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# Restoring Medieval Manuscripts in the Eighteenth-Century: Completing or Perfecting?

The example of France, Le Mans, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 14

Delphine Demelas

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- 1 The public library of the city of Le Mans (France) houses a rare hybrid manuscript<sup>1</sup>. It is an attempt by an eighteenth-century scribe to rescue a medieval fragment. The codex contains a single text, *La Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin*, a *chanson de geste* written at the end of the fourteenth century<sup>2</sup>. The value of manuscript 14 lies more in its particular composition rather than in its medieval origin. Indeed, the manuscript consists of fragments of medieval writing incorporated in the eighteenth century, that is from copies of medieval versions of the poem. This is known from study of J.-Cl. Faucon's edition of the poem, which showed that the eighteenth-century scribe of ms 14 composed his copy using a medieval model containing a now lost version of the text, that the critic called ms. X<sup>3</sup>. The medieval quires are poor copies: spaces for illumination are empty and guide letters are visible<sup>4</sup>. These blanks show that the copyist's workshop lacked either money or time to complete the decorations. Furthermore, some pages are copied twice, certainly due to an inattentive scribe<sup>5</sup>. Thus, the medieval pages are not the most exciting part for our study. However, what is noteworthy is that despite its poor appearance, somebody in the early eighteenth century took these medieval fragments, which contained extracts of the *Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin*, and decided to copy in the missing parts in order to rebuild the whole text and to fill in the lacunae. This intervention took place in a Benedictine environment, the abbey of Le Mans, as shown by an *exlibris* on the front page. The French Benedictines are famous for their dedication to the study of ancient written sources in order to research French History or the history of literature. If we look at the work of Nathan Edelman on *Seventeenth century France towards Middle Ages*, the author identified on chapter II the areas of competences of the Benedictines monks with respect to medieval manuscripts, and particularly their medieval philology discipline<sup>6</sup>. They are also famous for the restoration of medieval monasteries and religious

buildings, if not for their preservation of written sources from the Middle Ages<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, no scholar has reported medieval manuscript restoration as an expertise of French Benedictine monks, of which the manuscript 14 of Le Mans seems to be a unique testimony. This article focuses on the later copy, studying the eighteenth-century approach to these medieval fragments, in order to explore the Benedictine attitude towards the Middle Ages. Through the study of the production context of the manuscript and of the techniques of copying and binding used by eighteenth-century monks, this paper seeks to analyze this peculiar enterprise, in order to understand the status of medieval manuscripts after the Middle Ages.

## 1. Origin, date and purpose of the restoration

- 2 The restoration of ms 14 took place in a particular time and place: a Benedictine abbey at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Considering these conditions, it seems important to explore this context in order to have a better understanding of this process.

### 1.1 From a Maurist library

- 3 An *ex-libris* can be found on the first page of the manuscript<sup>8</sup>: *Inscrit au catalogue de la bibliothèque de Saint Vincent du Mans. 1719*<sup>9</sup>. This inscription indicates two major features. First, at one point in its history, the manuscript was stored in the Le Mans abbey library, in northwest France. Second, the number 1719 can be the date on which the manuscript was registered in the library's catalog. Luckily, this eighteenth-century catalog can still be found in the actual Le Mans Library.<sup>10</sup> The reference to our manuscript reads, on page 1218:

2. Le Roumant de messire Bertran du Glaequin en vers, jadis chevalier et connetable de France, très ancienne copie dont les lacunes ont été supplées<sup>11</sup>.

- 4 The manuscripts are listed in the second volume of the catalog started in 1718 by the monks of the abbey.<sup>12</sup> So, the number 1719 written in the *ex-libris* is certainly the date at which the codex was listed in the catalog of *libri manuscripti*. The study of the catalog's context also gives us some clues about the peculiar shape of the manuscript.
- 5 Indeed, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the library of Saint-Vincent abbey became one of the most important places of work for the Benedictines of Saint-Maur, and one of the largest book collections of the country. According to Didier Travier's work, the library possessed around 14,000 volumes in 1715<sup>13</sup>.
- 6 In the catalog of manuscripts, another mention follows the reference to manuscript 14:
- Histoire du même, en prose très ancienne édition avec figures. codex charlac. in 4<sup>to</sup>.....1 vol<sup>14</sup>.
- 7 According to the catalog, the hybrid manuscript was one part of a volume (1 vol) also containing an old edition of Bertrand's biography in prose<sup>15</sup>. This mention can mean that the two books were bound together or stored in the same box. Nevertheless, the combination of these two objects seems to indicate a desire to accumulate knowledge about Bertrand as an important historical figure of the region. This desire to build a bibliography about Bertrand – the French knight and constable – brings us back to a

Maurist historical project of the end of the seventeenth century: *l'Histoire de Bretagne* by Dom Lobineau<sup>16</sup>.

## 1.2 L'histoire de Bretagne and the ms. 14

- 8 Codex 14 might have been used to produce one of the Maurists' historical compilations. Around the time of the manuscript's restoration, the abbey of Saint-Vincent was the site of the production of a comprehensive Maurist work: the redaction of *l'Histoire de Bretagne* under the direction of Dom Lobineau<sup>17</sup>. In a letter, Lobineau claims he used the *Roman de Bertrand du Guesclin* to write about medieval Brittany, since the constable was one of the most famous historical figures of the region in the late medieval period<sup>18</sup>. For our purposes, the most interesting aspect is that, in this work, Lobineau refers to the author of the epic poem about Bertrand du Guesclin as *Trueller*, which is a reference contained in the prologue of only two manuscripts of the *Chanson* known today: the manuscript 14 of Le Mans and the codex of Berlin<sup>19</sup>. So, Lobineau probably had in his hand one of these two medieval manuscripts or a very close version when he worked on his *Histoire*.
- 9 Furthermore, in his glossary Lobineau quotes what he calls the *Roman de B. du Guesclin* on several occasions to contextualize his medieval entries<sup>20</sup>. For example, Lobineau quotes the poem on the *Assene, Bailla, Torchis and Tremoea* entries:
- Assene: Cil assena l'Englois un cop qui fu pesans/ Car navré l'abati laidement sur les champs. Roman de B. du Guesclin
  - Baillia: Ou j'aurai la Duchié du tout en ma baillie/ et je serai Duc nommé, ou j'y lairai la vie. Roman de B. du Guesclin
  - Torchis: cierges bandons, tortis, alloient allumant. Roman de B. du Guesclin
  - Tremoea: Failli nous est le vin, le bled, et le tremois / Il nous convient mengier chevaux et pallefrois. Roman de B. du Guesclin
- 10 The comparison between these quotations and the verses of the medieval sections of ms 14 yield some interesting results<sup>21</sup>. The verses quoted under the *Assene* and *Torchis* entry are exactly the same as in the medieval section of the Le Mans manuscript<sup>22</sup>. The versions of other examples are slightly different:
- Bailla in ms 14: Ou j'auray la duchié du tout en ma baillie  
et seray duc nommé, ou g'i lairay la vie<sup>23</sup>.
  - Tremoea in ms 14: Failli nous est le vin le blé et le tremois  
Il nous convient mengier chevaux et paleffrois<sup>24</sup>.
- 11 In the *bailla* example, the medieval copyist of ms 14 used a -y to note the ending of the first person future instead of a -i in Lobineau's quote. The medieval scribe also employed the letter -g to mark the personal pronoun of the first person (*ge*) where Lobineau's quote gives a -j. For the *tremoa* example, the final -d is missing on the word *blé*, thus demonstrating that medieval scribe of ms 14 did not use an etymological spelling, unlike the manuscript copied by Lobineau (*bled*). We can also point out that the word *paleffrois* has a double -f in the medieval manuscript instead of a double -l in Lobineau's quote. These grammatical and graphical differences between these verses clearly indicate that Lobineau did not quote the ms. 14 in the glossary of his *Histoire*<sup>25</sup>.
- 12 Lobineau undoubtedly used a medieval manuscript containing Bertrand's epic biography to work on his book, but the analyses show that it was not the hybrid codex of Le Mans. Nevertheless, the work of Lobineau could have prompted the copying of the missing parts of ms 14, as its restoration took place at the same time as the redaction of

