

THE CONTINUATIONS
OF CHRÉTIEN'S
PERCEVAL

*Content and Construction,
Extension and Ending*

LEAH TETHER



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THE *CONTINUATIONS* OF CHRÉTIEN'S *PERCEVAL*
CONTENT AND CONSTRUCTION, EXTENSION AND ENDING

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THE *CONTINUATIONS* OF
CHRÉTIEN'S *PERCEVAL*
CONTENT AND CONSTRUCTION,
EXTENSION AND ENDING

Leah Tether

D. S. BREWER

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Cover illustration: Illumination situated within the text of *Perceval* which looks forward to (or introduces?) events in the *First Continuation*: MS M, Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire, Section Médecine H 249, f. 59d. Photo: IRHT-BIU Montpellier.

List of Abbreviations and MS SIGLA

| | |
|--------|---|
| AFLSHN | Annales de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Nice |
| AL | Arthurian Literature |
| BBIAS | Bibliographical Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society |
| CCM | Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale |
| CFMA | Classiques français du moyen âge |
| CRM | Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales |
| FF | French Forum |
| FMLS | Forum for Modern Language Studies |
| FS | French Studies |
| GR | Germanic Review |
| MA | Medium Aevum |
| MLN | Modern Language Notes |
| MLQ | Modern Languages Quarterly |
| MLR | Modern Languages Review |
| NMS | Nottingham Medieval Studies |
| PAPS | Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society |
| PMLA | Publications of the Modern Language Association |
| PQ | Philological Quarterly |
| RMS | Reading Medieval Studies |
| RPh | Romance Philology |
| RR | Romanic Review |
| VR | Vox Romanica |
| YFS | Yale French Studies |

| | |
|---|--|
| A | Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 794 |
| B | Bern, Burgerbibliothek 354 |
| C | Clermont-Ferrand, Bibliothèque municipale et interuniversitaire 248 |
| D | Donaueschingen, Fürstenbergische Hofbibliothek, 97 (and Rome, Bibliotheca Casanatensis, A. I. 19 – copy) |
| E | Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates' 19. 1. 5 |
| F | Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana 2943 |
| G | Black letter edition published by Galiot du Pré |
| H | London, College of Arms, Arundel XIV |
| J | London, PRO, E122/100/13B |
| K | Bern, Burgerbibliothek 113 |
| L | London, British Library, Additional 36614 |
| M | Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire, Section Médecine H 249 |
| P | Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Université de Mons-Hainaut 331/206 (4568) |

| | |
|----------|---|
| <i>Q</i> | Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 1429 |
| <i>R</i> | Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 1450 |
| <i>S</i> | Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 1453 |
| <i>T</i> | Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 12576 |
| <i>U</i> | Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 12577 |
| <i>V</i> | Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, n. a. fr. 6614 |

Fragments (no sigla)

Brussels, Bibliothèque royale IV 852, nos. 10–11

Private collection, Annonay fragments

Private collection, Brussels fragments (formerly de Lannoy)

Note on the texts

Occasionally in quotations I have chosen to emphasise certain elements with the use of bold text, italicisation, and so on. The accompanying discussion indicates what this highlights.

Introduction

Chrétien de Troyes left his fifth and final romance, the *Conte du Graal*,¹ unfinished, hanging mid-sentence, probably owing to his death. It is well known that his central object, the Grail, went on to become one of the most enigmatic in all literature, and one which endures today. Chrétien's story, as well as the many other medieval texts to adopt the Grail theme,² have been endlessly examined and analysed as a result of their contribution to the transmission of the eternal motif, as well as their protracted influence on the literatures of both the medieval and modern worlds. Significantly, however, scholars searching for examples of the contemporary response to this extremely important romance have, until recently, often overlooked the works of four particular authors. These authors were among the very first to react to the call of Chrétien's unfinished tale and, collectively, they composed in excess of 69,000 lines designed to emanate directly from Chrétien's final utterance. We refer to them today as the 'Continuators'.³ Their works are known collectively as the *Perceval Continuations*, and individually as follows:

1. The *First Continuation* (or the *Gauvain Continuation*, la *Continuation-Gauvain* or the *Pseudo-Wauchier Continuation*), composed anonymously around 1200.
2. The *Second Continuation* (or the *Perceval Continuation*, la *Continuation-Perceval* or the *Wauchier Continuation*) composed by Wauchier de Denain no later than 1210.
3. The *Gerbert Continuation* (or the *Fourth Continuation* or the *Continuation de Gerbert*) composed by Gerbert de Montreuil around 1225.
4. The *Manessier Continuation* (or the *Third Continuation* or the *Continuation de Manessier*) composed by Manessier around 1225.⁴

¹ Or *Perceval* as I shall refer to it henceforth.

² Such as Robert de Boron's *Estoire dou Graal*, the anonymously authored *La Queste del Sainte Graal* and Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* to name but a few. Michelle Szkilnik provides a useful overview of the various medieval adaptations of *Perceval* in her 'Medieval Translations and Adaptations of Chrétien's Works', in *A Companion to Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. Norris J. Lacy and Joan Tasker Grimbert (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 202–13.

³ There are also two prequels to *Perceval* present in some manuscripts: the *Bliocadran*, ed. by Lenora D. Wolfgang (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1976) and the *Elucidation*, ed. Albert Wilder Thompson (New York: Publications of the Institute of French Studies, 1931), which I shall draw attention to in this book, but which limits of time and space do not allow me to analyse as *Continuations* proper, due to the fact they are diegetically anterior rather than posterior to Chrétien's *Perceval*.

