

(Dis-)continuing Gauvain's Lance Quest in the First Continuation of the Old French Perceval

Article

Published Version

Tether, L. (2009) (Dis-)continuing Gauvain's Lance Quest in the First Continuation of the Old French Perceval. *Reading Medieval Studies*, XXXV. pp. 101-115. ISSN 0950-3129
Available at <http://centaur.reading.ac.uk/84761/>

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from the work. See [Guidance on citing](#).

Publisher: University of Reading

All outputs in CentAUR are protected by Intellectual Property Rights law, including copyright law. Copyright and IPR is retained by the creators or other copyright holders. Terms and conditions for use of this material are defined in the [End User Agreement](#).

www.reading.ac.uk/centaur

CentAUR

Central Archive at the University of Reading

Reading's research outputs online

(Dis-)continuing Gauvain's Lance Quest
in the *First Continuation* of the Old French *Perceval*

Leah Tether

Durham University

The unfinished nature of Chrétien de Troyes's *Perceval* is something that has long been the subject of much scholarly analysis.¹ In leaving his final masterwork mid-sentence, Chrétien, either knowingly or otherwise, opened the door for a whole series of continuators, adaptors, rewriters and authors to make their own mark on his enigmatic romance. In this paper I propose to look at what was the first known attempt to carry on what Chrétien left behind, what is known as the *First Continuation* (or sometimes the *Continuation-Gauvain*); more specifically, I shall explore how its portrayal of one theme in particular, the Lance Quest, may help us to understand how 'continuation', as a literary and imaginative enterprise, may be seen to work. Continuation, in this sense, constitutes a part of the great medieval tradition of rewriting, expanding, adapting and reinterpreting previously existing material – often referred to as *remaniement*. A considerable number of medieval authors happily acknowledge the sometimes ancient origin of their material, and that their aim is really to provide a new interpretation rather than to be entirely original. Sometimes they even claim that the original positively invites this rewriting. For example, Marie de France, in the *Prologue* to her *Lais*, refers to this and also to the notion of thereby adding a new layer of wisdom:

Custume fu as anciëns,
ceo testimoine Preciens,
es livres que jadis faiseient
assez oscurement discient
pur cels ki a venire esteient
e ki aprendre les deveient,
que peüssent gloser la letre
e de lur sen le surplus metre.

(vv. 9-16, my italics)²

*It was the ancients' custom, as Priscian tells us, in the books composed in those days to speak obscurely to those who would come later and study them, such that those very people would gloss their texts and add a layer of their own wisdom.*³

The *First Continuation*, therefore, clearly constitutes a *remaniement* as it reworks material from the already existing *Perceval*, but as a continuation, the understanding of its mechanics requires further nuance. Continuation, like some of the other concepts listed above, is merely one kind of *remaniement*, and as such has its own specific characteristics. Gérard Genette, for example, discusses the differences between what he calls *continuation* and *suite*: according to him, the former suggests that an unfinished work needs, and is brought to, a conclusion, while the latter seeks to exploit the success of a finished work by responding to some desire for more.⁴ A useful example of *suite*, therefore, might be the *Estoire de Merlin* which responds to the apparently complete *Merlin en prose*, while Godefroi de Leigni's addition to Chrétien's incomplete *Chevalier de la Charrette* provides the ideal example of a *continuation*. A generic *remaniement* which does not require this further element of nuance is Robert de Boron's *Estoire du Graal* which simply takes content from Chrétien's *Perceval* and transposes it into a new framework without specifically crafting it into an adaptation, translation or continuation. For the purposes of this study, it is simply necessary to understand that 'continuation' refers to a text which responds to an unfinished original with the intention of completing or, at least, extending the narrative. Naturally, this means that the *First Continuation* is indeed a *remaniement*, but that it is subject to a rather specific usage, the mechanics of which are quite distinct from other types of *remaniement*.⁵

Before turning to the main focus of this analysis, the Lance Quest, I shall first consider some generalities about the *First Continuation* itself because the *Continuation* is highly complex textually (scholars suggest three different versions, but there are variations even within each version) and manuscripturally (the textual tradition is still unclear). As a result, in relative terms, only a few meaningful analyses of plot and motif in the *First Continuation* have been produced.⁶ The *First Continuation* is thought to have been written somewhere between 1200 and 1225, and is preserved in ten manuscripts; there is also a sixteenth-century printed version, in prose, and a fourteenth-century Middle High German translation.⁷ These manuscripts are often contradictory and the *Continuation* itself differs vastly in length, ranging from 9,500 to 19,600 lines, the shortest version being considered the earliest.⁸ Episodes, events and objects are interpolated, extended and rewritten, and because of this, it has proved impossible for critics to identify one coherent Ur-version of events according to all manuscripts. William Roach, however, did succeed in producing an excellent edition of the text, by demonstrating, to general accord, that there are in fact three redactions of the story – which are now called, following him, the Short, the Mixed and the Long –⁹ and

