

AN ARTHURIAN MANUSCRIPT IN THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY.¹

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AMONG the French manuscripts in the John Rylands Library there is an interesting copy of part of the Old French Arthurian Cycle. The only account of this manuscript which at present exists is the rather summary description in the "Hand-List of French and Italian Manuscripts",² and an examination has shown that it merits greater attention. French MS. No. 1 consists of two large folio volumes which contain the second part of the *Livre de Lancelot del Lac* (ff. 1-181 v°.), *La Queste del Saint Graal* (ff. 182-211 v°.), and *La Mort al Roi Artus* (ff. 212-257 v°.); that is, it represents the second part of the Vulgate Arthurian Cycle. The two volumes comprise 257 vellum leaves; the first 129 plus iv (paper), and the second 128 plus iv (paper). This division into volumes is purely artificial and does not correspond to any division in the work. The manuscript measures 411 × 292 mm. in its bindings, the leaves being 398 × 283 mm., of which the writing occupies 200 × 290 mm. in double columns of 44 lines; on many leaves there are coloured borders. The decoration is rather lavish; in addition to the illuminated borders are initials coloured alternately red and blue, many others illuminated, and seventy-four miniatures of a delicate and spirited technique. Two full pages are also highly decorated; the first (f. 82r°) corresponding to some former volume division, and the second (f. 212r°) adorning the opening of the final section of the work, *La Mort al Roi Artus*. The

¹ In all citations from the manuscript the orthography of the scribe is rigidly adhered to and no attempt is made to emend. Punctuation is added very sparsely, and only in so far as it is necessary to clarify the meaning and to prevent ambiguities. The extracts are in no sense "edited".

² M. Tyson, *Hand-List of the Collections of French and Italian Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* (1930), pp. 8-9. (Reprinted from the BULLETIN OF THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY, Vol. XIV.

binding, apparently English of the early eighteenth century, is a plain red morocco of medium quality, with, as its only decoration, a plain gilt rectangle round the edge and another in the centre of the covers. The spine of each volume bears the title *Histoire du Roi Artus MSS. Tom. I, Tom. II*, and each is contained in a case of light brown leather, made in 1882, bearing on the spine the title *Lancelot du Lac, MS. on vellum, circa A.D. 1300, I, II*. The volumes are divided into 34 gatherings (17 forming the first volume, and 18 the second), usually of 8 leaves, although the number varies occasionally owing to the loss of odd leaves and is altered to suit the division of the work into its respective sections. The gatherings contain the following leaves: Volume I: 7, 8, 7, 8, 8, 7, 8, 8, 10, 4, 6, /8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 8; Volume II: 8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 8/4, 7, 8, 8, 7, /4, 5, 8, 5, 8, 8, 8. The stroke (/) in the description of Volume I indicates the decorated page which once was the opening page of a volume, the strokes in that of Volume II the beginning and ending of the section *La Queste del Saint Graal*. In the first few gatherings of the first volume there are partially erased signatures which indicate the order of the leaves within the gatherings. These are as follows: bb, bc, bd, on ff. 8, 9, 10; cd, ce, cg, on ff. 16, 17, 18; de, df, dg, dh, on ff. 23, 24, 25, 26; ef, eg, on ff. 30, 31; fg, fh, fi, f (second letter cut away by the binder's knife) on ff. 38, 39, 40, 41. This apparently does not continue for the rest of the manuscript, but as the markings are very close to the outer edge of the leaf the binder's knife may have removed them. The order of the gatherings is also indicated in the more usual manner by means of catchwords. Many of these have been cut off during the process of binding, but those which remain are in two hands, the first contemporary with that of the scribe and the second of the fifteenth century. There are some curious orthographical variants between the catchwords and the text to which they refer. On f. 61 for example the catchword, in a fifteenth century hand, is *Mieulx la table Reonde*, referring to the *mieus la table reonde* of the text. More interesting, perhaps, is the case on f. 71. There the catchword is *Il ne vouloit oncques*, in a fifteenth century hand, whereas the scribe of the manuscript prefers *il ne voloit onkes*, showing that he came from some northern area of France,

probably Picardy. His spelling is full of northern peculiarities. The fifteenth-century binder employed, however, the orthography of the Parisian area. Another Picard trait of the scribe is shown in the catchword to f. 153. The text reads *batent lors haches en terre*, the *ch* for the standard French *c* being typically Picard,¹ but the catchword, although contemporary with the scribe of the manuscript, reads *batent lor haces en terre*.

In general the manuscript is in a good condition. In spite of the fact that several leaves are missing,² the text is a valuable one, and the miniatures, some of which have been cut out and the damaged leaves removed, form a useful source of information concerning contemporary habits, costume and armour.

The manuscript was acquired by the Rylands Library in 1901 from the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, together with many others which formed part of the same magnificent collection; the bookplate of the Bibliotheca Lindesiana is still inside the front cover of each volume. In the Crawford Library the two volumes were recorded separately as French manuscripts 1 and 2. Lord Crawford purchased them in March 1882, from Bernard Quaritch, together with the cases which now hold them. While in the Crawford collection much was discovered about the contents, as is shown by the more correct title *Lancelot del Lac* on the cases. Also, the manuscript was rebound in the correct order. At one time the opening of the final section, *La Mort al Roi Artus*, now f. 212, was the opening of volume one, and f. 82 the first leaf of volume two. The various alterations in the foliation in pencil in the top left-hand corner of the leaf are evidence that several attempts were made before all was correctly arranged. In the bottom right-hand corner of f. 212r^o is a tiny note, *vol i* and, beneath it, half cut away by a binder's knife, *i vol*. These no doubt refer to the fact that at one time this page was the first one of the manuscript. Furthermore, ff. 212 to the end are numbered, in what seems very like modern pencil, from one onwards in a quasi antique numerotation.

¹ The linguistic peculiarities of the scribe will be mentioned in more detail below, p. 341. For an account of the Picard dialect in Old French see M. K. Pope, *From Latin to Modern French*, Manchester (1934), § 1320.

² These are accounted for in detail below.