*L'Histoire de Bretagne* at the beginning of the eighteenth century. As the monk used this epic poem to write the medieval chapter of his book, he could have had access to a medieval manuscript unknown today or could have asked another library around Le Mans to lend him a manuscript of the constable's legend that was in better shape. Taking advantage of the presence of an entire manuscript in the abbey, the Maurists could have copied the missing sections into their own fragment to complete their collection. As a result, even if the manuscript 14 had not been used directly for the *Histoire de Bretagne* enterprise, it could have benefitted from it.

## 2. A Maurist restoration

- 13 This restoration occurred in a Maurist environment. Could the methods of the congregation, known for its philological dedication, have influenced the restoration techniques?

### 2.1. The copying techniques

- 14 The Maurists consulted several old handwriting sources to build their historical compilations<sup>26</sup>. As they needed a vast amount of information, they had to make a number of copies of the documents that they could find in public or private libraries. The scholars of the congregation had a peculiar way of carrying out this work. They respected the original text as much as possible by retaining the ancient spellings and the numbers system, Roman or Arabic<sup>27</sup>.
- 15 The first verses of ms 14, copied by an eighteenth-century scribe, clearly reflect the desire to preserve the features of Middle French:
- Seigneurs or faites paix pour Dieu le Roy divin  
que notre sire Dieux qui de ly eaue fist vin  
le jour que aux noces fu de saint archeteclin  
vous vueille tous garder et donner bonne fin<sup>28</sup>.
- 16 It is worth highlighting that the marks of French declension (*Dieux*) were all long gone by the time this copy was made. Thus, the scribe directly copied the medieval text without adapting it to the language of his time, as medievalists might do today in editing a manuscript. Furthermore, the Maurist used a layout very similar to the medieval one. The eighteenth-century copyist wrote in lines, respecting the medieval versification, since the text is a poem written in alexandrines. He also marks the beginning of each epic stanza with a capital letter and an indentation. This is the typical layout of a medieval page, even if the writing style had evolved. Thus the scribe sought to recreate the medieval *ordinatio* in his own copy<sup>29</sup>. From the first leaf of the manuscript 14, the eighteenth century scribe clearly respects the rules of Maurist and medieval copying.
- 17 Other clues also indicate the scribe's level of expertise in ancient techniques of copying. A marginal note on page 13 of the manuscript indicates:
- Cy commence l'ancien ms d'environ l'an 1400<sup>30</sup>.
- 18 This annotation raises the question: which manuscript does the scribe refer to here? Was it another medieval manuscript used for copying, or the beginning of the medieval section of manuscript 14, which was damaged?

19 To answer, we must look more closely at another marginal note in the first medieval folio:

Suite de l'ancien roman de ms B. du Guesclin dont le commencement manque jusque 1363 ou 1364<sup>31</sup>.

20 In this note, the word “*suite*” (continuation) is used, implying that this folio of the codex was not the beginning of the medieval section. A first hypothesis would be to consider that the old manuscript mentioned on page 13 is the medieval fragment of ms 14. The eighteenth-century scribe could have chosen to reduce the medieval part and replace the probably damaged first quires with his own copy of the text. A second hypothesis would be that the note on page 13 could refer to another manuscript and that the second note on page 77 could indicate that the beginning of ms 14 before this section of the French knight’s biography was missing.

21 In his edition, J.C. Faucon’s proved that the eighteenth-century copyist of ms 14 used a medieval model containing a now lost version of the text to complete the medieval fragment, which he called ms. X<sup>32</sup>. However, in 2007, a catalog of medieval manuscripts stored in the Staatsbibliothek of Berlin listed a codex of *La Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin* unknown to him<sup>33</sup>. This codex shares a major characteristic with manuscript 14: the medieval head is missing and was restored between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Could the Berlin manuscript be the one mentioned in the marginal note on page 13 of the codex of Le Mans? Could this codex be ms. X? Some marks suggest a close relation between those two pieces.

22 On page 13 of the Le Mans’ manuscript, the 18th-century copyist designated the following verses as the opening of the other old codex:

Vers son hostel s’en va la dame de bontez.  
Or diray de Bertran qui a l’ostel fut porté<sup>34</sup>.

23 The scribe added to these verses a bracket before the word *Vers* to highlight the first verse of the other medieval manuscript. Interestingly, the description of the Berlin manuscript indicates the following as the first verses of the medieval part: “*Vers son hostel s’en va la dame de bontez / Or diray du noble B. qui a l’ostel fut portez*”, therefore referring to the same lines highlighted by the eighteenth scribe on manuscript 14<sup>35</sup>. The marginal annotation referring to the beginning of an old manuscript dating to around 1400 could be clear evidence showing that the Maurist monk referred directly to ms. Hamilton 226, which today is housed in Berlin.

24 The list of the ties between the two codices does not stop there. On the first page of both manuscripts, each subsequent scribe used titles before their copies; for example here are two:

1. Ms Berlin: Le Roumant de Mre Bertran du Glaicquin jadis chevalier et connestable de France
2. Ms 14: Le Roumant de Mss° Bertran du Glaiequin jadis chevalier et connestable de France

25 The two titles are almost the same, both using a latinized spelling for the word *roumant*. If we look closely at every known manuscript containing a versified biography of the French constable, these are the only two codices that present this version of the title on the front page<sup>36</sup>. Furthermore, out of the entire tradition, only these two codices provide “*Trueller*” as the name for the author of the epic poem in the prologue of the text, while all the others use “*Cuvelier*”. So, given that ms. 226’s restoration is older than that of ms. 14, it seems possible that the eighteenth-century copyist of the Le Mans manuscript had in his hands the restored codex Hamilton 226 while completing

the missing parts of ms. 14.<sup>37</sup> But to what extent did he use the ms 226 to produce his transcription?

- 26 The similarities between both manuscripts could make one assume that the head of ms. 14 has been copied directly from the ms. 226, hence its mention on page 13 of ms. 14. To support or refute this hypothesis, we can compare the medieval and later copy of ms. 226 with its corresponding part in ms. 14.