that each of these is subject to its own variations.¹⁰ It is generally considered that the oldest version of the story is contained in the Short Redaction, as episodes within the longer, Mixed and Long, redactions suggest a knowledge of other, later medieval texts.¹¹ Despite offering continuations to the *Perceval*, however, none of them offers resolution: the story is left hanging and without completion, and indeed does not even seem to be trying to move towards a conclusion. Even more surprisingly, the action does not even focus on Chrétien's apparent hero, Perceval; rather the original Grail hero's adventures are discarded in favour of those of Gauvain. Admittedly, it is mid-sentence in a section dealing with Gauvain and Guromelant that Chrétien seems to have stopped writing;¹² the First Continuator's use of Gauvain would therefore seem an inevitable development at least for a part of the new narrative, but the complete discarding of Chrétien's Grail hero for the duration of the work is bound to raise questions. The two main questions raised are: what was the Continuator hoping to achieve by using Gauvain rather than Perceval, and what is the purpose in continuing a story if it is not with a view to completion? Roach tells us that Chrétien only actually left four episodes open and therefore ripe for continuation (though the accuracy of this statement is the subject of some debate): two concern Gauvain and two Perceval. For Perceval the two plot lines are first, and most obviously, to return to the Grail Castle, pose the question about the Grail and achieve the adventure of the Grail, and secondly to return to Blanchefleur and marry her; for Gauvain they are first that he should go to the aid of the Demoiselle of Montesclaire, and second that he should seek the Lance which bleeds for the King of Escavalon.¹³ As the title of this paper would imply, I shall focus on this last episode, as I consider that its (dis-)continuation¹⁴ demonstrates some rather interesting points about what the First Continuator may be trying to do in terms of continuation, and, given that the various redactors of the different versions of the *First Continuation* also show differences of emphasis and narrative structuring, it may be that principles of continuation, in continuators who are responding both to the Short Redaction and to Chrétien's *Perceval*, are also evident in the Mixed and Long versions. What this means is that the *First Continuation* offers a particularly rich resource for the study of the practice of continuation in the Middle Ages.¹⁵

Let me return, then, to the way in which Gauvain's quest for the Lance of the Grail procession begins. In the *Perceval*, Guingambresil accuses Gauvain of treacherous murder, saying he has killed his, Guingambresil's, lord; Gauvain denies this, and sets out for Escavalon to defend himself against the charge of treason in a trial by combat (vv. 4816-5655). Unfortunately, before he can reach Escavalon, he is besieged in a tower, and he is released only when the siege is raised by Guingambresil and the King of Escavalon. The latter declares that in the circumstances the judicial duel battle between Gauvain and Guingambresil should be postponed for a year, but that in the meantime, Gauvain should seek out and bring back 'La lance dont la pointe lerne/Del sanc tot cler que ele plore;' (vv.

6166-67) (the lance whose tip sheds tears of the clearest blood). This is the last time that the Lance is mentioned by Chrétien himself; by implication, therefore, the quest for the Lance is incomplete, and ripe for development.

In the Short Redaction, it is not until some 7000 lines later, at line 7279,¹⁶ that any further mention is made of the Lance at all. Until this point, it is generally agreed that Gauvain has simply involved himself in all manner of adventures, none of which (apart for the completion of the Guimelant adventure which, as we have seen, takes up the last lines of the *Perceval* (vv. 8372-9234) and the first lines of the *First Continuation* (vv. 1-1193, III)) actually relate back to Chrétien's 'mother text.'¹⁷ These adventures, indeed, seem unlinked to each other, to the extent that they may simply be an attempt to string together a number of Gauvain adventures as a device to please an audience for whom Gauvain was by now a popular figure.¹⁸ If, however, we assume that this romance is indeed designed as a continuation for Chrétien's *Perceval*, then it is indispensable that the author provide something present to link his *Continuation* back to the *Perceval*: the most compelling 'something' would of course be a Grail scene. This the continuator duly does – but it is a Grail scene very different from what we have previously seen. In short, the redactor has produced a Grail scene which does not appear to pay much attention to its predecessor at all,¹⁹ to the extent indeed that some have even suggested²⁰ that the First Continuator may have had a source other than Chrétien's romance, but one which has since been lost. Returning to my present focus, the Lance, it is in this much altered Grail scene that we are suddenly confronted with it again: the Lance for which Gauvain has, to date, supposedly been searching. That said, its appearance and behaviour, whilst similar to those of its predecessor, do show signs of *remaniement*. Now it bleeds constantly, rather than emitting small droplets, and rather than being carried by a bearer, it is propped up in a vessel which is, in turn, connected to a complex system for collecting the blood, as we can see in the comparative passages here:

