

Methods of book-production in a XIVth century French miscellany [London, British Library, Royal 19. D. I.

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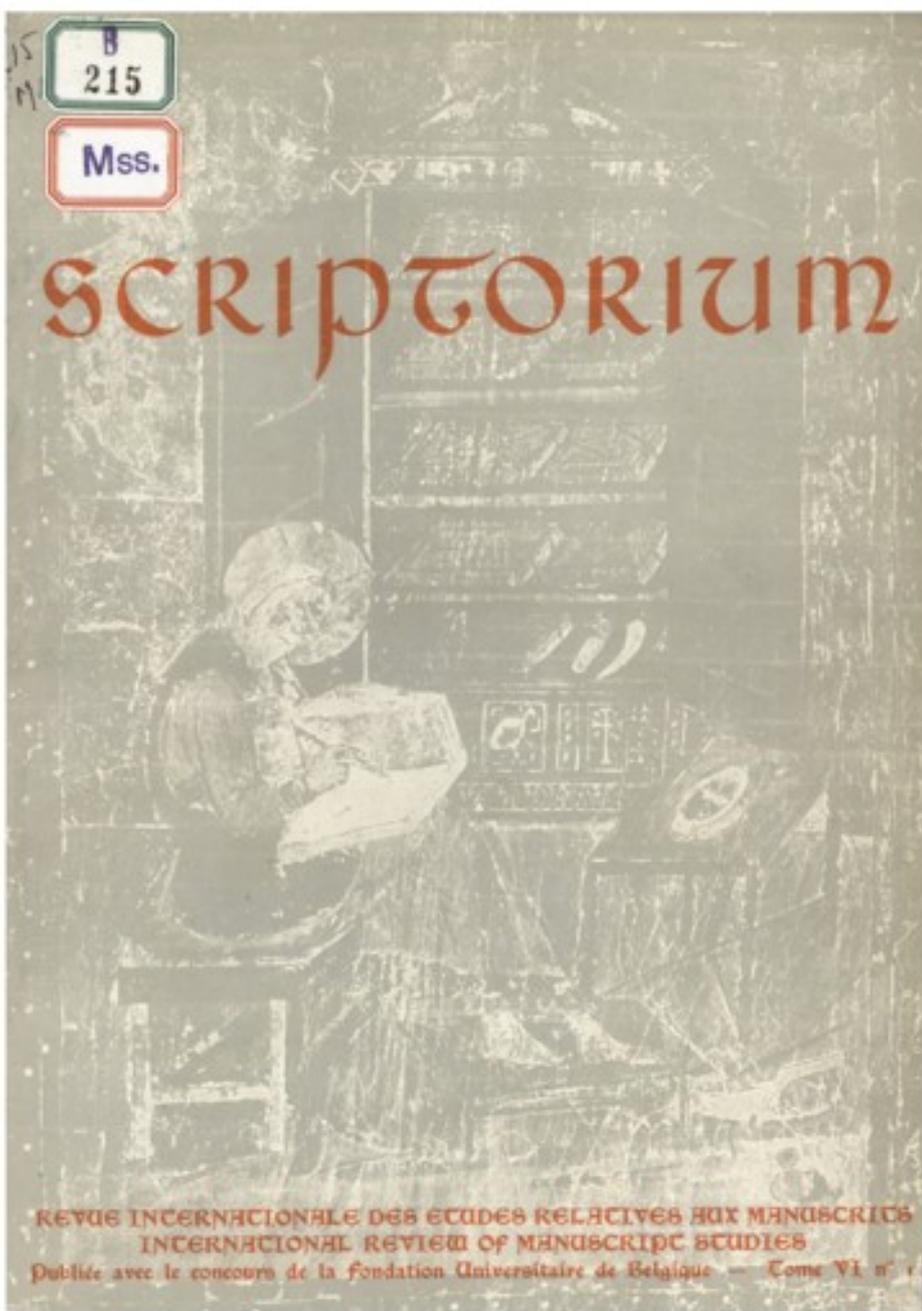
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# Methods of book-production in a XIVth century French miscellany [London, British Library, Royal 19. D. I]

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London, British Library, Royal 19. D. I

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Référence bibliographique

# Plan

1. Appendix MS. British Museum, Harley 4903[\[link\]](#)

## Texte intégral

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METHODS OF BOOK-PRODUCTION IN A XIV<sup>th</sup> CENTURY FRENCH MISCELLANY  
(LONDON, B. M., MS. ROYAL 19. D. I.)

Nothing is commoner than the miscellaneous manuscript containing a mixed assortment of works, but occasionally the selection is indicative of the purpose for which the collection was made. The subject of this study is a composite MS of this kind.

MS. Royal 19. D. I. of the British Museum has no very remarkable qualities from the artistic point of view. Its numerous, rather clumsy miniatures have a certain primitive charm, but it gives the general impression of a commercial job, hastily and rather carelessly done, and its chief interest is perhaps the light which it throws on the methods and conditions in the illustrating workshops of central France in the mid-fourteenth century.