Quaritch acquired the volumes from the Bibliotheca Sunderlandiana, broken up by sale in 1881; incidentally, this Library had been previously offered in its entirety to several other collectors, including Lord Crawford. In the Sunderland Sale Catalogue, where it formed Lot 670, the manuscript is one of the more important items. It is described at great length and is also mentioned separately in the introduction. This description is very valuable in confirming the fact that before Lord Crawford acquired it the leaves were bound in an incorrect order. The two highly decorated pages are described in detail, and it is seen that the present f. 212 was f. 1, and the present f. 82 the first leaf of the second volume. The manuscript still bears on the end papers at the beginning of each volume the Sunderland shelf marks, namely (Vol. I) K. K. 2: 7 in ink in rather large characters, and beneath it in pencil a later marking, 105 l, 13. Volume II bears similar marks, arranged in the same way: K. K. 2: 8, and 105 l, 14.¹ In the published Catalogue of the Sunderland Collection² the volumes are given the following description: "Arthur, King: Le Roman du Roi Artus et des Compaignons de la Table Ronde. MS. sur vélim, et décoré de figures et autres ornemens peints en or et en couleurs. 2 voll. fol. 105 l." It seems probable that the manuscript was acquired for the Sunderland Library by Charles Spencer, 3rd Earl of Sunderland, 4th Lord Spencer, the famous rival as a bibliophile of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, the founder of another great collection. It has so far been impossible to determine whence Sunderland obtained the manuscript. He is noted for the high prices which he paid for his books, and also for the fact that the binding with which he protected them was usually a mediocre quality red morocco, whereas his successors preferred a high quality binding, very seldom red morocco, with much decoration in gilt. Although the unprinted catalogue of the early editions in the Library at Blenheim mentions three

¹ For a reproduction of the Sunderland press mark see Seymour de Ricci, *English Collectors of Books and Manuscripts and their marks of ownership*. Cambridge (1930), p. 39.

² *Catalogue of the Books in the Library of Blenheim Palace*, Oxford (1872). The edition was limited to 50 copies, of which one finds a place in the Rylands Library.

manuscripts, it does not give any information concerning this one.¹ For the present, therefore, it must suffice to say that the manuscript's earliest known owner was the 3rd Earl of Sunderland.

The two volumes contain, as has been stated above, the second half of the Vulgate Arthurian Cycle. They represent the second half of a complete text of that Cycle, of which the first half has been lost, just as MS. Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds français 95 is the first half of a text of the Vulgate Cycle of which the second half is preserved in one of the Phillipps manuscripts. It is a not unusual thing for this text to become split up in this way. Ferdinand Lot,² lists no less than thirteen manuscripts which contain the second half of the cycle and various others, to the total of twenty-eight, which contain parts of the cycle. None of those which are described as containing the first part could, by their different descriptions, be considered as representing the lost portion of the Rylands MS. However, another lucky discovery may provide the missing portion, just as MSS. B.N. fr. 95 and Phillipps 130 have been shown to correspond to each other. The Vulgate Cycle has only once in modern times been printed in its entirety, and since the printed edition is more easily available than the manuscripts it is convenient to compare the Rylands manuscript with Sommer's edition of the Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances,³ of

¹ The manuscript catalogue of the Blenheim books is in the British Museum, King's MSS. 383, 384. This was prepared from the slip catalogue, now B.M. Add. MS. 11512.

² *Étude sur le Lancelot en Prose*. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, fasc. 226 (1918), p. 1, note 1, p. 11, note 1.

³ H. O. Sommer, *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances edited from Manuscripts in the British Museum*. Washington, The Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1909-1916, 8 vol. 4to: I (1909), *L'estoire del Saint Graal*; II (1908), *L'estoire de Merlin*; III (1910), *Le livre de Lancelot del Lac (Part I)*; IV (1911), *Le Livre de Lancelot del Lac (Part II)*; V (1912), *Le Livre de Lancelot del Lac (Part III)*; VI (1913), *Les Aventures ou la Queste del Saint Graal*; *La Mort al Roi Artus*; VII (1913), *Le Livre d'Artus*; VIII (1916); *Index of Names and Places*.

Sommer chose as the base of this "monumental if inaccurate" edition Add. MSS. 10292-10294 in the British Museum. The choice was dictated by personal convenience rather than by the merits of the manuscript.

Various parts of the cycle have been the object of editions in recent years. Sommer himself edited the *Merlin* as early as 1894: *Le Roman de Merlin or the*

which it represents Volumes V and VI. Indeed, inserted inside the first volume is a note dated 12th November, 1906, left by Sommer himself which makes this remark, and also adds that certain leaves are missing. He compares the manuscript in this respect with those in the British Museum upon which he was working at the time.

The Rylands MS. opens in the middle of a sentence¹—
 “mendoiroie quant moi plairoit et ma volentes est tele que iou men voel aler ia au vespre, car bien sachies que iou ne gerra a nuit en ostel nul se iou ne gis en lostel a la iouene dame de qui iou me parti ne mie granment a la fontaine v iou vous trouai.”
 This is part of an adventure of Guerrhes, who encountered three ladies by the side of a spring and restored to the eldest one her daughter, taken from her by a knight whose unchivalrous conduct he later punished by slaying him. In this section there are several lacunae. Between ff. 4 and 5 a leaf is missing; a miniature has been cut away, the knife marks being still visible on the later folios, and the damaged leaf later removed.² Another *early History of King Arthur* (London, privately printed). He used the same MS. as base. The ‘*Queste del Saint Graal*’ was edited in 1864 by F. J. Furnivall for the Roxburghe Club; he used MS. Brit. Mus. Royal 14 E iii, as base. A more modern and scholarly edition of the *Queste* is that by A. Pauphilet: *La Queste del Saint Graal, roman du XIII^e siècle* (Classiques français du moyen âge), Paris, (1923). This edition is based on MS. 77 of the Palais des Arts Library in Lyons, but contains readings from seven other manuscripts. The *Mort al Roi Artus* has enjoyed two separate editions: *Mort Artu, An Old French Romance of the 13th century being the last division of the Lancelot du Lac, now first edited from MS. 342 (Fonds Français) of the Bibliothèque Nationale with collations from some other MSS.*, by J. Douglas Bruce, Halle a. S., (1910), and *La Mort Le Roi Artu, roman du XIII^e siècle*, édité par Jean Frappier, Paris, 1936. The only part of the *Lancelot* proper to be edited separately is the story of the “Knight of the Cart”, which is not in the Rylands MS. *Le Roman en prose de Lancelot du Lac: Le Conte de La Charrette*, édité par Gweneth Hutchings, Paris (1938).

Throughout the present article references are to Sommer’s edition. Although in many ways this edition is inferior to those of the individual branches of the cycle, it is the only one which embraces the whole of the Rylands MS. and for the present purpose nothing would be gained by referring to three editions instead of one.

¹ Sommer, Vol. V, p. 23, line 21.

² F. 4 ends: “quant il est montes si vient Sorneham tous armes sor un grant cheval et ne sentresaluent . . .” (Sommer V, p. 34, l. 5). F. 5 begins: “ent tere virent” (Sommer V, p. 36, l. 21).

leaf has been removed for the same reason between the present ff. 17 and 18.¹ A leaf has also been removed between ff. 45 and 46.² Between ff. 73 and 74 there is a lacuna of two leaves.³ A miniature has been cut away between ff. 73 and 74, and the hole in f. 74 mended with parchment. The rest of this section, the third part of the Lancelot proper, is complete, until the end (f. 181v^o). Throughout the whole section the writing is even and well spaced. The only stained page is the verso of f. 81, where the writing is rather cramped, and over-runs the line. This has at one time formed the last page of a volume, and the scribe no doubt had difficulties in arranging his material in a rather limited space. The page, although stained, is quite legible.