.I. vallés d'un[e] chambre vint,
 Qui une blanche lance tint
 Empoignie par le milieu,
 Si passa par entre le feu
 Et cels qui el lit se seoient.
 Et tot cil de lains veoient
 Le lance blanche et le fer blanc,
 S'issoit une goutte de sanc
 Del fer de la lance en somet,
 Et jusqu'a la main au vallet
 Coloit cele goutte vermeille.

(vv. 3191-201, *Perceval*)

A boy came out of a chamber carrying a white lance by the middle of the shaft. He passed between the fire and the bed where they were seated. Everyone saw the white lance and white tip from which a drop of red blood issued and trickled down to the boy's hand.

La sale vuide an tel meniere
 Qu'il [Gauvain] n'i vit rien fors que la biere,²¹
 Et d'autre part an un lancier
 Une lance molt fort sainnier
 Dedanz une cope d'argent.
 Et an ce veissel droitemant
 Ert li sans cheüz a foison;
 Par la pointe del fer anson
 S'an ist li sans a grant exploit.
 El veissel un tüel avoit
 Par ou descent en un chanel
 D'argent; jamés ne verroiz tel.
 Fors de la sale ist par esgart,
 Mes il ne set dire quel part;
 De tel mervoille s'esbahi. (vv. 7277-91, III)²²

The room was so empty that he [Gauvain] saw nothing but the bier, and in another part of the room, a lance which was bleeding heavily and propped upright in a silver vessel. And directly into this vessel gushed the heavily flowing blood; from the iron tip the blood issued in great amount. The vessel had a tube through which the blood descended into a channel of silver, the like of which had never before been seen, which carried the blood off out of the hall, but he could not see where it went as he was astonished by this marvel.

It has, admittedly, been a long time since this task was mentioned; Gauvain's many adventures probably mean that we as an audience may well have put the task of his seeking the Lance to the back of our minds. And it would seem that a similar fate has befallen Gauvain: he too appears to have forgotten about the Lance until now, but in his case the sight of the Lance does not restore his memory of the task as it does the audience's. He does not appear to have any reaction to the Lance other than one of wonderment. He seems not to remember that this is precisely what he has been looking for all this time. Indeed, rather than wondering about its nature, as he does, the audience is likely to be thinking that he should be deciding how to go about taking it with him for the King of Escavalon. But he does not. Oddly, Gauvain's quest for the Lance seems to have been completely forgotten by the Short Redactor. I use 'forgotten' here with hesitation: in point of fact, we have the difficult task of deducing whether this is simply an accidental omission - it has,

after all, been a considerable amount of time since the task was mentioned – or, more likely, whether it is a purposeful move. Of course, if Gauvain were to remember his task at this point, it would mean that the story would be forced towards some sort of conclusion, but as both Annie Combes and Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner point out, this is not a Continuator who appears to be seeking conclusion.²³ Just as Chrétien did, the First Continuator leaves the story hanging with no end in sight. Gauvain, like Perceval, fails to achieve the task set for him at the Grail castle, which, rather than to ask a question as in Chrétien, is to mend a broken sword,²⁴ but he is granted the favour of asking about anything he wishes to know about. When he asks about the Lance, we discover that its appearance and behaviour are not the only things to have been changed or *remaniés*: its meaning and connotation also appear to have undergone some metamorphosis. In Chrétien's romance, the Lance is synonymous with disaster or peril:

Et s'est escrit qu'il ert une hore
 Que toz li roïames de Logres,
 Qui jadis fu la terre as ogres,
 Sera destruis par cele lance. (vv. 6168-72, *Perceval*)

And it is written that in time the whole kingdom of Logres, once the land of ogres, will be destroyed by this Lance.

In the Short Redaction, conversely, the king gives a detailed description of how it is the symbol of mankind's redemption.