It is not proposed to give a detailed description of this MS. as this has already been done (1), though attention will be drawn to certain errors and omissions which occur in the published description.

It contains eight works, all in French, and all but one in prose of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The language, like the style of decoration and miniatures, points to the Parisian region in the mid-fourteenth century, though the first work, the French prose Alexander romance, still retains noticeable traces of the Picard dialect in which it was originally written.

The compiler, or the patron who ordered the MS., seems to have had in mind the production of a kind of compendium of exploration and Far Eastern travel combined with some crusading propaganda.

He begins with the Old French prose Alexander romance, regarded as the account of the first great explorer and discoverer of the wonders of the East (2).

Unfortunately the prose Alexander ends on the sombre note of the king's death by poison and the savage struggles of his successors over his dismembered empire. The Middle Ages found it hard to tolerate the death of the just man left unavenged. After Roland's death has brought what, to our ideas, is the climax of the tragedy about two thirds of the way through the text, we have to wade through a rather flat sequel in order to see him duly avenged and the wicked appropriately punished.

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In the same way the Old French Verse Alexander Romance, which, like the prose one, ends with Alexander's death by poison, received two separate and independent vengeance sequels before the end of the twelfth century. As no prose version of either of these was available in the century, the compiler of our MS. inserted the better known verse Vengeance, that of Jehan le Venelais (3) as a sequel to the prose romance.

After this legendary beginning the compiler turns to more recent and more factual accounts of Eastern exploration. The third text is a Marco Polo, not the original version but the revised text, made possibly for Thiébaud de Cépoï (4).

Next comes the ' Merveilles de la terre d'outremer ' of Odoric de Pordenone in a translation by Jean de Vignay, hospitaller of the order of Haut Pas, who was a prolific translator of the first half of the fourteenth century and produced, among numerous other works, the standard French translation of the ' Speculum Historiale ' of Brother Vincent, called Vincent of Beauvais (5).

The fifth work is again an account of a fairly recent explorer of the Far East, John of Piano Carpini, in the abridgement of Vincent de Beauvais, Spec. Hist. XXXII, chaps. 2-66 ; this in a French version which is not the standard one of Jean de Vignay (ff. 148b-165b).

At this point, having whetted our imagination with all these accounts of strange lands and incredible monsters and marvels, the compiler turns to propaganda. It is like a rather subtle recruiting campaign for the crusades; as if he were saying to the reader : ' Now you too can see all these wonders if you have the courage, but of course the first step must be the freeing of Our Lord's sepulchre from the heathen '. It is a sort of medieval version of the old recruiting poster : ' Join the Army and see the world '. I may of course be reading too much into what could be a merely fortuitous order of the various works in this MS., but it seems significant that the sixth is a translation, again the work of Jean de Vignay and dated 1333 (6), of the : ' Directorium ad faciendum passagium transmarinum ', wrongly attributed to the German Dominican Burchard of Mount Sion (ff. 165b-192b). The original, written in the previous year, was addressed and presented to king Philip VI of France. It is a sort of crusaders' handbook, and contains, besides the usual guide-book material on the Holy Places, proposals for a crusade on the plan previously adopted by St Louis of a blow at the heart

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of Mohammedan power in Egypt, instead of the usual peripheral attack on the forces of Islam in Palestine and the direct attempt to recapture Jerusalem.

The seventh text in the collection is the unique MS. of Jean de Vignay's translation into French of the chronicle of Primat de St Denis. This began apparently with the accession of St Louis in 1226 and continued down to 1285. Jean de Vignay only translated the latter part of it, from 1250, as a continuation for his translation of the *Speculum Historiale* which breaks off in that year. He adds to it a chapter of miracles of St Louis which he had himself witnessed. The Latin original of Primat's chronicle is lost and our knowledge of it is derived entirely from this MS. It seems likely that the compiler of Royal 19. D. I. included it chiefly for the very full account it gives of St Louis' last crusade and death, as a further incitement to the young knight and potential crusader to emulate the saintly king of France (ff. 192b-251b).

We may also suppose the same intention to underlie the inclusion of the last work in the MS. It is a series of extracts from the *Bible Historiale* entitled in the colophon : ' Pluseurs batailles des roys disrael encontre les Philistiens et Assyriens ' (ff. 252b-267b). They extend from the story of David and Goliath to the siege of Samaria by Ben-Hadad. Again the intention seems to be remind the potential crusader of some of his illustrious predecessors who fought the enemies of God on the same ground where he himself will, in the words of Archbishop Turpin, ' help to uphold ' (7).

Such are the contents of our MS.; and such, I think, was the purpose for which the collection was made. But it is of interest not merely for its contents. It can also be made to yield some interesting and rather unusual information concerning conditions and methods, and especially the division of labour, in the trade of book-production in central France in the mid- fourteenth century.

