



# Understanding Segurant Knight of the Dragon

✧ Arthurian hero whose adventures are diversely found in the complex romance titled *Les Prophecies de Merlin*, the Grail Quest unique to BnF manuscript 12599, the compilations attributed to Rusticien of Pisa and various guironian stories stemming from them, and have by their dispersion and their variety perplexed the great wizards of Arthurian studies, casting Segurant into relative oblivion until recently the very pleasant and recreational edition of said adventures rescued him from obscurity and allowed to re-evaluate the theories and chronology concerning the origin and development of the character, but the correction of a number of erroneous preconceptions also created, however, a great deal of widespread confusion about the nature & scope of this rediscovery, confusion which fortunately the present treatise now purports to elucidate and clarify for all readers of good will and pure heart. 🐉

by Lays Farra  
english translation (working version)

— 2026 —



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“[...] we risk substituting the texts we want to penetrate with constructions of our imagination. The continuous explanation of difficulties by the system of interpolations is an open door for all chimeras [to walk through]. [Thus, we] mount the hippogriff which carries us into the ethereal regions of 'primitive texts' which complacently bend to all hypotheses.”

*“[...] on risque de substituer aux textes que nous voulons pénétrer des constructions de notre fantaisie. L'explication à jet continu des difficultés par le système des interpolations c'est la porte ouverte à toutes les chimères. On enfourche l'hippogriffe qui vous entraîne dans les régions éthérées des 'textes primitifs' qui se plient complaisamment à toutes les hypothèses.”*

Ferdinand Lot, *Étude sur le Lancelot en Prose*, [1918, p. 120-1](#).

“[...] conjecture, always provided that it be disciplined by fact and never be confounded by either writer or critic with assertion or proved statement, is a legitimate means for seeking to arrive at the truth.”

Lucy Allen Paton, *The Prophecies of Merlin*, [1926, t. I, p. vii](#).

SEGURANT. — And I am not called, Segurant the Brown, known as the Knight of the Three Fathers, son of Hector 6 or Hector 9 or Hector 13? Also known as the Knight of the Great Appetite, hero of the adventure of the Copper Tower?

*SÉGURANT. – Et moi on ne m'appelle pas moi Segurant le Brun dit Chevalier aux Trois pères fils d'Hector 6 ou d'Hector 9 ou d'Hector 13 ? Dit aussi Chevalier au Grand Appétit héros de l'aventure de la Tour de Cuivre ?*

Florence Delay and Jacques Roubaud, *Graal Théâtre*, 2005, p. 128-130.

(Pagination might shift a bit, will be corrected in the final version)

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Cover image drawn by Lays Farra.

For any questions, unclear passages, comments, corrections: [contact@sursus.ch](mailto:contact@sursus.ch)

## Introduction

Legend has it that in 2010, Emanuele Arioli came across the adventures of Segurant le Brun, knight of the dragon, in the manuscript of the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal 5229, which contains a particular version of the Arthurian romance entitled *The Prophecies de Merlin* (*Les Prophecies de Merlin*). Intrigued by this hero that he does not know, he subsequently notices that this story is continued in the more general framework of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, and in some other manuscript traditions: the French manuscript 12599 of the National Library of France (BnF) in Paris, a few compilations rattached to Rustichello da Pisa (Rusticien of Pisa) and the variations on the cycle of *Guiron le Courtois* which descend from it.

On the subject, Emanuele Arioli produced:

- A [thesis at the École des Chartes in 2013](#). (We have requested permission to read it, but have not received a response to date.)
- A publication in the [Histoire littéraire de la France](#), an old and prestigious book series, in 2016. (Presented as equivalent to the 2013 thesis, cf. *Étude* 2019:9. Obviously with some changes, in the 2016 book he cites papers from 2014 or 2015, but we will refer to it that way.)
- A [doctoral thesis](#) in 2017.
- The two-volume edition of Segurant in 2019, [one on the “cardinal version”](#) (the episodes specific to the Arsenal manuscript) and [another one on the “variants”](#).
- The publication of the 2019 edition was accompanied [by a study that explores this story, its past and its future](#). (Referred here as *Étude* 2019)
- In 2023, [a translation of 22 episodes selected from the 39 included in the cardinal version](#), refocusing the story on Segurant himself, adding a translation of excerpts from the “complementary” and “alternative” continuations of the story.
- In 2025, [an “educational” edition of Segurant](#), intended for use in middle schools (as it was included in french official programs, teachers can assign it instead of Chrétien de Troyes’ *Yvain*), and which, despite the promise displayed on the cover to contain “the complete annotated work”, in fact contains the same abridged translation from 2023 (what’s so complete about it? It doesn’t even contain the entire cardinal version, let alone the rest) while removing the notes that accompanied it. Some simply enigmatic passages are thus left unexplained (the explanation given was sometimes shaky already, admittedly) which is only meagerly compensated by the introductions and commentaries by Mathilde Spsychala that accompany them, about medieval vocabulary for example. (Note that this is quite expected for this type of educational edition, by consulting those of *Yvain le Chevalier au Lion* you won’t find any in-depth analyses either.)
- In 2025 as well, a pocket edition of the translation, slightly smaller, with some added material, like a note on literary history.

There is also an [Arte documentary](#) (presented [with great fanfare at the BnF](#)), as well as two comics adaptation, [one that rewrites](#) the history of Segurant with an added dose of Norse mythology (it must have sold quite well as [it got a sequel](#)), [another one](#), aimed at a younger audience, tells us about the quest among manuscripts of a certain “Manu” — which takes advantage of the child-friendly setting to present the “discovery” in an even more fanciful way, but which leaves roughly the same impression as the rest of the marketing. Translations of the book and the comics are published [in German](#), [in English](#), [an Italian](#), [in Portuguese](#) and in [Dutch](#). Other translations have been announced, in Russian and (big deal) [in English](#) — fateful timing for the present translation, will we manage to dispel some misunderstandings among English readers of Segurant? It doesn’t stop there: [the French translation was advertised in the Paris metro](#). The publisher [lists an \(incomplete\) catalogue of its editor’s many media appearances](#). The Arthurian Imagination Center in Brocéliande has dedicated an exhibition to Segurant. It is said that a statue in his honor will soon be erected in Brocéliande as well. Even as I’m translating these lines, french public TV channels and sensational magazines alike keep on harping about the great “discovery”, two years on.

Yet, when one examines the public’s comments or the questions journalists ask to Arioli, there seems to be a widespread misunderstanding about the nature of the narrative he edited and its history, and about what in

Arioli's work was actually novel, a misunderstanding that his numerous media interventions fail to dispel. The shortcuts the Arte documentary took to highlight his editing work (Arioli himself sometimes admits the theatrical framing can be misleading) did not help either.

As we shall see, this is a complex tradition, and it is obviously not easy to present this complexity without creating further misunderstandings when one is invited to a two-minutes segment on television or radio. Reducing Arioli's work to having "discovered and reconstructed a lost romance" is a terrible simplification that clearly misleads the public, but if one were to go into detail, it would require correcting and refuting the theories of his colleagues. This raises a deontological question: when you are invited onto every TV show, is it acceptable to use this platform to denigrate the work of other academics, in front of an audience that does not have the tools to fully understand the subtleties of the philological debates at stake? Doesn't such media leverage short-circuit the process of academic debate? It is a good marketing strategy to restrict oneself to a few broad formulas (technically true if possible) but it also has the virtue of avoiding this kind of dynamic.

In December 2023, we dedicated [a short video](#), made quickly, and therefore with some errors too, which left many subjects untouched. In August 2024, the first version of this article was released as well as [an episode of our french Arthurian podcast \(Rex Quondam Rexque Futurus\) about all the "matter of Segurant"](#). You are reading a version slightly enriched and corrected and adapted for an english readership.

The purpose of the four sections of this article will always be:

- I. to present, as best we can, with some helpful diagrams, the network of texts brought to light by Arioli and his edition,
- II. as well as his theory on the history and chronology of these texts, the arguments in favor of it, as well as the criticisms levied against him
- III. to present an overview of what the discipline knew about Segurant before him and what theories clashed regarding the history of these texts, those which anticipated Arioli's reconstructions as well as those which moved away from them.
- IV. And in conclusion, we will return to some of the most common misunderstandings that we have seen in the press to clarify them one by one, as well as other more inventive misunderstandings, trying to list, finally, what we truly owe to Arioli's work, to underline what is original and new in his re-evaluation of this fascinating dossier about Arthurian prose romances from the end of the 13th century.

We will discover that these stories about Segurant (re)discovered by Arioli were actually discussed in detail by specialists for sometimes more than a century, even before they were edited. The relationships between the texts and their chronology were debated, but like the rest of the *Prophecies de Merlin* tradition, the subject was relatively neglected until put forward recently by Lagomarsini, Koble, Arioli and other scholars.

*For any comments, remarks, questions, inaccuracies detected:* [contact@sursus.ch](mailto:contact@sursus.ch)

*First english version from 2026.*

*The first french version was dated August 2024. The document may possibly be updated.*

## Note on references.

We refer to most of the texts mentioned in the format [author name] [year]:[volume].[page/paragraph]. That way ([Paton 1926:I.39n1](#)) refers to note 1 at the bottom of page 39 of the first volume of the edition of the *Prophecies* by Paton, in 1926. (With a link to the online source when available) Texts dating from the same year are distinguished by a letter or a word from the title, e.g., Koble *Prophecies* 2009 for her monograph and Koble *Segurant* 2009 for her article.

For Arioli's works we refer to "Étude 2016" for the volume in the *Histoire littéraire de la France*, "Étude 2019" for *Segurant ou le Chevalier au Dragon (XIIIe-XVe siècles). Étude d'un roman arthurien retrouvé*. Arioli 2019 without specifications refers to his edition, the stories about ségurant, edited in two volumes: Arioli 2019:II.35.

As for the manuscripts, they are designated by the collection which holds them + their registration number (E. g. Bodmer 116, BnF 358), numbered not by page but by *folio*, per sheet, then specifying recto or verso: Bodmer 96-2 fol. 56r, we can also specify by a letter the specified column, for example if the manuscript has two columns: fol. 56ra (recto, first column), fol. 56rb (recto, second column), fol. 56rc (verso, first column), fol. 56rd (verso, second column) — numbering from a to f if there are three columns. Since the manuscripts of the Bibliothèque nationale de France that we are discussing are all in the section *Français* (French), BnF is given instead of BnF fr., a superfluous clarification here. (Again, if they are digitized online, the reference will have a link to the images of the manuscript)

## Abbreviations:

BnF	Bibliothèque nationale de France	For manuscripts held by the National Library of France, in Paris.
cf.	<i>confer</i> , "see"	refers to a reference
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> (= "for example")	
fol.	folio	
<i>Ibid.</i>	<i>Ibidem</i> (= "in the same place")	refers to the reference cited just before
ms.	manuscript	<i>mss.</i> for manuscripts in the plural
PdM	<i>Prophecies de Merlin</i>	the french romance from the 1270s
<i>sqq.</i>	<i>sequiturque</i> (= "and what follows")	indicates "and following pages" after a page number

## Note on the translation

Instead of the french form *Ségurant*, with the *accent aigu*, we systematically use *Segurant* here. An important part of Segurant's story is his victory and enchantment at the Tournament of *Vincestre*, here we systematically translate the placename as Winchester.

For concordance between versions of this article, as well as the diagrams, etc. we keep the french form, *Rusticien* for the name of *Rustichello da Pisa*, as was common in English half a century ago it seems (e.g. [Gathercole 1967](#) ; [Bogdanow 1967](#)) as well as the title *Rusticien II* for "Les Aventures des Bruns", the second compilation attributed to him by Lagomarsini (2014). Even if the franco-anglo-italian form *Rusticien of Pisa* doesn't seem completely appropriate.

A whole deal is made of the fact that Segurant is a "*roman redécouvert*", a rediscovered romance, in medieval parlance, and while in modern French a *roman* most often means a *novel*, our translation will systematically translate the word as *romance*.

Except for Paton's edition, some passages from Bogdanow, Loomis or Garner, and the odd case when we can cite Le Goff in english translation, most of the sources we rely on here are in French, Hence all quotations from the works of Arioli, Carné, Ferlampin-Acher, Koble, etc. will be translated into english accordingly, mostly without giving the original text which can be found in the original french version of this article, or online when a link is provided.

The first version of this article used, when possible, Arioli's french translation of selected texts about Segurant, from 2023, and in the absence of the english version as of yet, these page references are kept. An excerpt of the english translation has circulated online and from what we can see our translations won't differ that much, but we don't know how faithfully it represents the upcoming english translation so we didn't use it much. Mentions of the translation (trans. 2023) implies that we translate the french translation into english.



For the *Dream of Rhonaby*, Lot's french translation of the *Mabinogion* was replaced with that of Charlotte Guest.

Compared to the original french version of this article, any and all phrases might have been expanded or shortened to make them clearer. Things that are too french might have been cut altogether. The introduction about the character of Merlin had links to episodes of *Rex Quondam Rexque Futurus*, our french podcast going through arthurian medieval literature, but it seems superfluous for an english readership.

The translation might be horrendous in places, you are allowed and encouraged to complain constructively.

## I. Segurant's Adventures: the Network of Texts

Reading the press reports about Segurant, one would easily believe that Arioli found a few dozen chapters scattered across various manuscripts and assembled them back-to-back to form a Segurant romance, but in fact, his “cardinal version,” which supposedly reflects the “original romance,” comes essentially from a single manuscript. Of the 39 episodes it contains, 36 are only attested there, in the Arsenal manuscript 5229, a very particular manuscript of the *Prophecies de Merlin*. Three other episodes, which are also in the Arsenal manuscript are also attested outside as well:

- Episode II is in some other versions (short and group IV) of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, which allows to fill the gap due to the loss of a folio in ms. Arsenal 5229.
- And episodes VIII and X which are also found in *Rusticien II*, and descending “Guironian” stories, around *Guiron le Courtois*, which develop other stories around these episodes.

[See Appendix 1](#) for the summary of the cardinal version, episode by episode.

The modern French translation has chosen 22 of these episodes and excerpts from the variants and continuations. To better situate all this, we must begin with the tradition of the *Prophecies de Merlin*.

### *Prophecies de Merlin* and Ur-Prophecies

The character of Merlin comes from Breton (writ large, i.e. Welsh) traditions about a certain Myrddin, who is at the heart of several Welsh poems where this bard proclaims various poetic prophecies. Geoffrey of Monmouth combined him with the character of Ambrosius Aurelianus who appears in the *Historia Brittonum* (9th century) to form the character of Merlin, a child born of an incubus and thus the gift of prophecy, who advises the kings of Britain in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*, ~1136). Its chapter IX is also made up of prophecies of Merlin and it could have been transmitted separately. Geoffrey also writes a *Vita Merlini* (1151), a work about the life of Merlin.

Around 1200, Merlin figures at the center of a prose romance logically titled the *Merlin en Prose* (*Prose Merlin*), part of the trilogy attributed to Robert de Boron. In this one the “prophet of the English” still has the gift of prophecy, but the tale develops the story of his incubus origin: a council of demons alarmed by the coming of Christ, who freed so many human souls from hell, decides to engender a sort of antichrist to counter him, by raping Merlin’s mother. The latter repents enough for her child to be saved, he will keep his knowledge of the past from his demonic origin but God also grants him knowledge of the future, he will thus be able to advise the kings of Britain and bring Arthur to the throne.

The *Merlin en Prose* will also be integrated into the other Arthurian cycles of the 13th century, a *Vulgate Suite* connects it to the Lancelot-Grail (Vulgate), which forms a large part of the Arthurian canon, and another *Suite du Merlin* to the so-called “post-Vulgate” or “pseudo-Robert de Boron” cycle. Both tell, in their own way, the end of Merlin: the Lady of the Lake, Viviane (or Niniane) locks him in a tomb or an invisible prison.

The French romance that we call *Les Prophecies de Merlin* is part of this rich tradition. The title might suggest that it is only a collection of Merlin’s prophecies, like chapter IX of the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, but we also find there, in its long version, many chivalrous adventures typical of Arthurian romances.

The storyline of the *Prophecies de Merlin* includes a *prophetic storyline*, stories centered on Merlin uttering prophecies about the end of the world, the advent of the Dragon of Babylon, the political context of the end of the 13th century or the fate of various knights of the Round Table, and which are then written down by his scribes, Maître Antoine (Master Antoine), *le Sage Clerc* (the Wise Cleric), etc. or inscribed on rocks before being collected by knights. Merlin, as usual, is locked in his tomb by the Lady of the Lake, Viviane, but his spirit continues to prophesize there and the knight Meliadus can therefore come to collect his words for a little longer. Perceval also finds a book of prophecies that had been compiled when Merlin was still a child.

In the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, these stories about Merlin, his prophecies and his scribes are interspersed with more conventional arthurian adventures, novelistic episodes: episodes about the false Guinevere and the Tournament of Sorelois from the *Lancelot proper*, Arthur is bewitched by the false Guinevere and it is therefore his fool, Daguenet, who must lead the war against the Saxons, the wicked “fairies”, Morgana

and Sybille, plot against Arthur's court and bicker, the adventures of Alexander the Orphan, Perceval, Palamèdes, and also of a certain... Segurant. In 2009, Koble discusses the opposition between the chivalric adventures of the long version, *le côté d'Arthur* ("Arthur's side"), on the one hand, and *le côté de Merlin* ("Merlin's side"), on the other, which she considers an intrinsic part of the work.

The text of the *Prophecies de Merlin* has been edited by Lucy Allen Paton in 1926-1927 (as far as the prophecies are concerned, with only a summary of the adventures), and the long version of the Bodmer manuscript was edited by Anne Berthelot in 1992 and by Nathalie Koble in 2001 (despite several announcements, her edition remained unpublished, but [it is available in PDF since December 2023 here](#)). Koble also wrote a monograph [about the Prophecies in 2009](#) and discusses them as well in [another work on the Suites du Merlin in 2020](#).

No extant translation exist. Beyond the Arsenal manuscript, Arioli translated a small excerpt of Segurant in the long version, as well as the adventures of Alexandre l'Orphelin (Alexander the Orphan), in modern french. There is also the purported translation of Vêrard's 1498 edition of the Prophecies, by John Matthews and Matthew Haverkamp. An interesting member of the tradition to be sure but made by people that did not understand french, or much of anything, rearranged and cut the text in nonsensical way, and inserted excerpts from other texts, adapting Paton's summaries in places, that it barely qualifies as a translation. ([see our review: Farra 2025](#), for the extant of the butchering)

With the long version and Arsenal manuscript, the manuscript tradition contains four branches, identified by Paton and confirmed by later studies (e.g. Benanati 2021:38):

Table 1: Branches of the Prophecies de Merlin's manuscripts

Prophecies de Merlin Group I (long version)	"Long" version including many Arthurian adventures (war against the Saxons, Alexandre l'Orphelin, etc.). Bodmer manuscript 116 contains the most complete version, its final episodes being found nowhere else in full — including what Arioli calls the Complementary Romance Version. This is the "standard" version of the <i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> , but that does not imply that it is without alteration, as we will discuss.	<a href="#">Bodmer 116</a>
		<a href="#">BnF fr. 350</a>
		British Library Add. 25434
		British Library Harley 1629
		<a href="#">Rennes BM 593</a>
		Modena, envelope fragments 11/1 fasc. 10
Prophecies de Merlin Group II (short version)	"Short" version that focuses mainly on <b>Merlin's prophecies</b> , without the more literary Arthurian adventures.	Vatican Reg. Lat. 1687
		<a href="#">Bern Burger Library 388</a>
		Brussels Royal 9624
		<a href="#">BnF fr. 98</a>
Prophecies de Merlin Group III (Arsenal)	The Arsenal Manuscript 5229. Contains the prophetic storyline but does not include the romantic episodes of the long version (except one, the Lady of the Lake rescuing Urien). Apart from that, it intersperses other adventures at other points: the <b>Cardinal Version of "Segurant"</b> .	<a href="#">Arsenal 5229</a>
		(Contains the cardinal version)
Prophecies de Merlin Group IV (compilation)	Collections of Merlin's prophecies which, like the short version focus mainly on the prophecies, but rearranged in a different order (see <a href="#">Paton I.35-38</a> , <a href="#">40-41</a> for the correspondence between these manuscripts and Paton's	Venice BN Str. App. 29, 33r-87r
		<a href="#">Chantilly. Bibl.château 644 (n°1081)</a> 2ra-59vb et 163rb-164vb

	edition), and which add prophecies that are not found elsewhere. (Sometimes as if taken from a “Book of Tholomer” which would be located at the beginning of the plot)	+ (close to the <a href="#">edition printed by Vêrard in 1498.</a> )
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### Segurant: the “cardinal version” (Arsenal 5229)

The Arsenal 5229 manuscript therefore contains adventures that are found nowhere else, centered on *Segurant le Brun*, knight of the Dragon, and which form what Arioli calls the “cardinal version” of Segurant.