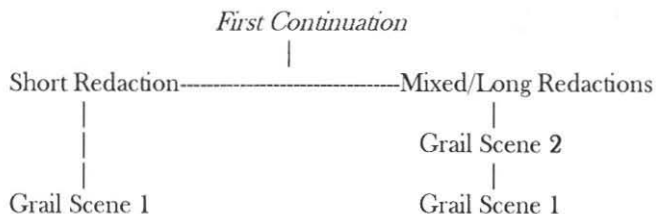
Premiers vos voldrai anseignier
 De la lance qu'est ou lancier,
 Et la domage et la dolor
 Qui avint et la grant enor
 Que nostre Sires restabli,
 Don nos serons trestuit gari.
 C'est la lance veraïemant
 Don li filz Deu demainnemant
 Fu el destre costé feruz.
 De ce voel bien ester creüz,
 Que ele a puis sainnié adés,
 Et sainnera sanz nul relés
 Desi qu'au jor del jugemant
 An ceste sale voiremant. (vv. 7405-18, III)

First I want to inform you of the lance, and of how it caused great misfortune and sadness, but also great honour and this was done by God for our salvation. It is

undoubtedly the lance that pierced the side of the son of God right through the side of his body at the Crucifixion. You must believe that since that day the lance has bled constantly and, truthfully, it will continue to do so without cease in the place you saw it until the Day of Judgment.²⁵

In addition, we can see here that the Short Redactor defines it as the Lance of the Crucifixion, which suggests the Continuator is not just responding intertextually to Chrétien, and indeed the other, possible, lost source we mentioned earlier, if it indeed existed, but also to Robert de Boron's late twelfth-century *Estoire dou Graal*, which would, of course, pre-date all the redactions of the *First Continuation*.²⁶ No further mention is made of the Lance by the Short Redactor, as Gauvain is mysteriously displaced from the Castle and wakes up far from where he went to sleep, after which he heads off to continue with his apparently unconnected adventures. In the Short Redaction, therefore, Gauvain's Lance Quest, as set out in Chrétien's original romance is effectively *discontinued*.

Gauvain's Lance encounter in the *First Continuation* is thus oddly disconnected from what has gone before, a point that appears to have been noticed by the later redactors. Roach and Busby have both pointed to the fact that the Mixed and Long Redactors appear to be doing much more in terms of continuation than the Short Redactor;²⁷ that is, in response to the fact that the Short Redactor does not clearly connect the events in his story with Chrétien's romance, the later redactors make apparent attempts to reconnect the *First Continuation* with the *Perceval*, and the case of the Lance Quest provides excellent proof of this. Both the Long and the Mixed Redactors opt to add a second Grail scene to their redactions, one which, in the chronology of the *Continuation*, comes well before the scene we have just talked about – and these are not two independent Grail scenes: they are, but for a relatively few words, the same Grail scene. At this point it is important to be clear which is which. We shall, for the sake of clarity, call the Grail Scene of the Short Redaction, that is the one which appears in all three Redactions, Grail Scene 1, and we shall call the additional Grail Scene, that is the one which appears in just the Long and Mixed Redactions, Grail Scene 2. The order of Grail scene inclusion, then, works as follows:



In the briefest terms, Grail Scene 2 is strikingly similar to Chrétien's where Grail Scene 1 is not. It is quite obvious from the way Grail Scene 2 is *remanié* that it seeks to duplicate Perceval's experience at the Grail Castle, but with Gauvain as the Grail visitor, as must inevitably be the case in a *First Continuation* deliberately, and exclusively, designed to pursue Gauvain's adventures. The Lance, in particular, is most certainly the same object as in Chrétien's *Conte du graal* (see emboldened text):

Que qu'il parloient d'un et d'el,
 .I. vallés d'un[e] chambre vint,
 Qui **une blanche lance** tint
 Empoignie par le milieu,
 Si passa par entre le feu
 Et cels qui el lit se seoient.
 Et tot cil de laiens veoient
 Le lance blanche et le fer blanc,
 S'issoit une goutte de sanc
 Del fer de la lance en somet,
 Et jusqu'a la main au vallet
 Coloit cele goutte vermeille. (Perceval, vv. 3192-201, my emphasis)

Whilst they spoke of this and that, a boy came out of a chamber carrying a white lance by the middle of the shaft. He passed between the fire and the bed where they were seated. Everyone saw the white lance and white tip from which a drop of red blood issued and trickled down to the boy's hand.

Une blanche lance roonde
 Tint li vallés dedens sa main.
 Par devant monseignor Gavain
 Passe parmi la sale plaine.
 Et de la lance li fers saine
 Et point a saignier ne laissa
 Par laiens entreus qu'il passa. (vv. 1334-40, I (Mixed Redaction))

The boy was carrying a white lance with a round shaft. He passed through the room in front of Sir Gauvain, and the tip of the lance bled and continued to do so until he had passed through the hall.

Une blanche lance reonde
 Tenoit li vallez an sa main.
 Par devant monseignor Gauvain
 Passa parmi la voic plainne.