Henri Martin in ' *Les Miniaturistes français* ' (8) has discussed in considerable detail the question of the organisation of labour in the illuminators' workshops which, from the beginning of the thirteenth century, began to replace the monastic scriptoria as centres of book-decoration and illustration.

Guild records and accounts make it clear that a master illuminator usually had a number of apprentices and journeymen working under his direction, and Martin shows that it was usual for him to scribble instructions for his underlings in the margin of the manuscript to be illustrated. These mostly took the form of short notes in the vernacular which could afterwards be ploughed off when the book was trimmed up for binding. Such notes

works of literature has met them (9).

Rather less frequently rough sketches were drawn in the margin to guide the miniaturist and afterwards removed with knife or pumice stone. In many cases they have either been left for fear of damaging the parchment or have been imperfectly removed. Martin has published sketches of several from MSS. in the Bibliothèque de Ste Geneviève, and has shown that frequently the carelessness or inattention of the illuminators has defeated the intentions of the master.

Our MS. contains a very large number of these marginal sketches. Of its 164 miniatures 124 are accompanied by rough sketches in states of preservation varying from very clear to barely visible, eight more show rubbed places in the margin from which such sketches have apparently been removed, and only thirty-two show no traces of marginal roughs having been used. These sketches are very rough indeed and consist for the most part of ovals for bodies, circles for heads and spikes on the circles for crowns ; more unusual objects, such as elephants, are generally more exactly represented.

It is not usually possible to say from the evidence available if more than two persons were engaged on the illustration of a particular MS ; namely the master who wrote the directions or drew the roughs, and the artist who produced the finished picture. In the case of this MS. however the existence of a greater sub-division of labour can be proved.

On f. 38V there occurs a miniature (PL 10) illustrating the rubric : ' Comment Alixandre se combat avecques jaians qui n'ont que .i. œil el front.' The master, following a model which was representative of the general tradition of the cycle of pictures illustrating the Alexander Romance, duly sketched his three one-eyed Cyclopes in the lower margin (10). He then passed the work over to a man who was not the painter but a draughtsman whose task it was to draw out the miniature in ink in the space left for it by the scribe, following the indications of the master's marginal rough sketch. He drew the miniature correctly, and the work was then passed to the painter. The latter either was illiterate or did not trouble to read the rubric. He felt however that there was something wrong with these one-eyed warriors. He therefore corrected his predecessor's work and gave them two eyes apiece, but it remains possible still to make out the original single eye of the draughtsman's ink drawing showing through the thin wash of colour with which the painter covered the faces of the

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three figures ; a fact which proves the existence, in this workshop at least, of a degree of subdivision of labour which one would hardly expect to find in medieval conditions.

Other errors occur in the illustration of this first, Alexander Romance, section of the MS. which contains 102 of its 164 miniatures ; but they are of minor interest as the master had

a model to work from, in a manuscript illustrated with the traditional cycle of Alexander miniatures, and so could not go far wrong (11).

There is however one point which has not been noticed by those who have described the MS. and which is of some interest. Ff. 28 and 29 are in the wrong order and should be reversed. What has happened is that these two folios formed the middle sheet of the fourth quire of four sheets (eight ff.), and this sheet was folded the wrong way by the binder with the result that the two folios were bound in reverse order.

That this occurred before the book was given out to be illustrated is shown by the fact that the master illuminator, following his model, sketched a rough in the bottom margin of f. 28V which really belongs to f. 29r. (How Alexander fought and defeated the elephants). He noticed his mistake in time however, crossed out his sketch, recopied it in its proper place on f. 29r, and made a new and correct sketch in the side margin by the space for the miniature on f. 28V. The miniatures on f. 29V are correctly placed. It is however curious that the correct rough was placed on f. 28r. This might be due to that particular miniature having been omitted in the model with the result that the master had to design it for himself following the rubric, but it is more likely that the displacement made him think that it had been omitted in his model, and that it was not until he came to the next one that he saw what was wrong.

In view of the care taken to get the miniatures correctly placed despite the binder's error it is curious that no attempt was made to get the two leaves into correct order, but that no doubt was a matter for a book-binder, and so outside the province of an illuminator's establishment. We have here evidence, which is not lacking elsewhere (12), of the fact that books were usually already bound and not still in sheets or quires when they reached the illuminator.

But while the master had a model to work from in designing the miniatures of the Alexander it was otherwise when he came to fill the spaces left by the scribes in the latter part of the MS. Here his errors and confusions show clearly what process was followed in a commercial firm when it was

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necessary to illustrate a MS. for which no traditional model was available.

