now begins with the Divine
direction that Joseph should set out upon a mission of conversion.

The poet has compressed the essential details from a lengthy passage into five lines, omitting to mention the vision of Christ from which the instructions emanate, but including the warning that Joseph and his family must never return to Jerusalem, while leaving its significance obscure by neglecting Christ’s announcement that He intends to people distant lands with their descendants.

(26-37 : 123/16-125/3.) Joseph and his followers set out from Jerusalem, and the English narrative of their progress, their fears upon the journey and reassurance by their leader, follows, in outline, the content of the French. The sequence of certain passages has been altered, though merely as an aid to compression, and descriptive detail is very greatly reduced. For the most part the abbreviation is made without the loss of anything valuable in the French, but there are two examples within as many lines of the poet misunderstanding or misreading his source. The Jews, upon their journey:

...vinrent a I bois qui estava à damis line de Bretagne, sa avez norni hom des amais et ai zout apelée par son nom, pour que en cel bois, fut amitié de Dédans des traitres, saut li june la livrèrent à Acre, le roi de Damas, pour se fille que il avoit laissée, saut il prit la fille Philépere son frère. (124/16-125/3.)

But in the English this has become:

A morwe pel seore dîst and don hem to Jonge, And come to a forest with flourès ful feire, Pat was called Argo, pat pe kyng ouste, In pe lond of Damas, pe cuntre was dere. (11.34-37.)

The proper names in the passage vary as much from manuscript to manuscript and are so often corrupted (the Bretagne of this passage is Bethania in all the variants cited by Bacher, and the latter is obviously the correct form) that the poet may well have found Argo in his source.
If, however, he made the change from Latin, it is clear that he did not appreciate the significance of the name ("li bos des agnis" = the wood of aubush) any more than he understood the reference to "le roi des armes"; catching at the name he has transferred the wood—half a league from Bethany—to the Kingdom of Damascus.Instances of this sort of misunderstanding, which are quite common in the poem, suggest a somewhat careless reading of the French and, perhaps, a rather uncertain grasp of its meaning.

(15-18; 126/1-127/11.) The alliterative poem continues to follow the sequence of the prose, with Christ's command to Joseph that he should build an ark to contain the Holy Grail. The reference to "bat ilk he bled pou berest a-boute" (1.40) occurs somewhat awkwardly, as the Grail has not previously been mentioned in the English version. Presumably the poet had explained how it came into Joseph's possession in the opening lines which are now lost. This passage represents a very condensed form of the French, omitting reiterated promises of divine aid in return for strict obedience, but making use of lines upon the practical function which the ark is to fulfill throughout the story:

\[\text{When pe lust speke with me, liff pe llen sone,}
\text{pou achnalt fynde me rea, riiht bi pl ayde,}
\text{And, bote pou and pl sone, me no mon toucne. (11.41-43.)}\]

(127/43-128/11.) The French author describes the building of the ark according to divine instruction; the economical English poet leaves it to the reader's imagination, and, without loss of meaning, maintains the continuity of his narrative.

(44-51; 142/11-130/6.) By this omission and by transposing a slightly later passage in the French, the poet has combined two separate commands of Christ into a single message delivered by a supernatural voice. In the original version Joseph is instructed to convert and implies the
inhabitants of Sarraes, the first city at which the mission arrives, but, as the poet has not allowed the narrative of the journey there to intervene, he alters this to a more general charge:

And Joseph walk in ye world & preche myne worde (L.44.)

The result is concise and effective, and suggests a deliberate attempt to minimise the disruptive rapidity with which one episode gives place to the next in the abbreviated version by taking liberties with the sequence of events.

(52-56 : 120/11-120/11.) The poet now turns back to translate the essential details of the journey to Sarraes, and in his abbreviation of the French makes one of the frequent errors which suggest a rather cursory reading of the original or a deficient knowledge of the language. The city, he says:

...was called Sarraes, per Sarayns a pronen;
Great pore Abranames wyf, but wonede per-lime.

(11.55-56.)

But the effect of the lengthy passage in the original is precisely the opposite:

Na se cunt peon a oure oile qui aiment que Sarraes
Turent apleat de la forme Abraham; (120/15-16.)

(57-64 : 130/9-132/19.) The English narrative of the Jews' entrance to Sarraes and their appearance before the king in the temple moves so rapidly, eight lines providing only a sketchy outline of the French original. Many necessary details are omitted altogether: the king's name is not given, and, although he is to be one of the central characters, it is not until much later (L.134.) that he is identified as Arwak. His cognomen, "Li Neocoudas", and the mystery of his birth, are also passed over, even though they are material to a later incident in the poem (11.272-80.). And, similarly, his failure to find support amongst
his barren for the war with Egypt is referred to so vaguely that it
leaves what follows—his attempt to obtain advice and assistance from
Joseph—improperly explained and motivated. Excessive compression of
this sort occurs sporadically throughout the poem and often makes nonsense
of the original narrative.

(65-74 : 132/13-135/8.) The section which follows is no less drastically
reduced, but here the effect is more beneficial than harmful. The French
prose is wordy and repetitive and in the redaction the content of several
pages, Joseph's promise of aid for the king through the power of Christ,
and Walak's curiosity as to how he can be aided by one who is already
dead—is successfully conveyed in a few conversational exchanges between
the two.

(75-161 : 135/9-138/13.) Joseph, in order to reassure Walak, begins a
lengthy account of the Annunciation, the birth of Christ, the massacre of
the Innocents and the flight into Egypt. As this is all biblical ma-
terial with which every medieval reader would already be familiar, it
might have been expected that a redactor anxious to reduce the scale of
his work would content himself with a brief paraphrase. But, for the
moment, the poet's eagerness to advance the narrative gives way to a
homiletic interest and the passage is retained on much the same scale
as the original, and with a similar reflection of biblical wording and
phraseology. Joseph's sermon is a necessary preliminary to the con-
version of Walak, but the scope given to it is out of proportion in a
redaction where equally significant details of the plot are confused in
abbreviation or omitted altogether.

(17 : 138/14-140/12.) With surprising suddenness the English author
returns to a policy of radical abbreviation. The French version con-
tinues its account of the life of Christ: His ministry, betrayal,
crucifixion and resurrection, but, although this might be considered the most material part of Joseph's sermon, it is entirely omitted from the English redaction. There is no apparent reason for this change of method: it is true that most of Valahak's later questions concern the birth of Christ, but the poet has already included much more than is necessary for the introduction of the topic. Presumably this complete omission is assigned to compensate for the excessive length at which the first half of the homily is given.

(102-104: 133/16-29.) The English author contributes his own conclusion to the sermon by returning to take up a few lines, ignored earlier in his much condensed version of the passage where they occur (65-74: 132/1-135/8). They show Joseph urging Valahak to destroy the images of his heathen gods, and the poet was apparently prompted to insert them here by reading in his source that the Egyptian idols fell down before the infant Christ and were broken to pieces. The topic is one which is to be of importance later in the story of Valahak, but as a moral conclusion to Joseph's discourse it is dragged in rather awkwardly. But it is not much more suitably placed in the original, and the rearrangement at least suggests the degree of freedom which the poet permitted himself in making his redaction.

(105-136: 140/1-145/16.) He now returns to the sequence of the original, condensing a lengthy discussion between Joseph and Valahak on the mystery of the Virgin Birth, partly by reducing the wordy arguments in the French to comparatively straightforward statements, and partly by omitting some passages altogether. Most of these omissions are quite beneficial: one passage (142/10-143/9), for example, contains an appeal from Joseph to be heard without interruption, which, in the abbreviated English narrative,
would be an unwarranted deviation from the argument itself.

\[149/15-151/11\] In the present text the argument is extended to the nature and meaning of the Trinity, which Joseph explains at great length. It would appear, however, that the poet's interest in such didactic material has already been satisfied, and, indeed, such that he limits his merely condensed repetition of the matter already dealt with in earlier passages. \[137-150 : 151/13-152/3.\] The theological discussion continues and is concluded when Joseph confuses the alarum appointed by Owalak to debate with him. The king admits—

..."be Tengora I here, \(\text{pe lassa reason I do in pat pat pou rigeneat.}\) 11.137-38.

and, indeed, the argument is even more confusing in the English version than in the French, though the latter is never very straightforward in expression. Owalak asks a question about the nature of the Trinity, but Joseph's answer has more bearing upon the Virgin Birth. This confusion is apparently due to the poet's fragmentary recollection of some points in the previous section, omitted as a whole, which he inserts, often inappositely, in the conclusion of the debate.

(151-158 : 152/3-153/9.) The narrative turns to personal details of Joseph and his company, who are promised shelter by the king and a further audience on the following day. The passage does little to advance the action and adds nothing to what we already know about the land of Jews, yet the English author gives it at almost equal length, and, for the moment, shahara closely to his source.

\[153/9-154/12.\] At this point the writer introduces an important new character, Joseph, the son of Joseph of Arimathen. Then Owalak asks why the Jews go barefoot and in poverty; it is he who replies
with a homily on the proper service of God. The fact that the English author omits the passage altogether is not necessarily an indication that he had no interest in didactic material of this sort; the French contains so many similar homilies that to have included them all would have unbalanced a reduction in which the narrative proper is so much abbreviated.

(154-174: 155/11-155/10.) A direct statement of Joseph's learning in matters of religion allows the redactor to introduce him effectively, if somewhat abruptly, in spite of this omission. The treatment of this brief section of narrative demonstrates the freedom with which the redactor re-arranges his source even when retaining its substance. The French reads:

» Quant il roys de chaluy si bien parler, si demanda à Joseph, qui il estoit, et comment il avoit son. Et Joseph li dist:
"Sire, il est mes fier, si est apielée par non non Joseph. Et dist que il savoit tant que nue clers de non sages petit savoir ple, si parloit et si sain come il avoit ci."

(154/13-155/3.)

The English version is cast throughout in direct speech:

"I trouwe bat beo bi sone," bi Josashe ne seide. "Je, sire, so me is, for sopo as I pe telle."
"Con me out of cleryge?" seiu pe hyng penne. "Leene me forsope, sire, per liues no better."

(1. 159-72.)

This type of adaptation, applied to many passages of much greater length, often makes the abbreviation clearer and more forceful in expression. Unfortunately the effect is all too often spoilt by such meaningless tags as "for sopo as I pe telle," which serve no useful purpose except in connection with the alliteration.

(175-184: 156/11-156/14.) A similar brevity of expression is employed to condense the prose description of Avalak pondering over the problems of his war with Egypt and what Joseph has told him of the Christian
mysteries. But here the abbreviation is only partly successful. The nature of Cavalcab'sехшис is much more sensibly and directly stated, but the account of a vision which is sent to help him, a tree with three branches or trunks, one of which has darker bark than the others, is so greatly compressed as to be vague and difficult to understand without reference to the French.

The Bsteoir contains a lengthy description of further details connected with the vision, which leave no doubt as to its meaning: the tree is a symbol of the Trinity, and the branch with darker bark represents Christ as man in the flesh. The English author, apparently finding these mystical details excessive, has omitted them completely. Had his translation of the previous section been adequate the omission would not be harmful, but, as it stands, the poem requires the addition of these features to make it comprehensible.

The poet, apparently aware that his treatment of Cavalcab's vision is inadequate, adds two lines directly explaining the symbolism. These fulfil the function of the long passage previously omitted and are obviously suggested by it. But nothing in the French directly corresponds to them, and, although it is possible that the manuscript used by the poet contained a variant passage of this nature, they should probably be regarded as one of the rare instances of independent interpolation on his part.

Cavalcab's vision continues with a further illustration of the Trinity in the symbolic form of a tree with three stems, on each of which is written the chief attribute associated with a member of the Godhead. This is followed by a vision of the Virgin Birth, symbolised by a child entering and then leaving a room without
pass through the door. In spite of his earlier tendency to
effectively material of this sort, the poet includes both incidents
at considerable length, keeping closely to the content and sequence of
the original. The details which he suppresses are those of human interest.
the king is joined by his chamberlain, whose terror at what he sees is
apparently designed to heighten the wonder of the vision, but the English
author, though he retains the chamberlain, omits the passages which describe
his fears. As a result the chamberlain seems a rather meaningless
figure, who could well have been deleted altogether.

(212–222: 162/18–156:14.) The scene changes abruptly:

Now we leuen Pe kyng and of Joseph carpen; (1.212.)

But in this the poet is merely following his source which gives, at great
length, Joseph's prayer for help in the conversion of Evalak. This is
an invocation in the name of those whom God has aided in the past, -Josue,
David, Daniel, Mary Magdalene, etc., - and it is chiefly these scriptural
references which are retained in the English redaction at the expense of
the more material plea for assistance in converting Evalak. A divine
voice replies that "Pe kyng schal zoe terme", (1.229.) and the poet
passes at once to a different topic.

\[\text{(166/14–157/9.) The French author, however, goes on to give}\]

God's command that the Christian company is to pray before the ark,
coupled with the promise of a sacred office for Josaphe. The omission
of these instructions from the English version gives the action which
springs from them the appearance of being spontaneous. But it is un-
likely that this spontaneity has any significance in the poet's schema,
where motivation, even though dimm, appears to be much less important
than action. Though his attitude is by no means unvarying, he frequently
neglects such sections as this in favour of narrative passages which carry the story forward.

(230-233 : 167/9-168/18.) The absence of any evident and sustained policy of abbreviation is clearly demonstrated in what follows. As Joseph returns to his bed after prayer the author reflects upon the state of continence in which he lives with his wife and reveals that their youngest son, Galahad, was only engendered at the express command of God.

Even in the loose and rambling form of the romance this in something of an anachronism, though Galahad is to appear as a character much later in the story and his descendants are the principal figures in other branches of the cycle. But, as Joseph of Arimathea does not extend even to the birth of Galahad and makes no mention of his descendants, the poet's careful inclusion of this passage can only have been intended as a literary reference, for the pleasure of readers familiar with the ensemble of the Arthurian romances. The fact that he confuses Joseph's son with the more famous Galahad, the son of Lancelot, makes it all the more probable that this is why he troubled to translate the lines.

(234-236 : 168/13-23.) The story moves on. Joseph and his followers come on the following morning to pray before the altar. (The English author mentions Joseph only, though a few lines later he assumes the presence of the others: minor errors of this sort are legion throughout the redaction.) The passage is an essential narrative link, preparing the scene for what follows, and is, therefore, retained by the poet at almost equal length.

\[253\]

(169/14-170/7.) In a passage which has an obvious biblical source the Holy Ghost descends upon the Christians as tongues of flame. This is, however, only one of many miraculous occurrences which occur.
upon each other in the following page, and as no specific event arises from it, the reader can omit it without in any way weakening his narrative."

(235-256: 173/8-173/25.) Once again the voice of Christ is heard, first exhorting the Jews to be more faithful than those of their race who crucified Him, and then promising Joseph:

Ional bi-take pe to-day, in a good tymes, On pe hirseate pinge holden on sorpe, (11. 259-54.)

The opening homily occupies the major portion of this section in the French, but, as it is not particularly relevant and does nothing to advance the action, the poet has only summarised it briefly, giving the words of Christ mainly in reported form:

"i-blesset be je to day, alle myne lewe califiren"—
And he tolde men of his crucifling oue pe cros souote, And of noere sadres bfoire, Pat ne fond vn-suynede—
(11. 240-42.)

The promise to Joseph, on the other hand, forms the introduction to an important sequence in which it is fulfilled, and the poet carefully translates the rather ambiguous phrasing of the original at almost equal length.

(257-266: 173/25-175/1.) In preparation for the sacred office which he is to hold, Joseph is shown a vision of Christ within the ark, surrounded by five angels holding the instruments of the crucifixion. The English version is abbreviated by strict economy of expression; all the significant details of the original are retained, but the prolix description has been pared away. It is in passages such as this that the reddactor appears at his best, giving clarity and conciseness to a narrative often obscured by the repetitive, over-laborate style of the French.

(175/3-175/10.) The prose version here supplies an explanation:
of the crucifixion symbols held by the five angels, but, since their significance is self-evident, the poet ignores the passage completely.\footnote{277-280 : 177/10-178/5.}

The vision changes, and now Christ is seen stretched upon the cross, blood flowing from his wounds. The reductor, realizing that this is a significant episode, retains it at almost equal length and with no changes, other than the verbal alterations necessitated by the verseification.

\footnote{176/9-177/5.} His care in retaining the passage is, however, completely negatived by his omission of the culminating point in the description:

\[\text{\"{}\text{\textnormal{Et donc, les pieds au crucifix vit isole equiles quo Josaephus nec p(r)ere avart fuit apporter en l'arca, pas li estoit avis que li sans de pide au crucifi depusait en sale equiles, \ldots\text{"}}}\quad (176/6-12.)\]

The vision is intended to reveal Josaephus, and, incidentally, the reader—, of the true significance of the Grail as the receptacle of the divine blood, and, lacking this detail, it loses most of its value in the poem.

The poet could probably rely upon common knowledge of the Grail's origin and associations, but this can scarcely justify his neglect of something so fundamentally important in the story of Josaeph of Arimathien, especially when so much that is merely preparatory to it is carefully retained.\footnote{277-280 : 177/5-16.} The vision is momentarily obstructed by Josaeph, who joins his son in looking into the arca. What follows concerns them both, and the English author, recognizing this as a necessary link in the narrative, retains it in the form of a conversational exchange between the two, though much more briefly worded.

\footnote{281-284 : 177/14-18.} As the vision is resumed the story approaches a climax in Christ's consecration of Josaephus as the first bishop, and the reductor begins to treat his source still more freely, transposing and
rearranging whole sections at will. Passing over for the moment, some intervening passages, in which he later returns (vide infra, 252-253: 177/16-178/5.) and (285-294: 178/6-179/14.), he translates without abbreviation a few lines in which Christ appears as at His resurrection for the ceremony of Joseph’s consecration. By this rearrangement he enters at the head rather than at the end of the ceremonial procession which now begins, and provides a strong contrast with the dying Christ of the preceding passage. Though it is difficult to be sure that this effect was intentional on the part of the poet, there can be no doubt that the result is a decided improvement upon the original.

The decision to omit a detail connected with the appearance of the risen Christ was also a wise one. At first Joseph does not recognize Jesus until his son prompts him. In the rambling form of the prose this is merely one of many incidental details serve to round out the narrative but have no special significance to have included it in the abbreviated English version would have unnecessarily interrupted the more swiftly moving action.

(285-294: 178/6-179/14 and 180/11-181/15.) Descriptive details of the procession have a more material function in the story. The angels who assemble carry the vessels of the Mass as well as the vestments and insignia of priestly authority, sceptre, sword and miter, each of which has a symbolic function in the consecration ceremony. Although the English version is very much condensed, most of these articles are mentioned, and the passage gives an adequate impression of the ceremonial assembly. It is only when read in comparison with the French that the haphazard nature of the reduction becomes evident. The material has been selected from two separate portions of a lengthy section, some of the intervening
passages being transferred to another context (vide infra, 313-315; 160/14-181/2.) and others completely omitted, with a little regard for the sequence of the original that features which are there quite unconnected are arbitrarily associated and confused with each other. In the prose description the angel Gabriel appears bearing the Holy Oraul (172/26-179/4.), and some pages later there is mention of the rich chair in which the newly-created bishop is seated (183/1-5.). Two lines in the alliterative poem are clearly derived from these disparate sources:

pen com on, 'pe strenghe of God', Gabriel 1-noten, Wip pe riccheste sage pat ever for asete seemes;
(11.294-92.)

This sort of cobbling can scarcely be due to a deliberate policy of reduction by the combination of related elements; it seems more likely that it is the result of an imitative reading of the French, especially as the poet fails once more to take up a significant reference to the Orail.

Having mentioned the bishop's throne in which Josapho is seated, the prose author goes on to give its subsequent history, telling how a senseless king who tried to sit in it was struck blind. This is typical of the sort of incidental matter which is used to pad out the French narrative. In this instance it may be said to have some material connection with the story, since it stresses the sacred nature of the throne, but its omission by the English poet has no harmful effect on the continuity of the action. Indeed, it is an improvement upon the original, where the digression unnecessarily delays the concentration of Josapho.

(295-306 : 177/16-178/3.) Before the actual ceremony takes place the poet returns to translate, in shortened form, a passage which he had earlier passed over. It describes the altar used by Christ as celebrant,
on which are the symbols of the crucifixion and 'Pe disch wiPPe blode' (1:297.). This rearrangement, which is apparently deliberate, allows the introduction of the altar at the moment when its significance is obvious and not, as in the original, long before it is to be used.

(299-301 + 182/23-183/1 and 184/12-185/10.) Josaphe in robes and consecrated as the first Christian bishop in a ceremony which the French author describes at some length. By selecting three separate sentences which describe the essential action, and neglecting all the details in which it is elaborated, the poet covers the same ground in three lines. As a result the climax of this part of the story is narrated in sketchy outline which contrasts oddly with the extent at which the preliminaries have been detailed.

\[ (185/10-191/15) \] The degree of abbreviation varies throughout the redaction, and at this point economy seems to have been of particular importance to the poet. In one of his longest excisions he passes over some six pages of Hucher's text where Christ explains to Josaphe the significance of his episcopal robes, the outer garment symbolising Chastity, the head-covering Humility, and the staff Vengeance and Mercy combined. This symbolism has considerable importance in the theme of religious mysticism which runs through the story. And, judging by the attention he has given to it, the French author evidently expected that it would interest his audience as much as the more worldly adventures of Joseph and his son. Apparently the English redactor did not share this interest, or was prepared to sacrifice it in order to concentrate upon matter essential to the development of his story.

(302-304 + 195/22-196/17.) The charge which Christ lays upon Josaphe is material of this sort: he must appoint a bishop in every city he visits,
and anoint with holy oil the kings whom he converts. The poet gives the gist of the passage in a few lines, but omits a prophecy that Svalak will shortly become a Christian, since it merely anticipated action which he will later require to narrate in full.

(303-310 : 191/15-192/9.) A similar passage, in which it is explained that Josapha is to be charged with spiritual affairs and his father with temporal matters, is similarly abbreviated. These two sections have been transposed though the sequence of the original is much more suitable: there the direction for the anointing of pagan kings serves as a link with the next episode, a further attempt to convert Svalak.

|  | 192/9-193/21.) Between these two passages in the prose there is a long exegesis on the Holy Sacrament, which Josapha is taught how to administer and ordered to celebrate daily. Such material has an obvious value in lending interest and authenticity to an apocryphal history of the early Church and the establishment of its institutions, quite apart from any didactic intention on the part of the author. In omitting it the redactor leaves the narrative outline quite unharmed, since no essential part of the plot depends upon it, but he deprives his poem of an important religious element which might have been expected to appeal to an English audience as much as to a French one. |

(311-312 : 196/17-27.) The vision is brought to a close by the command that Josapha should return to the conversion of Svalak. Compressed into a couple of lines this serves the poet as a transition to a new scene and a new episode in the narrative.

|  | 196/28-197/11.) In the French romance the action is momentarily delayed while Josapha commits the ark to the care of his cousin Lucan, a character who never appears in the English version. Any detail
connected with the ark and the Urail is of importance, but, where no such of equal significance is ignored, the reductor was unlikely to pause over an incident which interrupts the progress of the narrative. (313-113: 180/14-181/2.) But the policy of omitting everything which does not advance the action is not consistently followed. At this point the poet goes out of his way to include a passage which he had passed over in its original context, describing the blessing of Solomon's palace with holy water. This seems, at first sight, the sort of non-essential which has been suppressed elsewhere, but here it is used, in combination with a similar detail(vide infra; 16-321: 180/25-189/13.) to serve a practical purpose.

\[ \text{In the prose tale this reference to purification serves merely as the introduction to a lengthy discourse by Christ on the use of holy water, and its connection with the office of priesthood. To the contemporary audience this would have the same attraction as the other didactic passages on religious topics with which the Canticle del Sant' Orail is liberally supplied, but to the English poet it could only be superfluous, either in its original setting or in the new context where he has placed the initial reference to purification.} \]

(316-23: 180/25-189/13.) The point of the reference is to suggest that the pagan palace is the haunt of evil spirits, and the reductor has associated it with another passage from quite a different context which also stresses the rather ominous atmosphere of the place. Daniel, we are told, declared "que oll palais art superiotes" (169/1-5.), and prophesied—

but hit scholde trewey, in sum tyme after,
Called beo be palais mervellouse for werkse,
bet per scholde beo aeygan Porw sonde of vr lord.
(11.321-23.)

This is a more definite statement of an idea somewhat vaguely expressed
in the original, and its placing here, at the opening of an episode in which the prophecy is to be fulfilled, suggests an attempt by the redactor to order his material with a definite effect in view.

(134-135 : 177/12-189/4.) The scene is set for a new episode, and Avalak summons the Christians to continue the debate, sustained on his part by a presbyter who disputes the doctrine of the Trinity. Feeling himself again on solid ground the English poet translates more directly, with fewer excisions and transpositions, than in dealing with the visionary and didactic passages. But even here minor details have been re-ordered, for no obvious purpose and without improving the narrative, others are omitted altogether, and there is the usual economy of expression.

(143-144 : 199/4-9.) Two lines in the English version illustrate the way in which the redactor's efforts to express the original effectively yet briefly often produce something so remote from his source as to constitute an adaptation rather than a translation. Then Avalak's clerk—

....tut si durant parló encontre le dévast et encontre la trinitie, si fu Joseph assi hablis del desafendre et del pouver encontre ce que chil avoit dit. Si no avert ne manquet recopndre à fausser que que chil avoit dit. Car à nostre seigneur me plaisecit. (199/4-9.)

The poet, perhaps influenced by a ready and effective alliteration, shows JosephOptions.churching by bad manners rather than by good logic—

He spargn in his spatison and speck narde wordes, Pat Joseph neede no space while his speche laste.

(11.343-44.)

(134-135 : 199/10-200/23.) Josaphe comes to his father's assistance, reminding Avalak of the vision in which he had seen the problems of the faith resolved, and threatening that Pholomar, king of Babylou, who is advancing against his kingdom will be allowed to humiliate him. This is a further step in the development of Josaphe as a leading character, demonstrating his power of prophecy, and, incidentally, stimulating the
reader's interest by hinting at future action in the story. So, although the plot is not directly advanced in this passage, the poet retains it at such the same length as the prose version.

(201/1-202/3.) His neglect of what follows is one more illustration of the ar rested nature of his re daction. Josapha's prophecy that the pagan clerk will be punished for his attack upon Christian beliefs fulfills precisely the same function as the previous passage. But the poet may well have felt that it could add nothing to the effect of what he had already chosen to include.

(202/6-205/15.) The fulfillment of this prophecy by the blinding of the clerk is, however, material to the action and is retained, though in shortened form. This incident gives rise to another: Evalak wishes to know if the clerk will recover and is told to ask his idols, but Apollo can give no answer. The victory of Christ's followers over the powers of paganism is a recurrent theme throughout the Lutetia, and the English author shows sufficient interest in it to translate passages such as this in some detail. But even here he finds much to omit without loss to the poem: Evalak enquires once more who Josapha is, admires his learning, and asks if Tholowy will really prove victorious, a repetition of matter already included in the redaction on its first appearance.

(305/15-306/13.) The repetitive nature of the prose romance may be responsible for the imitations with which the redactor seems to have read it upon occasion. In the French the idols are destroyed by the writhings of an evil spirit exorcised by Josapha, but the English author makes the prophet himself break them to pieces with a stick. The change may be deliberate, but it has no obvious purpose, and similar instances suggest that the poet merely_TIMEOUT or misunderstood_TIMEOUT.
The episode closes with a passage which is virtually a repetition of what has just passed: Balaah questions a surviving idol as to whether Tholomey will defeat him, but the god knows nothing of the future and dare not speak before the Christians. Although this also stresses the weakness of the heathen deities before the disciples of Christ, it might have been expected that the redactor would omit it as he has other duplicate passages less superfluous in effect. Instead, however, he translates it more fully than many narrative sections in which the action is rapidly developed.

A new episode opens with the arrival of a messenger who announces that Tholomey is advancing with a large force, and the king assembles his army to oppose the invader. This is an essential part of the narrative and is retained by the poet in the same form as the original and at almost equal length: the details which he neglects are some of the preparations for war which could safely be left to the imagination of the reader. These preparations are awkwardly interrupted by a lengthy passage in which Josapha discloses Balaah’s early history, humble birth, and tortuous rise to power, which have been divinely revealed to him. This is a side-issue with little bearing on the story proper; yet it survives at full length in the English version, occupying space quite out of proportion to the general scale of the reduction.

The only justification for the inclusion of Balaah’s life-story in the moral which Josapha draws from it: that the king should remember his duty to God who raised him from humble origins. But the poet, having retained the narrative in unusual detail, omits the moral, despite its value in the didactic theme of the work. As always,
he seems to be more interested in events than in their significance, moral or otherwise.

(441-445 : 313/15-215/14.) It was clearly for the sake of the narrative that he retained what follows. Evalak asks for help against his enemies and Josephus shapes a cross of red cloth upon his shield. The making of this talisman is included in the English redaction since it figures prominently later in the story, but the original has been greatly reduced, not only by the economy with which such essentials are described but by the very summary treatment of passages having didactic rather than narrative importance. The king wishes to be told the meaning of the vision he has seen, and, in the French, Josephus replies at length, telling him that he can only understand when he abjures his idols and believes in God, but the poet avoids the issue with:

"When pat you comest a'jeyn, wilt you acnalt forsopre, pou mint have more redl roume my rixenye, to here!"

(ll. 443-44.)

The topic is not, however, revived again, even where it would be less likely to interrupt the action.

(315/15-216/16.) The action is further delayed by reiterated instructions from Josephus as to the circumstances under which Evalak may look to the cross for help, but, as the passage contributes nothing which was not implied in the previous one, the redactor omits it without loss.

(450-451 : 216/16-18.) The plot moves forward again as Evalak assembles his men, and the poet translates the useful narrative link without alteration.

(216/15-220/6.) The army advances to the castle of Evalachin, the description of which comprises three pages of Bucher's text. The contemporary male reader at least would find much to interest him in this, but it is quite incidental to the story and the poet loses nothing
vital by omitting it from his version. By neglecting the remainder of
the passage, however, he has deprived the narrative of something essential,
-an account of the first assault upon Tholomer—and made the sequel
difficult to understand.}

(452-457 : 220/4,22.) As a result of this indiscriminate omission there
is an awkward break in the sequence of the English:

he arayes his riche men and rintes hem awipe.
A non Tholomers men woxen Pe blygore;
Some beeren hem a-bac and broughten hem to grounde; [451-53]
The reader is told the outcome of the engagement before he knows that
it has begun. The next phase of the action is similarly muddled:

Tholomer purcasse Evallak and, in his absence, his tents are destroyed by
another enemy force, but the poet confuses the two bands and makes
Evallak responsible for the raid on the camp. The change may be deliberate,
but the erratic nature of the redaction throughout this section suggests
that it arose from a mistaken reading of the original.

(458-472 : 220/22-222/27.) The redactor's usual interest in the narration
of events appears to have waned momentarily, and he omits a long passage
full of movement and intrigue: A spy discovers that Evallak has taken
refuge and Tholomer sets out to attack him. The action, like many of the
minicourses in the war, is indeterminate, but its absence from the English
text deprives what follows of proper motivation.

(452-471 : 222/27-233/26.) Evallak receives a message from his queen
warning him of the impending attack. To a certain extent the redactor
takes this passage to fulfill the function of the one previously suppressed,
and, perhaps for that reason, he translates it with unusual care and
fullness. In part the French reads:

"Divancement ne dis pas que je m'assez al Chein?" "Sire,
dist li valles, di le se hier seir scouvoles? "Et nés-tu,
dist Evallach, qui les scouvoles li dist?" "Far foi, dist-il,
The English version is as close to literal translation as the poet comes at any time:

"Do you witeres hire of pie and no has hire kennel?"
he onawereth a-non: "Sire, I not foresope.

Bote pe two cristene men pat bydes ow at court,
In gret counsell han i-beo, I trouwe hit be para-boute;"

(11.400-09.)

The incident of the queen's message was obviously intended to give yet another demonstration of the Christians' powers of foresight, and to increase the respect which Evalak is beginning to feel for them. As the English rendition is more intimately concerned with Joseph and his son than the rambling Estoire, which includes so many other characters, the poet could not afford to ignore the episode, but he seems to have thought it superfluous to demonstrate the accuracy of the prophecy, either before or after the event. He accordingly omits a passage in which the escaping Evalak is told that Tholomer has begun a siege of the town he has just left.

(478-480; 22/15-22/7.) In his flight Evalak is met by reinforcements sent by his queen, under the command of her brother Seraph, and by letters beseeching still more troops. The reddactor has transposed two passages so that Seraph and his party appear as though in response to the king's message, and in the abbreviated form of the English, where a change of topic over two lines would make the sequence jerky and incoherent, the change might have been beneficial. But in translating the arrival of Seraph in quite unnecessary length he leaves the
contradictory instructions of the queen to her brother, as well as
details of personal relations between the two men which are quite
irrelevant even in the original. To compensate by omitting an inter-
mediate section in which the allies retire to a city and lay plans for
a new assault. Without this, and similar references omitted elsewhere,
the poem lacks any indication of the passage of time, and the whole war
appears to occupy only two or three days.

\[ \sigma \]

The strategy of war apparently did not interest
the English author: he opts to postpone the assault and wait
for the enemy to attack. In this instance the action of the war loses
nothing by the omission, though the suppression of a short narrative
link, in which Tholomer arrives to renew the battle, makes the situation,
when the poet takes up the story again, rather difficult to appreciate.

(420-431 : 227/20-228/4) As the redactor has eliminated the incidental
passages describing passage in the war and the marshalling of forces in
cities and castles, the English version reads as though it were one long
engagement, a new phase of which now begins. In this instance the absence
of any mention of Tholomer's attack makes it seem that the portion of
the narrative link translated by the poet refers to the initiation of a
fresh assault by Svalak and his supporters.

\[ \sigma \]

The battle begins with a preliminary
skirmish described in detail by the prose author, who adds a great deal
of miscellaneous information on the size of the two armies, the divisions
in which they are arranged, and the age and character of Tholomer. None
of this finds a place in Joseph of Arimathea though the poet might have
been expected to take an interest at least in the narrative of the
engagement. The pages which follow in his source contain, however, so
many descriptions of combat that to have included all of them would have unbalanced a narration in which other elements are so greatly abbreviated.

(432-517: 233/10-234/24 and 236/23-238/3.) After Svalak has exhorted his knights to do their best, the onslaught begins. The poet translates the battle-field oration in outline, but attributes it to Seraphel.

Though the change may be due to error on the part of some Sforza copyist, the fact that Seraphel is the central figure in the engagement which follows makes it probable that the redactor deliberately substituted his name, as a means of linking the episodes and avoiding an awkward transition in the shortened narrative. His treatment of the battle is even more independent. The French begins mildly with a brief general description of the two armies charging against each other, which in the English version becomes a long and very spirited account of Seraphel's personal prowess:

When Seraphel seyf Pat men, pel miȝte l-seo sone his polnache go and proude down pallede. In pe plissast prea he preuede his weyne, Breke braynes a-brod, brassehe burnes, Seer bale in his bon, bed nit a-boute. He nedde an naene vpon seyf mif a grete value, nied nit harde wip tale in his two hondes; So he frusacade nem wit, and fornde his strenghe, Pat luyte miȝte faren him fro, and to flujf tounden.

A few descriptive details and something of the spirit of this passage may have been derived from references to Seraphel's part in the hand-to-hand fighting which occur here and there throughout the second section indicated, but the English is by no means a translation of any individual passage in the prose version. The source dictated the necessity for a battle scene at this point, suggested the prominence of Seraphel, and the violence of the action.
but the poet himself is responsible for the descriptive features. The result is an extremely forceful and expressive piece of narration, and one of the very few passages in the poem which represent an original contribution on the part of the redactor. 

Apart from the suggestions which he may have derived from the descriptions of Seraph in action, the poet makes no use of the remainder of this episode. The material which he neglects has religious rather than military significance: Avalak, noting the efforts of Seraph in the field, prays Christ to protect him, and he is given such superior strength that his party is only defeated by force of numbers. Although in the histoire the main function of the war is to demonstrate the power of divine protection, and the English author is later forced to pay attention to this element (vide infra, (555-556 : 234/2-257/11.) he prefers, wherever possible, to omit it in favour of the military and practical aspects of the battle. But even the narration of action for its own sake cannot always hold his attention. More than five pages of Bucher's text are given to an adventure of Avalak's seneschal, who, attempting to kill Tholomar, is unhorsed in the midst of the enemy and rescued by Avalak. Of this lively narrative, full of incident and military detail, the poet makes two lines only:
Pe steward of Eualak in pe stour lafte, 
Lai streight on pe feld, striken to pe sorpe.
(11.518-19.)

They serve well enough as a conclusion to his own general description of the chaos of broken weapons, injured horses, dead and wounded knights, on the battle-field, but convey so little of the episode in the original that the poet may be regarded as having suppressed it altogether, in spite of its similarity to material for which he elsewhere shows a preference.

(320 r ) As though conscious that this sort of redaction, with its wholesale omissions and excessive abbreviation, is making nonsense of his original, the poet adds a single line:

Jos Eualac and Tholomer twain han e-seembles (1.320.)
which has no direct source in the French, but which is apparently intended to summarise the action of the war up to this point. It is too brief to be of much use in the poem, and occurs as an awkward interruption between two passages of narrative, without serving to link them or to mark a period in the development of the story.

(320 r ) The prose author returns to Seraph, whose supernatural strength continues to amaze the enemy. This is merely a duplication of material which the poet ignored in the context where it first appeared (vide supra, 1.234/24-236/15 and 238/5-239/21.), and he is sufficiently consistent to make no use of it here. But although the redactor has chosen to eliminate the element of the supernatural, with its theological implications, where it is connected with Seraph, he follows the French in making him the central figure in the conflict. Tholomer sends his brother Harutor to attack Seraph, who retreats with his followers to
a narrow pass and in hand-to-hand fighting kills Sarat. This is a straightforward narrative of action with no supernatural significance, and the poet translates it at some length, though without much of the descriptive detail which the original contains. His treatment of the source is extremely free; he places Sarapha's flight to the pass before Tholomere order for the attack, and is forced to add two lines of his own invention to explain the purpose of the retreat. It is this type of purposeless alteration which confuses even the simplest of the prose narratives, and robs the poem of any logical sequence of events or continuity of action.

\[ \text{248/15-250/17.} \] The omission of what follows has, however, no harmful effect. Sarapha meets and overcomes another opponent, in a passage which is virtually a repetition of his encounter with Sarat. Episodes of this sort occur so frequently throughout the battle scenes in the Histoire that where, as in this instance, they have no bearing on the basic plot, the poet can afford to economize by suppressing them.\[ \text{252/17-254/7.} \] The elimination of similar duplications helps to make an effective abbreviation of the main episodes. The prose romance is crowded with incidents: Sarapha is unhorsed and wounded, recovers and kills an opponent, is wounded again, recovers and looks for Svalak, finds him on the ground, helps him to mount, and is again separated from him by the enemy. From all this the redactor selects some details only: Sarapha is only once wounded, and, though he searches for Svalak on the field, he is prevented from reaching him by intervening enemy forces. But despite this process of selection and the omission of whole passages (251/15-252/10; 252/16-253/21, etc.) the various incidents follow each other so rapidly in the shortened poetic form that the transition
from one to another is abrupt and awkward. For example—

him would per-wip and semmet so sore,
pat ne was in swooninge and fel to pe groundes.
Some penne he startes vp and straithte to his nache,
Culles on mennes needes pat pei down lyen, (11.542-45.)

At this point begins the most important episode in the lengthy battle sequence, and the only one concerned with the theme of divine assistance in war which the English author has chosen to retain. Evalak is taken prisoner by Tholomer, and in this extremity turns to the cross made by Josaph as his shield, prays for help, and is rescued by the sudden appearance of a mysterious Mysterious Knight. Despite its special significance, the scene is dealt with more summarily than many less crucial incidents in the story; the events are only very briefly outlined, without the descriptive fullness of the French version, and there is a fundamental alteration in the content. In the original the White Knight leads Tholomer into Evalak’s camp and there strikes him to the ground, while in the alliterative poem, his capture is omitted and he is killed upon the spot. Tholomer makes some incidental appearances later in the French narrative before his death in prison (293/4-8), but he plays no further part in the plot. In disposing of him directly the poet may merely have wished to avoid those later references, or he may have hoped in this way to give added force to the idea of supernatural intervention on Evalak’s behalf.

(570-605 : 257/12-262/24.) This is the dominant theme so long as the White Knight remains on the scene; when Evalak returns to the battle he finds Josaph in difficiultie and both have to be rescued by the mysterious knight, who assists them in the fight until the enemy finally retreats. The English version is, as usual, a greatly abbreviated one, in
which whole incidents,--Svalak kills a knight and takes his horse for the dismounted Seraph.--find no place. But the passages which suggest the divine source of the assistance given to the two leaders are translated with some appearance of care. But even here there are the usual errors of detail: the White Knight arms Seraph with a new battle-axe--

"Tien, Sèraph, chou t'envoie li vrai crusadi, et quant il l'auruit prise, ai senti que ale estoit plus légière le cal que il avoit toute jour portée par gou sent-il bien que chou n' estoit pas la moit. (252/21-24,)

but the poet, failing to appreciate the significance of the weapon's unusual lightness, makes it--

...pre heulor bi fer ben he bi-foren hedde: (1,592,)

Towards the end of the section, in dealing with the retreat of Theolomer's forces, led by his steward, he abbreviates so excessively and so carelessly that it is impossible to understand his rendition without reference to the French source.

(262/25-264/5) By this point the redactor had apparently grown tired of the battle. Having compressed the account of the enemy's last stand to the point at which it becomes incomprehensible, he omits altogether the French description of the final slaughter and the fate of Theolomer's steward. As a result his narrative of the war tails away inconclusively, and a fresh topic is abruptly introduced.

(614-614: 254/20-256/21) The awkwardness of the transition is, however, less irritating than it might have proved had the poet merely continued to follow the sequence of the French. There the White Knight vanished after the battle and Svalak urges Seraph to return with him to court.

This omission gives the essential features of the narrative, though in a much more direct way than the leisurely prose, turning reported speech into dialogue, and ignoring descriptive details altogether. The treatment
of the passage is, however, less important than its placing at this point.

In the Histoire a complete episode at the court of Svalak intervenes, occupying some twenty pages of Bucher's text, and postponing the end of the war until long after it has ceased to be material to the plot.

By transposing the two passages the poet produces a much more satisfactory sequence of events, disposing of the White Knight as soon as his function is at an end, preparing for the return of Svalak and Josaphe to court, where they appear immediately after the interlude, and recalling the role played by the Christians who again become the central figures in the action. The result is one of the most successful transitions in the poem, and perhaps the best attempt by the redactor to remodel his source creatively and with a definite effect in view.

(515-516: 364/6-272/16.) The English author now returns to the sequence of the French, having prepared a suitable introduction for the scene that follows. In the court at Sarras, Josaphe discovers by conversation with the queen that she has already been converted to Christianity.

The episode has, of course, an integral connection with the unifying theme in the part of the Histoire utilised by the redactor,—the conversion of Svalak and his people,—and he translates it with some care. Throughout, the name 'Joseph' is substituted for 'Josaphe'; this may be an attempt to concentrate attention upon the better-known figure, the hero of the poem in so far as it has one, rather than upon his son, who, in the French, tends to usurp the leading role,—or it may be a simple error due to the similarity of the names. With this exception the English version follows closely the general outline of the French, and includes some rather ingenious details which might, perhaps, have been omitted; the queen's mother was converted by a hermit who cured her of a disease, and when the
queen is asked if she too will believe in Christ, she thinks that it is
the hermit who is referred to—

And I wrote water warm and wetted my wounded,
And said his part was her, I had not on him lesse

(11.647-48.)

But, although the poet has taken the trouble to include much incidents
of human interest, his translation gives only a portion of the matter in
his source. The abbreviation is achieved not only by the elimination
of all the minor narrative links:

Ut nihil qui aovos lui estolent si me prinsent sur la
main, si me monsent devant l'ermite, et quant jou foi
devant lui, si me dist addansen:............. Et li hom
hom souvens de riche de chou que jou avois dit de
lui, et il me dist:................... Et tantost come jou
oi chou dit, ai m: respondi li hermite:...........

(269-270.)

with which the prose is literally padded, but by omitting long sections
of didactic material, on the meaning of baptism (267/13-16.) and the life
of Christ (271/16-4.) Here, as elsewhere, the English author shows a
preference for the narration of events rather than for instructive
histories, even where the instruction is relevant to his subject.

(272/16-283/4.) But his interest in adventure for its own sake
is limited, and he is unusually very ready to omit anything which does not
serve a necessary function in the story. By far the greater part of the
queen’s narrative has left no trace in his reduction. It is a diffuse
and rambling story: her mother, when dying, sent her to the hermit with a
box in which he placed the Sacrament, and on her way back she put "un
horne qui tenait certain viescin de roues noir" (273/7-2.) she asked her
to return with him and bury the hermit she had since died; she did so
and her attendants were converted by the stranger. It is difficult to
see any significance in all this, and the redactor must probably ignored
it because he thought it could add nothing to the plot which is not
already implied by the first part of the queen's story. 

(565-617 : 263/6-264/20.) The relation of this long interlude to the main narrative is pointed by the incident with which it concludes: "Oui, monseigneur, je vous ai appris la vérité. Je vous ai dit que vous aviez trompé le roi et que vous aviez trompé le Christ. Personne ne vous condamnera pour ça. Si vous aviez été un vrai maître, vous auriez suivi le vin et le pain de votre pays, vous auriez été un vrai maître."

(269/5-10.)

With characteristic gravity the English author translates:

"Will hast thou let so longe bi lord bis lyf leden?"

(1.353.)

The queen's answer—that Ewalak is too head-strong to be converted by her—is included as a means of heightening Joseph's success in the matter shortly afterwards, but her anxiety for the king's safety and the prophet's reassurance are omitted.

(660-677 : 286/21-287/18.) This prepares the way for the final scene in Joseph of Arimathea, which, due to the rewriter's skilful rearrangement of episodes (vide supra, 606-614 : 264/20-265/21.) begins directly with the arrival of Ewalak and Sampoe from the battle-field. The king sends for the Christians and praises Joseph (here, again, the rewriter has substituted Joseph's name as a true prophet, explaining to Sampoe the course of the aid they had received in the war. The chief function of this passage in the French version is to inform Sampoe of Christian beliefs, in preparation for his conversion, but the English author, unwilling to repeat a process which he followed at length in the case of Ewalak, omits the didactic matter completely.

(678-681 : 288/10-291/3.) Sampoe's conversion is aided by two miracles which follow each other in quick succession: Christ is seen stretched upon the red cross of Ewalak's shield, and a man who has lost an arm is cured by touching it. This type of incident clearly appealed to the
redactor as an alternative to the homily previously omitted, and he briefly retails the miracle of healing, while, by selecting a line here and there, he avoids all mention of the vision of Christ associated with it—perhaps because a similar vision had already featured in his poem (vidas supram, 267-276 : 175/15-176/9.)

(682-699 : 291/3-294/16.) Seraph is now convinced and is baptised as a Christian, together with the newly-healed knight, king Evalak, and some thousands of his people. This is the climax of an important episode in the Estoire and the culminating scene of Joseph of Arimathia, but the French account is relatively brief, and the English author follows his usual practice in reducing it to still more slender proportions. The result is a concise outline of the original, retaining the essential facts, but omitting material which contributes to the didactic theme of the prose work rather than to the plot, Seraph's sermon to Evalak urging him to accept baptism also (492/15-493/8.) The confusion of names still persists: in the original the whole ceremony of baptism is conducted by Joseph, but in the English version Joseph baptises Seraph, Evalak and the wounded knight, while his son officiates for the populace. The function is obviously more in keeping with Joseph's office as bishop, but it is probable that, here as elsewhere, the alteration is accidental and has no significance in the scheme of the redaction.

(700-703 ; 294/17-27.) It is possible, however, that the confusion originated in the prose version. In Hucher's text Joseph leaves Serres to carry the faith elsewhere and Joseph remains behind to consecrate the heathen temples, but in the manuscript edited by Sommer it is Joseph (1) who leaves the city and Joseph who stays behind. The redactor apparently

1) Co., cit., p. 75.
used as 

The passage is a short narrative link, introducing the next in the long series of adventures which compose the French romance, but with which the English work does not deal. To all intents and purposes the poem is at an end, and the few lines which follow 1,699 detract from, rather than add to, the general effect.

(703-707 : III,167/26-159/25.) At this point the redactor inserts a summary, in four lines, of an incident which occurs very much later in the 

It is one of the many adventures of Vulak (now known by his baptismal name of Bonrains) who rescues Joseph and his son from imprisonment by the king of Bourgas. The insertion is interesting for the light it throws on the poet’s methods and his intentions in making the redaction, but, as the reader is to hear nothing further of the incident, the account is both unsatisfactory in itself and most awkwardly placed.

(708-709 : II,4/27-295/6.) It interrupts the narrative of the Christians’ preparations for their departure from Sarnez, which the redactor, unusually, has chosen to include. Although the lines concern the safe-keeping of the Holy Grail, they are relevant to future action rather than to the episode contained in the English work, and they end the poem lamely and inconclusively:

Sipen pel bi-taujten pe blod twel burnis to halden, And pel lenden of pe town and Laura hit pere.

(II,709-9.)

There is nothing to suggest that the manuscript of Joseph of Arimathie is incomplete, and there can be little doubt that the poet deliberately ended his redaction at this point. Though the conversion.

1) H.B.: The reference here is to the third volume of Huchan’s edition.
2) See H.B. Skant, op. cit., p. 66.
of Svalak and Joseph is only the first of many missions undertaken by Joseph and his son, it has a certain unity as a separate incident. Even the abbreviated version contains details which link it with later episodes in the *Histoire*, but it is complete in itself at the point where the redbend ends. It may well be, however, that the incident was not originally selected as the only one to be transmitted, and that the decision to go no further with the work was made abruptly at this point.

The indecisive way in which the poem ends, and the inclusion of details which belong properly to the next episode, suggest some hesitation on the part of the poet. His rather pointless reference in 11,704-7 to a much later part of the story may indicate that, growing tired of his project, he leaped through the *French* manuscript and noted the future adventures of Joseph and Josephine, but decided to go no further with the redbend.

At the point where he broke off, the English poet had made use of something between a quarter and a third of the *Histoire* de Saint Ursul. The fact that he stopped at a moment when Joseph and his son (1) pass out of the story for some hundreds of pages, may explain why he lost interest in the prose narrative, since his reference to their later adventures makes it clear that his chief concern was with them rather than with their converts. But although the characters whose biblical associations make them of major importance are absent through much of the remainder, the French narrative continues as before, unaltered in the nature of its contents or the manner of its story-telling. As in the earlier scenes, the incidents follow each other rapidly, loosely strung together, and, at the best, very vaguely linked to the general theme.