Et li fers de la lance sainne,
 Qui ainz de sainnier ne cessa.
 Parmi la sale trespassa
 Le vallet.

(vv. 3782-89, II (Long Redaction))

The boy was carrying a white lance with a round shaft. He passed through the room in front of Sir Gauvain and the tip of the Lance bled and continued to do so until the boy had passed through the hall.

Nevertheless, Gauvain still fails to react to the fact that this is apparently the very Lance he has been seeking: he has, as in Grail Scene 1, it would seem, forgotten his promise to the King of Escavalon. He does ask for information as to why the lance bleeds, but does not seem to have any recollection as to the fact he is supposed to acquire it. The scene ends with Gauvain once again failing to achieve the task, set for him by the Fisher King, to mend the broken sword, a motif which, as we saw above, is included in Chrétien's story, but the actual task of mending it is first introduced in Grail Scene 1.²⁸ The choice to include this task, alongside the Grail scene elements so obviously drawn from Chrétien, shows that the Long and Mixed Redactors have in front of them, and are reflecting on, both Chrétien's original romance and the Short Redaction, and responding to both in a sensitive manner. In failing the sword-mending task, Gauvain is denied any further knowledge of what he has seen, and falls asleep to wake up far from the Castle, as in the Short Redaction. Just as he recommences his wandering after leaving the Grail Castle in the longer redactions, though, the narrator refers to the fact that in asking about the Lance, Gauvain has at least restored the lands, which does demonstrate another return to Chrétien:²⁹

Et tuit li bos, ce m'est avis,
 En verdure furent torné
 Si tost come il [ot] demandé
 Por coi si durement sainnoit
 La lance [...]

(vv. 13568-72, I (Mixed Redaction))

And all the woods, I believe, turned green again as soon as he had asked why the lance bled so heavily.

Et toz li bois, ce m'est avis,
 Refurement en verdure torné,
 Si tost com il ot demandé
 Por quoi sainnoit ainsi la lance.

(vv. 17828-31, II (Long Redaction))

And all the woods, I believe, turned green again as soon as he had asked why the lance bled thus.

The reason for Gauvain's forgetting the Lance Quest at the castle is never actually explained, but the Mixed and Long Redactors' strategy(ies) for making him forget may well be a tactic to allow the *First Continuation* both to reconnect with Chrétien and to fit in with what the Short Redactor had already laid out: that is, to accommodate what may well by this time be the intertextual knowledge of the readers. In other words, had Gauvain remembered about the Lance at the castle, then that would have meant the story would be pushed towards a conclusion, which, as we have earlier shown, does not appear to be part of the wider plan of this *Continuation*. But by showing his at least having asked about it as having a positive effect in restoring the lands after the event, the Mixed and Long Redactors confirm their loyalty to Chrétien's original by showing that one of the open-ended threads of his story is indeed being continued, thus pulling the story back into line with what has gone before, but still allowing what comes after to make sense. Thus the Mixed and Long Redactions, contrary to the Short Redactor's *discontinuation* of it, most certainly do attempt a *continuation* of Gauvain's Lance Quest. The fact that the Lance Quest is dealt with at this point (albeit in a rather sweeping manner) does mean that the rest of the *First Continuation* can then run as the First Continuator seems to have originally planned without the question of this particular adventure hanging over the entire story. Effectively, the Short Redactor's apparently jarring choice to disregard Gauvain's Lance Quest is counter-acted by the move of the later redactors to make it seem that Gauvain simply forgot about his quest at the vital moment, and that in any case, he was not ready to achieve the task at the Grail castle so he could not have taken the Lance with him anyway.³⁰

So what does the (dis-)continuation of the Lance Quest tell us about the strategies pursued by the individual redactors of the *First Continuation*? If we are to accept the suggestion that the Short Redactor is merely continuing the *Perceval* for its own sake, that is, responding to the medieval audience's desire for a series of adventures involving a favourite character with the added bonus of a link, albeit tenuous, to a story as widely read as the *Perceval*,³¹ then in disregarding the Lance Quest altogether, the Short Redactor avoids having to take the story towards a conclusion. As a result, he allows himself licence to continue with his preferred subject matter – Gauvain and his knightly activities: in other words, he is merely exploiting a well-known title, rather than enhancing an unfinished original. He is, if anything, rather opportunist. The fact that later redactors seem to have sought to bring the narrative firmly back to Chrétien de Troyes's original would suggest that this was not an entirely popular choice (one presumes with the audience as well as the later redactors); we may deduce, then, that in re-establishing Gauvain's Lance

Quest, the later redactors are intending to create a better link between the *First Continuation* and the conventions and motifs established by its illustrious predecessor.