The master was clearly not familiar with the text of Marco Polo, which is fairly copiously illustrated (38 miniatures), and was forced to rely on his own invention, aided by the rubrics. On f. 59V (pi. lib) this practice has led him into some strange errors. The rubric here runs : ' Ci dit le .viii. Chapitre. Comment le grant Caam leur donna la table dor de son commandement '. Not knowing to whom the word ' leur ' referred he glanced back to

the top of the page where he saw the words : ' ... les .ij. frères... ' For some reason, perhaps because he remembered that Franciscans had made many of the early missionary journeys to the Mongol court, he assumed that ' frères ' here meant friars, and so roughed out a sketch of a tall man, representing the Grand Khan, addressing two brothers of St Francis before a trestle table with a brightly burnished gold top. Here is another error ; the ' table ' is in reality a golden tablet doing duty as a passport, and ensuring to the bearer the right to free entertainment and protective escort throughout the Grand Khan's dominions. The error is clearly the master's and not that of the illuminator, as the sketch resembles the finished miniature closely and he has made sure that there shall be no mistake about it by writing the word ' d'or ' on the table top in his sketch, the only written direction in the MS. In the next miniature, on f. 61r (pi. 12b), he has not repeated the error as here the rubric runs : ' Ci dit le .xiiij. chapitre. ' Comment mesire Nicole, et mesire Mafé et Marc alerent devant le grant Caan ', and he correctly shows them in secular dress. This shows clearly that the master illuminator neither knew nor troubled to read the text of Marco Polo but contented himself with devising pictures which approximately suited the rubrics.

There are a considerable number of errors of this kind, due to careless following of the rubric without reading the text. For example, on f. 85r, we have the rubric : ' Ci devise le .lxxix. chapitre comment le grant Caam fist ocirre Naian '. This is illustrated by a conventional scene of execution by decapitation. Actually Naian, as a member of the imperial family, was smothered and shaken to death in a carpet so that the elements might not witness his end.

Again, on f. 238V, in Primat's chronicle, we have a long rubric which ends with the words : ' ... et comment Guy de Montfort tua (tua) Henri filz du conte Ricart frère du Roy d'Engleterre '. This is the source of a miniature showing two knights fighting on horseback. We learn however from the text of f. 239 that Guy stabbed Henry in a church.

There is also a quite natural tendency to Européanise these accounts of the Far East which occasionally produces very strange results to modern eyes. For example, on f. 95r (pi. 12a), the Grand Khan's charity to the poor is illustrated by a scene showing a western monarch distributing doles through an almoner in black monastic dress with cowl and gown.

There is also a curious tendency to identify the Grand Khan with

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' our side ' in any struggle which may occur, and so to assimilate him, not merely to any European monarch, but specifically to the king of France, while his enemies are shown as conventional Saracens. On f. 183r (pi. lia) the rubric runs : ' Ci dit le \*\* (i- e. six- vingtième or 120th) chapitre comment le grant Caan conquesta le grant royaume de Mien et de

Bengala par force de bataille '. The miniature shows him in full European armour with surcoat, horse-cloth and shield all with the arms of France, while his opponents appear as turbaned Saracens bearing the gold Turkish crescent on a red field.

It is even possible to form some idea of the business relations between the establishment producing this MS and the customer who ordered it. The evidence here consists in the variations in the use of gold in different parts of the MS. Gold is used fairly extensively in the decoration of the frontispiece of Alexander, and is regularly used for crowns in all pictures in which they occur down to and including the miniature on f. 23V, col. 2, which shows the queen of the Amazons receiving a letter from Alexander. Thereafter all use of gold ceases, and crowns are painted in yellow ochre or red, down to the end of the Alexander romance. Then, with the \* Venjance ', which has one small miniature of a battle scene as frontispiece, gold reappears. It is used in the full-page frontispiece of Marco Polo as in that of the Alexander which it exactly resembles in style and layout. Thereafter it is used in the corners of the frames of all miniatures, in leaf decorations and in the decorated initials which accompany the miniatures throughout the rest of the MS. Occasionally also gold grounds occur in the miniatures themselves.

I would like to suggest that this variation may be explained by assuming that the master illuminator became dissatisfied with the amount or frequency of the payments he received and so gave orders that the use of gold was to cease when about half the illustrations of the Alexander had been completed. We may then suppose that when this first section of the work was finished the customer called to inspect it, was dissatisfied with the rather shoddy appearance of the pictures, and gave orders, and funds, for the rest of the work to be carried out in a richer style.

A similar explanation was proposed by M. R. James in the case of the Bodley Alexander MS. (13) to account for the fact that after the first branch of the romance had been copied and decorated, the style of decoration suddenly becomes much richer and the miniatures more frequent, though again there is a variation throughout the book, to be explained by irregular payments. The very poor quality of the decoration of the latter part of the Luttrell Psalter is probably to be explained by a similar exhaustion of funds.

There remains one more point about this MS. which is of considerable

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interest. It is by no means isolated. In the British Museum alone (14) there are three other MSS. which are quite certainly products of the same set of hands and the work of the same establishment so far as the illustrations are concerned, though they are not written by the same scribes as wrote Royal 19. D. I., a fact which seems to indicate that this workshop was engaged in illumination only, and did not work in association with any

particular scriptorium.