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Nordreins(formerly Evalah)is snatched away from his kingdom by the Holy Ghost, and isolated on a rock in the ocean, where he is successively comforted by a handsome man in a boat bearing the red cross upon its mast, and tempted by a beautiful woman in a black-called ship, the one representing his new faith, the other his old one. Esopha, now known as Cubanis, in similarly carried off, but after many adventures, wandering about the sea on mysterious, unmanned ships, he encounters Nordreins and they return together to Erranos. Cubanis, however, sets out again to search for his son, Calideins, who is looking for his father has also been isolated on an island. The story returns abruptly to the head of Christians, who, under Joseph's leadership, cross the ocean on Joseph's ship, in order to spread the faith in Britain, where Cubanis later joins them. There follows a long series of incidents associated with Joseph and his son, sometimes together, at others individually,—their conversion of pagan kings, the birth of Galahad, their imprisonment by the king of Borgales and the arrival of Nordreins to the rescue, the baptism of an invading horde of Saracens. After numerous adventures and the passage of many years, the narrative ends with the crowning of Galahad as king of Wales, the forstelling of events concerning his famous descendants, and the deaths of Joseph and Josephus.

A summary about, however, gives any adequate impression of the 'Mateja del Saoit Uriel since it is not a clear-cut, straightforward narrative, but rather an extended series of incidents whose association in the work is largely fortuitous. The main concern of the author is with Joseph, Josephus and their first converts from paganism, but on the slightest excuse he turns aside to quite unrelated events—sacraments searching for Cubanis are shipwrecked on an island where they discover
the ruined palace and tomb of Hippocrates, whose life history, rise to
fame by healing Augustus Caesar's nephew, disgrace in an adventure with
a lady, departure for Galilee to visit Christ, revival of the son of a
Persian king, relieved from marriage to a princess, and death by poisoning
at her hands, occupies almost fifty pages in Suchet's text. The romance
unfolds like a Chinese puzzle, each incident containing another within it.
The interpolated material which so frequently interrupts the main action
is either, as in this instance, a narrative of adventure told for its own
sake, or the homiletic treatment of religious topics, paraphrases of
biblical matter, with an obvious didactic intent: the story of Adam and
Eve and the tree of life, the birth of their children, and the murder of
Abel by Cain, only vaguely connected with the story proper, fills some
thirteen pages, while the moral of Pompey's downfall as the result of
having stabled his horses in the temple at Jerusalem accounts for a
further fourteen.

The numerous interpolations of this sort are irrelevant
only in that they have little or no bearing upon the main thread of the
narrative and do not concern the chief characters in the action. But,
far from being extraneous, they typify the two elements which, singly and
in combination, underlie the very diverse components of the plot through-
out: the Histoire del Saint Grail: adventures, largely, though not exclusively,
of a military nature, or dealing with characters who represent the feudal
chiefs of contemporary society; and religious matter, varied in type, but
with a common expository or didactic intent. This conjunction of
apparently disparate themes is not confined to the Histoire alone, but

constitutes the distinctive characteristic of the Vulgate Cycle and the Grail romances as a whole. In every case the basic elements are those of the normal romance: "Les traditions héroïques y subsistent avec leurs principaux caractères, sans en exclure ce serait inutile que servent cyniquement les héroes de Chrétien," though in the later courtly love is noticeably absent, and it is the secondary figures, rather than Joseph and his son, who represent the aristocratic heroes of the roman courtien. "Thus le grand courant religieux et mystique du XIIIe siècle est venu balayer ces minces et leur assigner de strictes limites, et voici que s'oppose aux pernicieuses indulgences de la morale courtoise l'asymétrie garante de la foi. Allégories mystiques, pieux symboles maintiennent partout présente la pensée du Seigneur; les exploits chevaleresques ne se justifient qu'avec un idéal religieux et moral; l'objet de la chevalerie c'est la défense de sainte Eulalie, la protection des faibles et des opprimés; le chevalier vaudra par ses vertus chrétiennes, car 'riens ne fait le grand seigneur.'" There can be little doubt that this association of chivalry with religion was deliberately designed to glorify knighthood by demonstrating its virtues in an important field not previously exploited by the romances, and that it was approved by the aristocratic taste of the audience.

3) Ibid., p.111.  
4) Ibid., p.115 et seq.  
5) "...les magnifiques manuscrites cycliques du Lancelot-Grail, datées du XIIe et du XIVe siècle, nous ont été transmises avec l'ensemble de la tradition manuscrite des romans du Grail, par les bibliothèques des Grands Seigneurs, et non par celles des moines..." (Ibid., p.205.)
The Etoura, in comparison with other branches of the Vulgate Cycle, does not demonstrate the full degree of this synthesis. The sacred associations of Joseph of Arimathae and Joseph's holy office make it impossible for the leading characters to take the field as armed knights in defence of the faith, though they skirmish with the pagans upon occasion. But the role played by such a spiritual champion as the White Knight links the romance with the tradition which produced Galahad ("Le Messie de la chevalerie mystique, 'zealstaub'") and the other knights of the Grail. The same tradition is reflected in the freedom with which the adventures of Lancelot and Orfeiuno, knights errant after their conversion, are interwoven with religious matter in didactic form, with lengthy interpretations of mystic allegories, and detailed analyses of sacred symbols. But here a secondary influence is involved, of major importance in the period and not confined to the Grail romances alone. "Le XIIIe, plus encore que le XIIe, est l'Age du symbole. Mais ce trait qui convainc n'aurait pas son instinctivement, ou en aucun

1er expression, on le convainc..." "Dans la littérature polémique s'introduit ainsi un style pseudo-apocalyptique, et, dans le roman et les ouvrages édifiants, une allegorie systématique, incluant en propre

The Etoura, more, perhaps, than any other part of the Vulgate Cycle, displays the contemporary love of exposition, the pleasure taken in explaining the most obvious symbolism and in repeating the most familiar biblical episodes, with a freedom—made possible by the prose


medium, which is responsible for the great length of the work.

This intermixture of the two elements of religious exposition and adventure narrative constitutes, therefore, the chief characteristic of the French work on which the alliterative poet chose to base his composition. His treatment of these two elements indicates more clearly than anything else what it was that attracted him in the récit, what his intentions were in making the rendition, and for what sort of audience he believed himself to be working. The fact that narrative incident and religious homily are not perfectly integrated in his source allows the poet to discriminate between them in selecting the material for his greatly abbreviated version. Since much of the religious matter is merely a commentary upon, or an explanation of, details in the plot, it has, for practical reasons, less claim upon the reader's attention than narrative which advances the action. His omission of the récit's explanation of the crucifixion symbol (175/3-18), the sermon on the significance of holy water (101/2-102/11), the excessively detailed symbolic interpretation of the episcopal robes (185/18-191/15), and the instructions to Joseph on the celebration of Holy Mass (192/2-195/21) can be explained on grounds of economy.

But even where the religious element has a practical function to play, notably in preparing for the conversion of Evalde, the poet readily omits much which might be considered vital to his rendition. So, although he patiently translates the first half of Joseph's sermon on the life of Christ (72-101: 135/2-136/13), he breaks off abruptly.

1) Author (op. cit., p. 135) comments on the relation between the press medium and the development of symbolism: "Mais tride, les auteurs deviennent plus prolifiques, mais aussi plus subtils, cultivent le symbol complexe et le sous-symbol."
leaving some pages of identical material unused (139/14-140/12.)

His treatment of Ebalak's vision (175-184: 155/11-156/14 and 187-211: 156/11-162/17.) is only a partial one, and the pages which are omitted (156/15-158/11.) deprive the incident of much of its significance.

The poet himself seems to have been conscious that his version was obscure and he attempts to replace the missing material by inserting, on his own initiative, a direct explanation of the vision (185-186: ).

There is, however, no similar attempt to clarify the theological argument by which Joseph seeks to convince the king, much of which is omitted altogether (145/10-151/11.) and the remainder (137-150: 151/12-152/3.) so garbled as to lose much of its meaning. The inadequacy of the translation here, as elsewhere, suggests that the English author's attention is not closely engaged, that he has read the didactic passages in the original with so little interest as to be incapable of making effective use of the material which he nonetheless feels obliged to incorporate in his redaction.

Even where religious matter has been integrated with a narrative of adventures, some of these essential to the story proper, others merely incidental to it but interesting in themselves, he omits both elements together. He makes no use, for example, of the cautionary tale concerning the bishop's throne on which a pagan king tried to sit (163/15-164/12.), or of the divine instructions for the guidance of Joseph and his followers (266/14-167/9.). Or, again, he may retain an interesting story but ignore the loosely associated with it, giving Ebalak's early life-history (401-440: 107/25-213/12.) but omitting the moral which Joseph draws from it (212/12-211/12.), making one of the pages which describe Semepha in action on the battle-field
(496-517: 236/15-238/3.) but ignoring the prayers which are offered on
his behalf (34/24-236/15 and 238/3-239/21.).

In general, then, the redactor favours narrative incident at
the expense of the religious and didactic elements in his source. But
his attitude is not consistent; Joseph's prayer for help in converting
Aquak is, unexpectedly, retained at length (212-219: 162/16-166/16.) and
in a version which concentrates on the biblical precedents cited by
Joseph rather than on the practical plan for assistance. And again, an
episode of religious significance, demonstrating the fallibility of
heathen gods, is duplicated unnecessarily and in considerable detail
(307-402: 206/13-207/24.), despite the economy reflected in the general
conduct of the redaction.

On the other hand economy is occasionally, though more rarely,
effected by the neglect of narrative incident. The long account of her
past given by Aquak's queen is only touched upon in the English version
(615-662: 264/8-272/16.) and the greater part of her history is ignored
(272/16-283/4.), though there seems no reasonable explanation
for this discrimination, other than a lack of interest on the part of the
poet. A similar lack of interest is presumably responsible for the
reduction of a long, lively incident in the battle to a couple of lines
in the English poem (518-519: 239/21-244/16.) and for the complete
omission of another military adventure involving one of the chief
characters in the story (245/19-250/17.).

This, again, is in direct contrast to the poet's obvious
interest in the description of combat; an interest which is responsible
for the most original passage in the poem (11.496-517), one which, though
it fulfills the same function as its French counterpart, shows an
independence in descriptive detail which is as close as the poet ever comes to creative composition.

perse weore stedes to strulen, stoures to medlen,
Meeten mistful men, saelen porw scaeldes,
Harde hauberke to-borsten and pe breast purleden,
Sanon seneve vpon, schaft schalkene blode.
po pat nouen vpon hors heowen on helmes.
po pat hulden hem on fote hakken porw scoldres.
Mony swoufninge lay porw schindringes of scharpe,
And starf aftur pe dep in a schort while.
Per weoren nedes vn-hueld, helmes vponaunset;
Harde scaeldes to-clouen, on quarters fellen,
Slen hors and mon holliche at enes.

(11.507-17.)

This is almost the only instance in the whole work where the alliterative medium is used with real effect and the verse momentarily takes on the quality of poetry. The choice of medium, the decision to translate French prose into English verse, probably owed little or nothing to poetic feeling, or a sense of poetic ability in the redactor, but to considerations of native taste and literary fashion. When Joseph of Arimathie was translated in the mid-fourteenth century, the taste for romances composed or recast in prose, already widespread in France, had not yet begun to influence English literature. In choosing an alliterative verse form the first Midland poet was merely following the dominant literary practice of his dialect area. Whether or not the choice was a wise one is doubtful. Most of the topics with which the Entoire is concerned are not well suited to the alliterative line, and the best that can be said for the English verse is that it conveys the meaning of the original adequately, except in a few passages where excessive compression has caused obscurities, and that it is less distorted by the demands of alliteration than some of the contemporary poetry in the same medium.

The positive virtues of alliterative verse — forceful rhythm
and the reiterated crash of linked syllables appear in this short
description of combat, and, to a lesser extent, in a few scattered lines
on the same type of scene. If the quality of the verse as well as the
originality of the reduction at this point indicates a personal interest
on the part of the poet, then it is obvious that his interest is extremely
limited in range. It is confined to active scenes of battle and does
not extend to associated topics, such as the strategy of war; passages
dealing with this are omitted to a degree which occasionally confuses
the sequence of events in the English version. And even within these
narrow limits the interest is not consistently maintained; within the
portion of the Histoire covered by the English reduction many similar
passages are skimped in translation or omitted altogether, and some of
the later, unutilised episodes in the prose might have been expected to
appeal particularly to the poet on this ground. But such inconsistency
is typical of the reduction as a whole. It is possible to detect a
general principle of selection and rejection, one which favours the
narrative at the expense of the didactic element in the Histoire, but
the principle is not adhered to in any thorough-going way. Some of the
homiletic and religious passages are retained at the expense of narrative
incident, even to the injury of the story outline in the English version.

The inconsistency which characterises the content of the
poem is also apparent in the manner in which the reduction is carried out.
Just as the poet failed to follow any clear-cut policy in separating

1) A further description of Seraph's action, I.5, 3-4, and some individu-
alar lines in the scene between him and the White Knight, I.584-600,
show something of the same spirit.

2) For example: (I.216/16-220/6), (I.220/22-223/27),
(I.227/2-20) and (I.262/25-264/5).
narrative from homily, so he apparently lacked any concrete guiding principles for the conduct of the redaction. His sole resolve seems to have been that his version should be a radical abbreviation of the prose. But his methods of abbreviation are often haphazard and erratic.

It must be admitted that as a subject for abbreviation the Estoire del Saint Graal presents many difficulties. No straightforward story-line emerges from the episodic romance in its slow-moving, discursive prose form. At times the poet appears to be trying to carve out a narrative sequence of his own by a very liberal adaptation, but he is repeatedly tempted to include irrelevant incidents which distract from the main thread of the narrative and confuse the reader no less than his readers. Yet the evidence of his efforts to carry out his artistic function conscientiously is too obvious to be dismissed as unplanned or accidental. His attempts to adapt the narrative sequence in keeping with the greatly reduced scale of his poem, by transposing and rearranging passages over a wide area, must have been deliberately conceived with a particular effect in view. These structural alterations are, in general, designed to tighten and strengthen the plot, by bringing together incidents which are interdependent, and displacing or eliminating matter which, in the original, constitutes a deviation or interruption. Where the redactor is fully in control of his material the result is often a decided improvement upon the French version; the sequence from 1.313 to 1.323, involving the combination of two passages widely separated in the prose text, (313-315 : 180/14-181/2) and (315-323 : 168/25-169/13), and the removal of didactic material which is an unnecessary interruption in the new sequence, ( : 181/2-182/11), is a case in point. But his

1) Similarly, the passage 11.281-312 involves a complex combination of
attempts at large-scale rearrangement of the sequence of episodes are not always successful: in 11.472-88, for example, the sound idea of illustrating the motivation of an event by associating it closely with related events is spoilt by the retention of contradictory material, which might easily have been omitted.

In some instances the transposition of passages is so clumsy and results in so much middle as to suggest that the particular alteration is not intentional but accidental. Such confusions may indicate that the poet often read his source in lengthy extracts, and, in retelling the passage without further reference to the French text, 'seriously' augmented the sequence of events. This occasionally results in an improved grouping of incidents within the immediate context, but often spoils the total effect by neglecting or dismissing a detail essential to what follows. This type of independent redaction, without close and constant reference to the original, may also be responsible for the numerous factual errors in the English version, ranging from the confusion of 'Joseph' and 'Josaphe' (11.668-77 and passim), and the substitution of one character for another (11.492-517), to minor changes in the story itself (11.362-56). If, as some of the variants between the redaction and its original suggest, for example, 11.26-37 and 11.52-56, the poet's knowledge of French was imperfect, the frequency of such errors is all the more understandable.

(Cont.) widely separated sections, displacement of others and omission of whole pages in the original, while 11.38-56 bring together several divine commands given in two distinct visions awkwardly divided from each other in the *Étoiles*. Other successful rearrangements include 11.295-38 and 11.698-14.

1) A similar failure is represented by 11.75-104.
2) See, for example, 11.7-11 and 11.12-20.
3) Our ignorance of the precise form of the *Étoiles* used by the English...
The major alterations in the narrative outline indicate a somewhat cavalier attitude on the part of the redactor towards his source, just as the minor errors suggest a rather cursory reading and a lack of attention to detail. Both show, however, that the English author, whatever his shortcomings, was not content to borrow subserviently from the French, translating faithfully line by line, but approached his material independently, with the intention of reshaping and moulding it to his own ends. He is clearly quite uninhibited by anything connected with the original, the reputation of the author or the fame of the work, if, indeed, he was aware of either. Independence is reflected in the freedom with which he applies his various methods of reduction throughout.

The minor methods of procedure, like the major, are largely designed to compress the expansive prose narrative into some eight hundred alliterative long lines. The policy of abbreviation, as distinct from rearrangement, takes several forms and is applied with varying degree of success. The omission of whole scenes and episodes, quite apart from general discrimination between the two basic elements in the Estoire and the elimination of material to facilitate the regrouping of episodes, accounts for much of the difference in bulk between the French and English versions. The readiness of the audience for whom the Vulgate Cycle was compiled to accept interpolated incidents, however loosely connected with the main narrative, provided ample opportunity for this sort of excision. So the poet could omit the excurses on the punishment of Caiaphas (I:116/8-119/9), the description of the building of the ark for the Grail (I:127/23-128/11), and the incident through

(Cont.) Author makes it impossible to be certain that many of the apparent errors originated with him, but the consensus of evidence is sufficient to support a general charge of carelessness in the conduct of the redaction.
which Trespasser's conversion to Christianity is revealed (p. 171/28-173/3), without harming the essential fabric of the story. Here and there, however, essential incidents are passed over in the attempt to cut down the scale of the narrative. Failure to mention the Grail in a vision of the crucifixion (p. 176/3-177/1), for example, robs the whole scene of its point and weakens the significance of other details faithfully included.

The process of elimination employed on a smaller scale to separate important from non-essential details within individual scenes, though equally well-intentioned, is all too often unfortunate in result. The opening lines of the reduction (11.1-6) provide a good example of the poet carefully at work, selecting only those items of fact and descriptive detail which are vital to the understanding of the story. Elsewhere he is less meticulous and the reduction suffers through the omission of essentials: even such a slight slip as the failure to name Avalak when he first appears (11.37-44) causes confusion in the English version, while, more seriously, the absence of the details which explain the revolt of his barons reacts adversely upon much that follows.

The injury done to the meaning of the poem by excessive abbreviation is aggravated rather than counteracted by the retention of details or incidents which are unimportant or even meaningless in their context. The warning to Joseph and his followers not to return to Jerusalem (11.21-25) loses most of its significance by omission of the purpose behind it, while the carefully translated passage on the engendering of Galahad (11.230-33) could only be significant in a reduction which covered the entire poem as a whole. These and similar survivals represent topics in the original which attracted the redactor's interest for
reasons other than their function in the narrative, or which he included
carelessly through oversight and without a function purpose in view. They
provide further examples of that inconsistency which is evident throughout
the redaction.

In this respect the expression and style of translation
employed are one with the rest of the work. There is an obvious effort
on the part of the poet to economize even in the phrasing of his English
version, by compressing description, stating facts directly, and pruning
all repetitive material severely. The wordiness of the French prose
offers ample opportunity for such economy in expression, and in many
passages the narrative gains greatly as a result. But with his usual
inconsistency the redactor all too often falls into an almost literal,
line by line translation of the French, largely unaffected by the restraint
in expression usually exercised by the alliterative line. Then, apparently
becoming aware of too great a dependence upon the original, or bored by
the duties of a translator, he returns abruptly to a free and sketchy
paraphrase of the prose. The result is an odd jumble of styles, ranging
from inflated passages which almost equal the loquacity of the French,
to rapid transitions abbreviated to the point of incoherence. The erratic
effect is increased by the fact that the expression is quite unrelated
to the importance of the matter dealt with: an essential feature may be
skipped in translation, while an incident which might without harm have
been omitted altogether is faithfully and fully rendered.

This irrational style, changing by fits and starts without
apparent reason, typifies the redaction as a whole: the matter, like the

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1) See, for example, 11.65–74, 11.105–126, 11.160–174, and 11.257–266.
2) See, for example, 11.75–102, 11.357–402, 11.403–430, and 11.438–471.
expression, in inconsistently handled and to a large extent uncontrolled. Yet clearly the poet was not content to accept the material of the Etoire uncritically, and the evidence of his attempts to control and reshape it is apparent from even the most summary comparison of the two versions. The faults of Joseph of Arimathea spring from his failure to carry his policy of radical abbreviation into effect throughout the work, and to a more or less uniform degree within it. "The matter is so loosely and episodically assembled that the romance has little formal unity"—a failing which is partly inherent in the original, but which is aggravated by varied and unsustained attempts to shape a clear story-line from a wealth of incident, inconsistency in separating the two basic elements in the Etoire from each other, an uneven and erratic conduct of the narrative and an equally uncontrolled and jerky style.

This lack of consistency and control, the fundamental failing of the reduction, is much less obvious in reading the poem alone than in comparing it closely with the Etoire del Saint Graal, when the possibilities of success for the poet's principle of abbreviation are more evident and the extent of his failure is, therefore, more apparent. Some readers of the poem consequently find "compensation for this fault of structure in the author's successful communication of his imaginative apprehension of his subject". "The battle pieces evince extraordinary power; they are delineated with inconic vigor, with realistic detail, in phrasing often strikingly suggestive and picturesque. The poet wrote them with his imagination active, and with his ears ringing with Biblical accounts of warfare rather than with the narrative of the romances." The battle

passages apart—and they are more limited than Wells seems to suggest—there is little in the reduction to indicate that the poet's imagination was actively excited by his subject, and even in the mass of combat it may have been the opportunity to use the alliterative line effectively which caused him to originality rather than biblical fervour, since he discriminated against the religious element throughout his rewriting of the Astoire. He was certainly not content to be a book translator, but, even by the standards which can properly be applied to the seven medieval rehandling of other men's material, his work on the Astoire could scarcely be regarded as a creative process, involving imaginative interpretation or recreation of the original. At the best he is an original artist in intention only, a craftsman by fits and starts, and a poet still more apocryphally.

The originality of his approach to the French source indicates more clearly than anything else his intention in making the reduction and the sort of audience for whom he proposed to cater. Much of the attention paid to Joseph of Arimathea by literary historians is due to the fact that in it the Grail makes its first appearance in Middle English literature, much earlier than in any of the other versions now surviving. Yet the poem as it stands is scarcely a Grail story at all; the Grail itself figures only incidentally in the narrative, several of the most important references to it are omitted, and there is nothing whatsoever to suggest that the poet appreciated its significance. Had

he been interested in the Grail legend, or attracted to the Latioire as the source of material which he knew to have a particular appeal for his audience, he could surely have completed the redaction, or at least continued it as far as the British scenes with their peculiar religious significance for native readers. If the Grail had been the real subject of his interest or theirs his abbreviation would have been designed to follow the thread of the narrative in which it is directly concerned, neglecting the adventures of Svalak and Saraph, but covering the whole scope of the Latioire and, in particular, the later scenes upon the conversion of Britain.

Even though the redactor may have begun with the intention of giving such a complete version of the Latioire, his interest apparently waned as he read further in his source. The evidence clearly points to a breaking-off at a convenient point in the story, rather than to the deliberate preselection of a self-contained episode. And even within the chosen section the neglect of certain elements suggests that the poet either did not understand, or did not expect his audience to appreciate the distinctive mingling of apparently disparate features which characterize the Latioire dei Saint Grail and the Grail romances as a whole. Though, as always, his treatment is not clear-cut, he tends in the main to omit the religious and didactic element, whose close association with the normal romance context proved so attractive to French readers of the Thirteenth century.

It is, in the main, the narrative element which survives in Joseph of Arimatea, providing for English readers of the Fourteenth century, not a Grail romance, but an adventure story, in which the incidents are to be accepted for their own interest rather than on
account of their religious significance. Admittedly it is an adventure romance of a distinctive type, involving scenes and characters not normally favoured by the contemporary English audience, but for those accustomed to read Saints' lives there would be nothing unsuitable in the appearance of Joseph of Arimathea in such an entertaining context. And the poet has taken care to accentuate the normal romance elements in his tale by giving as much attention as possible to the military adventures of Avalak and Sarapha, whose prowess as knights was, for him at least, one of the most attractive features of the original.

As it stands then, the alliterative poem is unconventional only in that it ignores the real subject, the essential interest of the work on which it is based. Within the restrictions placed upon him by his source matter the poet has tried to shape a brief narrative of adventure, emphasising the features usually demanded by the contemporary English audience, and eliminating the elements which are most characteristic of the Grail romances, and therefore, at this period, specifically French. He has used the *Estoire del Saint Graal* as a mine from which to quarry an episode which attracted him, ignoring the larger implications of the theme and the dominant character of the work. Unless he had before him some form of the French source very different from the relatively uniform version found in so many surviving MSS., he can be accounted responsible for the distinctive nature of the redaction and the individual form taken by the English poem. His treatment of that source reveals a highly independent and personal approach to a French original, designed to satisfy very different tastes and based upon very different literary criteria.
CHAPTER V

GOLAGUS AND GAWAIN

Amongst the later productions of the alliterative revival, Gogarbus and Gawain is generally dated 1450-1500, and assigned on internal evidence to Scotland. No manuscript of the poem is known and a single copy has survived by chance in a unique collection of tracts printed at Edinburgh in 1508 by Walter Chappan and Andrew Millar. The alliterative poem, one of the few un-antilated pieces in the volume, is complete, apart from a few single verses dropped by the printers, in 1362 lines, grouped in elaborately rhymed stanzas of 13 lines each. It early attracted the attention of Scottish antiquarians and there have been six modern editions.

Various attempts have been made to assign the work to a specific Scottish poet. They rest upon two brief poetic references,

2) The Chappan and Millar Prints, which are now in the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, are fully described in Dickson and Edmond's Annals of Scottish Printing, Cambridge, 1890, pp. 49-53.
which seem, however, to be conflicting. Andrew of Wyntoun, in his
Cronicle, compiled c. 1420, refers to a certain Mabchown of the
Awle Ryale, who, he says:

......said the greit Gest of Arthure
And the Anteris of Gawane, (1)
The Epistile als of Suete Susane.

But Dunbar in his Lament for the Nekarirs, written some hundred years
later, complains of the ravages of death amongst the Scottish poets:

Clerk of Tranent sik he hem tane,
That said the Anteris of Gawane, (2)

These passages imply two authors, a century apart, for a work whose
title strongly suggests such a poem as Golagrus and Gawain. A possible
solution may be that one of the references is to the alliterative
Awntyr af Arthure, a Northern poem which, despite its title is mainly
concerned with Gawain. But many years of research have revealed nothing
more about Mabchown and Clerk of Tranent than the details given by
Wyntoun and Dunbar, and since it is impossible to say which, if either,
... wrote Golagrus and Gawain, the controversy can add nothing of value to
the study of the poem.

(Cont.) Sir F. Madden, Sirr Gawane, Bannatyne Club, London, 1839; K. Trautmann,
in Anglia, III, Halle, 1879, pp. 395-440; F. J. Amours, Scottish Alliterative
Poems in Bimin, Stanes, S.T.S., Vols. 27, 38, Edinburgh, 1892-97;
C. Stevenson, Poems from the Makuloch and the Glass MSS, together with

1) F. J. Amours, ed. The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun, 6 vols.,
3) On Mabchown see O. Neilsen, Mabchowne of the Awle Ryale, Glasgow, 1902.
   For a survey of the bulky literature on the "Mabchown controversy" in
   its bearing upon the alliterative poems see F. J. Ketrick, The Relation
   of 'Golagrus and Gawain' to the Old French 'Parceval', (Catholic
   University of America Dissertation), Washington, D.C., 1931, pp. 17-27,
   and for a more recent survey, Kerrick and Ortorn, pp. 405-12. Ketrick
   was inclined to assign Golagrus and Gawain to Clerk of Tranent, though
   admitting (op. cit., p. 27): "All deductions, it is true, which are made
   from the minute evidence at hand must necessarily be highly conjectural."
Scottish patriotism may well have influenced the opinions
of early commentators as to the source as well as the authorship of
the work. Sir Walter Scott, failing to find any apparent French original
for this or for the *Aventura seu Arthure*, decided that they were both
"compiled by Scottish authors from the Celtic traditions which still
(1)
float among their countrymen" while he imagined it as
"entitled to claim the praise of an original composition." But in his
edition of 1839 Sir Frederick Madden declared (op. cit., p. 338): "The plain
fact is this, that the author of *Colacrus and Gawain* has borrowed the
entire outline of his romance from the French *Roman de Perceval*. He
had compared the alliterative poem with an early printed text of the
(2)
French romance in a prose recension, available to him in the British
Museum, and found that it demonstrated "the close imitation of the
Scottish writer and the fallacy of believing in 'floating celtic
(3)
traditions.'"

Later commentators, far from detecting "close imitation",
were puzzled by the relatively vague parallel which they detected between
*Colacrus and Gawain* and the *Roman de Perceval*, and found it difficult to
define the relationship between the two works. "Hat nun der *Perceval*
selber den dichter von *Colacrus and Gawain* als vorlage gedient, oder ist
Christien nur mittelbar von ihm benutzt worden? Da GO trotz handgezäpf-
licher Übereinstimmungen doch auch vielfach von dem französischen
gedichte abweicht, so möchte man geneigt sein, die zweite Frage zu bejahen.

1) See his edition of *Sir Tristan*, Edinburgh, 1804, p. lvi.
2) *Tresnaissance et Recreative Hystoire du Perceval la gailois....*
Aber welches auch die unmittelbare quelle des dichters von 30 war, es ist gewiss, dass er sich freihheiten mit ihr genommen hat? Apart from those who accepted Madden's identification of the Roman de Perceval as the immediate source without further inquiry into the nature of the
redaction, most scholars adopted one of two attitudes to the problem: they either agreed that Colagrus and Gawain is only indirectly related to the French romance, or rejected a written source of any kind and fell back upon the theory of floating Celtic traditions equally available to both the French and the Scottish author. Amongst the former Köting declared: "Mittelbare quelle des gedichter ist umstandlich der
(3)
Perceval desCreation von Troyes? Miss Jessie Weston, on the other hand, although admitting an obvious association between the Perceval
(4)
and Colagrus and Gawain, maintained that, in common with the other Scottish poems upon Gawain, the alliterative work was based on a more primitive form of the incant source from which the French romance
(5)
derived. "That the reverse cannot be the case, and the English romances
be drawn, as has been suggested for certain individual examples, from
(6)
the Perceval is, I think, certain.

Those conflicting opinions as to the origin of Goliad and Gawain are contrary to the normal process of source-investigation in Middle English scholarship, where the first tentative identification of an original is progressively confirmed or corrected by later research.

The confusion in this case persisted until the publication in 1931 of F.J. Ketrick's definitive work on the problem. His researches explained the wide disparity of opinion amongst those who had previously studied the relations between the English and the French manuscripts, ranging from the "close imitation" of Hadden, through the indirect relationship suggested by Trautman and Körtig, to the independent evolution postulated by Miss Weston. The views of those who had done any original work upon the problem had, in his opinion (op. cit., pp. 11-12.), been conditioned by the forms of the Percouval text known to them, the disparity of their conclusions reflecting the considerable variations between the versions then available. His own study was based upon all known texts, printed and in manuscript, and aimed at deciding conclusively whether or not Goliad and Gawain derived from the Homan de Percouval, and if so, which of the surviving forms best represents its original source. His comprehensive and detailed comparison of the alliterative poem with the Percouval text "proves beyond question, we are now convinced,


2) Apart from Hadden, who knew the printed prose text of 1530 (vide supra, p. 10) and Miss Weston, who had access to a majority of or all of the 42 manuscripts, the Percouval was known to earlier scholars only in Charles Potvin's edition (Percouval le Galois ou le Conte du Grail, 7 vols., Paris, 1867-71) of a manuscript, (Mans, Bibliothèque publique, 331/206) which "is in many respects a weak text and of inferior value so far as the section with which we have to deal is concerned...." (F.J. Ketrick, op. cit., p. 12.)
that the author of the former had knowledge of a written French source.

He found sufficient evidence "to establish a definite and immediate relationship between the Scottish text and the French versions, thus clearly disproving, on the one hand, the opinions of Scott, Ising and Spence, previously suspected, that the source of the poem lay merely in Celtic tradition, and on the other, the view, apparently favoured by Trautmann and approved by Härte, that a Perceval text constituted only the indirect source of Galieus and Gwên.

As Kethrick pointed out (op. cit., p.8) some of the earlier commentators upon the origin of Galieus and Gwên were inaccurate in their references to the Roman de Perceval as the source of the alliterative poem, failing to distinguish between the Perceval proper and its later continuations. Perceval le Gallois, ou le Conte del Grail, the last of the romances written by Chrétien de Troyes, has proved extremely difficult to date with any certainty. Scholars can agree only in placing it at some time between 1174 and 1180. It is a complex work, even by comparison with the other romances of Chrétien, and carried out

1) P.J. Kethrick, op. cit., p.117.

2) The most recent edition is that by S. Neve, Le Roman de Perceval, (Textes littéraires français), Geneva, 1956.

3) V.... de date incertaine (1174-80 ou 1177-87).... (E. Author, Histoire littéraire de la France médiévale( XIIe-XIVe siècle), Paris, 1954, p.196; "Some time after 1173, and before 1181...."(W. Holman, A History of Old French Literature, revised ed., New York, 1966, p.205); V.... between 1174 and 1190 V.... the years from 1174 to 1180 seem more probable, though not certain! (J. E. Bruce, The Evolution of Arthurian Romance, 2nd ed., Baltimore, 1923, p.653, see also Vol. II, pp.63-4); "So wurde die Arbeit an Grail in die Jahre 1180 bis 1187 fallen...." (S. Hofer, "Beiträge zu Kristianes Werken," Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie, XII, Beil, 1922, p.419).
on a vast scale, extending in the longest of the existing manuscripts to over 60,000 lines. Chrétien himself is credited only with the opening sections of the poem as it now exists, the remainder being attributed to various continuators. Opinions differ widely as to the point at which the original author left the poem incomplete, presumably at his death, but most scholars accept that the rubric \textit{Explicit Parceval}\footnote{For a useful resume of opinion on the divisions and multiple authorship of the \textit{Parceval} see U.T. Holmes, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.267-269. He concludes (p.268): "It is quite probable that the exact division of all this material needs revision; it is very possible that Chrétien did not stop at verse 20,601! But the new edition of the Parceval Continuations, now in progress, (W. Koch, \textit{The Continuations of the Old French \textit{Parceval} of Chrétien de Troyes}, Philadelphia, 1949-- ) is conducted on the basis of the accepted division, which begins the First Continuation at 1,607.} is valid after line 19,601 in two of the surviving manuscripts indicates the limit of Chrétien’s composition. \footnote{3) P.J. Kethrick, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.52-3.} It is almost generally agreed, too, that after the death of Chrétien, three or four (perhaps more) continuators took up his work: 1) an unknown writer sometimes called Pseudo-Vauchier, who wrote up to line 21,316 with interpolations; 2) Vauchier de Jomin (variously called Gautier de Chenet, etc.) who is credited by some with the further continuation of the verse to line 13,775 or 14,934, as variously given, and who composed his work most probably about 1190-1200; 3) Nanseeier, who took up the story at this point and carried it (c.1214-1225) to a conclusion; and 4) Gerbert de Monceaul, who at about the same date took up the story independently at the same place as Nanseeier and added a conclusion of his own. The divisions between the various continuations, the dating of each and their assignment to the several poets who are believed to have had a hand in the work, have given rise to a good deal of controversy, and the results must at the best be considered as provisional. It has, for example, been suggested that the attribution
of the Second Continuation to Yvainier de Denain is doubtful. This
deprives the name Pseudo-Yvainier,—a title of convenience given to the
hypothetical author of the preceding section,—of its previous signifi-
cance, and this portion of the Perceval is now generally known as the
First Continuation.

The portion of the Conte del Graal which can definitely be
ascribed to Chrétien is largely concerned with the early career of
Perceval, his introduction to Arthur's court, first visit to the Grail
Castle, and subsequent quest, but long passages are devoted to adventures
of Gawain, quite irrelevant to the main thread of the romance. The
First Continuation begins by completing one of these Gawain-episodes,
and thereafter it is Gawain who remains the central figure, entirely
displacing Perceval, who only makes a belated reappearance as the Grail-
hero in the Second Continuation. Indeed, the whole theme of the Grail
is largely ignored, except for the one or two scenes in the Grail Castle,
the First Continuation is merely a Gawain romance which is in no
significant way to be distinguished from the Runcient, the Vengeance
(2)
La guide de Yvain and the Green Knight, or half a dozen others! The in-
variable association of this First Continuation with the Perceval in
the surviving manuscripts makes it obvious that it was considered as a
Grail poem, carrying on the story begun by Chrétien. Yet the anonymous
author's conception of his function allowed him to ignore unity and
continuity, to neglect Perceval, the original hero, and even to insert
amongst the Gawain-material a complete romance on the adventures of

2) J. Beach, ed., The Continuations of the Old French Perceval of Chrétien
yet another knight, Carados: "a group of episodes so extraneous that they have always been recognised as unrelated to the Grail theme".

It is scarcely surprising, in view of the scant respect which the author of the First Continuation showed for the hero and the theme of the original Perceval, that his own work was very freely handled by later writers. Its episodic nature and the absence of any unifying theme made it easy for redactors whose conceptions of romance were less grandiose to detach such portions as suited their purpose. The author of Golagros and Gawain chose to combine two separate incidents from the First Continuation, in both of which Gawain is the hero. The general resemblance between the English poem and these corresponding passages in the French is clearly demonstrated in the parallel abstractions given by Kotrick. But the resemblance is one of outline only and the English adaptation is sufficiently free to account for the confusion and disagreement amongst earlier commentators who had not compared the versions in any detail.

Their work was made particularly difficult by the textual complexities of the Perceval Continuations and the unsatisfactory nature of the only complete edition then available. Despite the great

2) *Perceval*, otherwise Le Conte du Graal, must have been a favourite quarry for materials, for from one part alone of this long romance, namely, from the beginning of the continuation of Chrétien's work by Gauthier de Doulen/Is., the First Continuation of the Pseudo-Baudri, no less than three Gawain poems have been taken out: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, based on the episode of Carados; the *Joust of Sir Gawain*; and Golagros and Gawain derived from some of the adventures pertaining to the expedition of King Arthur against the Castel Orguellous (*F. J. Ansures, op.cit., pp. xviii-xix*).
4) The Potvin edition, based on Mobs, Bibliothèque publique, 331/206, alms,
amount of scholarly interest concentrated upon the Grail theme in Arthurian romance and the attention consequently given to Chrétien's *Conte del Graal*, the textual relations of the Continuations have largely been ignored. And, in view of the wide variations between the existing texts, this has proved a serious drawback to the study of the poem as a whole and of its relation to the other works derived from it. The manuscripts of the original poem, the *Perceval* proper, present a relatively uniform and consistent text. However, immediately after the point where Chrétien's work ends, the MSS begin to vary from each other in a way which no longer permits the establishment of a single text.

An edition of the Continuations which takes into account this textual complexity has long been needed and is at present being supplied by Professor Roach. The editor's aim is to make available all the significant elements in the text tradition as represented by the surviving manuscripts.

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manuscripts and early printed forms. These, as he lists them, are:


B: Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland: 19.1.5.
   First Continuation: ff.25a - 130c. First half of the
   13th. century.

   This MS. contains only the Second Continuation.
   Late 13th. century.

   First Continuation: ff.84a - 163b. Second half of the
   13th. century.

M: Montpellier, Bibliothèque de l'École de Médecine: II.249.
   First Continuation: ff.59b - 154c. Late 13th. century.

P: Lens, Bibliothèque Publique: 331/206.
   First Continuation: ff.119b - 229b. 13th. century.

   First Continuation: ff.73d - 193b. Second half of the
   13th. century.

   This manuscript, of the first half of the 13th. century,
   contains only the original Perceval and a fragment at the
   opening of the First Continuation, ff.184d - 186d, breaking
   off at a point which corresponds to 1.11,596 in Potvin's
   edition. It therefore includes neither of the two passages
   corresponding to the material of Golagrus and Gawain.

   First Continuation: ff.65c - 130b. 14th. century.

   First Continuation: ff.37a - 96a. Second half of the
   13th. century.

   First Continuation: ff.53a - 146c. 14th. century.

   This manuscript, of the late 13th. century, has many large
   gaps in the text, and the First Continuation, ff.15f - 77f,
   ends imperfect at a point which corresponds to 1.21,298
   of Potvin's edition.

Q: The sixteenth-century French prose version, printed in a black
   First Continuation: ff.47a - 131b.
The Middle High German translation made between 1331 and 1336 by two Alsatians, Claus Wiese and Philipp Selin, at the request of Count Ulrich von Rappoltstein, and now extant in two MSS: Bonn, Rheinische Landesbibliothek: 97, and Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatensis: A.I.19.

These fourteen forms of the Perceval Continuations have not as yet been thoroughly studied: the textual analyses so far published have been confined either to a limited section of the text or to a number of the existing manuscripts only. The edition by Roach is intended to provide the basis for a thorough and comprehensive analysis, from which some conclusion as to the evolution of the textual tradition (1) can eventually be drawn. The editor has meantime attempted a provisional grouping of the texts of the First Continuation on the basis of certain similarities and divergences of outline and of detail. "Anyone who undertakes to read the MSS. of the First Continuation is at once struck by the fact that, while there are great divergences between some MSS., there are also remarkable similarities between others, and that through all the variations and concordances there is a basic conformity to a large general plan. In spite of differences of length and infinite variations in details of expression, all the MSS. which preserve the whole of the First Continuation tell essentially the same story". "In addition to the common general content there are also resemblances of detail which permit a more exact grouping,—a grouping which can be made solely on the basis of the present state of the text, and without necessitating conjectures on how the existing differences and agreements may have (2) been produced."

1) "The first requisite at present is not an explanation of the evolution of the text. It is rather that the materials be made available so that such an explanation can be formulated" (Roach, op.cit., I, p.xl.)

2) Ibid., I, p.xxxvi.
On this basis Roach has divided the thirteen texts of the First Continuation into three distinct groups: M Q U and G representing a Long Redaction; A S L P and R a Short Redaction; and T V and D, which have features in common with both groups, representing a Mixed Redaction. Such a grouping can only be provisional and does not necessarily invalidate the work of earlier investigators who, like Ketrick, studied the manuscript relations of the First Continuation within the limited section of the work in which their interest lay.

Ketrick’s textual analysis, confined to the two relatively brief episodes, (Potvini 11.16, 323-634 and 11.18, 209-19, 456), corresponding to Colagrus and Gawain, established a grouping of twelve First Continuation texts (2) roughly similar to that given by Roach. His comparison of textual variants first suggested the existence of two major groups: Group A including T V D Q M E and G, and Group B consisting of U S A and P. The Mixed Redaction is here represented by the single text L which has features in common with both the major groups: Apparently, the scribe had before him a manuscript from each group upon which he drew at will in making his version. Closer analysis within the major groups showed that although the B-texts are relatively uniform in nature, those of Group A can be subdivided, T V and D sharing characteristic readings.

2) Ketrick was not concerned with MS.R (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, 150) which lacks the sections in which he was interested. I have given the results of his textual analysis of the remaining forms in some detail as his dissertation is a rare book: so far as I can discover there is no copy of it in the British Isles.
4) Ibid., p.83.
5) Ibid., pp.71-4.
which distinguish them from Q E F and G. And similarly, the sub-group
Q H can be distinguished from E G. Finally, close examination of the
latter group, (Edinburgh National Library: 19.1.5 and the 1530 French
prose—), reveals distinctions between them which suggests that, though
both are ultimately derived from a common form distinct from all other
known texts, neither is directly dependent upon the other.

On the basis of this classification Ketrick compared the text
of Galagwus and Gawain with the relevant sections of the First Contin­
uation, in order to establish their general relationship. The nature of
the Perseval variants and the very free rendering given in the alliter­
ative rendition restricted the comparison to matters of detail, verbal
parallels which associate Galagwus and Gawain with various manuscript
(4)
groups and individual texts of the First Continuation. The evidence in
each case is limited, but the total effect is cumulative. "Thirty passages
distributed throughout the poem indicate one hundred and forty verbal
agreements, sufficient surely to establish a definite and immediate
relationship between the Scottish text and the French versions...."

Further analysis of this evidence suggests that the texts of Ketrick's
Group A are generally closer to the Scottish text than those of Group B,
and within the former the texts of sub-group E G have certain readings
in common with the alliterative poem which are not found in any of the
other forms of the Perseval. Under these circumstances the inter­
relations of the two French texts are of particular importance.

4) Ibid., pp. 86-107. 5) Ibid., p. 117. 6) Ibid., pp. 113-19.
There can be no possible doubt but that the 1530 Prose is merely a working over of a copy in verse,.....the text being studded with rhyme words and obvious substitutions for the same. Miss Weston was of the opinion that the Edinburgh MS, was the only existing text which could be held to represent this verse original of the 1530 Print. Ketrick, on the other hand, considered "that Edinburgh shows considerable variation from the source of 1530 must have been, and that the two existing forms are only indirectly, though closely, related. And consequently he discovered a number of readings in which the 1530 Print stands closer to the Scottish poem than does the Edinburgh MS. These, together with certain expressions "which occur in the Scottish, are found in none of the verse texts, and are due directly to rhetorical and verbal changes necessary in the renderings into prose. He convinced him that Galagrus and Gawain was derived from a French prose text which is more closely represented by the 1530 Print than by any other existing form of the Perceval.

This is as far as textual comparison can go. It cannot be shown that the 1530 Print is specifically the source of Galagrus and Gawain, and the date of publication would seem to rule out the possibility of direct association. There is, however, some evidence which "points to the existence in England at the time of composition of the Scottish poem of a prose Perceval manuscript. This would suggest that the paraphrase of a verse text of the Perceval into prose did not actually occur in 1530, as has been assumed, but that the 1530 Print represents merely a revised and perhaps slightly abridged edition of a previously existing prose manuscript, the actual paraphrase having been completed.

2) J.L. Weston, op.cit., I, p. 54.  
4) Ibid., pp. 119-20.  
5) Ibid., p. 120.
in the late fifteenth century and certainly before 1506, or possibly earlier. With this earlier text or a copy of it varying slightly from the prose text which eventually found its way into print in 1530, the author of *Colaeruc and Gawain* was familiar.

This identification of the 1530 Print as the form of the First Continuation most closely related to the lost sources of *Colaeruc and Gawain* explains the confusion and disagreement which had existed prior to the publication of Ketrick's study. Those who denied the existence of any French source whatsoever or would only admit an indirect connection between the Scottish poem and the *Roman de Perceval* were virtually restricted to the single MS. edited by Potvin, *Lomé*, Bibliothèque Nationale I340/1306: "a text which lacks numerous readings that are especially valuable in proving the French as direct source of the Scottish verse. On the other hand, those who were confident that *Colaeruc and Gawain* was directly based upon the *Perceval*, happened to have access to one of the rare copies of the 1530 Print. His opinion, formulated in ignorance of the other *Perceval* texts, has now been confirmed by detailed analysis and comparison: the 1530 Print may be accepted as the best available guide to the original upon which the alliterative author worked.

Ketrick confined his study to establishing the relationship of *Colaeruc and Gawain* to the *Roman de Perceval*, and, apart from a few comments on the general characteristics of the Scottish poem, did not deal with the nature or conduct of the redaction. On the basis of the connection which he established between the alliterative work and the 1530 Print, the process of adaptation can now be studied in detail.

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The black letter prose edition is now extremely rare. According to Ketrick there are only five surviving copies, including that in the British Museum, which was known to Hadden. It bears the title: *Trempuisante et Re/creative Hystoire du Trespreaulx et Vaillant Cheuallier* / Perccual le galloye Jadis cheuallier/ de la Table roade. Lequel acheau/ les ausenturen du saint Gra/al. Ausc aulchuns faictz/ belliqueux du noble/ cheuallier Gauwain/ St aultres cho/walliers estans/ au temps/ du noble/ Roy/ Arthus/ non au parausant Imprim. Ausc privilege/ On les vend au Pallas a Paris/ En la bou/tique de Jehan longis. Jehan sainot denis/ et Cal/liet du pro/ Marchans libreries demourant au/ dict lieu.

The British Museum copy, though it lacks the table of contents found in the other examples, follows the general order, beginning with the *Illustration de L'Hystoire du Graal* and the prose redactor's prologue, then giving a version of Chrétien's *Pereveal*, followed by the First and Second Continuations and the Continuation of Manesseier, but omitting that of Gerbert de Montreuil. The prose version of the First Continuation follows closely the sequence of the verse texts, giving a series of major episodes, the first generally known as the *Book of HIreval*, the second as the *Book of Brun de Branlan*, in both of which Gawain is the central figure. After the interpolated *Livra de Cawados* the narrative


2) The problem of nomenclature arises here. In referring to Gawain, Kay, Lusan, and the other Arthurian heroes familiar in both French and
returns to Guain, and it is here, in the adventure of the Chastel Orguillens, that there occur the passages which have been identified as the source of Galagrus and Guain.

During one of the periodic assemblies of his court, Arthur is reminded by the sight of an empty seat at the Round Table, that Girflet, one of his followers, is still imprisoned in the Chastel Orguillens, where he had been seized four years earlier. By this reference an extremely tenuous connection is established with the Perceval proper, in which Girflet is briefly mentioned as one of those who engage themselves to besiege the Chastel Orguillens and rescue a maiden held there against her will. Rebuked by the king for their neglect of a comrade in distress, the knights agree upon an immediate rescue, and Arthur, with a picked company, sets out to attack the castle. They cross Britain and many other countries, exhaust their provisions, and send Bay to obtain food at a dwelling by the way. There he finds a dwarf roasting a peacock upon a spit, abuses him, is attacked by his master who appears upon the scene, and returns, discomfited, to the others. Guain, making a more courteous approach, is well received by the lord of the place, Ydar le Bel, and gains hospitality for the whole company. When their journey is

(Cont.) English romances, I have adopted the common English form of the name to avoid complexity. In the case of unfamiliar place-names and the lesser characters who figure in the Perceval and its Continuations I have accepted the forms used by Boeck in his analysis of the First Continuation (op.cit., Vol. I, pp. xlvi-lxii) as his edition is now the standard reference work. In references to the alliterative poem I have retained the original names in a standardized spelling, since, as will appear later, they provide a significant contrast with the forms in the French version.

resumed they come to a castle where Gawain is involved in a duel with 
Bran de Lin, whose sister he had seduced in an earlier episode of the 
First Continuation. Arthur eventually reconciles the two knights and 
takes Bran de Lin with him to join in the siege of the Chastel Orguelleux.
Once arrived and encamped before the castle individual knights of the 
Round Table engage in jousts with members of the besieged party, each 
side gaining some victories. During the hunt which occupies an interval 
in the jousting Gawain comes upon a strange knight lying under a tree 
almost bereft of his senses,—apparently because his amie has failed to 
keep a tryst with him there. This, Bran de Lin reveals, is the Riche 
Soudoler, lord of the Chastel Orguelleux. When the joust is resumed 
Gawain meets the Riche Soudoler in single combat and eventually over- 
comes him. The vanquished knight chooses to die rather than surrender, 
as the news of his defeat will kill his amie. Gawain chivalrously 
agrees to pretend that he has been the loser until the lady can be sent 
away to another castle still believing her lover victorious. Once this 
decit has been effected,—Gawain surrendering his sword to the maiden,— 
the Riche Soudoler makes his submission to Arthur, Sirflet is released 
and the company of the Round Table sets out upon its return to Britain. 
On the journey further adventures arise, but the episode of the Chastel 
Orguelleux is virtually self-contained and what follows need not con- 
cern us.