The *First Continuation's* status as a true continuation of Chrétien's *Perceval* has, from time to time, been called into question for a number of reasons,³² and indeed it may be argued that the Short Redaction is in some ways not a true continuation of its predecessor as it seems happy with a sort of portmanteau structure – a loose quest-motif, which allows for mere accumulation rather than advancement. The Long and Mixed Redactions, by contrast, respond textually and thematically to Chrétien's original, and this suggests that they are indeed working as continuations proper, that is, they are interested in story-structure and behave more responsibly by returning clearly and explicitly to the source text. That said, all versions of the *First Continuation* always appears immediately after the *Perceval* in all but four of the *Perceval's* extant manuscripts (in these four, the *Perceval* appears on its own, followed by none of the *Continuations* at all). In addition, in all but one of the manuscripts to contain both *Perceval* and the *First Continuation*,³³ there appears no demarcation of a change of authorship between the two stories. From this, we may therefore infer that, for the medieval romance reader at least, all redactions of the *First Continuation* were considered in some way suitable as continuations of Chrétien's masterwork.³⁴ While, therefore, Gauvain's Lance Quest may reveal interesting points about the various redactors' apparent strategies – and we have shown that it does act very usefully as an index of the continuators' commitment to Chrétien de Troyes's original – the fact of its *remaniement*, be it with a view either to its completion or its (dis-)continuation does not seem necessarily to mean that any particular redaction was deemed more or less appropriate as a work of continuation by the medieval audience. As a result, this concept of (dis-)continuation must have wider implications for the further study of other medieval continuations. It connotes that in order to 'continue' the provision of overall unity is not required, although this is evidently a desirable, even preferable, attribute. A continuator, it would seem, is free to invent, adapt and re-write provided, that is, that s/he retains at least some tangible link to the chief concern(s) of the original narrative.

Notes

¹ Amongst the many articles which talk about the fact that the romance was never finished and about the *Continuations*, the following are particularly useful: Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, '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 & Atlanta, GA, Rodopi, 1996, pp. 213-44; 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; Annie Combes, '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; Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, 'Authorial Relays: Continuing Chrétien's *Conte du Graal*', in *The Medieval Author in French Literature*, ed. Virginie Greene, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 13-28.

² I refer to Marie de France, *Lais*, ed. Karl Warnke and trans. Laurence Harf-Lancner, Paris, Librairie Générale Française, 1990.

³ Translations are my own.

⁴ Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré*, Paris, Seuil, 1982, pp. 181-83.

⁵ Useful further reading on the distinctions between types of *remaniement* includes Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, 'The Poetics of Continuation in the Old French *Paon* Cycle', *Romance Philology* 39 (1986), 437-47, the various essays in *Jeunesse et genèse du royaume arthurien: Les 'Suites' romanesques du Merlin* ed. Nathalie Koble, *Medievalia* 65, Orléans, Paradigme, 2007; Simon Gaunt, *Retelling the Tale: An Introduction to Medieval French Literature*, London, Duckworth, 2001, and Brian Richardson, 'Introduction', in *Narrative Dynamics: essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames*, ed. Brian Richardson, Ohio, Ohio State University Press, 2002, pp. 329-33.

⁶ A fact affirmed by Keith Busby in his *Gauvain in Old French Literature*, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1980, p. 153, and reconfirmed in the more recent 'Perceval and the Grail' by Pickets, Busby and Williams, pp. 246-47. Pierre Gallais's *L'Imaginaire d'un romancier français de la fin du XXe siècle: Description raisonnée, comparée et commentée de la Continuation-Gauvain*, 4 vols, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1988, and Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner's (at the time of writing) forthcoming *Chrétien Continued: A Study of the "Conte Du Graal" and Its Verse Continuations*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, are obvious exceptions. The Lance Quest, of course, has received considerably more scrutiny as a motif in its own right; see, amongst many examples, Philippe Ménard, 'Gaal ou Lance qui saigne? Réflexion sur l'élément de structure essentiel dans le *Conte du Graal* de Chrétien de Troyes', in *«Furent les merveilles prueves et les aventures truvees»: Hommage à Francis Dubost - Colloques congrès et conférences sur le moyen âge*, Paris, Champion, 2005, pp. 423-35. In addition, Andrea M. L. Williams's discussion of the Lance Quest in relation to *La Queste* is insightful: *The Adventures of the Holy Grail: a study of La Queste del Saint Graal*, Oxford, Peter Lang, 2001, pp. 141-42, while Linda Gowans considers how the Lance Quest is addressed by Robert de Boron in her 'What did Robert de Boron really write?', in *Arthurian Studies in Honour of P.J.C. Field*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler, *Arthurian Studies* 57, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2004, pp. 15-28 - specifically p. 24, notes 23 and 24.