The first of these MSS. is Royal 20. B. I., a mid-fourteenth century MS of a French translation of the ' *De re militari* ' of Vegetius, again probably the work of Jean de Vignay, to whom it is attributed in some of the MSS. (15). It has a frontispiece showing two presentation miniatures in a foliate frame with medallions containing heads. In style it exactly resembles the frontispieces of the Alexander and Marco Polo sections of Royal 19. D. I (ff. 1 and 58) where however the medallions contain shields instead of heads. Books II, III and IV are each headed by a small miniature in the style of those of Royal 19. D. I. and in all three cases accompanied in the lower margin by a rough by the same hand as those in that MS (16).

The second example is British Museum MS. Additional 16888 (17), two of the later continuations of the Old French verse Alexander romance, the ' *Vœux du Paon* ' (18), ff. 1-141, and the ' *Restor du Paon* ' (19), ff. 142-161b. Each is preceded by a miniature by the same hand as those of Royal 19. D. I. and the first is again accompanied by a foliate frame with medallions containing heads like that already mentioned in Royal 20. B. I. In this case no roughs have survived.

The third example of the work of our establishment is MS. Harley 4903, again of the mid-fourteenth century. This MS. is important for literary as well as for iconographie reasons, and has not previously received adequate notice. It is the second volume of a MS. in the Bibliothèque Nationale which was until now though to be lost. I leave the detailed discussion of it to an appendix<sup>^</sup> and confine myself here to points bearing on the history of the workshop with which we are concerned.

As the second volume of two this MS. has no frontispiece, but it has 70 miniatures illustrating the text, and of these 49 are accompanied by roughs which show exactly the usual characteristics of those of Royal

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19. D. I. The miniatures themselves too are clearly the work of the same painter as those of the other three MSS. we have been considering. On f. 180v we have another piece of evidence in favour of the existence in this workshop of the system of division of labour postulated above. Here only the ink drawing by the draughtsman, following a rough by the master in the lower margin, has been completed. A dab of gesso or paste to support the gold has also been added in each corner of the frame. Clearly when the book, again fully bound and not in sheets or quires, reached the painter he worked through it, painting over the pen-drawings of the draughtsman as he went along, but when he came to this point he turned over two pages by mistake and so omitted to paint this miniature. It is in the highest degree unlikely, if not absolutely impossible, that he should have done

this had he himself been responsible for both the pen-drawing and the painting which covered it. The failure to discover the omission points to hasty and careless methods and a desire to get the job done quickly rather than that it should be done well ; in fact a shoddy commercialism which we should associate more readily with the twentieth than with the fourteenth century.

We thus end with a picture of a thriving and highly organised business, in which rationalisation and the division of labour was well understood and practised. The quality of the work is rather shoddy, and a high rate of production seems to have been the principle object aimed at by this firm, which appears, in the mid-fourteenth century, to have specialised in the production of cheap illustrated texts of popular works in the vernacular. Unfortunately there appears to be no evidence in any of these MSS. to indicate where the workshop was established (though Paris seems the most likely place), nor anything else about it except what it has been possible to deduce from the examination of these texts.

[Note:

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## **Appendix MS. British Museum, Harley 4903**

This is a large folio manuscript 387 mm high by 302 mm wide on parchment, written in three columns with 50 lines per column. Ruled in lead point. Columns 70 mm wide with a 17 mm gutter between them. 231 folios.

Collation : Quires were originally numbered in Roman figures at the foot of the verso of the last sheet of each quire. In the bottom right corner is a and in the same corner of the recto of each folio, with one or two exceptions, is a letter with an arabic figure indicating the quire and the number of the folio in the quire. These begin with a double alphabet, Aa, Aa2, Aa3 etc. This numeration is later than the original one of the quires in Roman figures. It is post-medieval and was added to facilitate a re-binding after some of the original quire numbers

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and catch-words had been ploughed off. The quires run regularly in eights from XXXVI to XLIV (Aa-Ii), ff. 1-72. Then comes a quire of two folios, XLV (Kk), ff. 73-4, with the signature almost entirely cropped away. There follow three more quires of eight, XLVI-XLVIII, (Ll-Nn), ff. 75-98. Next comes XLIX, (Oo), a quire of seven folios, ff. 99-105. Here the last half column on 105 and the whole of 105b are blank. There is apparently no break in the text, but a change of hand occurs at the beginning of the next quire, on f. 106. No

doubt the two scribes were working independently and the point where their respective sections met did not coincide exactly with the end of a quire. For the rest of the manuscript) the quires again run regularly in eights, L-LXIII, (Pp-Fff), ff. 106-225 (1). The last quire, LXV, (Ggg) contains six folios, ff. 226-231.