The general resemblance of this story to the plot of Golagyn 
and Gawain should be obvious from an outline of the Scottish poem. 
Arthur and the whole company of the Round Table set out upon a pilgrim- 
age to the Holy Land and journey towards Tuscany until their provis-
ions are exhausted. They sight a walled town which Bay enters in
search of supplies, and finding a dwarf roasting birds over the fire in a rich hall, scratches the food and is assaulted for his discourtesy by an unknown knight. Gawain, sent to second Kay, makes a courteous application to the lord of the castle, who gladly entertains the whole company for some days before they again set out on their journey. Passing by a castle on the banks of the Rhone, Arthur learns that its owner, Sir Golagrus, owns no superior, and swears that on his return he will exact homage from the independent knight. Having completed his pilgrimage, the king returns to besiege Golagrus, who, with all courtesy, refuses to submit to him. The attack begins with a series of engagements, single and multiple, in which several knights on both sides are killed or captured, but neither party has the advantage. Finally Golagrus takes the field against Gawain, is overcome and forced to choose between submission or death. He prefers death to dishonour, but Gawain, unwilling to kill a noble adversary, agrees to protest that Golagrus has been the victor and accompanies him to his castle in apparent defeat. Assured by his followers that they would remain loyal to him even in defeat Golagrus reveals the truth of his overthrow by Gawain and goes to make submission to Arthur. The two parties join in feasting and hunting before the king, having released Golagrus from his allegiance, returns to his own kingdom.

The obvious similarities between these two versions, Kay's encounter with the dwarf, Arthur's siege of a castle which resists his authority, and Gawain's act of magnanimity towards a defeated adversary, have frequently been commented upon, but there has not been any detailed comparison on literary grounds. Such a comparison can only be very general in nature since, as the abstracts already given should suggest,
the English poem is only vaguely modelled upon the French work and
does not adhere to it in incidental matters. For the same reason the
citation of parallel episodes can only be given as a general guide to
the relationship of the two texts, since in many instances the English
reduction bears little resemblance to the corresponding section in the
French romance.

(1)

1-19: 101d - 103d. The two versions inevitably differ very widely
at the point which represents the beginning of the English poem. As
the adventure of the Chevald Orgueilous is only one in the long series
of incidents making up the Perceval Continuations there is no signifi-
cant break in the French text. The prose print marks the opening of a
new episode with the rubric:

Comment le roy Arthur presoit son chevalier en chasse
des bocs avec ses chvalliers et prison, et en returnant
declara a Guvain et andere ses prisonniers qu’il vouloit
tenir court la plus riche que il est de ses vivant temes.(2)

(fol. 101d.)

1) All references to the 1950 Print are to the British Museum copy,
0.75-6.10, as reproduced in Photograph No.8 of the Modern Language
Association of America, made available to me through the courtesy of
the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. The pages of the original
appear to have been regularly numbered upon the recto of each leaf
in roman numerals, though in many places the numbers have been
clipped by the binder. There are occasional errors: folio 101, for
example, is actually labelled "seuillet xviiis," but as the same
number appears three pages earlier and the following leaf is lab-
elled "xii," the correct numbering can be established. As the
sequence appears to be generally correct, I have employed it in
references to the French text. Each leaf carries two columns of
print on both recto and verso: 101a therefore refers to the left-
hand column on the recto of page 101, and 101b to the right-hand
column on the verso of page 101.

2) The French print employs a number of conventional abbreviations:
a swelling dash over a vowel for m or n, as in tirer, or over a for w,
as in avance, and over p for pe, as in finier; i for gui; a for ai;
sblir for chevalier, and so on. I have expanded these without comment,
added modern punctuation, accentuation, and a modern system of capital
letters for proper names. Otherwise the text is reproduced as in
the original.
The action thus summarised begins at once with the royal hunt, introduced in the usual conventional manner—

Ge part au roy au temps nouveaux que doucement chantant les cuirillons, que le roy Arthur estoit au bois ailleurs avecques luy avait amé de son plus prives la plus grande et la plus maire partie, puisque jamais il ne ains n'a eut coulé, que qu'il devoir aussy faire a cause de sa grande (1) vigneurie.

At the hunt Arthur lags behind, lost in thought, and, when questioned, declares that to make amends for recent inactivity he is planning a great feast at Carcass on Pentecost. But when the company of the Round Table is assembled for the banquet the king remains passive, carelessly wounds his hand with a knife at table, begins to weep and finally accuses his followers of disloyalty in that they have failed to rescue their companion Girflet from his long imprisonment in the Chastel Orgueilous. This elaborate introduction has an obvious purpose: the author of the First Continuation, wishing to provide yet another sequence of typical Arthurian incidents,—a military quest of the Round Table, a distant expedition, contest and conquest with a noble purpose,—and hoping, perhaps, to link his work with the original prologues—has revived the Chastel Orgueilous as an old centre of such adventures. The narrative link is a tenuous one and the reader might well be forgiven for overlooking Girflet’s part in the original expedition against the castle.

But his imprisonment, as soon becomes apparent, is merely a peg upon

1) This passage serves to illustrate the close relationship between the 1530 Print and the verse texts of the First Continuation. At this point the verse text said by Patrick to be nearest in form to the prose version, Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, 19.1.5 (ed., Rosch, op. cit., Vol. II, 1950), reads—

Ces fu au mai au tom novel
Que doucement chantant ciel,
Et li rois fu au bois aler,
Des compagnons li plus prives
Dons o roi molt grant partie
which to hang a complex of adventures which may be enjoyed for their own sake, and, in the general nature of later Arthurian romance, it would readily be accepted as such. To lend significance to the incidents that follow it was merely necessary to stress the importance of this prime cause to Arthur and to the honour of his company, and this the elaborate introduction does, suggesting a revival of Arthurian energy and a renewal of chivalric purpose after a period of inactivity, giving new impetus to the unending sequence of romantic adventures.

But of all this the English version knows nothing; the alliterative post paise directly to the narrative of action and begins upon the journey which, inevitably, leads to adventures—

In the tyme of Arthur,as trew men so taid,
The king turnit on ane tyle toward Tuscane,
Rys to seik our the say,that saik lesen was seid,
The syre that seidis all seilis,mithly to sang.

(11.1-4, 1)

He makes no mention of Gisflet's imprisonment, or of a specific campaign directed against the Gauntlet Cornualiens, or, indeed of any previous adventure associated with it. His narrative is to be self-contained, depending for acceptance upon its intrinsic interest and not upon its association with Chrétien's Conte del Graal or the other episodes of the Perceval complex. His decision to ignore the elaborate introductory passages of the French text seems perfectly legitimate since the essential interest of the incidents which occur during Arthur's journey does

(Cont.)

Pur desirer et per compaignier,
Or nuns n'ans a escre meus....

(11.12; 507-13)

Similar verbal parallels are apparent throughout, and in many places the original rhyme can be detected in the prose translation.

1) References to the alliterative text throughout are to the edition by F.J. Amuse, Scottish Alliterative Poems in Rimey Stanzas, S.E.S., 27, 38, Edinburgh, 1992-7.
not depend upon the original cause of the expedition. All that is necessary here, as in most Arthurian romances, is something to send the king and his court wandering abroad so that adventures may come in their way. The redactor’s substitution of a pilgrimage for the original quest is entirely adequate for the purpose and in no way alters the significance of the incidents which follow. How does it reflect any religious interest on his part which is likely to colour the romance as a whole? Briefly introduced in the first four lines of the poem the pilgrimage is ignored thereafter, and on the only occasion when its revival seems likely to conflict with the narrative interest of the work (11.301-4) it is disclosed in the most summary manner. To the alliterative poet it was merely an excuse for the royal journey, one which was self-explanatory and allowed him to introduce without further preliminaries the incidents from the First Continuation which had excited his interest.

And so the royal journey begins:

Or, sans vous tenir prolis de compte, le lendemain un soleil levant furon tout les chevaliers monte ainsi que le roy l’avoir commandé, et virent tous ensemble devant le palais seul qui voyrent leur confiance, lesquels les gens je vous diray: premierement y Fust Sauvais, le roy. Gifler, Caman, Lœu, et Lucain le bouteillier, et Tor le vaillant chevalier. Seignor, et Labegian, avoces le fils au roy Urien, et Gider le fils Bud, le Lais Hardy, le comte de l’Engaine, et Gisantin le Galois, et Gersans Brovares, le bon Toulant de Bougeront, lequel fust le quinziem, lesquels tournent ensemble devant le palais ne présentent, et ainsi que la attendaient, arriva le roy Arthur tout arce qui guerroye a monter s’attendit.

It might have been expected that the English redactor, having substituted

1) It has been suggested by Amore (op. cit., pp. 249-50) that the English redactor took the idea of Arthur’s passage through Tuscany upon pilgrimage from the alliterative Morte Arthure (11.385-8), but the freedom and independence with which the whole redaction is carried out makes it seem unlikely that he should require a literary source for such a minor element in his narrative.
a convenient opening for the narrative link in the original, would there-
after have been content to follow his source patiently and closely.
But his is not to be a reduction of that kind; even in this comparatively
uneventful prelude to action there is a change of emphasis which fore-
shadows major alterations to the French narrative at a later point.
The English poet does not reproduce the list of knights who are to ac-
company Arthur. This might be explained on grounds of the difficulty
which such a catalogue inevitably presents in alliterative verse where
each name must be accompanied by alliterating adjectives to fill out
the line, a clumsy, tedious business, especially where the list is dictated
by the source and cannot be compiled on a basis of phonetic suitability.
It is a problem which recurs throughout the reduction and will require
fuller comment at a later point. In this instance the omission is not
important since the English reader could be expected to apply the con-
ventions of romance in assuming that Arthur is accompanied by the prin-
cipal knights of the Round Table, Gawain, Kay, Lancelot, etc., who may later
be named individually where the narrative requires. But the French text
limits the king's companions to fifteen, and the point is underlined
when those who have accompanied him beyond the city turn back again.

St quant trois lieues sont aliés se arresting en ung
gard et en se departissant grand nombre de gens a grand
regret, qui joaissant en eu lieu avoient le roy condamné
t d'accompagner, lesquels au la cité se retirant. Et le
roy avoysant les quinze esclous que quant at luy mandit
trepasserent tout le pain forest, rurets, landes et plainnes;

In the English version, however, the "quinze esclous" are replaced by a
large force, riding as a general array with banners displayed:

Farand on their steeds, stout men and stabil;
Romy array, our the street5 startes on stray,
Their banners shone with the sons of silver and rubill,
And their gleam, as gold and gossis so gay;
Of silver and saphir shaltily that shone;
one fair battell on bruid,  
Markit our one fair maid;  
With sparrow speedly that spaid  
Our fallis, in cans.  \(11.18-26\)

So, while the Arthur of the First Continuation goes to attack the  
Chastel Oghualens with a picked company of fifteen knights, the Arthur  
of the English text rides upon pilgrimage surrounded by an army, sparring  
with all the forcefulness of alliterative verse. The change is not of  
major importance at this stage in the redaction, but it is symptomatic  
of such that is to follow.  
\(40-117 : 103d - 104d.\) As the company of the Round Table rides through  
the land it chances upon adventure in the usual, unmotivated fashion of  
romance. Provisions become exhausted and the knights are in search of  
somewhere to replenish:—  

\text{Text cut an avant chevalado que ung grand arbre}  
\text{advicerant, souds lequel ez sert erresten, et la avoit}  
\text{asez pres une fort belle et close fontaine...}  
\text{\(f01.103d.\)}

While they rest in the shade May sights a hut, a "maisonnette", "laquel  
estoit close de paille", where an old woman directs him to a larger  
dwelling, a "manoir", standing in its own demense, and to this he rides.  
The English version leads up to the first adventure in much the same  
way, though with some significant differences of detail and proportion.  
In the alliterative poem the preliminaries have disappeared: there is  
no peasant hut, no old woman to give directions. The manor itself (here  
replaced by a walled city, probably for reasons of alliteration) is  
sighted in two lines and entered by May within twenty. The change is  
undoubtedly one for the better since the naturalistic detail of wayside  
enquiries, etc., merely delays the adventure without contributing to the  
effect of its narration. Yet the redactor who can dispense with these  
preliminaries betrays his indebtedness to the French text in citing his
town beside the fountain associated with its first appearance in the
original:

As they walkit be the syde of one fair well,
Throu the schynynge of the son one siste than se,
(11.40-42.)

Occasional echoes of this kind demonstrate the relationship between
Eulogron and Gawain and the First Continuation, even where the English
redactor has fundamentally altered both the narrative and the significant-
ance of his original.

In this particular episode the English version shows a
decided change of emphasis which has necessitated some minor alterations
to the original narrative. Kay, in the Perceval Continuation, rides to
the manor which appears deserted until he enters the great hall:

Et veloit un une cheminée ung fort beau feu et grand
allumé ou il n'y a hommne ne femme appruesu fors ung
soul main qui rotisseoit ung paon moulst gras, lequel
estoit enhausté an une broche de pommier, vers lequel
vint le seneschal.....

(fol.104a.)

The Seneschal addresses the dwarf courteously but gets no reply, and,
growing angry demands the peacock for his own dinner and for his king.
The dwarf refuses and twice answers him impertinently, until Kay, losing
his temper, kicks him into the fireplace. At this there enters a knight
of handsome appearance and dress:

..... et tenoit ung laz de sois verd pur lequel il
tenoit ung leuvrier apres luy.....

(fol.104b.)

who mildly rebukes Kay. But, when the Seneschal replies haughtily, the
handsome knight satisfies his desire for the peacock in a violent
manner:

A forz le paon print a plain poing qu'il lieve bien
legierament, duquel de toute sa vertu en a feru le
senechal d'ung si grand et se paissant coup que petit
s'en faut que coocse ne l'a et bien vous dis qu'il
asserera au sol si que chooir le feist sur le plancher
plat estendu.....
Adams sette la chevalier la peau a ses deux
grans loriers....

(fol.104e.)

Kay, marked for life by the blow, is then ejected by two armed retainers,
and returns to his companions, who question him as to whether he has
found supplies for them:

......et Noex leur respondit que mon et que illes trob
mille terre avoit pour trouver a venger. (fol.104e.)

The function of this incident is obvious enough: to demonstrate the
blunting of stupidity and pompous pride of Kay, and to suggest how far
short he falls in his rashness, discourtesy, cowardice and untruthfulness,
of the true ideal of a chivalric hero. It is a familiar theme, constantly
recurring in various forms throughout the Perceval complex and, indeed,
the whole of Round Table romance, in which the Seneschal's defects of
character serve as a foil to the perfection of successive Arthurian
heroes.

The hero of the Chastel Corne1leus sequence, as the title
of the English redaction suggests, is to be Gawain, who, in this prelimi-
nary incident must succeed where Kay has failed. It is in order to
throw into relief Gawain's courage, courtesy and nobility of character
that Kay is humiliated in this encounter with the dwarf. But though
in the English version the incident remains unchanged in all essentials
the alliterative poet has significantly altered the emphasis throughout.

When the city is first sighted the Seneschal demands permission to
enter it; speaking somewhat boastfully, and is warned by Arthur to
behave discreetly:

"Grant me, lord, on yore gait smythly to pay;
And I call baid-word, but saud, bryng to you bare,
Gif he be feek on the fold your freandy or your kay?
"Seyn thi will is to wedi, wy, nyb in wair,
Juke that wisly thou wyrk, Cristo were the fyrre wyn!"

(11, 54-5.)

There is nothing to correspond to this in the French. Similarly, when
he enters the hall Kay dashes straight to the fire and snatches the roasting bird from the dwarf:—

Sahiz Kay raschit to the roist, and raff fr the same, lightly slaught, thro' lust, the lyn fr the lyno;
To feel lyn of that lyno rude the frier was full done;
(11,51-3.)
The preliminaries have all disappeared: there is no courteous approach by Kay, no insulting provocation on the dwarf's part to justify the un-knightly assault. In the French text it is specifically stated that Kay was at first restrained by a sense of shame from what he realised to be an unworthy action:—

Est la main ne daigna respondre, de quoy fut leZendehal
sy yrre que, se il n'estrait craindre hoste, il avoit tout a ceste
heure occis, sait il avoit bien et agit pour voy qui
eut vousroit a droit blamoir.
(fol.104a.)

But in the English version the voice of conscience is never raised. The redactor's intention is evident: to concentrate upon the essential physical details of the incident in a forceful, abbreviated narrative, displaying Kay's rashness and vulgarity directly and vividly, and dismissing with everything which is merely incidental to this function. There can be no doubt that he achieves his purpose, but not without some loss. The English narrative is more direct but also less subtle than the French. Kay is made to seem not merely crude and boorish but also rather ridiculous, and what the incident gains in forcefulness it loses in credibility and human interest. Even where he follows the original more closely the redactor has apparently missed the significance of some details. For example, the stranger knight's rebuke and Kay's shrillish reply, his ejection and Irving report to his comrades remain such as in the French:—

The rank rascal he said to Arthur the king;
Said: "Lord, speed on your way;
You have no need of my help.
To praise you for this to pray,
It helps me no thing." (11,113-17.)
but the alliterative poet has failed to appreciate the ironic fitness of the blow with the spits—

Sweigh with the grume,in his grieve,lost part to abide day,
Fellit the fries with his fist flat in the flure.
(11.105-6.)

And similarly he omits the detail of the greyhound led by the strange knight and, in consequence, loses a pleasant touch of humour and human interest in the sequel to this incident.

The poet's attempt to concentrate and simplify the somewhat diffuse prose narrative is quite understandable; alliterative verse, by nature somewhat rigid and slow-moving, is more suited to the description of a single strong situation or of violent action than to outlining a sequence of events or conversational exchanges. But he is strangely inconsistent in his abbreviation. He omits incidental details which give depth and reality to the narrative of action, yet he expands a passing reference in the French text to the richness of the hall where the scene takes place into an elaborate descriptive set-piece—

Syne hynt to see his hall
That was metalit with wall;
Well wrought was the wall,
And payntit with pride.

The nylon del of the deise dayntely was deo
With the doughtynest in their dale dayntic south delo;
Bight letteriis of gold blith vute bout,
Blellden savoires quis ame of sacke dayntic south wale.
He saw none levend leid wonne lost lent,
Bouth the lord as leid,leif ye the leis.
The rank raikit in the wall,rinae and gant,
That wouldir wishing was wrought with worship and wale.
(11.62-73.)

The passage is not inappropriate: it is merely somewhat out of proportion with the general abbreviation of the English work. It seems unnecessary to read any special significance into such an expansion. The case with which the alliterative technique, adding adjective to adjective, piling detail upon detail, leads to over-elaboration in description, probably
accounts to some extent for this and similar instances in which the economy of the English poem is unbalanced. Yet the desire for rapidity of narration, for directness and forcefulness of effect,—with the consequent defect of over-simplification and lack of subtlety,—is the dominant consideration throughout this sequence.

(118.111, 1040–1055.) The same desire and something of the same defect mark the following sequence, which is the pendant to Kay's encounter with the stranger knight whose name we now learn, in Yder la Bal. Kay's whole concern on his return is to conceal his misadventure from his companions, by pretending that he has met no one.

St plus leur dit:"Ainsi, fait il, veillez savoir que je suis de son maist chauvacher, ainsi que puissions halter trouver, ou il y ait petit me grand a menager, cause l'on m'a dit et compto. St Guenan alora luy respond:"Tout est vrai, fait il, et que vous je veuist de manger, si cause vous, sac ne viante ne veult il jus en contenant leste at possible. (p.104d.)

The Seneschal is forced to confess his meeting with the lord of the manor who, he says, is cruel and will give them no shelter. Gueman's subtle and half-humorous exposure of the attempted concealment is sufficient to remind the company of Kay's traditional character, and Arthur, deciding to send a more tactful messenger, chooses Gueman himself. The corresponding passage in the English has precisely the same outcome, but both effect and emphasis are very different. What is merely implied in the French text is made explicit in the alliterative poem: Gueman's oblique hint at Kay's deception because a direct attack upon his character and Arthur comments openly upon Gueman's more trustworthy nature:

Then spek ochir Gueman the say, cautious and note: "Ochir, ye know that ochir Kay is crabbit of kynde; I rede ye ask furth ane man, nature of mane, That will with fairnesse fraint frendship to fynd.
Your folk ar feblill and faynt for falt of their fude;
Sum better bold-word to abide,vndir mod lynd!
"Sohir Gwynne,graith ye that gait,for the gude rude!
Is nan me boxum ane bernes,brith for to bynd?"

(11.118-25.)

A single stanza conveys the matter of the original forcefully and with economy, yet the effect is not altogether successful. This whole incident is used by the English redactor, as by the French author, to heighten the nobility of Gawain's character in contrast to that of Kay. To make Gawain comment directly and crudely upon the Seneschal's defects is to make him speak out of character and to weaken the effect intended.

That was barefaced and licentious in the original has become harshly realistic and over-emphatic in the redaction. There are probably two reasons for this change in emphasis. The English author could not necessarily rely on his audience's familiarity with the stock character of Kay in French romance, and, as he had made no use of the earlier incidents in the French complex which illustrate its defects of folly, pride and boastfulness, he was forced to bring out these characteristics pointedly, yet briefly, in a manner consistent with their ancillary function in his story. And, furthermore, the very nature of alliterative verse, with its forceful iteration and emphatic expression, makes it unsuited to convey the licentious, sensational tone which pervades the prose text at this point. To have given the equivalent of each idea in the original, with appropriate alliterative phraseology, would have resulted in a cumbersome and overweighted narrative, quite out of keeping with its function in the story as a whole. To avoid this the poet has attempted to summarize the French narrative in a manner more suited to the alliterative medium, and in doing so has inevitably lost some of the subtlety of the original.

The defect exemplified here is general in the English redaction and spoils, to some extent, the intended effect of what follows. Gawain
makes a courteous approach to the lord of the manor, is well received and gains hospitality for his companions who are graciously welcomed by Yder le Bel:

Puis, avant en la tour le mons ou encore estoient les lovriers, lesquels la chair du poen mongeois. Et quant le roy les eust advi ens, finit se se rejoignant: "Par ma foy, faict il, ses deux loyriers n'avoient aucun dieu que nous n'avions ce jour esté. Il le chevalier en acrobat, ce que Nous entend, mais bien se garde de parler."

There is humour in Arthur's sly reference to the fatal peacock, and irony in the host's smile, but both were, apparently, lost upon the English reductor. Having disregarded the earlier reference to the dog accompanying Yder le Bel, admittedly incongruous at that point, he makes no use of this human incident which lends depth and reality to the French version. And, similarly, he ignores the Seneschal's discomfort at the sight of the peacock, the secret amusement of the lord, and the fun at Kay's expense during the feast:

"Et vous dis bien que les serviteurs du chevalier, en faisant le service, se purgnerent a rire secretement de l'erreur du seneschal. Et le main ne s'en peut color, mais en commença a parler. Et n'eust pas par vous estoit asse au main ne l'avait ramentu, car plus que mil il le solloit, et le chevalier parlalement, pour l'erreur que vous ay dit, que clairement apparaissant, disoit on que Nous fast tignaux. De quy tout le jour estoit grand honte quant il veoit que tous ensemble le guident ses compaignons, tant qu'il n'en alleront coucher."

This is not directly reproduced in the English version and what corresponds to it is less subtle, more direct, lacking the humorous over-tones of the French, but laying more serious stress on the chivalric issues involved:

"There came an laithles laid air to this place, With all girdill eurgilt, an their light gars; It lythyth be his cognisance an knight that he was, Not he was laidlike of laithis, and light of his fore. The very cause of his come I knew noght the corse,
But wondirously wraithly he wrought, and all as of war.
Yit sait I might quent he is, be Godin greet grace!
But yet it hapeti that he be awe knight of yowres here,
Has done my lord to singles, that I hym saide nyght,
And his presence plase,
I say yow in certaine,
He waltie not agane,
As I am trew knight!” (11.137-59.)

It should be noted that May is not directly named as the offender: the
redactor has reproduced the spirit of the original in making his dis-
grace implicit rather than a matter of open complaint against him.

Throughout this section the English author gives fuller ex-
pression to some other elements which are cursorily treated in the French
of these the most important is the formal exchange of complimentary
speeches, between the lord and Gawain, between Gawain and Arthur, between
Arthur and his host. These make up a large proportion of the English
poem at this point and though they do something to advance the action,
casting the prose narrative into direct speech, they are at greater length
than their practical function requires. There is a certain formal stiff-
ness in the elaborate combination of rhym and alliteration which constit-
utes the Colinus and Gawain stanzas that is peculiarly fitted to these
courtly exchanges. The cumulative effect of the alliteration is equally
suited to richness of description, and the alliterative poet does fuller
justice to the feast prepared for Arthur than does the prose author who
tends to generalise in such matters:

Their nyght service he was, with bagis in swali,
 thought all seelough was sight fra the son to the sea;
Wynys went within that vacis, vaist wearty to swali,
In coupis of chlair gold, bightest of ble,
It war full tall for to tell truyntly in swali.
The air cournis that war set in that swali,
The revenci war muskit on set, at the swali,
With smetralis myrthfully molat, thanse glos.

(11.395-16.)

The poet clearly realised the effectiveness of his medium for such pur-
pouses and gave it full rein. The resulting passages are successful in
themselves, but rather out of proportion to their function in the narrative. They contrast oddly with the somewhat elliptical expression given to the essential subject of this section: the glorification of Gawain by contrast with the blundering Kay.

\[ \text{Fol. 105a - 111a,} \]

Kay's adventure with the dwarf having served its purpose, the narrative of the First Continuation passes to another episode, much greater in length, of which the English redactor makes no use whatsoever. Leaving the castle of Ydor le Bel, the company of the Round Table travels on its way, its progress marked by the occasional rubrics in the prose text:

\[ \text{Fol. 105b.} \]

The author will not tell of the wanderings of the Venger until the proper point in his story, and so he passes on:

\[ \text{Fol. 105b.} \]

Gawain, in his search for shelter, follows the tracks of a band of knights and is led to a castle which appears deserted, though the tables stand ready spread. He fetches the king and his companions and all sit down to eat. Suddenly Gawain rises from table and hastily puts on his armour, questioned by Arthur he reluctantly narrates the substance of one of his earlier adventures, an incident which forms part of the Book of Bran de Breanant in the First Personal Continuation. Wondering abroad upon an occasion Gawain had chanced on the tent of the beautiful Rassiele de Lis and had lain with her by her consent. Promising to return and marry her, he rode on his way but was pursued by the lady's father and brother, both of whom he killed in fair fight. A second brother, Bran de Lis, then
took up the fight, but seeing Gawain weakened by the re-opening of an old wound, agreed to postpone the combat until the next time they should meet, when Gawain must fight as he is found, either armed or unarmed. And now Gawain has just caught sight of the shield of Bran de Lis hanging on the wall of a neighbouring room, and has armed to be ready to meet him:

Comment Guavain, nez pres du roy Arthur, aprés qu'il eust compris la vérité a son oncle, luy pris que tout ils déparissent de ce lieu pour la crainte qu'il evoit que Brandellis ne le trouvant en celle place ou il estoient; de que le roy ne voulut accepter de quy grand mal luy en cuyda venir. (fo1.109r.)

Meanwhile, Kay, pursuing a dog which has entered the hall, is led to a garden where he comes upon Bran de Lis and his followers. He is recognised and seized by them:

Comment Keu le seneschel du roy Arthur, aprés qu'il eust entré au jardien ou estoient tous les chevaliers, luss pres et mordu a Brandellis, qui estoit le seigneur du chasteau, auquel il dit que le roy Arthur et Guavain estoient dedans la grande salle du dit seigneur, avois un table pour prendre leur repas. (fo1.109v.)

Bran de Lis goes at once to the hall and challenges Gawain to resume their duel. As they fight a damsel enters and, seeing that Gawain is in danger of defeat, brings forward a child of five years which she urges to plead with Bran de Lis not to kill its father. Later, when Gawain has gained the upper hand, she sends the child to beg him not to kill its uncle. As the knights continue to fight the child in play attempts to catch their shining swords; all are touched by the sight and Arthur stops the combat:

Comment la paix se feist entre messire Guavain et Brandellis par la supplication du roy Arthur et ses princes, et le petit enfant estant entre eux. (fo1.112r.)

When Bran de Lis learns the purpose of Arthur’s journey he offers to
accompany him, the king agrees and the whole company sets out for the Chastel Oignolles.

It is not difficult to see why this material did not appeal
to the English redactor and why he made no use of it in his version.
Galagrus and Gawain is apparently complete as we have it and it was
clearly intended to be a self-contained romance in celebration of Gawain.
Having opened his story with the incident in the manner of Yder le Dau
the redactor could make no use of the episode which follows since it
is merely the second half of an adventure begun very much earlier in
the First Continuation.—Gawain's liaison with the blondefille de Lis and
the subsequent feud with her brother. The main scene in which the
child is interposed between the two combatants,—a characteristic 'set-
piece' of chivalric romance,—would be meaningless to a reader who did
not know that it is the Danoiselle de Lis who places her child by Gawain
between its father and its uncle, Beau de Lis. It seems unlikely that
the English author can have possessed a copy of the First Continuation
which included Kay's encounter with the dwarf and the siege of the
Chastel Oignolles while omitting this intervening episode. Even had
his version of the French lacked the earlier scenes of the feud with
Beau de Lis, in the Book of Beau de Brabant, it would have been quite
easy for him to reconstruct them from the abbreviated account which
Gawain gives to Arthur. Everything suggests that the alliterative poet
deliberately chose to omit an incident which he considered unsuited to
his purpose. And, technical reasons apart, there is a very obvious
objection to its inclusion in a romance which celebrates Gawain as the
pattern of perfect chivalry. The episode as a whole does not show
Gawain in an ideal light; his seduction of the Danoiselle de Lis, the
1) In the British Museum copy of the 1510 Print the first half of this
adventure occupies fol. 438, 44 to fol. 70a.
death of her father and brother at his hands,—though in fair fight,—the inconclusive nature of his first combat with Bran de Lis and his obvious unwillingness to meet him again when he begs Arthur to leave Bran's castle,—all are little to his credit. The effect which the redactor had obtained by contrasting Guimis with the bewitch, cowardly Kay could only have been weakened by following him through this somewhat dubious affair, and certainly little of ideal value is lost by its omission.

So technical problems of any importance are raised by the omission. The English author has merely fused together the departure from the castle of Bran de Lis with that from the house of Idar le Bel, and he follows Arthur upon his journey towards the Chastel Orguelles as though nothing had intervened in the source. The episodic construction of the original made this appearance of continuity easy to achieve.

There was only one apparent difficulty: in the French version Bran de Lis accompanies Arthur and throughout the remainder of the book he fulfills a special function as expositor of everything which happens at the Chastel Orguelles. Such an expositor was also necessary to the English redactor, and as his readers could know nothing of Bran de Lis or the events which bring him into Arthur's company, he was forced, as we shall see, to provide a substitute. But this small detail apart, the two incidents are quite distinct and detached, and the episode at the castle of Bran de Lis disappears from the English version without trace and without apparent loss.7

(222-311 : 113a — 113b.) Even before Arthur and his followers leave the castle of Bran de Lis their host has taken up his role as the guide to everything connected with the Chastel Orguelles and its inhabitants:

Et vous dis bien que le roy se parloit envie de Brandesia, car malz voallentiers escouteid les comtes qu'il fut recitoit du riche Chastel Orguelles. (fol. 123a.)
The source of his knowledge, or that previous connection he has had with the Castel Orgueil, is not made clear. His knowledge may be that of a neighbour, since his lands appear to lie next to those of the Castel, though at seven days' journey! More probably his omniscience is a literary convention adopted by the author of the First Continuation as a means of conveying information essential to the story. His familiarity with the wooded countryside in which the castle is situated makes his advice that tents, sounds, and hunting servants be added to the military equipment, so that the party may camp before the walls and hunt during the intervals of the siege—

Pourtant son les couleurs troncon, et moins les serviers et messagers sont ceux les les vouent: monter, il que plus, ne restent que à partir. Le roy par son main armé, accompagné de son vice-roi, de son château partant, et se mirant tous au chemin. Brusilic no demeura pas moins, quant et de roy d'en partir. Sept ans journées apres arrêt, en passant par maintes forêts, et puis en ung plain vennu, duquel ils pourront percevoir le riche Orgueil.

The original version contains little more than this less than a single column of print, providing a slight narrative link between the incidents in the castle of Bran de Liz and the adventure of the Castel Orgueil.

The corresponding passage in the alliterative poem contains some ninety lines, bearing only the loosest relationship to the French text, and fulfilling various functions which could have been superfluous in the original, but which are rendered necessary by the distinctive nature and independent conduct of the redaction.

As in the French version the section opens with a journey, the journey which carries Arthur and his companions away from the scene of Kay's disgrace—but the redactor has evidently retained some memory of the tents suggested by Bran de Liz—

That transit up tents and burnet of town,
The roy with his Round Tabbl, richest of myne.
They drive on the da dair be dalis and doun,
And of the nobilist be-soom, noomerit of ynyse.
When it drew to the dirk nycht and the day yelit doun,
Thay plantit doun pachonitis, pridefully fra thine.
Thus iournit gentilly thy abssulrouse knichtis,
Ithandily ilk day,
Throu may for contray,
Our the montaines gay,
Heltis and hillis. (11.224-34.)

And this journey too brings the travellers within sight of the castle
which they are to attack. But there the resemblance between the two
versions ends. The author of the First Continuation gives no detailed
description of the Chastel Orguelles, either here or elsewhere in his
version, but the English redactor devotes two stanzas (11.235-60) to its
situation, on a high rock beside a river where many ships sail, its de-
fenses, a double ditch and a stout wall lined with three and thirty towers,
and the fair, sunny land which lies round about it. The details are all
appropriate to the role which the castle is to play in the narrative,
but they are the product of the redactor's imagination, not drawn from
his source. What follows is equally the creation of the alliterative
poet. Arthur asks—

Quha is lord of yno land,
Lusty and licand,
Or quha as is ke beldand,
Payne wald I wit? (11.257-60.)

These are questions of the kind to which, in the original version, Bran
de Lis supplies the answers. Despite his omission of the Dameisle de
Lis incident and its sequel, the English redactor might have retained

1) A detail elsewhere in the poem suggests that the river on which the
castle stands is the Rhone. During the rejoicings which celebrate
its surrender we are told—

On the riche river of Rene nyct thai said (1.1345.)
There is nothing in the original to suggest such a site, the Chastel
Orguelles being very vaguely located, and alliterative convenience
may well explain the English author's precision in the matter.
Bran de Lis in this role, leaving the reader to imagine that he was merely one of the Round Table knights. Instead he has chosen to introduce a new character, Sir Spyngrose, who first appears at this point and throughout the poem supplies the place of Bran de Lis in the original. As a minor member of Arthur's court he figures elsewhere in romance, both French and English, and notably in Malory where he is called (1) Sappingrose. But he is not included amongst the fifteen chosen knights who are Arthur's only companions in the Book of the Castel Ornelles, and there is no apparent reason why he should have been chosen for the role he fills, except, perhaps, the alliteration which his name provides with the various parts of the verb 'to speak'. That, at least, is his only office in the poem:

Than sahir Spyngrose with speche spak to the king:
"Yone lord beldis of name leid, that yone land aw,
Bot ever-lastynge but legianse, to his loving,
As his elynris has done, endurynge his day?
"Keverly god!" said the heynd, "how happynis this thing?
Herd their ever ony sage sa selcouth ane saw!
Sal never myne hart be in caull me in likynge,
Bot gif I losseing my life, or he laid law,
Be the pilgramage compleit I was for caull now,
Bot dede be my destenye,
He sail at my aame cumyng
Lak hommage and oblissing,
I mak myne avow!" (11,261-73.)

This stanza introduces an entirely new idea, to which there is nothing to correspond in the French text,--Arthur's resolve to exact homage from the lord of the castle. It is true that at the end of this episode in the French the lord of the Castel Ornelles does homage to Arthur, but rather in acknowledgement of his defeat by Gawain than

2) Vide supra, p.321.
as one forced to accept permanent subjection to a feudal overlord. And in the First Continuation this is no more than an incidental detail; it is not made the motive for future action. Arthur's decision to relieve the master of the stronghold to submission is an invention of the English author. Its function is obvious: in the Paranzval Continuation the Chastel Osguelle is the goal of an expedition deliberately undertaken for the specific purpose of rescuing Sirflet, whereas in the alliterative poem Arthur comes upon the castle accidentally in the course of a pilgrimage and the plot requires that he be given some pretext for an attack upon it. The general character attributed to him in much Arthurian romance,—proud, overbearing, intolerant of any rival to his power,—no doubt suggested this solution to the redactor. As a pretext for the scenes of conflict which follow it is quite as appropriate as that provided by the imprisonment of Sirflet in the original.

The emphasis with which Arthur speaks is, no doubt, the poet's method of suggesting, briefly but forcefully, the strength of feeling which moves him to attack the castle, giving the whim of present verbal importance in keeping with the long train of events which arise from it. One might well expect that as the mainspring of future action Arthur's resolve would be accepted without consent upon its justification, moral or practical, especially in English romance, whose readers are generally supposed to have been less interested in motivation and less concerned with issues of moral right and wrong than their Continental counterparts.

The reply made by Sir Gyrganros seems, therefore, as something of a surprise—

"Alas lord, spairs of sic speche, quhill ye speir more, For abbatment will be micht be to borne that is borne. Cr ye be strengeit with strent, yone aitone for to acone, Sone ledis salbe laisit, and liffe forborne. Speikis na seconcy, for Cristis aone dair! Yone knicht to acon with skaith ye chaip nocht but acone."
It is full fair for to be fallow and foir.  

To the best that has beene brevetit you before.  
The myghty king of Bassidone, woorsthieest but wene,  
Their got he same horose;  
For all his his parage;  
Of lord of yone lynges,  
Nor neuer none sene,  

The wy that wendis for to were quhen he wanye best,  
All his will in this world, with wethis I wy,  
Yit saill be licht as leiff of the lynd last,  
That velleris doun with the wynd, sa wasserand it is.  

Your myocht and your maiestes mesure but myw!  
"In faith! said the qualye king,"trou ye full traid,  
My heecht saill baldein be, for baleil or for blis.  
Sail neuer my likame be laid velaissit to sleip,  
Whill I have gart yone borne bow.  
As I have mid myne aucow,  
Or ellis mony wadou  
Ful wraithly sal weip! " (1)  

There are many incidental references to the power and authority of the  
lord of Chastel Orgu`leus, his fame and prowess as a knight and the  
loyalty of his followers, scattered throughout the French text, but there  
is no sustained passage comparable to this. The power of expression  
and real poetic ability shown in these stanzas gives surprising authority  
to the warning that Arthur should not make war lightly or in a boastful  
spirit against an adversary whose worth and nobility of character are  
praised by a member of the opposing party. The firmness of Arthur's  
resolve, his re-iteration of his intension, in the face of such a warning,  
is a cardinal point in the construction of the English version. In order  
to give reality and importance to the scenes which follow the king must  
be made to stake his reputation as the supreme overlord of all whom  
within his sphere, not in wilfulness or malice, but calmly and deliberately.  

And for the same reason he must be given an opponent who is  

1) 1.291 is one of a number of single lines in the text which are  
defective.
worthy of him. The space and the care which the alliterative poet has devoted to drawing the character of the adversary, and describing the impregnable of his stronghold, make it clear that he realised the importance of preparing a proper moral and psychological basis for the scenes of action which follow. The imprisonment of Girflet is an adequate reason for the original attack, but the conflict between the spirit of proud independence shown by the lord of the castle and Arthur's indomitable determination to break that spirit is, on human grounds, much more interesting. The issue is, in addition, much more explicitly stated than in the original version, and at a point where it prepares effectively for the introduction of the action whose significance largely depends upon the moral spirit in which it is undertaken.

The effectiveness of the passage is, however, somewhat marred by an oversight on the part of the redactor. His choice of a pilgrimage to replace the rescue of Girflet as the purpose of Arthur's journey proves embarrassing when the adventure of the Chastel Erguelleus on the way. A secular mission could have been postponed or forgotten at this point, but the pilgrimage cannot be neglected. To prevent a serious interruption in the narrative thread it is hurriedly dismissed, with a brevity which reveals how little significance the poet attached to the religious associations of Arthur's journey:

The roy rial raid withoutin restin,  
And socht to the siste of Criste,our the salt flude.  
With meall honour in ord he maid his offring;  
Syne buskit hame the samyn way that he before yude.  

(11,301-4.)

And so the narrative returns to the Chastel Erguelleus, the centre of interest throughout the remainder of the poem.

(312-544 : 113b.) After a section in which there is only a vague resemblance between the French text and the much more elaborate English
Antioch set up camp before the Chastel Orgueil:

Après d'ang petit boys d'oliviers eurent ja tendu en ung pré seulz qui devant furent verraux les tentes et les pavillons du roy ou ils dressèrent forces loges.

(fol. 113b.)

But where the French text is briefly factual the English poem is elaborately descriptive:

That plantit doun and polyeoun,vpone and plane lee,
Of pillow and of pillow that proudly was picht,
With mapis of rede gold,riesle to see,
And gret eamsnes of the cynamo,semy by sicht;
Bordouris about,that bright war of ble,
Betin with bright gold,barely and bright;
Frenyels of fyne silk,fretit ful fre
With deur dymonth this beddens,that dayntely was dicht.

(11,312-19.)

There can be no practical reason for this elaboration. The tents of Arthur are equally unimportant in both versions,—at best a human detail intended to give reality to the action which follows. But the alliterative passage is decorative rather than realistic. It suggests description undertaken for its own sake, for the pleasure which the poet takes in the richness of effect given by the adjectival profusion of alliterative verse in such a context. Yet it is not out of place here: excessive and unnecessary elaboration of the physical background is, oddly enough, more in keeping with the heightened atmosphere of the romance than the flat and factual tone of the French prose.

Once the camp has been established both versions turn to the preparations for combat. So far as the French text is concerned these are entirely confined to the besieged party within the Chastel Orgueil:

...
just de ceut ne environs, et que de ceste heure gercotent
mis si pendus trois mille escus aux murs du chasteau. Et
ainsi comme Brandelie ceste chose au roy s'ensuit, voient
a droite venir a apporter a la muraille plus de trois mille
confanes, ou lannes confanes, feistes de diverses fagon
et illocques d'escus ayoit aux enceintes par dehors pendus.
Apres ce vontrent chevaliers our destriers et par galefroi
des foresa tout a plain laur a et grand route vers le
chasteau venir, ou ils entrerent. (vol. IIIb.)

This represents almost the total content of the French text at this
poin,-less than a single column of print. On this basis the English
redactor has built something very much more elaborate. He provides
seven stanzas describing the preparations for battle, of which there
are only occasional reminiscences of the original in points of detail.

Supporters pour into the castle from all sides-

Many saw to the way to the site set;
Schipon saw the streme that stichil full straung, 
With alain vapping, I eie, that was for more wrought,
(11.479-81.)

banners and shields are displayed-

Ilke monegane his enseny showin has their;
Furly fayre was the feild, richesit and saw
With gold and goudit in grymmes,
Schipond schairly and schayynes;
The sone, sa cristall sa aleynes,
In schabillies that schean. (11.479-9.)

while a horn sounds to announce the begining of conflict. Yet even
where there are echoes from the French text the original idea is usually
transformed, both in scale and in interpretation. For example, the horn
 sounded from the castle and the shields hung upon the walls are strangely
associated in a scene which, though it is quite in keeping with the pre-
paratory function of the original has no counterpart in the French version-

As the reigned roy was reigned wyone now,
With the sime of the Round Tabill, that was richest,
The king croxnit with salongloly to kne,
With rememr baronie and heirnies of the best,
He hard and bagull blast breys and one loud blaw,
As the saylyy gons alit to the rest.
A mawe pelon to one g.ret, gismand to schaw,
Turnit to ane his toure, that toun was full trust;
Ane helme of hard steil in hand has he hynt;
Ane scheild wroght all ouf weir,
Seynt vail vpone faur;
He grippit to ane grete sporr,
And furth his vail wynt.

"What signifi's yone scheene scheild?" said the senyeour,
"The lufty helme and the lance, all ar awa;
The brym blast that he blew with ane stevin stour?"
Then said sir Spynagres with speche: "The auth sal! I say.
Yone is ane froik in his force, and fressch in his flour,
To se that his schir was be sickor of assay;
He thinkis proves to prove, for his paramour,
And prik in your presence, to purchese his pray.

(11.519-37.)

Elaborations of this sort seem, at first sight, purposeless
and difficult to explain. But there is reason to believe that the
redactor has spun some 230 lines from less than a column in his source
with a single end in view: in order to impress upon the reader the mag-
nitude of the task which Arthur has undertaken in attempting to subdue
an opponent whose power, resource, authority and resoluteness are apparent
in every detail mentioned. The description of military might is the
most obvious way of achieving this effect, and the alliterative poet
spares no effort in building up an impressive picture of the forces of
chivalry marshalling within the castle:

Be it wes myldmerne and mere,mercit on the day,
Sohir Solagros very mer,meanful of myght,
In greis and guratouris,grathit full gay,
Segyno score of scheildis thait athis at ane ncht;
Ane helme set to ilk scheild,sither of assay,
With fel lase on left,leemad ful light.
Thys flourit thait the fore front,their fays to fray,
The froikis,that aer fundin farses and forsay in fght.
Ilk knyght his curnesse kit-kit ful cleir;
Their names wrettin all thare,
Quhat berno that it bare,
That ilk froke quhere he fare
Right wit quhat he weir.  (11.485-92.)

And it is important, in view of later developments, to note that in the
English work these preparations are not confined to the display of
knightly shields and banners. Some of them are of a purely practical
and realistic order, which would probably have surprised and shocked the
readers of chivalric romances—

Thai bord bowa of bram wealthly within;
Falishtis malmed to pase,
Gapand gournys of brusa,
Grundin ganseis their wase,
That said ful gret dyme. (11.455-56.)

Despite his reliance upon a French source, the exercise of his creative
imagination has led the English poet to introduce contemporary details
in a way which was apparently impossible for the redactor of the Six-
teenth century prose print in re-working the Twelfth century romance.
The implication of such descriptive passages as a prologue
to combat would be obvious to the contemporary reader, but the English
author, with his tendency to underline every effect and to state every
issue as clearly and directly as possible, makes another attempt to be
still more explicit. At the sight of the elaborate defensive prepara-
tions within the castle Arthur expresses his admiration at the strength
and resolution of his adversary, but renew his determination to subdue
him—

"Yone is the wiliest wane," said the wise king,
"That ever I vist in my walk, in all this world wyde;
And the straitest of stuff, with richesse to ring,
With vishanit borys borgans to abide;
Any wane do thame an deir with vodonyg;
Yone house in an huge hie, fra harmo thame to hide;
Yit sal I mak thame varfite, foroutis restis,
And rove thame thair restis, with routis full ride,
 though I said fynd thame new notis for this ix yeir;
And in his bene presence
Hair call I mak residence,
Not he with force mak defence,
Wit strength me to steyr. (11.493-506.)

One of his followers, Sir Spynagros,—still speaking with the special
knowledge of the castle and its defenders which he derives from Bran
de Lis, though there is nothing in the French to augment this particular passage—answer him in terms which imply a rebuke of his boastful雄.

"Quanto media", said Sire Agras, "sic notis tu nevin, Or only terms be turned, I tell you treulty? For their is aegis in yone unill vil met wythe sovin, Or they be wran it, I wis, I warne you ilk wy. One hardier of hertic vaith the kevin, Or they be dantit with dreed, err it thei do, And thei with men wythe mold be masht full swin, Thise salbe fundin right force, and full of chivalrie. Sir, ye ar in your maist, your mayne and your myght, Yit within thair dais thre, The sicker suth saith ye as, Whate hir men that thei be, And now thei darr fight." (11.506-10.)

And again it should be noted that the forthcoming conflict is spoken of in sternly realistic terms, not as an occasion for chivalric display but as a battle to the death. In this respect also the English author is preparing for a major change later in the narrative, when his redaction is to differ fundamentally from the original version.

These preliminaries to combat would one imagines be sufficient to make the redactor's point—that the forces of Arthur are here matched against worthy opponents of whom a member of the Round Table can speak with admiration. But the point has so far been made almost wholly in general terms, with reference to the defenders of the castle as a body and with regard merely to military preparations. But the English author had sufficient subtlety to realise that in characterising the opposing forces, these were not the only elements to which he must pay attention. His source postulated not only a conflict between the company of the Round Table and the defenders of the Chastele Orgueillous but, more important, a personal struggle between Gawain and the Lord of the castle. He realised that this personal conflict, though it was to take place on a
physical level as a contest of military prowess, was primarily a clash
of chivalric personalities which would determine not merely who was the
stronger warrior but who was the more perfect knight, displaying the
greatest nobility of character and refinement of courtly behaviour.

Having already reminded his readers of Gawain's traditional character
in the incident at the castle of Yser la Bel, the redactor found it unnec-
necessary to add much to his original in this connection. But that
Gawain may later be matched with an opponent worthy of him the redactor
has provided ten stanzas in which there is only one theme: the courage,
prowess, and nobility of the lord of the castle.

At a council of the Round Table it is decided to send an
embassy demanding that those within the castle submit to Arthur, and
Gawain, Yvain, and Lancelot are chosen for the mission. Before they ride
off Sir Spynagros warms them how they must behave—speaking once more
in the character of the knowledgeable Bran de Lis, and, in this instance
also, without warrant from the French text—

Spynagros than spake, said: "Lordingis in he,
I rede ye tark treuly to my teacing;
For I know ye be bawde bernes beter than ye,
His land, and his lordschapel, and his lawes,
And ye ar thre in this thode, thousand eft in thrang;
War al your strentchin in ane,
In his grippin and ye gane,
He wald corow yow illume;
Tom aterne in an straw.

And he is maed onold naik as ane child,
Blithe and beausun that biurde as byrd in hir houn,
Ways of hall arm of face as flour walfl,
Woldir etallart and strang, to streein in ane stour,
Thairfor mildly witouth hail to that myld,
And maik him no wareis,bot al measure.
Thus with truyt ye ast ye trow vaure tyld,
And faeud his frendship to fan; with fynes favaur,
It hynrics never fer to be hynedly of speche;
He is ane lord rible,
Ane sayaly souwcrane in ane,
Ane wourthy wy fer to saile;
Throu all this world reche! (11.341-52.)
Praise of this kind comes all the more effectively from one of the opposing party, and the effect is reduplicated by the lord's behaviour when the three ambassadors appear before him. They are received with ceremonious courtesy, and Gauain delivers their embassy, giving the reader an opportunity to convey upon his character and deportment:

Then sahir Gauyn the gay, rude and gracious,
That ever was buildit in blis, and bounte embray,
Joly and gentill, and full chevalours,
That noysy poynt of his prysse was fundin defail,
Agil and armi, and wyght armi,
Illuminat with lust, and with luft lust,
Dole of the message to sahir Colagras,
Before the rynle on raw the rynk was noght wait;
With one clane contentance, cunly to know,
Said:"Our seourane Artheor
Oreathe the with honour,
Hae said us thre as mediuator,
His message to achna." (1.389_401.)

There follows an elaborate exchange between Gauain and the lord,-here called Sir Colagras,-conducted in terms of utmost respect and expressed in highly-rought phrasology, still with alliteration, full of formal eloquence. Gauain praises the nobility of Artheor whom kings are proud to serve, speaks of the high repute of Colagras, and demands his friendship and allegiance on his master's behalf. With equal eloquence Sir Colagras replies:

Then said the squire of the sail, with sad semblance:
"I thank your gracious grote lord and his gude wil;
Had ever laid of this land, that had been levered,
laid any feate before, freik, to fulfill,
I will sickirly myselfe be consequent,
And seek to your seourane, sayly on syll,
Son hail our daughry alderie has been endured,
Throsandy in this thede, uncharkit as thril,
If I, for obesiance or boast, to bondage no bynde,
I war weorthy to be
Hingit heigh on axe tre,
That ilk creature might se,
To waff with the wynd,

But saund my sancencyr fra subjection,
And my lordseip un-laut, withoutin legiance,
In these two stanzas Golagrus paints his own character—courteous, noble, courageous and calmly independent—with greater effect than the remaining 200 lines of the passage.