The text of the Lancelot proper presents some very interesting features. The scribe is normally careful; there are very few expunctions and several corrections, as though the manuscript has passed through the hands of a contemporary reviser. The text is similar to that published by Sommer. There are several small omissions due to homoeoteleuton (e.g. on f. 20r^o, col. 1, the Rylands MS. reads "Quant la roine oi cheste auenture si fu moult esbahie", whereas Sommer (i.e. Add. 10293) reads "Quant la roine oi ceste parole que Lancelot a este en telle auenture si en fu esbahie que . . ."); errors of this kind seem unavoidable, even in the most carefully written texts. In addition our manuscript has the peculiarity of sometimes offering a version which is much shorter than that of Sommer's base text, even when the later version is a condensed rendering of that of other manuscripts. The following passage on f. 59r^o is a case in point: "Lors apiele mon seigneur Gauvain et lui dist: "Ales biaux nies au tres le roi Baudemagu et si emprendes le tournoiement de nostre part." Et il se lieue maintenant et sen vait auoec cels qui illuec estoient

¹ F. 17 ends: "et li rois nestoit mie en la sale a chel eure ains estoit en un praeil (Sommer, V, p. 70, l. 11). F. 18 begins: "ele quide ke boines li soient pour venir (Sommer V, p. 72, l. 26). It is interesting to note that in this case the letters in the margin indicating the order of the leaves are on f. 17 ce, and on f. 18 cg, thus demonstrating that at the time of these markings, probably the fifteenth century, these leaves had not been removed (*vide supra*, p. 319).

² The lacuna corresponds to Sommer's, Vol. V, p. 144, l. 3 to p. 147, l. 38. This missing leaf is the last one of a gathering.

³ Corresponding to Vol. V, p. 233, l. 18 to p. 233, l. 37 of Sommer.

et le fianche, et puis retourne a court pour atoner sa gent, et li rois Artus lui dist : " Gauvain, Gauvain, aues oi que li rois Baudemagus a pris tournoient encontre nous? Par foi sil nauoit chaiens fors ma priuee maisnie si le quideroie iou desconfire." " Sire, fait mesires Gauvains, par la foi que iou vous doi, chou a il fait par la seurte au bon chevalier as armes vermeilles." Ensi parlerent tant quil fu eure de couchier, si ala chascuns a son hostel. Et li rois se coucha en vne chambre loing de gent, tous seul. Et Lancelot prist congie au roi Baudemagu et lui dist quil iroit a Camaalot parler a .J. preudomme priueement, et li rois dist par Dieu. Si ont tant cheuauchie entre Lancelot et Boort quil vienent iuscal mur que la roine auoit dit a Boort. Et il troevent luis ouert si entrent ens et atakent lor chevas a .J. arbre. Et quant la roine quida quil fust tans si fist toutes ses damoiseles aler coucher lune cha, et lautre la, et lor dist kele not cure de noise."¹ It must not be assumed from this extract that the Rylands MS. represents a shortened version of the romance, for such is very far from being the case. In many respects our text is unusually complete and often the account which it gives is the longer and more detailed. From f. 140v^o, col. 2 to f. 164r^o, col. 2, there is recounted in full the adventures undergone by Bohort, Lionel, Hector and Gauvain in the last quest for Lancelot. These adventures are only found, so far as is at present known, in one other copy, the fifteenth-century Harleian MS. 6342.² It seems unlikely that they are in any of the manuscripts in French libraries, for Ferdinand Lot, who worked on the Paris manuscripts, remarks of these adventures : " Elles sont racontées dans le ms. du fonds Harley 6342 au British Museum. Cette addition est publiée par O. Sommer, t. V. p. 413-474."³ The text of the Rylands MS. in this part is very close to that published by Sommer. The chief differences are scribal, and modernisations of language in the Harleian MS. This passage, occurring as it does in an early fourteenth-

¹ This is the equivalent of Sommer's Vol. V, p. 182, l. 4 to p. 183, l. 2.

² They have been printed by Sommer from the Harleian MS. as the Appendix to Vol. V of his edition. He evidently did not notice their presence in the Rylands MS. when he examined it.

³ *Étude sur le Lancelot en prose*, p. 377, n. 2.

century manuscript, shows that the technique of recounting in full adventures which elsewhere are simply described as having taken place, is not a specifically late device. These adventures are certainly an expansion of the original form of the romance, but their discovery in the Rylands MS. shows that this development took place earlier than has hitherto been supposed.

In many other respects also the version of the romance in our manuscript is lengthier and more verbose than that of B.M. Add. MS. 10292-4, for example. From f. 96 onwards there is related the adventure of Bohort, who rescues a damsel and her "ami" from robbers who are waylaying them. There is a more detailed introduction to the episode in the Rylands MS. and throughout it agrees more closely with the version of Harl. MS. 6342 than any other.

Occasionally, however, there are other examples of the version of the Rylands MS. being highly abridged. A case in point is the account of Perceval's being placed in the seat on the right of the Siege Perilleus. The Lancelot section is then at the same time more verbose and detailed than the published version, and also in parts an abridged version of that account. Thus, from the point of view of text alone one is unable to determine the exact relationship between the Rylands and the B.M. manuscripts; it is only possible to describe them both as collateral versions of a common original.

The *Queste del Saint Graal* is introduced by the concluding sentence of the previous section: "Mais atant fenist chi endroit maistre Gautiers Map son liure de Lancelot del Lac, si commence a parler du saint graal."¹ The Graal section has unfortunately lost the opening leaf, no doubt because it was highly decorated, as is f. 212. Thus it commences in the middle of a sentence: "ke on fait par laiens de Bohort et de Lyonel car grant pierche auoit quil ne les auoient veu. Et li rois commande que les tables soient mises car il est temps de mengier."² Ff. 182 to 204 seem to be

¹ F. 181v^o col. ii. Sommer, Vol. V, p. 409.

² The equivalent of Sommer's Vol. VI, p. 6, l. 1 ff. It is interesting to note that the fifteenth-century catchword at the foot of f. 181 is *a la veille*, i.e. the opening of the Graal section ('a la veille de la Pentecouste', etc.), thus the leaf must have been removed after this date.

rather different from the rest of the manuscript. The parchment is coarser, thicker and rather discoloured, and the writing somewhat heavier and coarser, while the miniatures are of a different and possibly earlier execution. The writing, although rather less skilfully performed, does not, however, necessarily need explaining by a change of scribe. The orthography of this part is remarkably consistent with that of the rest of the volumes and from ff. 200 to 204 there is a gradual change to the more pleasant script. In these few folios (181-204) there are no coloured borders and the few rubrics to the miniatures seem to have been added later. These folios have every appearance of having been executed rather hurriedly by the same scribe as the rest of the manuscript and then illuminated by a different hand. There are several expunctions and many alterations. Notes have been made in the outer margin by a reviser and the errors later corrected by the scribe. For example, on f. 197 there are small crosses in the outer margin against words which have not been clearly written and these have later been rewritten by the scribe or a contemporary. On f. 196 a repetition of a sentence has been corrected both by expuncting it and by crossing out.