Coming from the prestigious lineage of the Bruns, which appears in *Guiron le Courtois*, he was born on the *Isle Non Sachant* (~Unkown Isle), quickly proved himself there and was knighted, before going to compete at the court of King Arthur. He launched a challenge to everyone, pitched his tent in Winchester where a tournament was to take place, where he managed to unseat everyone by taking the place of the *quintaine*. (A turning mannequin that knights must strike as part of a jousting game.) Segurant is therefore an excellent knight, perhaps the best in the world, which seems to disturb Morgana and the enchantress Sibylle, who summon demons to create an illusion and bewitch him. He thus sees a monstrous dragon devour dozens of knights, and vows to chase and kill it. But, it is in fact an illusion, a demon summoned by the witches who has only taken the appearance of a dragon and pretends to devour other demons who had taken the appearance of knights. Enchanted and obsessed, Segurant sets off in pursuit of the beast. So Segurant is chasing a dragon that doesn’t really exist, or at least that he can’t kill. And while Arthur’s court would like to search for him, Morgana convinces them that Segurant doesn’t exist either, that he was part of the illusion (and that’s why he was seemingly so strong), and so everyone forgets about him. A nice trick from the author to explain why you haven’t heard of Segurant in Arthurian literature yet. ([See Appendix 1 for a full summary of the “cardinal version”.](#))

The unique structure of the Arsenal manuscript could be explained as being a late compilation. It was generally dated to the 15th century, and Arioli more precisely dates its redaction between 1390 and 1403, which is still more than a century after the writing of the *Prophecies de Merlin* in the 1270s. Any hypothesis about the cardinal version, which would have been part of the Ur-Prophecies or a “lost romance of Segurant”, is therefore based on a single and very late manuscript. However, as Nathalie Koble already says in 2009, this manuscript “drains unpublished narrative materials, but skillfully assembled” and even if it “presents itself to the reader as a new Arthurian romance” (Koble *Prophecies* 2009:478, we translate) we cannot rule out that it might preserve ancient materials:

“By examining the structure of this manuscript, the reader cannot help but suspect that he is in the presence of a late montage entirely made up of older fragments of which this manuscript alone would bear witness, or that the compiler has completely or partially transformed himself into a true [original] novelist.” ([Koble, Segurant 2009:§10](#))

However, she also says that the author of the Arsenal manuscript “substituted for the narrative episodes of the romance versions some forty Arthurian episodes that are not found elsewhere.” (*Prophecies* 2009:151) which would imply that the long version is the standard version and theses Segurant episodes an innovation, and the title of [his article](#) presents it as “an Arthurian romance made of whole cloth” (*monté de toutes pièces*, “entirely built from spare parts”), so her contribution will be understood as inclining towards it being a late compilation. (see for example [Carné 2016:193n1](#)) In the review of *Segurant* by Ferlampin-Acher in the *Romania* ([2021](#)) an editor’s note states that Nathalie Koble, who was also on Arioli’s thesis jury, became convinced over time of the validity of Arioli’s theories. “In fact, it was she who had steered the work in this direction when she had better seen where reading the Arsenal ms. was leading.” (“Même, c’est elle qui avait orienté le travail en cette direction lorsqu’elle avait mieux vu où menait la lecture du ms. de l’Arsenal.” [Romania 2021:200](#))

The long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, also includes adventures of Segurant (Arioli’s “version complémentaire romanesque”), and in her edition of ms. Bodmer 116, Anne Berthelot summarizes the story and

notes that when the narrative moves on to Segurant it is with a tone that suggests that much has already been said about him, when this is not the case. (1992:18) Here, no episodes from the Arsenal manuscript, but we do see the enchanted Segurant pop in and continue his quest for the dragon, so it seems to *continue* the Arsenal's story and fit it perfectly. In 1926, Paton therefore already postulated that some episodes of Arsenal 5229 must have been found in the original composition of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (which she calls "X") otherwise it becomes difficult to explain why Segurant appears in the long version. Paton shone quite a spotlight on the "Matter of Segurant" as she gave quite extensive summaries of the Arsenal episodes ([see excerpts PDF, 2mo](#)) as well as the episodes pertaining to him in the wider *Prophecies de Merlin*, and edited the prophecies alluding to the character ([see excerpts, PDF, 2mo](#)).

Even more so when we examine what episodes these different branches share:

- All of them reproduce the prophetic storyline (including prophecies about Segurant) even if not always in full (sections are missing in the Arsenal manuscript for example)
- All branches have episodes that are not found in the others:
  - Unique to the extended version: romance adventure episodes
  - Unique to the Arsenal: Cardinal version
  - Unique to the short version: fragment of Bern-Brussels, other snippets of apparently abridged stories. ([Paton I.20-21](#))
  - Unique to group IV: additional prophecies (notably on Segurant) which seem to be taken from a "Book of Tholomer" (perhaps a later addition? cf. Winand 2020), found developed in Italian adaptations.
- In the long version and the Arsenal (but not the short version)
  - Episode of the Lady of the Lake saving Urien
- In the short version, the Arsenal and Group IV "compilation" (but not the long version)
  - Episode II of the cardinal version, prophecies made to Galehaut le Brun (also in the ms. of group IV, Chantilly and Venice, the Vêrard edition [contains a little bit of this episode](#))
  - Conversation between the Lady of the Lake and Bohort ([Bern 81r](#) ; [Arsenal 140r](#)) — also in the Vêrard edition ([LIIIv](#)).
  - A further prophecy about the "Good Mariners" (Venetians), cf. [Paton I.66-7n11](#), Koble Prophecies 2009:125. Also in the compilation group [Vêrard 1498:CXXVc](#)(partial) = Venice 87d-88b.
- Finally, the manuscripts of group IV "compilation" or the Vêrard edition preserve some episodes of the long version (cf. [Paton I.40-1](#), the Vêrard edition actually reproduces in order a long section of the Venice ms.)
  - Palamedes confronts Lamorat (Koble XXXV.15-18), but the latter's name is replaced by Méléagant ([1498:37a](#)).
  - Dinadan, Galehaut and Méléagant (Koble LI.8-12 = [1498:38a-39c](#))
  - The King of Ireland on Crusade (Koble LXXIII.1-10 = [1498:77a-78c](#) = Venice 49c-51a)
  - Duel between Morgana and the other fairies (Koble LXXXIII = [1498:119c-122c](#) = Venice 82d-85a)

These links can be illustrated in the form of a Venn diagram:



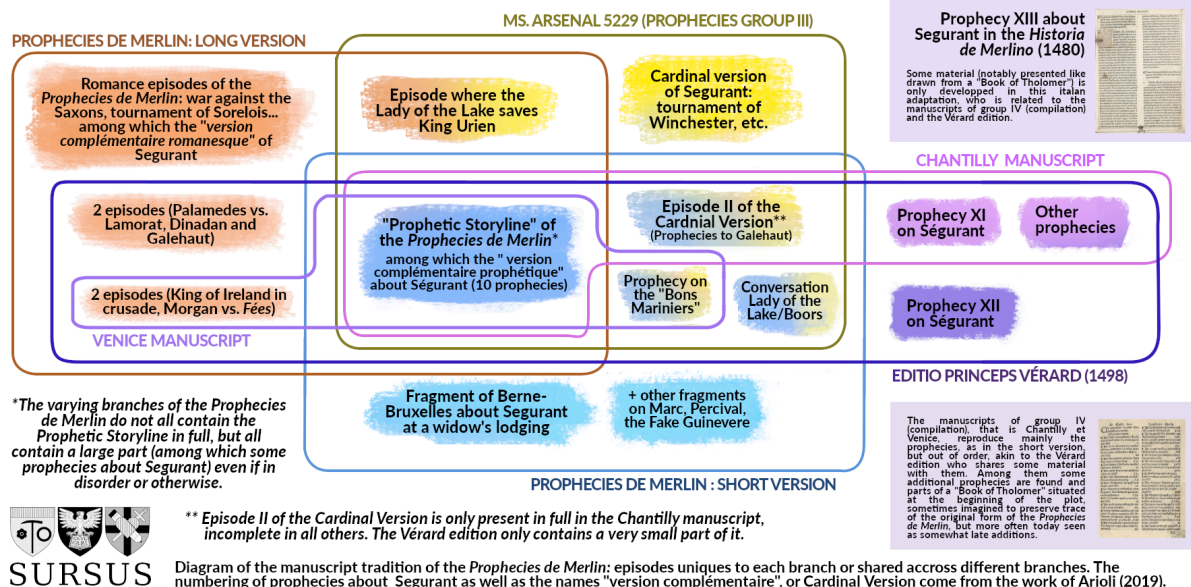
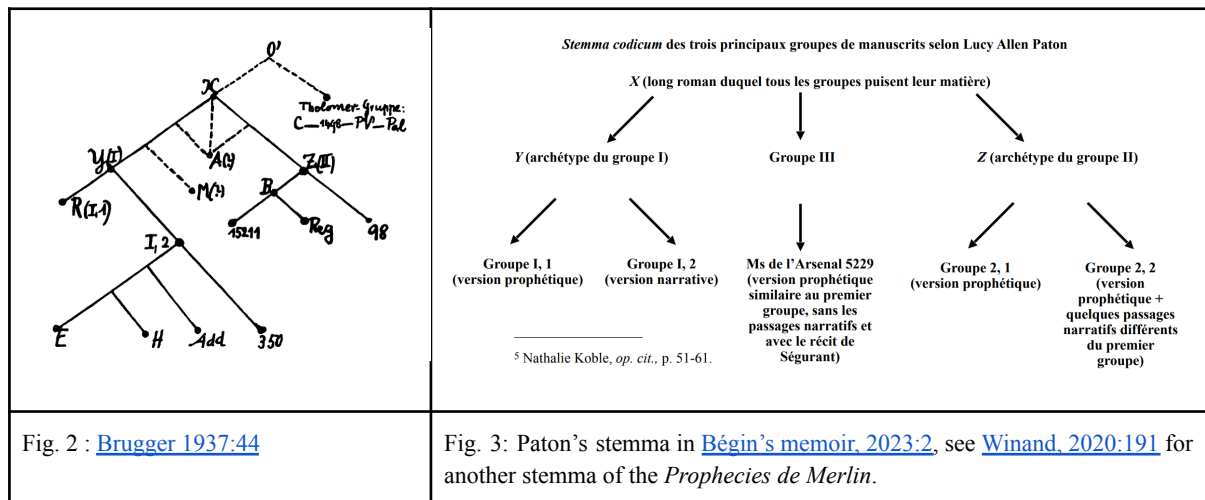


Fig. 1: Venn diagram of the tradition of the *Prophecies de Merlin*.

Why such a fragmented tradition? Arioli postulates that one factor could be the blacklisting of Merlin's prophecies (writ large) following the Council of Trent. This would not be limited to the specific romance of the *Prophecies de Merlin* but would have caused the destruction of a certain number of manuscripts which could have shed light on this tradition. In doing so, he takes up a hypothesis as old as it is reasonable, already put forward for example by Jane Taylor (2011:100) but going back to Bellamy (1896:II.556) who says that the Council of Trent "completes [the] ruin" (*achève la ruine*) of the *Prophecies de Merlin*.

Paton therefore thought that all descended from the same archetype of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (designated "X") but that due to this very altered tradition, the possible interpolations and contaminations between different branches, it was impossible to reconstruct it precisely, even if she advances a few suppositions. (II.294)

Arioli, is more optimistic, and offers a chapter-by-chapter reconstruction of what he calls the *Ur-Prophecies*, which would include most parts of the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* and the cardinal version of Segurant. The prophetic storyline about Merlin and his prophecies would have been interspersed with the cardinal version in its first half and the romance episodes of the long version in its second half. Arioli also notes that it is precisely at the hinge between these two halves that we see major alterations between the different branches, the short version having in particular the Berne-Brussels fragment, where the scribe is about to recount an adventure of Segurant at a widow's house, before giving up, as well as other fragments in the same vein. This could be the trace of the abbreviations and reworkings which would have given birth to these different branches.

Figures 2-3: Stemmas of the manuscripts of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (X = *Ur-Prophecies*)Table 2: hinge of the different branches of the *Prophecies de Merlin* ([excerpt from appendix 3](#))

Ms. Arsenal 5229	Ms. Bodmer 116 (long version)	Bern-Brussels (Short Version)
[...]	[...]	[...]
End of the cardinal version: episodes XXXVI-XXXIX		
154c	prophetic storyline Sage Cleric flies to stone 52	Snippets only in short version: Bern 83va?, Brussels 47v-52r
	XXV Sage Cleric on the Stone 53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fragment on Mark and the Seneschal of Leonois (<a href="#">Bern 85ra</a>; Brux 49v)</li> <li>Fragment on the false Guinevere, (<a href="#">Bern 86ra</a>; Brux 52r?)</li> <li>Fragment on Marc imprisoned, Perceval winner of a tournament. (<a href="#">Bern 89ra-b</a> Brux 55?)</li> </ul>
	XXVI: Story of the four stones on the crown of the Dragon of Babylon 55v  <b>Prophecy X</b> : on the stone of Segurant	<b>Fragment of Bern-Brussels</b> Segurant at the widow's <a href="#">Bern 91va</a> , Brussels 55v
	Bod. XXVII; Ren CLXXXVII-CCXX 59v young lady arrives with a charter	Brussels 55v
154c-157a the Lady of the Lake saves King Urien from an enchantment	<i>The only "Arthurian" story in common between the long version and the Arsenal ms.</i>	
Here the manuscript of the Arsenal concludes by bringing together the episodes of the prophetic storyline...	...in which the romantic episodes of the long version are interspersed. (cf. <a href="#">fig. 4</a> And <a href="#">Appendix 3</a> ),	

Another element supporting his reconstruction emerges when we compare the text of the different traditions during the transition from one episode to another, as Arioli does in a table at the end of his *Étude* (2019:360 *sqq.*), for example in ms. Arsenal 5229, Merlin dictates prophecies to Master Antoine (95vb), episodes XVI to XX of the cardinal version follow, then the text tells us that we return to Master Antoine (103vb). The long version does not have the episodes of the cardinal version... but the text also tells us again that Master Antoine wrote down Merlin's prophecies, even though, here, we have not left him! (Bodmer 116 fol. 46rb) Similarly, instead of the Berne-Brussels fragment, we find "*or lairons a parler de ces propheties, si parleront d'autres*" (Bodmer 116 fol. 59rb) — "we will now leave these prophecies and will speak of other [prophecies]" - a common transition formula to switch between scenes, between characters, etc. but to go from some prophecies to *others* prophecies? Seems to be a sign of abridgement. After the episode of *Mador de la*

*Porte*, the long version skips a prophetic sequence and only copies it later, creating an inconsistency in its chronology, etc. It is not always easy to determine whether one branch abbreviates or another develops, but Arioli multiplies the philological examples which seem to attest to abbreviations which support his reconstructions.

By examining these different traditions in parallel, in our appendix tables (cf. [table 2](#) And [Appendix 3](#)) or on the diagram below, we see more clearly how these two halves of the *Ur-Prophecies* could have been arranged, the first half interweaving the prophetic storyline with the cardinal version and the second with the romantic episodes of the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* :

## Manuscripts of the *Prophecies de Merlin*: shared and unique episodes by branch

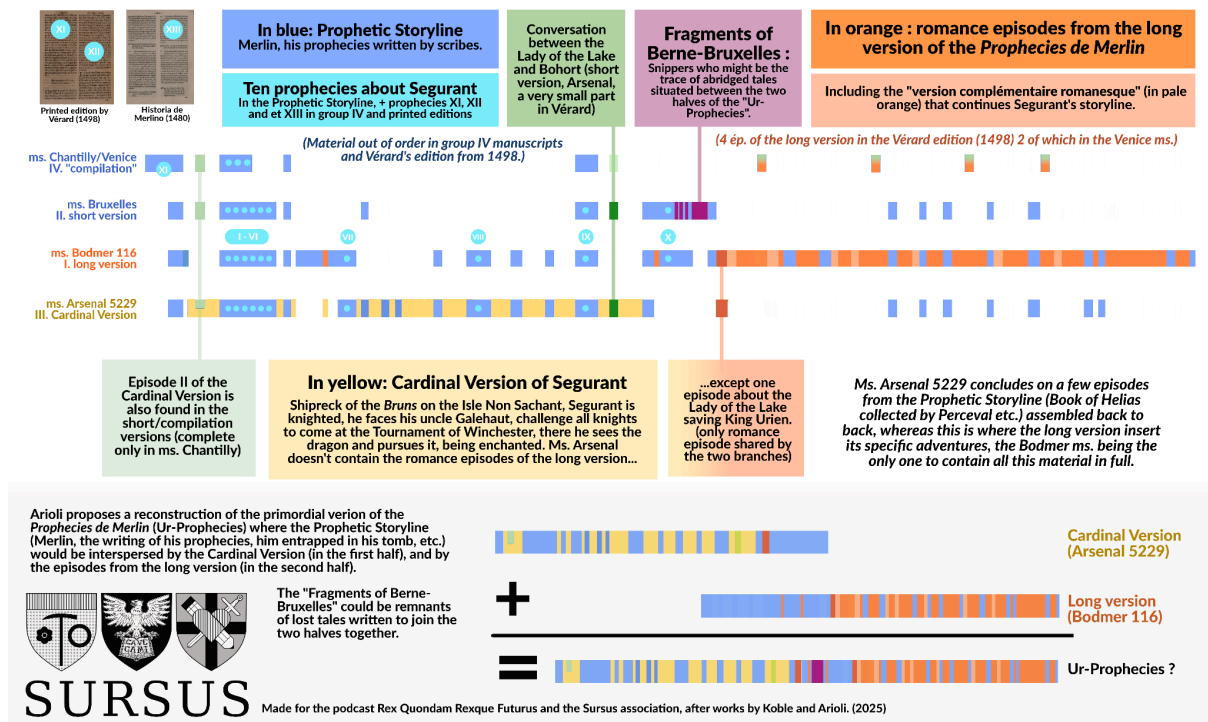


Fig. 4: Diagram of the composition of manuscripts from the different branches of the PdM

## Continuations and variants

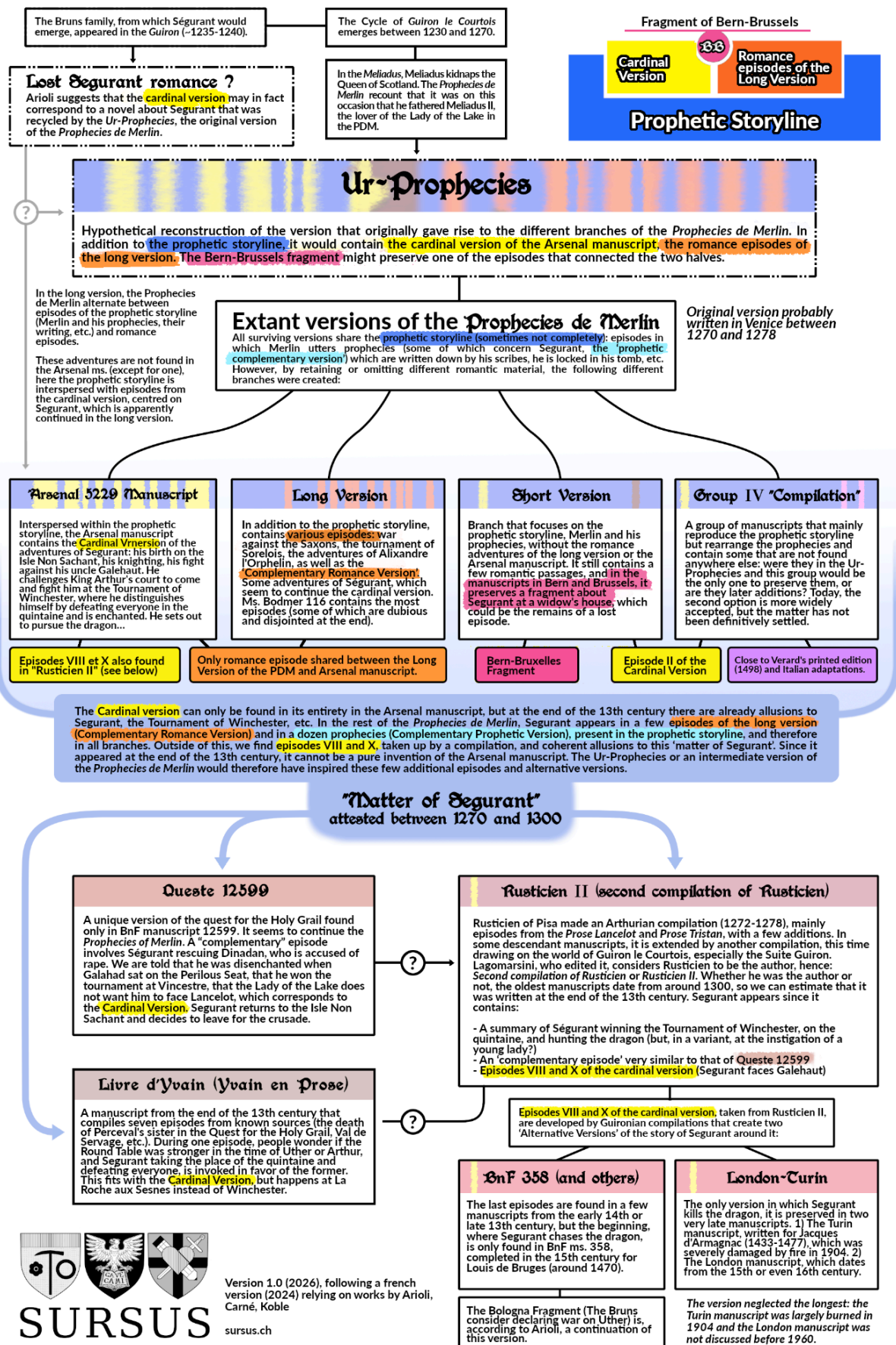
Outside of the Arsenal manuscript, Segurant appears in other branches of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, and some of the Arsenal episodes are found elsewhere, and extended. (See below Table 3 on the possible reading order of the different texts below, and Fig. 5 on the Segurant tradition, next page)