The amount of attention which the English poet pays to the character of Golagrus seems, at first sight, out of all proportion and contrasts strangely with the brief references in the French text, which provide no hint for this elaborate characterization. It is only when the redaction is studied as a whole that the reason for this discrepancy in scale becomes apparent. The English author is here replacing material from his source of which he makes no use, and for which some substitute is necessary if his redaction is to have force and meaning. His omission of all references to the imprisonment of Girflet has already forced him to supply another reason for the attack upon the Chevalier Orguelles,—Arthur's desire to win submission from a free knight who has never owned allegiance to anyone. If this substitute is to be more than an empty pretext submission must be formally demanded and formally denied as it is in this passage: any attack without such a formality would reflect the greatest discredit upon the honour of the Round Table. But, as we shall see at the end of the poem, this matter of allegiance was more than a mere formal pretext in the eye of the English redactor, and his treatment of it here is in accordance with the significance
which it held for him. More important, however, is the preparation made
here for the later omission of an element upon which the whole plot
turns in the original version. In the French text Gauvin ultimately
spares his opponent and saves defeat in order to save the life of a lady
in love with the Lord of Chastel-Guelle, who will die if he is harmed.
But the English redactor knows nothing of love; in his version the lady
never appears, and Gauvin makes his chivalrous sacrifice in order to save
the life of a noble opponent who refuses to choose between death and
dishonor. It is at this point in the redaction that both Gauvin and
the reader are made aware of this nobility of character in the future
adversary, and it was no doubt for this reason that the English poet
made Gauvin the bearer of the royal demand to Colagrus and the witness
of his resolute refusal to submit.

In view of the magnitude of the sacrifice which Gauvin is
later called upon to make this character-sketch, upon which his respect
for Colagrus is based, could scarcely be over-drawn. But even in view of
the dual function which it fulfills and the scope and importance of the
excised material which it replaces, the extent of the passage, the re-
iterated glorification of Colagrus, — through the reports of Brynagres, in
Arthur’s grudging admiration, and even in the nobility of his own words
to Gauvin, — seems altogether excessive. Something at least of this
excess may be due to the alliterative poet’s pleasure, — evident at other
points in the redaction, in the conduct of elaborate and formal conver-
sations. Gauvin’s mission to the court of Colagrus provides a splendid
opportunity for the composition of courteous speeches in which the stately
rigidity of alliterative verse, slow-moving yet emphatic, is an advantage
rather than a defect. Had the poet not welcomed this opportunity to
display his mastery of the medium in such a context the desired effect might well have been achieved with more economy. The speeches are not impositive or unsuccessful in themselves, but their elaboration contrasts rather oddly with the way in which the narrative is scoped elsewhere, when the narrator is drawing his material from the French source and not from his own imagination.

(545-766 : 113b - 115c.) Preliminaries having been completed, at great length in the English text, within a few lines in the French--both versions proceed to describe the conflict before the Chasteil Orguillons. In the

Fol.113b

Persuad Continuation the nature of the combat is at once made clear when, at a feast in Arthur's pavilion, Lycan requests that the joust of the first day should be his:-

"Sire, fait il, je vous priso et requiers me ostreier et
donner la premiere joute du matin, car a cause de mon
office me appartient. Et le roy responde: 'Je, fait il, ne refuseray la premiire requeste qui m'a esté en ce
pains demandes, et pour ce de bon escoler vous l'octroie';

(fol. 113c.)

The issue is to be tried in a series of individual combats between a knight of the Round Table and one of the defenders of the castle. The whole matter is to be formally arranged and Arthur's companions urge the king to allot to each his day of combat:-

(fol. 113c.)

Et par estatement chasjun au roy disoit ses joyeux,
en luy requirant par deduit qu'il assister a chasjun
son jour pour hons de crainte les gester. Et le roy
disit que mon fera, mais en ceste pour los tires et
que ainsi il luy vient a gré.

(fol. 113c.)

When Lycan rides out as the first champion of the Round Table it is not, therefore, to an open battlefield, but to the lists where the rules of the tournament hold good:-

(fol. 113c.)

et entre au pré de la bataille, qui ung lieu ordonné estoit; pour combattre a tous ceux qui bataille vouloit.
Or vous faut il entendre que aux quatre quartes de ce pré furent quatre oliviere plantes, qui au camp la divisä
There is nothing whatsoever to correspond to this in the English version.

In place of the courtly preliminaries, Arthur merely appoints one of his followers to meet the knight who is seen riding out from the castle.

And when they meet there is no suggestion that it is within the lists or under the rules of the tourney. These omissions do not seem significant in themselves; they are on a par with similar instances in which the redactor appears anxious to press on with the action to the neglect of elements which are merely preparatory or incidental to it. Only later, in the light of the general treatment of combat in the alliterative poem, will it become apparent that these particular details have been omitted because they conflict with the redactor’s whole conception of the struggle which occupies the greater part of his composition and monopolises his attention from this point onward.

So far as the French text is concerned the joust of the first day, in which Lucan encounters an unnamed knight from the Chastel Orguellous, sets a pattern which is to be repeated on subsequent occasions:

quant Lucain en ce pré fut entré, guerres s’attendit long- omn que mout fierement voit venir hors du chasteau ung chevalier, qui sur ung grand cheval seoit, de toutes armes bien armé, qui au pré s’en vient grand allure ou en ce lieu sans atoigner. Les lances sur les arrestent moi rent, puis brocherent des espoorns; si est l’unge vers l’autre venu, lesquols en leurs sances grand coups donnerent. Le chevalier premièrement s’arrêtet Lucain torant que se lance en pieuse volon. Mais bien sequit le bouteiller trouver, lequel par si grand force l’a rencontré que jus de son cheval enuy le pré l’a porté. Et quant il le veist abatu, le doctier grint et s’en retourne, et l’austre au pré tout quoy laisse a pied, desgarni de monceure. (fol.113d.)

Though by force of arms the day in Lucan’s he has committed a technical fault which deprives him of victory, Eras de Lim explains that had he
brought his defeated opponent to Arthur's camp as a prisoner the castle would have surrendered immediately. At once began makes back to the field where he is met by a new champion, overpowering, and led away to join Siriflot in imprisonment within the castle. It is not surprising to find that the English author takes no notice of this technicality or its outcome. In the original the whole matter is extremely vague: Bran de Lis does not explain why the Chastel Orguelleux should surrender because the first of its champions is led off the field in defeat, and when he himself brings a beaten adversary into Arthur's camp on the following day there is no mention of a general surrender, and the contest continues on subsequent days. The redactor was well advised to ignore such an unnecessary and pointless complication. He concentrates instead upon the practical details of the combat, but even in this connection his version bears only the vaguest resemblance to the French. In his text the engagement opens with a duel between Sir Caudefeir as representative of the Round Table and Galiet who rides out from the castle. This is only the first of several combats in which the names of the original protagonists have been replaced by others, or supplied where they are lacking in the French. The issue is a general one and will be discussed as such at a later point. An alteration of more immediate significance affects the nature of the combat itself. Lucan's meeting with his opponent is a formal joust, described in vague general terms without individual details of arms or action, and it ends without injury to either party. The encounter between Caudefeir and Galiet is, by contrast, a much more serious affair:

Caudefeir and Galiet, in gleamand steil media, 
As glaisie glowany on gleid, grynlly thai ride; 
Kosir sterno thy steir on their stent stedie 
Athir borne fra his blank borne was that tide.
Thai rusebit vp madly, quhe en right rede;
Out with swordis thai swung fra their schalk side;
Their with wraithly thai wrik, thai worthy in redeis;
Hawit on the hard steeil, and hurt thame in the hide.

Sa wondir freashly thai frekin rusebit in feir;
Throw all the harnes thai bade,
Beith birny and breast-plade,
Thairin wesynis south wade,
Sit ye but weir.

Thus thai taught vpone fold, with ane fel fair,
Subill athir bune in that broth bokit in blude;
Thus thai sollit on mold, ane myle way and maire,
Wraithly wrought, as thei war witlense and wade;
Beith thai magic forsath, sadly and sair,
Thought thai war astonait, in that stour stithly thai stude.
The fight as fellly thai fane, with ane frechc fair,
Subill Caudifair and Galiot bith to grund yeude.
Caudifair got vp agane, throu Goddis grete mightis;
Alone him wightely he wan,
With the craft that he can;
Thai louit God and sanct an,
The king and his knightes (11, 557-52.)

The violence of this combat, made all the more evident by the vigour of the alliterative medium, suggests the reality of a duel to the death rather than the make-believe of the joust. The imaginative detail in which it is described seems to reflect a personal interest on the part of the poet, an interest which extends to the technicalities of the engagement, the power of the blows exchanged and the violence of their effect, and is not limited merely to its ultimate outcome. Though on this occasion the result is not fatal to either party, blood is shed on both sides, and the general contrast with the French version is sufficient to suggest that the redactor's intention differed widely from that of the original author. Yet this passage merely hints at a fundamental distinction between the two versions which grows more extreme from this point onwards: a contrast between the treatment of warfare in the French text, with its formalised description of individual combats conducted according to the conventions of the joust, and the violent multiple engagements of the
English redaction, which result in bloodshed, injury and death.

In the Perceval Continuation this phase of the action covers three days: on the first Lucan has the joust and is eventually taken prisoner; on the second Bran de Lis represents the Round Table and leads his opponent to Arthur in defeat; while on the third day Kay is driven beyond the limits of the field and forfeits his horse to the enemy. The English author eventually makes some use of the incident of the third day, though not at this point in his narrative. This apart, his redaction bears only the loosest resemblance to the original. Of the first two days he makes four: on the first, already described, Gaudifeir defeats and captures Galiot, the representative of the besieged party; on the second Sir Hannswold of Arthur's company meets Sir Rigel of Rone, and both are killed; on the third each side sends out four knights, Lyonel, Iwain, Bedwar and Gyromalace of the Round Table engaging Louyn, Edmond, Bantellas and Sanguel, until two knights are captured on one side, and on the other one is captured and one killed; finally, on the fourth day, each side puts five champions in the field, Agalus, Edmond, Mychin, Maligor and Hew representing the besieged in combat with Codar, Owales, Iswell, Myrest and Emell, and each loses two prisoners to the other party.

It should be apparent, even from this outline, that the contrast between the French and English versions in their treatment of combat

1) Vide infra, pp. 363-70.

2) The problem presented by this spate of names in the English text is discussed below, vide, pp. 404-3. It should be noted here that 'Emell' as it occurs in 1.745 is only doubtfully a proper name. The whole episode suggests that the redactor was careful to balance the forces engaged on either side: the failure of a copyist to notice his intention may account for the confusion over the name of the fifth knight in Arthur's force. For a full explanation of the problem see P.J. Amours, op. cit., p. 275.
The narrative of combat, lacking even this degree of descriptive individuality, follows the same formalised pattern in each case: the knights charge, break their lances upon each other and are unhorsed, but rise, draw swords, and fight on foot until one or the other is overcome and yields. The victory in each case is a bloodless one, and observance of the technicalities of jousting play as large a part as military skill, as Kay discovers to his cost:

Puise le chevalier se haste quant son capon rompu apparaert,que a force de le poursuivre,Neux par force armes hors les bornes qui au quatre oliviers tendent et estoient aux quarès du pré.  

(fol.113v - fol.114v.)

The siege of the Chastel Orgueiloue, as the French author conceives it, is an elaborate game, played out with all ceremony, in an area specially designated for the purpose, and according to a code of behaviour tacitly
accepted by both sides, and apparently, so familiar to the contemporary reader as to require no explanation. The issue between the two parties is treated seriously, Arthur aiming at the surrender of the castle, but though it is to be decided by a trial of strength and skill it is not made a matter of life and death. The incident is handled by the prose author with his usual competence, but there is nothing to suggest that it had any particular significance for him, beyond its practical function in his story. And, for the most part, his attention is concentrated upon the ceremonial and ritualistic rather than the purely military aspects of the engagement.

Everything in the alliterative version combines to suggest that the attitude of the English redactor was in direct contrast. The element of the joust, apparent in his account of the duel between Gaudifer and Galiet, can barely be detected in the narrative of the engagement upon the second, third and fourth days. Only the limitation of the forces involved and the matching of representative champions from the two sides distinguishes it from general warfare. It is still, as in the French, a judicial combat, but of a more sternly realistic kind; a trial of skill decided, not on technical grounds, but by death or serious injury. And, above all, it is characterised by a violence so extreme and so forcefully conveyed that the prose narrative seems, by comparison, artificial, colourless and lacking in action.

Such a summary as this might lead anyone familiar with the general practice of Middle English redactors in dealing with French originals to suspect that the author of Golagros and Gawain, failing to appreciate his source, has merely scarredened and spoilt it by concentrating on the element of violence to the neglect of other, more subtle, issues in the French. This would be a mistaken view. Those elements which
are preliminary or incidental to combat, and on which the French author
dwells, have neither been neglected nor misinterpreted by the alliter-
ative poet. He too realised the importance of arms and armour as ad-
 juncts of the knight, and he has described the arming of Sir Rannald in
some detail:

The deir dight him to the deid, be the day dew;
His bryn and his bannet, burnist full bens;
Faith his horse and his greir was of ane haile hew,
With gold and goulis an gay graithit in grene;
Ane schoene scheild and ane schaft, that scharpily was sched;
Thus ber-hedis he bair;
As his aldaris did air,
Subhik beirnis in Britane wair,
Of his blude bled. (I1.606-8.)

This is in no sense a reproduction of the arming of Bran de Lis in the
original: it is the quality and splendour of the arms, and the heraldic
warrant of their wearer's noble ancestry, which interest the English
redactor, not the mere ceremonial of arming. And elsewhere in this
episode he shows that for him the battle is not merely a formal exchange
of blows, but an intimate reality whose importance and gravity are
reflected in the emotional reactions of the onlookers. When Sir Rannald
and Sir Rigil kill each other he supplies a comment, for which, naturally,
there is no warrant in his sources:

All the bernys on the bent about that beheld,
For pure sorow of that sight that sight vusound.
Schieir teris achat for schalkis, sehan wair ascheild,
Cwhan thair foundrit an fel foy to the grund;
Faith their bertis can brist, braithly but boild,
Thair wes na stalwart vasteirnit, so sternes wes the stound! (I1.637-42.)

Passages of this kind represent a refinement upon the original and show
that, despite his preoccupation with the violence of combat the alliter-
ative poet was not so insensitive as to ignore other, more human, aspects
of warfare.

But it is true that, despite their significance, such elements
occupy only a small proportion of the 230 lines which the English
redactor has devoted to the opening phases of the battle. They are
largely submerged in the reiterated and minutely detailed description
of physical violence which occupies the poet’s attention to the virtual
exclusion of everything else. It is in his treatment of this element
that the English author appears most original and most independent of
his French source. Even here, however, a vague general resemblance to
the original can be traced. The combat serves the same practical
function in the development of the plot, and individual engagements
follow the same basic pattern: the knights charge against each other,
break their lances and are unhorsed, but draw their swords and fight upon
foot to a conclusion. But there the resemblance ends. Where the French
author has sketched in the general outlines of each engagement in con-
ventional terms, leaving it to the reader’s imagination to supply the
details of something which was a commonplace of contemporary life and
literature, the English redactor gives a minute description of the action
which leaves little or nothing to the imagination. More significantly,
where the prose version contains a somewhat trite and general outline
which might be paralleled in a score of contemporary romances, French
and English alike, the alliterative poem supplies something fresh and
original, bearing the signs of imaginative creation and exploiting the
resources of the medium to the full. The violence of action is de-
scribed in intimate detail:

Athir laught has their lance, that Larry in sight;
On ten stede thai standed, with one stornr sachtie:
Togiddir freascly thai freacit franacht, in say;
Their spears in splendrisc sprant,
On scheldie schonkit and sacht;
Swin ou their hadie went,
In feld fir away.
Thai luftly ledis belis lightit on the land,
And laught out suerdis, luftly and lang;
Thair stedis stakkerit in the stour, and stude stummerand,
Al to-stiffillit and stonayt, the strakis war sa strang!
Athir borne braithly bet with ane bright brand;
On fute freschly thai frekis feghtin thai fang;
Thai hewit on hard steil, hartly with hand,
Quhill the spalis and the sparkis spedely out sprang.
Schir Ransald raught to the rank ane rout was verryde;
Cleely in the collair,
Fifty maillydis and mair
Ruvin of the schuldair he schair;
Ane wound that was wyde. (11.615-34.)

Inevitably, the same features recur again and again: spears are splintered,
swords broken, helmets cleft and mail shorn away. But this repetition
is as much part of the general effect as the regular iteration and marked
stress of the alliterative verse. By skilful variation of a limited
vocabulary the poet has been able to continue the same vigorous description
over many stanzas without allowing the effect to become monotonous:

Thai riche birnys thai bet derfly with dynt,
Newis down in grete heant, hartly with hand.
Thai mighty men vpon mold ane riale course maid,
Quhill clowie of olene maill
Hopit out as the haill;
Thay beirnys in the bataill
Sa bauldly thai laid!

Thai bet on sa bryimly, thai beirnys on the bent,
Bristis birnais with brandis burnist full bene;
Throu thair schene scheildis thair schuldiris var schent,
Fra schalkis schot schyre blude our scheildis so schene;
Hynais of rank steill rattrillit an rent,
Comys grisly on the grund granis on the grene.
The roy ramyt for reuth, richist of rent,
For cair of his knightis cruel and kene,
Sa wondir freschly thair force thai frest on the feildis!
Sa huge wes the melle,
Wes nane sa suttell south so
Quhilk gome sulid gouern the gre,
Bot God that al weildis.

The wyis wroght vthir grete wandreth and weuch,
Wirkand woundis full wyde with wapnis of were;
Selays of hard steill thai battenit and heuch,
In thait hailaing thai hynt grete harmsys and here;
All to-turnit thair entyre, traistly and tewch,
Burnist bladis of steill throw birnais they bera;
Sohart surdisia of scheth smartly thay drench,  
Athir freik to his fellow, with fellonne affere;  
Throw platis of policst steill their poyntis can passe,  
All thus thai throw in that thrang  
Stalwart strakis and strang;  
With daggaris dorfly thay danc,  
Thai doughtyis on dase. \(11.580-712.\)

It would be difficult to imagine any description of battle more strongly contrasted with the brief, urbane, and somewhat detached version of the French text. The full significance of the contrast is obvious only when the process of redaction is viewed as a whole, but this passage is crucial in that the atmosphere of military violence established here dominates the English poem to its conclusion, becoming more and more pronounced as the work proceeds.

\(\text{115c - 116d.}\) In the French text, the engagement is interrupted at this point by an episode of a very different kind. The judicial combat is broken off by the sound of bells within the castle walls:

A tant somerant les cloches des eglises du chasteau que si grand bruit et noise font que l'on n'y est sutuf Dieu tonner. Et quant le roy est ce son entendu, si est etnqut et demanda la cause de si grand somerie. Et adons Brandalis respondit:"Sire, fait il, je le vous diray. Il est aujourd'hui samedi, or puisqu'il est nomme passe, ne fera mal rien au chasteau, car bien vous die qu'en ce lieu est plus homere la mere de Dieu et veneres qu'en mal lieu\" (fol. 115c.)

As there will be no more jousting until after the holyday, Bran de Lis suggests that Arthur and his followers should spend the time in hunting. During the hunt Gawain is separated from the others and comes upon a tower in the forest, where, under a tree, he finds a knight so deeply sunk in dejection that he seems as though dead. When Gawain attempts to rouse him the strange knight threatens him violently and falls back into his melancholy stupor. Gawain leaves him and rides on through the wood:
Lais pas n'eust demie lieuie allé qu'il rencontra en son chemin une molt belle pointe damoiselle, dessus une palefroy montée, le plus beau qui piega fust veu. Et estoit la housse de ce palefroy, le poitrail, la resne et écroppiere toute batue en or. Et estoit la robe a l'avant, en sa main ung fouet tenoit dont la poignee d'or et d'ivire estoit, et les cordons tous de fil d'or et de soie, de quoy souvent en fier le palefroy.

(p. 116a.)

The lady is pressing on in haste when Gawain stops her:—

"Sire, fait elle, d'arrester ne ay je oure au moins a ceste heure, et pour ce laissez moy aller, car je vous die en verité que j'ay occis ung chevalier, le meilluer que piega fust de voir la terre! "Et comment, luy a dist Gawain, l'avez vous de vos mains occis?" "Ouy, sire, pour tout carrant, car tene moy de me rendre a luy a midy, et pour ce que luy ay morty, je l'ay sur terre trouvé mort; et n'ayoit son pareil au monde!"

(p. 116a - p. 116b)

Reassured that her knight is still alive and waiting for her near the tower, she presses on while Gawain returns to camp and recounts what he has seen. As usual, it is Bran de LIs who supplies the explanation:

Et quant le seigneur de Lis l'oit, si dist au roy: "Sire, fait il, sachez bien que ce chevalier est celluy soudoyer tant riche, qui la riche magnific maintient et qui tant est preux, vertueux et saigne. Celle damoiselle tant ayse, que pucelle et dans la clame, et le chevalier dist qu'il en courra, s'a son plaisir ne jouist d'elle. Il est certain que Dieu a donné et donné de grand force et de hardiesse, mais tant est de la pucelle espris que sans l'avoir il ne peut vivre!"

(p. 116b.)

At this point a great procession pours out from the Chastel Croguelleus to welcome home its master the Riche Soudoier and his amie, now reunited with him. That night there is great rejoicing within the walls:

Une joye fust si tres grande en ceste nuit dedans le chasteau que ne la squarroi exprimer tant y est de luminaire de cyme aux murs et au tour des monstiera, sur les arbres et sur les cloches, que semble a ceulx qui sont dehors que le chasteau soit en feu enflamé. Grand bruit feirrent monestiers de core, tubours, fleutes et trompes, a jouer et moner doiz plaisir jusques a la nuijiet s'emploierent.

(p. 116c.)

This is an episode of great importance, though its full significance does not become apparent until later, in the climax of the action,
-a climax for which this is an essential preparation. It introduces
the heroine of the Chastel Orguelleus adventure and the love-element
which plays such a vital part in the French romance. The crisis of the
French tale, when it comes, will be a crisis of love, the love of the Riche
Soudoier for the unnamed lady. The sole function of this passage is to
demonstrate forcefully and succinctly the extent of that love. Everything
which we are told of the heroine,—the splendour of her appearance, the
melancholy into which her lover is thrown by her absence and her fear
that his disappointed love has killed him; the ceremony with which she
is received by his followers and the rejoicing within the Chastel
Orguelleus,—is intended to suggest her worthiness and the honour in
which she is held by the Riche Soudoier and everyone connected with him.

Of all this the English version knows nothing. No hunt
interrupts the mounting crescendo of military violence in the allitera-
tive poem; there is no heroine and no element of love either hero or
elsewhere in the redaction. All known texts of the First Continuation
agree with the 1530 Print in including the hunting episode, and, as we
shall see, there is evidence to suggest that it was also in the version
known to the English redactor. His omission can, therefore, be accepted
as deliberate. Its full significance will not become apparent until the
climax of the action is reached, a crisis which must, as a result of this
omission, be fundamentally different from that in the French romance.
This is the most important change made by the English author in adapting
the original to his purpose and its repercussions can only be appreciated
in full when the redaction is viewed as a whole.

As the redactor apparently decided to ignore the love element
in his source, it is natural that he should make no use of what follows
in the French text. When the jousting is renewed Arthur accords the
day to Yvain, who, after the usual formal engagement,—the charge, the
breaking of lances, and the sword-fight on foot,—eventually defeats the
representative of the Chastel Orguelleus and leads him prisoner to the
royal camp. He reveals himself as a young Irish knight who has long
served the amie of the Riche Soudoier:—

"Sire, je sçay pour vérité que demain joustera premier
monsire le Riche Soudoier, et vous en diray la maniere.
L'ans ont ung establissement qu'au matin se lievent les
pucelles, les demoiselles et les dames, et s'en viennent
aux murs regarder pour veoir se mal verront des voustres,
et celle qui le premier advise le chevallier estant au
près, s'en va le sien amy armer incontinent, sans atanger.
C' est ainsi que ma dame toutes les manda au soir et si
leur commande que pour l'amour d'elle nulle ne voulisat
premier que sa personne aux murailles monter ne au pré
regarder. Pour ce bien pourra estre ainsi de la jousté
que vous ay ditz." (fol. 116d.)

This, too, is clearly designed to show the great love and honour in which
the lady is held by the Riche Soudoier, but here the theme begins to be
woven into the general plot of the romance. When Gawain asks who will
represent the besieged party in the joust of the following day, the Irish
knight replies:

"Et me feist mon sire yer chevallier pour l'amour et en
faveur de s'amie, et pour recompense de mon service me
octroya et donne le jousté pour ce jour. Mais pour rien
ne l'oust octroie, se ma dame ne l'en priast.... (fol. 116d.)

The passage is more important than may, at first sight, be apparent. It
makes it clear that when the Riche Soudoier appears in the lists it will
be by his lady's wish and through her agency. As a result the reader
is conscious that, throughout the scene which follows, her eyes are on
her knight and that she is, to some extent, responsible for what befalls
him. The alliterative author's rejection of the love element, and conse-
equent re-interpretation of the whole Chastel Orguelleus episode, makes
such subtlety superfluous, and, like everything else connected with the
heroine, it has disappeared without leaving any trace in the English
version. (769-907: 116d - 117b.) Uninterrupted by this interlude, the battle
continues to its climax in the alliterative poem, the final engagement
following closely upon that in which five members from each side take
part. The lord of the castle takes the field by his own decision,
angered at the capture of two of his followers:

Than sehir Golograsa for greif his eaw eone wetnt, 
and wraithe as the wynd, his handie can wryng.
Yet makis he very, very qubasa mynt,
Said: "I sal hurgrane abyle, and one end bryng;
To mornas, sickirly, my self sal us eik to the feeld!"
(11.769-73.)

By this invention the English redactor gives continuity to his battle
narrative and supplies the function of certain details omitted in the
previous section of the original. That their omission was due to
deliberate rejection on his part and not to a lacuna in his source is
suggested by a minor feature which occurs here. In the First Continuation
it is Gawain who initiates the new engagement: when he learns that the
Riche Souldier intends to take the field, he demands from Arthur the
jeuist of the day, is granted it, arms himself and rides into the lists:

Kais longuement n'ys eust asid que au chasteau on feist ung
soor clerement seconor au deessa de la maistresse toux, lequel
si haultement seconor que laisse la terre en frenist plus d'ugne
grande lieue a l'environ, tant fort et mestieiment resson,
Adonc dist Besaire Brandalis au roya: "Si feist il, sachez
que brievement verres le Riche Souldier venir tout armé a
cheval. Car jamies le sor l'oon ne sonne jusques a tant qu'il
se velit arme. S'y ay bien au son entendu que raimenant
il a ses esperes chaussée!"
(fol. 117a.)

This is not the first occasion in the French romance on which the horn
has been a battle signal, and on at least one occasion (vide supra, pp. 342)
the redactor has followed his source in using it as such. The bell, on
the other hand, is used only as a prelude to the hunting scenes in the
French text, and it was, most probably, some memory of this which influenced the alliterative poet in giving his version of the present incident.

He buckit to one barfray,
Twa smal bellis rang thay;
Than seyally Arthur can say,
Was sohene vudir scheidil.

"What signifiis yone rynging?" said the ryale;
Than said Spynagros with speche:"Schir, sen speir,
That sail I tell yow with tong, treuly in taill.
The wy that waldis yone wane, I warn you but weir,
He thinkis his aune self shall do for his daill;
Is rane as proud in this part of ryth is his peir.

Yet once more Sir Spynagros fills the role of Bran de Lis in explaining the usages of the Chastele Orgueilleux. But the redactor has extended his function far beyond the original, and with a specific purpose in view. He has replaced the formal ceremonial of the arming of the Riche Soudoir with a long panegyric (ll. 784-833) on the character of his English counterpart, Sir Golagrus. Spynagros has been heard in praise of Golagrus on previous occasions but now he concentrates upon the physical prowess and knightly skill of the adversary as the qualities most relevant to the engagement about to begin. He urges Gawain not to undertake the duel and Gawain, naturally, persists in his intentions.

"Sen ye ar as worscheipfull, and wourthy in wre,
Dasyt with the darest, maist doughty in deid,
Yne borne in the battale wil ye nought forborne,
For al the mobill on the mold, merkit to reid?
"Gif I de doughtely, the lee is my dere,
Thoght he war Sampson himself, sa me Criste reid!
I foresanught to fesht, for al his grete feir,
I do the weill for to wit, doultesse but dreid!"

The function of this lengthy interpolation clearly is to stress the magnitude of the task before Gawain by suggesting the great worth and high reputation of his opponent. These are the qualities which bear weight with Gawain in the decision which he is called upon to make at the climax of the poem, so that this passage, together with others in
the alliterative poem previously devoted to the praise of Golagrus, virtually duplicates the function of the hunting incident omitted by the English redactor. The contrast between the excised material and the panegyric of knightly virtues put into the mouth of Syymagros is indicative of the fundamental transformation affected by the redactor, which has altered the whole nature of the story.

The fact that such praise is voiced by a knight of the Round Table gives it added force, and Gawain's persistence in seeking the encounter with Golagrus reflects his own courage and resolution. But, for the most part, the redactor has been content to rely on the traditional character of Gawain and has not attempted to do for him what he has been at such pains to do for his adversary. In the original version, on the contrary, all attention is concentrated upon Gawain before the duel, and there is no attempt to characterise the niche Scoudier, except in so far as his love for his ami is concerned. The French author follows Gawain through all the preliminaries to battle:

....messeire Gauvain se leva, puis esveilla messire Yvain, lequel legierement feist lever. Puis s'en allerent prive- ment desaduire hors, a la rouse, parlant d'ungue chose et puis d'aultra. Et estoit ceste matinée si clare et si pure et si belle que se faut pour se merveiller. Et en ceste rouseau laversent leurs mais, les yeux et le visage. Puis au pavillon se retirèrent, ou se firent vestir de leur mais et de leurs manteaux. Et pendant qu'ils entendirent a regarder les armes de Gauvain, le roy se leva, et test après allerent la messe ouir, que le roy feist de Saint Esprit celebrer. Et,quant la messe fut chante, au pavillon sont retournées. Et après disner sans attendre a fait Gauvain ses armes appoter. (fol.116d - fol.117a.)

There is nothing at all unusual or striking in this passage or in the description of the arming of Gawain which follows it, but this type of relaxed and polished narrative, with details of human interest which give depth and reality to the story, is highly characteristic of the prose text.
and suggestive of the fundamental differences in narration and in atmosphere which distinguish it from the alliterative work. This conventional method of stressing Gawain's chivalric ability, by concentrating attention upon him in the formal ceremonies of arming and阵仗 the richness of his accoutrements, has no appeal for the English author. In so far as it exists in the English version it is applied to Gawain's opponent-

With that mony freouch freik can to the feild found,
With Golagras in his gair, gret of degre;
Armat in reda gold, and rubois sa round,
With mony riche reliks, rialo to se.
Thair was on Golagras, quhair he glaid on the ground,
Frenyais of fine silk, fratit full fre.
Apone atarmad stedis, trappit to the heill,
Sexty schalikis full schene,
Cled in armor sa clene,
No wy wantit, I wane,
All stuffit in stail.

That borne raid on ane blonk, of ane blia quhite,
Blyndit all with bright gold and beriallis bright;
To tell of his deir weid war doultis delite,
And also ter for to tell the travails war ticht.
His name and his nobillay was noight for to nytis;
Thair was na bathill sa heich, be half ane fute hicht.
(11,084-900.)

Both by employing the conventional methods of the original in this way and by repeatedly inserting material which throws a favourable light on various aspects of Golagrus' character, the redactor is building up a personality very different in many respects from the Riche Soudoier of the First Continuation. The fact that, here as elsewhere, he lays more stress upon the fundamental chivalric virtues than on the external trappings of rank and power is indicative of the role which he intends Golagrus to play in the redaction.

Although the redactor's method of preparing for the crucial battle scene seems much more deliberate and on a more profound level than that of the French author, his version is awkwardly interrupted by an incident which, at first sight, seems entirely out of place here.
Before Gawain can come into the field, Sir Kay, losing patience, dashes out and encounters an unnamed knight from the castle, who eventually gives up his sword to the Seneschal and is led to Arthur in submission. This is clearly derived from the joust of the third day in the French text, ignored by the redactor in its original context (vide supra, (545-765 : 113b - 115c)). But there the encounter ends in Kay's disgrace; unhorsed, he is driven beyond the limits of the lists, and, when he tries to convince his companions that the victory has been his, they laugh at him. It is difficult to understand why the redactor should have wished to recall this episode here, still more difficult to see why he has altered it to give Kay a victory instead of the humiliation in which the original adventure results. He can scarcely have made the change out of regard for the reputation of the Round Table or the character of Kay, since at this point his whole concern seems to have been to exalt the leader of the opposing party and, in the affair of the dwarf, he was content to follow his source in degrading Kay as a means of emphasising Gawain's courtesy. This effect might have been repeated here, throwing into relief his hero's courage and skill in arms by showing Kay's disgrace in the sphere where Gawain is about to succeed. This was clearly not the redactor's intention, and but for the skill and care with which the redaction as a whole is carried out, one might dismiss the incident as an oversight on his part, by which he missed an opportunity to improve upon his source. There is, however, one possible explanation of the alteration. Gawain is about to win a military victory which he forgoes out of regard for his adversary, appearing in the eyes of his Round Table comrades as a defeated knight. The difficulty of his decision and the magnanimity of his sacrifice will be heightened if he at first appears...
to have failed where Kay, his inferior in other knightly qualities, has succeeded. Whether or not this interpretation is too subtle to have presented itself to readers of the alliterative poem it is impossible to tell, but the redactor is entitled to the assumption that his alteration was deliberate and related to his general treatment of the French work.

(106-1024 : 117b - 117c.) Both versions having prepared for the final duel,—the French largely on the material level, the English, to some extent at least, on the psychological plane,—the two opponents meet. The struggle follows much the same course in both texts: the knights charge, breach their spears on each other's shields, dismount and fight on foot. First one then the other having the advantage,—until finally Gawain stands over his opponent helpless on the ground. But despite this similarity of outline the two versions differ yet more widely in their treatment of combat than in the earlier battle passages. The French account is quite brief and concerns itself largely with incidental features,—the watching crowds who line the walls of the Chastel Arguelam, the heat and thirst from which the combatants suffer, and so on. In the English poem, on the other hand, over a hundred lines are given to close and minutely detailed description of the fighting, in which the ability of alliterative verse to convey the violence of combat is exploited to the full. As before, attention is concentrated upon the crushing force of the blows struck, the shattering of armour, and the spurting of bloods—

With ane bitand brand, burly and braid; 
whilk oft in battle had been his bute and his baldes; 
Ho leit gird to the geome, with greif that he had, 
And claif threw the cantall of the close scheldes. 
Three birny and braist-plait and borden it tald; 
The fulye of the fyne gold fell in the feld. 
The rede blude with the rout folowit the blaid, 
For all the walis, I wis, that the wy wald,
Throw classic of olimn gold, and olimm sa cleir.
Thair with sahir oloegras the ayre,
In rekill angrir and ire,
Alse farse as the fyre,
Leit fle to his feir.

Sic dinte he del to that doughty,
Leit hym destinaty to danger and drie;
Thus was he hundillit full hait, that hawtane, in hy,
The scheld in countir he keat our his olear weid;
Newit on hard steill woundir haintely;
Cart beryallis hop of the hathill about hym on braid.

Inevitably, many of the effects employed in the earlier battle scenes
are repeated, and again reduplicated even within this passage. Weapons
are shattered, mail hewn away, and jewels scattered in the fields:

The tothir stert sic hak, the storne that wes stout,
Hit sahir Gawayne on the gere, qubil gresit wes the gay,
Betit doun the bright gold and beryallys about;
Scheldit his sahir wedis scharpily away,
That lufly lappit war on loft, he gart thame law lout.
The storne stakrit with the strak, and stertis on stray,
Qubill neir his reasone wes tynt, sa rude wes the rout;
The beryalli on the land of bratheris gart light,
Rubis and saphery,
Precious stonis that weir;
Thus dree thai wedis sa deir,
That dantely wes dight.

These repetitions are redeemed by the skill and vigour with which the
passage is handled, and they have the practical effect of showing that
Gawain's victory over a worthy opponent is not easily won. But the
whole episode is far in excess of anything the French author thought
necessary: his interest lay purely in the outcome of the combat, while
the English poet clearly welcomed it for its own sake and seized the
opportunity to exploit his alliterative medium to the full.

(1035-1141 : 1170 - 1180.) With the eventual victory of Gawain both
versions reach the crisis of the action, the scene to which everything
that has so far passed is preparatory. And it is here that the most
significant distinction between the two texts, the key to their funda-
mental disparity, occurs. When Gawain calls on the Riche Benoist to
submit to Arthur's authority or die, he is still dazed, and believing that his amie upon the castle wall must already have died at the sight of his overthrow, he does not wish to live. But once he has recovered and asked Gawain's name, he makes this request of him:

"J'ay une amye, laquelle plus ayme que moy. Se morte est, pour elle meurray si tost qu'en arrray la nouvelle. Si vous requiers par voustre noblesse, par chartie et courttoisie, que m'amie vive, ne rendez par tel convenant que a droit me a tort ne fera chose désormais contre vous hommes qu'il soit au Chasteau Orguilleux. Et s'il vous plaist ceste chose faire pour moy, que present je vous vouldrois dire, par la foy vous fianceray faire tout au vouloir du roy, et si n'auray je chevallier que me luy face au roy fiancer. Mais se m'amie le agavoit, bien en pourroit de deuil mourir, laquelle ne croiroit jamais que par vous susse esté conquis. Et pour ce je vous supplic que se la bien me voulles faire duquel je vous requiers, que leons en la maistresse tour vous plaise auques moy venir. Si me feser honnour ou devant m'amie vous agenouillers et luy direz qu'a elle vous rendez prisonnier et qu'au pré je vous ay conquis, ainsi la vie rendez a moy et a ma bonne amie. Et si la chose faire ne voulez, je vous requiers de moy occire? (fol. 117d - fol. 118a.)

Gawain is faced with a dilemma: if he claims the victory he has won then Arthur's purpose of gaining the submission of the lord of Chastel Orguilleux will be defeated. So great is the love between the Riche Soudoier and his amie that she will die at the news of his defeat, and, knowing her death, he will not yield merely to save his own life. But it is the claim of love rather than feudal duty which influences him in reaching his decision. And it is here that the importance of the hunting episode becomes apparent: recalling the scene in the forest Gawain is persuaded of the violence of the passion which unites the Riche Soudoier and his lady:-

Alors Gauvain se remembr du penser qu'il trouva quant rencontra la damecelle qui luy a diert que mort estoit en la forest desseconde la tour, et aint que de si grand amour l'ayme celle qu'elle mourroit si tost qu'elle acharoit qu'il estoit honny ou vaincu. Foure a moymesme advise que trop grand cruaulte avoit en l'ame faisoit pour l'autre occire. (fol. 118a.)
So, on the understanding that his opponent will eventually submit to Arthur, he agrees to feign defeat and accompanies him to the Chastel Orgevalens.

The corresponding scene in the English redaction clearly cannot be conducted on this basis. In view of earlier excisidues love cannot be urged as a reason for Gawain's self-sacrifice, and a new reason for his opponent's obduracy must be supplied. As in the original, this scene and, indeed, the entire romance, turns upon a single issue, but in the English version the heart of the matter is not love but honour. And the claims of honour are urged in many different forms. When Gawain calls on his defeated adversary to yield he refuses to dishonour his ancestors in order to save his own life:

"Wes I never pit defoullit,nor fyllit in fane,
Nor none of my alderis,that ever I haue nevyn;
Bot ilk borne has been noumend with blane,
Singaul in rialte, and reullit them self even.
Sall never noye voldir son me me with schames,
Me luck on my ichanys with light nor with levin,
Me none of the nynt degris haue noy of my name,
I sware be authent God, that settis all on sevin!
Bot gif that wevship of ware win me away,
I trete for me favoar;
So furth thi dervor;
Of me gettin then no more,
Ditwis this day"  (11.1038-50.)

Gawain, anxious to spare him, tempts him to submit with promises of equal rank in the court of Arthur, to which Golagrus replies that his honour is not to be bought:

"Then war I wundir wons,
To purchase proffit for pris,
Shure acheme my swer lyis,
All my lesing.

The sage that schrankin for my scheme, the schrent night by schen,
That mare luffis his lyfe than lois wpone ord;
Sal never frayk on feld, fraynt nor freynds,
Gar me lux for me luke, lawit nor lord;
For quhene with yourship cail of this world wends,"
Their will none wyis, that ar wis, wary the wall.
For any trety may ygy, I sell the the toyal,
I will noght turn any anent, for all this world brard,
Or I pair of pries are penny-worth in this place,
For bessendi or baryell;
I knew my avn quarrell,
I dredi not the perseill
To see in this case!" (11.1071–57.)

What then, saik Gawain, can he do to save him:

"That wull I tel the wyth tong, trewly in tale,
Said thow deny the in daid to do my deuial;
Lat it worth at my wil the worschip to male,
As I had wensyn the of warse, wourse and wie;
Syns cary to the castel, quhare I have maist sure.
Thus may thow saif me fra syte;
As I am cristynit perfite,
I call thi kyndis quyte,
And saif thyn honoure!" (11.1094–1102.)

If efect, Golagus demand from his conqueror the same sacrifice as
the Riche Souldier, but for the sake of his honour not his love. The
decision to surrender his victory is more difficult for the Gawain of
the English version since he has not had the warrant, given to his French
counterpart in the hunting incident, of the violence of the passion which
motivates his opponent in making this demand upon him. Knowing little
of the lord of the castle, except by report, he is required to trust him
with his own regulation, since, if Golagus fails to keep faith with him
by ultimately making submission to Arthur, Gawain's honour will be injured
in the eyes of his Round Table comrades:

"That war hard," said that boyn," sa have I gude helo!
An wounder perealous poyny, partenyng grete plight,
To acer in thi gentre, but signeto or sale,
And I before saw the neuer, sickerly, with aight;
To lair in thi loute, and show war vale,
Than had I cassi in eair masy knye kniteh.
(11.1103–3.)

His decision, however, is the same as in the original; the duel is briefly
resumed, Gawain pensends to be overcome and accompanies Golagus back
to the castle in apparent defeat.
The outcome, then, like the dilemma with which Gawain is faced, is identical in both versions. Only the motivation of his decision has been changed. But the change is emphatically pointed by the frequency with which the concept of honour is referred to by both Gologras and Gawain. There can be no doubt that the alteration has been deliberately contrived by the redactor. Though the full extent of his reinterpretation only becomes apparent here, he has long been preparing for this scene by numerous changes which only become fully effective at this point.

It is clear, for example, that the frequent interpolations illustrating the nobility of Gologras or directly praising his knighthood qualities have borne weight with Gawain and are responsible for his unwillingness to push his adversary to extremes:

Sohir Gawyne treit the knight to turn his entent, for he was wondir wa to wark hym more wagh. (11.1066-7.)

Sohir Gawyne rewit the rank, that was riale, and said to the reverend, riche and rightuis: "How may I succour the sound, safely in sale, before this papill in place, and pair noght thy pris?" (11.1090-3.)

And the importance which the redactor attached to this conflict of personalities and ideas is indicated by the thoroughness with which it has been worked out. The great extent of the episode is due, in some degree, to the formality of the exchanges between the two knights—the speeches, here as elsewhere, being complicated by alliterative elaboration—but the essential argument has not been spun out artificially. On the contrary, the dilemma is more directly and realistically stated than in the original, where it is accepted as a convention of the plot without any show of interest in its implications, and it is more genuinely argued. Gawain striving by every means to save his opponent's life and honour. As a result the whole scene is much more forceful than in the French version where the hero's decision is taken too lightly and too quickly to carry
conviction on the human plane. Comparing the two versions one is left with the impression that what to the French author was only one of many similar crises in the complex plot of his romance, has become for the English redactor a genuine human situation, to be treated with a sincerity which will engage the sympathetic interest of the reader.

The care with which the emotional context of the scene has been filled out reflects this change in interpretation, and, incidentally, accounts, to some extent, for the greater bulk of the alliterative version.

The agony of the watchers on the castle walls when they see their lord unhorsed reminds the reader that much more than a single life hangs upon Gawain's decision:—

Lordings and ladyis in the castell on loft,
when thay saw thair liege lord laid on the landis,
Now swart thing of awars swounit full oft,
Wyke wourthit for wo to wringin thair handis.

As nowthir solace nor sang thair sorrow to soft,
Awe mai stroky and steur at thair hartie standis.

On Criste sumly thay cry:"On croze as thou coft,
With thi blisnit blude to bring us out of bandin,
Let never our souarna his cause with schame to encheif!

Mary,fastest of face,
Besek thi sone in this case,
Ane drop of his grete grace
He grant us to goif?" (11.1051-63.)

This addition is directly instrumental to the redactor's purpose since it is the attachment of his people, demonstrated here, which, as the following scene will show, justifies Colagrus in imposing such a decision upon Gawain. And, similarly, the reaction of Arthur, who sees the failure of his ambition to subdue the castle as his champion is led away in apparent defeat, underlines the magnitude of the sacrifice implied by that decision—

The roy requand ful raith, that raith wene to se,
And raicht full rediis to his riche tent;
The watere wet his chekin, that schalkis myght se,
As all his wolthis in wored had bene away went,

And othir bornys for harret blakynit thair bie,
Bræithly bandin in baill, thair breustis way blent.

"The flour of knyghtsede is caught throu his cruelte!
The adventure of the Chastel Orguelleux draws to its conclusion, following similar lines in both versions, though earlier alterations by the English redactor necessitate some changes here also. The French text is brief and factual. Entering the castle with the Riche Scudier Cousin makes his pretended submission to the lady:

"Et comme Cousin de cent heures à la damoiselle se rend en disant: "Dame, non espoir tenue, cur pour tant voyez certifié que par mes armes m'a conquis le bon chevalier votre seigneur?"

(fol. 118b.)

She suspects nothing, but as soon as possible the Riche Scudier persuades her to withdraw to another of his castles where he will shortly join her to enjoy their privacy together:

"Et fail entendre que le sculdoer lui fait aller pour consulter qu'elle n'entendit parler comme il avoit esté satis. Mais en tant que de la damoiselle il se fut délivré, fait pour tout le chasteau soin comme il estoit advenu.

(fol. 118b.)

Having confessed his defeat to his followers and released Sirflot and Iscan, the Riche Scudier rides with Cousin to the royal camp, where he recounts everything to Arthur and makes his submission together with all his knights. Both ride fast together in the Chastel Orguelleux, where Arthur spends fifteen days before setting out upon his homeward journey.

Here, again, the most significant changes made by the redactor affect, not the events themselves so much as the motivation which underlies what is said and done. There can, of course, be no question in the alliterative poem of disguising the real outcome of the duel from the non-existent heroine. But, as before, it is concern for his honour which leads Golagrus to conceal his defeat from his followers until he has tested their reaction by putting the issue to them in a hypothetical
"Say me ans a war, the tame of thir tune,
Gahethir ye like me lord, laught in the feild,
Or allis my life at the lest ledel forge,
And bown ye to sum bernes, that myght be your beild?"
The wortely wyld at that word war woundir we,
Then that wist their seuerane was schent wnder scheild.
"Woe wil na favour here fane to frende nor to fa;
We like yow ay as our lord to were and to weild;
Your lordship we may noght fone, also lang as we leif;
Ye sal be our governour,
Wylle your daies may endure,
In esse and howonour,
For chance that may shewe" (11.1181-93.)

Assured of their continuing loyalty he reveals the true state of affairs
and praises the magnanimity of Gawain:

"In sight of his seuerane, this did the gentilly;
He has me sauit fra syte throw his gentrise;
It war syn, but recurs,
The knightis honour sild unsure,
That did me this honour,
Quhilk maist is of price. (11.1201-6.)

So, within the term of his own interpretation of the episode, the redactor
has brought his version to the same practical conclusion as the French
original. But, unlike the French author, he is not content to round off
the plot without resolving the idealistic issues involved. He has in-
serted, without warrant from his source, a long speech in which Colagrus
makes his apologie, arguing that what Fortune decrees no man can escape.
He cites the example of famous men who have been overthrown by Fate,
-Sampson, Solomon, and the six of the Nine Worthies who belonged to the
ancient world. At first sight the speech seems superfluous, a conven-
tional acknowledgement of the power of Fortune, which is a recurrent theme
in late Medieval literature. But on reflection its function becomes
apparent. The Right Soudoier needs no apology for the demand which
he makes upon Gawain, -love is a sufficient excuse in itself, and Gawain's
sacrifice is made partly in fulfillment of his knightly duty towards
the lady whose life he indirectly saves. Deprived of this excuse, Sir
Colagras feels called upon to justify his conduct:

"Cen fortuna echis the course, throu hir quanys,
I did it neyth for same draid that I had to de,
As for me fasting of hart, as for me fastise;
Where Criste echis the course, it ryms quentyly;
May newthir pover nor pith put him to prize.
Cuban on-fortune sublaimys the quail, their gain grade by
Lhe may his danger endure or destanye diapise,
That led men in languer my lustand inly,
The dace as languer may endure m Brightin Awainie.
Ilk man may kyth be his cure,
Faith kryght, king and espiour,
And more in his ayrour,
And water midst mine is. (11.1220-32.)

By presenting his story as an example of what all men may discover in their own experience he sums up the moral of the whole. His apology is not entirely adequate in human terms, nor in the moral altogether relevant, but it is significant that the English redactor, having stressed the nobility and unyielding resolution of Sir Colagras, should find it necessary to supply a substitute for the more natural, but, from his point of view, admirable, motivation of the original version. His interest clearly was not confined to action alone, but comprehended the motives from which the action springs.

Other elements in this final scene which seem, at first sight, to be superfluous additions on the part of the redactor, are similarly related to the underlying plan of the redaction. Then the lord of the castle appears before Arthur to make his submission there is an elaborate and formal exchange of speeches. This, like the description of the procession in which Gawain leads his defeated opponent to the royal camp and of the feasting in which both parties join, is greatly expanded from a comparatively brief passage in the prose romance. The added emphasis of the alliterative version is necessary both in relation to form and to content. What in the French work is merely the conclusion of one amongst many episodes has been made the final scene of the English poem,
and if the story is not to end in anticlimax it must be rounded off
with appropriate emphasis, so that what is merely outlined in the orig-
inal is fully described and acted out in the exchanges between Arthur
and Holagros. The theme of Gawain’s moral victory on behalf of the
Round Table is conclusively demonstrated by the fullness with which the
lord of the castle makes his submission to Arthur and the frankness with
which he acknowledges the part played by Gawain:

"Because of yore bald borne, that bewght me of landis,
All that I have under hewyne, I haile of you hail
In firth, forest and fell, yyna ever that it standis.
Sen yourship’sfall Gawane has wonyn to your handis
The senory in gouernyn,
Gaidly conquerour and lyng;
Heir mak I you obeisng,
As liege lord of landis."  (11.1316-23.)