There are certain leaves missing from this section which require noting. It has already been mentioned that the opening leaf has been removed, and there are other lacunae as follows: Between ff. 204 and 205 there is a rather large section missing. F. 204 is the last of the rather coarser ones of the volume and from f. 205 onwards the leaves are similarly arranged to those of the rest of the manuscript. F. 204 ends with the words "tout le iour demoura laiens Percheval", which form part of one of Perceval's adventures in the Quest of the Graal.¹ F. 205 begins in the middle of a sentence,² and soon a new paragraph opens which treats of Lancelot: "Or dist li contes que quant Lancelos fu venus a leve de Marcoise."³ This large lacuna, the equivalent of over a hundred printed pages, is probably due to the loss of a number of gatherings. A normal folio of our manuscript is the equivalent of about four and a half printed pages, therefore this

¹ The equivalent of Sommer, Vol. VI, p. 68, l. 30.

² The equivalent of Sommer, Vol. VI, p. 173, l. 18.

³ Sommer, Vol. VI, p. 174, l. 10.

lacuna is one of about twenty leaves, either two ten leaf gatherings, or two of eight leaves and one of four. It was probably on account of this lacuna that Sommer failed to notice the extra section in the Lancelot proper part of the manuscript when he examined it.¹ Two other leaves are missing from *La Queste del Saint Graal*. The first after f. 205,² and the second at the end of the branch. The concluding words are: "... et la merueille du graal et le pooir que Diex i ot mis e chil ert desloiaus et crueus comme chil ki tous ert estrais de maluaise lig-".³ The text of this part of the manuscript has never yet been used or consulted for the purposes of an edition. An examination of it shows it to be fairly close to the group B³ of Pauphilet's classification,⁴ although there are many readings of the A² group. A complete collation of the text with all manuscripts is necessary before any but very general conclusions can be reached.

The final section, the *Mort al Roi Artus*, opens on f. 212, a highly decorated page, with the following explanation of the *raison d'être* of the work: "Chi commence li liures des mors Artus Gauvain et tous les autres compaignons de la taule reonde et toute la fins. [rubric.] Apres che que maistres Gautiers Map ot traitie des auentures del saint graal asses souffissaument, si comme il fu auis au roi Henri son signour ke che quil auoit fait nen deuoit pas souffrir sil ne racontoit la fin de chiaus dont il auoit deuant fait mention comment chil moururent de qui il auoit les proeches ramenteues en son liure, et par che commencha il cheste darrainne partie, et quant il lot mise emsamble, si lapiela la mort al roi Artu, pour che que vers la fin est escrit comment li rois Artus fu naures es plains de Salebieres et comment il sen parti de Girflet qui tant lui fist compaignie que apres lui ne fu

¹ Sommer's note in the MS. takes no account of any of these lacunae nor of the extra adventures described *supra*, pp. 325-26.

² The equivalent of Sommer's Vol. VI, p. 176, l. 18 to p. 178, l. 36.

³ F. 211. The equivalent of Sommer's Vol. VI, p. 196, l. 4.

⁴ In his introduction, *vide supra*, p. 322 n. 3, Pauphilet does not consider our MS. for the purpose of establishing his text. For further study of problems connected with the "Queste" see: Albert Pauphilet, *Études sur la Queste del Saint Graal attribué à Gautier Map*, Paris (1921); Myrrha Lot-Borodine, *Trois Essais sur la Quête du Saint Graal*, Paris (1921); Étienne Gilson, "La mystique de la grâce dans la *Queste del Saint Graal*" (Romania, Vol. LI (1925), pp. 323-347).

nus hom qui le veist viuant. Si commence maistre Gautiers ceste darainne partie." The imputing of the authorship of the work to Walter Map, the actual author of some works such as the "De nugis curialium", is a literary device probably of the actual author of the work rather than of a scribe. The "roi Henri" is of course Henry II of England, who died in 1189. Map himself died between the 15th of March, 1208, and the 5th of June, 1210. Since the Prose Lancelot has as its *terminus a quo* 1214, Map's authorship is clearly impossible.¹ The author's prologue to this last section is interesting from various points of view. Illustrating as it does the medieval desire to cloak anonymity under an unimpeachable source, it also expounds certain ideas on the construction of the romance. The author provides this "darraine partie" for no other reason than that the reader would expect to learn how the various dramatis personæ ended their careers.

This last branch of the cycle, by all counts the most powerful and the most dramatic, is well preserved in the Rylands MS. The lavish decoration of the opening leaf is symbolic of the grandeur of the closing stages of the reign of Arthur. The last forty or so folios of the two volumes contain nineteen of the seventy-four miniatures, and there are traces of several others having been cut away. That is, in less than one-sixth of the whole manuscript there are to be found over a quarter of the miniatures and one magnificently preserved decorated page. This is rather unusual, as in many manuscripts of the Vulgate cycle the last, and from the æsthetic point of view the most moving, section of the work is less well-illustrated than the preceding branches. Economically it was not always, indeed very seldom was it, possible to provide rich and numerous miniatures right to the very end of such a lengthy work as the Vulgate Cycle. The Rylands MS. has not been shorn of its glories through a desire to curtail expense, and the most deserving branch is the best illustrated.

There are a certain number of leaves missing from this section,

¹ For a complete discussion of the problems of date and authorship of the Vulgate cycle, *vide* F. Lot, *Étude*, Ch. VI. *Date de Composition de l'Œuvre, Patrie et condition sociale de l'auteur*, pp. 126-165.

nearly all of them because miniatures have been cut away and the damaged leaf removed. The cuts on the succeeding leaves have in many cases been mended with narrow strips of transparent parchment. After f. 213 two or three leaves are missing owing to a leaf having been damaged by the cutting out of a miniature; the missing leaves¹ describe the adventures of Lancelot when he stays at the house of the " Dame d'Escalot ". Between ff. 218 and 219 there is a similar lacuna.² Between ff. 230 and 231 there is another pair of leaves missing,³ and also between ff. 232 and 233.⁴ The remaining lacuna is at the end of the volume where the last gathering is missing. This last gathering may, however, have never been completed. The last miniature has no rubric, although there is a space left for one, and it is possible that the miniatures of the last eight leaves were never executed. The manuscript ends with an incomplete sentence: " Quant li chevalier le roi Yon virent leur signor mort, il se claiment las caitif et commencent a plourer et a faire trop grant duel, et pour le duel remest le chache a saresterent tout entour le cors, et quant chil qui deuant fuioient virent que chil estoient areste sour le cors, il sorent tantost que chestoit aucune haute personne." ⁵ The missing leaves contain the rest of the account of the great battle in the West, the death of Arthur and the break up of the kingdom of Logres.