Table 3: Possible reading order of the different versions of Segurant (adapted from Arioli, original summaries)

<p><b>Cardinal Version (Arsenal 5229)</b></p> <p>Shipwreck of Segurant's ancestors on the Isle Non Sachant, he is knighted, defeats his uncle Galehaut, challenges Arthur's court. Enchanted at the Tournament of Winchester he sets off in pursuit of the dragon, which is in fact only the appearance taken by a demon summoned by Morgana and Sibylle...</p> <p>(<a href="#">see appendix 1</a> for a full summary)</p>	<p>— (attested outside the Arsenal ms.) <b>Ep. II of the Cardinal Version</b> also in the short version of the <i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> (complete in ms. Chantilly, incomplete in all others)</p> <p>→ <b>Ep. VIII + X: Segurant helps Hoderiz, fights his uncle Galehaut</b> Also found in <i>Rusticien II</i>, a "Guironian" compilation attributed to Rusticien (Rustichello) of Pisa, which also adds that Segurant was running after a dragon and an episode very similar to that of the <i>Queste 12599</i> where he rescues Dinadan accused of rape.</p> <p>Two versions take up episodes VIII+X as they are and develop some of Segurant's adventures before and after, apparently according to the allusions found in <i>Rusticien II</i> (hero victorious at Pas Berthelais, in pursuit of a dragon):</p>				
<p>↓</p> <p><b>Complementary Romance Version (<i>Prophecies de Merlin</i>, long version)</b></p> <p>Golistan seeks Segurant to be knighted by him. Perceval finds a cleric locked in a spinning cage and learns that only the Knight of the Dragon can free him (most probably Segurant). Segurant pursues the dragon, winner of a tournament in the Cité Fort, he allows the princess to avoid being wedded to a suitor she does not desire. He kills with an arrow the Cleric who controlled the mechanisms of a Tower defended by Copper Knights, etc. meets his squire Golistan, and the Lady of the Lake, who cannot cure his enchantment but tells him to go to the coast where he will find a ship...</p>	<p>↓ ↓</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p><b>Alternative Version BnF 358</b></p> <p>Segurant fights Bertoullars at the Château du Trépas and makes him abolish his custom, then resumes the quest for the dragon in a forest. He confronts Galehaut (VIII+X), falls in love with the young daughter of the Duke of Normandy, then goes to fight a knight guarding the giant's bridge and takes his place. His father Hector fails to unseat him, but his uncle, Branor, succeeds. They then return together to Val Brun.</p> </td><td> <p><b>Alternative Vers. London-Turin</b></p> <p>Segurant, 21, leaves to kill the dragon that devours people, and then paints it on his coat of arms. (The dragon is therefore not a demonic illusion, this is the only version where Segurant kills it, which contradicts the cardinal version). Segurant fights giants and knights at the Pas Berthelais and, seriously wounded, goes to be treated in Carmelide. Fight against his uncle Galehaut (ep. VIII+X). The giants of the Black Forest having killed their parents, he will attack them with Galehaut, free their prisoners and seize their treasures.</p> </td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <p><b>Fragment of Bologna:</b> The Bruns are considering declaring war on Uther who has seized Roche Brun.</p> </td></tr> </table>	<p><b>Alternative Version BnF 358</b></p> <p>Segurant fights Bertoullars at the Château du Trépas and makes him abolish his custom, then resumes the quest for the dragon in a forest. He confronts Galehaut (VIII+X), falls in love with the young daughter of the Duke of Normandy, then goes to fight a knight guarding the giant's bridge and takes his place. His father Hector fails to unseat him, but his uncle, Branor, succeeds. They then return together to Val Brun.</p>	<p><b>Alternative Vers. London-Turin</b></p> <p>Segurant, 21, leaves to kill the dragon that devours people, and then paints it on his coat of arms. (The dragon is therefore not a demonic illusion, this is the only version where Segurant kills it, which contradicts the cardinal version). Segurant fights giants and knights at the Pas Berthelais and, seriously wounded, goes to be treated in Carmelide. Fight against his uncle Galehaut (ep. VIII+X). The giants of the Black Forest having killed their parents, he will attack them with Galehaut, free their prisoners and seize their treasures.</p>	<p><b>Fragment of Bologna:</b> The Bruns are considering declaring war on Uther who has seized Roche Brun.</p>	
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<p><b>Fragment of Bologna:</b> The Bruns are considering declaring war on Uther who has seized Roche Brun.</p>					
<p>↓</p> <p><b><i>Queste 12599</i> (an allusive episode continues the plot of the <i>Prophecies de Merlin</i>, long version)</b></p> <p>Segurant, winner of the Tournament of Winchester, was disenchanted when Galahad sat on the Perilous Seat (appearance of the Grail), and refused to fight Lancelot. With Golistan, he saved Dinadan, accused of rape. Segurant returned to Isle Non Sachant, then decided to go on crusade after reading an inscription from the Pope on the church wall.</p>	<p>→</p> <p><b>Complementary Prophetic Version (A dozen prophecies about Segurant which are found in the different versions of the <i>Prophecies de Merlin</i>)</b></p> <p>Segurant will go to Jerusalem during the quest for the Grail to sell his father's precious stones. He will become king of Abiron (far in the East) and of Babylon, will return to search for Merlin's tomb in the forest of Darnantes - and will speak to the Lady of the Lake. He will encrust the marvelous stone that shone on his tent in an altar, where the Dragon of Babylon (= antichrist) will take it back to set it in his crown. Additional prophecies (ms. Chantilly, ed. Vêrard, <i>Historia di Merlino</i>): he will become king of Jerusalem and die young, his descendants will conquer the Saracens without mercy.</p>				



Fig. 5: Textual tradition of Segurant: complementary and alternative episodes





### Complementary romance version (Version complémentaire romanesque)

In the long version, or *romanesque* version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, some adventures of Segurant or mentioning Segurant seem to continue the cardinal version. These seven episodes, baptized *version complémentaire romanesque* (“complementary romance version”) by Arioli, are published and summarized in the second volume of his edition.

Summary according to Paton 1926, Berthelot 1992, Koble 2001, Arioli 2019

- I. Golistan seeks Segurant to be knighted by him. He finds a knight pulling a young lady by her braids, and defeats her tormentor. The young lady asks him to cut off his head, but he refuses. She thus kills the knight with a knife and tells him that his band of criminals had already killed two of her sisters and tried to rape her. They then go to the castle of one of her sisters, who is gathering troops to attack the bandits. On the way, Golistan kills other criminals and frees women imprisoned in the basement of a monastery, who become nuns. He meets the knights of the Isle Non Sachant who are waiting for Segurant at his tent and decides to wait with them.
- II. Perceval finds a cleric locked in a spinning cage, but it stops when a monk celebrates mass, at which point an old woman brings him food. Perceval is unable to free him. The old woman leads him to an inscription near an abandoned tower, which tells that this cleric had tried to kidnap the Lady of the Lake, and that Merlin had then enchanted him. Only the Knight of the Dragon will be able to free him. (Most probably Segurant)
- III. As he is chasing the dragon relentlessly, Segurant’s equipment deteriorates. He arrives at the *Cité Fort*, where he sees the dragon plunge into a river. The queen is the stepmother to the princess of Cité Fort, and wants her to marry her son, Gui, against her will. When she sees Segurant, the princess laughs, sensing that his arrival is a good omen. A tournament is organized, with the princess’s hand at stake. She threatens to jump from the top of the tower if Gui wins. The next day, Segurant wins the tournament and defeats Gui.
- IV. The next day, the queen plans to poison Segurant, but to no avail, as the princess detected the plan and brought him food, warning him not to eat anything else. A dwarf brings a roast peacock for lunch, which the princess throws on the ground, where a dog eats it and dies. Segurant knights Richier, from the family who is hosting him, and gives him in marriage to the princess. He then sets off again in search of the dragon that has, at this point, emerged from the water. That night, the queen sets fire to the Princess’s room, but everyone manages to escape, except for the said queen, who perishes in the fire. The marriage of the princess and Richier is celebrated. A month later, the king dies and Richier ascends to the throne.
- V. Segurant arrives at the home of a hermit, to whom he explains that he is pursuing the dragon that devoured a hundred knights at the Tournament of Winchester. The hermit notes that Segurant is enchanted, and that he will not be rid of it easily. Segurant is devouring his provisions when a messenger arrives announcing that knights have tied 60 people to donkeys with the intention of burning them. Segurant unties them, upon which twenty-eight knights attack. He kills or seriously injures them. His victory is celebrated. After eating, a priest explains that the knights were in fact rebellious servants who burned a church and killed chaplains. Segurant sets off again in pursuit of the dragon.
- VI. The Lady of the Lake and Bohort arrive at a tower guarded by two immense knights, in fact copper automatons, powered by a machine of gears, ropes, chains, and mercury (explicitly not magic). It is the work of a cleric who seeks to hold a young lady prisoner there. The Lady of the Lake announces that the Knight of the Dragon will bring this adventure to an end.
- VII. Segurant reaches a castle. Boors is there with the Lady of the Lake, who recognizes Segurant’s excessive appetite and confirms that he is the victim of an enchantment. She cannot help him but reveals that he must later find a ship by the sea (which will bring him closer to his goal, one assumes). The next day they go to the tower, Segurant sees the cleric operating the mechanism through a crack and fires an arrow at him that mortally wounds him. As he dies, he falls on the machine controls, and it stops. The young lady asks Segurant to stay because the cleric’s family will take revenge, and indeed, a few days later, 400 knights attack the tower. Segurant kills or routs them. They return the next day and are defeated by Segurant and the young lady’s family. Segurant continues his quest.

- VIII. Golistan is waiting for Segurant in Winchester, at his tent. He sets off in pursuit of a deer pursued by a pack of dogs. He manages to kill it near a spring and give its flesh to the dogs. A knight arrives and demands the dogs, which Golistan refuses, they fight. His opponent throws himself into the body of water to escape him, and begins to drown. Four of his companions try to help him but without success. Golistan throws their horses' harnesses into the water and flees, riding all night. The next day he helps a peasant and his daughter defend her from a man who wanted to kidnap her, he kills the aggressor and all his followers. (As he is not knighted, he can fight against villains) He then eats at their house and is joined by Segurant whom he recognizes, again, by his great appetite. He asks him to knight him. They remain feasting among the peasants for three days until the dragon reappears and Segurant sets off in pursuit. (His mere presence overrides Pommenglois's enchantment, since he carries a more powerful enchantment.) Golistan returns to Segurant's tent, with the knights of the Isle Non Sachant and tells them of his failure.

#### On the Prophecies de Merlin (Long Version and Others)

To edit the *Prophecies de Merlin*, Lucy Allen Paton relied on the Rennes manuscript, which reproduces the long version, but abridged it. The manuscript that contains the most material today, Bodmer 116, was in the hands of an auction house and she was not given permission to edit it or even to summarize it properly ([Paton I.9, I.51](#)). It is on this manuscript that Berthelot relied in 1992 and Koble in 1997-2001 for their editions. [Koble's edition is available in PDF on HAL since December 2023](#). There is no complete translation into a modern language. To approach the text:

- [Summary of the long version, in French, by Nathalie Koble in her edition \(pp. 1-25\)](#), summary which can also be found in her book on the *Prophecies de Merlin* (2009:495-526).
- An overview of the contents can also be found at the beginning of the Berthelot edition. (1992)
- And Lucy Allen Paton summarizes the romance episodes in English. ([1926:I.371-422](#))
- Arioli has translated excerpts from the Segurant episodes he edited from the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, they should therefore be included in the english translation as well when it comes out. (Arioli translated them out of order, I give the Bodmer 116 foliotation for comparison — which doesn't help as nothing is done to indicate that these four episodes come from the same branch of the tradition, they are simply situated as being found in a Geneva and a London manuscript, in this other manuscript etc. feeding into the image of a completely fragmented romance)
  - ép. I, Golistan looking for Segurant (67va)
  - ép. VIII, Golistan meeting Segurant (171vb)
  - ép. V, Segurant with the hermit (130ra)
  - ép. VI-VII, Segurant at the Tower of the Marvel of Copper (135va)
- Arioli has also translated into modern french the seven *Prophecies de Merlin* episodes involving Alexander the Orphan in 2024.

For Arioli (*Étude* 2019:62), it is not possible to know whether the episodes of the Complementary Romance Version were invented by the compiler of the Ur-Prophecies or whether they were taken from an earlier (intermediate) source, which also contained the Cardinal Version for example. On the other hand, he notes that where the cardinal version seemed a “foreign body” in the Arsenal manuscript, the romance episodes of the long version are more intertwined with the prophetic storyline (*Étude* 2019:46). Some of them involve the Wise Cleric for example, and in the adventure of the Tower with the Copper Knights we see Segurant and Golistan meet the Lady of the Lake, who comes from the prophetic storyline, the same goes for Perceval who learns that only Segurant will be able to free the cleric in the cage. Since Segurant's “lost romance” is supposed to have existed *separately* from the *Prophecies de Merlin*, it seems that for Arioli, these episodes which mix the two matters cannot logically be drawn from there. (For the same reason he assumes that episode II of the cardinal version must be a later addition, and couldn't have been part of the original Segurant romance.)

When talking about the *Prophecies de Merlin* it is often assumed that the complete work is in fact the long version, which is therefore treated like the standard version, but it should not be forgotten that this text also bears traces of alterations.

- Disorder in the episodes of Perceval: at the end of the prophetic storyline, we see Perceval collecting a book of prophecies from Merlin, recorded when he was only a child. However, earlier in the plot, when Perceval enters the scene, we are told that he had just left the hermit... It could be a lost scene with another hermit, but at this point, Perceval is also looking for Corbenic, the castle of the Grail, which would seem more logical at the end of the romance, in this chronology...
- The final episodes, which are found in full only in Bodmer 116 (and abridged in the Rennes manuscript) are particularly disjointed and no longer seem to have any connection with each other.
- Winand also notes: “None of the endings proposed by the manuscript tradition therefore appears absolutely convincing” (2020:59). All of them seem to have sketched out vague attempts at a conclusion. If we take up Koble’s chapters, we can try to place the end between episode LXXXII (the end of the unanimity of the tradition) and episode CII (up to which the Bodmer and Rennes manuscripts continue).

There still remains one theoretical problem: the beginning of the *Prophecies de Merlin* tells that after Blaise, Merlin briefly had Tholomer as a scribe, before Master Antoine took his place after his promotion. Some of the prophecies are presented as being taken from a “book of Tholomer”, Paton believes that it was indeed part of the *Prophecies de Merlin* originally (II.304 sqq.), more fragments are found in group IV of the manuscripts (Chantilly, Venice, Vêrard’s edition from 1498 which develops it further) and Italian adaptations (Paolo Pieri, *La Storia di Merlino* ; mss. Parma, Biblioteca, Biblioteca Palatina, Palatino 39 ; Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 949 ; the incunable *La Historia de Merlino*, Venezia, Luca Venitiano, 1480). Brugger integrates this into the stemma he proposes, placing them close to the root. (1937:44)

Véronique Winand rejects this idea (2020:188) the “Book of Tholomer” would therefore be a later addition, in the same way as the book of Blaise added by the *History of Merlino* Italian. Moreover, Arioli proposed a few years ago to devote a future study to settling the question of the “Book of Tholomer” (Arioli 2020:17) and to study the links between all this “and other partially lost texts” and “other unpublished episodes and fragments that we have encountered during our research” (*Étude* 2019:48).

The publication of a critical edition by Koble (Carné 2009:§1 ; Combes 2010:541 ; Taylor 2011:102n13) to Arioli (*Étude* 2019:32n4), but it did not see the light of day, however [the text of the edition which accompanied his 1997 thesis, and amended for his 2001 thesis, has been available in PDF since December 2023 on HAL](#). Arioli himself announced in 2019 an upcoming edition of the reconstructed Ur-Prophecies—it remains to be seen whether this would actually be useful. (More recently, when he was asked about this project at a conference, he implied that he had given up on such an undertaking.)

### “Complementary Prophetic Version”: Prophecies about Segurant

Even outside the Arsenal manuscript, in the long, short and “compilation” versions of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, we find prophecies that seem to speak of Segurant. They relate a future that is not recounted in the texts that remain to us: his role in Merlin’s quest, he goes to Jerusalem, becomes king of Abiron.

- I. A knight from the family of Galehaut le Brun will find the Lady of the Lake after Merlin’s death, to question her. (Paton LXIII)
- II. Segurant le Brun will become king of Abiron (Paton LXXV-LXXVI)
- III. Segurant will be a feared warrior, during the quest for the Grail he will go to Jerusalem and sell the precious stones that his father Hector the Brown had brought from the Isle of the Griffins to the Isle Non Sachant (Paton LXXXVII) – this is not recounted in the Arsenal manuscript.
- IV. The king of Abiron will ride in the forest of Darnantes until he finds information about Merlin. (Paton CXXI)

- V. This king will be called Segurant and he will beat everyone at the joust, no one could defeat him except Galahad. ([Paton CXXIII-CXXIV](#))
- VI. Before the death of the Lady of the Lake, only one knight will come to Merlin's tomb: the king of Babylon and Abiron. ([Paton CXXIX-CXXX](#)) In the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, this is in fact the case faor Meliadus, the italian *Historia di Merlino* thus specifies that there will in fact be two knights.
- VII. Like Segurant, a knight named Moran will go to Jerusalem, be crowned king of Abiron, and return to Darnantes to speak to the spirit of Merlin. ([Paton CL](#)) No information elsewhere on this Moran which would make him anything other than a double of Segurant, we believe.
- VIII. The Dragon Hunter will be enchanted at the Tournament of Winchester before being crowned King of Abiron. ([Paton CLIX-CLX](#)) This prophecy, which corresponds to the cardinal version, describes an event which remains to us in written form, while most of the others do not.
- IX. When Segurant returns to Logres in search of Merlin's tomb, a miraculous spring of boiling water will spring up in Abiron's palace. ([Paton CLXXVII](#))
- X. The stone of the pavilion of Segurant once belonged to Philip of Greece. Hector, Segurant's father, had found it on the Isle of the Griffins. Segurant would set it in his crown as king of Abiron and later have it set in the altar of Notre-Dame. A servant of the Dragon of Babylon would remove it so that it would be one of the four stones set in the crown of the Dragon of Babylon (the Antichrist). ([Paton CCV](#))

Three others are not part of the Paton edition because they are found in more minority manuscripts (Chantilly), the edition of 1498 or in Italian translation.

- I. A descendant of Hector the Brown will become king of Jerusalem and so valiant that no one will dare to confront him, everyone will flee before him. ([Chantilly 32ra-32rb](#) ; [Vérard 1498:17va](#))
- II. Merlin's Quest will be completed by the Knight of the Dragon after he takes the place of the Quintaine in front of Arthur's court. [Vérard 1498:136ra](#))
- III. Segurant, king of Abiron, will have descendants who will increase the glory of God, will conquer castles and towns of the Saracens without pity, and he will die young of natural causes. ([Historia de Merlino 1480:76rb](#) (k3, book IV, chapter V), also the manuscript Parma Biblioteca Palatina, Palatino 39, fol. 134r, but which dates from after the edition).

The character of Segurant also makes his appearance in the *Queste 12599*, in the compilations attributed to Rusticien of Pisa, and, apparently following the latter, in the "Guironian" tradition around *Guiron le Courtois*.

### Complementary episode (12599 version)

#### Queste 12599

The *Queste 12599* is, to use the subtitle of its editor Damien de Carné, a *Tristanian quest inserted in the manuscript BnF 12599*. We maybe would have called it the *Queste Glatissante*, but arthurian typologies are confusing enough, and there's some scifi allure to the serial number in the name.

Fol.	Quires	Content
1-10	I	<i>Guiron</i> (Lath. §249-250)
<i>Lacuna</i>		<i>Lacuna</i>
11-38	II-V	<i>Guiron</i> (§106n1-107n3)
<i>Lacuna</i>		<i>Lacuna</i>
39-100	VII-XIV	<i>Prose Tristan</i> (§59-71)
		fol.100cd empty
101-106	XV	<i>Tristan</i> (moved) + Varia
		fol. 105d, 106cd empty
107-109	XVI	fol. 107ab empty
		<i>Tristan</i> (§203-282a)
110-221	XVI-XXXI	
222-268	XXXII-XXXVII	<i>Folie Lancelot</i>
		fol. 268cd empty
269-320	XXXVIII-XLIV	<b><i>Queste 12599</i></b>
321-500	XLV-XLVIII	<i>Tristan</i> (§338b-417)
<i>Lacuna</i>		<i>Lacuna</i>
501-511	LXIX-LXX	<i>Tristan</i> (§538-569)

The manuscript BnF 12599 is a very particular Arthurian compilation, which contains, in addition to parts of the *Prose Tristan*, and the cycle of *Guiron*, part of the *Folie Lancelot* (also found in BnF 112) and the *Queste 12599* — only found in 12599, hence its name.