Ms. 226		Ms. 14	
seventeenth century	<i>Alez en a l'ostel, ou lit le trouverez.</i> <i>Quant la dame l'oÿ, son cuer moult troublez.</i>	eighteenth century	<i>Allez en a l'ostel au lit le trouverez.</i> <i>Quand la dame l'oÿt, son cuer moult fut troublé.</i>
fifteenth century	<i>Vers son hostel s'en va la dame de bontez.</i> <i>Or diray du noble B. qui a l'ostel fut portez.</i>		<i>Vers son hostel s'en va la dame de bontez.</i> <i>Or diray de Bertran qui a l'ostel fut porté</i>

- 27 Comparing them shows that these two versions undoubtedly look different. First, the part dated from the seventeenth century on ms. 226 (when compared with the version of ms 14) presents dialectal (*ou/au*) and conjugation (*oÿ/oÿt*) differences plus an incomplete verse (*moult troublez/moult fut troublé*). The head of the Le Mans manuscript could not have been copied directly from the ms. Hamilton 226. As the first verse of the fifteenth century part of ms. 226 is exactly the same on ms. 14, we can infer that the eighteenth-century scribe continued his transcription with the medieval parts of ms. 226 as a model. But the second verse invalidates this theory: here, ms. 226 offers a different lesson on the first hemistich making the alexandrine uneven. D. Stutzmann also notes certain divergences between the two copies, as some verses are missing in the Le Mans version and not in the Berlin manuscript.<sup>38</sup> Ms 14 is not a direct copy of Hamilton 226, not for its head nor for the rest of the copy, even if the eighteenth-century copyist had it in front of him to produce his restoration. Thus, Hamilton 226 cannot be ms X.
- 28 The eighteenth-century scribe of Le Mans therefore had at least three medieval manuscripts of the *Chanson* by the time of the production of this copy: the medieval fragment of the ms 14, the medieval part of the ms Hamilton 226 and ms X, which was certainly a complete version, on which the scribe drew to build the missing parts of ms 14. This third manuscript may also have been the one from which Lobineau extracted his quotations of the poem, undoubtedly preferring an entire text as a more reliable source. In any case, the use of different manuscripts to produce a copy can be interpreted as a philological choice. The copy process was not just accomplished with the material that the Maurist had within reach; it is the product of a process of deliberation about what model to choose to complete the medieval fragment. The later scribe acted as an early modern editor, consulting several versions of a text to produce a new one.

- 29 Thus, the eighteenth-century scribe uses a strong philological approach in his copy work, following the Maurist discipline towards written sources. Did this peculiar vision also influence the material restoration of ms 14?

## 2.2. Binding technics: a Maurist reflexion on restoration?

- 30 The structure of the manuscript is as follows (eighteenth-century portions are highlighted in italics):

*p. 1-76, 2<sup>3+2+3+2+1</sup>, 3<sup>16</sup>, 4<sup>10</sup>, 5-7<sup>16</sup>, 8<sup>14+1(torn)+1(blank)</sup>, 9-10<sup>16</sup>, 11<sup>1+14+1</sup>, 12-14<sup>16</sup>, p.-462-701*<sup>39</sup>

- 31 Codicologically, quires 2 and 11 are of particular interest, as they combine both eighteenth-century and medieval leaves. Quire 2 comprises three medieval folios (p. 77-81), followed by two late folios (p. 83-85), three medieval folios (p. 87-91), and 3 late leaves (93-96 and 96 bis), as shown in the following figure:

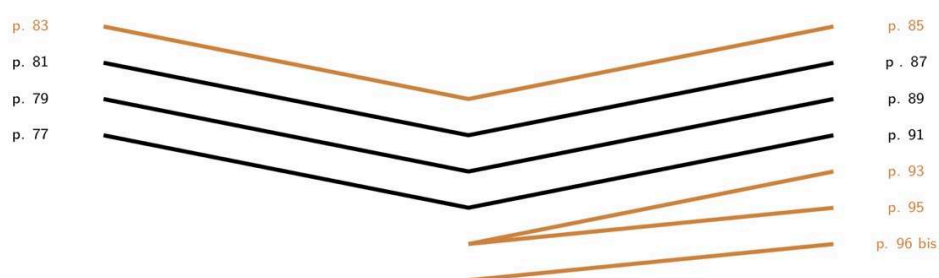


Figure 1: Quire 2, p. 77-96 bis

- 32 This quire restoration follows early indications present on the medieval leaves. Indeed, a note from a copyist from the sixteenth or seventeenth century on the bottom of p. 82 indicates that leaves are missing:

2  
Il manque icy qlques feuillets<sup>40</sup>

- 33 The number 2 has been added to signal the number of missing folios. According to these indications, the inner bifolium containing pp. 83-86 was added to complete the quire. On page 92, a vaguer note written by the same hand as the previous one announces:

Il manque icy quelque chose<sup>41</sup>

- 34 This note leads the eighteenth-century scribe to add the last bifolium containing pp. 93-96 and a folio corresponding to p. 96 bis to complete the missing text. These early notes show us that the Maurist scribe did not just replace the damaged parts of the manuscripts with new ones but also completed quires with folios that were missing long before his restoration.

- 35 Quire 11 is also a hybrid, as shown on this figure:



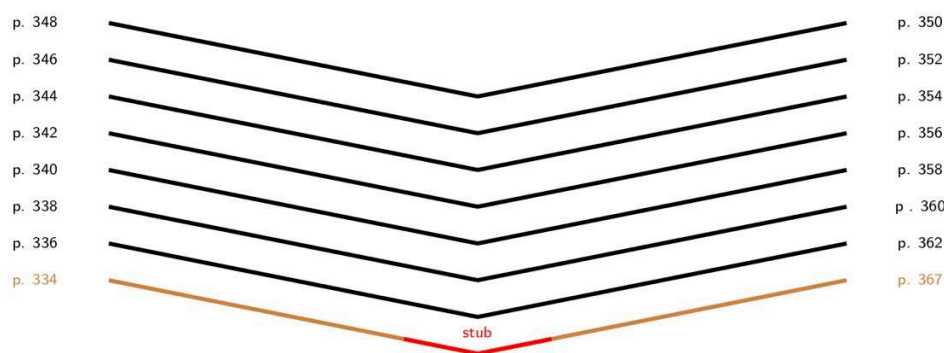


Figure 2: Quire 11, p. 348-367

- 36 In this quire, the restoration relates to the outer bifolium. These folios are replaced by new ones, but unlike quire 2, the first medieval bifolium was still in place when the restoration took place. Indeed, the Maurist restorer cut the probably damaged medieval folios, kept a medieval stub and glued the new copy into it. These two hybrid quires inform us about medieval and eighteenth-century binding. The latter copyist undoubtedly cut the medieval part and pasted his copy so he did not have to break the medieval quire sewing, with the aim of disarranging the medieval binding as little as possible.
- 37 In quire 2, the absence of the inner part is probably the result of a medieval mistake, as inner folios are usually less damaged than the first and last ones because they are protected by the others. As we do not encounter a stub as in quire 11, this suggests that these parts are missing from the original binding. The three medieval bifoliums of quire 2 were probably sewn together to form a quire at a very early period. The outer bifolium and inner bifolium replacements of quire 2 and 11 show that the Maurist scribe perfectly mastered medieval binding techniques. So why not use this knowledge to recreate the missing outer bifolium of quire 2, as he did in quire 11?
- 38 The answer seems to lie in the copy technique used to fill the medieval gaps of the text. As we have just seen, this part of quire 2 was clearly missing when the Maurist started the restoration. So, it was impossible for the later scribe to pick up the missing portion of the text directly from the damaged folios and measure the length of the missing text. He was forced to use another manuscript as a model to fill this first part. As we saw, the eighteenth-century scribe used a manuscript containing a different tradition of the poem from the one present in the medieval parts of ms. 14. But what the restoration of quire 2 restoration suggests that this difference between the ms. 14 and ms X caused him difficulties in repairing the fragment. Indeed, his model of copy gave him another chronological order of the poem episodes, as he announced on p. 92:
- Le ms de m. du Guesclin met icy le siège de Rolleboise et renvoye le siege de Melun après la prise de Meulent.<sup>42</sup>
- 39 The two versions present different chains of events: in ms 14, the order of the sieges is Melun-Meulent- Rolleboise, whereas in ms X the order is Rolleboise-Meulent-Melun<sup>43</sup>.
- 40 Firstly, due to this difference, the later scribe was unable to evaluate the exact number of missing verses. Let's take a look at three manuscripts of the poem presenting the sequence Melun-Meulent-Rolleboise as in ms. 14: Aix-en-Provence 428 (306), Paris, fr. 850 and Beinecke 990<sup>44</sup>. In the Aix version, these three sieges are described in 198 lines (l. 3498-3696); in fr. 850 version in 199 lines (l. 3526-3725); and in the Beinecke 990

version in 245 lines (f. 21v-23r)<sup>45</sup>. Among the versions with the order Melun-Meulent-Rolleboise, then, we have a long one and a short one. To which category does the ms14 belong: to the longer or the shorter? If we look at the other medieval quires, we can see that they are all composed of 16 folios, except for quire 4. Assuming quire 2 had been prepared to measure 16 folios, 4 bifoliums are missing from the outer part of the quire. So, the missing text missing before page 92 should have been contained in 4 folios. Considering the fact that ms. 14 has a ratio of 62 verses per folio, it could be concluded that about 248 verses are missing between p. 93 and p. 97 (4x62). Therefore, ms. 14 should present the longer version of the Melun-Meulent-Rolleboise episodes, in a similar manner to the version of ms Beinecke 990.

- 41 Secondly, the Maurist scribe was forced to make some modifications to the binding in order to include a *laisse* in *-ent* on page 96 bis to catch up with the first verse on the next quire: *pour l'amour des seigneurs ou il ot mautalent*<sup>46</sup>. The Maurist copyist had to add one single folio to copy this *laisse* in order to give some narrative coherence to his restoration. It also gives indications of the restoration's chronology. The Maurist scribe must have restored the missing head copy all at once until he reached the medieval part. Then he must have compared the first medieval quire of ms 14 with Berlin Hamilton 226 and the ms. X, and realized the versions were different. First, he apparently chose to add one bifolium at the end of the medieval quire, where he copied the text displayed on ms X. Then, he glued one extra folio after the extra bifolium to replace the *laisse* in *-ent* to follow the narrative sequence of ms. 14, *laisse* which took place in a previous part in ms. X and Br 226. He had to consider it as a better alternative than replacing the first four missing bifoliums of the quire, redoing the copy of p. 73-76, and then sewing it to the medieval folios of quire 2.
- 42 This peculiar and complex manuscript helps to complete the spectrum of Maurists' medieval expertise, and adds restoration as a new feather to their cap. Nevertheless, folio additions and quire reconstructions are not the only eighteenth-century interventions on medieval parts of ms 14. The manuscript also presents signs of direct philological interventions by bringing new perspectives to understanding Maurists' intentions with respect to medieval manuscripts.

### 3. The object and the text

- 43 This reconstruction may be more complex than it appears. We have seen that the use of several manuscripts to built a copy was a testimony of eighteenth-century scribe's philological concerns. Other philological aspects may also reflect scholarly preoccupations from the eighteenth century.

#### 3.1 When philology serves restoration

- 44 According to Sebastian Timpanaro, the eighteenth century was the period in which philologists started to work on a more systematic *recensio* in order to produce critical editions<sup>47</sup>. If we think about ms. 14, the restoration of its missing episodes could only be accomplished by comparing all manuscripts verse to verse. Furthermore, the work of the later scribe is the testimony of a certain *selectio*, because he chose ms. X as his model, since it may have been a whole codex – and one that he considered the best. However, in keeping up with his time, the scribe's philological sensibility was increased

by the use of three manuscripts, comparing their different traditions to rebuild a medieval state of the poem.

- 45 The philological work of the late scribe is going way beyond the comparison of manuscripts. Verses on page 160 and 161 give us examples of other forms of copyist's interventions on the medieval folios:

Et ostages [aussi] vous luy en livrez<sup>48</sup>.  
Sur un cheval estoit [mout] seurement montez<sup>49</sup>.

- 46 The scribe added *aussi* and *mout* – forgotten by the medieval copyist – on the top of the line to correct these verses and to restore the twelve syllables of the alexandrine. The eighteenth-century copyist is aware of French epic versification rules and is able to restore defective verses of ms 14. He also applies another type of correction directly to the medieval text:

Et celle de Harcourt qui est blanche com fee  
[et celle d'Albret, cette contrée louee]  
qui dolente est au cuer qu'ainsi sui assenee<sup>50</sup>.

- 47 The late scribe uses the space between two lines to include a verse present in another manuscript of the poem to complete the text. If we look closely, this extension was not necessary from a grammatical point of view, the referent of the pronoun *qui* can equally be the lady of *Harcourt* or the Lady of *Albret* in this context. However, it was necessary from a narrative point of view to restore the fifth sister of the queen, Lady of *Albret*, missing in ms. 14. Another example of text addition can be seen on page 114. On the bottom of the page, the scribe added the following verses:

Et quant B. l'ouit s'a la chiere levee  
Et a dit au sergent parole bien notee  
« Biaux Seigneurs, n'en n'aiez nulle chiere effrayee  
Nous aurons ∞ <sup>51</sup>.

- 48 A cross on the right margin signals where these verses took place on ms. X. The absence of these lines on ms 14 slightly changes the diegesis: without the mention of a change of speaker, the harangue of the French army is supported by the herald instead of the protagonist, Bertrand. Considering the herald's basic narrative function in the *chansons de geste*, it appears unlikely that such a character could address directly the army himself in a motivation speech<sup>52</sup>. The fact that Bertrand is not mentioned in this *laisse* creates also a grammatical dissonance with the opening verses of the following one, that mention him and his former speech. The Maurist chooses to correct this *laisse* using ms X variants in order to restore some narrative logic.

- 49 On page 429, the Maurist scribe corrects a medieval copyist error:

Huon de Carualai et des autres foison  
[le tres noble baron]  
Quant il virent B. ~~et des autres foison~~<sup>53</sup>

- 50 The medieval scribe clearly copied the second hemistich of the first verse twice. The Maurist monk corrects this medieval mistake deleting the second hemistich of the second verse and placing between the lines the correct lesson he has encountered in ms. X. He can also complete the absence in the medieval copy, as in page 441: *A terre labati [saichez] quelle bee*, filling in the blank that the medieval scribe had left<sup>54</sup>.