The importance which the alliterative poet attached to Gawain’s victory
over an opponent worthy of him in every respect—a theme which is
largely his own creation—, is reflected yet once more in a final alter-
ation to the original version. The Ricke Soudciuer, having made his sub-
mission, is absorbed by the court and rides with it towards the next
adventure, but in the closing lines of the English poem Arthur recognizes
the respect due to a noble adversary by freeing Colagros from his alleg-
lance and restoring him to proud

"Heir mak I the reward, as I haile resoun,
Before thir senorynis in sight, semely beside,
As tuisheng the temproralitie in tour and in tourne,
In firth, forest and fell, and made so wide;
I mak relexing of thin allegiance;
But I waile I sell the varand,
Faith be sey and be land,
Tre as I the first fand;
With cutin distance!"  (11.1354-62.)

In its context this passage has a tone of finality which,
even without the warrant of the sixteenth century printer’s colophon,
—"Heir endis the Knightly Tale of Colagros and Gawane"—, would suggest
that the plan of the alliterative poem was complete at this point. The
Book of the Chastel Orguellum continues, following the return journey
of the royal party, which involves a second visit to the castle of Bran
de Lins, where they learn that Gawain's small son has been abducted and
set out to search for him, but this is extraneous matter, preparing for
Gawain's Visit to the Grail Castle, the next adventure in the uninterrupted
sequence of the French romance. Had the English author intended to con-
tinue his redaction beyond this point it would probably have been neces-
sary for him to have included the earlier scene in the castle of Idas,
explaining the existence of Gawain's son, and to allow Golagrus to acco-
company the searchers as the Riche Soudoier does in the original version.

The absence of these linking episodes suggests that the redactor was
interested only in certain passages of the Book of the Chastel Orguellum.
From it he has selected two incidents, the encounter with the dwarf in
the castle of Yder le Bol and the siege of Chastel Orguellum, which
show Gawain as a perfect knight practising the chief chivalric virtues,
courtesy, courage, military prowess and magnanimity towards a defeated
adversary. If, as this combination of incidents suggests, it was his in-
tention to make a poem in praise of Gawain it is remarkable that he did
not choose more widely amongst the numerous Gawain adventures of the
Perceval Continuations, and, in particular, that he ignored those episodes
which associate his hero with the Grail quest. The limited nature of
his redaction may be explained in two ways: either his source was sim-
ilarly limited in coverage, or his conception of a romance differed
fundamentally from that of those who compiled the Roman de Perceval.

The fact that Golagrus and Gawain combines two incidents which are
similarly associated only in the Book of the Chastel Orguellum is pre-
sumptive evidence that the latter was the source in question. In effect,
the narrative sequence of the English poem is that of the Book of the
Chalced Orquellens, with the omission of those episodes which link it
with the other books of the First Continuation. These linking episodes
suggest, and the surviving manuscripts demonstrate, the improbability of
the alliterative poet having found his two adventures in isolation from
the others with which they are interwoven. Whether or not one accepts
Ketrick's identification of the 1530 Prose Print as most closely repre-
senting the original source of the English poem, there is every reason
to presume that the redactor had before him a version of the Roman de
Percyval which extended at least as far as the end of the First Contin-
uation, even if it did not contain the later episodes.

Whatever the precise nature of his source it is obvious
from what the redactor has made of it that his conception of a romance
differed fundamentally from that of the French authors who carried on
the work of Chrétien de Troyes. The central theme of Chrétien's poem,
—the Grail quest—, was progressively ignored in favour of purely secular
adventures by those who continued the Roman de Percyval, just as the
original hero was largely replaced by Gawain, and the loosely constructed
romance degenerated into a formless sequence of incidents, often quite
fortuitously connected, new adventures arising during the pursuit of
others, in a complicated intertwining of narratives. Many of these
incidents demonstrate,—though in a somewhat remote and mechanical way,—
various aspects of the codes of Chivalry and Courtly Love, but their
haphazard association in the romance suggests that they owe their
inclusion not to any specific relevance to the general theme, but purely
to their individual entertainment value. The selection of two amongst
so many similar incidents indicates at least some degree of arrangement
on the part of the redactor. His conception of a romance apparently
implied selection and concentration, the narration of two related episodes, placed within the Arthurian context, but centered upon a particular member of the royal court whose knightly character forms the unifying theme of the work.

This difference in conception inevitably required the redactor to make some structural alterations in his source material, primarily in separating it from its context in the Perceval continuation. The basic structure of Arthurian romance made this comparatively easy. The romances are commonly presented as records of knight errantry, journeys of the royal court, or, more frequently, of individual knights, which lead inevitably to a series of adventures. The journey itself is the narrative thread on which the various incidents are strung and it can be broken at almost any point without difficulty. This the alliterative poet has done, neatly and effectively, both at the beginning and the end of the Book of the Chastel Ogruelleus, cutting his chosen adventures free from earlier and later episodes, and again within the book in excising the scene at the castle of Bran de Lies. The latter is a particularly fortunate example of the convenience of such a narrative sequence from the redactor's point of view: by continuing the royal journey uninterrupted from the house of Ydar le Bel to the Chastel Ogruelleus (vide supra, p.335) the English author has dropped without trace a whole episode which he apparently considered superfluous to his design. The fact that he later recalled and made use of a detail from the excised passage (vide supra, p.336), and that he was forced to supply a substitute to fill the role of Bran de Lies as commentator before the Chastel Ogruelleus (vide supra, p.337), though it throws light on the original from which he worked, does not weaken his structural

design: the English reader, ignorant of the original, would accept the alliterative version at its face value without detecting any discrepancy. And, similarly, the case with which the redactor has dispensed with the presence of Bran de Lis at the siege of the Chastel Orguellus indicates the purely fortuitous nature of the links by which the original author attempted to give some semblance of unity to his episodic narrative. The fact that the Riche Soudoier, accompanying Arthur on his return journey, is drawn into the next sequence of adventures, forms a similar link,—one which is easily severed by the redactor, who leaves Golagre in enjoyment of his liberty (vide supra, p. 380), and allows us to assume that the return to court was uneventful. Only the backward link, which associates this episode with earlier incidents in the Perceval complex, presented the redactor with any real difficulty. Even if we may assume that his copy of the original was sufficiently complete to allow him to understand the references to Girflet's imprisonment (vide supra, p. 315), the tenuous link which they provide with events so much earlier in the story could only be an embarrassment to him. To have summarised the action leading up to Girflet's capture, or to have translated the elaborate introduction stressing the significance which the mission of retribution holds for Arthur (vide supra, pp. 314-21), would have been a clumsy solution, unbalancing a narrative centered upon the means by which that mission is accomplished to the virtual exclusion of its original purpose. The revival of the Girflet motif is, in any case, a rather spacious link with the Perceval proper, and Arthur's concern after such a lengthy interval is overlaboured and unconvincing. The redactor probably sensed that the linking passage was strained and, since his limited design made the allusion to Chrétien's poem of no value, he preferred to ignore it altogether and contrive a new opening for his
The conventional device which he has substituted, the pilgrimage which leads Arthur and his followers to adventure (vide supra, pp. 328-34), fulfills its function with economy, avoiding any association with earlier incidents and the necessity for explanation. But it has this defect, that unlike a secular mission it cannot be suspended or forgotten when the adventure of the Chastel Orguilleux arises en route.

The rapidity with which the redactor has disposed of the pilgrimage (vide supra, p. 341) shows that its function in his narrative was a purely practical one. And, by contrast, his realization that this substitute for the Chretien motif required him to supply an alternative reason for Arthur's attack upon the castle of Galagras is evident in the thoroughness with which he has replaced the elaborate introduction to the Book of the Chastel Orguilleux.

The nature of the substitution is of the greatest importance, indicating a change of emphasis which is apparent throughout the reduction, and affects the subject-matter fundamentally. By making Arthur's intolerance of a knight whose only crime is his independence, his refusal to own allegiance to anyone (vide supra, p. 338), the mainspring of the action, the alliterative poet has altered the moral basis of the story. And, although the traditional character of Arthur would probably have allowed the medieval audience to accept his unprovoked aggression without question, the emphasis which the redactor has placed upon it suggests that this is not a haphazard substitute for the original motivation but a deliberate change in interpretation. By concentrating attention not upon Arthur but upon his adversary, in describing the elaborate preparations for resistance (vide supra, pp. 342-5) the English author has emphasized the magnitude of the task undertaken by the
king, whose admiration at the strength of the forces marshalled against
him renewes his determination to crush such a worthy opponent (vide
supra, p. 345), saying it clear that he is deliberately and occasionly
staking the reputation of the Round Table. That this is humanly more
impossible and morally less justifiable than the rescue of Girflet
would not have troubled readers of the alliterative poem. But by this
substitution the English poet has based the whole incident on a motif
which gives it fundamental human appeal: the conflict of two person-
alties equally proud, independent and unyielding, one of whom must, it
seems, be humbled into submission. This idea is, to some extent, implicit
in the original, but by a change in emphasis, fully and carefully aff-
ected, the redactor has made it the specific theme of his version, one
which involves a new interpretation of the plot and an altered character-
ization of the protagonists.

The action of the English poem springs from the imperious
character of Arthur, but, in the tradition of romance,—as distinct from
that of the pseudo-chronicles,—the king is not an active protagonist, and
the solution of the dilemma posed by his opposition to the lord of the
castle is left to Gawain, who acts as the representative of the Round
Table. The plot turns, therefore, upon the traditional character of
Gawain, and this fact has inevitably influenced the form and content of
the poem. By leafing through the Perceval complex the alliterative poet
could easily have collected material for a Gawain romance in which his
hero embodied each of the chivalric virtues in turn. But it is evident
from the construction of the redaction that his interest was excited
specifically by the adventure of the Chastele Orguelleus. In association
with it he found two other episodes: the scene in the castle of Bran de
Lin, which, since it is incomplete, involved, and little to his hero's
credit, he entirely omitted (vide supra, pp. 332-5), and the incident of
the dwarf in the house of Yder le Be(l vide supra, pp. 323-32), which,
though it is equally dispensable, he chose to retain. This selection
of episodes was clearly deliberate and the latter was retained with a
specific end in view: by contrasting the boorishness of Eay with Gawat's
courtesy and consideration for others it prepares, to some extent, for
his treatment of Golagrus at the climax of the main action. But it is
equally evident from the attention given to it that the redactor valued
it for its preparatory function only and considered it ancillary to the
incident in which his real interest lay. The general introduction and
the affair of the dwarf occupy the first 17 stanzas of the alliterative
poem while the remaining 63 are given to the siege of Chastel Carguelleus.
To the modern mind the association of two episodes so disproportionately
in treatment may seem clumsy, despite their thematic relationship, but it
is doubtful if the medieval reader would have been troubled by the un-
balanced nature of the composition. Whether or not it can be regarded
as totally successful, the form of the alliterative work is clearly the
result of a unified conception, designed to convert the disparate elements
of a cyclic romance into a related whole, centered upon one major in-
cident to which everything else is subordinated, and devoted to the illus-
tration of a single theme. Such a conception contrasts strongly with
the original context of the source material in the loosely-formed,
themelose compendium of the Forcaval complex, and suggests a redactor
of independent mind, to whom a romance implied more than formless
sequence of incidents, treated as of equal worth and retailed for their
individual interest alone.

Yet, though the English author worked with unusual origin-
ality and thoroughness in separating his story-matter from its context
and shaping it to the requirements of a self-contained romance, his
redaction would have been of limited interest only had he confined his
treatment to matters of form and outline alone. The chief importance
of Galahad and Gawain as a Middle English romance based upon a French
source lies in the fact that the theme of the original has been funda-
mentally altered and the whole reinterpreted in a way which contrasts
strongly with the evident intention of the French author. The adventure
of the Chastel Oguellens poses a problem relating to the governing
codes of Medieval society, to which Gawain, as the perfect type of con-
temporary manhood supplies the solution. The problem, as originally
stated, might be summarised in this way: how may a knight save the life
of a vanquished opponent, who must either die or offend against the code
of Courtly Love, without himself violating the laws of Chivalry? As re-
stated by the alliterative poet it has become: how may a knight spare
the life and honour of an unyielding opponent without losing his own
honour in the process? Even in this simplified form the contrast between
the two themes is obvious. The English poet’s reinterpretation, given
effect in all its ramifications, is responsible for sweeping changes in
construction, characterisation, and even in the atmosphere of the work.

The most evident changes in construction are those which
involve the omission of sections of the original concerning the love of
the Richc Soudelier and his amie, an element which either offended or
failed to interest the English reductor. By omitting the lengthy
interlude of the hunt he has left the English reader in ignorance of
the claim which love exercises upon one of the chief protagonists (vide
supra, p. 361-5), a claim which, in the original version, influences the hero,
Gawain, in making the decision upon which the action turns. Consequently,
his decision is reached in a scene which omits all mention of the
lady (vide supra, pp. 371-7), and the dilemma facing him is posed not in
terms of love but of honour. The practical outcome remains unaltered:
Gawain hazards his own reputation to save his opponent from the choice
between dishonour and death, and is justified by the other's subsequent
behaviour. It might be argued that, as the hunting scene is a self-
contained incident, this reinterpretation was forced upon the redactor
by its absence from the version of the original available to him. But
this would assume that other references to the love motif, integrated in
the plot, were also lacking: the redactor has made no use of the scene
in which Gawain surrenders his sword to the lady (vide supra, pp. 377-8),
or of the Irish knight's account of the scene by which she ensures that
her lover shall take the field on the fatal day (vide supra, pp. 363-4).
Even if his source had lacked all these passages it would not have been
difficult for the English poet to reconstruct the love element from
the Eysch Scudoier's account to Gawain in refusing to surrender after
his defeat (vide supra, p. 372), an account which the earlier scenes illu-
strate dramatically without adding anything of essential importance.
To presume the absence of this key passage also would postulate a form
of the original so fragmentary as to be of little use to any redactor.
And there are some minor features of the alliterative version which
suggest a knowledge on the redactor's part of scenes which he can,
therefore, he assumed to have omitted deliberately: he has confused the
horn which sounds to battle with the bell which introduces the hunting
scene in his original (vide supra, pp. 365-6), and when the horn heralds
the appearance of the first champion from the castle (not, it is true,
Golagrus himself), Sir Synagros explains to Arthur:-

He thinks a prove to prove, for his paramour,
And pritk in your presence, to purchase his pray. (11. 538-9.)
The reference may have been dictated by the needs of iteration, or the poet may have recalled incidentally the love motif of the French version. But, those details apart, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the process of redaction involved the deliberate suppression of the love element, requiring some structural alterations and the omission of lengthy passages in the original text.

These changes are essentially negative. Had the process of redaction gone no further than this we should have been forced to conclude that the original author approached his source in a purely negative spirit, removing the elements which he found uncongenial and replacing them only where they were essential to the plot. In effect, his additions to the original version far exceed his rejections, manifesting a positive and highly individual approach to his source. And, significantly, the most extensive additions relate to his reinterpretation of the main theme. The original author did not find it necessary to explain Gawain's motive in allowing his opponent to escape the choice between love and death since it is implicit in the situation: the Riche Sundoier is bound by the laws of love and Gawain's sacrifice is made in recognition of the superior claim of a code which needed no explanation to the contemporary reader. But the alliterative poet, having rejected the code of love, did not merely replace it with the code of chivalry, which implies that knights shall mutually respect each other's honour. His hero responds not to a chivalric dilemma but to a human situation, and makes his sacrifice on his personal estimate of his opponent's honour and integrity. Here, therefore, as in the general framework of the alliterative romance, the fundamental issue is one not of convention but of character: it arises from a clash of temperaments between Arthur and Golagrus and is resolved in a conflict of personalities.
when the integrity of Golagrus is matched with Gawain's magnanimity.

The neat psychological pattern of the romance is somewhat marred by the fact that Arthur's behaviour in forcing his suzerainty upon a free knight is not justifiable on human or moral grounds, but it has this advantage, that it frees the two active protagonists from any moral responsibility for the situation in which they find themselves: Golagrus defends himself from unprovoked aggression while Gawain obeys without question the orders of his feudal superior. By accepting the traditional Arthur as the un-motivated deus ex machina who precipitates the action, the redactor achieved a plot without a villain which enabled him to concentrate upon the interaction of two personalities of equal integrity and worth.

The success of the redaction therefore depends upon the characterization of the protagonists to a much greater extent than the conventional Medieval romance. So far as Gawain is concerned the English author has followed the lead given by his source, using the incident in the house of Yder le Bel to remind the reader of his hero's traditional reputation as the pattern of chivalry by contrasting him with the inept and boorish Kay. Thereafter he relies largely on this traditional character, only occasionally inserting a brief passage in praise of Gawain's qualities at crucial points in the story: when, as Arthur's ambassador, he first meets Golagrus (vide supra, p. 348), and again when he is led from the battlefield in apparent defeat (vide supra, p. 376-7). These passages are brief and seem strangely limited when one considers that the English romance is devoted specifically to the glorification of Gawain. But the redactor was sufficiently sensitive to his material to realize that the incident of the Chaste! Orgueixus demanded a more
subtle characterisation of the hero than that to be achieved by such conventional methods. Significantly, he rejected the opportunity to repeat the effect of a flattering contrast, which his original offered him in Kay's disgrace on the battlefield (vide supra, p. 355), in favour of something much more profound and original: by converting Kay's defeat into victory and presenting it immediately before the scene of Gawain's apparent overthrow (vide supra, pp. 368-70) he has heightened the circumstances in which the hero accepts humiliation before his king and companions and underlined the moral qualities involved in making such a decision. And, significantly too, he has put the most direct and cogent praise of his hero into the mouth of the enemy, Golagrus, who acknowledges Gawain's worth before his own followers (vide supra, p. 375) and before the court of Arthur (vide supra, p. 330). These passages, also, are brief, but they gain added force from the fact that the praises they contain are voiced by an opponent who is in every respect worthy of Gawain, his equal in chivalric virtues as well as in physical prowess. The theme of Gawain's double victory, military and moral, over a knight of equal worth is inherent in the original story, but the redactor has heightened and stressed it not only by altering both construction and motivation but, most effectively, by elaborating the character of Golagrus far beyond anything which the French author thought necessary in presenting the Riche Soudier.

But, characteristically, he has achieved his purpose largely by extended use of a device put at his disposal by the author of the original version: Fran de Lis, whose function in the original is confined to explaining the usages of the Castel Ornelleus, becomes, in the person of Sir Jyngres, an ardent partisan of Golagrus, interpreting his motives,
expounding his character, and directly praising him before his own companions of the Round Table. It is Spynagros who explains why Golagrus owes allegiance to no overlord (vide supra, p. 338), and warns Arthur not to interfere lightly with one whose spirit of independence will drive him to resist any attempt to subjugate him (vide supra, p. 338).

This spirit is given practical expression in the preparations of the castle defenders to resist a siege (vide supra, pp. 342-5), described in detail at much greater length than in the French text, and with a forcefulness which compels Arthur's admiration (vide supra, p. 345). And it is Spynagros again who seizes this opportunity to stress the resolution of Golagrus and his followers (vide supra, p. 346). Though this episode may have been suggested by a brief passage in the French text its treatment there is purely descriptive and its implications are not brought out by anything comparable to the comments of Arthur and Spynagros.

The lengthy sequence which follows upon the embassy sent to demand the submission of Golagrus (vide supra, pp. 347-51), owes nothing whatsoever to the original and was clearly invented by the redactor in order that Gawain, who leads the mission, may be witness to another aspect of his opponent's character—the courtesy and nobility which underlie his resolute independence. Here, again, Spynagros has been used to outline the salient traits of personality, warning Gawain and his two companions that they must behave discreetly before a knight of such repute (vide supra, p. 347). These qualities are then demonstrated by the manner in which Golagrus, firmly yet graciously, rejects Arthur's demand (vide supra, pp. 348-9). And when his personal prowess in arms because of moment in the story, as he is about to meet Gawain in the field, the same formula is employed: Spynagros praises his courage and military skill at great
Length, urging Gawain not to risk an encounter with him (vide supra, p. 366). In addition, the redactor has made use of the common convention by which the prowess of the knight is reflected in the splendour of his equipment and armour, replacing the original description of the arming of Gawain by a similar passage concerned with Golagrus (vide supra, pp. 367-8).

And finally, Golagrus is characterised by his behaviour in the crisis of the action, by his stout resistance against Gawain (vide supra, pp. 370-7), by his calm refusal to dishonour his ancestors and himself by surrendering (vide supra, pp. 373-4), and by the frankness with which he acknowledges his opponent's generous treatment (vide supra, pp. 377-9). The total effect is cumulative and Sir Golagrus emerges as a character much more fully realised than his counterpart in the Book of the Chastel Coguelleus.

The Richo Scudier is fully characterised only in regard to his love for the lady, and, though it is assumed that he also possesses all the chivalric virtues, he remains a vague figure, indistinguishable from scores of other knights of romance. By contrast, the personality of Golagrus dominates the English romance almost to the neglect of Gawain, the conventional hero. Indeed, it might be said that there are two heroes since the interest of the story lies, not in the conventional contrast of good and evil but in the conflict of two noble natures, where the greatest honour belongs, not to the boldest warrior, but to the knight whose practice of the chivalric code, and the self-sacrifice which it exacts, is most perfect. The outcome must inevitably reflect upon the character of the loser, more especially if, as in the English redaction, his behaviour is dictated by purely personal considerations and not, as in the French text, by a conflict of duties. The redactor was apparently aware of this flaw in his interpretation and inserted the strange passage in which
Colagrus makes his apology (vide supra, pp. 378-9). It is not altogether a satisfactory conclusion to the psychological plan of the redaction, but it indicates the poet’s unwillingness to abandon a character who had so excited his interest and to whom he had devoted so much attention, as soon as his practical function in the plot was completed.

This passage is entirely original, and though others dealing with the personality of Colagrus may have been elaborated from ideas in the French version, the element is largely additional and has fundamentally affected the economy of the redaction. As a result of these and other additions it is difficult to define the conduct of the redactor in relation to the source. Where the two narratives are sufficiently close to permit direct comparison, the English text appears more direct and simple, following the general outline of the French original while ignoring the minor details of human interest which lend it reality. The opening sequence, for example, gives a much abbreviated account of the incident in the house of Yves le Bel, omitting Kay’s preliminary inquiries (vide supra, pp. 323-4), his altercation with the dwarf (vide supra, pp. 324-5), the blow with the spit (vide supra, p. 327), Guasin’s humorous revelation of Kay’s deceits (vide supra, p. 328), and Arthur’s jesting reference to the dogs which devour the peacock (vide supra, p. 330). As the alliterative poet clearly intended to subordinate this episode to the story proper such abbreviation was essential, but the siege of Chastel Arqueslauz has been treated in similar fashion, the redactor concentrating on the essential action to the neglect of incidental details. Consequently, the two narratives are very different in effect and emphasis. The French prose unfolds smoothly and coherently, devoting equal attention to each incident in the story, unharrassed by description or characterization it
any length, but enlivened by many touches of detail which stimulate
the imagination. The alliterative poem, by contrast, is laid out on
broad, sweeping lines, presenting the story as a sequence of episodes, in
each of which the essential action is rapidly outlined in a context
which, though it assists the effect of the narrative, does little to
advance it. The one is competent and urbane, if somewhat facile and
shallow, the other is erratic in movement, yet forceful and compelling
in effect.

One reason at least for this contrast in styles of narration
lies in the redactor's choice of an alliterative medium. The prose of
the 1330 print lends itself, even more than the flowing couplets of the
original Parceval, to a continuous narrative, developing point by point,
ingling action and incidental detail, without interruption of any kind.
The alliterative line, especially when combined with the elaborate rhyme-
scheme of the Colagrus and Gawain stanza — a, b, a, b, a, b, a, b, c, d, d, d, c — is
too inflexible to deal effectively with a diffuse narrative. Its epi-
grammatic construction, usually in half-line units, is better suited to
expressing ideas or moods than to showing how they are related in a
particular situation. But to a master of alliterative verse this was
not an absolute defect, and this particular poet has adapted his story-
telling to circumvent the limitations of the medium, by reducing the
direct narration of events to the minimum, and exploit its capabilities
fully in support of his abbreviated narrative. The chief stylistic
feature of alliterative verse is its ability, by accumulating points of
detail, more closely related thematically than syntactically, to describe
scenas, convey atmosphere, and express attitudes and states of mind. The
author of Colagrus and Gawain has made extensive use of it for all these
purposes, and it is this extra-narrative element which is responsible for the radical difference between the redaction and its original in scale and proportion. Some of the descriptive passages—the feast in the house of Ysber (vide supra, p. 331), the rich tents of Arthur's camp (vide supra, p. 342), and the feasting which concludes the poem (vide supra, p. 379)—are purely incidental. Others have some bearing upon the action: the richness of the hall in which Kay encounters the dwarf (vide supra, pp. 327-8) suggests the rank and worth of the host against whom he-offends, and the description of the enemy castle (vide supra, p. 337) indicates its impregnability. Both types of passage usually derive from something in the French original but the alliterative poet always exceeds the warrant of his source, adding detail to detail, in elaborate descriptions which contrast strangely with the abbreviated narrative in which they are set. This is true also of the set speeches and formal conversations in which he allows his characters to express their intentions and reactions. These are, however, much more closely related to the theme of the romance: the contrast between the contempt with which the dwarf's master comments upon Kay's misbehaviour and his complimentary exchanges with Galahad (vide supra, pp. 330-31), establishes the reputation of one protagonist, while the formal courtesy with which Galahad responds to Arthur's embassy (vide supra, pp. 348-49) does the same for the other, and the context of chivalric personalities, which is the chief interest of the redaction, is expressed in the verbal duel between them at the crisis of the action (vide supra, pp. 373-4). These speeches and dialogues are even less to the original than do the descriptive passages. The French text provides opportunities for their introduction, but the redactor has extended these by converting direct narration into dialogue,
exploiting the element to a degree which far exceeds its practical function in the story. His enthusiasm has produced some of the most effective passages in the poem, reflecting in their rather stilted eloquence something of the formal courtesy of relationships between the characters. Together with the battle passages they are mainly responsible for much of the distinctive atmosphere which characterises the alliterative work. The redactor's attention is divided between two aspects of warfare: the military preparations which precede it, and the hand-to-hand fighting which it involves. Both are necessarily included in the original version, but their treatment there is extremely limited by comparison with the English redaction, of which some 40 stanzas, in a total of 105, are concerned with one or the other. The preliminaries to combat—preparations within the enemy castle (vide supra, pp. 342-5), the arming of Sir Faulcald (vide supra, pp. 358-9), and of Sir Golagynus (vide supra, 368)—bear little resemblance to those in the original, as the alliterative poet has concentrated on practical matters which suggest the stern reality of warfare, and as the splendour of equipment which reflects the ability of the warrior, to the neglect of ceremonial with which the French author was chiefly concerned. His account of the battle itself (vide supra, pp. 351-61 and pp. 365-71) differs so widely in both scope and interpretation as to bear almost no relation to the source. The original author conceived the engagement before the Chauteau Orguelles as a series of formal jousts between individual knights, fought within the lists and under the laws of tournament, and ending, without injury, in a technical victory for one party or the other. In the alliterative poem the contest opens with such a duel, but it is described in terms which suggest the reality of a judicial combat rather
than the make-believe of the journey. As the action proceeds, with larger forces engaged on each successive day, even this degree of similarity vanishes until there is little to distinguish the violent struggle, resulting in bloodshed and death, from open warfare. Neither the number or order of the combatants, nor the numbers or names of those engaged, nor the nature of the fighting, nor the outcome of individual engagements, can be said to bear any real resemblance to the French original.

The degree and extent of this divergence from the source has led one scholar, Willson, to suggest that the battle-sequence is not borrowed romance matter but a factual account of certain events during the reign of Edward III. He does not deny that the general outline of the alliterative poem is taken from the Perceval continuation, but he believes that "a section of the plot of that romance utilised in the poem is, nevertheless, so skilfully adapted to the historical situation as to make difficult the task of determining where exactly romance shaded into narrative of allegorical or actual fact." He equates Arthur's pilgrimage with the expedition of Edward III against King John of France in 1355, the siege of the castle with the Black Prince's attack on Carcassonne, and the duel of Golagrus and Gawain with a personal encounter between King John and the Black Prince at Poitiers in 1356. The specific parallels between history and romance are, however, vague and unconvincing: similar correspondences between fact and fiction could probably be deduced from almost every Medieval romance. In this instance

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2) Ibid., p. 335.
the identification accounts for features of the English story which are more reasonably explained by their presence in the French original, while doing nothing to account for the specific differences between the battle scenes in the two versions. It seems improbable that a redactor who showed such a marked interest in the moral and idealistic content of his original should choose to make it a vehicle for historical material, still more difficult to understand why an incident in English history should appeal to a Scottish poet writing a hundred years after the event. When the battle-sequence is viewed in the context of the whole, a more reasonable explanation of this divergence from the source suggests itself. The redaction as a whole is characterized by a much greater degree of realism than the French version, suggesting that the alliterative author was more intensely involved and associated himself more intimately with the human situations presented by his story-matter. His reinterpretation of the original motivation and the stress which he has placed upon character show that he viewed the incident, not as a conventional demonstration of contemporary codes, but as a study of the practical operation of those codes in the lives of individuals. Inevitably, he found the jousting of the French version too formal and artificial to give adequate expression to the struggle for liberty and integrity which forms the core of his interpretation, and chose to replace it with the reality of battle to the death. The result is something of a compromise between the set duel and warfare with limited forces, but this apparent confusion is probably due to the way in which the redactor's conception of the element developed as he worked on the battle-sequence, evolving further and further away from the matter and spirit of the original.
The alliterative medium is also partly responsible for the nature and extent of this element. Alliterative verse is particularly well suited to express violent action, and, by an accumulation of brief, disjointed, descriptive phrases, to convey the swift-moving chaos of battle. The English poet clearly took pleasure in exploiting its capabilities to the full, and his enthusiasm has produced passages which, despite their repetitiveness, are amongst the most effective and original in the poem. But here, as in some similar passages, his medium may be said to have run away with him. It is significant that those elements which alliterative verse expresses most effectively, splendid settings and costumes, violent action and formal eloquence, bulk larger than their function in the redaction warrants and contrast strangely with the sparseness of the relatively undeveloped narrative in which they are set. And it must be admitted that in exploiting the merits of the alliterative medium so fully the redactor has not always kept the balance between these descriptive passages and the narration of events, for which its complexity makes it less suitable.

The peculiarities of the medium may also explain a number of minor distinctions between the French and English versions in the matter of nomenclature. Apart from Arthur, Kay, Gawan, and some familiar members of the Round Table who are mentioned incidentally, the characters in the alliterative poem bear different names from those in the original, and although some of them, such as Gynegres, can be identified elsewhere in Medieval romance, others, including Colagres himself, can not. The nature of his redaction compelled the English poet to alter and add to the names given in his source. In the French text the Nibe Scudeler has no personal name and most of his followers are also anonymous, but
the greatly extended treatment of the battle sequences in the English
work made it essential to identify the numerous combatants and dis-
tinguish the role of each in the complicated action. Clearly, allit-
eration was the controlling factor in the choice of names. The re-
strictions of alliterative verse, which caused the redactor to pass
over the catalogue of Arthur's followers given in the original narrative
(vide supra, pp. 321-2), also forced him to select names for members of
both parties which could alliterate together as the opponents met in
combat, matching Gaudifair with Galion, Fauval with Rigal, Lyonel with
Loys, and so on. Where the names of familiar romance heroes could supply
a ready alliteration he has made use of them, but where nothing of the
sort occurred to him he probably did not hesitate to invent a suitable
name. The name Golgraus has been variously explained both as borrowed
and as invented: Laddes suggested that it was related to that of the
Golagar who appears in Kelore. Trautmann that it was derived mistakenly
from the name of the Chastel Orguellous, and Kettick that it originated
as "li gales gros" or "li galaos gros", a phrase descriptive of a powerful
knight whose castle stands, according to the English poet, "on the riche
river of Buone" (l. 1345). Whichever, if any, of these theories is accepted,

1) "Golagros has been identified with the Megagonye of Kelore, Gaudielair
figures in the romance of Alexandre le Grand, while of the others,
Duan is clearly the Duan of the original Chastel Orguellous episode,
and Galion, Lyonel, Dedar, Gyromalense, Cador, and Reinald appear else-
where in the Matter of Britain (see J. Kettick, op. cit., pp. 115-16).
Other romances, lost to us, may have supplied further names, but as they
are names only and not associated with characteristics material to the
story, the basis on which they were selected is more important than the
source from which they were drawn.
1) "Nicht aus Galagar, sondern aus dem fläschlich für ein substantiv
behalten orguellous [grimalius]. Daube ich den Namen Golgraus anstander
can be little doubt that the demands of the medium, the fact that
Colagrus must repeatedly alliterate with Gawain, was a material factor
in the choice of the name.

This matter of names is a minor one, but the problem in mani-
pulation of alliterative verse which it presents and the solution
supplied by the redactor's readiness to supplement his original, are
characteristic of the redaction as a whole. The use of the alliterative
medium in Colagrus and Gawain is a factor of fundamental importance,
effecting the construction, the narration, and even the interpretation of
the romance. So far as construction is concerned, it is obvious at a
glance that the English poet had a conception of romance form quite dif-
ferent from that held by the various authors of the Roman de Perceval.
Their compilation, haphazardly evolved over a period of many years, could
scarcely be expected to follow any uniform plan of construction, but even
the underlying theme of the Grail quest, which gave a certain formal
unity to Chrétien's original, was virtually abandoned in favour of a chain
of secular adventures, casually interlinked in a sequence which is limited
only by the failure of each author's powers of invention. Clearly, the
medium in which they worked did not exercise any formative influence
upon them, neither the facile octosyllabic couplet, nor, still less, the
later prose. The English poet, on the other hand, was inevitably restrained,
at least in the scope of his redaction, by the choice of a complex stanza
combining rhyme and alliteration: faithful reproduction, sequence by
sequence, of the Perceval complex, or any considerable portion of it, in
such a medium, would have been a lengthy, slow and painful process.

This limitation in scope is, however, a purely negative factor,
whereas comparison of Colagrus and Gawain with the Roman de Perceval
suggests a positive approach to the problem of form on the reductor's part. Faced with the necessity to limit his treatment of the original, he chose to deal intensively and in detail with two incidents only, rather than attempt a wider coverage of its many adventures. His conception of a romance clearly involved more than the sketching of a narrative outline, however close-packed or interesting in itself. Equally, his selection and combination of two separate incidents suggests that certain topics appeared to him better suited to romance treatment than others which we can assume were available to him. He apparently preferred the more conventional type of knightly adventure to the mysterious Grail episodes, the forthright and familiar Gawain to more subtle and complicated heroes, and the issues of courage and honour to the more questionable aspects of contemporary codes, such as those involved in the affair of the Bouginole de Lieu. And just as his selective taste prevented him from accepting the compromise of a romance compiled from the many Gawain episodes in the original, so his sense of form led him to reject the technique of enthainment by which the original authors linked adventures together in haphazard sequence, treating each as of equal importance. Instead, he has subordinated the incident of Kay's encounter with the dwarf, making it merely preparatory to the meeting of Colagruze and Gawain which forms the core of his reedition. There can be little doubt that this method of combining the two incidents was as much part of the reductor's policy as his limited selection of episodes, and that neither was forced upon him merely by inability to cope with the unwieldy bulk of the original. He was sufficiently in control of his source-cutter to make ready use of the plot machinery which it provided where it suited his purpose. For example, he has
retained the device of Arthur's journey as a means of linking the separate episodes, though he has telescoped the sequence of events, and, similarly, he has supplied another narrative to fill the role of Bran de Lio before the Grail. Recognising the value of these devices in advancing the action and supplying essential explanatory details, he has supplied the narrative aids supplied by the source proved unsuitable for his purpose. He has not hesitated to invent alternatives, such as the pilgrimage, which, in the English version, provides the initial motive for the action. It is notable that both in what he invents and what he borrows he employs the conventional techniques of romance, suggesting that he was not primarily interested in form or technique for their own sake, but merely in achieving a form which would appropriate to his matter and to his alliterative medium.

The nature of the medium also required him to develop a narrative technique very different from that of the French romance in either its verse or prose forms. The high competence, both technical and poetic, which he has achieved suggests a poet who was master of the alliterative stanza, aware of its limitations and skilled in compensation for them by exploiting its capabilities to the full. At first sight the stanza seems totally unsuited to the function for which it has been employed. Its complicated inter-linking of rhyme and alliteration, and the tortured expression necessary to satisfy the requirements of both, make direct narration of events in connected sequence extremely difficult. It is still more difficult to combine such a narrative with the details of human interest which can lend it reality, without verbally inflating them to a degree where they are incongruously out of proportion with the general context. Slavish adherence to the diffuse, circumstantial sequence of the French text could only have produced a slow-moving, over-
bloom narrative, burdened by the infinite expression of unimportant inci-
dentials. To avoid this the English redactor has carved out a narr-
ative sequence of his own; selecting the essential facts from his
source, he has conveyed them in an abbreviated form which outlines the
main action of the original in a few stanzas only.

Had his interest in the French romance been confined to the
adventures which form its narrative framework his alliterative version
would have been no more than a brief résumé of the original. But his
appreciation of the social, human and emotional background to the action
led him to attempt to replace the numerous detailed touches by which
these elements are conveyed in the French narrative. In doing so he
exploited the particular merits of his alliterative medium: its ability
to describe elaborate settings and complex action by adding detail to
detail, disjointedly, yet with cumulative effect, and, by the very rigidity
of its framework, to express exalted emotions with appositive, formal
elegance. Here and there in such passages he has used details which
are reminiscent of the original, but they are no more than isolated
features in lengthy sections, often of more than a hundred lines, which
are essentially his own creation. Often they far exceed their function,
most notably in the descriptions of combat, suggesting that to the all-
iterative poet this sort of writing was itself a source of satisfaction.
Freed from the restraint imposed by his source he was at liberty to
employ his imagination and exploit his medium fully and creatively.

These extra-narrative passages are so numerous, so sustained,
and so distinctive in character as to affect the whole nature of the
English redaction. The French narrative develops smoothly and coher-
ently, action being interspersed with sufficient descriptive detail to
sketch in a conventional background, only rarely, as in the early-morning scene between Donin and Prain (vide supra, p. 367), achieving sufficient depth of human interest to carry conviction for a modern reader. The English version, by contrast, is laid out on broad, sweeping lines, the action advancing rapidly and erratically in a compressed narrative, frequently interrupted by passages which fill in the background, emotional as well as physical, so fully and graphically as to lend a convincing air of reality to the whole. This entails a change in atmosphere scarcely less extreme than the change in narrative technique, and, to some extent, arising from it. The somewhat detached manner of the French narrator has produced a conventional romance, impersonal in atmosphere, without any particular conviction to give it force. The English narrative, on the other hand, reflects an author who was personally engaged, transforming his material by the vivid realism of his imagination, recreating convention in human terms, and exploiting the emphatic quality of alliterative verse for his purpose. The fundamental reorganization involved in adapting the narrative to the alliterative stanza make it clear that, for the redactor, the choice of medium was a matter of primary importance. The enthusiasm with which he has exploited it suggests that, in his eyes, it had a validity as the medium of a romance which outweighed its defects. It also suggests that his conception of a romance was essentially mythic; he had merely been interested in making the matter of a French romance available to those who could not read the original he would not have employed a medium so demanding and inflexible, so liable to complicate the process of storytelling.

The choice of such a medium postulates a redactor who was more than a bock translator, whose interests were, to some extent at
least, literary and artistic. Its very intractability, which made the literal reproduction of the original impossible, compelled him to approach his material independently and to recreate it imaginatively. The extent to which he considered his function as redactor to be a creative one is indicated by his fundamental reinterpretation of the central theme in the romance, and by the way in which everything in the English version has been made to conform with his personal conception of the story. The central incident of the Book of the Chevalier Oguellus was originally conceived as a conflict between the codes of Chivalry and Courtly Love. It is a conventional romance situation, deriving its interest from the somewhat mechanical interaction of the codes, to which the characters respond with the inevitability of automata. Yet the English author saw it, not as an artificial dilemma, but as a genuine human situation, in which the crisis is produced and the solution provided by the normal human reactions of the protagonists. His imagination, ignoring the mechanics of the original, seized on the fundamental conflict, conceiving it not as an empty clash of codes but as a duel of personalities actuated by regard for their own and each other's honour. Inevitably, the substitution of character for code as the source of the action involved a complete reinterpretation, not just of the crisis itself, but of everything preliminary to it. The whole redaction is directed towards the preparation of an effect very different from that intended by the original author: "all the developments of plot and all the careful suggestions of character suddenly unite to create a dilemma both quite unusual and at least as natural in the circumstances of the time as many of those upon which the plots of the classical French tragedies were made to hang. "At once the intention behind the earlier effects becomes apparent, and we are obliged to concede that although these
may have been over-elaborate and un-economical they did nevertheless serve a functional purpose by preparing a milieu in which such a conflict of principles could arise. The design and the dramatic situation are rare and noteworthy in medieval literature. Despite the origins of its material the English romance is undeniably an organic whole, rooted in character and making its appeal to the imagination on an acceptable human level. And in all these respects it is entitled to claim the credit of an original creation.

In so far as it can be considered representative, Colacrus and Gawain suggests that Scottish authors of the Fifteenth century were unusually original and individualistic in their conception of romance. In form it contrasts strongly, not only with the Thirteenth century Percival, but also with the contemporary Yrdest Diarmid, both representative of the romance in its later development, suggesting a return to the relatively simple, limited and concentrated format of the earlier examples. The use of the complicated alliterative stanza at a time when, in England as in France, prose had become the usual medium of romance, is also reminiscent of the earlier conception of romance as essentially a poetic form. And, most important, the interpretation of the story in human terms indicates a reversion from the increasingly artificial romance of the later Middle Ages, with its formal manipulation of the social codes, to a narrative based upon natural human reactions to moral rather than social forces. In all these respects the powerful formative influence of the alliterative medium is evident. The fundamental alterations associated with its use have produced in Colacrus and Gawain a classic example of the extremes to which the process of redaction can be carried, resulting in a poem which is not merely a copy of its original but a new creation, with its own criteria of form and content.

17 E. J. Cane, Middle English Literature, London, 1951, p. 33.
CHAPTER VI

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

Few problems in Middle English scholarship have proved more frustrating than the attempt to determine the sources of Sir (1) Gawain and the Green Knight. Progressive research has defined the period and place of composition with as much precision as can be expected in the case of an anonymous poem of the Fourteenth century. But a lengthy investigation has not so far discovered any feasible source for the alliterative text, or produced any theory of origin which has won general acceptance. Where many Middle English works are concerned the solution of such a problem is of historical or academic interest only. In this case, however, it is a matter of artistic importance.


2) The text is generally dated c. 1370, though various dates as late as the last decade of the century have been proposed; "...the last quarter of the Fourteenth century" (J.R.R. Tolkien and E.V. Gordon, op.cit., p.xxi); "...the late seventies or early eighties of the
In the alliterative Gawain, almost alone amongst the Middle English romances, we recognise a mature, balanced, integrated composition, a work of literature in its own right. To understand fully the creative process which produced it we must know the nature of its sources, the form in which they reached the alliterative author, and what was involved in adapting them to his specific purpose. This is the real aim of the source investigation, which has sometimes been lost sight of in the course of the search.

The early attempts to trace the origin of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight followed familiar lines and promised a ready solution. Madden, the first editor, accepting the poet's references to “Ye bok” (1) at their face value, looked for a written source in contemporary French romance. He found what he regarded as the "immediate original" in the Livre de Caradoc, part of the First Continuation of Chrétien's Perceval, though he noted parallels to certain incidents in a later prose re-duction of the Conte del Graal known as Perlesvaus, and in La Yule sans Frain, a verse romance of the early Thirteenth century. His opinion was accepted for many years, and in 1883 Miss M. C. Thomas produced evidence of correspondences between Gawain and the Caradoc episode in matters of detail, which, according to her, confirmed the derivation. But she also found similar links with other sections of the Thirteenth century (H. L. Savage, The Gawain- poem, Chapel Hill, N. Carolina, 1936, p. 14).

The dialect has been identified as North West Midlands (Oakden, Alliterative Poetry, Vol. I, p. 86), but there is no general agreement on a more precise location— "south Lancashire rather than Cheshire..." (J. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon, op. cit., p. xxiv); "The poet... may have been reared either in Lancashire or in the Yorkshire West Riding that adjoins Lancashire." (H. L. Savage, op. cit., p. 132.)

1) "It is professedly not of his own invention, nor founded upon popular tradition, for he expressly refers at the commencement to written authority..." (op. cit., p. 305.) He cites l. 34, l. 690 and l. 2523.
2) Ibid., pp. 305-7.
3) See, for example, R. Morris, op. cit., p. viii.
the Roman de Perceval, where the general narrative bore no resemblance to the English story. Already the search had become complicated, not by lack of feasible sources but by evidence which linked Gawain with a number of French romances and implied an elaborate process of compilation from them. Gaston Paris, writing in 1888, added to the number the Thirteenth century Runbaut, in which he detected the type of correspondence found elsewhere by Miss Thomas, but rejected her theory of composite origin in favour of a common source for the English work and the various French romances. His hypothesis related only to the content of the first and fourth divisions of Sir Gawain, the Challenge or Beheading Game. For the second theme of the romance, the Temptation, Miss Thomas, confining her search to the twin forms of the Perceval, had found an original in the episode of Gawain and Guigambresil. The resemblance in matters of detail was, however, dismissed by Paris as "très faible" since it was not supported by any conformity in the essential basis of the two stories. The rejection of this false lead ended the attempt to find an immediate source for Sir Gawain, in whole or in part, amongst the extant French romances.

1) Ibid., pp. 58-65.
2) "...précisément parce que le récit du Green Knight contient des traits qui se retrouvent tantôt dans l'un tantôt dans l'autre des récits parallèles, on doit conclure qu'il ne provient d'aucun d'eux, et qu'il nous représente une dérivation indépendante de la source commune, c'est-à-dire un poème français épique, qui avait pour sujet principal ce qui dans les autres textes ne forme qu'un incident au milieu d'autres! (G. Paris in Histoire littéraire de la France, Vol. XXX, Paris, 1888, p. 72.)
4) "...surtout il faut remarquer que dans le Perceval nous n'avons pas, comme dans le Vert Chevalier, une épreuve à laquelle l'hôte de
Gaston Paris had pointed out that the theme of the Challenge is also to be found in Celtic literature, and in 1897 Miss Jessie Weston compared Sir Gawain and its various French analogues with two versions of an incident known as The Champion's Bargain in the Irish epic of Fled Bricredd, preserved in a manuscript of c.1100, though dated as early as the Ninth century. Finding many details of the Celtic legend more clearly reproduced in the Gawain episode than in the Livre de Garadoc or the other French texts, she agreed in rejecting them as possible sources of the alliterative poem. Her general study of Arthurian romance connected it with the Celtic legends and Gawain with Cuchulainn, the hero of The Champion's Bargain, and she suggested that the Irish versions were likely to provide a more reliable guide to the original of the English narrative than its analogues in French literature.

The first detailed study of the problem, by G.L. Kittredge, made valid use of evidence from both French and Celtic sources. Kittredge accepted the Irish version of the Beheading Game as "essentially identical, even in details, with the shape which it takes..."

(Cont.)

1) Ibid., p. 77.
3) Garadoc seemed to her the least likely of such sources: "It seems difficult to understand how any one could have regarded this version, ill-motivated as it is, and utterly lacking in the archaic details of the English poem, as the source of that work. It should probably rather be considered as the latest in form, if not in date, of all the versions! (Ibid., p. 89.)
in Gawain and the Green Knight, and assumed a specifically literary connection between them. On the ground that the outline of The Champion's Bargein is also clearly discernible in Caradoc, Perlesvaus and La Belle sans Frais he decided that the legend "somehow passed from Irish literature into French, where, presumably, the alliterative author discovered it. Comparing the existing forms in French and English with the versions in Fled Eriu, Kittredge suggested that Gawain and Caradoc were independently derived from a common source, which he labelled R. "This source was undoubtedly in French and in all probability was a brief episodical romance of Gawain, to whom it was natural for any French writer to attach such an adventure when it attracted his attention. Convinced by a number of points reminiscent of the Celtic text in which La Belle sans Frais differed from Caradoc and

1) Ibid., p.9.

2) "The close agreement between the stories cannot be fortuitous. Nor can it be due to the common utilizing of a casual bit of vagrant tradition. The Irish tale is carefully wrought out in detail with conscious art, and its correspondence with the English poem extends to certain minitiae which are not folk-lore, but literary elaboration! (Ibid., p.15.) "In the complete absence, then, of any indication to the contrary, we are forced to infer that the Challenge in Gawain and the Green Knight goes back, in some way, to an elaborate literary version of The Champion's Bargein in Irish! (Ibid., p.17.)

3) Ibid., p.9.

4) "The Caradoc version and the Gawain version are mutually independent; for each...... preserves important details of the Irish story that do not appear in the other. Yet the Caradoc version and the Gawain version resemble each other closely in noteworthy particulars in which both differ from the Irish tale! (Ibid., pp.36-7.) "...the special agreements between the Caradoc and the Gawain version over against the Irish story prove beyond question that the author of the Caradoc and the author of the French Gawain drew independently from a common source! (Ibid., p.38.)

5) Ibid., p.38.
 Gawain that it could not have been derived from R, he was forced to
postulate an earlier intermediary version (0) in which these primitive
traits still survived. The relation of Perlesvaus to the other texts
proved more difficult to determine. It, too, contains certain of the
Celtic features which distinguish La Mule sans Frein from texts of the
R-group, and Kittredge found no conclusive proof that it derived them
directly from La Mule or from 0 as their common source. Indeed, he
thought it possible to explain away the points in question and accept
Perlesvaus as another member of the R-group.

In summary, Kittredge's theory of the descent of the Be-
heading Game from the early Irish epic to the Fourteenth century
Gawain implied two intermediate forms: a... an episodical romance of
Gawain (0), probably composed in England in the twelfth century in the
Anglo-Norman dialect. 0 is lost, but we may feel sure that its plot
was confined to the story of the Challenge, and that it followed the
Irish with reasonable fidelity... "About 1200 or a little earlier,
0 was revised or rewritten by some Frenchman, probably in a dialect of
Continental French. This reworking (which we call R) was more courtly
and polished than 0, but did not depart from it in any essential feature,
remaining an episodical romance of Gawain with its plot confined to the
Challenge. "Another French poet combined the Challenge as told by R
with an entirely different tale of Gawain (the Temptation), and thus con-
structed a highly ingenious plot in honour of that hero. His work is
preserved to us in an English version, our Gawain and the Green Knight?"

In searching for the source of the Temptation incident

1) "On the whole... though I am convinced that Perlesvaus did not
borrow the Challenge from La Mule sans Frein, I cannot make up my
mind positively between 0 and R. I incline towards (however...)."
Ibid., p. 75.
2) Ibid., p. 75.
Kittredge was guided by his analysis of its original significance: "...we may unhesitatingly recognize its central incident as one of those tests or proofs to which supernatural beings are wont to subject mortals who venture into their other-world domain. Amongst the myriad forms taken by such tests he classed the Gawain episode with those in which the hero, by unwittingly fulfilling certain pre-ordained conditions, frees the person who imposes the test from enchantment, and often from a monstrous shape to which he has been condemned. Recognising that in their later forms such stories are often rationalised, the supernatural nature of the testing agent forgotten, and the purpose of the test obscured until it becomes merely 'the custom of the castle,' Kittredge examined episodes of the kind in the French romances of Yder, Huntant and Le Chevalier à la Prise, the Middle English Culde of Carlile, two Italian canzonc of the Fourteenth century and some Latin examples. From the recurrence in such diverse contexts of an adventure in which the hero, sometimes Gawain, sometimes not, secures the disenchanted of his host by resisting the advances made to him by the host's wife or daughter, he postulated the existence, at one time, of a prototype version from which the main lines of the Temptation incident in Sir Gawain were drawn.