Table 4: contents of the ms. BnF 12599, from [Carné 2018](#).

Comparing the *Folie Lancelot* in the two extant manuscripts, one sees that the scribes of 12599 tended to abbreviate the stories they transcribed so as to fit them at the end of a quire, or even the end of a page, and the beginning or end of the *Queste 12599* unfortunately seem to shorten their model, which we no longer have elsewhere.

The fact that it takes up the tropes of the *Prose Tristan* perhaps explains its place in a very “Tristanian” manuscript, but it also follows up on the stories of the *Prophecies de Merlin* and could be the trace of a cycle that integrates it. Segurant is listed there, but his link to *Guiron le Courtois* seems more allusive. Whereas the cycle of *Guiron le courtois* conjures its own chronology and temporal space by relying on the fathers of the usual heroes, the *Queste 12599* involves mostly young heroes. Thus: “The very presence of Segurant, which does fall within the Guironian fictional personnel, is explained by this recourse to the young generation and is therefore part, despite the superficial belonging to this or that subject, of this same perspective opposed to Guironism.” (Carné 2021:LIXn92)

#### Summary: complementary episode 12599

(According to the editions by Arioli in 2019 and Carné in 2021, [text available on the RIALFrI website](#))

At Segurant’s tent in Winchester, Golistan is eager for Segurant to “grant him the order of knighthood” so that he might finally be able to avenge the death of his father, the Morholt, killed by Tristan. However, Segurant has only heard good things about Tristan and is therefore in no hurry to allow said revenge to take place. He therefore leads him on with empty words.

They see a knight pass by, carried on a donkey by four peasants, four “villains,” who whipped him with straps until he bled. Golistan challenges them, and Segurant kills three of them. The fourth asks Golistan for mercy and says that their victim is a knight of the Round Table, Dinadan, and that they caught him in the act of raping his daughter, after they heard his daughter’s cries and found her in tears. They were taking him to a count who has authority over them so that justice could be done. Dinadan is untied and goes to rest in Segurant’s tent, while Golistan lets the peasant go but makes him swear never to lay a hand on a knight again, and tell him that if they have a problem with a knight, they should seek justice from another knight.

Segurant does not recognize Dinadan immediately (apparently Golistan does not tell him his identity), but one day the latter recognizes him by his appetite and exclaims that even on the “White Isle” he would not find enough provisions to satisfy himself: “tu n’avoies pas garison en l’Isle Blanche, por ce que tu ne troveroies que devorer” (II.134) — allusion to the nourishing power of the Grail? In the *First Continuation* of the *Conte du Graal*, it is the name of the island on which Joseph of Arimathea lands with the Grail, which feeds his community, and Segurant’s enchantment is supposed to be remedied by the Grail. Dinadan tells him, as already has “many times”, that he is indeed a wolf, and his mother must have slept with a wolf to produce him - indeed this corresponds perfectly to his jabs at the Tournament of Winchester. Segurant then recognizes him and replies that the young lady he raped should have “cut your thing” with the “pendanz” (hanging stuff) to dissuade future knights errant from behaving like rapists. Dinadan retorts that it is Segurant’s mother’s “thing” that should have been skinned. Segurant laughs and then asks him for news of Arthur’s court, and then praises the exploits of Galahad, Lancelot and Tristan. On the way, they come across two groups of 40 knights who are fighting each other, he orders Dinadan to go and help those who are losing, but he refuses, Segurant helps them and mocks Dinadan. They discuss Tristan and Lancelot, Segurant says he would not like to confront them.

They encounter Galahad, Lancelot, Tristan, and Palamedes at a spring. Golistan asks, in vain, to be knighted to kill Tristan. Segurant overthrows Palamedes, Tristan, and Lancelot but refuses to confront Galahad, then flees into the forest with Golistan.



Dinadan stays behind and tells the knights that they just saw the Knight of the Dragon who was enchanted until the test of the Perilous Siege, he reminds Lancelot that the Lady of the Lake does not want him to face her. Lancelot therefore understands that he is the winner of the Tournament of Winchester. Galahad mocks Palamedes about his religion. A knight and a lady are pursued by ten knights, the knight turns and confronts one of them, they kill each other. The lady laments: they were two suitors, she hated one, to whom her family had promised her, and tried to run away with the other. Dinadan does not want to escort the lady, Tristan reproaches him for it, he retorts that Tristan did leave Ysolde at the Joyeuse Garde! But two of the lady's brothers arrive and she leaves with them.

Palamedes accepts to receive baptism at Camelot. (not very consistent with the usual chronology of the Quest of the Grail in the *Prose Tristan*)

Segurant and Golistan return to Winchester, where they find a ship that takes them back to the Isle Non Sachant, but Segurant sees letters written on the wall of the church that tell him that the Pope has called a crusade, and so he decides to leave overseas (*oultremer*), for the Holy Land.

## “Guironian” stories

### Guiron le Courtois

Reading through the recent edition of the cycle of *Guiron le Courtois*, one will not find Segurant le Brun, but we find his family there, the Bruns family (lit. *the Browns*), and Segurant appears in “Guironian” texts which derive from said cycle, which could have created a lot of confusion, so it is worth having a word about this.

In medieval manuscripts this set of stories is often referred to as the *roman de Palamedes*, although this knight is not at all its main character. Famously, it is under this name that it seems to appear in a letter from Frederick II dating from 1240, this very rare precise attestation of an Arthurian romance, in Italy no less, seems to indicate that it already existed, perhaps in a different form than those which survive.

Focusing on the fathers of the usual heroes of the Round Table (such as Meliadus, the father of Tristan), this abundant cycle studied and catalogued by Löseth and later Lathuillière has long discouraged specialists. In 1966, Lathuillière had numbered and classified all the Guironian episodes he had found, but considered that making a stemma of all the manuscripts of *Guiron le Courtois*, a genealogical tree that clarifies their variety was an enterprise “as difficult as it was illusory” (Lathuillière 1966:106 cf. [Lagomarsini 2017](#)) Too many transplants and rewrites, but the BnF 350 manuscript seemed to him to provide an acceptable “vulgate” of better quality than the rest.

For more recent researchers of the Groupe Guiron, this vulgate owes its quality to a later harmonization, on the other hand they came to more optimistic conclusions as to the possibility of an edition, in particular by considering separately the trajectory of the three main parts (*Meliadus*, *Guiron*, *Suite Guiron*) developed in substance between 1230 and 1270 approximately and then completed by continuations and connecting texts, which are then lost in multiple versions and derived texts. According to their analysis:

1. *Roman de Meliadus* (before 1240 probably ~1230-1235)
  - a. *Continuation Meliadus* (after 1240?) — edition by the Groupe Guiron still to be published, already a partial edition in Bubenicek 2015.
  - b. “Connection texts” linking the *Meliadus* And the *Guiron*. The second part of connection A dates from ~1240-1300, after which the first part of connection A and connection B were written (between the middle of the 13th and the end of the 14th century).
2. *Roman de Guiron* (before 1240, probably ~1235-1240)
  - a. *Continuation Guiron* (~1240-1280), in full only in London Add. 36880 and ms. X (unavailable) — according to the editors, probably the earliest of the supplements to the three main branches of the cycle.
3. *Suite Guiron* (~1240-1270), a sort of *prequel*, despite its name.
  - a. *Continuation of the Guiron Suite*, contained only in the ms. [BnF NAF 5243](#), it would therefore date from between the composition of the *Suite Guiron* (1240-1270) and the date of the manuscript (~1380).

See [Arlima pages on each section](#) and the [short summary and links to volumes already published since 2020, on the Groupe Guiron website](#). (freely available in PDF — still missing the *Continuation Meliadus*)

The Bruns family (Hector le Brun and especially Galehaut le Brun) makes its appearance in the *Roman de Guiron*, the *Guiron Suite* and the *Continuation Guiron*. ([see for example Sophie Albert's 2007 article on Galehaut le Brun](#))

The Arsenal manuscript, as we have seen, focuses on a new member of this family: Segurant le Brun. He is the son of Hector le Brun (the Younger) and the nephew of Galehaut le Brun (the Younger), who are the sons, respectively, of Galehaut le Brun (the Older) and Hector le Brun (the Older). This doubling of the Hectors and the Galehauts could indicate a distortion of the tradition along the way. ([Carné 2022](#)) The various manuscripts then give genealogies that are often contradictory, which was mocked, for example, by *Graal Théâtre*, a series of french plays we cite in the incipit to this article.

In addition to the Bruns family, the *Prophecies de Merlin* borrows another point from the Guironian universe: the origin of Meliadus, lover of the Lady of the Lake. He would be the product of the union between the Queen of Scotland and Meliadus, the father of Tristan, who had abducted her - an abduction which is found in the *Meliadus*.

### Rusticien of Pisa

Rusticien of Pisa, who is said to have recorded the adventures of Marco Polo, also passed on to us a [compilation of Arthurian episodes](#), not a continuous romance but a text that puts together episodes, often taken from elsewhere, without necessarily linking them, and adding some of his own. Written between 1270 and 1298 (and probably ~1270-1274 for Bogdanow) it was published by Fabrizio Cigni in 1994. It already mentions Segurant in passing, with his title of knight of the dragon:

Or sachiez que li Viel Chevalier estoit només messire Branor li Brun, ci fu oncles de m. Sigurans le Brun <car il fu frere charnel son pere>, et fu cousin li buen Ector le Brun. [...] Branor li Brun, oncles de mesire Siguranz le Brun, li Chevalier au Dragon, et cousin de mesire Ector le Brun ([Cigni 1994:241-2](#))

Personal translation : *Now know that the Old Knight was named Sir Branor the Brown, and was uncle of Mgr. Sigurans the Brown <for he was his father's brother>, and was cousin of the good Ector the Brown. [...] Branor the Brown, uncle of Sir Siguranz the Brown, the Knight of the Dragon, and cousin of Sir Ector the Brown*

It is possible that Rusticien already knows the story of Segurant as found in the manuscript of the Arsenal and the rest of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, but he does not elaborate further.

Cigni relies on the BnF 1463 manuscript, which would be the best witness to Rusticien's original work. Indeed, this compilation was often remixed and compiled in turn (notably by the “alternative versions” of Segurant discussed below) and the other manuscripts that transmit it add episodes, in a sort of Guironian compilation that Lagomarsini calls *Les Aventures des Bruns* (*The Adventures of the Browns*) and which he treats as a second compilation that he also attributes to Rusticien of Pisa. Hence *Second compilation of Rusticien* or *Rusticien II*, even if the attribution is not unanimously upheld. The two texts being linked, transmitted by the same manuscripts and with a lot of variation, it was long common to speak of “the *compilations* of Rusticien” in the plural, like Löseth, or of “the second version of the Compilation of Rusticien” like Albert ([2007:§24n20](#) ; 2010:148).

### Complementary episode (Rusticien II version)

*Rusticien II* draws especially from the cycle of *Guiron le Courtois*, borrowing and remixing episodes from the *Suite Guiron*. We also find there, with regard to Segurant:

- A short **summary** stating that after the Tournament of Winchester, he had set out in pursuit of the dragon with his squire Golistan, at the request of a young lady, and had carried on up to the point of falling ill and having to stay two months at Roche Dure to recover.

- Follows the **complementary episode** that we find in the *Queste 12599*, but in a slightly different wording: Galaad becomes Gawain, no reference to the Grail and the scabrous passages seem “watered down”: Dinadan is transported on a mule, less infamous than a donkey, the details of his torture are less gory, Dinadan is seized, not in *flagrante delicto*, but on the cusp of raping the peasant’s daughter, the villains are *pasmés* and *espouvantés* (knocked-out and terrified) instead of being killed, and instead of Golistan asking the latter to rely on another knight in case of trouble, Segurant laughs and simply says that Dinadan would never have done anything like that. (Carné 2021:272; *Étude* 2019:194) However, it can be noted that in *Rusticien II*, instead of unexpectedly meeting him in Winchester, Dinadan rode with Segurant before staying with him with the villains, which fits with his role as a privileged companion in the cardinal version. (Carné 2021:271) For Arioli, the 12599 would therefore be the original, Carné agrees and notes in this sense that it is strange to see Dinadan describe the group of knights as the flower of chivalry with the replacement of Galaad (2021:273) but, we would object, a group formed by Lancelot, Tristan, Palamedes, Gauvain and Keu is not small fry either!
- **episodes VIII + X of the cardinal version**: Segurant rescues Hoderis then goes to face his uncle Galehaut and beats him. See the summary of the cardinal version. ([Appendix 1](#))

If the “second compilation” can also be attributed to Rusticien, it should date from the 1270s, but in any case, the oldest manuscript, that of Florence, dates from around 1300 (similar dates for the fragments of Bologna and manuscript [Vatican Reg. Lat. 1501](#)), making it plausible to estimate that it was written at the end of the 13th century.

#### Reading order

As Brugger noted ([1938:495-501](#)) if we put together all the prophecies and announcements about the end of Segurant’s story, the order of the final episodes seems a little confusing.

- Segurant will have to go on crusade, and become king of Abiron, but he will still have to return to Great Britain to find Merlin’s tomb and set his marvellous stone on an altar (and then return to Abiron?)
- Moreover, it is announced that he will be the only one to find Merlin’s tomb, but of course this is also the case for Meliadus, and the prophecies also announce that a certain Moran will do it too. Could it be that Segurant will be the only one to find it *without help* from the Lady of the Lake? But according to the texts it is implied that on the contrary he will need her help... ([Brugger 1939:40sqg.](#))
- Segurant will be disenchanted during the quest for the Grail, fine, but if it is during the Perilous Siege scene (*Queste 12599*), it must be at the launch of the quest for the Grail, during the Pentecost where the Grail appears in front of Arthur’s court when they are joined by Galaad. However, in the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, to cure his enchantment the Lady of the Lake advises him to reach the coast and board a boat. But to embark for where? The Pentecost of the Grail normally takes place in Camelot, would he really go by a sea route?
- In the *Queste 12599*, Segurant embarks on a ship to return to the Isle Non Sachant and then go on crusade, so perhaps the ship is simply announced to send him to the eastern episodes that are to conclude his life, to Jerusalem, Sarras and Abiron. Segurant would still be enchanted in this phase of the story, but at the end of the *Queste del Saint Graal*, before the Grail returned to heaven, Gilead brought it back to the East, to Sarras, and there he was crowned king. This probably inspired the oriental destiny of Segurant, perhaps that is when and where he was supposed to be disenchanted, in the East when Galaad had brought the Grail there, but that would happen *at the end* of the quest for the Grail, and no longer at all *at the beginning* as with the Siege Perilous.

#### Alternative Versions

Taking root in *Rusticien II*, two different later versions took up episodes VIII and X, with the fight of Segurant against Galehaut, embroidering other episodes before and after to integrate them into their Guironian adventures. These versions are, *a priori*, much less crucial for the origins of the text since the sets of manuscripts which contain them in their entirety all date from the 15th or even the 16th century:

1. BnF 358 (executed for Louis de Bruges around 1470) for the first;
2. Turin LI7-9 (written for Jacques d'Armagnac 1433-1477) and London BL Add. 36673 (15th-16th c.) for the second, the London-Turin version. For a full description of the Turin manuscript, which corrects some points raised by Arioli, see [Winand 2023](#) (and also [Winand 2024](#) on the fragment of Parma).

The last two episodes of version 358 are certainly found in manuscripts that could date from the 14th or even the 13th century ([Bodmer 96-1](#), [Vatican Reg. Lat. 1501](#) and some fragments in Bologna), but the beginning, where Segurant hunts the dragon, has survived only in the manuscript [BnF 358](#).

Table 5: episodes of the “Alternative Versions” of Segurant

Lath.	BnF 358 (and related mss.)	Lath.	London-Turin
§218	I. Segurant against Bertoullars	§259	I. Segurant kills the dragon
	II. Dragon Hunt		II. Liberation of Pas Berthelais
§223- §224	III. Traveling to the Wild Kingdom and fighting against Galehaut  episodes VIII + X of the cardinal version	§223- §224	III. Traveling to the Wild Kingdom and fighting against Galehaut  episodes VIII + X of the cardinal version
§226	IV. Love in Sorelois	§191n2	IV. Segurant, Galehaut and the Giants
	V. Segurant and Hector at the Giant's Bridge		

Lathuillère (1966) thus gives the order of readings corresponding to the London manuscript: §259 + §223-224 + §191n2 (p. 50), the same for 358: §218 + §223-224 + §226 (p. 71).

#### The BnF 358 Alternative Version:

1. Segurant will face Bertoullars at the Château du Trépas, he makes him abolish the castle “evil custom” after defeating him in an axe fight, then must recover from his injuries.
2. He then meets a terrible dragon in a forest, which he chases until it gets too dark. He meets a hermit, chases away evil knights, etc. and then resumes dragon hunting. So there is no allusion to his demonic nature as before, it seems like a very real dragon of flesh and blood that he comes across
3. Then he faces Galehaut, these are episodes VIII and X of the Cardinal Version, which are found in the Arsenal.
4. Segurant will also fall in love with the daughter of the Duke of Normandy.
5. Then he goes to fight the knight who has to guard the giant's bridge, and must take his place once he has defeated him. His father, Hector, comes to fight him, and is unable to defeat him, but his uncle, Branor, succeeds. They then return to Val Brun to find Galehaut, who will then go to join Guiron.

A short fragment from Bologna, very damaged and which seems to be found in the continuation of this version, tells us that Segurant is with Hector, Galehaut and Branor, while Uther Pendragon has seized their lands, Branor wants to go to war against him, and Galehaut supports the idea.

The **London-Turin Alternative Version**, is only found in two manuscripts, that of the British Library Add. 36673, and that of Turin L.I.7 which was badly damaged by the famous fire of 1904. ([Jonas](#))

1. Segurant was knighted at the age of 21. Shortly after, a young lady announced that she had seen a dragon that had devoured someone, and Segurant went to fight it, without telling his father. After a few days of searching for it, he found it devouring a squire. The beast let out such a terrible cry that his horse died instantly. He therefore confronted the fight on foot, cut off its front legs and tail, and thrust his blade into its mouth to finish it off. He then had a dragon painted on his shield; and from then on

will be called, obviously, the Knight of the Dragon. It is noteworthy that instead of the demonic and illusory dragon, impossible to kill in the Cardinal Version, this dragon is very deadly, and that instead of a prolonged quest, this is Segurant's very first exploit.

2. Segurant defeats 22 giants, 22 knights and 3 giantesses at Pas Berthelais. He is seriously injured and will seek treatment in Carmelide.
3. The joust between Segurant and Galehaut follows, again episodes VIII and X as they are,
4. and at the end, fight against the giants: giants of the Black Forest killed people from their families so Segurant and Galehaut will attack them, free their prisoners and recover their treasures, they then return to the wild kingdom, and at the end again, Galehaut the Brown leaves to join Guiron for new adventures.

### Segmenting upstream and downstream

Arioli identifies other apparitions of Segurant, showing the influence of this tradition. (*Étude* 2019:129 *sqq.*)

In one of the branches of the *Livre d'Yvain* (*Book of Yvain, Prose Yvain*, late 13th or early 14th century), we see knights debating: was the Round Table more valiant in the time of Uther or his son Arthur? Gaheriet suggests that it must have been in Uther's time. Indeed, during the tournament at the Roche aux Sesnes (Rock of the Saxons) Segurant had put himself on the quintaine against all the good knights, and even Lancelot had not managed to unseat him although he had tried three times. (cf. Arioli, *Livre d'Yvain*, 2019:137-8, fol. 29v ; *Étude* 2019:132) — so Segurant on the quintaine with slight variations: at the *Roche aux Sesnes* and not *Vincestre*, and Lancelot tried three times.

The manuscript Vatican Reg. Lat. 1501 (late 13th or early 14th century) is an anthology of *Guiron le Courtois*, including some unique episodes. His first fragmentary four-page quire depicts Segurant in a tournament where two sides confront each other. Segurant overthrows Galehaut le Brun and Guiron overthrows Uther Pendragon. Segurant and Guiron perhaps represent the new generation against the old. Galehaut and Uther are put back into their saddle by Golistan and the Good Knight Without Fear, and afterwards, Galehaut manages to overthrow Segurant with a blow to the helm.

There is some confusion in this tradition, Golistan, who is usually Segurant's squire, finds himself helping the opposing camp. Segurant is not even the knight of the dragon here, it is Galehaut who has a dragon on his coat of arms... (*Étude* 2019:134)

Segurant tends to become a knight from the time of Uther Pendragon rather than Arthur, and this is a dimension that we find for example in the *Round Table* (Italian compilation of the 14th century) where, aged 170, he comes to measure himself against Tristan, in another comparison between the old and the new Round Table. Later we learn of his death, which implicitly crowns Tristan. (*Étude* 2019:138) It is designated there as *knight Agragon*, an enigmatic term which must be a corruption of *Dragon Knight*, Knight of the Dragon.

The *Vendetta dei Discendenti di Ettore* (*Revenge of the Descendants of Hector*, 15th century) involves the knights of the Round Table who, descendants of Trojans, go to take revenge against the Greeks, we find in the twelve best knights a *Sichurans lo Forte*, in which Arioli sees an obvious avatar of Segurant, even if he no longer retains so many of his traits.