⁴ I have opted to refer to the *Continuations* of Gerbert and Manessier as the *Gerbert Continuation* and the *Manessier Continuation* because it offers a clearer designation than the often preferred

'Continuation'⁵ as a literary form was certainly not unknown in the Middle Ages. A number of works of considerable import were actually begun by one author and completed by another, such as the *Roman de la Rose*, begun by Guillaume de Lorris and completed forty years later by Jean de Meun. Even Chrétien de Troyes had previously been subject to the practice: at the end of *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* the narrator states explicitly that the story was begun by Chrétien but concluded by Godefroi de Leigni under the instruction of the master himself.⁶ Thus, continuing a text was by no means unusual, but, curiously, no one to date has devoted a whole work to an investigation of the wider implications of the mechanics of 'medieval Continuation'. Jean de Meun's *Rose* and Godefroi's *Charrette* both conclude the texts they seek to continue: they complete the action and round off the story, so they do bear some resemblance to each other. The *Perceval Continuations*, however, seem to have a number of different motives in mind as only one of them actually provides a conclusion to the story. The others, by contrast, elongate the story, and as such are, in some cases, left just as incomplete as the Ur-Text⁷ they continue. On the basis of even this superficial an observation, therefore, it becomes clear that there are at least two different styles of 'Continuation' at work in the *Perceval Continuations* – for now, we might call these extension and completion. As such, it is reasonable to suppose that there also exist other types of 'Continuation', and that 'Continuation' is, in some way, functionally similar to a genre in so far as it may constitute an umbrella term under which there are a number of 'sub-genres' which need identification, explication and description.⁸

It may seem surprising to find Continuation designated as a genre, but I believe that such a designation is justified. The conventional view of genre, and the list of 'canonical' genres, such as comedy, tragedy and epic, derives of course ultimately from Aristotelian thought, and thereafter in part from critical practice of many years, and partly, more recently, from the so-called Constance School – Jauss, Iser and other theorists of *Gattungstheorie*. They regard genre as

Fourth Continuation for Gerbert's text and Third Continuation for Manessier's. As I will explain in detail later, Manessier's text appears diegetically as the third of the Continuations in the majority of manuscripts in which it is present, but in the two manuscripts where Gerbert's text also appears, Manessier's text appears as the fourth Continuation, with Gerbert's as the third. Thus, numeric designation can be confusing.

- 5 When referring to the product or process, I capitalise the word 'Continuation'. In order to distinguish process from text more clearly, I italicise the term when it directly refers to one of the texts in question, e.g. *Perceval Continuations*. 'Continuator' is only capitalised when referring to a specific author, e.g. 'the First Continuator'. Similarly, 'redaction' and 'redactor' are only capitalised when referring to a specific text or author, e.g. 'the Short Redaction/Redactor'.
- 6 As Godefroi states in ll. 7098–107, Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier de la Charrette ou le Roman de Lancelot: Édition critique d'après tous les manuscrits existants*, ed. Charles Méla (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1992). See p. 97 for the full quotation.
- 7 This represents a slightly new designation for this term. Earlier editors of the *Chanson de Roland* such as Theodor Müller (Göttingen: Dieterich, 1878) and Joseph Bédier (Paris: L'Édition d'art, H. Piazza, 1922) had used 'Ur-Text' to refer to the (undiscoverable) original version of the text; in other words, the original from which all other versions derive. Here I use it to refer to *Perceval*, as while the *Continuations* are not rewritings of the original story in the same sense, they do all derive, ultimately, from Chrétien's original narrative.
- 8 For example, just as the genre of Comedy has the sub-genres of farce, burlesque, comedy of manners, satire, and so on, Continuation may also have a series of sub-genres.

something which is grounded in reader or audience reception, where genres effectively elicit a kind of expectation in their audience as to the particular kind of text they will experience; this Jauss terms the *Erwartungshorizont*.⁹ In other words, a reader will come to a particular work of art with a set of expectations generated by a recognition of the text-type, or genre, to which it belongs, or is said to belong. Jauss, as a medievalist, makes particular reference in the same article to genres such as *chanson de geste*, *roman* and *littérature bourgeoise*, but insists that genre theory is not about burdening texts with narrow genre identification; rather it is a question of situating texts within the wider context of an interlocking genre system such that they become, effectively, intertextual. Simon Gaunt (who is drawing upon genre theorists such as Zumthor and Bakhtin, as well as Jauss) extrapolates that this means that genres are not discrete, but rather more fluid, constructs which evolve in response to a variety of factors, but which still convey such generic paradigms so as to effect a reader response of intertextual recognition.¹⁰

Certainly it is important to realise that genres, particularly in medieval literature, are intrinsically fluid: short narrative poems like *fabliaux* and *lais* shade into each other; the *chanson de geste*, for example, very early develops story-types which would seem more characteristic of romance,¹¹ to the extent that, sometimes, it seems that the former is distinguishable from the latter principally on formal grounds.¹² Distinctions between genres are not, it seems, compelling; although equally, it seems clear that readers and book-owners at least had some understanding of genre, and tended at the very least to separate *chanson de geste* from romance from theatre. I say this on one particular ground, the codicological, which will be relevant to Continuation.

Keith Busby has argued that one locus in which the separation of genres seems to a degree to be consecrated is in manuscript collections where, for instance, the distinction between *chanson de geste* and romance is clearly articulated. He states that '[s]election and ordering of texts within a manuscript can tell us whether certain texts were regarded as of a kind'.¹³ Busby goes on to cite the manuscript tradition of *Perceval* and the *Continuations* as a particularly useful illustration of the deliberate manuscriptural grouping of texts which were viewed by their medieval readers as in some way 'generically similar',¹⁴ but crucially not necessarily so in the way that would conform entirely to our standard expectations

⁹ See Hans Robert Jauss, 'Theorie der Gattungen und Literatur des Mittelalters', in *Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, ed. Maurice Delbouille, 11 vols (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1972), I, pp. 107–38 and Wolfgang Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens: Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung* (Munich: Fink, 1976).

¹⁰ Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 3–10.

¹¹ See Sarah Kay, *The Chanson de Geste in the Age of Romance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).

¹² One could make a similar point, for instance, about theatre: the distinctions between 'farce', 'sottie' and 'moralité' are not confining. See, for example, Alan E. Knight, *Aspects of Genre in Late Medieval Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983).

¹³ Busby, 'Narrative Genres', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*, ed. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 139–52 (p. 148).

¹⁴ This is due to the fact that there is only one known example of a *Continuation* appearing on its own in a manuscript; in all other cases (as is explained in detail later) the *Continuations*

of 'genre'. Effectively, what Busby is suggesting is that texts need not belong to traditional genres, such as epic, comedy, romance or hagiography and so on, for them to demonstrate certain characteristics of what he calls 'generic similarity'.