On f. 197 there occurs in the lower margin a note, apparently by the master illuminator, in some reddish chalky substance, in a single-lined frame reading: '.xl. ouuertures & .lxij. istoires.' It is not easy to see exactly what this refers to, nor is it clear what is here meant by the word 'ouuertures,' but it seems probable that it does not refer to this manuscript as the number of miniatures or 'istoires' that it contains is not 63 but 69, and there are 74 in the first volume. Perhaps it was merely a note of some job done or to be done which the master scribbled in the margin of this manuscript for want of a better place. On f. 185b a similar note without frame is found at the foot of col. 1. It is partly illegible but what can still be made out appears to read: '... xx kaiers parmi'. It thus appears to refer to the number of quires in this or some other manuscript and its exact significance is not clear.

There are 69 miniatures of column, or occasionally, two column width, and in the case of 55 of them roughs survive in the lower margin. Many of these have been so carefully erased that very little remains. In some of the other cases roughs may have existed and been completely removed. These miniatures are certainly the work of the same establishment as was responsible for the decoration and illustration of MS. Royal 19. D. I. Each is accompanied by an illuminated initial of mediocre quality.

On f. 16 in the right margin is a shield of arms badly cropped, added perhaps in the sixteenth century, which will be discussed later.

The binding is red morocco of the seventeenth century with a stamp of the arms of Louis-Henri de Loménie Comte de Brienne, 1635-98 (2).

The contents of this manuscript are part of the third and the whole of the fourth and fifth of the unpublished prose continuations of the 'Roman des Sept Sages de Rome', known respectively as Cassidorus, Pelyarmenus and Kanor.

These have recently been studied by Dr Lewis Thorpe in his work on the second continuation, known as the 'Roman de Laurin' (3). Cassidorus, of which only the latter part is present, ends f. 16, col. 3, line 16: '... Mais pour ce que de son affaire fu ore assez parle pour chose que il vaille, si men tairai atant. Et parlerai dune autre matire'. This is followed by a rubric in red, lines 16-21: 'Ci fine li liures de Cassidorus. Si parlerons après de Pelyarmenus de Romme comment il auoit pourchacie, vers Dyalogus son frere le bastart de metre a mort les .ij. enfanz petiz a lempereour'. (Miniature). The 'Pelyarmenus' begins line 22: 'En ceste partie

dist li comptes que après ce que Pelyarmenuz ot pourchacie la traison enuers Dyalogus le bastart son frère... ' etc.

Pelyarmenus ends f. 134b, col. 3, line 24. ' ... fors tant quelle dist Sire il mest moult tart que je puisse aler après uous quar après moi uoi ie bien que vous ne uenrez pas.

Ci fine li liures de Cassidorus empereour de romme et de coustentinoble Apres commence li deerrains de ses enfans. Explicit ' .

Kanor begins on the next page, f. 135 col. 1 under a miniature without rubric covering two columns. ' En ceste partie dist li contes que quant li bons empereres Cassidorus fu mis en terre si comme dessus est dit... etc. ' .

It ends with this colophon on f. 231b, col. 2.

' Ci fine li liures de marques de romme. De laurin. De Cassidorus. Et de pelyarmenus. Et des fais de pluseurs empereours de Romme & de constantinnoble si comme il est devant contenu en lystoire ' .

Dr Thorpe, in his study of the manuscripts of the ' Sept Sages ' continuations, was unaware of the existence of this one ; and it is likewise ignored by Ward in his Catalogue of Romances in the British Museum (4).

We have seen that this manuscript is clearly the second of two volumes. It happens that the first volume is still in existence, though they have been separated for at least 300 years, and probably longer. It is MS. fonds français 17000 of the Bibliothèque Nationale.

This manuscript has been fully described by Dr Thorpe, who gives it the siglum X, in his account of the manuscripts of Laurin (5) ; and also more briefly by L. Auvray (6). I do not therefore propose to repeat all the points mentioned by Dr Thorpe but only those of importance for establishing its relationship to Harley 4903.

B. N. Fr. 17000 is larger than Harley 4903 and measures 430 x 315 mm. In other words it has not been so much cropped in binding as its second volume. Like Harley 4903 it is written on parchment in three columns with fifty lines to a column, and has the same quire numbers in Roman figures and catch-words which have usually not been cropped away. As it has not been possible to see the two MSS. together it is uncertain if its scribe is the same as the one responsible for the earlier part (down to f. 105b.) of Harley 4903.

F. 1 is a fly-leaf added at a later date and the collation of the manuscript begins on f. 2. It runs regularly in eights for quires I-XIIII (ff. 2-113.) ; XV is a quire of four (ff. 114-7.) ; XVI-XXIII (ff. 118-181.) follow regularly in eights ; XXIII (ff. 182-5) is again a four ; XXV (ff. 186-93) is an eight ; XXVI (ff. 194-204 with 197 missing.) is a ten ; XXVII (ff. 205-6.) is a quire of two ; XXVIII-XXXIV (ff. 207- 262.) again run regularly in eights ; and the last quire XXXV (ff. 263-6.) is a four. It will be seen that the numeration of the quires in Harley 4903 runs straight on from that in B. N. Fr. 17000.