In *Le Morte Darthur* by Thomas Malory (printed in 1485) we find a character named Servause or Sevrause the Brewse, who, Arioli notes, had not given rise to any comment by Vinaver or Peter J. C. Field, editors of the text. (*Étude* 2019:144) His name reminds us of someone, especially since the Lady of the Lake makes him promise not to fight Lancelot... It is obviously Segurant le Brun. Another possible echo of his adventures: Malory affirms that he was not the last to fight against men, giants, dragons and other wild beasts. Arioli does not specify, however, that this identification had already been made by Sue Ellen Holbrook [in 1978 in \*Speculum\*](#), referring to Paton's edition :

“[...] in connecting her [la Dame du Lac] with Servause le Breuse, Malory refers to the French book. In the little story he appends, Servause flickeringly resembles Segurant le Brun of the Prophecies, in both



name and deed, for both do not joust with Lancelot thanks to promises made to the Lady of the Lake and both are involved in exploits with dragons and giants. [Note: See *The Prophecies de Merlin*, ed. Lucy Allen Paton (New York, 1926), 2:438-439 (Dame du Lac prevents joust between Lancelot and Segurant), 206 (pursuit of dragon), 447 (combat with giant); for commentary on the Segurant episodes in the *Prophecies*, see 1:279-292.]” ([p. 766](#))

This article was also included in the collective book [Arthurian Women : A Casebook](#) in 1996, reissued until 2015 and was in fact pretty easy to find on our side.

However, I notice in Malory another echo of Segurant that I haven’t seen discussed elsewhere. The character of Segwarides is analogous to the *Séгурade* of the *Prose Tristan*, cuckolded by Tristan. But, strangely, before these adventures, he is introduced as a brother of Saphar and Palamèdes, the Saracen knights:

“Sir Palamides the Saracen was another, and Sir Safere his brother, and Sir Segwarides his brother, but they were christened [...]” ([Malory VII.26](#), cf. also chap. 27)

Why is this? In my opinion, there is an influence here from Segurant, who, because of his name, Segurant le Brun (Segurant the Brown) was sometimes considered a dark-skinned man, as in this armorial from the second half of the 15th century which describes his face as “almost brown” (*presque brun*): “Segurant le brun [...] Le visage eust bele et grant et presque brun. Les cheveulx eust plus noirs que d’autre couleur [...]” (“Segurant the Brown [...] His face was beautiful and large and almost brown. His hair was more black than any other color [...]”) ([BnF 12357 fol. 4r](#), cf. [ed. Wittwer 2025](#)). In the Guironian compilations (BnF 340, for example), Segurant is often renamed *Séгурade*. If he is imagined as having brown skin in traditions flourishing in Malory’s time, it is not so surprising that, at the end of the chain, Segwarides becomes a Saracen.

Luigi Alamanni, an Italian poet in the service of Francis the 1st of France, features Segurant in his adaptation *Girone il Cortese*, where he tends to exchange the attributes of *Séгурade* and Segurant (widespread mixup as you’ve seen by now), and also in his *Avarchide*, where Arthurian knights reenact the Trojan War. Segurant plays the role of Hector, with a few minor changes. He is eventually killed by Lancelot, who plays the role of Achilles. We thus find once again Segurant’s preeminence and the confrontation between Segurant and Lancelot, with the Lady of the Lake playing the role of Thetis, the protective figure of Lancelot/Achilles.

Some Spanish books also allude to Segurant: *Tristan de Leonis* (1501) and *Amadis de Gaule* (1508). Also found in the *Quattro primi canti del Lancilotto* by Erasmo da Valvasone (1580): Lancelot is held prisoner by Morgana, with the help of demons, and Galehaut le Brun sends his nephews to look for him: Segurant (the Brown), *Séгурade* (the White) and Galehodin. We note here the doubling of characters typical of derived traditions: Segurant/*Séгурade*, Galehaut/Galehodin. Galehaut le Brun also seems to take on traits of his namesake, the Galehaut des Estranges Isles from the *Prose Lancelot*. Being less familiar with Italian and Spanish works, we do not know how well known all these links were; after all, Umberto Renda was already referring to Löseth to explain Alamanni. ([1899:37](#) cf. [Fig. 7](#))

As for the character’s remote inspirations, Arioli suggests that he could be connectd, from a distance, to the figure of Sigurdr, the dragon slayer of Norse mythology, by his name and the theme of the dragon, but also other elements: the wall of fire that appears at the tournament, they carry a cursed treasure, victims of the intrigues of a queen who wants to poison them (at the Cité Fort in the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*), the prophecies that mark out their journey, etc. (*Étude* 2019:98-100)

A Segurant/Siegfried connection is not impossible. Very close to northern Italy, for example, at Roncolo Castle in the Tyrol, there are frescoes showing Siegfried alongside the Knights of the Round Table, so it is not so fanciful to imagine Germanic myth and Arthurian legend linking up. ([Loomis 1948:48-9, fig 61](#)) To be sure, Arioli auslo points out that his name could simply come from Latin *sicurus* (safe) and that at this point it was already commonplace for an Arthurian knight (Tristan, Lancelot) to kill a dragon, including, one might add, in the frescoes of Roncolo Castle where we see Tristan cutting out a dragon’s tongue. ([Loomis 1948:fig. 66](#)) That said, one could perhaps strengthen this hypothesis by examining the intersections between Matter of Britain and

*Heldenepik*, which are not that rare, but that would not necessarily help us establishing this link on the chronological side of things...

(As historians of religions, we would have much to comment on the mythological analyses in Arioli's *Étude*, but it does not seem to us to be particularly productive to align literary studies with the standards of the history of religions.)

## II. Arioli's Hypothesis and Reconstruction

### Arioli's theory

Arioli's theory in a nutshell ([see fig. 5, textual tradition of Segurant](#))

- The Bruns family appears in the tradition of *Guiron le Courtois*
- A lost romance about Segurant le Brun, perhaps unfinished, was composed
- This romance was included in the *Ur-Prophecies* which then divided into different branches, including the Arsenal ms., which partly preserves the romance.
- This material from Segurant influenced other branches in the tradition
  - *Queste 12599*: allusive episode about Segurant
  - *Rusticien II*: summarizes the matter of Segurant from the *Ur-Prophecies* + the 12599 episode.
  - BnF 358 and London-Turin take up episodes VIII+X from *Rusticien II* and develop them.
  - *Le Livre d'Yvain* refers to Segurant on the quintaine, perhaps after *Rusticien II*.
- (Other stories and allusions after the 13th century)

What are the arguments for this process?

It cannot just be the work of a late author, a romance “made up of whole cloth” as Koble suggested in the title of her article, since many elements of the story are attested in manuscripts and texts that definitively date from the end of the 13th century: in the rest of the tradition of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (1270-1279?), in the *Queste 12599* (1275-1300?), the *Rusticien II* (end of the 13th century, *a priori*) — and the “Guironian” stories which build upon it (but which extend back to the 15th century). We can also add *Le Livre d'Yvain*, a compilation in a 13th century manuscript, edited separately by Arioli, which includes an episode mentioning Segurant on the quintaine. (One wonders why this passage is not part of an appendix of a few pages in his edition, Arioli already mentioning it in 2016 — perhaps time constraints, or the publisher's requirements, the two editions having been released in 2019 at the same time as the *Étude*)

To list these elements of the Cardinal Version attested at the end of the 13th century:

- The gemstone on Segurant's tent at the Tournament of Winchester (discussed in some of the prophecies of the *Prophecies de Merlin*)
- The Isle Non Sachant (*Rusticien II*, *Queste 12599*)
- Segurant winner of the Tournament of Winchester (*Rusticien II*, *Queste 12599*)
- No one can knock him down from the quintaine (*Rusticien II*, *Livre d'Yvain*)
- Dragon appeared “in a great fire” (*Rusticien II*)
- Segurant pursues the dragon (*Prophecies de Merlin*, *Rusticien II*, and after that BnF 358, London-Turin, etc.)
- Segurant saw the dragon devour many knights (*Prophecies de Merlin*)
- Segurant is/was enchanted (*Prophecies de Merlin*, *Queste 12599*)
- He will be disenchanted during the quest for the Grail (*Prophecies de Merlin*, *Queste 12599*)
- The Lady of the Lake does not want him to fight against Lancelot (*Rusticien II*, *Queste 12599*)
- A young squire from Ireland wants to be knighted by Segurant in the Arsenal Ms. the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* names him Golistan. (*Rusticien II* also) Ferlampin-Acher ([2021:201](#)) notes that there is a *Golistan du Puy Perdu* in episode XXXIV of the Cardinal Version, which could be where the long version (and the rest of the tradition) took up the name, especially since there it takes the form *Golianz* or *Goliaz*, therefore closer to Goliath, a giant's name which would be appropriate for the son of the Morholt — Arioli made the Golistan/Goliath connection without mentioning these forms (*Étude* 2019:273).
- The enchantment of Méléagant, and of a hundred knights by the young lady of Pommeglois and their liberation by Segurant, quite consistent between Arsenal Ms. and long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*.
- Episodes VIII+X: Fight between Segurant and his uncle Galehaut (*Rusticien II*)
- Episode II of the cardinal version in the short version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*.

... This means that at the end of the 13th century there existed a “Matter of Segurant” which includes key elements of the Cardinal Version, which therefore cannot be an invention of the Arsenal manuscript. For Arioli the “Cardinal Version” from Arsenal Ms. is the only existing text which can claim to be the source of the others. Integrated into the *Ur-Prophecies* or in an intermediate form that we no longer have, it is, for him, this text about Segurant which must have inspired all these apparitions.

Table 6: corroborations of the cardinal version

Cardinal Version	Elements attested outside
I. The shipwreck on the Isle Non Sachant	<i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> short version (and IV, “compilation”)
II. <b>Prophecies uttered to the young Galehaut le Brun</b>	Episode II could be an addition that connects prophetic storyline and adventures ( <i>Étude</i> 2019:50-51)
III. The Roche aux Sesnes and the Salesbières Tournament IV. The two Carmelite nuns	(Portion restored from <a href="#">Chantilly Bibl. chât., 0644 (1081) 49vb-50ra</a> )
V. The knighting of Segurant Segurant <b>wants to go to the Holy Land</b> , Hector, his father, dreams that he sees him chasing away pagans who flee before him.	<i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> : Complementary Prophetic Version: Segurant will leave for the East, king of Abiron etc.
VI. Segurant and the assault on the Pas Bertelais	
VII. The fight between Segurant and Tarant	
VIII <b>Segurant’s Journey to the Wild Kingdom</b>	Intertextual Episodes VIII + X found in <i>Rusticien II</i>
IX. Galehaut and Baudemagus against the Saxons Replaced by an episode of Mador de la Porte in the extended version of <i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> .	Segurant saves Hoderis and goes to fight his uncle Galehaut. The text of both episodes is found as is in the “second compilation of Rusticien”, and was later expanded by Guironian compilations. The Arsenal manuscript also has an episode where Galehaut and Segurant go to fight giants at the end.
X. <b>The joust between Segurant and Galehaut le Brun</b>	
XI. Dinadan, the Knight of the Ten Guards XII. Segurant at the Tournament of Carmelide XIII. Bliobéris et Dinadan XIV. The Tournament of Camelot XV. The Challenge of Segurant to the Arthurian Court XVI. Morgana and the Plot Against Arthur XVII. Dinadan and Palamede	
XVIII. <b>Segurant’s Tent</b>	<i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> : He has a stone that sheds a great light on his pavilion at Winchester (Prophecy X)
XIX. The judgment of Galehaut XX. The Arrival of Queen Guinevere at Winchester XXI. Queen Guinevere and the Madness of Palamedes XXII. The plot of King Mark and King Claudas XXIII. The arrival of Segurant in Winchester	
XXIV <b>Segurant takes the place of the Quintaine</b>	<i>Rusticien II</i> : Segurant beats everyone on the quintain at the Tournament of Winchester.  <i>Livre d’Yvain (Yvain en Prose)</i> , branch V: Segurant on the quintaine (but at the tournament of the Roche aux Sesnes, not Winchester)  <a href="#">Queste 12599 (fol. 282a)</a> : Segurant won the Tournament of Winchester.
XXV. The Enchantment of Meleagant	
XXVI. <b>The joust between Segurant and Lancelot</b> The Lady of the Lake tells Lancelot in a letter that she does not want him to fight Segurant beyond breaking a spear against him.	In the complementary episode of the <a href="#">Queste 12599 (fol. 282a)</a> it is Segurant who says that she forbade him: “Be at peace. Do not take offense at the knight, for the Lady of the Lake herself, who raised you, had forbidden you to do it.”

	<p>("Soiez en pés. Ne prenez estrif au chevalier , que meismement la Dame du Lac, que vos nors, le vos defandi jadis." ed. Carné 66)</p> <p><i>Rusticien II</i> has another version of the episode: "because your lady, the Lady of the Lake, forbid me [to fight you]" (here the interdiction is addressed to Segurant and not to Lancelot)</p>
<p>XXVII. Segurant, the dragon and the wall of fire</p> <p><b>Dragon</b> appears at the tournament in a wall of <b>fire</b>, <b>Segurant sets off in pursuit and is enchanted</b>. (here the dragon and the knights it devours are devils)</p>	<p><i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> (I.374-5): While chasing the dragon that has devoured knights, a hermit notices that it is enchanted (BL Add. 25434 128vb-129ra). + Prophecy about the Enchanted Dragon Slayer at the Tournament of Winchester</p> <p><i>Rusticien II</i>: he pursues the dragon, which had appeared in a great fire, on <b>the command given to him by the young lady on the last day of the tournament</b> (not in the Cardinal Version)</p>
<p>XXVIII. Dinadan in search of Segurant XXIX. Lancelot and the Giant XXX. Segurant and the Quest for the Dragon</p>	
<p>XXXI. Truths and lies about Segurant</p> <p>"[The forty knights] remained there until Segurant's return, which did not take place at that time, but at the time of the quest for the Holy Grail, because it was thanks to the virtue of this Holy Vessel that he was disenchanted, as we will tell you later." (<i>Segurant</i>, trans. 2023, p. 168, Ms. Arsenal 5229 fol. 130rb)</p>	<p><i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> : Lady of the Lake: Will not be freed until the Grail quest begins, but must go to the seashore where he will find a ship, which will advise him. (BL Add. 25434 162vb-163ra)</p> <p><i>Queste 12599</i>: Segurant is disenchanted during the Perilous Siege: discussed by Galaad and Dinadan in the past tense cf. BnF fr. <a href="#">12599 282r</a>, Carné 65-6. passage cited in <i>Étude</i> 2019:69)</p>
<p>XXXII. Palamede and Guerrehet XXXIII. King Mark and the war between Hoël and Gralier XXXIV. Galehaut and Golistan of Puy Perdu XXXV. The organization of the Norhout tournament XXXVI. Palamedes and the Adulterous Woman</p>	
<p>XXXVII. The Quest of Segurant</p> <p>One hundred knights of the Isle Non Sachant are <b>enchanted by the demoiselle de Pommenglois</b> who serves Morgana.</p>	<p>The cardinal version does not explain the fate of the remaining hundred knights but the long version of the <i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> tells that they find Golistan and the other knights at Segurant's tent, recounting having been enchanted by Sibylle, which corresponds well to her role and could therefore be a lost episode.</p>
XXXVIII. The Norhout Tournament	
XXXIX. Knights of the Isle Non Sachant enchanted	

Arioli goes further, he considers that the text of the cardinal version is very coherent and in fact fits rather badly into the *Prophecies de Merlin*, and therefore postulates that it must have existed before, separately, in the form of a lost romance about Segurant, perhaps unfinished, before being recycled by the author of the *Ur-Prophecies*, the original form of the *Prophecies de Merlin*. This perhaps implies that the compiler of the Arsenal manuscript had also perceived this coherence and chosen to extract this narrative framework by removing the other adventures from the long version... including those which contained Segurant — or perhaps he was reserving them for a second volume. Here, we are in more speculative territory, obviously.

Löseth thought that Segurant must come from a *Geste des Bruns* (*Saga of the Browns*) with the rest of the Bruns family. A gratuitous hypothesis for Lathuillère ([1966:128](#)): the tradition of *Guiron le Courtois* is so prolific that the Bruns could simply have appeared in one of the many particular versions that would be difficult to date precisely. And, with the vagueness regarding the composition of *Guiron* or the compilations of Rusticien, this is generally what Arthurian studies would assume: Segurant must have appeared in *Guiron le Courtois* or "Guironian" texts before inspiring the *Prophecies de Merlin* (Cf. [Garner 1928:86](#) ; [Brugger 1938:353, 491, 1939:45, 65](#) ; [Bogdanow 1967:332n1](#) ; [Koble 2009:61](#) ; Lagomarsini 2014:89 ; [Carné 2018:§3](#)). But if the



versions of *Guiron* containing Segurant are in fact late rewritings (15th-16th centuries), it is difficult to postulate that this is where the character and his adventures come from.

The Bruns family as such did appear in *Guiron le Courtois*, but who added Segurant to the roster? If we don't want to "ride the hippogriff" (as Lot would say) by postulating hypothetical sources, in the texts that remain to us, there are only two options:

1. Either Segurant appears in the primordial version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (Arioli's *Ur-Prophecies* or Paton's X) — and, additional hypothesis, for Arioli this version recycled a lost romance about Segurant, the manuscript of the Arsenal preserving a part of it.
2. Or Segurant appeared in the "second compilation" of Rusticien de Pise and was subsequently taken up elsewhere, which Lagomarsini implies when he edited this compilation in 2014.

In editing this second Guironian compilation, Lagomarsini noticed (see diagram opposite) that it was essentially composed of rearranged episodes from the *Suite Guiron*, with the exception of its end, where we find the "complementary episode" (Lath. §242), Segurant who faces off Lancelot, Palamedes etc. after the Tournament of Winchester, and its central core, where we find:

- S2: Securing to the aid of Hoderis, and facing his uncle Galehaut (§223-224 of Lathuillière, VIII+X of the cardinal version of Arioli)
- S2\*: Lamorat and the good Knight confront Hélianor, Segurant in love with the daughter of the Duke of Brittany, Segurant at the giant's bridge (§225-226 of Lathuillière, for Arioli §226 makes up episodes IV and V of the alternative version of BnF 358)

This is where they disagree, but as Lagomarsini noted ([2018:392](#)) joined by Carné ([2022:§34](#)) their reconstructions actually agree on a very large number of points, and mostly disagree on the transmission of S2, that is episodes VIII and X of the "Cardinal Version". In 2015, Lagomarsini described this passage as follows:

"A long central episode, the source of which remains unknown, has as its protagonist Segurant le Brun, the 'Knight of the Dragon', who also appears in some French texts of Italian origin from the last quarter of the 13th century." ([p. 57](#))

Arioli would retort that their source is in fact not unknown, but is simply the Cardinal Version: episodes VIII and X (= S2) are found in the Arsenal manuscript, and fortified by the clues attesting to the antiquity of the Matter of Segurant, he postulates that it is on this side that one must look for the origin of the character. (see fig. 7 and 8 below on their respective theories)

For Lagomarsini, on the contrary, particularly because of their similarity with the adventures of the Old Knight in the "first" compilation of Rusticien, it must have been him who composed these episodes as well. Like the versions of Londres-Turin or BnF 358, the Arsenal manuscript would be only another of these fifteenth-century compilations which transplanted and extended these episodes.