In light of this, Busby asserts that medieval readers and listeners 'had a much more flexible view of genre than modern scholars do',¹⁵ thus stressing his contention that modern scholars need to adopt a more adaptable approach to the question of genre. Hence I am employing the term 'genre' in a particularly nuanced way: what I am actually attempting to delineate is something far less constraining than would usually be understood. Rather than suggesting that Continuation is, in itself, a genre in the very traditional sense, as would be applied to text-types such as, for example, 'epic' or 'romance', what I am alluding to is that there exists a kind of 'generic similarity', to use Busby's term, between medieval texts which specifically continue (rather than just rewrite/respond to) an Ur-Text. Further, this 'generic similarity' would have evoked a sense of recognition and, therefore, expectation – to return to Jauss's *Erwartungshorizont* –, in the reader/audience as to the kind of text they would experience. Busby notes:

The purpose of thinking about genre and questioning narrative texts as to their generic affiliation must be to enable modern readers to situate them in their medieval textual context and to make them reveal by comparison significant details about their form and meaning. [...] [G]enre study can be both synchronic and diachronic, and compare genres, not simply examples of what are deemed to belong to the same category.¹⁶

And this is the crucial point: what I am seeking to convey most of all is that Continuations, while demonstrating generic similarity with each other, actually exhibit identifiable 'generic distinctions' from other medieval texts which rewrite, or respond to, a pre-existing text. The wider significance of this, of course, is that these other types of texts must, by association, play host to their own generic similarities and distinctions, thus giving modern readers the very opportunity of generic comparison which Busby demands. Therefore, – and following Busby's suggestion – the *Perceval Continuations* offer the scholar a rich resource for analysing the mechanics of 'medieval Continuation' as constituting a kind of genre in the particular sense described above – that is, as 'generically distinct' from other forms of rewriting, and particularly so by virtue of their manuscript tradition.

As suggested above, scholarship of the *Continuations* has, at least until recently, been limited to just a handful of works which consider the texts in any real depth. In terms of book-length studies, aside from an early study of the Paris manuscripts by Hugo Waitz,¹⁷ there are only four published volumes and one unpublished dissertation of note. In 1952, Hilmar Wrede wrote a thesis on

are accompanied by at least *Perceval*, if not other of the *Continuations*. Busby, 'Narrative Genres', p. 147.

¹⁵ Busby, 'Narrative Genres', p. 151.

¹⁶ Busby, 'Narrative Genres', p. 141.

¹⁷ Waitz, *Die Fortsetzungen von Chrestiens Perceval le Gallois nach den Pariser Handschriften* (Strasbourg: Karl J. Trübner, 1890).

all four *Continuations*, but concerned himself far more with manuscript tradition than with content.¹⁸ Guy Vial's later study, *Sens et unité*,¹⁹ is a detailed study of *Perceval* and the *First Continuation* which is structured into two parts. The first concerns *Perceval* – most specifically undertaking a careful analysis of a number of key scenes which have Gauvain as the main character and demonstrating their organic unity with related scenes which have Perceval as the main character. The second part of the study centres on the *First Continuation* and, like the Wrede thesis, its manuscript tradition. Vial died before completing the work, and the volume was published posthumously; thus it is left without a conclusion and there is a sense that the impact of the argument is lost as a result. In the late 1980s, Corin F. V. Corley²⁰ and Pierre Gallais²¹ produced further studies. Corley's work is a highly technical analysis of the *Second Continuation*, which suggests that manuscript evidence can be used to show how the Second Continuator's first line may not be that traditionally assigned to him; rather he may have started his composition at a later line. Gallais's work, on the other hand, focuses on the *First Continuation* in an exhaustive four-volume enterprise. Every last drop of information is squeezed out of the text in order to produce a study which first considers the manuscript tradition in an attempt to discover the 'best' manuscript, which Gallais considers to be MS *L*, and then undertakes a literary evaluation of the text, reliant mainly on Jungian archetypes. Gallais's study is the result of a lifetime's work and is certainly comprehensive, but it actually received largely negative reviews from both Alexandre Leupin²² and Corin Corley.²³ Leupin fundamentally disagrees with the choice of MS *L* as superior due to what he terms as Gallais's philological dependence 'upon a system that does not apply to the medieval mode of writing'.²⁴ This error in methodology then tarnishes Leupin's view of the entire study, to the point where he suggests that it is 'necessary to pull the plug' on this sort of study as the survival of the discipline is at stake.²⁵ For Corley, the issue is more with Gallais's support of his choice of MS *L* than with the choice itself; he states that 'one can only regret that there is not a clearer exposition of the manuscript relationships'.²⁶ Nonetheless, where Leupin is almost entirely disparaging of the work, Corley is keen to express his admiration for the meticulous linguistic analysis undertaken by Gallais, even if it is 'occasionally excessive'.²⁷ While Leupin's assessment is rather severe, it is true that there are some fundamental issues with Gallais's

¹⁸ Wrede, 'Die Fortsetzer des Graalromans Chrestiens von Troyes' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Göttingen, 1952).

¹⁹ Vial, *Le Conte du Graal: Sens et unité: La Première Continuation: Textes et contenu* (Geneva: Droz, 1978).

²⁰ Corley, *The Second Continuation of the Old French Perceval: A Critical and Lexicographical Study* (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1987).

²¹ Gallais, *L'Imaginaire d'un romancier français de la fin du XIIe siècle: Description raisonnée, comparée et commentée de la Continuation-Gauvain, Faux Titre*, 33, 34, 36, 39, 4 vols (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988–89).

²² Leupin, 'Review: Gallais's *L'Imaginaire d'un romancier français*', *Speculum*, 66 (1991), 408–10.

²³ Corley, 'Review: Gallais's *L'Imaginaire d'un romancier français*', *MLR*, 86 (1991), 193–95.

²⁴ Leupin, 'Review', p. 408.

²⁵ Leupin, 'Review', p. 410.

²⁶ Corley, 'Review', p. 194.

²⁷ Corley, 'Review', p. 194.

assessments, and that the sheer volume of both data and detail can make it difficult to penetrate his argument. Nonetheless, Gallais's study remains a remarkable work of scholarship, if only for the volume of detail.