The fact that the literary ancestry of the Temptation motif was so much less concrete had led earlier scholars to give

1) Ibid., 76.
2) "This reconstructed version is no fancy sketch. It is preserved to all intents and purposes in the group of poems to which the Earl of Carlisle belongs. Indeed, except for the active temptation on the lady's part, it might serve as a reconstruction of the French romance to which all the poems of the Earl group (the Earl, the Chevalier and the canzonc) have been shown to go back, and this feature does survive in the Yder in a very primitive form!" (Ibid., p. 105.)
disproportionate attention to the Beheading Game, but Kittredge stressed the parity of the two themes, believing that the impulse to combine them came from their basic similarity as tests of heroic qualities and the fact that the agent of the test in both cases was a person of strange appearance and supernatural powers. The motif which knits the two episodes together, the exchange of winnings between Gawain and his host, he regarded as an invention by the French author who, in his belief, made the compilation. In corroboration of his general theory he cited the evidence of The Turk and Gawain, a Fourteenth or early Fifteenth century English romance, in which the Challenge is used, as in Gawain, to draw the hero into an adventure which ends with the disembelegation of his challenger. In his opinion this version of the story, if not actually based on the French Gawain, or upon the earlier C or R versions, at least furnished an independent demonstration of the process by which the plot of Gawain was evolved.

Almost simultaneously with the publication of Kittredge's study, another American scholar, J. E. Rubbert, approached the problem from an entirely different starting-point. He questioned the previous assumption that the Challenge and the Temptation motifs had existed as separate entities before they were interwoven to form the plot of Sir

1) Ibid., pp. 107-9.

2) "The whole transaction depends upon a state of things which could not exist until the Challenge and the Temptation were combined in a single plot. There was, then, no magic lace in the version of the Temptation that the French author used; neither was there, in all likelihood, an agreement to exchange winnings" (Ibid., p. 114.)

3) Ibid., pp. 118-25.

Gawain, and sought to prove that they were analogically connected in a way which illuminated the original significance of the story. Of the two occurrences of *The Champion's Bargain* in *Fled Eiridrend* Kittredge had ignored the earlier, known as the 'Uath' version from the name of the challenger in the Beheading Game. Bulbert pointed out that in this text, following upon the Beheading Game, Cuchulainn is further tested by Curoi, with whose wife Blathnat, according to other Celtic legends, he had a liaison, eventually killing Curoi for her sake. He saw this association as evidence of an earlier form of the story in which Blathnat, a *fée*, used Curoi, a shape-shifter, to test the valour of her chosen lover in the Beheading Game. Amongst the French versions of the beheading motif he recognised the story of the Fairy-mistress most clearly in *La Hule Sans Fraire*, which he considered more primitive in its essentials than the other romances where the original meaning of the Celtic legend had been disguised by rationalisation.

1) "If the two parts of *GK* were originally distinct, we should expect to find the beheading story in its other occurrences connected with plots and used for purposes different from those of *GK*. On the other hand, if we find in several cases that the beheading story is connected with an action similar to the latter part of *GK*, we must suppose that the two parts are not separable. Further, if a study of these cases shows that they can be referred to a definite, established type of story, we may be able to understand more clearly the exact nature of *GK* and get some idea of how it reached its present form? (ibid., p.434.)

2) "...we have in the tale of Curoi the beheading game in connection with a fairy-mistress story as a test which the hero must meet in order to win the fairy, and we also have the proposer of the test (Curoi) established as a shape-shifter? (Ibid., p.439.)

3) "In fact, we have in *BE* a fairy-mistress story with very slight alterations and decidedly primitive characteristics. Hence here again, as in the *Fled Eiridrend*, we have the head-cutting episode used as a test for the achievement of a fairy mistress. Furthermore, the notably primitive elements in the story give it much greater weight as evidence than the *Parcival* and *Parzival* versions? (Ibid., p.439.)"
dual role played by the Green Knight, the stress laid upon his
soul, and his association with the Green Chapel, identified as a
fairy mound, Hulbert interpreted Gawain in its entirety as the testing
of a mortal by a shape-shifter, an Otherworld creature. The reason for
the test given by the English poet, the enmity of Morgan la Fay, he
found unconvincing and suggested that its original function was to
prove the hero worthy of the love of a fée. Two significant differ-
cences in the alliterative poem, the fact that the lady offers her love
to the knight before he has submitted to the beheading test, and that
she does so merely in order to try him, not from genuine affection,
he attributed to the alterations of a story-teller who, for a special
purpose, wished to heighten the moral victory won by Gawain. Early
rationalizers having converted the shape-shifter, whom the fée used as
her instrument in testing the hero, into her husband, later authors felt
it immoral that she should make a sincere offer of love to another man,
and interpreted the incident, on the model of the other main episode in
the story, as a further trial of Gawain. That the test was one not for
chastity but for loyalty was indicated, in Hulbert's view, by the

1) "The fact that in the Plegid Ericrend and H.E.F the beheading game is
used as a test for the winning of a fairy mistress suggests that
such may be its purpose here? (Ibid., p.458.)

2) "Now at some time, a story-teller conceived the idea of making this
story a poetic explanation of the founding of an order, probably
because the green lace reminded him of the badge of that order.
Wishing to associate with the order the idea of loyalty, he altered
the nature of the material slightly by having Gawain resist the
love of the lady, and he transferred the incident of Gawain and the
lady to the hospitable castle, so as to bring the beheading test
after it and make the test an evidence of Gawain's loyalty? (Ibid., p.458)

3) "The story in its older form gave a test of courage, and the fact
that courage was a knightly virtue doubtless suggested to some
redactor the idea of developing a work which by various tests would
show forth a perfect knight, and give a meaning to the green lace. Hence the
second test, to define more exactly the chivalrous ideal. (Ibid., p.698-9)
incorporation, on the redactor's initiative, of the exchange of winnings between Gawain and the lady's husband, a motif found elsewhere in medieval romance. This addition, as well as the general reinterpretation of the Fairy-mistress story, he attributed to the author of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

A similar conception of the essential unity of the Gawain plot in its folk-lore form also underlies the theory advanced by R.S. Loomis in his general study of the relations between Celtic myth and Arthurian romance. After examining The Champion's Bargain and related legends he proposed to identify Curoi and Cuchulinn as two forms of the same heroic personality, the former representing the old sun-god who is overthrown and succeeded by the latter, his younger self. On etymological grounds he also identified Cuchulinn (as Garvan, his counterpart in Welsh legend) with Gawain, and Curoi (who often adopts the disguise of a bechluach, a herdsman or churl) with Sir Bercilak.

1) "...I think it probable that the author of CGK was the person who transformed the relations of the lady and Gawain into a test of loyalty, and that he also made the connection with an order? (Ibid., p.703)

2) R.S. Loomis, Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance, New York, 1927.

3) "...may we not tentatively conjecture that Cuchulinn is a diminutive Curoi, the young sun-god, who like Zeus kills the old sun and lightning god and takes over the symbols of his power?" (Ibid., p.57.)

4) "...Rhys long since pointed out that the mythical Welsh figure Gwri corresponds in a way to Cuchulinn? (Ibid., pp.61-2.) "Furthermore, Welsh myth knows both a little Gwri, Garvan and Gar-mach! (Ibid., p.62.) ...the earliest form of Gawain is that on the Modern portal, Galvagni. But everything becomes perfectly clear if one sees in Galvagni the Welsh epithet of Garvan, Gwralit Awnyn. For Garvan is no other than little Gwri and is therefore identical with Cuchulinn? (Ibid., p.63.)"

5) "...I think there can hardly be any question that all these names, including Sir Bercilak, are derived from the Irish bechluach." (Ibid., p.60)
In consequence, he saw the struggle between the disguised Beroilak and Sir Gawain in the Beheading Game as "the tale of the encounter of the old and the young sun-god, when the old god is beheaded on condition that the young god shall himself lose his head a year later, influenced by a traditional story-pattern of an exchange of blows which, illogically, made the aged Curoi test the valour of the youthful Cuchulinn. Loomis, like Hulbert, stressed the importance of the 'Uath' version of the Bhallengo in which Curoi's role is filled by two enigmatic characters known as Yellow Son of Fair and Terror Son of Great Fear, who, according to him, represent aspects of his dual nature as a sun-god who is also a god of storm and thunder, and correspond to the twin forms assumed by the challenger in the romance version of the story. And, like Hulbert, he regarded the associated tradition which made Cuchulinn compete with Curoi for the love of his wife Blathnat as the ultimate source of the Temptation motif in Gawain.

1) Ibid., p. 60.
2) Ibid., p. 61.
3) "If we are right, the story should mean: The hero first goes to Curoi in his solar aspect. He is then sent by Curoi to be tested by himself in his thunderous aspect. The hero is accompanied by a guide. Precisely these three points are incorporated in the story of Gawain and the Green Knight. For the Green Knight in his capacity of host to Gawain betrays that he is the old sun god; we learn that he is 'a huge warrior', 'of great age', that 'broad and bright was his beard and all beaver-hued', 'with a face as fierce as fire'. Finally at the end of the poem the Green Knight reveals his identity with the host with face as fierce as fire. Both in nature and in function, then, Sir Beroilak the host corresponds to Yellow Son of Fair! (Ibid., p. 69.)
4) "The old tradition of the love affair between young Curoi or Cuchulinn and old Curoi's wife, which has been so distorted in Gawain and the Green Knight as to give us simply the temptation motif, still survives in Cúchulain and Ivain. For not only does the young sun god, Cúchulain or Ivain, slay the storm god and take his place, but he also marries his wife, just as Cuchulinn slew Curoi and took Blathnat! (Ibid., p. 71.)"
Loomis's theory of the origin of the alliterative romance postulated a process by which these two episodes in the struggle between the old sun-god and his younger successor, in common with such myths generally, were transmuted into familiar folk-lore patterns and variously rationalised by the different narrators who made use of the common story-matter. He identified the dominant pattern in this instance as that of the test, by which the aging sun-god proved the quality of his successor, by which Curoi tried the valour of Cuchulinn and Sir Bercilak of Gawain. The original significance of the struggle for the love of Blathnat was made to conform to this pattern, in which her role is to test the hero's loyalty by her temptation. Loomis admitted that this theory of the intermingling of two adventures of Cuchulinn was merely hypothetical and not demonstrated by the existing Irish texts; yet there is nothing more certain than that the Celtic story-tellers regarded it as the essence of their art to combine into harmony the various stories about a

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1) Amongst the various "moulds for myths" into which he believed the struggle between Curoi and Cuchulinn had been cast Loomis included the Exchange of Blows motif, the Combat of Father and Son, and the seasonal battle of Summer and Winter. See Ibid., pp. 75-33.

2) "The narrative pattern which has most deeply affected the story of Gawain and the Green Knight is the test pattern. In its first form, we may believe, the encounter between Cuchulinn and Curoi was represented as a true quarrel, a genuine life-and-death struggle; and the loving passages between Cuchulinn and Blathnat in the ultimate source of Gawain and the Green Knight by no means consisted of a calculated temptation on her side and a virtuous rebuff on his, but were lusty and passionate enough! The complete overturning of these established relationships is due to the thorough-going application of the concept of the old god as a tester of the younger! (Ibid., pp. 31-2.)

3) "The next step was naturally to fit Blathnat into the same scheme. The result is apparent in Gawain and the Green Knight, where the lady's function is to test the hero's loyalty, as it is her husband's to test his courage! (Ibid., p. 32.)"
given figure. It is entirely possible, therefore, as Hulbert has
maintained, that Gawain and the Green Knight may represent with some
fidelity a combination already made in Ireland? Unlike Hulbert,
however, he made no attempt to reconstruct the evolution of the plot
on the evidence of the other texts usually cited, regarding even the
versions of the Beheading Game as independently derived from the
Celtic original. The nature of his study made him more interested in
features of Sir Gawain which confirmed his theory of the Celtic origin
of Arthurian romance in general, than in the evolution of the particular
legend or in the form in which it is likely to have reached the
English author.

Following upon the publication of Loomis's conclusions
other scholars, working along the same lines, attempted to fill in the
Celtic background of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight more uniformly
and in greater detail. Of these the most painstaking was Miss Alice
Buchanan, whose examination of both versions of the Challenge in Fled
Briorend and the other legends in which Cuchulinn is involved with
Cuoi and Blathnat, convinced her that their connection with Sir
Gawain was even more complex than Loomis had supposed. She rejected
Kittredge's identification of the unique source of the Challenge in
Sir Gawain in a single episode of Fled Briorend, finding closer

1) Ibid., p. 60.
2) "There are seven versions of this story in Arthurian romance....
Kittredge has declared that at least four of these are independent
of each other, and I go so far as to believe that all seven are
independent of each other? (Ibid., p. 59.)
3) A. Buchanan, "The Irish Framework of Gawain and the Green Knight",
4) "Kittredge's simple solution of the derivation of the Beheading
Test motif in Arthurian romance from a single Irish story is in-
adequate to explain the many permutations and combinations of elements
from the Cuoi cycle which we have been able to trace? (Ibid., p. 315.)
parallels to some features in the 'Ulath' text, a fact which suggested
to her that the form of this incident in the English poem was "the
result of combining the two versions of the Beheading Test." She
followed Loomis in interpreting Yellow Son of Fair and Terror Son of
Great Fear as "disguises" assumed by Curoi, whose dual role as the
host and tester of the hero she saw reproduced in the part played by
Sir Bercilak as the Green Knight. And she, too, accepted the tradition
of the love-affair between Cuchulinn and Blathnat as the origin of
the Temptation episode, referring to a theory that it had once been
included in Fled Bricrenn. In support of her belief that traditions
concerning Cuchulinn, Curoi, and Blathnat, found in old Irish texts
whose language proves their priority to the French romances, were
conflated to give us the plot of Cuchulinn she cited more than thirty points
of correspondence between these and the English narrative. She found
confirmatory evidence of a Celtic folk-tale combining the Challenge
and the Temptation in other Arthurian stories in which the influence

1) Ibid., p. 317.
2) "Such a correspondence is beyond coincidence, and added to the
four other features common to CGK and the Yellow and Terror version,
makes certain a genetic relation between the two." (Ibid., p. 325.)
3) "...Hulbert and Zimmer came to the conclusion that a love-passage
between Cuchulinn and Blathnat had been deleted from the Irish tale:
"It is entirely possible, therefore, that the author of Bricriu's Feast
knew a version of Cuchulinn's visit to Curoi's castle where the
young hero not only demonstrated his martial prowess but also his
well-known ardent feeling for his host's wife." (Ibid., p. 326.)
4) Ibid., p. 330.
5) Ibid., 328–9.
of the Curoi cycle is manifest and in which traces of both motifs appear—the Fifteenth century English *Carlot of Carlisle*, an episode in Chrétien's *Lancelot*, and another in Malory's *Lorte d'Arthur*. The recurrence, in different contexts, of the main features of the alliterative narrative convinced her "that a combination of the Temptation and Beheading Game is traceable outside of *Gawain and the Green Knight*, and that the compilation was the work of Celtic story-tellers rather than Medieval romance-writers."

These conclusions on the origin of the narrative framework naturally led to further attempts to discover Celtic sources even for incidental details in *Sir Gawain*. Loomis himself professed to see the original of *Sir Borcilak's 'grene lace*' in a magic girdle associated with Curoi in the Irish legends, and of Gawain's device of the pentangle in a charge supposed to have been borne by Cuchulinn on his shield. And, since it was part of his general theory that the common Celtic heritage of Arthurian legend was transmitted to the French romance-writers by way of Wales, he pursued details for which Irish traditions provided no obvious source in the Welsh legends. In the

3) "...many of the complex story-patterns which have come down into Arthurian romance must have taken shape in a period very close to that in which for linguistic reasons the authorities place the oldest part of *Brigiu's Feast*, namely, the ninth century? (*Ibid.*, p338.)
5) "We see Wales as the natural meeting place for Irish and Brythonic myth and saga; we see North Britain and Cornwall making their natural contributions; we see the Bretons of the Continent as the natural links between their cousins the Welsh and their neighbours the French? (W.E. Loomis, "By What Route Did the Romantic Tradition of Arthur reach the French?* *Ed.* Phil., XLI, Chicago, 1936, pp.227–16.)"
Eleventh century mabinogi of Pwyll he found what he believed to be the origin of several circumstances in Gawain not previously accounted for, including the year's interval which separates the hero's two encounters with the Green Knight, and Sir Bercilak's preoccupation with hunting. Almost immediately, however, another scholar pointed out that, in order to find authority for the latter particular, it was not necessary to go outside the Irish tradition but merely to extend the search beyond the Ulster legends of Cuohulinn to the other cycles, which he found provided parallels to more fundamental features of the romance.

Indeed, as the search was increasingly extended the problem of finding Celtic originals for the components of Sir Gawain was complicated by the difficulty of reconciling the multiple identifications and divergent interpretations which were proposed. Much controversy centered round the person of the Green Knight and the significance of his role in the action. Miss Buchanan agreed with Loomis in detecting attributes of both sun and storm deity in Curoi and corresponding traits in the dual personality of the Green Knight, his romance counterpart.

But W.A. Mitse, starting from a premise in keeping with the views of Loomis and the other folklorists, came to the conclusion that the origin of the story was a vegetation rather than a solar myth.


2) "Just as Bercilak the Host reveals solar features, so Bercilak the testor suggests his association with the storm in the powerful verses which describe the whetting of his ax, a common conception of the lightning weapon! (W.A. Mitse, op. cit., p. 325.)

3) "The premise of the now hypothesis is the realization that such stories as Gawain and the Green Knight cannot be understood unless we are willing to keep our minds open to the idea that in addition to literary documents, popular ceremonies and rites may be of first-class importance in considering not only the derivation of a story but also the significance of 'myth' that originally produced it" (W.A. Mitse, "Is the Green Knight Story a Vegetation Myth?", Mod. Phil., XXXII, pp. 351-66, Chicago, 1936, p. 355.)
His opinion was based chiefly on the form of the story contained in the *Perlesvaus*, but he detected elements of a vegetation myth in other romance versions of the legend, notably, in *Gawain*, the colouring of the Green Knight and his accoutrements, and the contrast between Winter and verdant growth which runs through the alliterative poem.

Yet another interpretation, by A.H. Krapp, revealed the Green Knight as a supernatural executioner, "in fact, the only deathless executioner known, namely Death itself, whose proposal of the beheading game represents Death's perpetual challenge to mankind, and whose green colouring is associated with the dead."

It was Krapp's purpose, in common with those who made other and different interpretations of the legend, to illuminate the Celtic background of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, but he started from an assumption which made it unnecessary to consider what significance

1) "That I have aimed to make clear is that the Green Knight tale as it appears in the *Perlesvaus* represents a vegetation ritual or myth. Whether or not this was the basis of the story on which, together with various other elements, the Irish *sliot* constructed his valour-testing 'game' is by no means so certain. But vestiges of such an origin seem to me to exist also in the other versions I have considered, to a greater or less degree. (Ibid., p.366.)


3) "The mysterious Green Knight is none other than the Lord of Hades, who comes to challenge to a beheading game the heroes sitting around the fire, probably some All Hallowes' on night! "All these stories, of essentially the same pattern, have their basis and starting point in the simple psychological fact that to man there is nothing more terrible than Death and that it requires a knight sans peur et sans reproches to accept his grim challenge and to brave him? (Ibid., p.215.)

4) Rejecting the conception of the Green Knight as a 'vegetation demon', Krapp pointed out that green was not uniquely associated with nature, but was also a fairy colour: "The reason for this peculiarity is not far to seek: the Celtic side are the dead ancestors and green is the colour of the dead and of death" (Ibid., p.211.)
this legendary matter may have had for the alliterative author: "The
Middle English poem is the English version of a lost French composition...."
And this, in effect, has been the general assumption amongst those who
have studied the problem, whatever their opinion as to the origin and
evolution of the story-matter. The early commentators presumed, on the
basis of the general relationship between French and English romance,
that Gawain derived directly from a French original. Those who pion­
eroed detailed research on the poem, whether, like Hulbert, they saw it
as the development of a unified plot, or, like Kittredge, as the result of
combining independent episodes, agreed that the immediate original of
the alliterative version was a French romance. Their opinion has been
accepted as the basis for most of the critical appreciations of Gawain
as a work of literature which have so far been made.

This general assumption has, however, been opposed by two
German scholars. The earlier of these, Dr. Else von Schaubert, accepted

1) Ibid., p.206.
2) "...il est extrêmement probable qu'elle ne fait que reproduire un
poème français perdu! (G. Parvis, loc. cit., p.71.) "The English poem
is based on a French (Anglo-Norman) account..." (W.H. Schofield,
English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer, London,
1906, p.217.) "His original was, no doubt, in French or Anglo-French"
(I. Collanes in The Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. I,
Cambridge, 1907, p.327.)
3) "That the immediate source of Gawain and the Green Knight was a
French poem is altogether probable! (C.L. Kittredge, loc. cit., p.3.)
Hulbert was less specific but he assumed that in the version upon
which the alliterative poem was based the evolution of the legend
was virtually complete and it had already been modified to the
requirements of French romance. See, in particular, loc. cit., pp.692-3.
4) E. von Schaubert, "Der Englische Ursprung von Syr Gawain and the
Kittredge's derivation of the Challenge from The Champion's Bargain but rejected his conception of the Temptation as a test of the kind found in the Manual of Manhood and the other texts which he associated with it, pointing out that the virtue displayed there is not loyalty towards the host but absolute obedience to his commands. She found Bulbert's theory of the Temptation as an integral part of the Celtic original equally unacceptable on the grounds that there is no trace of a fairy-mistress in the extant text of Flad Bricren and that his identification of the motif in La Male sans Frain rests upon a misinterpretation. As an alternative source for this episode she suggested a moral tale of the type represented by two anecdotes in the Vitas Patrum, concerning hermits who resist the advances made to them by beautiful women in trial of their virtue. But the chief interest of Dr. von Schaubert's study is her assertion that, whatever the source of the two main incidents in the story may have been, the English poet himself was responsible for combining them to form the plot of his romance. Her thesis was based on two considerations. Negatively, she thought it impossible that a French author, writing, according to Kittredge's dating of the hypothetical union of the twin motifs, in the full flood of

1) loc.cit., pp. 372-82.
2) Ibid., pp. 359-68.
3) Ibid., pp. 437-45. Dr. von Schaubert cited the tales from an Old French version, La Vie des Anciens Pères, but stressed the international character of such material, and Dr. Jabel Day has since pointed out, in her Introduction to Mallanoe's edition of Gaimain (op.cit., xxxix-xxx), that one of them also occurs in The Book of the Knight of la Tour-Landry, which, there is reason to believe, was known to the Gawain-poet.
4) "Der Einfall, eine Legende mit einem Motiv der Artusepik zusammenge- wurzelt, legt nun, wie der ganze Charakter der mittelenglischen Literatur ohne weiteres hervortritt und das Beispiel der Asusters off
romance production, could have produced anything so crudely constructed, so poorly motivated and lacking in psychological penetration as she considered the alliterative poem to be. 

And positively, she interpreted a number of contemporary Middle English poems in which two episodes, one moral and one chivalric, are set side by side in an Arthurian framework, as typifying the process by which Sir Gawain was produced in contradistinction to the method of enchainement used by French romance-writers of the period.

The existence of what he regarded as significant flaws in the alliterative poem also led Otto Lüßmann to deny that it could have been based directly upon a French original. He, too, accepted The Champion's Bargain as representing the ultimate source of the

(Cont.) Arthurian erläutert, einem mittelenglischen Dichter ausser-ordentlich viel näher als dem Verfasser französischer Artusromane ......... und so liefert also die soeben geführte Quellensuche einen weiteren Stützpunkt für die früher bereits mit Entschiedenheit aufgestellte und eingehend begründete Behauptung, dass GGK als englische Originalkomposition angesehen werden müsse! (Ibid., p.446.)

1) "Was wir an den französischen Artusromansen bewundern, und was auch in fast allen neueren Arbeiten über den einen oder anderen desselben nachdrücklich hervorgehoben wird, ist gerade die fast unangemessen sehr gute, oft sogar geradezu glänzende Komposition. Ist dann aber denkbar, dass ein Franzose, und zwar nach Kittredge um 1250, also zu einer Zeit, die nach Gaston Paris als Spionenszeit gerade besonders Gewicht auf Komposition gelegt haben wird, zwei Motive wie unser Enthaupungs- und Verführungs- und Verführungsmotiv in derartig ungeschickter Weise verbunden haben kann, wie es in GGK der Fall ist? Könnten wir einem französischen höfischen Epiker des 13. Jahrhunderts die geradezu künstliche Motivierung des Gansens durch die Laune der Fee Morgan, diesen ganzem jämmernlichen Schluss zur Last legen?" (Ibid., p.395.)

2) "Die Ergebnisse unserer gesamten letzten Untersuchungen über Colagros und Gawana, die Awityre off Arthur und die Awane of King Arthur sowie GGK lassen sich wohl dahin zusammenfassen, dass diese vier Artusromane ähnlich durch Eigenart und Schwäche der Komposition sowie Vernachlässigung des höfischen Elementes, - bzw. Wahl von höfischen Geiste völlig entgegengesetzt, ja direkt behauptenswerten Motiven, - die drei letztgenannten übereinstimmend auch durch stark moralisierende Tendenz und auffällig schwere psychologische Mängel französischer Arturomantik unerlässig werden und daher sicher nicht auf französische Gesamtvorlagen zurückzuführen, vielmehr als typisch englische Dichtungen anzusehen sind! (Ibid., p.436.)"
Beheading Gawain, and agreed with Hulbert in deriving the Temptation from a Celtic legend concerning the love of a fée for a mortal. Whoever first combined the two incidents made the latter conform to the Test motif of the former, but, according to Löhmann, so clumsily that traces of its original significance are still apparent in the alliterative version, where the lady's behaviour towards Gawain indicates that her love for him is genuine, not merely a ruse to try him. Convinced that such an inept compilation could not be the work of a French author, and that the original to which the alliterative poet refers could not have been in French, he concluded that the immediate source of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight was written in English and was the work of an English redactor.

These constitute the major theories so far advanced regarding the source of the alliterative Gawain. Other studies have sought to connect its origin with various individuals and chivalric orders. The adoption of Gawain's 'grene lace' by his fellows of the Round Table in the last stanzas of the poem gave rise to the suggestion


1) "Er erkannte sofort den Bruch der Handlung in dem Gegensatz zwischen dem Liebesmotiv und dem Prüfungsmotiv als untragbar und beseitigte ihn, indem er ersteres unterdrückte und das zweite zum Grundgedanken des Ganzen machte! (Op. cit., p. 34.)

2) Ibid., pp. 47-8.

3) "Wenn der englische Chl.-Dichter einleitend über seine Dichtung sagt 'I schal teile hit astit, as I in toon herde, wi' tonge...!(V.31-32), so kann sich das kaum auf eine französische Quelle beziehen. Die Wahrscheinlichkeit spricht hier für eine englische Quelle. Das Französische war damals, am Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts, schon im Absterben begriffen, war auch nur die Sprache der Höfe und der Gebildeten, die Sprache des Volkes war englisch, 'I herd in toun' deutet doch wohl auf einen Vortrag vor der Volksmengen, also auf eine englische Version! (Ibid., p. 32.)
that it was composed in honour of some order of knighthood. The fact that the Carter motto is written at the end of the text in the extant manuscript has led to its association with the foundation of the order, but it has been suggested that a connection with the Knights of the Bath or the Savoy Order of the Collar is more probable. The issue is largely irrelevant here since it is merely suggested that the wish to celebrate a chivalric brotherhood may have provided the impetus for the composition, influenced the choice of story-matter and dictated the prominence given to the 'green lace'. Those who have associated Sir Gawain with historical figures imply, however, that its plot was modelled on incidents in their careers. It has, for example, been suggested that the beheading of the Green Knight was based on the execution of Sir Ralph Holmes, to whom Froissart refers as the Green Squire, and, alternatively, that the poem as a whole arose from certain events in the life of Enguerrand de Coucy, a French knight who married Isabella, daughter of Edward III. But the evidence on which these identifications rest is extremely tenuous by comparison with the general basis for the discussion of the evolution of Sir Gawain from literaryaxon.

Of the theories properly concerned with the nature of these sources none has proved generally acceptable. Even the question of whether or not the original of the alliterative poem was a French work or an English one remains undecided. The views of Löhmann and Dr. von Schaubert in this connection stem from their conception of Sir Gawain as a clumsy compilation, flawed in structure and unworthy of a French romance-writer. Yet the overwhelming consensus of opinion is that, whether the credit belongs to the alliterative poet or to the author of an earlier version, the romance has been constructed with a skill rarely equalled in the literature of Medieval Europe. Such judgements are essentially subjective, but the evidence adduced in support of an English original is not convincing. It has been shown that Löhmann’s interpretation of the Temptation incident as an inadequate adaptation, confused in meaning, rested upon the misunderstanding of a number of lines from which he assumed that the lady’s expressions of love were genuine and represented unintentional and inappropriate survivals from an earlier form of the story. Dr. von Schaubert’s classification of Gawain with the Amityra of Artimur and other poems which she regarded as typically English in structure, took no account of the obvious distinction between the skilful interweaving of narratives, structurally and thematically, in the former and the association of unrelated episodes.

1) "Whoever the genius was who worked out the plot of GGK, he performed a miracle, for I doubt whether in the whole history of fiction so perfect a narrative structure has been built almost exclusively from such inharmonious and recalcitrant materials? (R.S. Loomis, "More Celtic Elements in Gawain and the Green Knight", The Journal of English and Germanic Philology, XXXII, pp. 149–54, Urbana, Ill., 1933, p. 18.)

in the latter. And, it might be added, the instance of Colgrus and Gawain, in which two separate incidents, taken from a French romance, have been given unity of form and meaning by an alliterative poet, argues against her thesis rather than in support of it. Even if one grants the premise on which it is based,—the invariable superiority of French literature,—it is difficult not to feel that the argument concerning the defects of the alliterative version is too strained to carry conviction.

Something of the same exaggeration marks the studies of Miss Weston, Professor Loomis and others who have approached the problem with the conviction that the ultimate origin of Arthurian romance is to be found in Celtic folklore. In so far as they have been able to discover convincing analogues to episodes in Sir Gawain and to reveal the original significance of its story-matter, their researches form a valid part of the source-study. But their thesis has, perhaps, been pressed too far. However impressive the evidence produced by individual folklorists, the cumulative effect fails to carry conviction. The accumulation of detailed parallels and the identification of analogues in various Welsh and Irish cycles implies an elaborate process of synthesis which is scarcely exemplified in the other Medieval versions, regarded as cognate developments of the Gawain-story. None of those who contributed to this imposing body of evidence considered its implications or the part played by such a synthesis in the production of the alliterative romance. They were content to bridge the gap between the

1) "One feels bound to protest here, in spite of Dr. von Schaumbert's opinion, that the skilful interweaving of the stories in Gawain is of a very different type from that in the other three poems? (W. Day, op. cit., p. xxix, Note 1.)"
rudimentary framework of the narrative in the legends of Cuchulinn, and the sophisticated version of Sir Gawain by producing feasible 'originals' for every episode and even for such incidentals as the emblem of the pentangle. Their success is not, however, so significant as it might appear at first sight; given any considerable body of story-matter, Celtic or other, and an equal licence in interpretation, it would not be difficult to assemble equally impressive parallels. But the complicated train of hypotheses on which many of the correspondences depend, and the variant identifications proposed in some instances, have confused and weakened the general thesis. And conflicting interpretations of the mythological background of the story, particularly the nature of the Green Knight, have shown how subjective such judgements are and how unreliable as a guide to the significance which his source-matter held for the alliterative author. The realisation that such arguments had been carried further than the factual evidence warranted has recently led Professor Loomis, the most confident of the 'Celticists' to modify his original views. Though he continues to support the general

1) It is significant that such parallels have been discovered in legends of the Vedic tradition: ™...in Indian mythology and ritual are to be found, and in endless variety, the characteristic motives of the Western romances and fairy-tales of the Green Knight and Grail quest types. Stories and motives of other types could be paralleled in un-ending detail... (A.K. Coomaraswamy, "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: Exira and Namui", Speculum, XIX, pp. 104-25, Cambridge, Mass., 1944, p. 120.) There is no question here of a literary connection, but rather of the duplication of common folk-lore patterns, reflecting a universal mythical significance. We have, in fact, to account for the world-wide distribution of folk-lore motives: and if we are to do that we must, I think, go behind the 'literature' and ask what the folk-lore motives mean, and why it is that it has seemed so important that they should be faithfully transmitted...? (Ibid., pp. 120-21.)

2) R.S. Loomis, "Objections to the Celtic Origin of the 'Matière de Bretagne', Rom., LXXIX, pp. 47-77, 1958.
thesis of the relationship between Celtic myth and Arthurian romance, he now feels compelled to reject many of the detailed hypotheses on which it was built up as speculative and unproven, and, in particular, his own equation of Cuchulinn with the Welsh Gwirvan, and Gwirvan with Gawain, on which he had based his theory concerning the origin of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

From the Celtic analogues whose validity he has come to question Loomis specifically excepts the link between The Champion's Bargain and the Beheading Game in Arthurian romance, on which the theories of Kittredge and Hulbert were primarily founded. The features which establish its connection with Sir Gawain are impressive, and the majority of scholars accept the Irish legend as the ultimate source of the Challenge in the alliterative poem. None of the various episodes suggested as the origin of the Temptation command the same general acceptance. Other Arthurian tales in which Gawain is submitted to a similar test bear only a vague general resemblance to the incident in the English poem. The moral tales cited by Dr. von Schaubert, in

1) "Though one may reject many Celtic parallels adduced by one scholar or another, there remains in my opinion a large body of striking similarities between the narrative literature of Ireland and Wales on the one hand and the European romances of the Round Table on the other that the position stands secure! (Ibid., p.77.)

2) "...I involved myself in a network of speculations and equations which was bound to provoke amazement in those better grounded than myself in Celtic literature! I have long since realized that not only is there insufficient evidence for these relationships, but also that Gwirvan and Gwirnach cannot mean what I thought! (Ibid., p.48.)

3) "If anyone, after reading Kittredge's study, denies that there is convincing evidence that Arthurian romance was influenced by Irish saga, then it is obvious that literary parallels have no validity for him! (Ibid., p.57.)

4) "Though these stories show the existence of some tale of Sir Gawain tested by his host through his wife, none of them exhibit the close connection with our poem that can be seen between it and Caradoc.
which the her is a hermit, have no association with the world of romance and their circumstantial resemblance to the Gawain incident is not so compelling as to postulate a direct literary connection. Hulbert's conception of the Temptation as an integral part of the Celtic legend from which, he believed, Sir Gawain was ultimately derived, is largely subjective, depending, like much of Loomis's thesis, on a personal interpretation of the original meaning of the story. Just as Loomis saw in the alliterative poem reflections of the primeval struggle between Curoi and Cuchulinn for the possession of Blathnat, so Hulbert detected echoes of a Fairy-mistress story in those romance versions of the Beheading Game regarded as cognate with it. But the objective evidence in both instances has not proved convincing to others. Kittredge's thesis of derivation from a French romance in which both motifs were already united rests upon an elaborate chain of assumptions for which there is little factual support. The evidence which he cited for the existence of its hypothetical antecedents links them only with the Beheading Game in Fled Bricrend. His identification of analogues to the Temptation incident depended upon his interpretation of it as a test resulting in a release from enchantment, yet nothing

(Cont.) or even Fled Bricrend, where actions and speeches can be found almost identical with those in Gawain. In none is any detail of the temptation found which reminds us of the methods of Bertilak's lady. It seems unnecessary to assume any more knowledge of such versions on the part of the combiner of the stories than the fact, which must have been generally current, that Gawain had taken part in some such adventure? (M. Day, op.cit., pp.xxv-xxvi.)

1) "Beyond the suggestion of The Turk and Gawain as derived from the French original, Kittredge puts forward no argument for its existence, beyond saying that it is 'altogether probable', and that the Englishman was 'certainly indebted to his unknown predecessor for the plot as a whole'" (Ibid., p.xxxi.)
in Sir Gawain suggests that the hero's resistance to temptation has this effect, and there is little objective basis for Kittredge's theory.

From the academic viewpoint all the attempts which have been made to trace the origin and evolution of the Gawain narrative have some validity, and each has contributed to our knowledge of its prehistory, both literary and legendary. But so far as critical appreciation of the poem, or understanding of the creative process by which it was produced, are concerned, the source-study has produced little of essential value. Research has not so far determined the nature of the source with sufficient certainty to enable us to evaluate the English poem either as the creation of an original artist or as a redaction based on the work of others. Even if we grant all the hypotheses which have been advanced in this connection, the essential knowledge still eludes us. If we accept the views of Kittredge or Hulbert on the origin of the story-matter and study the versions which they regarded as its nearest analogues, we find them so different in form and nature, so inferior in literary quality, so remote even in narrative outline from the alliterative poem, as to furnish no concrete conception of the postulated source, to which, admittedly, they are only indirectly related. At the best these theories can indicate feasible forms of the story, or its components, at a certain stage in its evolution, but cannot establish the relationship to the English version with sufficient assurance to allow us to estimate the author's ability in narrative construction. And without more immediate knowledge of the source it is equally impossible to judge the alliterative poet's interpretation of his material. The chief value of research upon the interrelations of Celtic legend and Arthurian romance is the
light which it throws upon the mythical significance of the story-
matter, and, therefore, upon the methods by which it has been made to
conform to the ethical codes and social interests of a Medieval
audience. But few Celtic scholars would suggest that the alliterative
author drew directly upon Celtic material in its primitive, folklore
form, and their theories do little to bridge the gap between \textit{D"rourend} and the English romance. Even if we accept a particular
interpretation as most in keeping with the meaning given to the story
in \textit{Sir Gawain} we still cannot determine what part the English author
may have played in reinterpreting it, or to what extent its rationaliza-
tion was the work of his predecessors, French or other.

The whole question of the origin of \textit{Sir Gawain} has been
discussed as though it were merely a matter of the dependence of
English romance upon French originals. But even if one rejects a
French source in favour of the theory advanced by L"ohrmann and Dr. von
Schaubert nothing of value is added to our knowledge of the process
by which the alliterative work was produced. The assumption of an
English original merely poses the same questions at another remove:
what were its sources?; what was the redactive process involved?;
what evidence does it furnish of creative ability on the part of an
English author, or of literary discrimination in an English audience?;
without supplying any means of answering such queries. And similarly,
the association of the poem with a historical figure or with a chivalric
order, even if it could be proved conclusively, has little significance
since we cannot know how or to what extent it influenced the choice,
invention or adaptation of the story-matter. Even the most reliable
of the source-studies, can, therefore, be of limited value only. They
can do something to define the category of literature to which Sir Gawain is related and trace the evolution of its story-matter in cognate versions. But the light which this throws upon the origin and composition of the alliterative romance is so feeble and oblique as to provide only limited guidance in formulating a critical appreciation of the work or judging the creative ability of the English poet.

And, in effect, critical appreciation of Sir Gawain has either been confined to comment on the intrinsic qualities of the poem, excluding all consideration of the creative process, or has supplemented the evidence of the source-studies by reference to the general tradition of the Middle English romance. In so far as received opinion on the relation of such romances to their antecedents can be said to exist, it conforms in general outline to the pattern assumed by most of those who have studied the origins of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. That is to say, it postulates derivation from a French romance, which, if it belonged to the Arthurian tradition, was ultimately based upon a Celtic legend, for whose rationalisation and adaptation to Medieval tastes, a succession of intermediate French authors had been responsible. This, broadly speaking, is the process of evolution which experience has detected behind the majority of Arthurian romances in Middle English, and the extent to which Kittredge’s research tended to confirm it in the case of Sir Gawain no doubt accounts for the readiness with which his theories were accepted by those who had not personally studied the problem. (1) But however valuable such corroborative evidence may be in the general study of the Middle English romance;

1) They were accepted by Tolkien and Gordon (op. cit., pp. xi-xv), for example, to the virtual exclusion of other opinions.
it is largely worthless, not to say misleading, as a basis for evaluating the alliterative Gawain as the creation, original or derivative, of an English poet. The specific importance of Sir Gawain in the literary history of the Middle Ages lies in the extent to which it differs from the characteristic romances produced at the same period in both France and England. The qualities which distinguish Gawain from other romances cannot, with assurance, be accounted for by reference to the tradition which produced works so different from it in every respect. It is as unjustified to assume that the features which differentiate it from the common run of Middle English romances must have been inherited from a French prototype as to attribute its flaws to the clumsiness of an English redactor. Since the various source-studies, whatever their individual virtues, cannot furnish any reliable indication as to the nature of its immediate original, and the unique character of the romance largely invalidates the evidence of the tradition in this connection, the most that can be attempted is a tentative judgment of the creative process on the basis of the cognate versions, with cautious reference to the general practice of Medieval romance-writers, both French and English.

The source-studies have thrown more light on the general construction of the poem than on any other aspect, but even here their value is limited. Nor can the romance tradition be called in evidence, since commentators are agreed that structurally Gawain is unique, in the limitation of its scope to a single adventure of the hero, in the

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1) "The originality is in the way of telling. Instead of reviewing many of Gawain's adventures, the story is confined to one; and even within this single adventure, that our interest may be centered upon the victory of chivalry over base selfish gratification, all minor episodes are passed over swiftly" (C.S. Baldwin, An Introduction to English Medieval Literature, New York, 1914, p. 159.)
relation of its incidents to a common theme, and in the skilful interweaving of the two main incidents. Whether the alliterative poet was personally responsible for the limitation of the romance, or whether he found this incident in Gawain's career already isolated in his source, is impossible to determine. The evidence of the cognate versions, most of which form part of larger compilations, and the example of the romance tradition in which the complex of adventures is the norm, may suggest, however, that here, as in Galahad and Gawain, an alliterative poet may deliberately have chosen to concentrate upon a limited episode, separating it from its original context. If so, we may assume that the results of such concentration, the heightened significance of the chosen incident, the elaboration of incidental details, etc., were part of his intended effect in the conduct of the redaction. Whether he found the plot as a unified whole, ready to his hand, or chose to combine incidents drawn from different sources, is equally impossible to tell.

Despite the conclusions of Kittredge and Hulbert, based on very different premises, that the Challenge and Temptation motifs had previously been associated in the work of a French romance-writer, such a unified version remains purely hypothetical. The poet's references to the book:

1) "It is no simple tale of adventure and love, but the story of a test of character for which adventure and love-taking provide the means. This in itself would give the poem a unity uncommon in romances, but, in addition, the poet concentrates on one adventure of his hero, avoiding the temptation to dwell on others, though he mentions them!" (D. Everett, Essays on Middle English Literature, (ed. P. Keen), Oxford, 1955, p. 75.)

2) "The theme of the Beheading Game is kept in the reader's consciousness throughout, even when the second theme of the Temptation occupies the foreground!" (Ibid., p. 83.)
need not be taken at their face value, or may apply at most to a partial source. If we accept the evidence of the group of alliterative poems usually attributed to him, he was widely read in contemporary romance and moral treatises, and, on one occasion at least, combined material from diverse sources in an original, well-knit composition.

But though this may suggest that the author of Sir Gawain was capable of evolving his plot from various components, but we cannot pretend to judge his constructional ability in this instance without more precise knowledge of his sources than we possess at present. The shaping of the plot involved much more than the bringing together of the Beheading Game and the Temptation. The thematic as well as the structural unity of the poem results from their skilful interweaving, the outcome of one episode depending upon the issue of the other, and the two being knit together by the Exchange of Winnings.

1) "He says in 11.689–90 that 'the book' tells him of Gawain's wild journey to the Green Knight's castle, but it is just that description, with its geographical knowledge of the North-West Midlands and its realistic wintry landscape, which is obviously due to the West Midland poet himself. This makes the existence of 'the book' dubious! (M. Day, op. cit., p. xxxi.)

2) "From Cleansewe we know that he had read the Roman de la Rose, Mandeville's Travels (in the French version), Cursor Mundi and The Knight of La Tour-Landry (probably in French). In a complicated plot, comprising three episodes skilfully united by links, he blended these sources with the stories he took from various books of the Bible. At the end he states that he has preached the same moral lesson in three different ways.... It is not unnatural to suppose, in default of other evidence, that he went on to combine more elaborately two stories which had finally the same moral. Hence there is no reason why we should assume that he used one source only! (Ibid., pp. xxxi–xxxii.)

3) The subjective nature of such judgements is demonstrated by the fact that it was specifically on the evidence of his other compositions that Loomis denied the English poet any part in the shaping of Sir Gawain: "For this triumph in narrative architecture we cannot give any credit to the English poet. At least nothing in his other work suggests any such power" (R.S. Loomis, "More Celtic Elements in Gawain and the Green Knight," The Journal of English and Germanic Philology, XXXI, pp. 145–54, Urbana, Ill., 1943, p. 154.)
and the device of the green lace. Some scholars are prepared to accept such features as late additions on the part of the English author. But they have more than incidental significance: a redactor capable of employing devices of the kind with such subtlety would have been equally capable of constructing the whole framework of the romance. Opinions as to the point at which they became part of the composition must depend upon the solution of the wider problem of origin and evolution, where no absolute decision is possible.

Other, more refined aspects of construction present an even greater problem. Critics are agreed that the unique unity of Sir Gawain depends to a large extent upon the way in which every feature of the narrative, even the most incidental detail, is related to the whole, controlled and ordered with a delicate sense of proportion, contributing to the structure without distorting the general development of the design. In this connection the source-studies can give no valid guidance: without access to the immediate original we cannot tell whether the subordinate details were related to the general structure with equal skill or whether this represents a contribution on the part of the English poet. The evidence of the tradition would suggest the latter: architectonics were not the strong point of Medieval literature.

1) The increased Gawain's obligations, and made the test more clear-cut by adding the device of the exchange of winnings and the daily settlement with the husband, which he probably derived from a popular tale similar to the Niles Gloriousus. (J.R. Hulbert, loc. cit., p. 701.) See also, M. Day, op. cit., p. 559. At all events, his Gawain's possession of the lace in Gawain and the Green Knight is not an old feature of his legend. And it is even possible that the lace did not enter the plot until the English author worked up the material! (G. L. Kittredge, op. cit., p. 140.)

2) With all the wealth of detail that is to be found in every part of the poem, there is never any lack of control. On the contrary, the poet has succeeded in fashioning a narrative not merely unified but cunningly and satisfactorily shaped! (D. Everett, op. cit., p. 63.)
and we cannot confidently attribute to a hypothetical prototype a highly-developed sense of proportion which we do not find elsewhere in the romances either French or English. To a large extent this is true also of another distinctive feature in the structure of the poem. Certain incidents and descriptive passages are so placed in relation to each other—the three hunts which correspond to the three interviews between Gawain and the lady, the association of the Troy legend with Arthur's court which opens and closes the poem, the festivities which precede the appearance of the Green Knight and follow the arrival of Gawain at the castle of Bercilak, etc.—as to produce a rhetorical pattern superimposed upon the narrative structure. Some of these parallelisms may have been implicit in the narrative as the alliterative poet inherited it, but others are so incidental as to imply invention or the most slavish reproduction of an original. And the rarity of this sort of ornament in Medieval romance forbids the automatic assumption that it must have originated in the source.

(Cont.)

...the author, even where he compresses, does not lapse into bare summary. Indeed, the merit of this story is not swiftness of action, but richness and fulness of description within the field on which our attention is fixed. The interest is held, not by the excitement of activity but by the very vividness of the situation? (C.S. Baldwin, op.cit., p.157.)

1) C.S. Lewis (The Allegory of Love, London, 1936, pp.141–2), commenting on this feature of Medieval art in general, specifically excepts Sir Gawain: "It failed of unity because it attempted vast designs with inadequate resources. When the design was modest—as in Gawain and the Green Knight or in some Norman parish churches—or when the resources were adequate—as in Salisbury Cathedral and the Divine Comedy—then Medieval art attains a unity of the highest order, because it embraces the greatest diversity of subordinated detail."

2) "The poet has produced, as it were, an internal and an external order at the same time. While the character and actions of the hero give coherence and meaning to the events of the story, making of these a unified narrative, the events are also so ordered as to produce something of the effect of a pattern. This 'patterning' is made by the parallelism of incident or description. This sort of effect has
In general, therefore, though our limited knowledge of its antecedents prevents us from dogmatizing about the structural evolution of *Sir Gawain*, the evidence of romance tradition alone makes it probable that the alliterative poet was more than a passive redactor, content to adopt the framework of an earlier creation. The very perfection of the construction, its unity, controlled proportions and balanced components, and the subtlety with which the narrative and rhetorical patterns are integrated, suggest that it is the product, at first hand, of an exceptionally skilled narrator, or, alternatively, that it is a copy of such a creation, made by a painstaking redactor conscious of every structural virtue in his original. The romance as we have it can scarcely be viewed as the accretion of successive story-tellers: it bears the stamp of a single creative intelligence of a high order. Whether this was the English poet or a predecessor whose work he inherited cannot be proven. But even if we assume that *Sir Gawain* is entirely unoriginal, it nonetheless represents a considerable achievement on the part of an alliterative author. The delicate balance and subtle patterning of the romance could not have been reproduced in all their perfection by a careless or insensitive redactor. Even on the hypothesis that the alliterative version is no more than a translation, the recognition of qualities of form and structure and their preservation for the enjoyment of an English audience indicates an author more aware of artistic values in such matters than the majority of his contemporaries, French and English alike. And, as we shall see, other

(Cont.) Its nearest analogy in music and can give the same kind of pleasure as variations on a musical theme. It is undoubtedly an outcome of rhetorical teaching, but it is rare to find among Middle English poets one who knows how to make organic use of this teaching? (D. Everett, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-4.)
features of *Sir Gawain* make it highly unlikely that the alliterative version is merely a literal transcription, whichever its source may have been.

Of these perhaps the most significant is connected with the motivation of the romance. Most critics have found the motive given for the action as a whole,—the desire of Morgan la Fay to terrify Guinevere and shame the company of the Round Table,—inadequate and unconvincing.

(1) Who was responsible for this flaw? Morgan does not figure in any of the analogues to either the Challenge or the Temptation, and it has been suggested that it was only at a late stage in its evolution that the whole adventure was attributed to her traditional enmity towards the Round Table. Kittredge believed that the

1) "...the motive in question is not well worked into the fabric of the story. Not only is the Fay’s trick a failure, but there is no indication, in our author’s own description of the scene at court, that Guinevere showed any particular alarm: certainly she was in no danger of death from shock. Besides, one is rather surprised that Gawain should part with Bernlak on such cordial terms after the blunt avowal of his evil errand? (G.L. Kittredge, *op. cit.*, p.132.)

"...by it Gawain gains only greater glory, and Arthur’s court a better reputation. Being an enchantress, she of course knew what would be the outcome of her scheme. Why should she then plan a test which Gawain could meet? Further, if she was inspired by enmity, why was she so just in carrying out the tests? What was her motive? What could she gain by this test? The explanation is one that seems to be sensible superficially but is inherently unreasonable" (J.R. Hulbert, _loc. cit._, p.454.)