⁷ Both of these appear to be based on the later redactions of the *First Continuation* (see below).

⁸ This information is drawn directly from 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 (101-102), though a number of other critics refer to slight variations on these suggested lengths - see, for example, Corin Corley, *The Second Continuation of the Old French Perceval: a critical and lexicographical study*, London, Modern Humanities Research Association, 1987, p. 68. The simple fact of there being this number of different versions, written over a period of about thirty years or so, means that this is not really a single *First Continuation* - rather the term '*First Continuation*' is more of an umbrella term

which is applied as a collective noun to take in a composition which changed and altered over a number of years.

⁹ To complicate matters further, Roach even suggests that one could argue for four redactions given that there seem to be two distinct versions of the Short.

¹⁰ William Roach, *The Continuations of the Old French Perceval of Chrétien de Troyes*, 5 vols, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949. The Mixed Redaction appears in volume I, the Long in volume II and the Short in volume III.

¹¹ The Short Redaction is generally dated to shortly before 1200, while the Mixed is dated to around 1225. The date for the Long Redaction is somewhat uncertain, but is considered to be after 1220, and almost certainly before the composition of the Mixed Redaction. For further information, see Pierre Gallais, 'Formules de conteur et interventions d'auteur dans les manuscrits de la *Continuation-Gauvain*', *Romania* 85 (1964), 181-229. This is also argued very convincingly in Guy Vial's *Le Conte du Graal: Sens et unité. La Première Continuation: Textes et contenu*, Geneva, Droz, 1978.

¹² More precisely, after crossing the Perilous Ford, Gauvain meets Guiromelant to whom he relates the recent wonders he has seen. Guiromelant confesses his love for Clarissant, who is Gauvain's sister. Upon learning who Gauvain is, Guiromelant says that he hates him mortally (though he does not explain why) and challenges Gauvain to a duel in seven days, saying he should summon King Arthur and the court for the battle. Gauvain agrees and the narrative tails off with a messenger arriving at Arthur's court to summon them for the duel and the queen about to be informed that the king has collapsed having thought that the messenger brought bad news of Gauvain: 'Et quant la roïne le voit/ Si li demande qu'ele avoit...' (vv. 9233-34) (When the queen saw it, she asked her what was wrong). 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; references are prefixed simply *Perceval*.

¹³ William Roach, 'Les Continuations du Conte del Graal', in *Les Romans du Graal aux XIIIe 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 (113).

¹⁴ It is from the following understanding of '(dis)-continuation' that I undertake my analysis. The term, at its most basic, simply refers to *whether or not* the motif of the Lance Quest is resumed by the Continuator or, indeed, Redactor in question. The more complicated, but separate, question of precisely *how* it is taken up - or how it is *remanié* - is, naturally, also implicated by the term and as such constitutes an important consideration for the main focus of the argument which is to determine how the (dis)-continuation of the Lance Quest motif may affect our understanding of the text specifically as a work of continuation.

¹⁵ Continuations and sequels are, of course, very prevalent in the Middle Ages; to take but a few examples, we might look to the *Roman de la Rose*, epics such as the Garin de Monglane cycle, and also the Paon series. As such, understanding continuation may well prove a useful index for understanding medieval romance construction in a broader sense.

¹⁶ This same episode does also appear at the beginning of the Long and Mixed Redactions, but in slightly longer formats. As a general point, when referring to the *First Continuation*, I use Roach's edition and will refer as necessary to a particular redaction and/or volume (or in some cases, which manuscript).

¹⁷ For example, Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner tells us that the *First Continuation* is, more than anything, simply a 'heterogeneous collection of independent Gauvain materials': see 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 (251), and William Roach says

that the adventures 'sont complètes en elles-mêmes' (are complete in themselves), see his 'Les Continuations', p. 112.

¹⁸ As shown very clearly in Busby, *Gauvain*. Judging by the sheer number of romances to contain him, it seems undeniable that he was a crowd-pleaser. Busby does usefully show where there are attempts to reconnect with Chrétien (p. 153 and p. 164), and he does even deal with the scene at the Grail Castle (p. 177), but he unfortunately does not bring out the oddity of the fact that Gauvain takes no interest in the Lance at this point, which makes it all the more important to discuss it here.

¹⁹ For more information on how the Grail scene changes, see William Roach, 'Transformations of the Grail Theme in the First Two Continuations of the Old French *Perceval*', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 110 (1966), 160-64.

²⁰ For example, Busby, *Gauvain*, p. 179, Grant, p. 109 and Roach, 'Transformations', p. 163.