At the time of writing, interest in the texts appears to be increasing and other studies are now on their way.²⁸ Until these do appear, however, the most recent book-length publication on all four *Continuations* remains Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner's *Chrétien Continued*.²⁹ Her approach to the task is to analyse what she terms the texts' 'ongoing dialogue'³⁰ through the narrative analysis of key motifs and features which originate in what she calls the mother text, and which establish emerging patterns throughout the *Continuations*. She divides these key features into three subject areas (society and the individual; love, gender relations and family ties; chivalry, violence and religion) and uses her analytical model to demonstrate how each of these highlights formal issues such as collective invention, rewriting, interpretation and canon formation. The analysis focuses resolutely on medieval examples but acknowledges the resulting implications for similar analyses which centre on modern serial works. Chapter 1 surveys the collective authorship, while Chapters 2 to 4 introduce selected *Continuations*, focusing on problems which emerge in the analysis of *Perceval* and how they resurface across the corpus. Chapter 5 includes an examination of Grail issues which connect Chrétien with Gerbert and the *First Continuation*.

Aside from this handful of main works, there are several useful articles and notes to which I shall also refer. All of these accept the same notion: these texts are important and deserve more attention, especially given the widely accepted significance of Chrétien's final work, *Perceval*, for literature in general; that is, by their close association with *Perceval*, the *Continuations* must be regarded as similarly important. As Bruckner notes:

If from a modern perspective, we limit Chrétien's authorship to the 9,000-plus verses of his unfinished romance, [...] within the terms of medieval practice, Chrétien continues to exert authorship throughout the cycle, as continuators write freely but remain faithful to his tutelage through the continuing presence of the *Conte du Graal* inscribed at the head of each manuscript compilation.³¹

What Bruckner refers to here is her belief that *Perceval* and its *Continuations* effectively constitute a cycle.³² My understanding of this sometimes nebulous term derives from the following definition:

²⁸ In particular, Thomas Hinton, *The Conte du Graal Cycle: Chrétien de Troyes' Perceval, the Continuations, and French Arthurian Romance* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012).

²⁹ Bruckner, *Chrétien Continued: A Study of the Conte du Graal and its Continuations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). As a whole, Bruckner's book constitutes a reworking and amalgamation of a number of articles that she has produced over the last twenty years or so, to which I shall also make reference.

³⁰ Bruckner, *Chrétien Continued*, p. 2.

³¹ Bruckner, *Chrétien Continued*, p. 2.

³² Indeed, Bruckner was among the first to use the term 'cycle' in relation to the corpus in her 'Intertextuality', in *The Legacy of Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. Norris J. Lacy, Douglas Kelly and Keith Busby, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), I, pp. 223–65. The same appellation is used by Busby in his 'The Other Grail Cycle', in *Cyclification: The Development of Narrative Cycles in the Chansons de Geste and the Arthurian Romances*, ed. Bart Besamusca, Willem P. Gerritsen,

A cycle can be the end product of a gradual process of expansion as a result of which an original tale or romance is preceded by stories telling of previous events, or continued by sequels or continuations treating later developments. It can also be the product of a compiler who arranges or combines existing works into a comprehensive structure. A cycle is distinguishable from a mere collection of works by the fact that events are presented in a linear sequence, that the principal characters throughout the cycle are identical or related to each other, and that the cohesion between the constituent works is made clear by external or internal references.³³

Bruckner feels that scholars have overlooked the cyclical nature of the *Perceval* corpus owing to what she terms 'the inconsistent accumulation of materials contained within the texts'.³⁴ Presumably she is referring to a lack of obvious cohesion between episodes which would allow the corpus to fit under the heading of 'cycle' according to the above definition. Hinton, too, argues strongly for a reading of the texts as a cycle due to his understanding of this as being 'a collection of texts read in sequence according to a uniting principle of coherence'.³⁵ While I believe there to be a strong distinction between the notions of 'Continuation' and 'cycle' (indeed I would be reluctant to call *Perceval* and its *Continuations* a cycle at all, for reasons which I shall discuss in Chapter 2), there are most certainly important links between the two concepts. Indeed, as already alluded to in the discussion of genre above, the importance of rewriting in medieval cycles (such as the *Lancelot-Grail*) has attracted a wealth of critical writings and scholarship over the years; as a result, Bruckner's and Hinton's designation of the *Perceval Continuations* as forming part of a cycle does lend the texts a new and pertinent significance. While the modern reader struggles to accept the texts' narrative miscellany as providing acceptable Continuations, or appropriate successors, the inherited manuscript tradition suggests that the medieval reader must have responded differently.³⁶ It is this opportunity of gaining insight into the medieval reader's concept of Continuation – its permissible strategies and its intrinsic links to the better understood notion of 'cycles' – that makes the *Perceval Continuations* so crucial to address by means of the analysis which

Corry Hogetoorn and Orlanda S. H. Lie (Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen Verhandelingen, 1994), pp. 176–78. More recently, Etienne Gomez, working on vows, oaths and promises in the corpus, has reached a similar conclusion, arguing for a cyclical perspective in his article 'Les effets de cycle dans le cycle du *Conte du Graal*', in *Les genres en question au Moyen Âge*, ed. Danièle James-Raoul, Eidôlon (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, forthcoming).

³³ Bart Besamusca, Willem P. Gerritson, Corry Hogetoorn and Orlanda S. H. Lie, 'Introduction', in *Cyclification*, pp. 1–6 (p. 1).

³⁴ Bruckner, *Chrétien Continued*, p. 2.

³⁵ Hinton, *The Conte du Graal Cycle*, p. 6.

³⁶ Bruckner concurs: 'However miscellaneous and disconnected [the *Continuations*'] inventions may strike modern readers, the manuscripts themselves attest to a process of generation that constantly realigns first, second, third and fourth Continuations as the textual offspring of "le vieux Perceval," whose integrity is for the most part unobscured by later remaniements.' 'Rewriting Chrétien's *Conte du Graal*: Mothers and Sons: Questions, Contradictions, and Connections', in *The Medieval Opus: Imitation, Rewriting and Transmission in the French Tradition: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at the Institute for Research in Humanities October 5–7 1995 The University of Wisconsin-Madison*, ed. Douglas Kelly (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1996), pp. 213–44 (p. 214).