2) It has been suggested (D.S. Baughan, "The Role of Morgan le Fay in *Sir Gawain* and the Green Knight," *E.L.H.: A Journal of English Literary History*, 17, Baltimore, 1956, pp.241-51.) that the supposition of a flaw is due to misinterpretation of the romance, that Morgan’s desire to humiliate Arthur and his company is an adequate motive, and, furthermore, that her plan succeeds! This interpretation turns upon the meaning of 11.130-8 in which, it is suggested, Arthur actually strikes at the Green Knight with the axe, fails to harm him and is shamed before his followers until Gawain in turn takes up the challenge. The passage is admittedly vague: "...through respect for the divinity that hedges a king... the poet gave to the account something of Morgan’s magic so that it seems almost as if Arthur did not strike! But even if the lines in question
English redactor introduced her role as a substitute for the motive of disenchantment which, according to his theory, was at the core of the hypothetical French Gawain, while Huibert regarded it as a late replacement for what he considered the original cause of the adventure, the desire of a fee to test her chosen lover. Since there is no agreement as to what was the original motive it cannot be proven that the English version represents an alteration in this respect, still less that the alliterative poet was responsible for it. But the suggestion is an interesting one. If the inadequate motivation of the English romance is due to the redactor’s dissatisfaction with this aspect of his original it shows that, far from being a mere translator, passive in his acceptance of everything which the source contained, he was prepared to undertake fundamental alterations. And it is, perhaps, more feasible that a defect of this kind should result from an attempt to carry out a large-scale rearrangement and reinterpretation of the story-matter, that that a redactor who, in other matters, has shown such taste and discernment, should perpetuate such a flaw in the original.

But, on the other hand, we are not intitled to take it for granted that unsatisfactory features must inevitably have originated with the English author. And if this particular idea derived from his source

(Cont.) could bear this construction it is surely unthinkable that such a skilful narrator as the Gawain-poet would pass over a major crisis in the action so unemphatically, without making its outcome specific and underlining the momentous significance of Arthur’s failure.

1) "In the French Gawain the moving cause of the whole plot....was Borslaik’s desire to be disenchanted, a motive retained from the Temptation story. But if Morgan was to be the wonder-worker in the mysterious background, if it was to be Morgan that sent Borslaik to the court in strange guise with his axe in his hand— the object of the visit could no longer be his disenchantment. That purpose had to disappear when she became herself the weaver of the spell. Another reason had to be imagined, and our author found it in Morgan’s enmity toward the queen, which, indeed, was in his mind an inseparable trait of her traditional character. (Op. cit., p.133.)

he may well have considered it perfectly satisfactory. The evidence
of the tradition shows that the authors of romance paid little atten-
tion to motivation, that both they and their audiences were primarily
interested in adventure and were prepared to accept it on the flimsiest
of pretexts. In the case of Sir Gawain there are indications that
the author was so preoccupied with the moral implications of his
narrative as to accept any motive which did not detract from this
aspect of the romance.

It is generally agreed that this preoccupation with the
meaning of events is at the core of the alliterative Gawain: "The
first concern of the poem is thus with conduct; that is it is moral
in the true sense of the word." No one doubts that the moral theme of
the romance is the proving of Sir Gawain, but there has been some dis-
agreement as to what are the qualities for which he is tested. Most
critics, however, regard the poem, not as a series of incidents artific-
ially contrived to display particular moral qualities, but as a narrative
unified by its concern with the character of a perfect knight in all
its aspects of courage, chastity, loyalty, and courtesy. Whatever the
ultimate source of the Challenge and the Temptation episodes, the con-
ception of a test must have been associated with them from the beginn-
but the existing analogues are primarily concerned with the practical
outcome of the trial—the winning of a Fairy-mistress or the disembar-
ment of the testor, according to the various interpretations, and not

1) Within the terms of romance convention, Tolkien and Gordon (op. cit.,
pp. x-xi) find the motivation of Sir Gawain quite acceptable.
2) D. Everett, op. cit., p. 77.
3) Hulbert (loc. cit., pp. 694-5) interpreted the episode of Gawain and the
lady as a test, not for chastity as others believed, but for loyalty
towards his host. "But 11. 773-5 show that Gawain's chief fear is
that he may sin against God, and his duty of loyalty to his host
takes the second place" (J. May, op. cit., p. 221, note 1.)
with its bearing upon the character of the hero. The source-studies cannot tell us who first conceived the narrative as a unity based upon character and related the component episodes to a moral pattern more compelling than the narrative pattern created by intertwining them. The other works attributed to the Gawain-poet have been cited as evidence of his preoccupation with moral themes, and it has been suggested that his personal selection and combination of the material is responsible for the fact that Sir Gawain is predominantly concerned with character rather than with adventure for its own sake. This, if it could be proven, would suggest that the alliterative author exercised a creative control more profound than that indicated by the various theories of narrative manipulation. The common practice of romance-writers in using their narratives to expound various aspects of the chivalric code makes it possible that the English poet inherited the moral theme along with the matter of his romance. Yet its treatment surpasses conventional usage: the concentration upon fundamental moral qualities rather than the purely social attributes of knighthood, their relation to a Christian basis not merely to the code of

1) It was on this basis that Dr. Folation Day (op. cit., pp. xxxi-xxxvii) attributed the union of the Challenge and the Temptation to the alliterative poet. Each story illustrates the same moral obligation: a promise once given must be kept, even though unforeseen circumstances appear to make death the cost of keeping it. This brings the plot of Gawain into line with those of Cleanliness, Patience, and also St. Erkenwald, each of which illustrates a moral virtue, the first two by showing God's punishment of the opposite vice, the last by exhibiting the character of a man who, in the face of many temptations, kept to the path of perfect justice! (Op. cit., p. xxxi) "It seems quite consonant with the methods of the author of Cleanliness and, as I hold, of St. Erkenwald, to take a story and with the help of hints from various sources mould it so that it shall be the vehicle of a great moral lesson! (Ibid., p. xxxv.)
chivalry, and the practical demonstration of such qualities in the action of the romance, without intrusive comment by the narrator; suggests the reflection at first hand of a personal conception of the moral element rather than passive reproduction of an original or unthinking adherence to a convention. This originality of conception, freshness of treatment, and fundamental relation to the whole fabric of the romance, makes the moral content of Sir Gawain one of its most unusual features; and there is some reason to think that it may be the creation of the alliterative author, the reflection of a personal interest on his part.

The demonstration of chivalric virtues by submitting an individual knight to a series of trials is a familiar pattern in Medieval romance; the uniqueness of Sir Gawain consists in the transformation of the convention by the originality and imaginative intensity with which it is handled. The character-drawing in the alliterative

1) "Clearly, the poet has made his own choice among the qualities customarily held to be proper to a knight, and his choice accords with Christian morality. "The moral as the poem is, the poet hardly moralizes. His conception of the Christian gentleman is conveyed through the actions and speeches of the characters and, in particular, of Gawain. At the same time none of the characters is a hero peg on which to hang a moral, like Chaucer's Guinevere. (D. Everett, op. cit., p. 77.)"

2) There is an obvious contrast between the treatment of this element in Gawain and the artificial and mechanical exposition of social and religious codes in the French prose romances of the Grail, with their contrived situations illustrating esoteric aspects of the codes, their overweighted symbolism and intrusive commentaries upon it.

3) It is an interesting indication of the subjective nature of such judgments that Dr. Ney's conception of the moral element as of fundamental importance in Sir Gawain has been countered by another scholar. "In Sir Gawain the success comes principally from the poet remarkable visualization of the action and setting of his story, and only to a lesser extent from the conception of conduct upon which the characters act. These are, to be sure, noble and gracious enough, and reflect a good knowledge of human behaviour, but beyond the
romance displays a similar originality of conception. The persons
involved are familiar enough, the mysterious challenger, the virtuous
knight, the seductive lady, the courteous host—, but, despite the stereo-
typed roles they play, each has been given individuality, reality and
depth. Their personalities are partly revealed by their actions,—the
lady stealing to Gawain's bedside, the Green Knight sharpening his axe—,
but, more subtly, by the manner in which they express themselves,—the
Green Knight by his grim humour, the lady by her witty ambiguity, her
husband by his boisterous good spirits. The characterisation of Gawain
presented the greatest challenge: instead of the conventional compound
of knightly virtues which might have been expected, he emerges as a
convincing personality whose humanity is apparent in the sincerity of
his prayers for divine aid, the embarrassment which he feels at the
lady's advances, his pangs of conscience over the concealment of the
green lace. Individually and in their relations with each other the
characters carry greater conviction than any in the romance tradition,
outside the works of Chrétien de Troyes. What part in their creation
can be attributed to the alliterative poet? Despite the inconclusive
nature of the source-studies it is not difficult to recognise the
prototypes of the grim challenger and the courageous hero in the
various forms of the Beheading Game, and the character of the lady is
implicit in the Temptation, whatever form of it lies behind Sir Gawain.
But these skeletal characters are no more than romance conventions:

(Cont.) degree to which they are heightened there is nothing particu-
larly remarkable about them. The exceptional success of this
romance comes from other sources than the principles of behaviour
upon which its action is based? (G.W.B. 73, 333–5)
1) "The proving of a knight by a lady was already an old story when it
was retold by this unknown poet, but in retelling it he reconceived
it is the human flesh which has been given to them that constitutes true characterization. It consists in a multitude of details, actions, gestures, forms of expression, so grouped and interrelated as to build up an integrated personality. If these are the work of the alliterative poet, then whatever the form of his source may have been, the characters may be considered as of his creation. And to suppose that they are not implies the preservation of the most minute circumstances in copying from an original in which the characterization was already fully developed, a process which, as we shall see, the nature of the alliterative medium renders unlikely.

The convincing realism with which the characters are presented has a significant bearing upon the supernatural element in the English romance. The Green Knight is no less vividly characterised than the human actors, and by the same method of accumulating intimate details of speech and behaviour. At the same time there is no attempt to gloss over his magic nature. Indeed, by applying the same intensive realism to his strange appearance and the grotesque circumstances of his beheading the alliterative poem leaves no doubt of his supernatural associations. Yet the role he plays is accepted without comment, and, indeed, throughout the romance, the element of magic is not differentiated in treatment from the concrete world in which it operates, but is presented as something no more in need of explanation than the social usages reflected in the story. ‘The author might almost have been a modern novelist with a contempt for romance, trying, by way of experiment

(Cont.) it: he made it no longer a knight and a lady, but persons that sometimes seem to us, even in their long-forgotten setting, almost real’ (C.S. Baldwin, op. cit., p. 161.)
to work out a 'supernatural' plot with the full strength of his reason; merely accepting the fabulous story, and trying how it will go with accessories from real life, and with modern manners and conversation. To what extent was the alliterative author responsible for this method of bringing the supernatural element into accord with the realistic setting in which it operates? The earlier versions of the Beheading Game can suggest something of the way in which the prototype of the Green Knight was originally presented. But apart from a few recurrent features—the giant size of the challenger, his terrible weapon, and his association with the colour green—they differ too widely from each other and from Gawain to allow us to distinguish what the alliterative author may have found in his source from his own imaginative contribution. Even if we accept Balbert's theory of the Green Knight's relationship to the lady of the Temptation we cannot tell whether the vagueness of his connection with Morgan la Fay is due to a deliberate policy on the part of the English poet of ignoring the supernatural springs of the action in favour of the realistic operation of the magic agent, or to a lack of clarity in his source. The various interpretations of the Green Knight as a Sun god, a vegetation spirit, or a god of Death, the identification of the Green Chapel as a burial mound, of the 'grene luce' as a Celtic tallisvua, have little value since there is no means of knowing whether the


English author was aware of this background to his material or to what extent rationalisation had blurred its significance before it came into his hands.

Whether or not the poet was conscious of it, the treatment of the supernatural in Sir Gawain is so consistent as to reflect a clear-cut conception of its function in the romance. The description of the Green Chapel as a natural structure whose atmosphere makes it a place of ill-omen, whose grass-grown walls automatically associate it with the Green Knight, conjures up a setting entirely appropriate to that mysterious figure, by concentrating on certain details of its physical appearance and their effect upon the mind of Gawain. And similarly, at the introduction of the Green Knight, the whole effect of his weird appearance, his supernatural associations, and the concealed threat in his challenge, is suggested by reiterated reference, in perfectly naturalistic terms, to his greenness, and by describing the reaction of the onlookers. There can be little doubt that the essential detail here, the Green Knight's colouring, derived from the Celtic versions of the Beheading Game, but whether the alliterative poet was aware of the significance it had there, whether for him green was a fairy colour or a colour associated with Death, is largely irrelevant. For us, who can only guess at the original significance, the description remains powerfully effective because it has been achieved by artistic means which remain valid: by applying to the supernatural the same vivid, concrete description, the same intense visualisation by which the natural world is presented, and which makes it possible to accept the two upon the same plane of reality, yet without in any way depriving the magic element of its force or significance.
in the plot. The evidence of the tradition suggests that this method of treating the supernatural may be an original contribution on the part of the alliterative poet. The majority of romance-writers show the same reluctance to examine the operation of the magic forces which control the action in their narratives, but few of them make any attempt to assimilate the supernatural element to the realistic world of contemporary society in which their characters move. It is accepted as a necessary part of the plot machinery, but, in their hands, it remains a purely formal, conventional element, ignored as far as possible, and without any effort being made to give it the effectiveness which it has in Gawain. The method by which it is presented there involves the consistent use of a great deal of descriptive detail, carefully related to a common design, so that, even if this exploitation of the supernatural originated in his source, the alliterative poet can be credited with recognizing its effectiveness and preserving it by a painstaking reproduction of the numerous detailed touches in which it consists. In this, therefore, as in other aspects of the work, a final estimate of the English author's contribution must depend upon the extent to which such a process of detailed reproduction is thought possible in an alliterative medium.

The successful harmonization of the realistic and the supernatural in Sir Gawain is due in large part to the descriptive skill

1) "The visual quality of Sir Gawain is of crucial importance to the necessary harmonization of the elements in its story, the everyday, human and dramatic one, and the formal, conventional one of magic. By hiding the necessary but embarrassingly improbable cause behind the vividly and pictorially perceptible and therefore credible effect, the author won acceptance for his material, satisfied his own acute sense of the probable and to a large extent smoothed over the inevitable discrepancies between old conventional motifs and the naturalistic and human treatment of the subject which he preferred." (J. Kane, op. cit., pp. 74-5.)
lavished upon it. Indeed, the element of description is of the greatest importance throughout the poem as a whole. The plot is as improbable as that of most Medieval romances and the characters are not potentially more credible than such stereotyped figures usually are. The improbabilities are made acceptable by the circumstantial account given of them, every scene being filled out with incidental, pictorial details which lend it conviction, and the characters acquire depth and individuality by the vividness with which they are realised. The effect is achieved not by the mere accumulation of circumstantial detail, but by the skill and perception with which the poet has selected those features of character or incident which are most characteristic and evoke the personality or situation most vividly, without delaying the action or overloading the imagination with excessive description of particulars. He seems to outline every action or object clearly and to endow each picture, as it strikes the mind's eye, with a special distinctness, so that the effect of all is extremely vivid.

In consequence the mind is not readily wearied in reading this romance; the clarity of succeeding impressions seems to refresh the reader instead of exhausting his straining imagination as do the diffuse and ill-defined impressions created in some other romances. In many passages the poet appears, at first sight, to have indulged a personal interest in the picturesque and exploited his descriptive talent purely for its own sake. But each of these descriptions contributes something essential to the plan of the romance, in the arming of Gawain

1) G. Kane, op. cit., p. 74.
elaboration of the richness of his accoutrements emphasises the rank and worth of the knight as he is about to set out on his adventure; the description of the pentangle allows the poet to expound the hero's virtues just as these are about to be put to the test; the account of Gawain's winter journey carries the action forward and, at the same time, establishes the theme of his endurance under hardship. Yet, though there is little in the alliterative romance which can be considered superfluous, it is obvious that the poet took pleasure in descriptive writing for its own sake, most clearly in the hunting scenes, though even these have practical and thematic importance in the scheme of the poem.

The part played by the descriptive element in the success of the romance as a whole makes it as important to know to what extent the English poet was responsible for its present form as to decide his part in shaping the plot or determining the characterization. So far as the descriptive set-pieces are concerned, most scholars are prepared to consider them as original additions on his part. "Among the characteristic passages which were certainly added or greatly elaborated by the English author are two learned introductory stanzas...

1) It has been suggested that the hunting scenes also have a symbolic relationship to the theme of the romance. H.L. Savage ("The Significance of the Hunting Scenes in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight", The Journal of English and Germanic Philology, XLVII, Urbana, Ill., 1928, pp.1-15) saw a closer connection between the hunts and Gawain's interviews with the lady than is generally proposed: "...a certain parallelism in their situations which would probably be quite apparent to the lady or gentleman of the fourteenth century" (loc. cit. p.1). According to his theory, there is a deliberate parallelism between Gawain's behaviour and the qualities attributed in Medieval venery to the various animals hunted by Sir Erecilak. On the first two days he hunts deer and bear, regarded as noble game, and Gawain preserves his honour in the face of temptation, while on the third day he hunts the fox, regarded as vermin, and Gawain proves false to his knightly word by breaking the compact between them.
summarizing the fabulous settlements of Western Europe and mentioning
the Siege of Troy; the description of the Christmas festivities
and that of the Green Knight; the challenge and the speech of Gawain;
the highly poetical stanzas on the changing seasons; the very elabor-
ate description of the process of arming a knight, with the allegorical
account of the pentangle of virtues; Gawain’s itinerary; the winter
piece; the justly celebrated account of the three hunts.

The basis on which these passages are attributed to the
alliterative author is not one which can be established by the evidence
of the source-studies. Even if Loomis was correct in identifying the
(2)
Celtic origin of the pentangle, and Bulbert in suggesting that details
of the social setting were drawn from the Vulgate cycle of Arthurian
romances; the contribution of the alliterative poet remains undefined,
since the importance of these features consists in the use which has
been made of them, the way in which they have been developed and func­
tionally related to the plan of the romance. Our knowledge of the
literary antecedents of Sir Gawain is too vague either to prove or
disprove that these descriptive ‘set-pieces’ derive from an earlier
version. The evidence of the tradition is equally inconclusive.

Passages of the kind, elaborating details of dress, armor, and heraldic

give a similar list of passages which, in addition to being un­
paralleled in the existing French versions, are specially characteris­tic of the English poet and may almost certainly be taken as new
matter introduced by him.


bearings, of feasts and travels, some of scenery and weather, are common in both French and English romances, but they are, for the most part, conventional and artificial, literary exercises in which the same stereotyped catalogues of detail are duplicated from one example to the next, where dress is always incredibly splendid, the weather invariably fair, and which have no essential bearing on the narrative theme and do nothing to further it. The contrasting treatment of the pictorial element in Gawan, where it is closely integrated in the general structure of the romance, where the richness of feasts is elaborated, not for its own sake, but to establish or contrast a mood, in which the realistic description of bitter winter weather heightens the general realism and, at the same time, creates an atmosphere appropriate both to the action and to the moral theme it illustrates, may suggest that the alliterative author was an innovator in this respect, but it cannot rule out the possibility that this originality of conception was not his but was inherited from his source. The principal reason for supposing that the English poet was primarily responsible for the treatment of the descriptive element is not the inconclusive evidence of the analogues or the contrast with romance tradition, but the nature of the medium in which he worked. Even those who believe that Sir Gawain was directly based upon a French original admit that the redactor's choice of an alliterative verse-form must have involved radical alteration of the parent version. In Kittredge's opinion, for example: "The Middle English masterpiece is not a translation in any proper sense of the term. It must be utterly different in style and poetic manner from the lost French poem on which it is based, for in these particulars it bears no resemblance to anything in French
literature. It marks the culmination of a development of style and poetic manner that is peculiar to England and to a certain part of England (the West Midland and Northern district), just as it marks the culmination of a kind of metrical development similarly limited in geographical scope.

This is not to suggest that the use of an alliterative verse-form made it impossible for the English poet to reproduce a French original consistently and faithfully. But the choice of a medium so foreign to the dominant French tradition in romance implies an independence of approach which makes strict adherence to a product of that tradition somewhat improbable. The difficulties of alliterative verse, even in the relatively plastic and undemanding 'blank verse' paragraphs with rhyming 'bob and wheel' in which Gawain is written, are sufficient, however, to constitute a serious bar to the exact reproduction of descriptive passages consisting of numerous, carefully related, details. And the same obstacle would exist whether the original in question were in verse or prose, in French or English; the difficulty of reproducing both the sense and the sequence of ideas and reconciling them with the strong rhythms and linked sounds of alliterative verse is formidable in any circumstances. But when, in addition, the descriptive passages depend for their effect upon a subtle combination of details, the use of emotive terms and the reiteration of certain words, whose delicate balance seems unlikely to survive the process of translation unimpaired, and when the alliterative version is not only unusually consistent and perfect in itself, but unexampled

1) G.L. Kittredge, op.cit., p.128.
elsewhere, there is a strong supposition that they have been freely composed by an original creative imagination, rather than translated by a patient but unoriginal redactor.

These considerations have resulted in certain limited passages of Sir Gawain being attributed to the alliterative author, even by those who are confident that he worked directly from a written source. The implications of such a theory are, however, much wider than most authorities acknowledge. Throughout the English romance the descriptive element is consistent and homogeneous. The intense visualisation by which the situations are evoked, by which the characters are given life, depends, like the set descriptions, on the same subtle combination of aptly-chosen details. But, dispersed here and there, in a multitude of brief references whose effect is cumulative, its subtlety would be less likely to survive the process of redaction without being blurred or obscured. Yet it is upon the success of the visual element in all its aspects that the artistic success of the alliterative author’s whole creation depends. Every feature of this poet’s success derives in the end from his instinct for the picturesque, the fine talent for seeing and describing which he possessed, and the discrimination in selection which he exercised. The men, the objects and the observations he puts into his romance have outgrown the story which was his subject; their vivid imaginative existence is hardly due to this at all, but is the entire product of his fancy, just as the coherence, the good order and the decent limits of his subject were imposed by his taste. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is remarkable for the small contribution made by the story and material to its success, and for the extent of the transformation of that material by the poet’s
imagination.

The nature of the descriptive element may seem too narrow a basis on which to found such a sweeping estimate of the originality of the alliterative Gawain, by comparison with the documentary evidence produced by the various source-studies. But, in effect, by approaching the problem from this peripheral stand-point, it may be possible to evaluate the creative achievement of the English poet more exactly than by confining attention to those aspects of construction and motivation on which the source-studies offer limited, and conflicting, evidence. The descriptive passages in Gawain are marked by a creative intelligence which expressed itself in a highly individual way, and the nature of the element, as well as the inherent difficulty of the alliterative medium, suggests that they are the result of original composition rather than reproduction at second hand. But the talent for visualization which distinguishes these passages is largely responsible for the effectiveness of other, more fundamental, aspects of the alliterative work. The unconventional and unusually convincing characterization is achieved by the same vivid pictorial presentation of person, manner, address, involving a similar selectivity, sense of proportion and confident control of detail. The method by which the supernatural agents and events are reconciled to the natural world in which they operate requires the same delicate contrivance of effect, by the association of visual features in which the credible and the fantastic are cunningly intermingled. And upon the effectiveness of these two aspects of the romance depends the acceptance of its moral

1) G.Franz, op.cit., p.76.
those, since the hero's behaviour under trial can carry conviction only if it is consistent with his personality and the testing agents, human and supernatural, are sufficiently credible to command respect. In the last analysis, therefore, the unique quality of the most fundamental features of Sir Gawain results from a method of presentation so subtle and complex that it seems equally improbable that it could be accurately reproduced in an alliterative medium, and that the English poet should not have exercised creative control over it, unhampered by the dictates of an original. And, in effect, Eltvedge at least was prepared to attribute to the alliterative author a major part in the elaboration of these aspects of the romance, while denying him any part in shaping the narrative itself. Yet, though the argument based on the nature of the medium cannot apply here, the construction of Sir Gawain reveals the same unity of conception, the same sense of proportion, and the same subtle relation of parts to the whole, which marks these components elements. In the absence of any conclusive proof that the structure of the romance was already fixed and complete before it came into the hands of the English poet, it seems justifiable to assume that he exercised upon its construction the same creative

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1) "He followed the plot with substantial faithfulness, as we have already seen; but he elaborated every detail of description with a richness of fancy quite foreign to the sober narrative style of his original, he gave life to the personages and vividness to the action, and he inspired the whole with an ethical earnestness that ennobles the tale without making it less romantic. The Frenchman was a first-rate raconteur who combined two independent stories into a single plot with a high degree of constructive ability, and he was master of a flowing and limpid style exquisitely adapted to straightforward story-telling. The Englishman was an idealist and a true poet, who saw, in the capital story which his French predecessor had told so acceptably, the possibility of illustrating the finest traits of the medieval gentleman, who controlled an elaborate and difficult poetical technique in such a way as to make it a natural vehicle not merely for the description in which he delighted but for dramatic action as well, and who built up, on the basis of the
control which is apparent in the treatment of character, moral content, and descriptive elaboration, and that the consistent artistic personality stamped upon the work as a whole is his, not merely the reflection of a predecessor whose creation he inherited.

The only *prima facie* basis on which we are entitled to judge the creative ability of the English author, however, is his achievement in the one field where we can be confident that his original, whatever its form, could give him no guidance—the management of the medium in which he wrote. No one will deny his success in manipulating,—perhaps in creating—a verse-form which, despite its comparative rigidity, is capable of great range and subtlety of expression. The potentialities of alliterative verse have nowhere been better demonstrated than in *Sir Gawain*, where it is used, with equal facility, as the medium of direct narration, of witty and allusive conversation, and of evocative description. But the result is something more than an example of technical mastery: one of the rare instances in medieval poetry where verse is more than a conventional literary medium, where every aspect of the subject is expressed by genuine poetic means. Poetic ability need not necessarily imply powers of construction or psychological insight in the creation of characters. But, quite apart from the consideration that poetic achievement is more improbable in the work of a translator or an imitative redactor, than in that of an

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(Cant.) excellent French romance, which was on a par with numerous others quite as good and quite as well-told, a unique masterpiece in the grandiose manner? (G.L. Kittredge, *op.cit.*, p.129.)

1) "So far as is known, it is unique though related to other stanzas forms which employ the alliterative long line; but, if the poet did not invent it himself, he was fully alive to its potentialities? (D. Everett, *op.cit.*, p.74.)
original writer or one whose approach to his source was relatively independent, this evidence of creative power on the part of the alliterative poet must inevitably influence our assessment of his share in the creation of the romance as a whole. It seems unlikely that a poet so fastidious in his control of poetic detail would be content to accept another's creation, without adapting it to conform to his personal tastes and those of the particular audience for which he intended it. And when we find that the unique appeal of the romance depends so largely upon details of presentation and expression, which, in turn, are intimately related to the nature of the poetic medium, it is not unnatural to see the alliterative poet as the controlling intelligence chiefly responsible for every aspect of the work. In the absence of more conclusive evidence on the nature of the original than we possess at present, the creative process cannot be defined with precision, but in any analysis of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight the nature of the alliterative medium and its relation to other aspects of the poem must be regarded as of fundamental importance.
Amongst general features of the body of alliterative romance certainly the most striking and perhaps, in the last analysis, the most significant is the limited extent of its dependence upon French romance. Of the eleven poems and two fragments which have generally been classed as romances only four can be related to specific French sources with sufficient certainty to permit the analysis of the redactive process. Amongst the remainder there are some which suggest French influence, though a textual connection with any existing romance remains unproven. The French origin of \textit{Sir Gawain and the Green Knight} has not been established with enough assurance to exclude alternative theories, and the unique nature of the poem prevents any dogmatic assumption of its dependence upon romance tradition. Further research may clarify the situation here and in the case of \textit{Bauw Eseliar} and \textit{The Awtyra of Arthure}, but for the present all that can usefully be said of these latter is that, though one employs the characters and framework of Carolingian epic the other of Arthurian romance, both are distinguished from the French narrative tradition, the first by its humorous and 'popular' exploitation of the conventions, the second by its overt
moral purpose, to such an extent as to make it unwise to assume that
the alliterative redactors contributed nothing of fundamental importance
and that only the language and medium are native and original.

Whatever their immediate sources may have been these two
poems have only a peripheral connection with French romance, to which
the nature rather than the presentation of their story-matter links
them. The other alliterative narratives, classified as 'chronicles in
the epic manner', are still more remote from the French romance tradition.
The *Alexander* poems, *The Destruction of Troy* and *Norse Arthur* deal with
the familiar matter of the Arthurian romances and the romances of Ant-
iquity, but in the pseudo-historical form in which it existed before
the authors of romance fell heir to it, while *The Destruction of Jer-
usalem*, quite outside the tradition, is concerned with historical and
religious rather than romantic themes. In making use of such material
the alliterative poets looked back to a tradition much older than that
of the *Roman de la Rose*, one which was part of the common European heritage
rather than the preserve of any particular country and whose associat-
ions were with the international medium of Latin.

In making their redactions from the Latin chronicles and
pseudo-chronicles these alliterative poets were merely fulfilling the
function of the independent, creative author of the Middle Ages, drawing
upon historical matter in the authoritative and respectable sources
in which it was available to all. In these instances the redactive
process need not imply what is normally involved in the case of the
Middle English romances, the passive reproduction of another man's work,
but rather the same original and creative function which was exercised
by those French romance writers who themselves made use of the matter
of Antiquity in the Latin chronicles or of Arthurian matter in Geoffrey's
Historia Rerum Britannica, or, at second hand, in Wace and Gaimar. Even if research should ultimately demonstrate that the alliterative poets were indebted to French versions of the chronicles rather than the Latin originals, their choice of such historical and factual sources will not lose its significance. That they, writing in the Fourteenth century, should prefer story-matter virtually uncontaminated by romantic elements, suggests a conception of narrative poetry amongst the alliterative authors closer to that of Wace than to the dominant tradition of the roman courtois. Yet the chronicle-romances which they based upon this matter are in no sense archaic or provincial, though ignoring the refinements in treatment and interpretation introduced by Chrétien and his successors. They do, however, reflect a preference for such material in a form characterised by the realism of the chronicle rather than the fantasy of the romance, predominantly concerned with the actions of heroes rather than the emotions of knights and ladies, heroic rather than chivalric in spirit, epic rather than romantic in atmosphere. All questions of source and the nature of the redactive process apart, it is surely significant that such a large part of alliterative narrative, including the longer and more ambitious poems, should reject the tradition of the roman courtois in favour of the more primitive, more realistic, less literary and less purely French tradition of the epic chronicle.

The degree of independence from the dominant romance tradition suggested by the limited selection of French originals, the distinctive nature of those poems whose association with French literature remains unproven, and the marked preference for material drawn from Latin chronicles, is in contrast with the general assumption that Middle English romances are based upon French sources and that,
collectively, the range of elements they contain will not include anything foreign to the French tradition. It may be that in the light of research upon individual romances this generalisation will ultimately require modification, and, in some instances where a feasible original cannot be discovered, the assumption of a French source on grounds of probability may prove to be unfounded. If, however, the generalisation is accepted as such, this would seem to provide one fundamental distinction between the alliterative examples and other romances in Middle English, since the former make use of Latin sources, or, more significantly, of material from the chronicles, to a much greater extent than the non-alliterative tradition would lead us to expect.

These circumstances lend particular importance to the choice of subject-matter by those alliterative poets who appear, by their employment of French originals, more closely allied to the dominant romance tradition. Their works form too small a part of alliterative romance to make it likely that their selection of material will have a significant bearing upon the relation of the corpus to Middle English romance as a whole, and, in effect, the range of story-matter involved is too diverse to suggest any distinctive taste or preference on their part. The matter of William of Palerne is not drawn from any of the major categories of Medieval romance, but from a distinctive and individual work whose extra-narrative associations are believed to have been of a specialised and personal nature, meaningful to the original French audience but not to readers of the English redaction. The attraction of Guillaume de Palerne for such readers must, therefore, have been inherent in the story-matter as such, rather than in its connection with a familiar type of romance material. The original of Chevalere Asly, on the other hand, belongs to the epic matter of France, not, it
is true, to the classic legends of Charlemagne, but to a cycle primarily inspired by contemporary history and ultimately much affected by the influence of the roman courtois. The other alliterative poems considered here are all associated with the Matter of Britain, though in the case of Joseph of Aramathie with an episode, from the early history of the Grail, somewhat remote from the general character of Arthurian legend. Only Golagrus and Gawain, drawn from one of the continuations of Chrétien's Roman de Parceval, and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, whose closest analogues in French literature belong to the same romance complex, suggest an interest in the classic matter of the roman courtois and in a particular Arthurian hero, but the association of Sir Gawain with the Conte del Graal is too uncertain to support any dogmatic theory of preferences amongst the authors of alliterative romance.

Their choice of story-matter therefore provides no basis for contrast with the general corpus of Middle English romance. The selection includes material from the classic cycles and from miscellaneous romances, much from the most exploited sources of the period and something relatively obscure in origin. It suggests that the alliterative poets did not discriminate between epic and romantic matter, yet their debt to the Matter of France is too slight to support the conception that it had a particular appeal for English audiences. In effect, the only significant contrast between alliterative and non-alliterative narrative in this respect is provided by the chronicle-romances. Their exploitation of the European heritage of pseudo-history rather than anything distinctive in the source-matter of the romances examined here, has, no doubt, been largely responsible for the conception that English authors were especially attracted by epic themes, as well as for the unusual degree of realism attributed to alliterative narrators.
If such realism is found to be characteristic of the alliterative romances of French origin it must derive from the treatment rather than the selection of story-matter.

In their conception of romance form, at least, the alliterative poets would appear to have differed considerably from the French authors whose creations they utilised, and this, in turn, has influenced their choice of source-matter. Only the relatively unoriginal William of Palermo reproduces the form of its original: the joint adventures of hero and heroine constituting a unified whole, susceptible of abbreviation but not of redaction in part. The other romances of known origin represent partial and, indeed, very limited selections, far from representative of the sources from which they were taken. Chevalier Assigne is no more than a fragment of the Crusade Cycle and the Histoire du Chevalier au Cygne, from which it derives, is the least representative section of this chanson de geste. But if the English poet rejected the epic matter available to him in the cycle, he also ignored the romantic extensions to it in the Chevalier au Cygne and Enfantsk Bodelfrey, and, in effect, he has isolated an incident common to the folklore of many countries, whose inclusion in the French work was purely arbitrary. The form and scope of the alliterative version are those of the folk-tale or popular short story, rather than the romance or chanson de geste: the great sweep of the epic cycle apparently made no appeal to the alliterative redactor, and, though his chosen matter was barely coloured by the context from which it came, he did not attempt to reinterpret it in terms of romance.

The limited section of the Estoire del Saint Graal used in Joseph of Aramathia bears something of the same relation to the
complex of Grail romances of which it forms part. The central interest of the cycle lies in the infusion of Arthurian legend with a Christian mysticism designed to give a more profound, religious significance to chivalric ideals. In this respect the Estoire is merely preparatory, establishing a pseudo-historical basis for the association between Chivalry and Christianity assumed by Chrétien and his successors, by drawing upon the legends of Joseph of Arimathaea and similar matter which constitutes a kind of Christian folk-lore. But the problem facing the partial redactor in this instance was much more complex than in the case of Chevalers AIsigné, since here the pre-romantic material has been more thoroughly assimilated and the early history of the Grail is interspersed with chivalric episodes very similar to those which constitute the bulk of the cycle. The choice of the Estoire in preference to more conventionally romantic episodes might be interpreted as further evidence of that interest in pseudo-historical matter amongst alliterative authors which produced the 'chronicles in the epic manner'. But, if so, it seems unlikely that the redaction would have been abandoned before reaching that part of the original most likely to appeal to such an interest in an English audience, the role played by Joseph of Arimathaea and the Grail in the conversion of Britain, and that so much attention would have been given to the chivalric episodes which interrupt the record of early Christianity. Partial redaction from such a source posed problems of form and thematic unity which the alliterative author has not solved. Though the main incident selected by him is self-contained in narrative terms its original significance has been lost through its arbitrary isolation in the alliterative poem, which is neither a unified romance, nor a narrative outline for popular consumption, but merely a fragment, specifically literary yet formless, a crumb from the
vast banquet of the Vulgate Cycle. His failure to come to terms
with the fundamental theme in his original is reflected in his inability
to make a clear-cut choice between the narrative and didactic elements,
though in the brief English extract the significance of their inter-
connection does not have scope in which to develop properly. Like the
author of Chevalere Aisigne he chose to ignore the formal model afforded
by his source and the function originally served by the episodes which
he selected from it. Both of them made use of major French works as
quarries for their own, more modest, constructions, casting them in a form
which has more in common with the short folk-tale than with the roman
courtois, and selecting stery-matter in which the familiar elements of
romance are not of dominant importance.

The relation of the two Gawain romances to the form and
content of the sources with which they have been associated is less
negative in nature, though not less original and independent. The
acknowledged debt of the one and the possible debt of the other to the
First Continuation of Chrétien's Parcval clearly did not extend to
matters of form. The case can only be argued with confidence as regards
Golagrus and Gawain, but the evidence in that instance is significant
in its bearing upon Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. This redactor also
has quarried from a vast cyclic compilation, primarily, though sporadic-
ally, concerned with the Grail, but though, like the author of Joseph of
Aramathia, he ignored the Grail theme, it was in favour of an episode
characteristic of the roman courtois in its full-blown development.
His reinterpretation of the chosen matter is not in question here, but
it is associated with a radical alteration in form, resulting in a
well-finished romance, which, in its self-contained narrative and thematic
unity, its integration of disconnected incidents, its controlled and balanced proportions, is satisfying and successful while contrasting in almost every respect with the form of the French original.

The form of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is even more complex and sophisticated, yet nothing in the narrative analogues for in romance tradition, either French or English, compels us to assume that both form and matter were inherited by the alliterative poet substantially as he has given them. The example of *Galahad* and *Gawain* may legitimately suggest that another alliterative poet, a century earlier but in a less remote district, was capable of an equally fundamental process of redaction, and that, whatever the nature of his source, he may well have produced a version radically different in structure. Whether the compilation involved an equally discriminate selection of story-matter must remain undetermined, but the unity of theme and narrative in *Sir Gawain* finds a closer parallel in *Galahad* and *Gawain* than in any of the postulated sources. Both poems can be classified as romances without that straining of the category which is necessary if *Chevalier Ariste* and *Joseph of Arimathea* are to be included, yet neither suggests uncritical acceptance of the form and subject-matter of the French romances to which they have been related.

Of these five alliterative romances, therefore, only *William of Palerme* can be said to reproduce substantially the form and content of its original, which, in itself, is more unified, both in theme and narrative, than the majority of French romances. The others, related to the sprawling cyclic romances and romanticised epics, reject both their scale and their episodic form, and, for the most part, the themes with which they are chiefly concerned. The alliterative redactors apparently
conceived the romance as a narrative limited in scope, unified rather than episodic, depending for its appeal upon the interest of its story-matter and not upon its concern with more cosmic themes centered round the Grail or the Crusades. Their selection of material is not, therefore, representative of the sources from which they derived it, and they are not to be classified by referring them to the categories represented by their French originals.

While our knowledge of the sources of many Middle English romances remains incomplete it is difficult to estimate the extent to which the alliterative poets were distinctive in rejecting the original form and combination of story-matter presented by the French romances on which they drew. The comparative brevity of many English versions, the limited scope of their adventures, and the absence, prior to the Fifteenth century, of complex romances comparable to the Grail and Crusade cycles, suggests that in this respect the alliterative poets have more in common with their English contemporaries than with the majority of French authors. In so far as their choice of story-matter is concerned, it finds a parallel in the large proportion of miscellaneous subjects amongst the existing English romances in other media. The range of alliterative texts is, however, too limited to support a dogmatic conclusion. But it is, perhaps, significant, that the cyclic romances from which some of the alliterative poets made limited selections appeared again again in English during the Fifteenth century, but, on this occasion, in much more complete and literal versions. These were the result of the growing linguistic barrier which, at that period, was gradually depriving all but the most sophisticated English audience of access to literature in French, and, being designed to make the originals available without alteration, only the language employed is native.
Their uncritical acceptance and reproduction of the form and content of their originals is in significant contrast with the earlier alliterative versions, which, whatever their individual merits or failings, imply a conception of romance at variance with that of the French examples from which their material was drawn.

The alliterative romances from French sources belong, in general, to a period when the use of such originals implied adaptation rather than mere translation. Though they range in date from c.1350 to the latter part of the Fifteenth century, in effect only Colagrus and Gawain is later than the second half of the Fourteenth, and the time-lag which affects Scottish literature in the Middle Ages merely disguises the fact that its affiliations are not with contemporary English romance but with the other alliterative examples of a century earlier. These come not only from the first flush of the Alliterative Revival, but also from the peak period of romance production in England. There is, therefore, nothing in the dating of the alliterative examples to support the conception that French influence penetrated the West more slowly and at a later period than other, more accessible, regions. Nor would it be valid to suppose that the French romance tradition reached alliterative authors in a more fragmentary condition than was usual in the case of others, since the existing versions suggest a deliberate choice of matter rather than the redaction of fragments which represent chance survivals. Consequently, the time-lag between the alliterative versions and their originals is neither greater nor less

1) Some of these Fifteenth century versions of the cyclic romances justify the selective approach of the alliterative redactors. Those in prose are quite readable but the clumsiness and tedium of Henry Lovelich's History of the Holy Grail, extant, though incomplete, in 23,794 octosyllabic lines, suggests how unfortunate a full version of the Vulgate Cycle in alliterative verse would have been.
than is usual in the case of Middle English romances, and, to judge from the examples of various branches of the tradition represented amongst the alliterative poems, the accumulation of romance composition was available to Western poets as freely as to other English authors, and was used by them with equally little discrimination between the different kinds of material represented there.

So far as these general and external features are concerned, no fundamental distinction can be made between the body of Middle English romance and those few alliterative examples which are based upon French originals. In so far as such a distinction exists it must, therefore, derive from the conduct of the redaction and the nature of the end-product in each case. This inevitably raises the question as to whether or not the existing texts can legitimately be interpreted as the work of an individual redactor. Admitting that, in the circumstances of the period, surviving manuscripts are unlikely to represent the author's autograph in every detail, the issue of literary importance is whether the work as we have it is the product of a redactive process conceived and executed by one man or of haphazard evolution over a period of years, in the hands of various story-tellers who made use of the material for their own purposes. Where, as with each of the alliterative romances, only a unique text survives, giving no indication of intermediate versions, opinions on the matter must be largely subjective.

But in some cases at least, critical estimates would probably show a certain consensus of opinion in this respect. Few people would question the assumption that William of Palerne represents the work of an individual redactor: the close relationship between the alliterative version and its original, the consistency of the redactive process,
and the humorous over-tones inherent in the expression, all suggest individuality and a personal style in its execution. 

*Cola grus and Gawain* differs so radically from its French original as to allow the objective possibility that it may be the result of an accumulative process in which one redactor was responsible for the isolation of the incidents employed, another for their combination into a coherent whole, and a third for the final presentation in alliterative verse. But subjectively it is difficult to admit that such a process could produce a work so thoroughly integrated, in which the reinterpretation of theme and narrative incident are so effectively interrelated, and the success of the whole rests to such an extent on the consistency of characterization and the invention of descriptive detail. The fundamental nature of the redaction would seem to indicate that a single controlling intelligence was responsible, not only for the ordering of the material but for a choice of incident consistent with the conception of the romance as a whole. Of the selection and ordering of story-matter in *Sir Gawain* nothing can be said with certainty, but though the sense of form, narrative control and thematic cohesion which distinguish the poem might conceivably be due to a preliminary redactor or even to the French originator, the unique nature of the romance depends, in the last analysis, upon the creation and ordering of details towards a pre-determined pattern too subtle and complex to be achieved by a piece-meal redaction. In the case of *Chevaleres Assigne* and *Joseph of Aramathia* it is not possible to speak with the same assurance. Neither is so consistently faithful to its French original as to eliminate the possibility of intermediate redactions. But though, conceivably, the selection of story-matter and the general shaping of the romances may be due to earlier authors, the
existing texts, despite their inconsistencies, do reflect an individual conception of the redactive process, and contain occasional verbal echoes of the French source which suggest direct acquaintance with it.

In this respect no valid comparison can be made between the general corpus of Middle English romance, where so little is known of the process of composition, and these few alliterative examples. But at least one suggestion made in connexion with the former can scarcely be applied to the latter: the conception of progressive redaction through oral transmission must be excluded, not only by the length of William of Palerne and Sir Gawain but by the complexity of the alliterative medium, which especially in combination with the elaborate rhyme scheme of Galahad and Gawain, makes it unsuitable for memorisation.

The suggestion is due to the haphazard and unfinished effect of many Middle English romances and to their lack of individuality. The subjective impression that the alliterative romances are substantially the work of individual authors would suggest that this is a feature which genuinely distinguishes them from other contemporary examples of the form. It must, however, be remembered that the generalisation concerning oral redaction has been based upon the English romances as a whole, and that in some instances the individuality of the alliterative versions is only apparent in comparison with their French originals. Comparative study of the non-alliterative romances on the same basis might modify the apparent contrast in this respect.

Whether or not individual control of the redactive process constitutes a point of contrast between alliterative and other romances, it is abundantly clear that no generalisation can be applied to the very diverse types of redaction represented by the former. The character of the redaction in each case is at variance with the common conception
of English romances as indiscriminate abbreviations of French versions, in most of which the plan of the original is ignored or obscured and is not replaced by a new pattern, either formal or interpretative. This is admittedly an over-simplified characterization of the Middle English redactions, but the degree to which the alliterative examples deviates from it, and the variety of redactive processes which they demonstrate is sufficient to suggest a genuine contrast between them and the body of non-alliterative romance. William of Palerne is distinguished by the fidelity with which it adheres to its source, giving a version which, far from being an abbreviation, was probably somewhat longer than the French text, before the loss of several leaves from the manuscript. The apparent expansion is due, not to the insertion of new material expressive of personal interests on the part of the redactor, but to his evident desire to lose as little as possible in translating the closely-packed original into a less pliant medium. Though his version is not devoid of individuality its most striking characteristic is a patent intention to reproduce the original in all essentials. William of Palerne is a French romance in a native medium, and the only alliterative romance which can in any sense be considered as a translation.

Of the others, Chevalere Assigna and Joseph of Aramathie correspond most closely to the common conception of Middle English redactions from French romance. Both represent radical abbreviations of their originals, though the degree of compression is difficult to estimate, due, in one case, to the variable length of existing versions of the source and, in the other, to the impossibility of equating the alliterative verse with the rambling prose of the Vulgate Cycle.
But though in one instance the abbreviation is largely a technical matter in the other it represents an attempt to alter the basic character of the French original. The author of Chevalere Asigne confined his expression of personal taste to the selection of story-matter: having isolated it from its context he left the episode virtually unaltered in character, without attempting to discriminate between the basic folk-tale and the romantic elements with which it had been diluted. Joseph of Aramathie, however, shows sporadic attempts to separate the narrative of chivalric adventures from the homiletic material associated with it in the original. True, the result is confused and unimpressive, but in attempting the dichotomy the alliterative redactor implicitly rejected that combination of elements which constituted the distinctive characteristic of the French original.

Neither of these redactions can be regarded as passive, but they demonstrate an approach to French material which is largely negative in character, rejecting the original conception of the story-matter without attempting to reinterpret it in a new context. By contrast Colagrus and Gawain is both positive and highly original in its relation to the French source. Just as the redactor's limited selection of story-matter from the Parcival-complex indicates his rejection of the cyclic form of the original, so his highly individual conception of romance is reflected, in his version, by a radical alteration of the whole character of the borrowed material. His treatment has been extremely selective, omitting some incidents completely, modifying others, re-arranging the sequence of events, supplying new motives for the action and altering the characterization in keeping with this new conception of the narrative. There is nothing haphazard or experimental about
his work, and the result is a unified whole in which theme and narrative, character and motivation are significantly interrelated in a manner very different from the original, yet obviously related to and derived from it. Under these circumstances the conventional issue of abbreviation does not arise since the two versions are so loosely related to balance its many omissions and abbreviated narration of events the alliterative text extends some sections by the inclusion of material, notably in speeches and descriptive passages, for which there is no warrant in the French. The character of the whole is in direct contrast with the common conception of the redactive process in the Middle English romances.

What little we know of its French analogues, as well as the evidence of romance tradition, suggests that Sir Gawain and the Green Knight may well be the product of an equally radical process of redaction. Though it cannot be proven objectively that the narrative and thematic unity, the economy and coherence of incident, subservience of details to the whole, subtle contrivance of effect, and individuality in characterization which mark Sir Gawain, originated with the alliterative author and distinguished his version from its original, whether French or not, yet the contrast with romance tradition in most of these respects is presumptive evidence to that effect. And in the absence of a known original, the example of Cola Grus and Gawain, where a similar contrast exists, may suggest the process by which such a distinctive redaction might be achieved. It is true that Sir Gawain shows certain refinements, in the rhetorical balancing of incidents and the creation of atmosphere by the manipulation of descriptive detail, for example, which cannot be matched in Cola Grus and Gawain, but these are elements of the type least likely to survive translation into alliterative verse, and if we postulate
the redactor's responsibility for the general character of the distinctive alliterative version we may reasonably assume that he was responsible for these features also. Within the context of the other alliterative romances considered here there is sufficient evidence of a fundamental approach to the business of redaction, and of an original and independent conception of the nature of romance, to forbid the assumption that all those features which distinguish English Sir Gawain from the common run of Medieval romances must have been inherited from its source, whatever this may have been. But even without the presumptive testimony of Sir Gawain the alliterative redactions display a variety of aims and procedures, ranging from the patient reproduction of a French work to the virtual creation of a new romance from selected elements of the original, sufficient to cast doubt on a generalisation which assumes that amongst English authors the redactive process was simple, uniform and unvarying from period to period and instance to instance. Even as applied to the non-alliterative romances in English such a generalisation must be regarded with suspicion, but the variety of the alliterative redactions, and the individuality of the two Gawain poems in particular, would seem to imply that this is one respect in which the difference of medium is associated with a more fundamental distinction in nature and treatment.

If the character of the redactive process does constitute such a distinction between the alliterative romances and others in Middle English, then we may expect to find it reflected in the treatment of individual aspects of the French originals. The general conception of the Middle English romance assumes that it deals almost exclusively with the narration of adventures and that the redactors were chiefly concerned to separate such a narrative from the other
elements with which it was associated. This was certainly the primary purpose of the redactor who produced William of Palerne: he has been at pains to preserve the adventurous content of the original in all its ramifications and even, apparently, to add to it some further complications. But in doing so he has not materially altered the character of the parent work, since as a roman d'aventures it consists very largely of an extended sequence of narrative incidents, only occasionally interspersed with emotional elements. The redactor shows a certain impatience with the latter, but he has redressed the balance of his omissions by abbreviating some scenes of action whose outcome, rather than their detailed content, is material to the plot. In effect, both the French and the English versions are a salutary reminder that the narrative of adventures is the essential basis of romance in any language, and that comment upon the extent to which English redactors favoured this element must take into account the balance between it and other components of the individual source employed.