"Finally, the special case of ms. 5229 (Eastern France, 15th century) is worth considering. This manuscript has inserted a small cell of the [Guironian compilation] (that is, again, the part extracted by β1) within its particular version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, which it mixes with original materials reconstructing the life and deeds of Segurant le Brun." ([Lagomarsini 2015:66-7](#))

Fig. 6 : Composition of *Rusticien II, Les Aventures des Bruns* (Lagomarsini 2014)

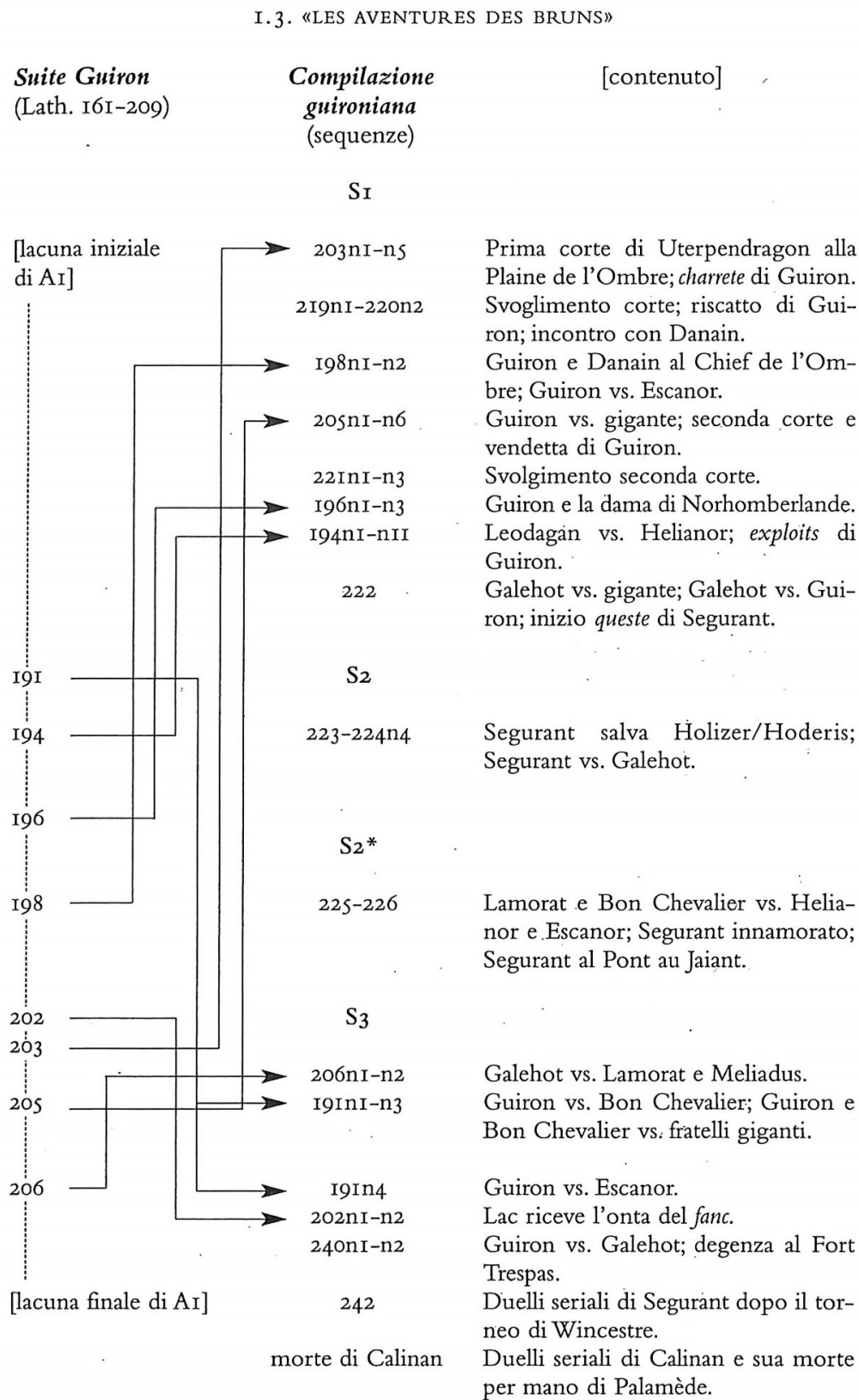


Table 7: Intertextual episodes comparing Lathuillère's numbering of guironian episodes (1966)

Terminology in Lagomarsini (2014) <i>Aventures des Bruns</i> (= S1 + S2)		Lathuillère (1966)	Terminology in Arioli (2019)	
Uther’s court at the Plaine de l’Ombre Guiron in a cart, Guiron’s ransom, meeting with Danain. Guiron confronts Escanor, giants. Guiron’s vendetta. Uther’s second court. Guiron and the Lady of Northumberland. Leodagan vs. Helyanor, Guiron’s exploits. Galehaut confronts giants, Guiron.	S1	§203n1-5, §219n1- §220n2, §198n1-2, §205n1-6, §221n1-3, §196n1-3, §194n1-11, §222n1		
		§218	I. Segurant against Bertoullars	<b>Version alt. ms. BnF 358</b> (and related mss.)  (four episodes)
			II. Hunting the Dragon	
<i>Aventures des Bruns</i> (= S1 + S2)	S2	§223- §224	III. Traveling to the Wild Kingdom and fighting against Galehaut  episodes VIII + X of the cardinal version	
“short continuation” of the <i>Aventures des Bruns</i>	S2*	§225	Continuation of §221: Helyanor and Escanor confront Lamorat and the Good Knight to determine possession of the castle of the Lady of Riscot, the fight is interrupted before they kill each other and decide to submit to the judgment of the King of the Narrow March. <i>(not on Segurant, therefore not edited by Arioli even if always associated with §226)</i>	
		§226	IV. Love in Sorelois	
“long continuation” of the <i>Aventures des Bruns</i>  Galehaut vs. Lamorat and Meliadus. Guiron vs. the Good Knight Without Fear. Guiron and the Good Knight vs. Giant Brothers. Guiron vs. Escanor. Lac in the Mud. Guiron vs. Galehaut. Convalescence at the Fort of Death.	S3	§206n1-2, §191n1-4, §202n1-2, §240n1-2		
		§242	Complementary episode of <i>Rusticien II</i> (similar to that of the <i>Queste 12599</i> ): Segurant on the quintaine, beats everyone, Dinadan arrested by the villains, etc.	
Death of Calinant, not numbered by Lathuillère.		*mc		

Fig. 7: Approximate theory of Arioli (2019)

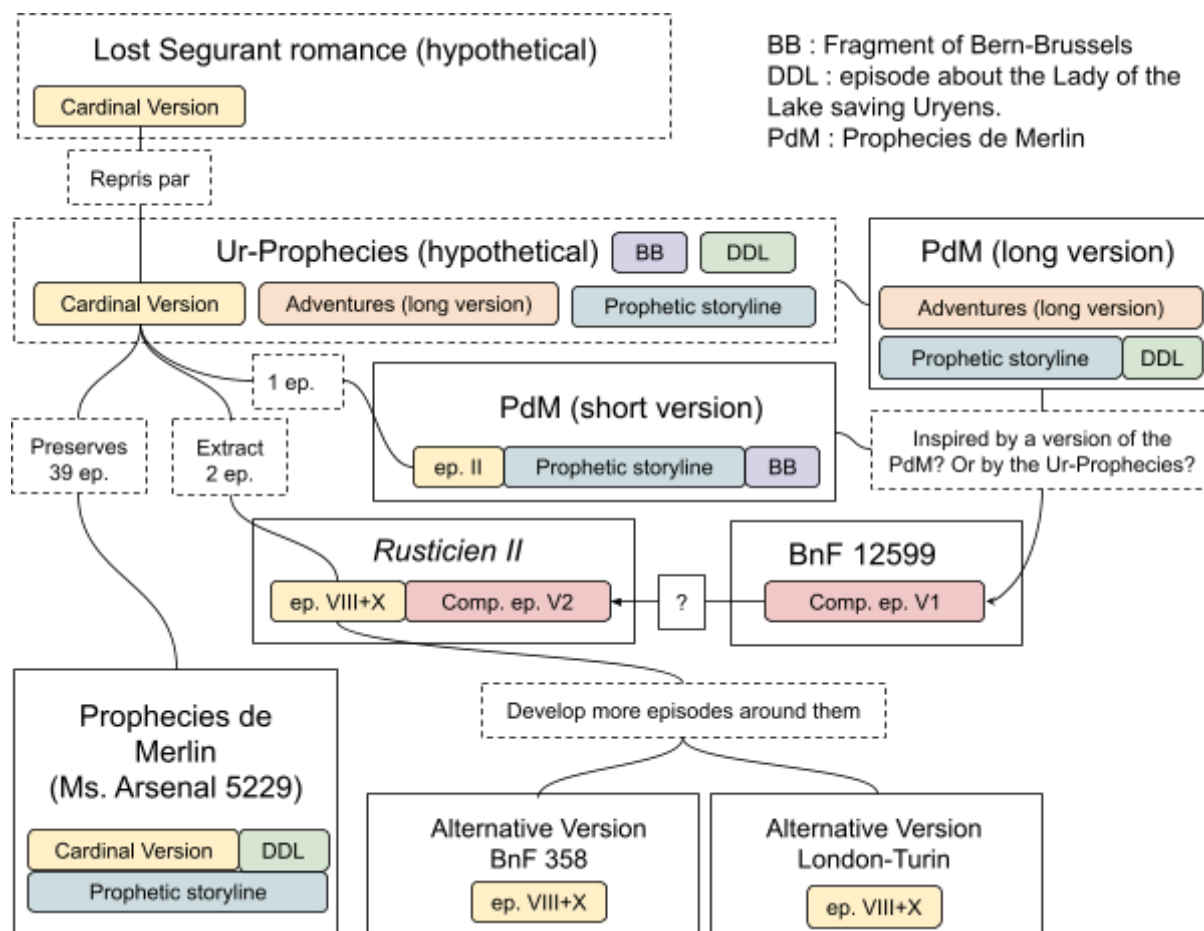
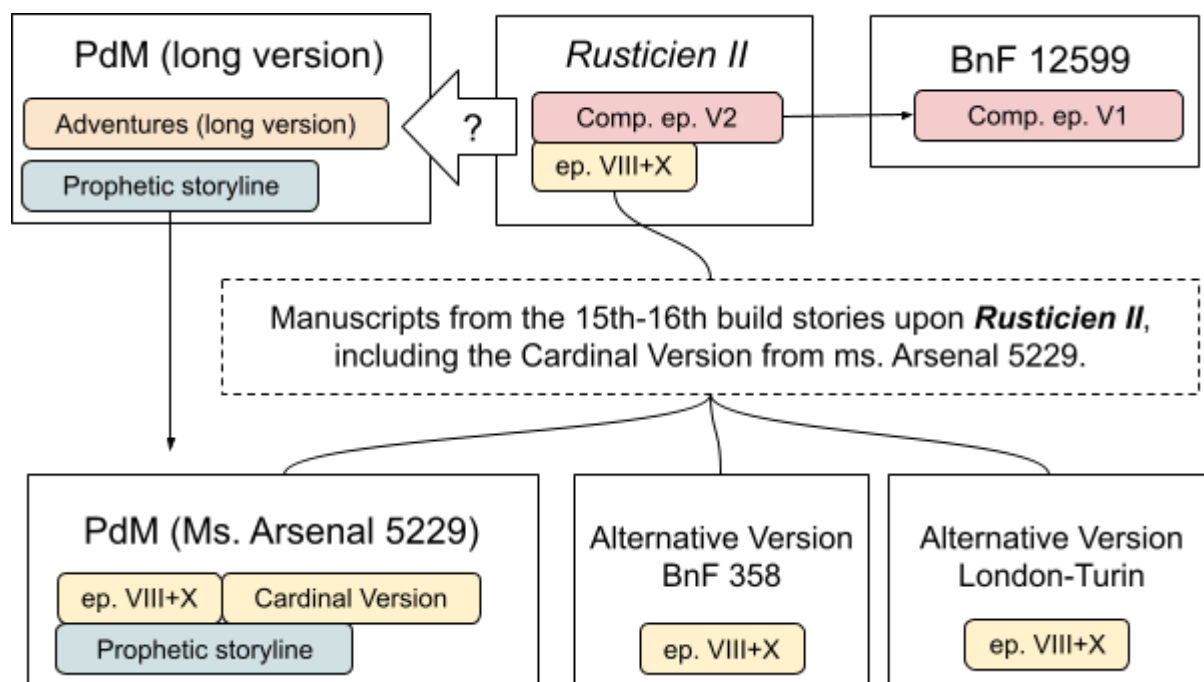


Fig. 8: Approximate theory of Lagomarsini (2015)



For Arioli, beyond the philological arguments, even if we were to admit this late date for the text, the remaining traces of the “matter of Segurant” would still need to be explained: in the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* and the *Queste 12599*. Can the text of *Rusticien II* claim to explain all that? For example, there is no allusion to the Grail which disenchant Segurant as in the *Prophecies* and the *Queste 12599*.

First, it is certainly possible to imagine *Rusticien II* inspiring the primordial version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, which would then invent all these elements and transmit them to the *Queste 12599*. *Rusticien II* thus replacing a hypothetical Segurant romance, but without changing the reconstruction of the *Ur-Prophecies*. (Obviously it depends on the dating chosen for these texts if it is possible that *Rusticien II* was written later than the *Prophecies de Merlin*.)

Then, we could imagine that there was indeed a source which inspired all these ancient mentions of Segurant, which like the Bruns family would be of Guironian inspiration (*Geste des Bruns*, *Guironian text about Segurant* and *Lost Segurant Romance* are not mutually exclusive descriptions), but this source would have been completely lost afterwards — let us think of what Philippe Ménard postulates on the “Post-Vulgate” *Quest for the Grail*, [see below](#). Rather than inheriting lost materials, the Arsenal manuscript would be the work of a “Segurant fan” who would have gathered all the traces of his hero (in *Rusticien II*, the *Prophecies*, maybe in the *Queste 12599*) and tried to synthesize them by filling in the gaps. As Arioli says, it seems simpler to assume that he inherited, at least in part, a coherent account of the *Ur-Prophecies* rather than imagining a compiler energetic enough to bring together and synthesize three different and scattered manuscript traditions.

“We would have to suppose that a 15th-century author conceived the project of writing an immense retrospective account of the “Complementary Romance Version”, while encompassing the “intertextual episodes” [ep. VIII+X] and systematically reusing all the details provided by the “Complementary Episodes” and the “Complementary Prophetic Version.” (*Étude* 2019:57)

However, as Damien de Carné reminds us, the scale of such an undertaking should not be exaggerated either: in the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, which contains the adventures of the *Complementary Romance Version*, one also finds the prophecies that form the *Complementary Prophetic Version*. In absolute terms this hypothesis, perhaps less economical, simply assumes a compiler having access to the *Prophecies de Merlin* and to *Rusticien II* — the Segurarian episode of the *Queste 12599*, in sum a series of allusions, confirms quite directly the existence of the Matter of Segurant but does not seem to provide us with the essential ingredients for the development of the Cardinal Version that cannot be found elsewhere.

Is it really much more improbable than imagining the author of *Rusticien II* remix the *Suite Guiron* while also having access to the *Ur-Prophecies* and the *Queste 12599*, which is what Arioli’s theories would seem to imply? (*Étude* 2019:75) Similarly, when Arioli supposes that, in the BnF 358 Alternative Version, the episode where Segurant delivers nuns (*Étude* 2019:83n122) or the one where he devours a hermit’s provisions (*Étude* 2019:278n33) would be copied on episodes from the *Complementary Romance Version* (that is to say the adventures specific to the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*) this would imply someone developing the episodes from *Rusticien II* but still having access to the *Prophecies de Merlin* tradition. (In her time, Paton thought that this episode of BnF 358 reflected the Guironian source which had inspired the *Prophecies de Merlin*, so an influence in the other direction cf. [II.286](#))

Certainly, comparing the Complementary Episode of the *Queste 12599* and its version in *Rusticien II*, it is indeed the latter who appears to work as a compiler, by purging it of the least respectable materials. (*Étude* 2019:72-5) but the fact remains that we should not exaggerate the improbability of these different traditions crossing paths, especially if we assume that they developed in a fairly small Franco-Italian milieu.

For the full discussion see [Arioli 2018](#) (article whose “updated version which constitutes the reference” can be found in his *Étude* 2019:317-345, where the article is slightly rearranged), see also the response in [Lagomarsini 2018](#) and the assessment that is made by [Carné 2022](#) of their respective theories.



If we exclude the very speculative existence of a separately existing “Segurant Romance”, on the whole Arioli’s thesis seems entirely plausible: Segurant would have appeared in the tradition of the *Prophecies de Merlin* at the end of the 13th century, or at least some core features of his story developed in the *Prophecies de Merlin* rather than in Guironian texts. On the other hand, when we try to specify the form that this Matter of Segurant took back then, to specify the contours of this now famous “lost romance”, and to determine if the manuscript of the Arsenal reflects it faithfully, the problems begin.

### Some problems

Two points could be rightly criticized:

First, the presence of Segurant in the rest of the tradition of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (adventures and prophecies) seems to attest that some central elements of the Cardinal Version existed in the primordial form of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, as Paton already thought, and to which Christine Ferlampin-Acher or Damien de Carné concurr. But Arioli invokes, among other things, the *coherence* of the story to imply that the entire cardinal version existed then, even the portions which are not attested otherwise, and that all this constituted a continuous romance about Segurant which had an independent existence before being recycled by the Ur-Prophecies. Even under his pen this remains a more than fragile conjecture, difficult, if not impossible to prove — and yet it is the thunderous announcement of *Rediscovered Romance of Segurant* which dominated all discussions. Is it reasonable to give a prominent place to the most speculative part of his theory? As Ferlampin-Acher says, he might have “supported, with caution” his “risky hypothesis”, but the fact remains that “the material existence of such a text remains uncertain.” ([Romania 2021:198](#)) ; “*Segurant* is now promoted to the rank of a work in its own right, [...], but caution is required, as a subject matter did not necessarily coincide with a [separate] work in the Middle Ages.” ([2021:214](#))

Then, Arioli’s hypothesis is perhaps more economical than imagining the compiler of the Arsenal collecting all the mentions of Segurant in two or three different manuscript traditions before filling in the gaps thanks to the implications contained in the narrative, but it does not imply that *all episodes* of the Cardinal Version were found in the Ur-Prophecies, as Paton and Carné point out again: the compiler of the Arsenal could well have invented episodes, and some are very suspect. In his 2016 study, Arioli said “Although coherence and cohesion are not irrefutable criteria [...], we assume that the ‘cardinal version’ is a monolithic block” (“Bien que la cohérence et la cohésion ne soient pas des critères irréfutables [...], nous supposons que la “version cardinale” est un bloc monolithique” *Étude* 2016:25) and most often it is as a monolithic block that he treats it, without attributing different dates to its episodes. With some exceptions, of course: the translation selected 22 episodes out of 39, which prevents the average reader from being perplexed about the presence of those that have no connection with Segurant.

As is customary, Arioli’s colleagues made a fairly large number of comments on his edition, proposing corrections and possible improvements to the text and the edition: [Plouzeau 2019](#) ; Timelli 2020 on the [tome I](#) and [the tome II](#) of the edition; [Ferlampin-Acher 2021](#) ; [Carné 2022](#). (See also [Martina 2020](#) on the 2019 *Étude*)

Below we will examine the problems that relate to the content of the narratives in the Cardinal Version.

Cardinal Version, Episode II: a connecting episode?

The first four episodes of the cardinal version focus on Segurant’s ancestors. To copy our summary ([Appendix 1](#)):

Episode I: The brothers Galehaut le Brun le Vieux and Hector le Brun le Vieux (Galehaut the Brown the Old and Hector the Brown the Old) flee from King Vertigier (Vortigern) and ask their wives to take refuge in Carmelide with their children while they embark on a ship. A storm washes them up on a deserted island, where they and four other castaways start a new life, build a shelter and hunt birds while the mariners pick apples. They discover a natural harbor, le “Port Trouvé” (the found harbor), and name the island: Isle Non Sachant. (= unknown island)

Episode II: Master Antoine reads Merlin's prophecies to Galehaut le Brun le Jeune (son of Hector le Brun le Vieux). He states that the Salesbières tournament will be won by two men who have previously eaten only wild animals, small apples, and poultry for several months, and will then sleep with Carmelite nuns. (This is obviously Hector and Galehaut, who will be reunited with their wives who had taken the veil.)

Episode III: King Arthur fights against the Saxons of the *Roche aux Sesnes* (Rock of the Saxons) and defeats them. Galehaut le Brun le Vieux and Hector le Brun le Vieux distinguish themselves in the battle. The next day, preparations are made for the Tournament of Salesbières (Salisbury). Merlin has Arthur's tent built on a rock from which he can observe the entire Salesbières plain. (We do not know how the two brothers left the island and we no longer have the episode of the tournament itself, which was apparently cut.)

Episode IV: Merlin, Arthur, and the two old men visit Master Antoine. Everyone then goes to the Trinity Monastery where their wives and children are. They then accompany Arthur to London. Léodagan asks Arthur to help him defend Carmelide.

Episode II is quite particular, it is attested outside the Arsenal manuscript in certain versions of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, and consists mainly of prophecies to Galehaut which announce (or recapitulate) the episodes which follow and which precede, which is rather redundant, and perhaps a little artificial... Arioli therefore postulates that it could have been written *to bridge* between the prophetic storyline and the Cardinal Version when the two were joined together (*Étude* 2019:50-51) and therefore that it must not have been part of the original plot on Segurant, but he kept it in his edition because 1) it is important for the manuscript tradition due to the link between *Prophecies de Merlin* (short version) and the Cardinal Version, and 2) it allows for a more continuous text. This hypothesis is double-edged, on the one hand it points to connecting tissue which would indeed show that the story of Segurant was shoehorned into the plot of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, but on the other hand, the lack of connection between the introductory shipwreck and the rest of the story could lead specialists more eager to dissect the text to assume that this episode actually existed separately, and was perhaps not part of the same source as the following adventures. This also feeds into the hypothesis of a more daring compiler. Moreover, if episode II is restored from the Chantilly manuscript ([49vb-50ra](#)), from group IV (compilation), it is because all the other manuscripts are incomplete: Bern, Burgerbibliothek 388 fol. 62rb-62vb Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 9624 fol. 21r-22r (contain the beginning); Arsenal 5229, fol. 23rb-23vb (one leaf missing). Venice, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana, Str. App. 29 (243), fol. 87rb (incomplete). (Paton already noticed this ([L115n](#)) and even already edited the passage in question from the Chantilly manuscript ([L426-7](#)). This means that despite the insistence on the importance of having gathered fragments to reconstruct a lost romance, *the entire text that Arioli* believes to come from the "lost romance" is actually contained in full in a single manuscript: ms. Arsenal 5229.