follows, and importantly it is in this mechanical, rather than poetical, approach that I differ from Bruckner. While Bruckner conducts a survey of the recurrence of motifs across the corpus, she does not focus on the wider implications of the notion of Continuation. She does, in passing, make reference to mechanical elements, such as in Chapter 1's analysis of what she calls authorial relays (that is, the authorial acts of self-naming across the corpus as a way of authenticating each text) and in her consideration of the 'narrative loop' created by Gerbert's text in Chapter 5, but she does not consider that different Continuations may be mechanised by different means, and it is this that constitutes the main thrust of my analysis. Bruckner's content-driven approach is, of course, useful but, in the main, it resonates only with the *Perceval Continuations* themselves, where my own 'mechanical' approach is strategically designed to effect a wider impact on the analysis of Continuation across the medieval corpus. Busby, for instance, specifies the significant status of the *Continuations* as potential indices of the mechanical aspects of narrative composition in the Middle Ages:

Now that we are beginning to understand better the mechanics of medieval narrative composition and the transmission of texts in manuscript, and to read them on their own terms rather than by the received norms of modern scholarship, a re-examination of the corpus of continuations of Chrétien's *Perceval* could prove extraordinarily fruitful.³⁷

As such, this analysis should provide a supplement to, rather than a contradiction of, Bruckner's useful but ultimately content-focused approach. In her preface, Bruckner states that, just like the texts, she wishes 'to entertain the potential for interactive dialogue',³⁸ and certainly this research also responds to that desire. The analysis should therefore represent a development of, and a complement to, the relatively scarce scholarship on these texts – relative, that is, in comparison with other medieval Grail texts.

The reason for these texts' 'relative' neglect in modern scholarly analysis is very often attributed to their complicated manuscript tradition. This does not necessarily follow, however, once one acknowledges the life's work of William Roach, who succeeded in producing a vast, but largely accurate and very usable, edition of three of the four texts.³⁹ The remaining *Continuation*⁴⁰ was edited by

³⁷ Rupert T. Pickens, Keith Busby and Andrea M. L. Williams, 'Perceval and the Grail: The Continuations, Robert de Boron and *Perlesvaus*', in *The Arthur of the French: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval French and Occitan Literature*, ed. Glyn S. Burgess and Karen Pratt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006), pp. 215–73 (pp. 246–47).

³⁸ Bruckner, *Chrétien Continued*, p. 2.

³⁹ William Roach, ed., *The Continuations of the Old French Perceval of Chrétien de Troyes*, 5 vols (vol. I: Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949; vol. II: Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950; vol. III: Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1952; vol. IV: Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1971; vol. V: Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1983). Busby reiterates this need for further scholarship in light of the existence of a complete and accurate edition in his review of Roach's edition following the completion of the fifth and final volume: 'William Roach's Continuations of *Perceval*', *RPh*, 41 (1988), 298–309. A corrected edition of vol. I, undertaken by Roach's daughter, Eleanor, is known to be in production at the time of writing.

⁴⁰ Which is extant in only one manuscript plus a fragment of another.

Mary Williams and Marguerite Oswald.⁴¹ These editions certainly facilitate research on these texts; indeed, it has been argued that through the provision of full variants they impose a neatness on what are otherwise rather untidy texts.⁴² The textual variation between the manuscripts, however, is so great that producing one single redaction of the texts has proven impossible. In the worst case, for example, there are three/four redactions of the *First Continuation* alone. As such, while the texts are accessible, reading the *Continuations* still represents a perplexing, time-consuming task, which perhaps accounts for the fact that many scholars, at least until very recently, have preferred to leave the *Continuations* untouched. And this is a great shame, as these texts are of considerable literary quality. The notion of the *Continuations* as an important influence on Arthurian romance is an area which remains largely unrecognised and untapped, and while this is an analysis concerned more with the mechanisms of literature than with literary aesthetics, I hope that the investigation which follows draws attention to the many qualities of these texts, such that they may begin to enjoy as much attention and recognition as other Grail texts of the period.

Indeed, the influence of these texts, particularly on Chrétien epigones, is significant. The Continuator, after all, were not the only authors of episodic verse romances in the wake of Chrétien who positioned themselves pointedly with respect to 'the Master'. Interestingly, though, Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann, in her landmark study on the subject of 'epigonentum', opts to leave the *Continuations* out of her argument due to her belief that they constitute 'eine Sonderentwicklung des Hauptzweiges arthurischer Versdichtung'.⁴³ Schmolke-Hasselmann's study redresses the traditional view that post-Chrétien verse romances were simply poor imitations of the original, arguing that each text should instead be read as an example of innovative reception which creates an interesting dialogue with its predecessor(s). The decision to exempt the *Continuations* from her study is, perhaps, indicative of a certain inattention to the manuscript tradition which, as we shall see, actually provides strong evidence of these texts as representing 'precocious responses to the unfinished *Conte du Graal*, and [...] a substantial and apparently successful body of text', as Hinton puts it.⁴⁴ Indeed, Hinton devotes an entire chapter of his study to proving the alternative hypothesis that:

Arthurian verse romances began to appear in substantial numbers, and that Chrétien de Troyes's romances became models for later authors, partly *because of the success of the Conte du Graal cycle*.⁴⁵

Hinton also provides compelling evidence from other epigonal texts such as *Le Chevalier à l'épée*, *Le Chevalier as deus espees*, *Meraugis de Portlesguez*, *L'Atre péril-*

⁴¹ Gerbert de Montreuil, *La Continuation de Perceval*, 3 vols (Paris: Champion, 1922–75), vols 1 and 2 ed. Mary Williams, *CFMA* 20, 50 (1922–25), vol. 3 ed. Marguerite Oswald, *CFMA*, 101 (1975).

⁴² Pickens, Busby and Williams, p. 223.

⁴³ Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann, *Der arthurische Versroman von Chrestien bis Froissart: Zur Geschichte einer Gattung* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1980), pp. 5–6.

⁴⁴ Hinton, *The Conte du Graal Cycle*, p. 165.

⁴⁵ Hinton, *The Conte du Graal Cycle*, p. 165.

leux, *La Vengeance Raguidel*, *Hunbaut*, *Jaufre* and *Fergus* that specific borrowings are made from the *First* and *Second Continuations* in particular, as well as from *Perceval*, which demonstrate that thirteenth-century verse romancers appreciated and made use of the narrative techniques developed throughout the corpus as a whole, such as interlace and multiplication of heroes. As a result, Hinton argues that it makes more sense to read Chrétien epigones in relation to the full corpus of *Perceval* and its *Continuations*, rather than, as is more traditional, to Chrétien's *oeuvres complètes*, as this 'reflects more accurately the manuscript transmission of these texts as they have come down to us'.⁴⁶ Certainly, the *Continuations* must be understood as representing a kind of agile *remaniement* of Chrétien's *matière*, and as such deserve attention for their epigonal qualities as well as for their influence. As Hinton suggests, the strongest evidence that the inventiveness of these authors interested audiences just as much as the other Chrétien epigones – and arguably Chrétien's *Perceval* itself – is to be found in the texts' manuscriptal transmission.