- 51 These last examples show clearly the scribe's will to recreate a version of the *Chanson* that he has deemed the best, and constitutes a version other than the poem of ms 14, which he considered defective. These corrections can be interpreted as attempts of

*emendatio*, – a concept with which the scribe was certainly familiar since it was used by several scholars since the sixteenth century in their work on the first editions of antique texts<sup>55</sup>. The knowledge and use of these concepts by the eighteenth-century scribe is a precious testimony to the history of European philology. Long before Lachmann, the Maurist scribe of Le Mans applied the concepts of *recensio*, *selectio* and *emendatio* to medieval vernacular literature – of course not with the same accuracy. But even more than the application of these concepts to vernacular literature, the most outstanding part is surely the utilization of this search for authenticity in their manuscript restoration. The restoration of missing sections resulted in a critical edition of *La Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin* directly on the medieval folios, thus creating hybridity not only by mixing the periods but also by mixing perspectives.

### 3.2 The last medieval quire

52 All the work of the late scribe is characterized by his will to preserve most of the medieval leaves but at the same time to give a text to read. And the last medieval quire, quire 14, perfectly incarnates the Maurist scribe’s tension between conservation and edition. Looking at page 461, we can appreciate another of his interventions on medieval folios:

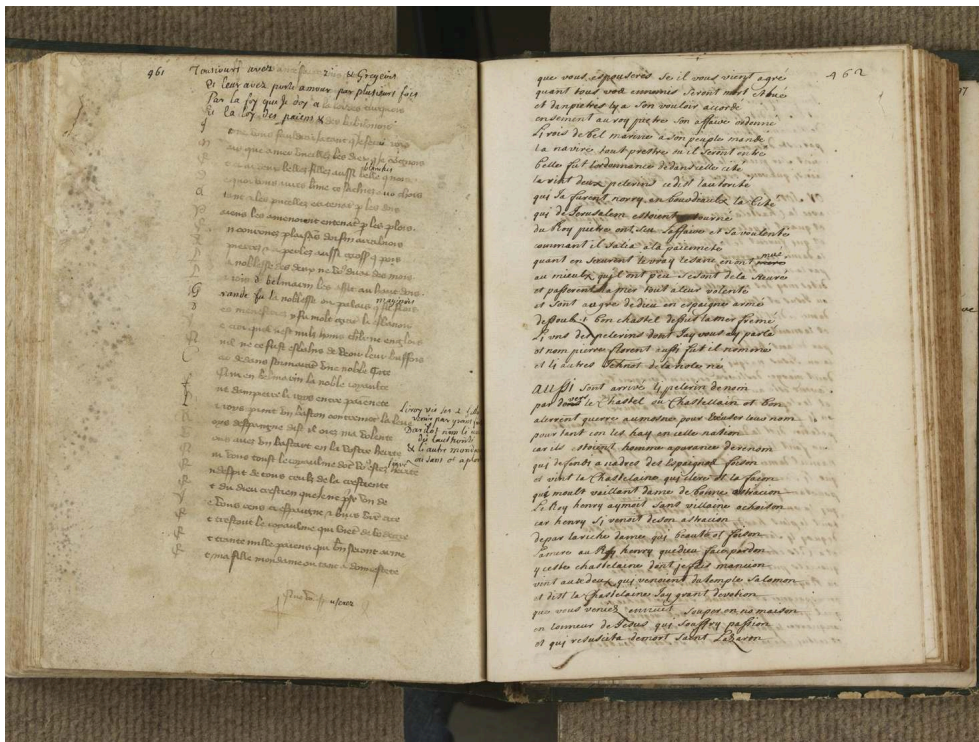


Figure 3: pages 461 and 462

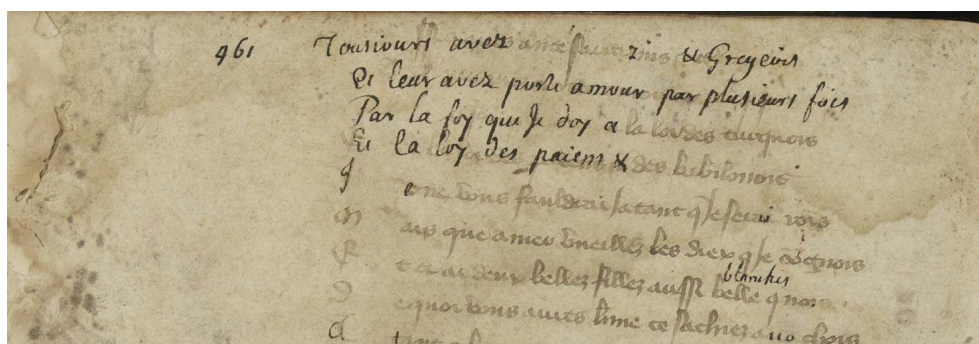


Figure 3': detail (top of page 461)

- 53 This sequence is a point of culmination for the narrative, when Peter the Cruel, King of Castile, chooses to abandon his Christian faith to convert to the pagan religion of the Bel Marine King. The poor condition of the last folios of quire 14 may indicate the end of the medieval manuscript – maybe since the Middle Ages or an early period as the damages can be the result of its contact with a binding. However, surprisingly, the eighteenth-century scribe did not opt for the ablation of the damaged bifoliums, as in quire 11. He preferred to keep the medieval leaves and to go over medieval letters with his black ink without any fear of denaturing the medieval part. On closer inspection of quire 14, we notice that his interventions on the erased medieval copy start on page 446 and continue, *crescendo*, until page 461, from some letters to whole verses. Indeed, the text appears faded in the whole second half of the quire (p. 446-461). If the Maurist had wanted to apply his *folioectomy* technique as in quire 11, he would have been obliged to sacrifice a quarter, if not half, of quire 14. So, he chose a method at the crossroads of conservation, restoration, and philology. He chose to conserve this part of the medieval quire despite its poor condition. But he elected a peculiar method of restoration, writing on the ancient text to restore the faded part. And he made these choices following the middle French poem, trying to copy the erased parts of each verse to still offer a text to read.
- 54 Perhaps this restoration could have been different. On page 440, we observe some attempts to imitate medieval handwriting:

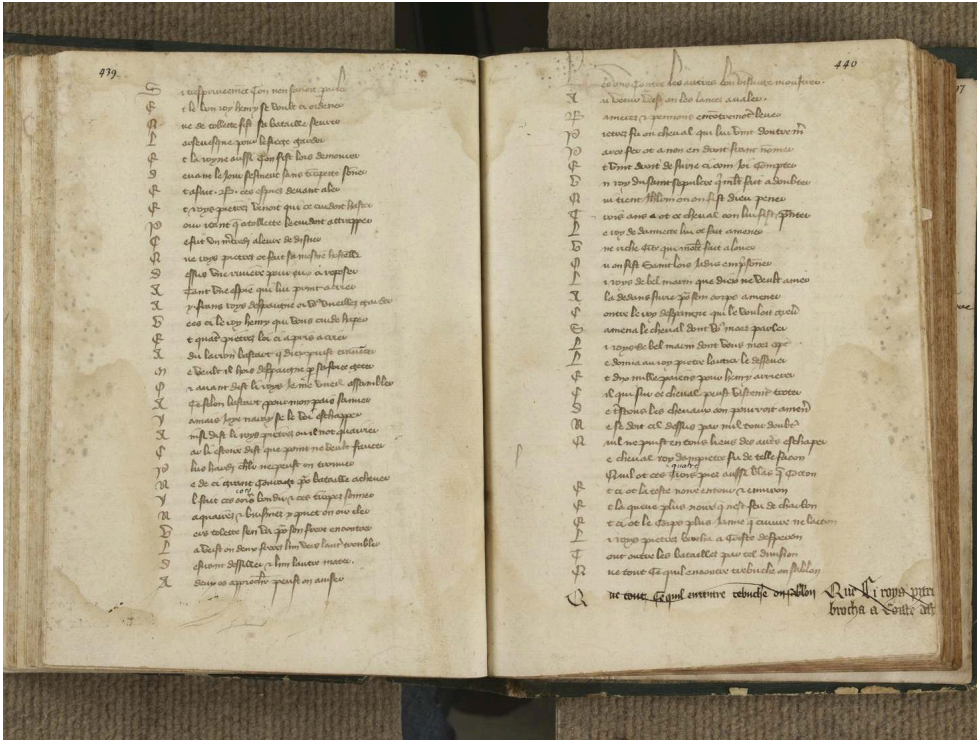


Figure 4: pages 439 and 440

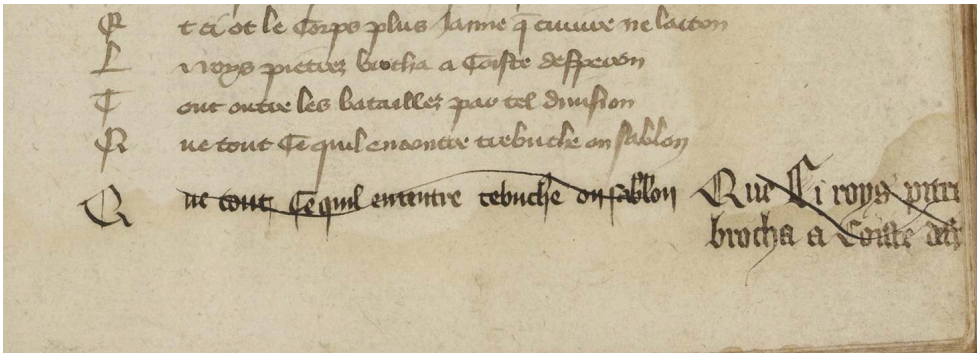


Figure 4': detail (bottom of page 440)

55 On the bottom of this page, we can see that that someone has exercised their ability for medieval writing. The black ink used is not faded, suggesting that these attempts are posterior to the medieval period. The last verse of the page is copied a second time, manifestly to practice cursive fifteenth-century lettering. On the right margin, we note another verse in gothic writing. These annotations show clearly that someone was experimenting in a period beyond Middle Ages to imitate a medieval way of copying. Could it be our Maurist scribe? The ink's color and vivacity are close to the one used by the eighteenth-century scribe. However, without a proteomic test run in a laboratory, it seems difficult to determine the exact age of these marginal notes. If they are from the late scribe's hand, this could be evidence of the type of restoration they had in mind for this quire. At some point in his thinking, the Maurist copyist could have planned to recreate the medieval folio as a contemporary art restorer – erasing the stigma of time and to restore the manuscript to its initial state. But, due to technical difficulties, he may have had to abandon this idea. In any case, these last interventions

on medieval leaves clearly demonstrate the late scribe's will to preserve the medieval manuscript, a text, and a complete and perfect codex all at the same time.

- 56 Considering this complex restoration, ms. 14 is undoubtedly experimental. Each renovation of each medieval quire presents different characteristics, as if the Maurist restorer was experimenting with the possibilities of medieval manuscript restoration in his day. Cutting, completing, resewing, correcting, imitating – all these options were considered by the monk to rejuvenate the old fragment stored in the library of the Saint-Vincent abbey. His philological training may have lead him to abandon an artistic restoration in favor of a textual restoration and correction. Apparently, he consistently uncovered its interventions, departing from an imitative type of restoration that he seems to have considered for a while. He finally chose not to hide the accidents of time on the manuscript, because he considers the past as an integral part of the object that should not be erased. Throughout his work, the eighteenth-century scribe does not search to highlight the beauty of the manuscript but its fragility, and hence it is of invaluable importance as a testimony to a bygone and ancient era. Other restorers of the eighteenth century adopted the opposite standpoint. A striking example of this position is add. manuscript 6894 of the British Library<sup>56</sup>. This codex was restored by Eliza Denyer, an English artist in the second half of the eighteenth century. She replaced all the missing illuminations and decorated initials, imitating the medieval decorations so perfectly that it is almost impossible to distinguish her interventions on the psalter<sup>57</sup>. These two different practices of restoration remind us of the dispute between J. Ruskin and E. Viollet-le-Duc about architectural restoration in the nineteenth century<sup>58</sup>. These eighteenth century interventions on medieval codices tend to prove that the romantic opposition between subliming or erasing the marks of the past during the restoration of ancient objects or monuments began to take shape a century before its theorization. Examples such as ms. 14 or add. 6894 invite us to reconsider conservation and restoration problematics of the nineteenth century, which certainly took root long before 1850, as is the case for work on the history of philology. Revealing further examples of early codex restorations will help to draw a more nuanced picture of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century behavior towards medieval manuscripts, more known for their mutilation than their preservation of medieval codices<sup>59</sup>.

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## NOTES

1. France, Le Mans, bibliothèque municipale, ms. 14.
2. There are currently three different editions for this poem: *Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin* par Cuvelier, *trouvère du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle, publiée pour la première fois par E. Charrière*, Paris, Firmin Didot, 1839, 2 vol.; Jean-Claude Faucon, *La Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin de Cuvelier*, Toulouse Éditions universitaires du Sud, 1991, 3 vol.; Delphine Demelas, *Sur un air épique, sur un air lyrique: célébrer le bon connétable. Édition critique et commentaires du manuscrit 428 (306) de la bibliothèque municipale d'Aix-en-Provence contenant La Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin de Cuvelier suivie de pièces lyriques*, PhD thesis under the direction of Pr. Valérie Naudet, defended on June 24th 2016 at Aix-Marseille University (France), 3 vol.
3. See for example his remarks about the variants of the ms. 14, in Jean-Claude Faucon, *La Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin de Cuvelier*, éd. cit., vol. 3, p. 224.
4. See for example the page 37 of the manuscript.
5. See page 124-125 or 127-128 of the manuscript.
6. Nathan Edelman, *Attitudes of Seventeenth-Century France Toward the Middle Ages*, New York, Morningside Heights, King's Crown Press, 1946, p. 44-84.
7. About architectural restorations by monks of the congregation see Monique Bugner, *Cadre architectural et vie monastique des bénédictins de la congrégation de Saint-Maur*, Nogent-le-Roi, Librairie des arts et métiers, 1984, and « Les constructions des bénédictins de Saint-Maur aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles », *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France* 73, 1987, p. 109-131.
8. The manuscript has been entirely digitized by the IRHT (Paris, France). To consult this inscription see <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 1
9. "Registered in the catalog of the Saint Vincent of Le Mans' Library. 1719."
10. France, Le Mans, bibliothèque municipale, ms. C 443 A.
11. "2. The novel of Sir Bertran du Glaequin in verse, once knight and constable of France, very old copy whose shortcomings have been replaced."
12. About this catalog see Didier Travier, "Une grande bibliothèque provinciale au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: l'abbaye Saint-Vincent du Mans", *Un Istituzione dei Lumi: la biblioteca. Teoria, gestione e pratiche biblioteconomiche nell'Europa dei Lumi*, Parma, Museo Bodoniano, 2013, p. 135-136.
13. *Ibidem*, p. 138.
14. "History of the same, in prose, very old edition with images. codex charlac. in 4<sup>to</sup> ..... 1 vol."
15. Today, two ancient editions of Bertrand's biography in prose are stored in Le Mans Library collection. The oldest is the edition of 1618: *Histoire de messire Bertrand du Guesclin connestable de France, duc de Molines, comte de Longueville et de Burgos, contenant les guerres, batailles et conquestes*