In this, as in other respects, Chevalier Assigane and Joseph of Aramathie conform more closely to the expected pattern of Middle English romance. The former concentrates upon the adventurous element in its source to the neglect of descriptive detail, attempting sporadic rearrangements of the original sequence to achieve a more close-packed and smoothly developing narrative. Yet, though the Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne itself is predominantly concerned with the narration of adventures, the alliterative version represents a drastic abbreviation confined to those incidents which advance the story and omitting such subsidiary action as that involved in scenes of chivalric combat. This would suggest that the appeal of action for English redactors is not
to be considered as axiomatic, and that the conception of romance upon which they proceeded must be taken into account. Here, in the case of a redactor whose aim is to reduce his original to the narrative outline of a folktale, the appeal of adventure has not been sufficient to dissuade him from rejecting much of the source-matter. Joseph of Aramathio suggests somewhat the same limited conception of romance as an outline of narrative incident, but here the redactor has been restrained in his abbreviation by the intermingling of adventure with religious homily. His attempts to discriminate between these two elements have resulted in an incoherent version in which the narrative of action predominates but not to the complete exclusion of didactic material. The redactor's efforts to give continuity and coherence to the action, by reordering the original sequence and abbreviating the intrusive homilies, suggests that his primary interest was in the narrative of adventure, yet this has not prevented him from treating it much more summarily than did the original author.

In these three romances, admittedly, action predominates over extra-narrative elements. Colgraus and Gawain, on the other hand, illustrates a type of romance in which the action is of secondary importance to the personal and social ideals expressed through it. It is true that this subservience of action to ideals already existed in the French original, but the alliterative redactor, far from attempting to redress the balance in keeping with the common conception of English romance, has emphasised it by his omission of certain narrative incidents. Indeed, the rigidity of the rhymed alliterative stanza has reduced the element of direct narration to the bare minimum so that it is no more than a framework for the description of action on the limited
scale of hand-to-hand combat and for the presentation of the reactions of those involved in the chivalric situations which it sketches.

Though the alliterative author takes an obvious pleasure in the action of combat, his limited choice from the endless adventures of the pseudo-caval-complex suggests that the narration of such incidents for their own sake made no appeal to him. The number of stanzas in his poem devoted to advancing the action is small by comparison with the number given to extra-narrative elements, and it is the latter which represent his own additions to the material of the French original.

The dichotomy between narrative and extra-narrative elements is less rigid in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, where the medium is more suited to the outlining of events in sequence, but such narration is by no means the dominant element in the poem. Neither the nature nor the range of adventures it involves distinguishes this from other romances; it is the subtlety with which the plot has been contrived, the vividness and credibility with which its incidents are presented, and the convincing realisation of the characters which vitalises its combination of familiar romance motifs. The narrative was evidently valued for its inherent interest not, as so often in the roman courtois as an excuse for the analysis of emotions or the discussion of social codes, yet the alliterative author, narrating with ease and economy, has given most space and attention to those incidentals, partly narrative, partly descriptive, which make even the most improbable episodes acceptable and humanly convincing. This is in itself evidence of an interest in the narrative of adventures, but at a more profound level than is implied by the generalisation upon the preoccupation of English romance-writers with narrative incident to the exclusion of everything else.
To what extent the alliterative author is responsible for the balance between narrative and extra-narrative elements in *Sir Gawain* is impossible to determine, since the difference between the presentation of the story here and in the comparatively conventional French versions is precisely what distinguishes this romance from the common tradition of the form. And the distinctive realisation of the narrative in the alliterative version consists in an imaginative control of detail, which, if it was not the work of the English redactor, at least implies sensitive appreciation of his source and immense patience and care in reproducing it. The fact that *Cola grue* and *Gawain* gives depth, conviction and reality to a conventional French narrative by a similar, though more rudimentary, manipulation of extra-narrative details, may at least suggest that such imaginative extension of the superficial appeal of adventurous incident was not beyond the powers of alliterative poets, or, whatever may have been the case earlier, out with the interests of the readers of later Middle English romance.

It is generally assumed, as a natural corollary to the preoccupation of most English authors with the adventurous incident of romance, that they felt no interest in, and, where possible, ignored the social codes which the *roman courtois* was designed to discuss and demonstrate. Generalisations on the subject suggest that the refinements of Chivalry made no appeal to them and that they ignored exponents of the knightly code in favour of the popular hero of action. This supposes a fundamental distinction between English romances and their French originals which is not always apparent in individual cases. Despite the aristocratic veneer which has been given to *Guillaume de Palerne* the chivalric element in the romance is comparatively limited.
in most of his adventures remains a simple, boyish hero, whose feats have the unsophisticated character of the folk-lore from which they probably derive, and only in the battle-scenes does he act in accord with knightly conventions. Significantly, it is precisely in these scenes that the redactor, usually so faithful to his source, has taken most liberty, omitting some episodes and abbreviating others. He has chosen to concentrate upon the practical outcome of the action as a whole rather than on those details of personal combat in which chivalric qualities show themselves, and even the deeds by which the hero wins knighthood have not excited any particular interest on his part.

In *Chevalier Asylla* as in *William of Palermo*, Chivalry is essentially an intrusive element: the folk-tale upon which this episode also is based required that the hero should fight in defence of his mother, but the conventions of the chivalric romance are responsible for the interpretation of the incident in terms of the judicial duel. And here, too, the alliterative redactor has concentrated upon the practical outcome of the engagement and the supernatural agents involved, to the neglect of military detail and ceremonial preliminary. Where he seems to have taken some interest in Chivalry, by giving a disproportionately full account of the hero's training in arms, it is the boy's behaviour, his innocent blunders and saucy questions, which receive attention and which, perhaps, imply a certain mockery of chivalric convention. The chivalric element in *Joseph of Ararat* is more conventional and more deeply-rooted, since the secondary heroes, Galas and Saraph, as prototypes of the Christian knights of the Grail cycles, behave as they do. The alliterative redactor shows a more consistent interest in their military adventures than in any other aspect of the original.
with regard to the intrinsic interest of the action than its chivalric
import. He was apparently unexcited by the link forged between Chivalry
and Christianity in the Estoire and his occasional expansion of battle
descriptions is counterbalanced by his abbreviation of the conversion
and dubbing of the first Christian knights.

In this, as in other respects, Golagrus and Gawain is the
most original and distinctive of the redactions whose sources are known.
The original episode, like many of those in the Perceval-complex, was
designed to demonstrate the perfection of knightly conduct by confront­
ing the hero with a somewhat artificial dilemma which he resolves by
refined observance of the chivalric code. For the French author the
attraction of such an episode clearly lay in the working out of a
paradoxical conflict of knightly duties, which involves the hero in an
apparent sacrifice of honour yet ultimately redounds to his credit.
Despite its improbabilities the English redactor has accepted the
incident for its intrinsic interest, and has done everything in his
power to make it credible in terms of natural behaviour. Though the
centre of interest in the romance remains a clash between opposed
principles, this arises, in the alliterative version, from the opponents'
conceptions of what is due to their personal honour rather than from
their obedience to conflicting articles of the chivalric code. Since
that code was based upon honour and personal integrity the distinction
between the French and English versions is not absolute, but the stress
which the latter places upon the characters of the protagonists, the
realistic motivation of their behaviour, and the description of their
emotional reactions, suggest that the redactor's interest was in con­
duct rather than in the ramifications of the code of Chivalry. The
contrast between the two interpretations is well illustrated in their treatment of combat: the formalised duel of the French version, conducted according to the rules of the chivalric joust, becomes, in the alliterative romance, a miniature battle, remarkably realistic in presentation and effect. Neither this metamorphosis nor anything else in the English poem suggests that the redactor was ignorant of chivalric theory or knightly practices, and, indeed, his interpretation rests upon a more profound and ennobling concept of knighthood than the somewhat mechanical and artificial presentation of the original. His imaginative apprehension of the episode was essentially realistic, and it was this rather than any lack of familiarity with Chivalry which led him to concentrate upon its practical influence upon character and conduct to the neglect of more formal aspects of the code.

Even without knowledge of his sources it seems possible to suggest that the author of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight also was primarily interested in natural behaviour and nobility of character, rather than in their formalised expression in obedience to the contemporary social code. Here the core of the romance is a multiple test of knightly character, but though the basic concepts of Chivalry underlie the presentation of the story, as he tells his Arthur's company, in Gawain's monologues of it and in his concern for his honour throughout the adventure, the explicit theme is moral and Christian rather than social and chivalric. And in the working out of the theme the character of Gawain rather than his adherence to the knightly code provides the unifying interest of the poem. The fact that on several occasions his behaviour conflicts with the dictates of his conscience gives an
effect of psychological realism more convincing in human terms than
the unnatural perfection with which the heroes of the roman courtois
adhere to the chivalric code. The neglect of Chivalry can scarcely
be due to ignorance on the part of the alliterative author; he has
made skilful use of the trappings of knighthood,—notably in the pass-
ages on Gawain's armour and heraldic bearing,—but as a means of giving
graphic expression to aspects of character and reputation rather than
as elements of intrinsic interest. Whether such treatment was dictated
by his source is impossible to say, though if that source was a French
romance it seems unlikely that its chivalric content can have been
confined to such incidentals. But, here as elsewhere, the example of
Colagynus and Gawain may be illuminating. In both poems the hero is
faced with a dilemma in which quixotic adherence to the code of
Chivalry seems to imply death or disgrace, and in both a regard for
personal honour ultimately provides the solution. Both situations
are capable of interpretation either in terms of the chivalric code
or of the personalities of the protagonists and their regard for their
own and each other's honour, and since the two conceptions are not
mutually exclusive the distinction between them is a matter of emphasis
on the part of the author. How such a change of emphasis could alter
the whole character of a chivalric romance is demonstrated by Colagynus
and Gawain. Whether or not a similar reinterpretation was involved
in the case of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, the distinctive nature
of the alliterative romance in this respect lies in the extent to which
chivalric conventions have been neglected in favour of considerations
of character and the natural regard for honour.

These two poems alone are sufficient to distinguish the
alliterative romances from others in Middle English as regards the
treatment of Chivalry. Though the more conventional alliterative
examples conform to the accepted pattern by avoiding the element in
their choice of matter or ignoring it as far as possible in their
sources, these two authors have selected incidents centered upon a test
of conduct in accordance with the governing code of contemporary society.
Yet they, too, by interpreting their material in natural rather than
formal terms, emphasizing character and personal honour rather than
obedience to convention, display that realism and interest in the straight-
forward hero of action which is regarded as characteristic of the Eng-
lish romance in contrast with the roman courtois. But the assumption
that this contrast arises from differences of social background between
French and English authors and audiences, and the ignorance of the latter
in matters of chivalric refinement, cannot apply in these instances:
The differences evident in Gawain and Gawain, possible in the case of Sir Gawain, must be a matter of deliberate choice arising
from a fundamentally different conception of the relation of the chiv-
alric code to its practice in life and of the function of literature
in reflecting that relationship with a bias in favour of realism rather
than idealism.

Something of the same preference for the reality underlying
the social code is apparent in the treatment by alliterative authors of
the other dominant convention of Medieval romance, that of Courtly Love.
It is frequently asserted that Middle English redactors, where they dealt
with love at all, preferred to interpret it as a purely natural emotion,
avoiding the artificial conventions of Courtly Love and, in particular,
the introspective analyses of feeling associated with the element in
the *roman comique*. Chevalere Assigne and Joseph of Aramathie avoid the element altogether by selection of story-matter. The exclusion was a simple matter in the latter case, but the later career of the Chevalier au Cygne and his marriage to the daughter of the duchess of Bouillon offered more romantic material, which may explain why the English redactor confined his version to the *Naissance*, and the childhood of the hero. The emotional basis of his chosen episode is the boy's love of his mother in whose defence he fights, and it is, perhaps, significant that the French author, despite his romanticising of the original folk-tale, has not attempted to reinterpret it, in a familiar Medieval mould, as a knight's defence of his lady's reputation. The interest shown by the alliterative author in the boy's natural feeling for his mother suggests that such a version might not have appealed to his less sophisticated tastes.

It is not, perhaps, without significance that the hero of Guillaume de Palerne also fights in defence of his mother, but here there are other episodes of a more romantic nature, the author having very largely reinterpreted the boy and girl relationship, which must have formed the core of the original folk-tale, in terms of the courtly convention. Their love expresses itself through the familiar literary apparatus of introspective soliloquy and emotional analysis and in the conventional symptoms of physical and mental torment. But this formalised elaboration of the love-element is so localised in extent and so intrusive in nature that it would have been simple and natural for an English redactor to whom it was distasteful to ignore it and restore the emotional content to something resembling its primitive form. Yet the alliterative author has made only minor alterations, designed to
abbrevi at e the conventional expressions of feeling and give them a more logical development, leading to resolution and action. The love-element in his version is still sufficiently prominent to refute the common assumption of its neglect by English redactors: his efforts to curtail it only appear significant by comparison with his usual fidelity to the source on which he drew. But he was patently ill at ease with the formalised treatment of love, with emotional analysis in particular, and, had he been more self-confident, might well have dispensed with it entirely. That he should have retained it, rather than abandon material which was otherwise congenial to him, suggests that in this respect he was more broad-minded than the general conception of the Middle English redactor would lead us to expect.

Nonetheless, his redaction represents a compromise. A later alliterative poet, the author of *Colaerus and Gawain*, found a more mature solution to a similar problem. Attracted by an episode in the *Percyval*-complex in which the influence of *amour courtois* is marked, he took advantage of the fact that the love-element was localised in extent to omit it entirely, removing every trace from his version. But his attitude to Courtly Love, far from the negative and evasive approach associated with Middle English redactors, was positive and constructive, involving him in a fundamental revision of the episode as a whole. Love is one of the mainsprings of action in the original, and the lengths to which he has gone in providing a new motivation suggests that his objection to the element was deep-rooted, and could not be overcome by modifying the more extreme manifestations of the courtly convention. We may assume that it was not the artificial expression of *amour courtois* but its infusion into an inappropriate sphere, of masculine action and masculine
values, which led him to reinterpret his original on a basis which ignored emotional claims upon the male. In its place he has asserted the claim of honour, which he apparently considered more worthy of his readers' attention, and which was, perhaps, more in accord with the social codes familiar to them.

Whether or not his attitude was shared by the author of *Sir Gawain* is impossible to determine, but there are certain similarities between their work which may be significant. The Temptation episode in *Gawain* centers upon the lady's offer of her love to Gawain, an incident which, though unorthodox in motive, might well have been elaborated in terms of the courtly code. There are, in fact, some traces of the convention in *Gawain*'s reflections upon what is due to his own honour and the lady's reputation and his concern not to give offence by an uncourteously rejection of her offer. Whether these represent the full extent of the love-element in his source or are vestiges of an original where the convention found expression in a long duel of love, with reflective soliloquies and evasive speeches on both sides, is impossible to judge. But it is noteworthy that here, as in *Colagrus* and *Gawain*, Courtly Love gives place to honour as a motivating force, the hero acting, not in obedience to the courtly convention but, naturally and spontaneously, out of regard for his own reputation and the honour of his host.

Therefore, though the alliterative romances may seem at first sight to conform to the common English pattern in their neglect of Courtly Love, the variety of their reactions to it is significant. Though some alliterative poets avoid the element in their selection of story-matter, the author of *William of Palerne* grapples with it in full-
blown form, if somewhat unenthusiastically, where he might have avoided it with comparative ease. In Calagrus and Gawain, on the other hand, a redactor whose polish and competence suggest that he was quite capable of appreciating courtly convention, positively rejects it as an ingredient of romance, substituting a less artificial code of conduct. And it is this code which provides the guiding principle in that episode of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight which might feasibly have been interpreted in terms of amour courtois. Neglect of courtly conventions by these alliterative authors implies, not unfamiliarity or apathy, but distaste or positive rejection in favour, in some instances, of a more natural and realistic basis for human conduct.

Neglect of the codes of courtly society by the authors of Middle English romance and their preference for the narrative of adventures implies that,preoccupied with incident and action, they ignored the sphere of ideas as a whole, the motivation and moral basis of the events in their sources. In this, as in other respects, the alliterative romances related to the French tradition are too varied to conform to such a generalisation. The closeness with which William of Palerne adheres to its original allows only incidental expression to the redactor's personal interests, but a preference for scenes of natural human emotion is suggested by his extended treatment of those showing the affection between William and his foster-parents and the fidelity of the enchanted prince who, as the werewolf, takes the hero and heroine under his protection. Such expansions are, however, counterbalanced by the omission of passages in which the characters reflect upon their circumstances and the workings of Fate, suggesting that though human overtones to the action interested the English author the element of
ideas made no particular appeal to him and he felt no need to underline the moral of the triumph of innocence and youthful love over the evil forces opposed to them. It follows as a natural corollary that the characterization in his version is purely rudimentary. But this cannot be interpreted as a return on the part of the alliterative redactor to a crude and elementary conception of romance, since the French version also, despite its elaborate analysis of feeling in the love scenes, leaves the characters as undeveloped as those of the original folk-tale must have been.

The author of *La Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*, dealing with very similar material, made at least some attempt to assimilate it to human experience by suggesting the bonds of affection between the hero and the other children and the natural feeling which inspired his defence of his mother, and to give the plot greater validity by relating it to a vague moral basis. The alliterative redactor found no space in his abbreviated version for the elaboration of motives or emotion and he ignored the original moral. Yet he apparently felt the need to provide some basis for the action since he attempted to relate it to Christian morality, though his efforts were too perfunctory to have much significance. The naivety of the youthful hero attracted him sufficiently to cause him to include passages of characterization quite out of proportion with his abbreviated account of the action, but he has done nothing to make the narrative more credible than the French version. The author of *Joseph of Aramathia* has shown equally little interest in extra-narrative details, though here the element of ideas is potentially of much greater importance. The mystic power of the Grail and its influence in the lives of Joseph and his followers and
in their conversion of the first Christian knights provides both moral and motivation in the *Etoire*, though the religious theme is less thoroughly integrated with the conventional elements of romance than in later sections of the Vulgate Cycle. The alliterative redactor, clearly ill at ease with this mixture of elements, makes little of the association, his preference for adventurous incident and his haphazard attempts to limit and reorder the Grail matter confusing the interrelation of chivalry and mysticism, just as his selection of story-matter prevents the full development of its significance. As a result the Grail has little more than a curiosity value in his redaction. Nor has he added anything to give greater depth to the very rudimentary characterization of the original version. In so far as his redaction succeeds it is, like *Chevalers Assigne* and *William of Palerne*, as a romance of action rather than ideas.

By contrast, *Galacrus* and *Gawain*, despite a lively plot, is primarily concerned with ideas and motives. The redactor's rejection of the codes of aristocratic society as the basis of action has not resulted in a romance of incident devoid of other interests. The chief concern of the redaction, as of the French original, is with conduct, but with conduct upon a natural human basis, inspired not by social conventions but by a concern for personal reputation and a regard for the integrity of others. This emphasis upon natural human behaviour is not merely an accidental result of the redactor's neglect of Chivalry and Courtly Love, but is a deliberate effect produced by his concentration upon character, motivation and the emotional reactions of those involved, which together occupy his attention at greater length than the narration of adventures. And, though his interpretation implies
a natural morality of honesty and self-respect his version is in no sense didactic and makes no pretense of being a moral tale in the manner of Chevalers Assain. It was clearly not the redactor’s intention to preach but to lend force and conviction to his story by expressing it realistically in terms of the behavior of credible human beings motivated by familiar emotions and reactions. Character was, therefore, of much greater importance to him than to the author of the original, whose conventional plot is worked out by the familiar lay-figures of chivalric romance in automatic obedience to its social codes. Golagrus and Gawain are motivated by personal integrity and a sense of honor which is rooted in the character of each, and the success of the alliterative poem largely depends upon the extent to which their behavior, and, to a lesser extent that of Kay and Arthur, can be accepted as a natural expression of personality. The elaborate care with which they have been characterized, by contrast with others, Gawain with Kay, Golagrus with Arthur—by what is said of them and by their own lengthy speeches, and by their own attitudes to each other in thought and in action, is responsible to a greater extent than any other element for the contrast between the French and English versions in scale, proportion and method of presentation.

Whatever may have been the case in its original, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight presents essentially the same realistic interpretation of romance matter on the basis of character and natural human reactions. The chief interest of the alliterative work lies in the hero’s behavior in the various situations which confront him, and the virtual absence of the conventional codes of conduct need not imply that it is a mechanical romance of incident only. Here, again, it is
Gawain's response to the claims of self-respect and duty towards others which provides the motivation and the moral basis of the action. But, despite the attention given to religion, in the observance of ceremonies as in the hero's prayers and concern to fulfil his Christian duties, the redactor clearly had no intention of preaching a Christian moral in romance form, or, indeed, of giving a didactic significance to any of the adventures he retails. His interest was in character and conduct for their own sake, and not in idealised perfection, but in natural and credible manifestations of human nature: the minor features in which Gawain falls short of the standards at which he aims lend greater conviction to his story than is generally achieved by French romances, whose knightly heroes are flawless in their practice of the chivalric codes. The alliterative redactor has accepted the traditional conception of Gawain as the basis of his characterisation, and makes use of such conventions as the ceremonial of arming the knight and the explanation of his heraldic bearing to convey it effectively. But it is the multitude of minor touches, fresh and original, which lend unusual depth and conviction to the character of the hero: the unforced simplicity of his piety, the courtesy of his attitude towards others, the convincing reality of his mental conflicts in deciding between honour and safety and in controlling his fear, and, above all, his sense of shame in his failure. These and the many incidental touches which make credible the character of Sir Borsilak,—in both his manifestations,—and of his lady, play a major part in the success of the alliterative romance. Whether such characterisation derived from a French original cannot be proven, but neither the rudimentary and formal treatment of character in the romans courtois nor the nature of the examples to which Sir
Gawain has been related makes it at all probable, while the example of Golagrus and Gawain may suggest the lengths to which an alliterative author might deviate from his source in characterizing the persons of the romance, as a means of giving added force and reality to the concepts with which it dealt.

The unusual degree of realism attained by these two alliterative romances has been achieved without that neglect of character and motivation, and consequent loss of depth and subtlety, which is usually associated with Middle English redactions as a natural result of their rejection of the ideals underlying the social codes reflected by their French originals. It must, however, be admitted that in this respect they are also distinguished from the other alliterative romances considered here, in which character, motivation and moral considerations have received little or no attention. And this is only one of several features in which the two Gawain poems share common characteristics which set them apart from the others grouped with them.

The nature of their story matter makes a distinction between them in one important matter, however. The instance of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight suggests that for some Medieval romance writers at least there was no essential incongruity in the realistic treatment of story matter in which the plot was controlled by supernatural agencies. Everything in Sir Gawain indicates that, just as the author's concern was not primarily with incident but with conduct, so his interest in the supernatural was not for its own sake but for its contribution to situations which provoked interesting human reactions. He has not attempted, for example, to rationalise the role of the Green Knight, but by painstaking and detailed presentation on the physical plane and by
natural and forceful characterization to make him acceptable on the same realistic level as the human characters. His success in this respect contrasts with the unsatisfactory passage in which he attempts to explain the supernatural interventions by attributing them to the enmity of Morgan la Fay, an unconvincing motive which, if it originated with him, may indicate his embarrassment with an element which conflicted with his realistic conception and rational motivation of the romance as a whole. In other respects his treatment accords with the practice of the most sophisticated French romance-writers, who assimilated the supernatural elements in their traditional story-matter to the somewhat heightened realism with which they presented the social background, without allowing it to obtrude upon their preoccupation with the codes of Chivalry and Courtly Love. But where their approach was largely negative, describing the operation of supernatural forces without attempting to explain their origin or to make them credible in physical terms, the author of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight has contrived to make the Green Knight contribute positively to the atmosphere and effect of his poem, not merely to the development of the plot.

Sir Gawain is distinctive in this respect not only by comparison with the romans courtois but with other romances in Middle English, including those in alliterative verse. Golegurs and Gawain excludes the supernatural completely. It seems unlikely that a redactor whose preference for the natural and realistic made him intolerant of the conventional motivation of his original would have tolerated the intervention of such a character as the Green Knight, and it may well be that his choice of an episode which moves entirely on a human and comprehensible plane indicates his tastes in this respect. The other
alliterative authors, however, accept such interventions without apparent difficulty. In the case of Joseph of Arimathea and of Chevalere Assigne their attitude is perfectly natural since, in these instances, they are concerned with the operation, within a Christian context, of divine agencies which aid the powers of Right against those of Evil. In an age of faith such manifestations of supernatural power required neither motivation nor explanation, and neither the French authors, nor their alliterative successors, made any attempt to rationalize them or bring them into harmony with the natural world in which they operate. The interest of both redactors and original authors was, apparently, absorbed by the physical forms in which the supernatural manifests itself, and their uncritical approach is reminiscent of the unquestioning acceptance of this element, both Christian and non-Christian in association, in Medieval folklore. In Chevalere Assigne the magic machinery of a folk-lore plot has been made acceptable in Christian terms, yet the sophisticated author of Guillaume de Palerne apparently found nothing incongruous in using such folk-matter, with its basic element of enchantment, as the theme of a realistic novel of contemporary life. The alliterative redactor cannot be considered less sophisticated merely because he adopts such an element, without attempting to rationalize it, though his attribution of magic powers to Alis-aundrine may suggest that he was sufficiently naive to welcome it for its own sake.

So far, therefore, as the supernatural element is concerned it would be artificial to attempt a distinction between French and English romances, since many French authors accept it at its face value as something in harmony with the world in which it operates. Only
those who are not merely content to reflect the surface of life in the *roman courtois* try to modify this disruptive, irrational element in their story-matter, and it is generally assumed that English redactors, less serious in purpose, were also less conscious of incongruity in this respect. Most of the alliterative romances considered here reflect the uncritical approach of such authors, French as well as English. But the example of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* may suggest that an alliterative author might be no less sensitive to the conflict between realistic presentation and supernatural machinery than the most sophisticated of French writers and even more subtle and inventive in reconciling the two elements.

In the most mature of the *romans courtois* the element of description plays a major part in bringing the fantastic story-matter into harmony with those aspects of contemporary life for whose discussion and analysis it provides the framework. By detailed description and vivid evocation of the physical background of contemporary society French authors hoped to make it easier for readers familiar with that society to accept their narratives, however bizarre, as having greater validity than their inherent interest could give them. As with many other elements in the romance, such descriptions quickly became formalised as set-pieces in which the author could display his descriptive skill and which the audience could appreciate for their own sake. For both purposes, decorative and evocative, a heightened realism was employed, in which elaboration of detail and excessive richness harmonise with the general idealisation of life in the *roman courtois*. The general assumption that the Middle English romances were intended for a popular audience unfamiliar with the social sphere
described in the *romancecourtois*,implies that redactors would reject
the greater part of such material in their sources without supplying
a social setting more appropriate to those for whom they wrote.

This is, in effect, one of the features in which the author
of *William of Palerne* has deviated from plodding fidelity to his
French original, in order to eliminate much of the descriptive matter
there. His approach is, however, by no means so radical as the gener­
alisation upon Middle English redactors would suggest; though he omits
certain descriptions entirely, and abbreviates others, he generally retains
those dealing with ceremonies and even expands slightly those of gardens
and natural settings. The descriptive passages in his work are, for
the most part spiritless and ineffective, and the frequency with which
he excuses his abbreviation of the original by pretending lack of space
or ability suggests that where he reproduced such descriptions it was
from a sense of duty rather than personal appreciation of their value.
The authors of *Chevalere Assigne* and *Joseph of Aramathie* were less
scrupulous. Yet the latter, despite the freedom with which he treated
the *Etoire* and his conformity in omitting and abbreviating many of
its descriptive passages, has been typically inconsistent in retaining
others and attempting one brief, independent contribution. It is sig­
nificant, however, that the French text is less closely related to con­
temporary life in its social setting than most romances and the des­
criptions reproduced by the alliterative redactor have a practical
rather than an evocative function, while his own contribution relates
to the action of a battle-scene. In *Chevalere Assigne* the veneer of
courtly life which the French author had applied to the folk-tale has
very largely been ignored, even though in descriptive features it was
both very general and very limited in extent. The redactor's omissions and abbreviations are, however, so much in keeping with his general treatment of the original as to suggest that he was more concerned to achieve a brief narrative outline than to alter a social setting which might prove unfamiliar to his readers.

Those three redactors are essentially negative in their attitude to descriptive detail. By contrast the author of Golagrus and Gawain is both positive and highly individual in his approach, and his treatment of the element differs radically from that in his French source. The original author, taking for granted his readers' familiarity with aristocratic society, established his story in a setting appropriate to it, not by the insertion of descriptive set-pieces but by frequent allusion to details of dress, settings and ceremonials, dispersed here and there in his articulate prose narrative. The effect is cumulative and suggestive rather than minutely detailed. The rigidity of alliterative verse in a rhymed stanzasic form prohibited the reproduction of such an effect, and the alliterative redactor was faced with the alternative of abandoning the social setting or creating his own method of evoking it. This he has done by devoting set passages to the minute description of combat, of armour, of settings and feasts, piling detail upon detail with an inventive freedom and a heightened realism of effect which exceeds anything to be found in his source. Had he confined himself to the element on which he has expended most effort, - description of combat-, it might have suggested that he was concerned with action rather than the evocation of social setting, but the purely descriptive passages in his work, though more limited, are sufficient to show that the trappings of aristocratic life were as essential to his conception
of romance as to that of the authors of *romans courtois*.

Whatever the nature of his source, the author of *Sir Gawain* and the *Green Knight* clearly hold the same conception in this respect. Everything in his romance suggests pleasure in and perfect familiarity with the physical background and social usages of the most refined, courtly life of the Fourteenth century. Like the redactor of *Colaegrus* and *Gawain*, he, too, has compiled descriptive set-pieces by the accumulation of numerous details designed to contribute to an overall effect of heightened realism and richness, and though these are not inserted merely to evoke the social milieu but to create atmosphere and assist in characterization, they are, perhaps, the least important part of the total descriptive content. Much more important are the numerous incidental allusions and minor details, which, subtly interrelated, cumulate in an imaginative effect from which the romance derives unusual depth and realism and attains a unique fusion of fantastic story-matter and concrete social setting. Many commentators are prepared to grant that the alliterative poet may have been responsible for the descriptive set-pieces, yet the unique character of *Sir Gawain* depends very largely upon the deployment of descriptive detail in a way which is unmatched in French romance and which, if it did not originate with the English author, must imply extreme care on his part to preserve and reproduce it. In either case neither this poem, nor *Colaegrus* and *Gawain*, will support the conception that English authors were less imaginative in their control of descriptive detail and less sophisticated in their view of contemporary society than the authors of the *romans courtois*.

The contrast between the two Gawain poems and the other alliterative romances in this as in other respects suggests the inadequacy
of any generalisation applied to them as a group. Such generalisations, referring to the Middle English romances as a whole, assume that redactors worked along uniform lines, with the same general purpose in view and influenced by similar preferences and prejudices. Yet even in the technical conduct of their redactions, these alliterative authors display a variety of working methods which indicates that, whatever the results, the redactive process was by no means so uniform as the common conception suggests. The example of Gillian of Palerne, the least independent of the alliterative redactions, shows that these English authors at least were never entirely passive in their approach to French originals. In this instance, though the redactor implicitly approves the technical conduct of the original version, he has made some sporadic attempts to modify the structure by transposing passages within limited contexts in order to achieve a more logical sequence of events. Elsewhere he has omitted incidental episodes which delay the outcome of the action, though he shows nothing of that desire to shorten his task by wholesale excisions with which English redactors are frequently credited. Indeed, his most obvious concern in the technical conduct of the redaction has been to ensure that the narrative lost nothing in clarity or continuity, by avoiding abrupt changes of scene and subject, by adding summaries of speeches and filling out allusions to earlier incidents, and creating links between scenes where the French does not provide for the transition. As the original author was himself unusually meticulous in such matters, the effect has been to make the alliterative narrator appear obtrusive and over-emphatic. This may suggest a somewhat self-conscious redactor who mistrusted his 'prentice hand, but it certainly does not confirm the conception of the author of
Middle English romance as slavishly reliant upon the constructive abilities of his French predecessor and content merely to shorten his labour by drastic omission and abbreviation wherever possible.

The example of *Chevalerie Assise*, on the other hand, may suggest that even such a process of abbreviation might entail considerable effort and care on the part of the redactor. The precise degree of abbreviation involved here cannot be determined, but it was clearly achieved by a deliberate policy of condensation, not merely by verbal economy and haphazard omission of material. Such omissions and abbreviations as there have been were possible only because the alliterative redactor went to considerable trouble to compensate for their loss by creating a new narrative sequence, ensuring the continuity of the action and suppressing subsidiary episodes for the benefit of the main plot. Although the results are extremely mixed, sometimes more effective than the original, yet often involving failings of the kind the redaction was designed to overcome, the author's good intentions are apparent throughout. His abbreviations also, though they often involve the loss of important details, suggest some attempt to discriminate between essentials and incidentals. Technically the redaction as a whole is erratic, uneven and often careless in execution, yet it is not without signs of enterprise on the part of the alliterative poet.

*Joseph of Aramathie* suggests a similar approach to the technical problems of redaction, neither slavishly dependent upon the French model nor entirely haphazard. And if the result in this instance is even more confused and rambling narrative sequence and intermingling of episodes upon two distinct planes.
Though the redactor appears to have wavered irresolutely between pedestrian reproduction of his original and sporadic attempts to abbreviate it, something of a general principle of redaction is evident in his efforts to achieve a clear-cut narrative outline. Realising the disruptive effect in his brief version of abrupt breaks in sequence and changes of scene, he has attempted to modify it by transposing whole sections of narrative in order to bring together related incidents and allow the action to develop logically. All too often, however, his efforts have created just those defects which he sought to remove. These and similar inconsistencies in the degree of abbreviation, factual errors and signs of carelessness, have marred the alliterative redaction, yet the basic conception is not without merit, suggesting a bold attempt to grapple individually and creatively with the French text.

Though these three redactors were clearly not without resource, their technical ability was inadequate for the function they undertook. Gelagrus and Gawain, by contrast, demonstrates an even more fundamental process of redaction carried out with a large measure of success. And in this instance the technical changes involved are not incidental to the abbreviation or structural amendment of the original, but are the means by which an entirely new interpretation, affecting every aspect of form and content, is expressed. The author's distinctive conception of romance form involved him in major structural alterations, in separating his chosen episode from its original context and in linking together two incidents very different in proportion and in importance. His rejection of the social convention underlying one prominent episode required him to compensate for its omission in his revised design. Only a redactor who was prepared to shape his version
independently and creatively could have contemplated such a fundamental reinterpretation. Despite his independent approach he has not hesitated to make use of the original machinery—such as the journey of Arthur’s court which serves to link separate adventures—, where it was valid for his purpose. His treatment of the selected incidents varies in fullness and intensity, not according to their prominence in the French text, where their intrinsic interest has clearly been the primary consideration, but in relation to their importance in the unified theme of his romance. In narration he has frequently neglected the detailed fullness of the French version in favour of a simplified outline, interspersed with lengthy passages which build up the moral pattern of the romance, express character and create atmosphere without advancing the action. The result is much less coherent than the original, erratic in movement and occasionally uncertain in reference, yet much more forceful and compelling and well suited to the redactor’s personal conception of romance.

Though it employs a somewhat different method of narration, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight displays the same happy relationship between subject-matter and means of expression. But where Galagrus and Gawain is broadly outlined in black and white, Sir Gawain is fully coloured and richly detailed. Without immediate knowledge of its source the technical conduct of the redaction, if redaction it is, can only be guessed at, yet the contrast with French romance and the other alliterative texts is illuminating. Apart from an apparent vagueness in motivation at one point, which may be intentional, and a certain perfunctoriness in rounding off the story, Sir Gawain exhibits none of those signs of technical contrivance which are evident in the other
alliterative redactions: abrupt transitions, unevenness of narrative texture, imbalance of narration, description and characterization.

This does not merely mean that the author was sufficiently master of his craft to avoid the errors made in Chevalero Aisine and Joseph of Aramathie, but that he achieved a method of expression as appropriate to the complexity of his matter, with its interdependence of incident and atmosphere, psychological subtlety and overtones of meaning, as the clear-cut construction of Colagrus and Gawain to its more straightforward and elementary interpretation of romance. Indeed, his control of detail, of characterization, description of settings and evocation of atmosphere in relation to the advancing action has all the flexibility of the French prose romances without their looseness of form. Yet subjectively it is difficult to feel that Sir Gawain is no more than a literal reproduction, in technique as in matter, of such a French romance: the limited scope of the alliterative poem would alone be sufficient to throw doubt on such a conception, and the technical conduct of the redaction has been designed in relation to the balance between scale and subject-matter. Technical control plays a greater part in the success of Sir Gawain than is usual in Medieval romance, and whoever was responsible for it must be accounted more than a mechanical redactor of other men's creations.

In the last analysis, however, the only component of Sir Gawain which can objectively be attributed to the English poet is the alliterative verse in which it is expressed. The skill with which the medium has been handled, the relation of the variable verse paragraphs to the movement of the story, the emphatic application of the 'bob and wheel', the flexible adaptation of the line to narration, description
and the subtle implications of courtly conversation, though they indicate poetic maturity do not necessarily imply powers of construction, narrative control, or psychological penetration. But, on the other hand, the absence of any conflict between matter and poetic form, or any indication that the redactor was hampered by the relative inflexibility of his medium, would suggest uniform control of both content and means of expression. The very complexity of Sir Gawain implies a particularly intimate connection between matter and medium: the movement of the alliterative line, the location of its emphatic stress, even the nature of the vocabulary it involves, affect the selection and combination of details, the prominence given to them, even their colour and significance. Yet this is a romance in which matters of detail are of paramount importance, and in so far as the alliterative poet was responsible for adapting his medium to make them fully effective, his part in the creation of Sir Gawain must be considered more fundamental than that of a mere translator.

The extent of his artistic control and the measure of his success are indicated by the relation between matter and medium in Golagruus and Gawain, whose redactor, using a French prose romance of the type which might feasibly have supplied the original of Sir Gawain, was forced by his complicated alliterative stanzas to adopt a style of expression utterly different from that of his model. It is true that the most sweeping changes affected by the author of Golagruus and Gawain in the matter of the Parceval continuation are due, not to incompatibility of styles, but to a difference of taste and temperament, yet the nature of the alliterative medium forced him to adopt a method of expression much more in keeping with his conception of romance than
the somewhat characterless prose of the original could have been. The rigidity of the rhymed alliterative stanza, restricting direct narration to the minimum, compelled the poet to concentrate upon evocative description of both settings and action, and rhetorical expression of feelings and attitudes. Had it not been that these were aspects of romance which interested him personally such a medium could only have been restrictive and frustrating, and we may therefore presume that its choice was a deliberate one. That he realised its merits is apparent in the lengthy speeches and the even longer descriptions of combat in which he has exploited its emphasis and rhetorical effect to create the most original and successful passages in his poem. For this alliterative redactor at least choice of medium was not a secondary consideration but one fundamentally related to his purpose as a whole.

The form of the alliterative medium chosen by the other redactors was less rigid and exercised a less positive control upon them. Its inhibiting influence is most apparent in *William of Palerne*, where, in attempting to reproduce his original verbally, the redactor fell, almost inevitably, into a verbose and inflated style, over-emphatic in its statement of inconsequential details, more clumsy and slow-moving than the French narrative. But by its very nature it forced upon the timid English poet a degree of verbal independence through which something of his own personality has found expression. It is suggested by colloquial overtones in the alliterative version, which, in contrast with the refined matter of the courtly episodes and the love scenes, produce a humorous effect which was, perhaps, unintentional. Such a form of expression is perfectly in keeping with the basic folk-lore element
in *William of Palerne*, but its use was probably dictated by familiarity rather than by consciousness of its suitability for the purpose in hand. The alliterative line was the redactor’s natural medium of expression, in which he struggled with his source matter without having the courage, or, perhaps, the ability, to adapt the one to the other, as the authors of the two *Gawain* romances appear to have done.

Both *Chevaliers Asaigns* and *Joseph of Avenarie* suggest a similar conclusion: for their authors the use of an alliterative medium was axiomatic, while its suitability to their chosen subject-matter was largely irrelevant. In the former instance the result is much as in *William of Palerne*, despite greater independence in narration. Where the redaction can be closely compared with its original it is apparent that the poet’s selection of alliterative terms has introduced incongruous overtones quite out of keeping with the general purport and atmosphere of the passage. Here at least there are no scenes of Courtly Love to be mangled, and the naivety of the boyish hero is well-suited to the gauche expression it receives. But, apart from some slight expansion of those scenes in which it can be so used, the poet has given no sign that he appreciated the qualities of his medium.

The author of *Joseph of Avenarie* exploits one facet of alliterative verse in a single brief passage describing the violence of conflict, but though the material of the *Estoire* offered him ample opportunity to repeat the effect he has not responded. Consequently the chivalric adventures in his romance have none of the effectiveness given to such incidents in *Galigrus* and *Gawan*, and the incongruity of the medium in the religious episodes is without compensation. The choice of an alliterative verse-form for the treatment of such material can only have
been arbitrary. That this redactor, like those of *Champlain assigna*
and *William of Palerne*, should have been prepared to struggle with
such a difficult medium in a context where it could not be fully
rewarding must suggest that its choice, even though largely passive
and negative, was strongly compulsive. That authors of such individu­
ality, independence and ability as those who produced *Golagrus* and
*Gawain* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* should use it with such
effect may equally well suggest that it was deliberately chosen and
exploited as the medium most appropriate to their conception of
romance and the redactive process.

The significance of alliterative verse as the medium of
redactions drawn from French sources lies in the extent to which it
must differ from the original medium, whether prose or verse. The
technical demands of the form not only preclude literal translation
but compel the poet to adopt a style of expression and a method of
narration which will not conflict with the movement of the verse and
which, if he is skilful, may exploit it effectively. This is not to
imply that English redactors using other media are not faced with
similar problems, but even in the comparatively simple blank-verse form
the difficulties of alliteration are such as to constitute a real dis­
tinction in degree. The rigidity of the verse, its tendency to fall
into single-line units and the difficulty of linking these in natural
sequence, inhibit its use in detailed and connected narrative and in
conversational exchanges, while its inherent suitability for cumulative
descriptive, rhetorical expression and the evocation of violent action
may be frustrated by the nature of the source-matter. Alliterative
poets must therefore go to greater lengths than redactors working in
more pliant media, either to modify the defects of their chosen medium or to exploit its special qualities. This implies greater personal effort and a more positive contribution on their part than Middle English redactors are normally credited with; to a greater or lesser degree they are forced to re-think and re-create the material with which they deal, sometimes only at a verbal level, often more fundamentally in matters of construction, narrative sequence, activation and even general interpretation. And the more complex the form of alliterative verse employed the more profound the personal contribution involved.

The alliterative redactors of French romance have responded in various ways to the problems presented by their medium in the treatment of their chosen subject-matter, and have reflected the interests of their audiences and expressed their own tastes with varying degrees of freedom and individuality. The nature of the redactive process in their hands and the conception of the romance expressed through it differentiate their works from the romans courtois and, to a lesser extent, from other Middle English redactions in the same form. Most significant, perhaps, in contrast with the general conception of English romances upon French originals, is the variety of the process involved, the range of tastes and interests reflected, and the extremes of creative ability demonstrated within the small group of texts considered here. And, though the uncertain dating of the texts renders such a suggestion hypothetical, there is evidence of a striking development of maturity and creative control amongst the alliterative redactors whose work is represented.

If William of Palerne can be taken to represent the most
primitive and least original of the alliterative redactions it cannot, nonetheless, be classed with those Middle English romances from French sources upon which the common conception of the native audience has been based. It shows none of that desire for radical abbreviation, for the isolation of a bare narrative of adventures, and very little of the antipathy for Chivalry and Courtly Love associated with the popular English audience. Though it is true that the chosen subject was essentially popular in appeal, the redactor has done comparatively little to free it from the courtly mould in which he found it, or to excise details of social setting, characterization and emotion in the interests of brevity. Certain indications of impatience with such elements suggest that they were not entirely to his liking, but as he laboured to reproduce his original as an integral whole we must assume that he wrote for an audience with the leisure to enjoy and the perception to appreciate much that was designed for the tastes of courtly French readers. The timid and negative nature of his redaction may reflect a passive and undemanding audience of middle class background, but with some pretensions to appreciate, at second hand, the literature of their social superiors, but not the ale-house listeners commonly associated with English romance, who were intolerant of everything save the recital of adventures.

Of the alliterative romances only Chevalero Assigne really suggests such a popular audience. The redactor's choice of an incident ultimately derived from folk-literature, his abbreviation of it, favouring narrative incident at the expense of background detail which, in the original, lends conviction to the improbable plot, and his avoidance of the limited chivalric content, conform to the general conception of
popular tastes and interests. Yet the contrast between the redaction and its source is not so extreme as such a summary might imply: the French author had added only a thin veneer of romanticism to the original folk-tale so that the redactor's neglect of the chivalric and courtly elements did not affect the fundamental appeal of the episode. Despite the fantastic plot it is clear that for both authors this lay in the behaviour of the hero, and even in his concentration upon action and adventure the alliterative poet has not entirely neglected details of character and emotional reaction. However popular his audience may have been, its preference for narrative incident did not debar it from appreciating the human appeal of the story, though it no doubt dictated the predominance of narration over description and characterization. The significance of Chevalere Assigne lies in the fact that in order to adjust the balance of components to the taste of an English audience the redactor was prepared to go to much greater lengths and to rely more implicitly upon his own judgement than the author of William of Palermo. The latter also selected story-matter of much human appeal, but though this clearly appealed to him he made only tentative and limited efforts to discriminate in its favour. The author of Chevalere Assigne, influenced, perhaps, by the requirements of an audience lower in the social scale, whose tastes differed more radically from those of French readers, and similarly conditioned by his alliterative medium, attempted a much more original and independent redaction, aiming at structural alteration, change of emphasis and, to a limited extent, at reinterpretation of his source. The fact that his redaction is largely unsuccessful, erratic in degree of abbreviation, unbalanced in proportion and confused in aim, does not disguise its ambitious nature.
or the extent to which, in terms of creative originality, it surpasses William of Paleme. Despite its imperfections it suggests the work of a redactor who accepted a measure of creative responsibility and the existence of an English audience, whose tastes, however crude, were not modelled in imitation of those of their social superiors.

Joseph of Arumathie in its turn represents a certain advance upon Chevalere Assigne, not in terms of total achievement but in the ambition of the project which it represents. Its author, also, accepted the challenge of alliterative verse by undertaking to re-plan and re-express his original, though he gives only one brief indication that he realised the potentialities of the medium itself. The results of his independence are equally sweeping, and, if anything, more unfortunate. Many of the technical measures involved were well conceived but vitiated by the lack of an over-all plan of redaction, the failure to make a clear-cut choice between the disparate components of the original, the significance of whose association could not be fully developed within the limited section taken from the Estoire, and by the negative attitude of the redactor to much of the material in his source as to its central theme. His discrimination in favour of military adventure and the narrative of action, the degree of abbreviation employed and the neglect of chivalric details as of the descriptive element, conform to the general conception of the English redaction designed for a popular audience. Yet the very fact that the alliterative poet should have selected such an original as the Estoire del saint Gaul argues against the familiar generalisation. That he should have approached it, not in the spirit of the author of Chevalere Assigne, as a quarry from which to hack an episode of obvious popular appeal, but with the
intention of giving an integral account of its contents, mystic as well as adventurous, suggests that he had in mind a somewhat more sophisticated audience. That his project proved abortive, that he failed to convey the full significance of his chosen matter, which apparently conflicted with his essentially realistic conception of romance, and that he abandoned it inconclusively, only serve to underline the ambitious nature of his original project.

By comparison the highly finished and successful Colagrus and Gawain represents a great advance on the part of alliterative redactors, both technically and creatively. Much of the author's individual and creative approach to his function may be attributed not merely to the comparative intensity of his work but to the complicated and demanding form of alliterative verse chosen by him. Since the nature of the medium required that the technical conduct of the redaction must differ radically from that of the original, his choice would seem to imply that he was prepared to undertake a fundamental reinterpretation of the work as a whole. Many of the changes which he has introduced may merely reflect his desire to accommodate the matter to the exigencies of his medium, but others suggest a deliberate and well-planned attempt to exploit the merits of alliterative verse as a means of giving effective expression to his conception of romance. Yet though the distinctive character of Colagrus and Gawain, the emphatic expression of its rhetorical passages, and the vividness of its minutely detailed battle-scenes, are largely due to the skill with which the inherent qualities of the alliterative medium have been exploited, they represent only a minor part of the English redactor's contribution. His conception of his function implies the deletion of fundamental features of
the original, including the element of Courtly Love as a whole and the formal aspects of Chivalry, involving as a result the alteration of the basic motivation of the romance. Such a conception suggests the negative attitude attributed to the ordinary English redactor and his suppression of everything in his source likely to prove unfamiliar to a popular audience. But what survives in Cola grus and Gawain is not merely the narrative outline of the original but its essential subject reinterpreted in terms of a natural morality and natural human relations. The redactor's positive contribution in matters of motivation and characterization quite outweighs his rejection of certain elements in his source and amounts to a fundamental reinterpretation on a basis which is essentially realistic. His interest lay not in the demonstration of social codes but in human behaviour as such, and, since so much else has been altered beyond recognition, we may assume that it was the potential human interest of the basic situation in the original episode which he expected to appeal to his audience. His treatment of it does not, however, suggest the vulgarization usually associated with Middle English redactors but rather a preoccupation with the fundamental ideals of contemporary aristocratic society which transcends the conventions in which the authors of romans courtois were accustomed to express them.

In his work the realistic approach to romance matter, which appears in embryonic form in the earlier alliterative romances, is fully developed and its effect is evident in every aspect of the redaction. Yet clearly it is not the realism of the limited imagination, but of sophisticated readers familiar with the usages of refined society, who require from the poet who serves them not only high technical competence but the ability to reinterpret the matter of French romance in terms of their
own conception of life and their realistic evaluation of the conventions underlying it.

If *Golagrus and Gawain* in relation to the earlier alliterative romances suggests a process of evolution in which English authors gradually acquired independence and competence in reshaping their French sources technically and thematically, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, despite its date of composition, would seem to be the logical apotheosis of such a process. All the characteristics which distinguish *Golagrus and Gawain* from its French original are seen here in still more refined forms. The technical control which achieved the clear-cut outline of the one is seen to a more perfect degree in the balanced proportions, smooth development and subtle interrelation of narration, description, and characterization in the other. The restraints imposed by the alliterative medium, which are still apparent in *Golagrus and Gawain*, have been overcome and the expressive powers of the verse are fully at the poet's command. More important, however, than this perfection of technique is the advance which *Sir Gawain* represents in the realistic presentation of romance matter and the realistic interpretation of contemporary life through it. Despite the fantastic nature of the plot the poet compels belief by the vividness with which he brings the situations involved to life, by his concrete presentation of the real and the supernatural alike, and by the extent to which his evocation of personality and analysis of natural human reactions carries conviction. Here, as in *Golagrus and Gawain*, concentration upon the fundamental roots of human behaviour, character and loyalty to a natural code of honour implies rejection rather than ignorance of the conventions which dominate the *roman courtois*: everything in the poem, from its detailed presentation
of the courtly setting to its assumption of the reader's familiarity with courtly usage, indicates that it was intended for an aristocratic audience. Under these circumstances the fact that Sir Gawain can neither be shown to be the product of a similar redaction process nor accepted as an original creation is particularly frustrating. Yet, whatever the process of composition may have been, this poem, more than any other Middle English romance is thoroughly rooted in the tradition of the **Roman o.Aretina**, and it may not be unjustified to attribute its wide deviation from that tradition to the same factors which caused alliterative redactors to make similar, if more limited, deviations not only from the practice of French authors but from that of their Middle English contemporaries.
The following abbreviations are employed in the Bibliography and throughout the thesis:

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