Interesting though this manuscript is from the point of view of the text which it contains, it is even more interesting for the miniatures adorning the text and the information which it gives concerning the execution of the illustrations. The miniatures are seventy-four in number, and there are traces of several others having been cut away.⁶ They are not evenly distributed throughout the text. There are cases of three on two folios, and twenty folios with no miniature at all. There are at least three different types, each due to a different artist. Those

¹ Corresponding to Sommer's Vol. VI, p. 208, l. 25 to p. 218, l. 22.

² Corresponding to Sommer's Vol. VI, p. 231, l. 17, to p. 236, n. 28.

³ Sommer's Vol. VI, p. 270, l. 3 to p. 277, n. 1.

⁴ Sommer's Vol. VI, p. 287, l. 29 to p. 293, l. 25.

⁵ The equivalent of Sommer's Vol. VI, p. 368, l. 26. Sommer's edition ends on p. 391, l. 7.

⁶ These are noted above in the description of the lacunae.

of the first part of *La Queste del Saint Graal* as far as the big lacuna after f. 205 are of a very different technique from those of the rest of the volumes. They are simpler, and rather cruder. Often they have no rubric, and the border is a simple one in black. Their shape is sometimes made more attractive by adapting them to an architectural framework. Those of the other parts of the manuscript are of the width of one column of the writing, whereas some in the first part of *La Queste del Saint Graal* are rather wider.¹ These rather simpler miniatures, the coarser surface of the vellum, and the rather less skilled script all give the impression that these leaves were written earlier than the rest of the manuscript. This may be so, but it is rather unlikely. More likely is it that the leaves have been stained and ill-treated by excessive usage, that the scribe was perhaps imitating a cruder style of writing, or it may even be an unconscious variation in his style, and the miniatures were probably executed by an older artist who was trained a generation or so before the artist who painted the others. The differences in scribal technique may quite well belong to one man. Critics too often assume that because a page has a different appearance it is due to a change of scribe. In cases such as these it is necessary to examine the similarities just as much as the differences. There are no reasons in this particular instance why the same scribe should not have been responsible for the whole of the volume. The orthography is remarkably constant with that of the rest of the manuscript and the abbreviations used are exactly the same throughout.

The miniatures of the remainder of the manuscript fall into two distinct classes. There are those in the body of the text which are headed by rubrics and mark the beginnings of "chapters" in the romance.² These are very carefully and spiritedly executed. The tints of the buildings and landscapes in them are delicious half-tones and all are framed in a border of a rather standard pattern. Occasionally, particularly in battle

¹ The miniatures in the other parts of the text measure 94×75 mm., whereas the long ones under discussion, especially the one on f. 182v^o, col. 2, measure 125×81 mm.

² Usually measuring 94×75 mm., with a border 6 mm. wide.

scenes, an air of movement and life is given by overcrowding with figures whose extremities and weapons often overrun the frame of the picture. The other miniatures are in the lower margin of the page and seem to have been added later. None of them have rubrics and they are rather smaller than the first type.¹ In execution they are simple and bold in colour. This artist has a liking for bright reds and blues as opposed to the half-tones of his colleague. The borders are narrower than the first type and edged with gold. The content of the picture never overruns this border.

Both these types are edged with red and blue borders, but there is a rather curious difference in the way in which the two artists have arranged the colours. In the case of the larger ones in the body of the text two opposite sides of the rectangular frame of the picture are of the same colour, whereas in the case of the smaller ones the two adjoining sides are of the same colour. The smaller ones are all added beneath initials which mark " chapters " in the romance. The two types occur in all sections of the manuscript : there are forty-five in the body of the text,² nineteen small ones in the bottom margin of the page which seem to have been added after the manuscript was completed,³ and ten in the *Graal* section which seem to be of an earlier technique.⁴ It is seen immediately that this uneven distribution is rather striking. There is a group of folios at the end of the manuscript which is well illustrated ; this, as has been mentioned above, is one of the most powerful parts of the romance. The earlier section of the *Graal* is also copiously furnished with miniatures. This also is a section to which it is desirable to draw attention. The more " humdrum " parts of the story are simply adorned with a miniature at the opening of the major section of the work, and it is interesting to note that the addition of the miniatures at the

¹ 88 × 50 mm., with a border 3 mm. wide.

² On ff. 16d, 24c, 46c, 59a, 77a, 82a, 84d, 90a, 94d, 96a, 101d, 105b, 109a, 114d, 118a, 121b, 122b, 133b, 139c, 140d, 143c, 148c, 158c, 167a, 172c, 179b, 208b, 211d, 212a, 216d, 220d, 223a, 224d, 226b, 228b, 230b, 231d, 240c, 242a, 244c, 252a, 252d, 253c, 254b, 255b. (The letters refer to columns of the folio.)

³ On ff. 13c, 15b, 24a, 25c, 33b, 38b, 43d, 48c, 53c, 53d, 66c, 72b, 73b, 191b, 193d, 194d, 205b, 223d, 239c.

⁴ On ff. 182b, 182d, 183d, 184d, 188a, 188d, 190a, 192a, 195d, 198d.

bottom of the page is most frequent in those parts which are less important from the point of view of their literary content. They seem to represent an attempt to make the distribution of the miniatures more even, instead of allowing the larger number of miniatures to emphasise the importance of the text.

One of the more interesting features of the miniatures is the fact that it is possible to learn from them something of the guidance given to the artists for their construction. In many manuscripts of prose romances, particularly the later ones, the miniatures are headed by a rubric which is in reality a chapter heading. In the earlier prose romance texts the rubrics are very often in the form of instructions to the artists. There are some very interesting examples of the later type of rubric in the Rylands MS., as, for instance, on f. 101v°, col. ii, where the rubric to the miniature in the text is as follows: "Ensi que Lancelot en .i. paueillon et a trouue vne damoisiele et nain bochu et dedens a vn bel lit et .i. cherge ardant et vns chevaliers y vient a qui lancelet se combat a piet."¹ From the point of view of the story itself the only necessary remarks are the last ones, concerning the fight between Lancelot and the "chevalier". From the point of view of the miniaturist, however, there is here a source of information concerning the picture which he has to paint, and he reproduces painstakingly, not only the single combat between Lancelot and the stranger knight, but also two tents, in one of which is a lady in bed, two candles lighting the interior of the tent, and, at the foot of the bed, a dwarf. Thus the rubric is nothing other than a description of what it was intended the miniaturist should paint. Another similar and possibly more striking example is to be found on f. 109v°, col. ii. The rubric to a particularly fine miniature is: "Ensi que li chevalier de la table reonde se sieent au disner et uns chevaliers sest assis ou siege perilleus et foudres et fus est chaus sour lui et la tout ars et li rois et la royne sieent a une autre table."² The information given about the following story is actually a résumé of it. There is related how a knight sat in the Siege Perilleus and was punished for his presumption. The interesting part of the rubric is the

¹ The text corresponds to Sommer, Vol. V, p. 303, l. 33.