faites sur les Anglois, Espagnols et autres, durant les règnes des rois Jean et Charles V. Escrite en prose, l'an 1387, à la requeste de messire Jean d'Estouville, Paris, Seb. Cramoisy, 1618. A portrait of Du Guesclin and some decorations on the first pages of each chapter could be the figures named in the catalog. However, it is still uncertain that a one-hundred-years old book would had been considered a "very old edition" by the writer of the catalog in 1719.

16. About the Maurists and their use of libraries, see Daniel-Odon Hurel, "Des usages des bibliothèques chez les bénédictins de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur (XVII-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)", *Usages des bibliothèques, Sources, Travaux historiques* 41-42, 1995, 1997, p. 79-88.

17. Dom Guy-Alexis Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne, composée sur les titres & les auteurs originaux*, 2 vol., Paris, chez la veuve François Muguet, 1707. Indeed, the work on the *Histoire de Bretagne* started around 1689, impulsed by Dom Maur Audren de Kerdrel, abbey of Saint-Vincent du Mans, and the book was published by Lobineau in 1707. See Jean Queniart, "Les mauristes et l'historiographie bretonne", *Chroniqueurs et historiens de la Bretagne: du Moyen Âge au milieu du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* [on line], Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2001, <http://books.openedition.org/pur/18483>, § 5.

18. Dom Guy-Alexis Lobineau, *Lettre a Nos seigneurs des estats de Bretagne*, Paris, chez la veuve François Muguet, 1707. An exemplar of this letter can be found in the manuscript France, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, LK<sup>2</sup> 454.

19. Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Staabibliothek zu Berlin, ms Hamilton 226 (Berlin, Germany). The others manuscript refer to the author as *Cuvelier*.

20. Dom Guy-Alexis Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne, op. cit.*, vol. 2. The references to the *Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin* can be found at the following pages: c 1775 "Assene"; c 1777 "Bailla", "Baro"; c 1779 "Bombarde"; c 1781 "Carrelus"; c 1784 "Chiere"; c 1787 "Conredium", "Disraisnare"; c 1802 "Jus"; c 1805 "Malatosta"; c 1806 "Mehaigner"; c 1808 "Moise", "Montance"; c 1809 "Naquaires"; c 1818 "Roussin"; c 1823 "Torchis", "Tremoea", "Truffator".

21. We choose to compare Lobineau's quotations only with the medieval parts of ms 14. Indeed, the later copied parts could match with the quotation, but these examples could also come directly from a shared model of copy and could not prove a direct use of ms. 14 by Lobineau.

22. See p. 125 for *Assene* and p.w 164 for *Torchis*, <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>.

23. See p. 162 of ms. 14, <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>.

24. See page 159 of the manuscript, <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>.

25. Furthermore, we will study above how Maurist scholars respected ancient grammar and writing in their copies of older texts.

26. See Daniel-Odon Hurel, « Les Mauristes, historiens de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles: méthodes, justifications monographiques de la réforme et défense de la centralisation monastique », *Écrire son histoire. Les communautés régulières face à leur passé, actes du 5<sup>e</sup> colloque International du CERCOR*, Saint-Etienne, 6-8 novembre 2002, Saint-Etienne, 2005, p. 257-274.

27. "Toutes les fautes qui se trouvent dans les chartes contre les règles de la grammaire et de l'orthographe ne doivent pas être rejetées sur l'inexactitude des copistes mais sur le goût des siècles dans lesquels elles ont été dressées." (Each error in the documents against grammatical and spelling rules cannot be attributed to the inaccuracy of the copyists but to the taste of the centuries in which they were written), in Dom Jean-Martial Besse, "Dom Fonteneau, Bénédictin de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur. 1705-1778", *Revue Bénédictine* 15, 1898, p. 337-447, p. 342.

28. See <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 1.

29. On the concept of *ordinatio* in medieval manuscripts see Malcolm B. Parkes, "The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book" 1976, reprinted in

*Scribes, Scripts, and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation, and Dissemination of Medieval Texts*, London, Hambledon, 1991, p. 35–70.

30. "Here starts the old manuscript dated from around 1400" <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 13.

31. "Continuation of Bertrand du Guesclin's novel whose head is missing until the year 1363 or 1364" <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 77.

32. See for example his remarks about the variants of ms 14 in Jean-Claude Faucon, *La Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin de Cuvelier*, vol. 3, p. 224.

33. Dominique Stutzmann and Piotr Tylus, *Les manuscrits médiévaux français et occitans de la Preussische Staatsbibliothek et de la Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2007, p. 175-177. See the manuscripts description of the *chanson* in Jean-Claude Faucon, *La Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin*, 1991, vol 1. The editor also ignored the existence of U.S.A., Connecticut, New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, ms. 990.

34. <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 13.

35. Dominique Stutzmann and Piotr Tylus, *Les manuscrits médiévaux français et occitans*, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

36. This is also the spelling form found in the manuscript catalog of Le Mans abbey's library mentioned in part I.

37. D. Stutzmann dates the restoration of the ms Hamilton 226 between the sixteenth and seventeenth century; *Les manuscrits médiévaux français et occitans*, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

38. "Texte: proche du ms C', mais apparemment sans en dépendre directement (cf. vers 74 omis dans C'); vers 54 omis; vers 65bis-ter présents" (Text: close to the ms C', but without depending directly on it (cf. verse 74 omitted in C'); verse 54 omitted; verses 65bis-ter present), Dominique Stutzmann and Piotr Tylus, *Les manuscrits médiévaux français et occitans*, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

39. As there is no catchword on the first and last part of the eighteenth-century copy (p. 1-76 and p. 463-701), it is impossible to determine their quire structures. Following the list of catchwords, with medieval ones in bold: p. 76: *Sire Bertran*; p. 86: *Au conte*; p.92: *Car*; p. 96 bis: *Guill. de Lonoy*; p. 127: *Place fait*; p. 146: *très bonne fermerté*; p. 178: *fors que tout al*; p. 210: *et absolucion*; p 242: *li autre Carualay*; p. 269: *qu'avez*; p. 301: *qui furent*; p 333: *y ot ce jour*; p. 335: *sans*; p. 363: *tost* (add by the latter scribe on the medieval leaf); p. 365: *sil*; p. 397: *Vous diray*; p. 429: *seigneurs apres*; p. 461: *que vous espouserez*.