There are very few extant manuscripts that contain *Perceval* on its own – just four out of a possible fifteen Old French verse manuscripts which are not in a fragmentary state – and for the most part these come from the earlier years of the tradition. Thus, while it is undeniable that Chrétien's part of the story was the best known, the abundant transmission of the *Continuations* does suggest a good deal of familiarity on the part of authors and audiences with the content of the latter too; and that scribes and readers may have felt that Chrétien's text needed Continuation. This may, of course, have been partly due to the *Continuations'* connection with *Perceval*, but their sheer proliferation demonstrates that they must also have elicited a degree of popularity among audiences in their own right. It is generally agreed that the copyists of Chrétien's *Perceval* felt somehow tightly bound to the original redaction of the text, as scribal variation of content and episode is kept to a minimum.⁴⁷ Perhaps the scribes were heeding Chrétien's stern warning that:

Qui autre fois le conteroit,
Anuis et oiseuse seroit,
Que nus contes de ce n'amende. (vv. 1381–83)⁴⁸

This fascinating interjection warrants more study, as it is highly unusual both in terms of authorial power and reader reception in the Middle Ages, but for now it suffices to say that the mere presence and authority of Chrétien de Troyes appear to be enough to impose limitations on future *réécriture*. This requirement of constancy in the copying of *Perceval*, however, seems not to have filtered

⁴⁶ Hinton, *The Conte du Graal Cycle*, pp. 216–17.

⁴⁷ Among these critics are Schmolke-Hasselmann in her *Der arthurische Versroman* and Busby, 'Text, Miniature and Rubric in the Continuations of Chrétien's *Perceval*', in *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes/The Manuscripts of Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. Keith Busby, Terry Nixon, Alison Stones and Lori Walters, 2 vols (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1993), I, pp. 365–76. Sarah Kay has also argued that such is Chrétien's literary personality, his mere presence 'sets limits on the interpretation of "his" works and conditions on admission to "his" canon'. 'Who was Chrétien de Troyes?', *AL*, 15 (1997), 1–35 (pp. 2–3).

⁴⁸ When referring to *Perceval*, I use Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Roman de Perceval ou le Conte du graal, édition critique d'après tous les manuscrits*, ed. Keith Busby (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993).

through to the transmission of the *Continuations*. It is worth briefly pausing here to consider the content of each of these *Continuations* and understand their textual history and background.

First Continuation

It is considered that the earliest version of the *First Continuation* was composed, anonymously, not very long after Chrétien's apparent demise – that is, no later than about 1200 or so.⁴⁹ Of all the *Continuations*, this is the most complex. Extant in eleven Old French verse manuscripts (MSS *AELMPQRSTUV*),⁵⁰ two fragments of Old French verse manuscripts (MS *J* and Brussels IV 852), one Middle High German translation (MS *D*) and a printed, prose version from 1530 (*G*), the *First Continuation* is the most prolific *Continuation* in terms of frequency of appearance.

I discussed earlier how all of the *Continuations* are subject to considerable levels of scribal variation; this comparative volatility is never more evident than in the *First Continuation*. Roach's edition of this text is a heroic feat indeed, given his identification of three extant redactions (each subject to significant variation) and the necessity therefore of publishing the text in three volumes over a period of three years. These redactions he calls the Short (contained in MSS *ALPRS* and printed in Roach's vol. III at c. 9500 lines in length), the Mixed (contained in MSS *DJTV*, printed in Roach's vol. I at c. 15,350 lines in length) and the Long (contained in MSS *EGMQU* and Brussels IV 852, and printed in Roach's vol. II at c. 19,600 lines in length). The Short Redaction is generally considered the earliest of the three redactions, with a proposed date of composition of not later than 1200, thus making the text very likely the first known response to *Perceval*, anterior even to Robert de Boron's *Estoire*.⁵¹ The Mixed and Long Redactions have proven more difficult to date, but they were almost certainly composed some time after the Short Redaction owing to what is widely held as implicit intertextual reference to other, later texts such as *La Queste del Saint Graal*, which in turn is dated to around 1230.⁵² There is even some conjecture that both the Mixed and the Long Redactions may post-date the *Second Continuation*, though the validity of this notion will probably never be categorically proven.⁵³ It is also

⁴⁹ Norris J. Lacy, Geoffrey Ashe and Debra N. Mancoff, *The Arthurian Handbook* (New York: Garland, 1997), p. 76. According to Schmolke-Hasselmann's chronology of verse romance, this dating would situate the text as having been composed at roughly the same time as *Tyolet*, *Melion*, *Le Cor*, *Le Cort mantel*, *La Mule sans frein* and *Le Chevalier à l'épée* (p. 16) and, in terms of other Grail literature, it would likely have appeared slightly in advance of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzifal* and Robert de Boron's *Estoire dou Saint Graal*.

⁵⁰ For comprehensive reference to the contents of each manuscript, along with full codes and so on, see Table 1, Appendices I and II. Additionally, Chapter 1 contains more exhaustive manuscriptural information.

⁵¹ See Marshal S. Grant, 'The Question of Integrity in the First Continuation of Chrétien de Troyes' *Conte du Graal*', *Proceedings of the PMR Conference*, 11 (1986), 101–25 (pp. 101–02).

⁵² For further information on intertextual dating links, see Gallais, 'Formules de conteur et interventions d'auteur dans les manuscrits de la *Continuation-Gauvain*', *Romania*, 85 (1964), 181–229.