Furthermore, the introductory episode of the shipwreck is especially poorly linked to the rest:

- The Salesbières tournament is announced, but the episode is no longer extant, and we don't know how the old Bruns return from their desert island to go to Salesbières.
- In Chapter V, the Isle Non Sachant is no longer the deserted island of the introductory Robinson Crusoe story but a functional medieval society, except for the lions that Segurant fights there. "We can therefore ask ourselves whether this Chapter V and its sequels were, from the beginning, part of the same narrative whole as the preceding chapters, or whether it is not, on the contrary, in one sense or another, an opportunistic collage intended to flesh out the biography of Segurant that was being assembled." ([Carné 2022:§74](#))

We observe a redoubling of the Galehauts and the Hectors: Galehaut le Brun le Vieux is the father of Hector le Brun le Jeune, while Hector le Brun le Vieux is the father of Galehaut le Brun le Jeune. But Carné wonders ([2022:§67](#)) if this redoubling is not the sign of an altered tradition, as is sometimes the case, especially since for episode II the Berne manuscript simply gives *Galehors li Bruns* ([f. 62b](#)) and that no other manuscript specifies *le jeune* (the young).

Since the text is clearly damaged, none of these remarks have definitive force. As Damien de Carné says, by comparing their texts, their transitional formulas, it does indeed seem that it is the other manuscripts that abridge the text of the Arsenal, and it is difficult to imagine someone recreating episodes I, III and IV from II. But that does not jeopardize his reconstruction of the *Ur-Prophecies* so much as his hypothesis of a lost romance.

Most often, Arioli does not address these obvious questions: were there episodes from the cardinal version that were added by the manuscript of the Arsenal, or before that by the *Ur-Prophecies*? Can we classify the different episodes according to the probability that they were part of these different layers of rewriting or not? [As Damien de Carné says](#) :

“The evidence gathered by E.A. argues for the ancient existence of the episode of the Tournament of Winchester, in a form perhaps very close to that which he edited. It is easy to believe that in this original framework Golistan must have played some role, just like Dinadan, and that there must have been a question of the Isle Non Sachant – and of course of a dragon. All these elements are attested by documents or texts independent of each other. Was there a Camelot tournament which features Bliobéris and Dinadan, the insolence of the latter towards Arthur appearing to be modeled on that of the Tournament of Sorelois towards Galehaut, in the long version of the Prophecies (in his *Étude*, p. 277, n. 32, E.A. proposes an influence in the opposite direction?) The brief adventures of the Knight of the Ten Guards? The Tristanian episodes? The misfortunes of Palamedes and Lancelot’s fight against a giant? The appearance of Galehaut? As for the Bruns themselves, were the first steps of Segurant on the Isle of Non-Sachant included there? Were the first chapters, which the other occurrences of chap. II attest of existing at an ancient date, nothing other than an extension of the story of the Bruns already known by the *Guiron*? Were there already two Galehauts, two Hectors, and were they used to introduce Segurant? All these points seem undecidable. The only thing that allows us to decide is the confidence that we place or not in a document from the end of the 14th century.” ([2022:§76](#))

Arioli barely delves into these speculations, perhaps out of caution, perhaps so that the reader fully considers the unique episodes of the Arsenal manuscript, before cutting into this “monolithic block” and discarding pieces. But with this silence, his implied thesis seems to be that *all* these particular episodes from the Arsenal manuscript were part of the *Ur-Prophecies* and before that of a lost Segurant romance, going through (at least) two layers of rewriting without the slightest alteration and without the slightest addition, which seems improbable in itself. It is very far from having been proven and obvious that this is not the only option. Isn’t it the role of an editor to draw the reader’s attention to this kind of problematic points?

#### A clearly altered text

36 episodes of the cardinal version are preserved only in the Arsenal manuscript, so they cannot be compared with other manuscripts to check how faithfully the copyist copied.

For the other three:

- Episode II is incomplete in the Arsenal manuscript, as in all others except the Chantilly manuscript.
- Episodes VIII and X correspond quite well to their version in *Rusticien II*, but the Arsenal also contains at the end of the X an additional episode where Segurant and Galehaut fight giants. Arioli considers that it was indeed part of the original text but it is difficult to exclude that it is the Arsenal which elaborates ([Begin 2023:80](#)) the fights of the Bruns against the giants are a Guironian cliché that it would not be difficult to add ([Carné 2022:§33](#)) as did the London-Turin version with its last episode where they also go to war against the giants (Lath. §191n2) and by mentioning this in its prologue.

All the more so, as Bégin remarks ([2023:69-70](#)) when the Arsenal manuscript tends to develop the prophetic sequences that it has in common with the rest of the tradition, sometimes at length. The sequence where Guinevere sends a lady to seek Merlin to elucidate her dream is four times longer in the Arsenal (48va-49rb) than in the Bodmer 116 (33rb).

These elements feed into the suspicion that the scribe altered his material considerably and that the cardinal version has very little chance of being, in its entirety, copied identically from a lost romance.

### The sons of the Duke of Burgundy?

In the cardinal version (ep. XXIII), Lamorat knocks down “the son of the Duke of Burgundy” (I.229) who stands out strangely in the tournament. In 2016, following Koble’s remarks ([2009:\\$28](#)) Arioli acknowledges that this must be a later addition which would indicate that the Arsenal 5229 manuscript had been written in Burgundy (pp. 9-16).

“the allusion to the son of the Duke of Burgundy, which could indicate a link with the Burgundian court and a dating to the last quarter of the 14th or the very beginning of the 15th century” (2016:25)

Indeed, he had managed to attribute the manuscript to Louis de Sancerre by deciphering an almost illegible inscription, and thus strengthened his hypothesis by pointing out the links of this notable with the court of Burgundy. In 2019, in his edition, he changed course: he instead pointed to Île-de-France and Picardy (I.39), the language of the manuscript displaying a common French, with some possibly Picardy features.

The cardinal version, on the other hand, would have first been written in the North of Italy, where we find the oldest manuscripts involving Segurant (*Étude* 2019:59-60) in a Franco-Italian context, even if its language has since been updated before being preserved in the Arsenal manuscript. As proof, Arioli lists a series of “Italianisms”, forms which would betray the Italian context from which the text would ultimately come. (I.49-51) In an example invoked to support its reconstruction, the Arsenal manuscript gives the lesson *joye* instead of *joiaus* in the other manuscripts, which for Arioli would be the influence of Italian *gioia* (*Étude* 2019:319). This is one of the variants that would demonstrate, according to him, that the text of the “intertextual episodes” (VIII+X) in the Arsenal ms. is better and must be the original, but it appears to be [a trivial example for Lagomarsini in 2018](#) (the form is found in French texts without established Italian influence) and [insufficient for Damien de Carné in 2022 to decide the filiation of the manuscripts](#) (the two forms are equivalent, perhaps interchangeable for the scribe). The other errors and variants that Arioli invokes also seem questionable to him.

In 2019, Arioli therefore presented a more extensive list of Italianate traits. (I.49-51 ; *Étude* 2019:58-59) But the diagnosis is not always unanimous: Plouzeau points out certain forms that can be found in common medieval French ([2019:\\$27](#)) and Ferlampin-Acher regrets the absence of a more systematic discussion of the Italianisms, which would weigh in on its origins. ([Romania 2021:206](#))

The scribe of the Arsenal (or someone he copied) would therefore have updated the language of his model, with some small modifications, such as the addition of the sons of the Duke of Burgundy. For Arioli in 2016 these are only “minor interventions” (2016:25) on the text, but for a critical reader, this adds to the multitude of clues which point to the fact that the manuscript of the Arsenal contains an altered text which could not have existed in this exact form at the end of the 13th century.

That said, arguments of this kind are often circular and reversible, whether those of Arioli or his critics. As for the sons of the Duke of Burgundy, for example, Arioli pointed out that a fragment from Bologna (Busta 7n°13? late 13th-early 14th) mentions a Duke of Burgundy cousin of Galehaut le Brun. (*Étude* 2019:61, and already in 2016:11n28) We could also note that in the *Prophecies de Merlin*, Merlin announces that “li rois Artu avra en sa subjection toute Gaille, **Bourgoigne**, Campaigne, Benuyc et Gaune”. (“king Arthur will have all of Gaul under his authority, **Burgundy**, Champagne, Benoic and Gaunes” Bodmer fol. 17v, Berthelot 1992:68, [Koble 2001:30](#)) So it is not that improbable in regard to Arthurian geography.

### Incomprehensible or questionable episodes

In *Rusticien II*, episodes VIII and X of the cardinal version are found back-to-back (separated by a space in the New York ms.) but in the Arsenal manuscript they are separated by a chapter IX which involves Galehaut des Estranges Isles, a chapter “which moreover raises the question of the belonging of certain chapters, including this one, to the general framework” ([Carné 2022](#)), other problematic entries noted by Carné: the ten guards who accompany Dinadan who appear at a widow’s house are not really explained (chap. XI) nor the presence of Galehaut at a certain Armant’s house (chap. XIX), chap. XXV there is mention of an enchantment of Méléagant which we no longer have, chap. XXXIII Tristan is said to have made a vow not to return to Tintagel for three months, but in an episode which we no longer have “Unless it is a reference to another form of chap. XXII, different from its current, deteriorated form.” ([Carné 2022](#))

Ferlampin-Acher (2021) also raises an eyebrow at the brief appearance of a knight with a very un-Arthurian name, Zarol, followed by an intervention from the narrator that she sees as a suture of the text : “*Et se aucuns me demandoit qui estoit li chevalier qui abati ainsi Zarol, je diroye qu’il estoit de Leonoys, filz au seneschal, et estoit appellé Hernaus.*” (“*And if anyone asked me who was the knight who thus killed Zarol, I would say that he was from Leonoys, son of the seneschal, and was called Hernaus.*” l.314)

Other problems in Carné’s article (2022) :

- p. 124: problematic allusion to Berthelai, the misdeeds in question will only be explained much later.
- p. 165: problematic allusion to the exploit of Bliobéris *qui avoit occis la serpan, ainsi come li contes a devisé ça en arriere* [who had killed the serpent/dragon, as the tale has said before], episode absent from the text. [N. b.: in his *Étude* from 2019 Arioli does mention this reference to Bliobéris killing a snake from an episode that we do not have. (p. 190-191)]
- p. 167: reference to a part of the story which is allusively represented by pp. 158-159 of the edition, a passage commented on above in case 1.7; one could consider this reference with the same suspicion as the story on these pp. 158-159.
- p. 173: What is the country of Galehaut le Brun (the Younger) and why (Hector himself lives on the Isle Non Sachant)? The context does not specify.
- p. 178: the context does not specify what is being discussed when the text mentions that Merlin’s quest is completed, just as it does on p. 199.
- p. 180: the narrator claims to have already recounted or mentioned the tournament at Camelot during which Bliobéris and Dinadan appear; when did he do it, when did he mention this tournament?
- p. 181: allusion, left hanging, to the prowess of Bliobéris, strangely evoked as *telx chevalier com je vous ay compté ça en arriere par maintes foiz* [that knight that I told you about many times before] although we have seen very little from him.
- p. 200: allusion, left hanging, to Morgain’s lust, which is in the habit *d’efforcier les hommes ainsi com vos avez oï ça en arriere* [to rape men as you have heard before], which in fact has not been told.
- p. 225: despite the announcement in this episode (admittedly poorly conceived and clearly deteriorated), Tristan will not be at the Tournament of Winchester.
- p. 242: see above, reference to a previous enchantment of Méléagant that we do not have.
- p. 271: allusion to a forest giant absent from the corresponding episode p. 223.

### A reference to the prophetic storyline in the Cardinal Version?

When the Demon-Dragon arrives in the story, we are told that we have heard before that devils have the power to transform themselves. Now, as Bégin remarks (2023) it seems to refer to a previous passage, which is not in the cardinal version. If the cardinal version is only the transplantation as is of a lost romance on Segurant, it could not allude to an episode which is outside...

Table 8: possible allusion to Merlin’s metamorphoses

<p>“dont as tu [Merlin] poesté de changier la forme que tu nous monstre de toy en tantes semblances et quant tu veulx?”</p> <p>Merlin answers that the fallen angels “ont poeste de changier leur formes et d’eulx m’est la poeste descendue”</p>	<p>“[e]t vous avez oï ça en arriere, et Maistre Blaise le tesmoigne ausi en son livre, que li ennemiz qui conversent en l’air ont poesté de changier leurs forme en quelque semblance qu’ilz vuellent”</p>
<p><a href="#">Bégin 95</a> quoting <a href="#">Arsenal 5229 fol. 17ra</a>. (Paton 104)</p>	<p><a href="#">Bégin 94</a> quoting <a href="#">Arsenal 5229 fol. 118rb-va</a>.</p>
<p>“From whence do you have [Merlin] the power to change your appearance to take on various forms at will?”</p> <p>Answer: The devil’s angels “have the power to change shape and it is from them that I inherited this power.”</p>	<p>“You have heard before, and Master Blaise testifies to this in his book, that the devils who inhabit the air have the power to change their appearance at will.” <i>Segurant</i>, translation, 2023:143. A note sees this as an allusion to the <i>Merlin en prose</i> (p. 241).</p>



In 2023, the translation only reminds us that the book by Master Blaise mentioned here must be the *Merlin in Prose*, which begins with the conception of Merlin, but we are told about Blaise's book *And* because we have *ityeah that back*. In his 2016 publication, in the Literary History of France, Arioli explicitly discusses the possibility that this is a reference back to another passage:

“[...] On the same subject, the story alludes to an episode related previously (“vous avez oï ça e arriere”); it could refer to the episode in the *Prophecies de Merlin* in which Merlin gives a devil the appearance of Master Antoine, see [Lucy Allen Paton, \*The Prophecies de Merlin\* op. cit., t. I, p. 141](#) (ch. LXXXIV) cf. Arsenal 5229 fol. 36r.” (2016:47n120, corresponds to Koble XI, Bodmer 24)

The dragon appears in the cardinal version, but this allusion therefore would refer to one of those episodes of the prophetic storyline, which is also found in the other branches of the *Prophecies de Merlin*.

This therefore poses no problem when we consider the Arsenal manuscript, where the two scenes can be found, or Arioli's reconstruction of the *Ur-Prophecies*. (cf. *Étude* 2019:354 *sqq.*) But for his reconstruction of a lost Segurant romance, this poses a fundamental problem: if the cardinal version existed separately from the *Prophecies de Merlin*, in the form of a Segurant romance, it could not allude to a previous scene which is not found in the cardinal version, but only in the prophetic storyline. This reference must date from the joining of the two stories. At the very least we must conclude that this part of the text could not have been written in this way, and therefore ask ourselves to what extent the text of the Arsenal manuscript faithfully reproduces that of a hypothetical lost romance, if we must add this passage to a long list of doubtful points.

That said, this is not an insoluble problem; in Arthurian literature in general and in the late 13th century in particular, these reminders (“as you heard before”) can be very artificial. Scribes announce or refer to episodes that apparently never made it into their texts. Koble notes this in her book on the *Prophecies de Merlin* (2009) but this is also the impression left by *Guiron le Courtois*. (Lagomarsini, “Pour l'édition du roman de Guiron”, in *Prolegomènes* 2018:305 citant aussi Albert, *Ensemble ou par pièces*, p. 61 *sqq.*) Damien de Carné adds in particular:

We know that we must be wary of this kind of announcements: after all, the chapter devoted to Mador de la Porte, which E.A. considers a late addition, is introduced with the help of the same expedient – *En ceste partie dist li contes que quant Mador de la Porte se fu partis de ses compaignons, ensi com vous avés oï cha en arriere* [In this part says the tale, that when Mador de la Porte had left his companions, as you have heard before...] (ms. Bodmer 116, ed. Berthelot, p. 103) – when no previous such episode is supposed to have existed. ([2022:§38](#))

It is logical that theories appear more confident in 2019 than in 2016, after having proposed a solution to various philological problems, but one almost regrets that this possible allusion no longer even seems to merit discussion.

#### A different tournament in Rusticien II and the Livre d'Yvain?

Moreover, In *Rusticien II* we are told that Segurant followed the dragon “par le commandement que lui fist la damoiselle le desrenier jour du tournoiement” (“by the command given to him by the young lady on the last day of the tournament”, cf. ms. New York fol. 78a ; [BnF 355 fol. 61 vb](#) ; [BnF 340 fol. 75r](#) ; [Bodmer 96–2 fol. 273v](#), etc. text transcribed by [Bogdanov 1967:334](#)) this was already noticed by Löseth (1924:88, cited by [Brugger 1938:362](#)) and Lathuillère §242 (1966:466) ; Löseth and Lathuillère see this young lady as one of the many young ladies that serve the Lady of the Lake (nothing prevents this reading but, to us, it does not seem to be implied at all by the text). Arioli says that:

“All manuscripts attest to this lesson («par le commandement», “by the command of”). However, in episode XXVII of the “cardinal version,” Segurant follows the dragon because of an enchantment. One can assume that the correct lesson was “by the enchantment of”; the error could be explained by the graphic resemblance of the two syntagms [commandement/enchantement], especially in Gothic writing.” (*Segurant*, ed. 2019:II.143)

This doesn't explain the *demoiselle* ("young lady"), Sibylle and Morgana are unequivocally described as *dames*, ladies. Cf. in the cardinal version: "*une dame si m'envoie*" (a lady sends me), "*Il fut enchantement que andeux les dames firent, dont elles vous mandent que vous ne vous faites plus tenir por fol.*" (It was an enchantment cast by these two ladies, and they advise you not to make a fool of yourself about this [from now on]) (ep. XXXI, I.276). Admittedly, the *demoiselle* of Pommenglois, in the service of Morgana, enchants knights. As is often the case, we find it strange that the edition barely discusses it and that the *Étude* does not discuss it at all, but we see that the 2016 monograph includes this passage in the "small divergences" that separate the summary from *Rusticien II* and the Cardinal Version:

"For example, according to the episode in the second version of Rusticien's Compilation, a young lady ordered Segurant to follow the dragon, while in the "cardinal version," the pursuit of the dragon is caused by an enchantment of Morgana." (2016:31n74)

In the same way, the *Livre d'Yvain* (end of the 13th-beginning of the 14th) mentions Segurant beating everyone in the quintaine, but the tournament did not take place in Winchester but at the *Roche aux Sesnes* (Rock of the Saxons, cf. Arioli, *Livre d'Yvain*, 2019:137-8, ms. fol. 29v).

It would seem to us a perfectly reasonable hypothesis to imagine that the compiler of the "second compilation of Rusticien" found the Tournament of Winchester with its demonic dragon too complicated and decided to simplify by introducing the adventure with the cliché of a young lady launching the quest. The same goes for the *Livre d'Yvain*: the compilations of this period seem to borrow adventures while changing a few details, their protagonist in particular (Arioli, *Livre d'Yvain*, 2019:19) nothing excludes the possibility that the episode is indeed an echo of *Rusticien II* who would have wanted to elude Winchester for one reason or another. But, given their weight in the argument, the fact that two of the early attestations of the Tournament of Winchester present a slightly different course of events from that of the cardinal version might merit a more in-depth mention than these passing notes.

#### Segurant's Appetite and the Tournament of Winchester

Another discrepancy: Segurant's appetite. We find it discussed in a comical way at the Tournament of Winchester, which fits perfectly with the continuation of the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (ed. 2019:II.120) where this is how he is recognized by the Lady of the Lake and Golistan ; with the mockery of Dinadan in the "complementary episode" of the *Queste 12599* (II.134; ed. Carné 2021:61) and that of *Rusticien II* (II.145). This is therefore an element that has profoundly marked the portrait of Segurant in his proven ancient attestations. We also find it in the second episode of the BnF 358 alternative version (II.176-7), his appetite is in fact absent only from the prophecies concerning Segurant, and from the alternative version of London-Turin.

However, in the Cardinal Version, before the tournament, this is never alluded to, while there are plenty of feast scenes. We even see him eating "un petit", that is **a little bit!** ([see Table 9 below](#))

"[...] this insatiable and bulimic appetite of Segurant, which he boasts of on several occasions, is totally absent from the preceding account. The festive meal at the time of his knighting does not mention it, despite the opulence of the service (pp. 112-113), nor the meal taken at the end of the assault on the Pas Berthelais (p. 122), nor the party at the King of Carmelide's (p. 128) or the meal that followed (p. 130), nor the evening at Oderiz's (pp. 135 and 137); at the same Oderiz's, in the morning, when the host had brought peacock, wine and pastries, and Segurant claimed to follow his host's advice to eat (ibid.), he ate *un petit!* [a little bit] Finally, the meal taken with his uncle Galehaut is just as normal (p. 143). Modesty of appetites. We would be less surprised by these two models of the same knight if we were to understand that they come from different phases of writing, or from distinct textual imports. Finally, let us note that the motif redoubles that of Galehaut's appetite as it manifests itself in the *Prophecies*, during the tournament of Sorelois." ([Carné 2022, §75](#))

If for Carné the jokes of Dinadan to Segurant in the *Queste 12599* repeated those he addressed to Galehaut during the Tournament of Sorelois in the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* ([2018:§51](#)), he notes in 2022 ([§76](#)) that Arioli proposes something else: the cardinal version would have inspired the *Ur-Prophecies* and the

scene would therefore have been duplicated and applied to Galehaut in the long version, and then inspire the *Queste 12599*. (*Étude* 2019:277n32) This might seem strange to imagine a compiler producing the *Ur-Prophecies* who would then keep *the two very similar scenes* but with different protagonists — however, Dinadan also amusing Arthur and Guinevere in the cardinal version with a very similar boastfulness (ep. XIII, XIV) shows us that, all in all, repetition did not tire the authors of the time as much as modern readers. However, it is not completely inexplicable that the Arsenal manuscript has “the knight’s legendary bulimia begin at the Tournament of Winchester” since this “gives it a horizon outside the diegesis recounted in the manuscript by adding the knight’s healing to the wonders of the Grail.” ([Koble 2009:n48](#)) After all, the demon summoned by Morgana, who takes the form of a dragon, was called “*dragon, pour ce que entre lui et ceulx de sa region avoient a **trengloutir** les ames des pecheurs qui estoient en enfer*” (“dragon, because him and the others of his region had to **swallow/devour** the souls of sinners who were in hell” I.255) — for he loves to swallow up souls. Is it possible that it somehow rubbed off on the knight who runs after him, and who will be, ironically, sated by the nourishing Grail, the vessel which has the capacity to make appear before everybody the dish he wishes for the most? ([Ferlampin-Acher 2021:212](#))

Table 9: Laughter and hunger, the Cardinal Version, a “monolithic block”?