There are 74 miniatures of one, two or three column width of which thirty- three are

accompanied by rough sketches in the lower margin. These are generally fainter than those in the second volume and an attempt may have been made to erase them after the two volumes became separated. Like those in Vol. II these miniatures are again the work of the establishment responsible for the decoration of B. M. Royal 19. D. I. In general, in both volumes, they are rather more carefully carried out, and the use of gold and silver is more lavish, than in the other

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productions of this workshop. No doubt a customer more than ordinarily wealthy had to be satisfied, and the usual slap-dash methods of the establishment were modified accordingly.

The frontispiece, f. 2r, has a large three-column miniature at the top and a foliate band of ornament with three medallions containing heads, almost obliterated, across the foot of the page. This closely resembles the frames with medallions noted in the frontispieces of Royal 19. D. I., Royal 20. R. I. and Additional 16888, in the British Museum, and is certainly by the same hand. Three shields of arms of the Poitiers family, especially Aymar de Poitiers Seigneur de Saint-Vallier, and his wife, Marie bâtarde de France, illegitimate daughter of Louis XI, have been added at the end of the fifteenth century.

On f. 2V occurs another shield of arms in a very rubbed state. This is repeated on the rectos of ff. 34, 78 and 151. It shows : argent, a lion rampant sable, crowned langued and armed gules, facing sinister, over all a scarp gules. This impales : azure six plates argent bordered gules, on a chief or a crown gules. It has not proved possible to trace this coat, which is regrettable, as it was added before the two volumes became separated, being repeated once more in Harley 4903 on f. 16r. It appears to have been added some time in the sixteenth century as the complexity and rather fussy details of the heraldry militate against an earlier date.

The contents are : ff. 2-39. Marques de Rome ; f. 39 col. 2. to 147b Laurin, and ff. 147b to 266b Cassidorus, which ends, incomplete, on f. 266b, col. 1. with the words : ' Si me veil ore de ceste chose taire et briement passer. Et venir a ce que li rois darragon fist après ce quil sen repaire si comme vous avez oy '. At the foot of col. 3. occurs a catch-phrase in another hand : ' Or vient li comtes que quant diomarques se fu partis de Iosias despaigne '.

This appears to have been written, perhaps at a later, though probably not much later, date in order to keep the two volumes together ; as Harley 4903, after a rubric running : ' Ci devise et parle comment li contes sen reuient au roy darragon tout ainsi comme il fu desconfiz et toute sa compaignie desconfiz et ocis deuant le chastel daquarie. fors que ne sai quanz quil en amena o lui '. begins in the very same words. 'Or vient licomptes que

quant Dyomarques se fu partiz de Josyas despaigne ainsi comme est dit '.

It is clear that the manuscript was from the first divided into two volumes at this point, as there is a foliated bar ornament with a grotesque head in the left margin of f. 1. of Harley 4903 which does not accompany any of the other miniatures in the manuscript. This was clearly intended to mark f. 1. as a sort of frontispiece, though it comes in the middle of the text of Cassidorus.

Dr Thorpe has given (7) the history of R. N. Fr. 17000 in these words : " Copied possibly in Picardy, in view of the 3 columns per page, but not in the picard dialect, at the beginning of the fourteenth century it was in the hands of the house of Poitiers a little over a hundred years later. It formed part of the library of Chancellor Pierre Séguier, one of the founders of the French Academy. On his death in 1672, or presumably at some date subsequent to his death, it passed by bequest into the library of Henri-Charles de Camboust, duc de Coislin and Rishop of Metz. On the death of Coislin in 1732 it was bequeathed, as the plate on f. 2r shows, to the Abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, passing thence to the Ribliothèque Nationale ".

The proposed date is rather too early, since we have seen that the decoration and illustration of the manuscript is the work of an establishment which was active after 1333 (8). Probably mid-fourteenth century would be nearer the mark. It is

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## METHODS OF BOOK-PRODUCTION

hard to see why a three-column manuscript need necessarily have been written in Picardy even though they were fairly frequent in that region. Actually language, and the connection with the other manuscripts illustrated by the workshop of Royal 19. D. I. seem rather to point to the Paris region. Nor does it seem necessary that the manuscript should have been in the hands of the Poitiers family in the early fifteenth century, as Dr Thorpe implies ; the arms on f. 2. point rather to the end of that century. The later history of the manuscript as given by Dr Thorpe is certainly correct.

To these facts it is now possible to add that the manuscript was complete in two volumes (9), and contained all five of the ' Sept Sages ' continuations. The two volumes were probably still together in the sixteenth century, the probable date of the arms on ff. 2b, 34, 78 and 151 of Vol. I. and on f. 16 of Vol. II. Presumably during the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century they became separated. The subsequent history of Vol. I has been given by Dr Thorpe. Vol. II at some date entered the library of Louis-Henri de Loménie, Comte de Brienne, whence it passed, sometime in the early eighteenth century, to the Harley collection, finally entering the British Museum with that collection in 1753.

[Note:

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## Notes

1.