⁵³ Corley, *The Second Continuation*, p. 77.

held by some that the Mixed Redaction is the latest of all the redactions as it appears to contain a combination of the Long and Short Redactions.⁵⁴

The precise content of the *First Continuation* will be discussed at more length in Chapter 3, but I shall give a broad overview here. Traditionally (that is, according to Roach) the text of the *First Continuation* runs from immediately after line 9234 of Busby's edition of *Perceval* ('Si li demande qu'ele avoit') to 'Si com je vos contai orains' (line 15322, Mixed, I; line 19606, Long, II) or 'Pale an fu et descoloree' (line 9456, Short, III).⁵⁵ The entire *Continuation* (in all three Redactions) is devoted entirely to the adventures of Gauvain, and these adventures actually seem to work rather well as individual, autonomous stories – indeed, Roach was able to split the narrative cleanly into six branches, each of which seems to tell a single, self-contained episode, or Gauvain adventure.⁵⁶ Perceval himself, by contrast, is given no mention except at a tournament in the Carados Section (Roach's Section III, episode 9), in which he is glimpsed only fleetingly. The First Continuator's decision to approach his Continuation in this way has received considerable comment. Bruckner, for example, notes that the *First Continuation* is, 'more than anything, simply a heterogeneous collection of independent Gauvain materials',⁵⁷ while Roach says that the adventures 'sont complètes en elles-mêmes'.⁵⁸ The Short Redaction includes just one visit to the Grail Castle, which represents the only obvious narrative link back to Chrétien's original text; various motifs and images within this Grail scene are, however, much changed from Chrétien's version of events, as we will see in detail later. The critic's curiosity is thus awakened as to how the medieval audience may have viewed these significant departures from the original. Indeed, the existence of the Long and Mixed Redactions suggests that readers or scribes may have found the Short Redaction unsatisfactory. The Long and Mixed Redactors, after all, effectively rewrite, and add to, large sections of the text of the Short Redaction and, perhaps most significantly, interpolate an additional Grail scene which is more analogous to Chrétien's Grail scene than to that of the Short Redactor. In this way the efforts of the Mixed and Long Redactors are often seen as an attempt to reconnect with Chrétien in places where the Short Redactor deviated too radically.⁵⁹ In spite of the Short Redaction's apparent digression from the

⁵⁴ Gallais, 'Formules', pp. 181–85.

⁵⁵ I quote the precise lines here as I will later take up the issue of where authorial changeovers occur in the manuscripts and it is therefore important to grasp what are considered the 'traditional' points of changeover. Hereafter, when quoting from Roach's editions, I will simply refer to the line number and volume number.

⁵⁶ For ease of reference I shall use Roach's episode breakdown throughout this study when referring to particular sections of the texts – episode summaries of all texts based on this breakdown can be found in Appendix IV.

⁵⁷ Bruckner, 'Intertextuality', p. 251. Leupin also makes the comment that the *First Continuation* 'se compose d'une bigarrure d'épisodes' in 'Les enfants de la Mimésis: Différence et répétition dans la «Première Continuation du Perceval», *VR*, 38 (1979), 110–26 (p. 111).

⁵⁸ Roach, 'Les Continuations du *Conte del Graal*', in *Les Romans du Graal aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Strasbourg, 29 Mars–3 Avril 1954 (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1956), pp. 107–18 (p. 113).

⁵⁹ A comment also made by Roach, 'Les Continuations', p. 115 and Bruckner in 'Intertextuality', p. 259.

main lines of Chrétien's original, however, the Short Redaction never appears without *Perceval* in any of the manuscripts. Indeed, all Redactions of the *First Continuation* are always preceded by *Perceval*. No matter how the Long/Mixed Redactors' tendency to rewrite the primitive version is interpreted, therefore, it transpires that all three Redactions must have been judged, in some way, appropriate Continuations of the Ur-Text. This is especially probable given that the Short Redaction is not completely discarded once the Long and Mixed Redactions commence their circulation; rather it continues to be included even in manuscripts dated to the later period of written transmission.⁶⁰ Even so, the fact cannot be avoided that attempts to refine and rewrite the primitive Short Redaction were undertaken in a calculated and deliberate manner by the Long and Mixed Redactors. This inevitably raises the question, if the Short Redaction was still considered to function as a Continuation, then what did the Long and Mixed Redactors hope to achieve by their enterprise?

Questions of intention here come to mind; while it can never be known incontrovertibly what the Continuator(s)/Redactor(s) intended to do in terms of Continuation, I shall argue that it is possible, upon the analysis of pertinent episodes,⁶¹ to make some legitimate suggestions as to what could have lain at the root of their endeavours. In other words, if an understanding of *how* the Continuators achieve their overall continuatory aesthetic can be reached, the critic may consequently be offered an insight into *why* the Continuator elected that approach to the task. This should facilitate the classification of precise nuances of Continuation present in that particular text, and ultimately give rise to the establishment of a set of terminology designed for specific application to continuatory texts, as well as a methodology for their analysis. In terms of the *First Continuation*, this approach should allow for a better understanding of, and more accurate way of describing, the relations between the Redactors' texts. It should elucidate how and why they respond to each other in the way that they do and, more importantly, what their specific continuatory aims are *à propos* Chrétien's Ur-Text.

Second Continuation

Containing a narrative construct considerably less complicated than the *First Continuation* because of its less convoluted manuscript tradition, the *Second Continuation* is no less interesting in terms of Continuation. Extant in eleven Old French verse manuscripts (MSS *AEKLM PQSTUV*), as well as both the sixteenth-century *mise en prose* (*G*) and the Middle High German translation (*D*), the *Second Continuation* is almost as prolifically copied as its predecessor. After some debate, the work has been most recently agreed as that of Wauchier de Denain,⁶²

⁶⁰ These are *P* and *S*, though this does assume that the scribes actually had knowledge of the later Redactions.

⁶¹ The Grail scene might be just one obvious choice.

⁶² The author names himself in the text as 'Gauchiers de Dondain', with variations on the spelling across the manuscripts. For a number of years the original identification of this name was with that of Wauchier de Denain, an already known literary figure who translated

and is thought to date from the very early years of the thirteenth century, not long after the composition of the Short Redaction of the *First Continuation* – certainly no later than 1210, and so may have appeared around the same time as Robert de Boron's *Estoire*, or perhaps a short time after.⁶³ It consists of two redactions (the Short and the Long) but the Short breaks off and joins the Long early in the narrative.⁶⁴ For the critic, this relative simplicity of redaction renders commentary on the *Second Continuation* somewhat more straightforward than is the case with the *First Continuation*. The sheer number of extant manuscripts and the significance of their respective variants, however, are still not to be underestimated. According to Roach and to convention, the text of the *Second Continuation* runs from 'D'aus deus le conte ci vos les' (line 9457, Short; line 19608, Long, IV) to 'Et Percevaux se reconforte' (line 32594, IV).