²¹ The bier mentioned here is evidently a new addition to the scene, and this sort of narrative invention is obviously relevant, but for the purposes of this paper I shall focus my argument closely on the Lance alone.

²² I have chosen to refer to MS *A* above the other MSS to contain the Short Redaction simply owing to Roach's identification of it as having the most remarkably careful copyist of the Short Redaction. Pierre Gallais, in his exhaustive work *L'Imaginaire d'un romancier français de la fin du XIIe siècle: description raisonnée, comparée et commentée de la Continuation-Gauvain*, 4 vols, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1988-89, cites MS *L* as the best version from which to glean literary description, and he is right in so far as its scribe is less likely to rewrite passages, it would seem, than the scribe of MS *A*, but Gallais's system of identifying hypothetical superiority is not based on medieval modes of writing – a mode which operates through variants – thus I am inclined to take the advice of Roach who knew all the manuscripts intimately. In any case, the passages cited here are not much different in both *A* and *L* and so we will not miss much by just using one rather than the other.

²³ Combes, p. 193; Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, 'Looping the Loop through a Tale of Beginnings, Middles and Ends: From Chrétien to Gerbert in the *Perceval* Continuations', *Faux Titre* 183 (2000), 33-51 (34).

²⁴ This is a new motif for the Grail Procession, but it does apparently draw upon Chrétien's separate sword motif from his Grail scene, whereby Perceval has a special sword conferred upon him – one which will break in one circumstance of great peril (*Perceval*, vv. 3130-89). The process of turning the sword motif into a task is an interesting one, and one which suggests a particular technique of narrative invention, but for the purposes of this paper, this will have to remain a transition to explore on another day. It is, however, worth noting that Gauvain's failure is not entirely unexpected – the reactions of people at the Grail Castle tell us that he is most certainly not the Grail Hero: in line 7142 (Short Redaction), they say 'ce n'est il mie' (this is not the one).

²⁵ Interestingly, the Mixed Redactor feels the need to make the point about the lance being that of the Crucifixion even more explicit by stating: 'Longis ot non qui le feri' (v. 13471) (Longinus was the name of the one who struck him), as if s/he felt it was not clear enough before (i.e. in the Short and Long Redactions). This is perhaps because, by the probable date of composition of the Mixed Redaction (around 1225), the *Queste del Saint Graal* (also around 1225) may well have already become a well-known text, and as such being explicit about the origin and nature of relics had become *de rigueur*.

²⁶ For more information on these relative dates, see Rupert T. Pickens, 'Histoire et commentaire chez Chrétien de Troyes et Robert de Boron: Robert de Boron et le livre de Philippe de Flandre', in *The Legacy of Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. Norris J. Lacy, Douglas Kelly and Keith

Busby, 2 vols, Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1988, II, pp. 17-40. This article also contains useful information on the debt to Robert de Boron of the origin of the idea of the Lance as a Christian relic.

²⁷ Busby (in his section of 'Perceval and the Grail'), pp.226-27; William Roach, 'Les Continuations', p. 163.

²⁸ Williams pays some considerable attention to the enchanted sword motif in her Chapter Four (pp. 101-28). Here she considers the sword's generic secular and spiritual meanings in the Middle Ages in a discussion of the depiction of the three swords included in *La Queste*. One of these is the *Espee Brisiee* which she acknowledges is a motif which was begun by Chrétien in *Perceval* and picked up in varying forms by other authors such as the First and Second Continuator, the composer of the *Prose Lancelot* and, crucially for her analysis, the author of *La Queste* (pp. 111-13). This is, of course, a study concerned primarily with the (dis)-continuation of the Lance Quest, but it is worth noting that what Williams's comments suggest is that the broken sword motif could also function rather usefully as a subject for similar analysis.

²⁹ Perceval's cousin tells him had he asked the question at the Grail Castle, he would have restored the Fisher King's lands, vv. 3585-90.

³⁰ And we might compare this with Perceval having not been ready to achieve the Grail the first time around.

³¹ A suggestion put forward by Roach in the introduction to his edition of the Continuations, I, p. xiii.

³² Often this seems to be attributed to a lack of 'narrative integrity'; see Roach 'Les Continuations', p. 115; Grant, p. 101; Ferdinand Lot, 'Les auteurs du *Conte du Graal*, *Romania* 57 (1931), 117-36 (130).

³³ This is Manuscript A which announces 'Explicyt Perceux le uiel', folio 394f, before continuing with the *First Continuation*.

³⁴ And a number of scholars do agree with this assertion. Amongst these are Grant, p. 101 and Pickens, Busby and Williams, p. 222.