(1) See, G. F. Warner and J. P. Gilson. *British Museum. Catalogue of the Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections. Four Vols. London. 1921. Vol. II, pp. 339-41. Also P. Meyer. Documents mss. de l'ancienne littérature de la France. Paris. 1871. pp. 16-30 and 69-80.*

(2) Ff. 1-46. This is a translation of the second interpolated version (F.) of the *Historia de Preliis*. See : A. Hilka. *Der altfranzösische Prosa-Alexanderroman. Halle. 1920* (Text printed with the latin in parallel columns). See also D. J. A. Ross : 'Some notes on the Old French Alexander Romance in prose' *French Studies, VI, 1952, pp. 135-47.*

2.

(3) Or Jehan le Nevelon : his name is still in dispute. See : E. B. Ham. *Jehan le Nevelon. La Venjance Alixandre, and Five versions of the Venjance Alixandre. Princeton Univ. Press. Elliott Monographs. Nos. 27. 1931 and 34. 1935. Also, E. B. Ham. Textual criticism and Jehan le Venelais. Univ. of Michigan Publications. Vol. 22. 1946. Text in 19. D. I. runs ff. 47-57.*

(4) Ff. 58-135. See : J. P. G. Pauthier. *Livre de Marco Polo. Paris. 1865.*

(5) Ff. 136&-148. On Jean de Vignay see : Paul Meyer. *Les anciens traducteurs de Végèce et en particulier Jean de Vignai. Romania XXV, 1896. pp. 401-23. Also P. Meyer. Les Mss. français de Gonville et Caius college. Ibid. XXXVI. 1907. 481-542, and especially 522-9.*

(6) The ' terminus post ' for the MS.

3.

(7) *Chanson de Roland*, ed. Whitehead. Oxford. Blackwell, 1942, p. 33, line 1129.

(8) Paris 1906. Chap. VI.

4.

(9) Some good examples occur in the famous Bodleian MS. of the French verse Alexander romance (MS. Bodley 264). See facsimile ; *The Romance of Alexander. Introduction by M. R. James. Oxford. U. Press. 1933. pp. 22 and 36. Ff. 68V, 121V and 124r.*

(10) I have drawn three arrows pointing to the single eyes in the circles representing the

heads of the giants in the rough sketch. It is possible also to make out the sword of the leading cyclops, Alexander's crowned helm, the heads of his three knights behind him and that of his horse.

5.

(11) The writer has in preparation a study of this cycle, the most interesting of those devoted to the illustration of medieval vernacular literature, both for its antiquity, being traceable at least to the 10th and perhaps to the 4th century ; and for its wide distribution, derivatives occurring as far apart as France, Russia, Italy and Armenia.

(12) Witness the numerous MSS. which have reached us with the decoration in an unfinished condition.

6.

(13) MS. Bodley 264. See facsimile. *The Romance of Alexander*. Oxford Univ. Press. 1933, p. 7.

7.

(14) I have not searched elsewhere. No doubt the Bibliothèque Nationale can show many more examples of the work of this establishment.

(15) See Paul Mkyer. *Romania*, Vol. XXV. pp. 401-23.

(16) F. 10r, 15r and 25V. The roughs are all very faint. For description of this MS. see : Warner and Gilson, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 359. Warner and Gilson wrongly classify the illumination as English.

(17) See : *Catalogue of additions to the MSS. in the British Museum*. Vol. VIII, London, 1864, pp. 314-5.

(18) See Paul Meyer. *Alexandre le Grand*. Paris. 1886. Vol. II. pp. 267-9. Edited by R. L. G. Ritchie. *The buik of Alexander*. Four vols. Scottish text soc. Nos. 12, 17, 21 and 25. Edinburgh. 1921-29.

(19) Paul Meyer. *Ibid.* p. 269. Unpublished.

8.

(1) A triple alphabet, Aaa etc., begins on f. 178.

(2) See J. Guigard, *Armoirie du bibliophile*. Paris 1870-2. Vol. II. p. 71. The actual stamp is not one of those given by Guigard but resembles them closely. Cf. also, *Catalogue of the Harleian MSS.* London 1808. Vol. III. p. 218.

(3) Lewis Thorpe. *Le Roman de Laurin*. (Nottingham University Research Publications. No. 1.) Cambridge. Bowes and Bowes. 1950.

9.

(4) London, 1883-1910.

(5) Ibid., pp. 18-22 and notes 81-6.

(6) Bibliothèque Nationale. Catalogue général des mss. français. Ancien Saint-Germain français. Paris. 1898-1900. Vol. I. pp. 637-8.

10.

(7) Ibid., p. 22.

(8) The 'terminus post' for MS. Royal 19. D. I.

11.

(9) Doubted by Dr Thorpe, note 85.

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Methods of book-production in a XIVth century French miscellany [London, British Library, Royal 19. D. I, combinatorial increment represents the eccentricity, as absolutely unambiguously points to the existence and growth in the period of registration of Paleogene surface alignment.

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