² The text corresponds to Sommer, Vol. V, p. 320, l. 22.

curious piece of information that at the time the king and queen happened to be seated at another table. In the miniature the knight is seated on the right of the picture, at a straight table, together with two others; the table is divided in the centre so that Arthur and his queen are at a separate table. The picture reproduces carefully the "foudres et fus" which destroy the hapless knight, and also the two separate tables. Thus, again, the rubric contains practical instructions for the miniaturist. Examples of this kind could be multiplied at great length for most of the rubrics could be shown to be instructions of this kind. The problem is, however, that the rubrics were added last, as is shown by the fact that the last miniature in the manuscript has no rubric although there is a space left for it, and other rubrics are carefully arranged round pinnacles and other projections over the border. Thus the rubric could not have been written down in its place and then the miniature executed according to it. Moreover, instruction would also be needed for those miniatures which bear no rubric at all. It seems, therefore, that the hypothesis that the miniaturist was guided by the rubrics is untenable. The Rylands MS. provides the answer to the problem. A careful examination revealed that in the bottom margin of many folios are apparent erasures of writing. On further inquiry it was noted that these occur mainly on folios containing miniatures, and it was decided to examine them under ultra-violet rays. This examination proved fruitful indeed, as it showed that these markings were indeed erasures, many of which followed a fixed pattern and all of which referred to the miniatures. In the lower margin of each column containing a miniature there are several lines, written in a small late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century hand, much closer to a court hand than to a book hand, all of which begin with some expression such as *Si com* or *Ensi que*, and occasionally *Chi endroit*. Then follows an account, very often, unfortunately, entirely indecipherable, of the content of the miniature. Below, written in a clumsy book hand, is the rubric to head the picture. As soon as this was established it immediately became clear how the miniaturist fulfilled his task. The scribe wrote the text, leaving room for miniatures, and then an overseer noted in the bottom margin

what was required in the miniature. This was then expressed underneath in a much shorter form as a rubric. After the miniature had been completed, the rubric was copied above it and the manuscript cleaned of all superfluous matter at the bottom of the page. In the case of the second of the rubrics cited, which is a rather lengthy one, there is only the instruction at the bottom of the page, and no rubric in the large clumsy hand. The instructions were, therefore, reproduced as the rubric.

By means of the ultra-violet lamp it has been possible to recover something of these erased instructions.¹ The only other example which I have been able to find of this particular procedure is in a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; MS. 342 of the fonds français, a copy of the Vulgate cycle, contains similar instructions in the lower margin as: "si com Boort encontra . . . home de religion qui portoit corpus domini". In the Rylands MS., however, the instructions are usually rather more lengthy and detailed. In many cases, unfortunately, the only portion of the erasure which is decipherable is that nearest to the inner margin, where it has not been possible to rub off the writing so thoroughly. Even these vestiges give useful information, as, for instance, on f. 16v°, where the rubric to the miniature is: "Ensi queancelos encon[tra] vne damoisele en vne forest qui plouroit et dementoit mout fort."² The miniature depicts Lancelot fully armed on horseback about to meet a lady, who is also on horseback, in a forest. The traces beneath are: ". . .ancelot encontra . . . a . . . le qui chevauchoit". This provides the information that the miniaturist was instructed to draw the various characters on horseback. More interesting perhaps are the traces beneath the miniature on f. 24v°. The rubric is: "Chi iouste estoit du mares devant la fontaine et les ar arbres ou li hyaumes pendent." The traces beneath are as follows: there are four lines in a small hand of which one can read the ends "attaint che . . . lettres escrites . . . vont . . . chaust (?) . . .", beneath which is written, in

¹ I am indebted to Dr. Tyson who kindly loaned a lamp for this purpose, and to the authorities of the John Rylands Library who gave permission for the manuscript to be examined in this way.

² The text corresponds to Sommer, Vol. V, p. 67, l. 14.

the large hand, the rubric as above. In the miniature there are two knights engaged in single combat on the left, in the centre are trees from which shields, helmets and swords are hanging. Over a spring there hang three shields and helmets, underneath which are written the names of Gauvain, Agravain and Lancelot.¹ It is, no doubt, to these names that the words "lettres escrites" in the instructions refer. Thus the miniaturist seems to have had quite detailed guidance in such matters. On f. 96r° there is a most interesting miniature showing how Bohort rescued a lady and her "ami" from robbers who were attacking them. The robbers are provided with the faces of men, monkeys, dogs, and even pigs. It would be most interesting to discover whether the artist was asked to paint them in this way or whether he did so of his own accord. Unfortunately the instructions beneath, although copious, are unreadable; the eraser has been very thorough. There are eight lines of small writing of which all that can be deciphered is: "Einsi que bohors . . . eut . . . soy", and, below this, in the larger hand: "Chi rescouse bohors . . . voelent murdrir . . ." which corresponds to the rubric: "Chi rescoust bohors une demisiele et son ami que reubeur voloient murdrir."² In view of the fact that there are as many as eight lines, it seems likely that full and detailed instructions were given to the artist concerning this particular composition. The rubric to the miniature on f. 109v° has been discussed above,³ and the instructions in the bottom margin are exactly the same as the rubric. In this case, in which the rubric is an unusually long one, it seems as though the rubric following the instructions to the miniaturist has been omitted, and the rubricator has treated these instructions as though they were the rubric itself.

In the lower margin of f. 118r°, col. i, the following traces are legible: "chi descendent mesire G et li ost . . . a ost ou royaume le . . . bau . . ." which obviously correspond to the rubric: "Chi descendent mesires G. et li ost le roy Artu a ost ou royaume le roy baudemagu." The miniature below the

¹ The text corresponds to Sommer, Vol. V, p. 89, l. 13.

² Corresponding to Sommer's Vol. V, p. 292, l. 11.

³ *Supra*, pp. 333-34.

rubric depicts six men in a boat about to join four others who have already disembarked. The sea is rendered more realistic by placing within it four fish and an eel.

The miniature on f. 148 is most delicately executed. It shows Ector on horseback on the drawbridge of a castle in the doorway of which is a servant. The castle itself is most delightfully drawn, the windows being of a delicate design, and the walls and roof in shades of brown, green, pink, and slate grey. The mortar between the stones is indicated by faint white lines. The moat, in which fish are swimming, is bordered by small ornamental trees and shrubs. The only guidance which the artist has had to this picture is that of the rubric: "Chi vaut auoir ectors hostel qui queroitancelot," for all that can be deciphered of the instructions is the following: "einsi . . . chest . . . chi . . . it . . . ectors . . .", which seems to be nothing more than a rather fuller form of the rubric. The artist of these miniatures needed no further guidance than some word such as "chastel" in order to create wonderful turreted edifices in the most delicate colours and forms.