40. "Some pages are missing here (2)"; <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 82.

41. "Something is missing here"; <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 92.

42. "The manuscript of Mr du Guesclin puts here the siege of Rolleboise and places the siege of Melun after the take of Meulent", <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 92.

43. Berlin ms. Hamilton 226, which we demonstrate was also used by the Maurist monk to realize his restoration, also presents the series Rolleboise-Meulent-Melun as ms. X. A mention of the eighteenth century, probably written by the late scribe of ms 14, can be read on this codex on folio 69r, saying: « *Ce siège de Melun est dans un autre ms. avant celui de Roleboize et la prise de Mante et de Meulent.* » (On an another manuscript, the siege of Melun is placed before the one of Roleboize and the take of Mante and Meulent). Thus, it also was impossible to use ms. 226 to complete the first medieval quire of ms 14. See Dominique Stutzmann and Piotr Tylus, *Les manuscrits médiévaux français et occitans*, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

44. France, Aix-en-Provence, bibliothèque municipale Méjanès, ms 428/(306); France, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 850; U.S.A., Connecticut, New Haven, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, ms. 990.

45. For an edition of the manuscript of Aix, see Delphine Demelas, *Sur un air épique, sur un air lyrique: célébrer le bon connétable: édition critique et commentaires du manuscrit 428/(306) de la bibliothèque municipale d'Aix-en-Provence contenant La Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin de Cuvelier suivie de pièces lyriques*, PhD thesis, *op. cit.*. For the Paris, Bnf, fr. 850, see: *Chronique de Bertrand du Guesclin*, edited by Cuvelier, E. Charrière, vol. 1, p. 125-134. A digitized version of the manuscript 990 is available online: <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/9892502>.
46. <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 97.
47. See Chapter II of Sebastian Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, trad. by Glenn W. Most, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 58-74.
48. <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 161.
49. <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 160.
50. <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 192.
51. <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 114.
52. On the messenger in the *chansons de geste* see Jean-Claude Vallecalle, *Messages et ambassades dans l'épopée française médiévale. L'illusion du dialogue*, Paris, Champion (NBMA n°82), 2006 and Jacques E. Merceron, *La Voix problématique du messenger dans les chansons de geste*, *Olifant* 19, n° 3-4, 1995 (Online version <https://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/olifant/index>)
53. The text is marked by a strikethrough line in the manuscript. See: <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 429.
54. <http://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?reproductionId=2892>, p. 441.
55. Other *emendatio* examples can be found on pages (*passim*): 107, 117, 146, 152, 167, 191, 215, 235, 310, 319, 346, 388, 426, 429, 461. To learn more about these first editors, see Chapter I of Sebastian Timpanaro, *The Genesis of Lachmann's Method*, *op. cit.*, p. 45-56.
56. United Kingdom, London, British Library, additional ms. 6894.
57. For more information on Eliza Denyer and the restoration of London, British Library, ms. add. 6894 see Sonja Drimmer, "A Medieval Psalter 'Perfected': Eighteenth-Century Conservationism and an Early (Female) Restorer of Rare Books and Manuscripts", *Electronic British Library Journal [Online]*, 2013, <http://www.bl.uk/eblj/index.html>
58. For an analysis of the distinct theories of Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc, see David Spurr, "Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc: Figures of Ruin and Restoration", *Architecture and Modern Literature*, University of Michigan Press, 2012, p. 142-161.
59. For some mutilations example of medieval manuscripts during the seventeenth century see Sébastien Douchet and Valérie Naudet, " 'Couper avec des ciseaux les portraits de nos trouvaies'. Défiguration et reconfiguration d'objets manuscrits médiévaux au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Lire les objets médiévaux. Quand les choses font signe et sens*, F. Pomel (dir.), Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2017, p. 253-294; Sébastien Douchet and Valérie Naudet, "Comprene qui pourra... La fabrique du Moyen Age au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle dans le manuscrit 405 de la Bibliothèque Inguimbertaine de Carpentras", *Le Manuscrit unique*, E. Burle and V. Gontéro-Lauze (dir.), Paris, SUP, 2019, p. 89-112.

## RÉSUMÉS

Bien que l'ère digitale ait fait émerger de nombreuses questions concernant la conservation des manuscrits médiévaux, le désir de préserver ces artefacts et de les transmettre n'est pas nouveau. Le manuscrit 14 de la Bibliothèque municipale du Mans (France) tient une place

importante dans l'histoire des tentatives de préservation des codex du Moyen Âge. Ce manuscrit contient une version particulière de la *Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin*, une biographie épique du connétable français rédigée à la fin du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Alors que la copie présente un texte complet, seulement la moitié des folios de ce codex date du Moyen Âge. Les parties manquantes ont été ajoutées au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle par un moine mauriste qui s'est servi de plusieurs autres copies de la chanson pour compléter les fragments médiévaux et pour reconstruire entièrement le texte à destination des futurs lecteurs. Cet acte de reconstruction est l'occasion pour lui de remodeler, de commenter et d'annoter le fragment médiéval tout comme sa propre copie. Le résultat de cette entreprise est un objet littéraire nouveau, similaire à l'original et pourtant en grande partie différent. Comment un moine mauriste du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle a perçu ce que nous nommons aujourd'hui « restauration » ? Quelle est la part de médiéval de cet objet du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle ? En se concentrant sur la description du manuscrit, cet article cherche à répondre à ces questions tout tâchant de comprendre ce que ces pratiques tardives ont à nous apprendre sur le devenir et la perception des manuscrits médiévaux après le Moyen Âge.

While today's digital era raises new questions for the preservation of medieval manuscripts, the desire to preserve and transmit the literature of the Middle Ages is not new. Manuscript n°14 of Le Mans library (France) represents a telling example of these preservation attempts. The codex contains a peculiar version of *La Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin*, an epic biography of the French constable written near the end of the fourteenth century. Although the text is complete, only half of the folios date from the Middle Ages. Additional parts were added to the text by an 18th-century Maurist monk, who decided to copy other medieval manuscripts of the *Chanson* in order to flesh out the fragments and rebuild an entire text for future readers. This reconstruction was the occasion for him to reshape, comment and annotate on the medieval codex as well as the copied text. As a result, arguably, he gave birth to a new literary object, similar to the original, yet still different. However, how did an eighteenth-century monk perceive what we now call restoration? How medieval is this literary object of the eighteenth century? Focusing on the manuscript's description, this article seeks to answer these questions by trying to understand what practices can tell us about manuscript perceptions after the Middle Ages.

## INDEX

**Thèmes** : Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin, Histoire de Bretagne, Roman de Bertrand du Guesclin

**Parole chiave** : frammento, francese medio, Mauristi, paleografia, restauro, studi di manoscritti, studi materiale, trascrizione

**Keywords** : fragment, manuscript studies, material studies, Maurists, Middle French, palaeography, restoration, transcription

**Mots-clés** : études de manuscrit, études matérielles, fragment, Mauristes, Moyen français, paléographie, restauration, transcription

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