Interestingly, the *Second Continuation* is the only one of the *Continuations* to appear anywhere on its own and separated from *Perceval*.⁶⁵ It does this in just one manuscript⁶⁶ – MS K – where it is immediately followed, without demarcation of a change of authorship, by a separate short *Continuation*, which brings the romance to a conclusion and which seems to be confined to this manuscript alone. This fifty-eight-line text is known as the *Independent Conclusion*, and in many ways might be regarded a 'Continuation' in its own right.

The *Second Continuation* recommences the story of *Perceval*, after his lengthy absence in the *First Continuation*, and tells the events in a linear and unified fashion: Wrede, in particular, was convinced that the *Continuation* was tightly and coherently constructed, and dominated by a feeling of unity.⁶⁷ In terms of response to Chrétien's text and to the *First Continuation*, it is apparent from the inclusion of various episodes, which seem to draw upon material from these predecessors, that the *Second Continuation* responds to both texts. This impression is created by an overriding sense that the *Continuation* is reacting to the perceived deficiencies of the *First Continuation* by gently tugging the story back into line with the Ur-Text by means of the duplication and/or imitation

a series of *Vies des Pères* under the patronage of Philip of Flanders and his niece Jeanne. This was heavily contested by Ferdinand Lot in his 'Les auteurs du Conte du Graal', *Romania*, 57 (1931), 117–36 (the original identification had been made by M. Wilmotte, *Le Poème du Graal et ses auteurs* (Paris: Droz, 1930)). Guy Vial, however, more recently re-established Wilmotte's original stance on the subject in his article, 'L'auteur de la deuxième continuation du Conte du Graal', *Travaux Linguistiques et Littéraires*, 16 (1978), 519–30, which Corley supports in his 'Wauchier de Denain et la Deuxième Continuation de *Perceval*', *Romania*, 105 (1984), 351–59.

⁶³ John L. Grigsby sets out the case for this, and for the datings of the other *Continuations*, in 'Continuations of *Perceval*', in *The New Arthurian Encyclopedia*, ed. Norris J. Lacy (New York and London: Garland, 1991), pp. 99–100. Schmolke-Hasselmann, in *Der arthurische Versroman*, suggests that, in terms of verse romance, the text would have appeared a little in advance of *Gliglois*, *Le Bel Inconnu*, *Meraugis*, *Durmart* and *Yder* (p. 16).

⁶⁴ Roach explains that the Short Redaction is contained in MSS A and S. MS A breaks off a few episodes into the *Second Continuation*, and it is at this same break-off point that MS S ceases to follow the Short Redaction and joins the Long instead: 'Introduction', in *The Continuations*, IV, pp. xiv–xvi. Corley also explains the issue, but in even more exhaustive detail, in his *The Second Continuation*, pp. 18–30.

⁶⁵ In all but one case it appears immediately after *Perceval*+*First Continuation* (there is no pattern to which redaction of the *First Continuation* precedes the *Second Continuation*).

⁶⁶ In all others it appears directly after *Perceval* and the *First Continuation*.

⁶⁷ Wrede, p. 128. Corley, however, argues the diametric opposite; *The Second Continuation*, pp. 42–55.

of familiar scenes and motifs from Chrétien.⁶⁸ For example, the Grail scene is considerably more recognisable as drawing inspiration from Chrétien's version than that of the *First Continuation's* Short Redaction, and the general impression of the *merveilleux* is more discreet. As such, the text is stylistically far more akin to the techniques of Chrétien than to those of the First Continuator. The impact of the *Second Continuation* is therefore considerably different from that of the *First Continuation*. There is a sense of familiarity regained, and with the return of Perceval comes the anticipation that the story will now move towards a close. Unfortunately the Second Continuator does not furnish us with this desired ending. Rather, he stops mid-Grail scene just before all is revealed to Perceval. The Second Continuator does, however, appear focused on narrative advancement where the First Continuator does not. The *Second Continuation* is analysed in this light in Chapter 4, where a detailed study of selected scenes should provide information as to how the Continuator achieves these perceived 're-connections', thus hypothetically allowing the identification and categorisation of a type of Continuation that is different from that of the *First Continuation*.

Gerbert Continuation

Extant in just two manuscripts, *T* (complete) and *V* (fragmentary), and in both cases diegetically placed between the *Second* and *Manessier Continuations*, the *Gerbert Continuation* presents a different problem from that posed by the other *Continuations*. It is considered to have been composed by Gerbert de Montreuil, also renowned for having written the *Roman de la violette*. Problematically though, it appears that he composed the *Continuation* at roughly the same date as did Manessier his conclusion (c. 1225),⁶⁹ and that he did so in apparent ignorance of Manessier's concomitant endeavour, which in a manuscript culture is by no means inexplicable. This has suggested to scholars⁷⁰ that Gerbert had in fact intended his piece to form an ending for the corpus as a whole. This is an argument which is also strongly supported by the narrative content as Gerbert retains Perceval as the main Grail knight and eventually brings him back to the Grail Castle, where the impression given is that he will finally learn all that has

⁶⁸ Annie Combes states: 'Whereas [the *First Continuation*] distances itself from the *Conte* as much as possible, [the *Second Continuation*], on the contrary, seeks convergence with it'; 'The Continuations of the *Conte du Graal*', trans. Alexia Gino-Saliba, in *A Companion to Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. Norris J. Lacy and Joan Tasker Grimbert (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2005), pp. 191–201 (p. 195).

⁶⁹ This would date both the *Gerbert* and *Manessier Continuations* to the period after Robert de Boron's *Estoire dou Saint Graal* and around that of the anonymous *Queste del Saint Graal*. In terms of verse romance, Schmolke-Hasselmann suggests, in *Der arthurische Versroman*, that *Jaufre* and *La Vengeance Raguidel* would have been composed at roughly the same time, while *Fergus*, *Le Chevalier as deus espees*, *Escanor*, *L'Atre périlleux* and *Humbaut* would have been composed in the period shortly afterward (p. 16).

⁷⁰ Such as Bruckner, *Chrétien Continued*, p. 190 and Louise D. Stephens, 'Gerbert and Manessier: The Case for a Connection', *AL*, 14 (1996), 53–68 (pp. 66–67).