The instructions for the artist do sometimes, however, describe the colour in which a certain article should be represented, as is the case, for example, on f. 172v°, col. ii. The miniature on this leaf represents the madness of Lancelot.¹ He is shown outside a tent, wearing only a rather tattered shirt, and hacking with a sword at a white shield which is hanging on a tree. The rubric gives certain information, as: "Chi se combatancelot tous hors du sens a un escu." The erasures at the foot of the page can be read as: ". . . et prie son . . . chidou ["dou" struck through by the scribe] se combatancelos tout hors du sens et fous en un blanc escu." The artist was clearly instructed to paint a white shield.

These erasures at the foot of the page are perhaps even more interesting when there is no rubric. The section "*La Queste del Saint Graal*" contains in its early part several miniatures without rubrics. The first in this section, on f. 182, depicts Gauvain attempting unsuccessfully to draw the sword out of the stone.

¹ The text corresponds to Sommer's Vol. V, p. 393, l. 29.

This picture seems rather crudely executed, the river having been drawn first and then the stone over it, with the result that the lines indicating flowing water can be seen behind the stone. There are four lines of instructions in the same hand as the others, which indicates that this section was produced at the same time as the rest of the manuscript, but the illuminations were executed by a different, and probably older, artist. These erasures are not entirely legible, but they can be deciphered as follows :

“ Ensi que par Gauains ren . . . tost ala vis
 la rive . . . li . . . ente se li roys . . . si int
 et nia ala traire mais il
 le fall hors ”.

This in full conveyed the following idea : that Gauvain went to the river bank with the king and some of the court, and attempted to draw the sword, but failed. It becomes plain that the rather simpler miniatures in the *Graal* section are due to a change of artist, and not to the insertion of leaves from another copy. All the miniatures in this section have been provided with very full instructions, but only parts of them are legible even under ultra-violet rays. To each illustration there are at least four lines of directions. On f. 188r° is a miniature showing one of the single combats of Galahad. Beneath it, in the margin, are three lines of instructions stretching over the width of both columns. This is only partially erased, and would seem to be decipherable. Unfortunately, in the process of erasing the ink has been smudged, with the result that very little of these copious instructions is actually legible. All that can be read is :

“ . . . va desor tel blanc et . . .
 porte ls ”.

On f. 189v° there is an interesting miniature showing Galahad meeting a knight who is a saint, for he has a nimbus. The rubricator has added above “ Chest saint iorges et galaaz ”. It is impossible to discover whether the rubricator’s introduction of Saint George is his own addition or whether the directions indicated it, for all that can be read of the latter is the word “ Galaad ”.

As soon as the last section of the work opens the rubrics become rather more lengthy and are in many cases simply a repetition of the directions to the miniaturist. Thus, in the section "La Mort al Roi Artus" many of the rubrics describe the miniature and end with the expression "et a apres mout biaux contes". Again, of the traces of the directions which are legible many are clearly the same as the rubric, as on f. 228r°, col. ii, where all that can be read of the instructions is: ". . . et la royne a bohort et li conte la mortel trahison que on ly a mis sus". The rubric to the miniature is: "Chi parole li roys et la royne a bohort et li conte la royne le mortel traison que on li a mis sus." An example of the usual type of rubric in this section occurs on f. 230r°, col. ii: "Chi se combat Lancelos a Mador qui auoit apele la royne e fu Mador desconfis e a apres moult biaux contes." Of the erased directions the following is legible: "chi se combat . . . fu desconfis . . . biaux . . ." From this and other similar examples it appears that the practice in this latter section of the volume was to treat the directions to the artist actually as the rubric. Most of the miniatures of this section are well preserved. They are vigorous in their battle scenes, tender in scenes such as the arrival of the ship bearing the body of the damoisele d'Astolat at Camelot, and full of drama in the scenes such as that of the burial of Gauvain. The latter miniature is on f. 254r°, col. ii, and has as its rubric: "Ensi que chevalier emportent le cors Gauvain en vne biere v quel uns dame y pamoit sous qui estoit nasuree en lespaule et un chevaliers se combati au seigneur de laiens par devant le palais." This indicates that three separate actions are taking place at once in this small picture. The whole is rendered with a rather remarkable effect, for there is no sense of overcrowding as there is in some of the simpler scenes.

The artists responsible for the miniatures were also the designers of the two highly decorated pages, ff. 82 and 212. There are no traces of any directions on either of these leaves, and it is possible that, apart from the miniatures, the artist followed his own course. The miniature on f. 82 represents king Claudas, who is seated in the centre with three men behind him and a dwarf in front, listening to the speech of a lady who is

addressing him. The page is decorated with leaf-like flourishes and sprays which spread from the initial and the miniature. The ends of the sprays are pointed and cusped. On this *ramage* there are grotesque figures, monkeys (one of which is weaving and the other playing a harp), dogs, rabbits, a monk reading, and in the centre at the bottom a long-eared owl. There is a drawing of St. Cecilia carrying an organ which fills a large part of the right-hand margin. The arrangement of the decoration on this page is very similar to that on f. 212. On the latter page there is a large miniature¹ depicting Walter Map, the reputed author of the work, seated, writing his romance, and King Henry standing in front of him. The decoration is arranged in the same way; corresponding to the figure of St. Cecilia is a picture of two lovers and, as on f. 82, there is a long-eared owl in the centre of the lower margin. Grotesques are grouped on the branches. A man is aiming with a bow at a monkey and another monkey is pruning two trees. Lower down the page a nun is suckling a monkey, and a man is aiming at a parrot; a rabbit, another nun and several other monkeys are also depicted. These two decorated pages show that the volumes have been cut down very much by a binder's knife, for the figure of St. Cecilia is now on the extreme edge of the leaf, and parts of many of the figures and flourishes have been cut away. The page must at one time have been at least 80 mm. longer and 40 mm. wider than at present.

Apart from enabling us to read the erasures relating to the miniatures, the ultra-violet rays clarified a few other doubtful markings, as follows. On f. 2 a strip of thin parchment has been glued in order to mend a cut left by the excision of a miniature. On this are the letters *ef* and other portions of letters, in a late court hand, probably of the sixteenth century. On f. 13v°, col. ii, is the figure *iii*, possibly a quire number. On f. 43v°, col. ii, the figure *viii*, also probably the number of a quire. In the bottom margin of f. 77v° there is written in blind scratches, in large ungainly letters about two inches high, "M O U R"; it seems impossible to give these any significance, and they

¹ 134 × 83 mm. The miniature on f. 82 is the usual size of those in the text, viz., 94 × 75 mm.

appear to be simply pen trials. On f. 90r° are the words *Chifurent* in a fifteenth-century hand. These also are probably pen trials, as are the words "*Sache tous chil qui che qui du souvenir*", written on f. 91v° in the same hand. On ff. 202-204 it has been possible to distinguish the markings of a contemporary corrector. Against a correction three lines from the bottom of col. ii of f. 203r° is written *def.* There are small crosses in the outer margins against corrections on the other columns of these folios. On f. 204r°, col. ii the letters *nie* are written against the word *compaignie* in the text.

The lamp revealed no marks of ownership on the end papers or elsewhere which cannot be read without its help.

A consideration of the language, the style of the miniatures and the scribal technique leads us to the conclusion that the manuscript was written in the north of France in the early years of the fourteenth century. The language of the text is clearly a northern dialect of French. The graphies *che*, *chil*, *ke*, are almost sufficient to demonstrate this, but it is necessary to be more precise. The particularities of the Picard dialect are well exemplified in the Rylands Prose Lancelot. Often the characteristic Picard *signour* is found instead of the standard French *seigneur*, as is *vint* instead of *vient*, and so on. The Francien *eau* appears in Picard as *iau*, and we have *biaus* in the manuscript where standard French would have been *beaus*, and *hiaume* for *heaume*. *Damisiele* is found by the side of the more standard *damoisele*. It is quite common to find the Francien *commencer* spelt *commenchie*, the Picard form, in this manuscript, and there is a case of the standard French *cloche* being rendered *cloke* (f. 201c). Often the standard *regarder* is spelt *rewarder*, another typically Picard trait. It will have already been noted that in some of the rubrics quoted the form *le* is used where *la* would be expected (e.g. "le mortel traison", etc.). This is a specifically Picard characteristic. These peculiarities, which are constant throughout the manuscript, leave no room to doubt that it is the work of a Picard scribe. It is impossible to date the manuscript closely from the language, hand or miniatures, for if they are the work of an older man trained in an earlier school such datings can be as much as a half century wide of accuracy. Such

indications as there are point to the fact that the work was probably executed in the first quarter of the fourteenth century.

Fortunately it is possible to reach further conclusions concerning the provenance and date of the manuscript by comparing it with others. R. S. Loomis was the first to point out that there is a group of related cyclic manuscripts of the Arthurian legend in prose, of which ours is a part.¹ He connects it with two manuscripts in the British Museum, Add. MS. 10292-4, and Royal 14 E iii. If one compares the miniatures in the three manuscripts there is seen to be an indisputable connexion between them. The illustration of the *Divine Stag*² is almost exactly the same, except that in the Rylands MS. the stag is facing the left and in the others it faces the right. One of the most striking similarities is the decorated page at the beginning of the *Mort Artus* section. The Rylands MS. differs from the other two in that it represents the unusual situation of a standing king and a seated author; in the other two manuscripts the situation is reversed. The style of decoration is the same in all three, but it must not be forgotten that this alone does not indicate a connexion, for it was a fairly widespread one. There can, however, be no doubt that the miniatures of Henry and Map in all three were at least based on the same model. Probably the best example of similarity of miniatures is in the case of those which illustrate the story of the arrival of the ship bearing the body of the Fair Maid of Astolat at Camelot.³ In the British Museum manuscripts the scene represented occurs rather later in the story than that in our manuscript. In the latter the miniature

¹ R. S. Loomis, *Arthurian Legends in Mediæval Art*. Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, New York and London. Oxford University Press (1938) (Monograph Series), Pp. 97-8, Plates 237, 238, 240.

² Rylands Fr. 1, f. 90r^o, col. i, Sommer, Vol. V, p. 277, l. 37: "Chi furent abatu lancelet et mordres ius de lor kevaus par .ij. chevaliers pour che que il sievoient le blanc chierf et les vi. lyons qui le conduisoient." *Vide* Loomis *op. cit.*, pl. 244.

³ Rylands Fr. 1, f. 226r^o, col. i. Sommer, Vol. VI, p. 256, l. 11: "Chi ariue la damoisiele descalot morte en vne nef deuant le chastel le roy artu et G. ala a la nef e le connut si vient apres mout biaux contes." This miniature has been reproduced in E. Vinaver's edition of *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, 3 vols. Oxford, 1947, vol. iii, p. 1576, as has the miniature on f. 224v^o, col. ii. *Op. cit.*, p. 1610. *Vide* Loomis *op. cit.*, plates 241, 246, 247.

shows the king and two knights looking out of the window of the castle at the arrival of the ship. In the former the king and several courtiers are seen leaving the castle and approaching the riverside. Although the scenes are thus different there are certain very strong resemblances between the Rylands miniature and those in the two British Museum manuscripts. In all three the castle is on the right, and it is the same castle. There is, on the left, a small extension supported by a sloping beam; then, the right, a cylindrical tower with a conical top, two squarish windows, between which there rises above the border of the picture what appears to be a flat-topped chimney. The castle is completed by another cylindrical, conical-topped tower on the right. The "barget" in which the lady is resting is in all three on the left of the picture. There can be no doubt that all are copied from the same model. The British Museum manuscripts were either copied the one from the other, or, more probably, both from a common source. The Rylands MS. was either copied from this source, or was itself the model for it. This latter seems the more natural hypothesis, as it is unlikely that an artist would alter the more dramatic scene, as painted in the British Museum manuscripts, to the one earlier in the story, as in the Rylands manuscript.

These, together with many other similar examples, show that there is undoubtedly a connection between the miniatures of all three. The fact that they are written in the same dialect of northern French indicates that they were not only illuminated in the one area, but also written there. In view of the fact that the Rylands MS. contains a series of adventures not found in the other two, it is impossible for it to have been copied from them. One outstanding difference is that the miniatures of the British Museum manuscripts are evenly spaced and fairly frequent, whereas in the Rylands MS. the distribution of miniatures is most irregular. This points to the fact that the Rylands MS. was not copied from a model with evenly spaced miniatures, but was perhaps an experimental copy for a new "edition" of the Vulgate cycle. That certain miniatures have been added at the foot of the page very shortly after the manuscript was completed suggests that it was intended that any copies made from this one

should contain more miniatures. Moreover, it is clear that the Rylands MS. was not copied from a source arranged exactly like itself, since there are copious instructions at the bottom of the page to the miniaturist. It thus becomes clear that our manuscript was made to a fresh pattern rather than copied slavishly from an already existing one. Since the two British Museum manuscripts contain miniatures very like those in our manuscript, but spaced at even intervals throughout the text, the only possible assumption is that they were copied from it, either directly or, more probably, through an intermediary. There is no linguistic objection to this hypothesis, as all are in a dialect of northern France and of approximately the same date.

Since British Museum Add. MS. 10292 can be dated by means of an inscription on a miniature on f. 55v^o, as having been executed about 1316, this date may be considered as a *terminus ad quem* for our manuscript. It is impossible to discover a *terminus a quo* with any exactitude, but from considerations of language, illumination and palæography it would be unwise to date the manuscript earlier than the last decade of the thirteenth century, and all indications point to its having been executed in the first decade of the fourteenth.

Rylands French MS. 1 is, therefore, not only of great interest as a text of the Vulgate Cycle of Arthurian Romance, but also as a member, and probably the "founder", of a family of manuscripts of that Cycle. Its interest is, however, wider, as it is of value in determining the methods by which manuscripts were constructed, and its importance is not simply Arthurian. Finally, as a work of art its beauties can be appreciated by all who love the illustrations of the medieval equivalent of the modern novel.