Cardinal Version		
ep. I-IV	Shipwreck of the ancestors of Segurant, Salesbières tournament, etc. Episode II is also in the <i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> (short version and group IV “compilation”)	External attestation
V	As Damien de Carné notes (2022), despite numerous meals, the beginning of the cardinal version never mentions Segurant’s appetite, a distinctive feature in later versions, despite numerous occasions, such as the feast after his knighthood (I.112-113, trans. 2023:32-3)	Segurant’s appetite (lack)
VI	Normal meal after the assault on the Pas Berthelais (I.122, trans. 44-5)	Segurant’s appetite (lack)
VII	Feast at the King of Carmelide’s (I.128) and the normal meal that follows (I.130)	Segurant’s appetite (lack)
VIII	Intertextual episode also found in <i>Rusticien II.</i> (with ep. X) Normal meal in the evening at Oderiz’s (I.135) the next morning he eats “ <i>un petit</i> ”! (a little bit, I.137) another normal meal with his uncle Galehaut (I.143)	External attestation Lack of appetite Seg.
IX	Galehaut and Baudemagus against the Saxons (suspect ep. according to Carné)	Addition?
X	Intertextual episode also found in <i>Rusticien II.</i> (with ep. VIII)	External attestation
XIII-XIV	Dinadan entertains Arthur’s court at the Tournament of Camelot	Dinadan’s jibes
XXII	Tristan postpones a duel because he will have to be at the Tournament of Winchester (but he does not appear in the episode as we have it)	Inconsistency
The end of the Cardinal Version, around the Tournament of Winchester, corresponds, in content and tone, to the long version of the <i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> and the <i>Queste 12599</i> , but we notice a shift from the beginning (whose two “cores” are attested outside of ms. Arsenal 5229): no trace of Segurant’s gargantuan appetite, of a bawdy tone or the very crude presentation of violent sexual themes, notably explicit mention of genital anatomy, which is unusual.		
XXIII	“Then [Dinadan] looked at Segurant and saw that he had much more [meat] and that he was eating with such a ferocious appetite that it was astonishing” (trans. 117) “ <i>And then he looked in front of Seguranz and saw that he had enough more and was eating so proudly that it seemed a marvel.</i> ” (I.232). He then compares it to a lion and a fox.	Segurant’s Appetite & Dinadan’s jibes
XXVII	Tournament of Winchester: Dragon attacks, Segurant enchanted, etc.	
XXXII	Palamedes meets an unfaithful woman whose “thing” (=her genitals) has been “skinned” by her husband. “ <i>Et lors li avint qu’il trouva enmy le chemin la dame dont je vous ay parlé dessus, que son mary avoit deshonorée. Et sachiez qu’il li avoit escorché sa chose toute et avoit occis le serf qu’il avoit trouvé avec li.</i> ” (I.285)	Tone: genital violence
Long version of the <i>Prophecies de Merlin</i>		
Comp. Version	Rom. Segurant devours his meal at the Cité Fort (II.104) the provisions of a hermit (II.111). Later, the Lady of the Lake (II.120) and Golistan (II.129) recognize him by his appetite.	Segurant’s appetite
Tournament of Sorelois	Dinadan mocks Galehaut, comparing him to a <b>wolf</b> : “ <i>Qu’est çou, Galehout ? Ne troeves tu teus viandes, quant tu ies en bos en la campagne des leus, ki te resablent ? Tu n’as pas talent de mangier poisson : on ne poroit oster le leu sa coustume, si m’en sui bien apercheus a ton mangier !</i> ” (Koble XXXV, Berthelot 198, fol. 89va)	Galehaut’s Appetite & Dinadan’s jibes
<i>Queste 12599</i>		
§9. As above, talking about flaying a woman’s genitals, rare form of sexual violence.	“Be silent, miserable wolf, if justice had punished your mother when she slept with the wolf who conceived you and had skinned her thing, the wolf that you are would never have come into the world! And if you live long, you will do us great harm, because we will no longer find meat in quantity: you will have devoured it all!” (trans. 2023:214) “ <i>Tais te, chaitif leus, que se la justice eust prise ta mere quant elle se choucha avec le leus qui te engendra et li aust escorché la chose, jamés tex leus con tu es ne naistroit au siecle [...]</i> ” (II.134, ed. Carné 2021:61)	Segurant’s appetite Dinadan’s jibes Tone: genital violence
§23.	Lady who squeezes the genitals of a knight (“ <i>par mi les pendanz</i> ”) until he loses consciousness. (ed. Carné 2021:204) The bawdy tone corresponds to the long version of the <i>Prophecies de Merlin</i> and to the end of the Cardinal Version, but no trace of this type of things in the episodes at the <i>beginning</i> of the Cardinal Version.	Tone: genital violence

In the *Queste 12599*, when Dinadan mocks his appetite, he thus states “tu n’avroies pas garison en l’Isle Blanche, por ce que tu ne troveroies que devorer” (II.134, “you would not [cure your appetite/find enough resources], not even on the White Island, because you would not find enough to devour” trans. 2023:214) for Arioli it is a “mythical place, wooded and wild, where meals follow one another without respite.” (“lieu mythique, boisé et sauvage, où les repas se suivent sans trêve.” trans. 2023:243, without indicating where this explanation comes from) but Damien de Carné notes (2021:61, 272) that in the *First Continuation* of the *Conte du Graal*, it was the name of the island where Joseph of Arimathea had landed with the Grail, which feeds the small christian community by manifesting food. (cf. ed. Roach v. 7627, trad. Coolput-Storms 502-3)

Of course, in the Cardinal Version, his appetite only manifests itself in episode XXIII (p. 232), that is to say *before* that he was enchanted in episode XXVII, so here his appetite cannot logically result from the spell cast at the Tournament. Perhaps the tradition vaguely remembered that Segurant’s bulimia declared itself at the Tournament of Winchester, but that the latest rewritings omitted to link it to the enchantment. *Rusticien II* describing Segurant fallen *ill* by dint of pursuing the dragon (ed. II.143) would be another trace of this.

(The fact that Arioli does not cite Damien de Carné’s entirely reasonable hypothesis about the White Island, instead recounting a theory he pulled out of his hat and which he does not explain in the least is already a problem when the translation is intended for the general public. A “mythical wooded and wild place”... Given our specialties regarding mythologies and Arthurian literature, as well as having read all of Arioli’s work, we should be well positioned to understand this “explanation”, but have no idea where it comes from. Moreover, this problem is compounded in the “pedagogical” edition of 2025 since the notes are purely and simply removed. Schoolchildren will therefore find themselves reading this objectively enigmatic passage without even this half-explanation.)

The Tournament of Winchester scenes therefore differ in several respects from the above, which is a double-edged sword for Arioli’s theories. On the one hand, this scene with the illusory demonic dragon, which is certainly the most interesting, the heart of the Cardinal Version, corresponds very closely to the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, justifying all the more bringing them together in his reconstruction of the *Ur-Prophecies*. On the other hand, Segurant’s appetite is not the only major absentee from the beginning of the Cardinal Version, which poses a problem for making it a “monolithic block”...

Arioli discusses the truculent and burlesque character of the comic relief in the *Prophecies de Merlin* which, it must be said, differs from many classical Arthurian texts. In the long version, we see Morgana and Sybille arguing over a knight they like, and fighting when he slips away. Sybille calls Morgana a whore, who responds in kind and grabs her by the hair, but, older, she does not have the advantage when Sybille starts beating her up and drags her by the braids into the room while Morgana screams, making “more noise than a bull.” (Illustrated in [Bodmer 116 fol. 94v](#)) Afterwards, despite her age, “ele commence a plourer mout durement et a regreter le duc de Tyntajoel, son pere, et tous ses amis” (“*She starts to cry very hard and to miss the Duke of Tyntajoel, her father, and all her friends*”) — a pure scene of regression! In a magical duel, we also see Morgana defeated by a ring that reveals her nakedness, she laments that they have seen her aged body (sagging breasts, skin on her belly on the ground): “*et il ont veue ma char et mes mamieles pendillans et la piel de mon ventre contreval la tiere*” (Bodmer 169d, Koble 317) — while she usually presents herself fresh to her lovers with the help of magic ointments.

Ferlampin-Acher (2021:201) thus notes a correspondence between the gesture, as violent as it is rare in Arthurian romances, of *escorchier la chose* (“skin the thing”) of an unfaithful wife in episode XXXII (I.285) of the cardinal version (that is *after* the Tournalment of Winchester) which is found in a salient of Dinadan in the *Queste 12599*: “Shut up, miserable wolf, if justice had punished your mother when she slept with the wolf who conceived you and had **skinned her thing**, the wolf that you are would never have come into the world” (“*Tais te, chaitif leus, que se la justice eust prise ta mere quant elle se choucha avec le leus qui te engendra et li aust escorchie la chose, jamés tex leus con tu es ne naistroit au siecle*” II.134, ed. Carné 2021:61) In the *Queste 12599* we also find a lady squeezing the genitals of a knight until he loses consciousness. (ed. Carné 2021:204) Scenes which would be more at home in a fabliau, but whose tone corresponds, once again, to *the end* of the cardinal version, but of which no trace is found in its *beginning*. A beginning which arouses suspicion all the more since its two main cores, the shipwreck of the Bruns (ep. II) and the fight of Segurant against Galehaut (ep. VIII + X) are attested outside, which makes the hypothesis of their grafting at least possible.



Other discrepancies mark a certain separation of the Tournament of Winchester from the other episodes: in episode XXII of the cardinal version, Tristan postpones a duel because he must go to the Tournament of Winchester... but in the scene of the Tournament of Winchester that has come down to us, he does not participate. ([Carné 2022:§75](#), on the other hand, in episode XXXVIII, Marc organizes a tournament in Nohout, after Tristan requested it in episode XXXV.)

As Damien de Carné says, we would be less surprised by these problems “if we understood that they come from different moments of writing, or from distinct textual imports.” ([Ibid.](#)) but they somewhat jeopardize the idea of a lost romance transposed as a whole.

The adventures of Segurant in the long version, cut in the Arsenal ms.?

A big problem is that the copyist of the Arsenal (or rather his model) would have had the *Ur-Prophecies* before his eyes, and would have decided to make a manuscript centered mainly on Segurant... but he would have cut out the episodes of Segurant that we find in the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*? That he cuts the other episodes from the long version, to bring together the episodes of the prophetic storyline (Perceval at Helias etc.) which form the conclusion of the manuscript of the Arsenal, fine, but if Segurant interested him so much, why cut episodes which form a the continuation of the story, his meeting with Golistan, the Lady of the Lake? (= “Complementary Romance Version”)

For Arioli, it seems, not only can these episodes not come from Segurant’s lost romance since they are mixed up with the prophetic storyline (notably through the presence of the Lady of the Lake) but in addition, the compiler would have, in a certain way, detected that it was a continuation, a sequel, which did not really advance the story, in fact its episodes “excessively delayed the closure of the prophetic storyline” (*Étude* 2019:47). So he would have deliberately preserved episodes about Galehaut des Estranges Isles, King Marc, etc. but not the one where the Lady of the Lake announces the rest of the story to Segurant? (By dint of having to read between the lines, or rather being very careful not to trust what seems obviously implied, we are not even sure that this is what Arioli says.)

The manuscript concludes in the middle of a prophecy ([see Table 9](#) below) there remains therefore some known material in the prophetic storyline. The scribe concluded his work with a wavy line, which suggests that he had indeed finished copying his model, and that he was simply missing the end of the latter. Perhaps originally the episodes of the “Complementary Romance Version” would have been placed after, or in a later volume (for example with the *Queste 12599*, who knows?). But if we follow Arioli’s reconstruction, the question remains the same: why distinguish these episodes and extract them from the *Ur-Prophecies* to put them at the end, rather than with the rest of the Cardinal Version? Would our medieval scribe really have spontaneously separated these series of adventures from Segurant rather than associating them?

According to Arioli, therefore, the episodes about Segurant in the long version mix the two matters, and could not have existed in a separate romance about Segurant, it would therefore be a continuation, and what is more a continuation which does not advance the story much., more artificial and therefore later. The Arsenal manuscript would therefore be the only direct trace of this lost romance. But if the *Ur-Prophecies* did indeed recycle a lost Segurant romance before breaking up, what guarantees us that they would have divided up, taking great care to ensure that all the remains of the romance ended up in a single manuscript and were not divided between several traditions? Can we exclude this hypothesis? Arioli’s scenario in any case implies a very careful bipartition, where the long version would have chosen to exclude the romance episodes of the cardinal version, and vice versa, with a meticulousness that failed only for the only romance episode that they share (the Lady of the Lake to the rescue of Urien) - without knowing why the scribes of each of these two branches would have become mutually allergic to the material of the adventures favored by the other. In certain cases, would it not be simpler to imagine a writing in several stages, rather than massive *Ur-Prophecies* from which (almost) all these episodes would have come out fully armed before two different halves were independently removed?

With the marketing around his books, the general public will have the impressuon that Arioli has put together pieces of texts from various sources, but it is the opposite: he stays *really close to his manuscripts*, perhaps to leave as little room as possible for criticism. In 2016, after all, it was the opposite, he assumed “that the ‘cardinal version’ is a monolithic block” (2016:25) — a serious mistake to choose this wording, difficult to



resist the temptation to repeat it sarcastically, as this article or those of Lagomarsini did. To claim the term monolithic in the first degree, when it usually serves to caricature the position of an adversary, is to lay oneself open to the favorite criticism of intellectuals, the most obvious in the world: to say no, this phenomenon is not monolithic, everything is more complex! Closely followed by: there is not one Segurant but many Segurants! Still, we remain under the impression that he doesn't want to weaken his hypothesis, even if it means not being exhaustive: he does not enter into the matter of the integrity of the Cardinal Version, nor does he want to weave a fragile and attackable link by postulating that the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* would keep other traces of the lost romance. (He briefly implies it in the translation, but not in his academic publications.)

If we want to remain descriptive, the "Cardinal Version" consists simply of *the episodes from the Arsenal manuscript that are not found in the long version of the Prophecies de Merlin*, but repeating "Cardinal Version" confers them a sense of unity that sometimes makes us forget it. If some parts correspond to ancient attestations, what guarantees that this is the case for all the episodes? Certainly, the episodes involving Segurant in the long version are connected to the prophetic storyline and it is therefore difficult to imagine them existing separately, but the Cardinal Version is not all about Segurant. Multiple episodes are not centered on Segurant, but on Galehaut des Estranges Iles and Baudemagu (IX, XIX, XXXIV), Tristan (XXXIII, XXXV, XXXVIII) or Palamèdes (XXXII, XXXVI). If this kind of episodes were indeed part of the plot of the "lost romance", they could have been taken up or extended in the Ur-Prophecies. And if we are still looking for an original romance, what tells us that fragments could not have been preserved in the second half, that the Arsenal manuscript would be the only branch to preserve the romance digested by the *Ur-Prophecies*? In absolute terms, nothing, the question seems to be decided in advance by the advantage that there is, in terms of argumentation, in concentrating on *one text* contained in *one manuscript* (e.g. *Étude* 2019:48): we can treat it as an indivisible and undivided unit, without needing to mount the hippogriff of speculation, as Ferdinand Lot would say. Arioli establishes undeniable links between these texts and then, without pulling on these threads too much, tosses the reader from one link to another until reaching the chosen conclusion without really putting the theory to the test. Satisfied with a journey that has not bored you with hypotheses and counter-hypotheses, that has not plunged too much into the acid waters of criticism, you will not necessarily notice all the details that have not been made explicit, you will tell yourself that you must have missed them, or that these details are so obvious that they are implicit, or that you have not understood everything, and that it is therefore better to stick to this composite portrait of the theory, where your mind has filled in the gaps so that you leave with a more unequivocal conclusion than what was actually verbalized. If the critical or curious public wants to test the solidity or fragility of the analysis, they will have to do it alone.

All this is only problematic if we consider the cardinal version as directly extracted, *verbatim*, from the Ur-Prophecies, which also included most of the romance adventures of the long version, then that the accidents of transmission would have ensured (how practical) that only the manuscript of the Arsenal preserves the episodes which were actually those of the lost romance. If we were to imagine instead that the editor of the Arsenal manuscript actually developed different textual cores of the tradition taken elsewhere or that the long version was also reworked (which is clearly the case) everything is easier to explain. Without this insistence on treating the cardinal version as a "monolithic block" taken from the Ur-Prophecies and copied and pasted without change into the manuscript of the Arsenal, most of these contradictions disappear — admittedly without leaving us with certainties.

(To make matters worse, in his translation, Arioli abandons this careful bipartition by asserting that ultimately the episodes of the long version on Segurant "may have been part of the original text" (2023:193) — a hypothesis apparently dismissed in the past because it would have constituted a serious weakness in his academic work, and would have given rise to numerous criticisms, resurfaces here in the translation for the greater public, where it will attract less thunder. So here we found the theory apparently updated but without developing the slightest argument to justify this. Moreover, reading the notes, we see that the White Island is not the only "explanation" that would require further development.)

We see in fact that the cardinal version has three “cores” which are attested outside, but which are not necessarily well connected to each other:

1. The shipwreck of the Bruns and the tournament of Salesbières (ep. I-IV, episode II attested outside)
2. Intertextual episodes VIII and X, with the fight against Galehaut, which follow one another in all the other manuscripts, but are interspersed in the Cardinal Version by episode IX. (They are certainly separated by a space, apparently intended for an illumination, in the New York manuscript)
3. And finally the Tournament of Winchester, which connects perfectly to the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, to the *Queste 12599*, and quite well with *Rusticien II* (with some variation), but which stands out from the two previous “cores”, as we saw with Segurant’s appetite.

As Carné says, all this is very easy to understand if these come from “different moments of writing, or distinct textual imports” but if we insist on affirming that it is a romance written in one piece by a single author, the problem of coherence arises. Of course, medieval texts are not lacking in inconsistencies, but Arioli postulated that the *consistency* of the cardinal version was to provide the solution of *the inconsistency* of the *Prophecies de Merlin*: if this hypothesis creates more problems than it solves, one is entitled to ask, says Carné, if it “is not counter-productive. It cannot in any case be considered economic.” ([Carné 2022:\\$64](#))

In a word, “caution is required” (Ferlampin-Acher 2021:214), “the editor’s silence masks a certain number of dysfunctions” ([Carné 2022](#)) and we sometimes find ourselves regretting “the omission of significant data which should be made available to readers” ([Lagomarsini 2018:394](#)).

### Analogous example: the Post-Vulgate?

Arioli’s approach is often compared to Fanni Bogdanow’s reconstruction of the Post-Vulgate cycle. ([e.g. Ferlampin-Acher 2021:200](#)) This attempt at a cycle is so named because it would have sought to rework the “Vulgate” (that is, the Lancelot-Grail) to refocus it not on Lancelot or Tristan, but on King Arthur and the Grail. If the two enterprises are very different, the same question arises about it: did its editor really make a “discovery”? Is her reconstruction justified?

Since the publication of the “Huth Merlin” (the Post-Vulgate *Suite du Merlin*) by Gaston Paris and Jakob Ulrich, the text’s claim to announce a cycle was taken seriously ([L1-li](#)), and very quickly were found correspondences with the *Demandas*, Iberian versions of the *Queste* and of the *Mort Artu*, for example with Sommer’s article “The Queste of the Holy Grail forming the third part of the trilogy indicated in the *Suite du Merlin* Huth MS.” (*Romania*, 1907:[369-402](#), [543-590](#)) which addresses the Portuguese *Demanda*. The Post-Vulgate, or the “Romance of the Grail” by the pseudo-Robert de Boron would therefore be a trilogy composed of this *Suite du Merlin*, and particular versions of the *Queste del Saint Graal* and the *Mort le Roi Artu*, which conclude it.

Fanni Bogdanow is a very important figure in Arthurian studies published so many articles whose titles announced the discovery and publication of *Hitherto Unknown Fragments*, of a *Hitherto Unnoticed Manuscript* from a *Hitherto Unknown Source*, etc. that you will find some examples just in the bibliography of this article, and that her obituary by Jane H. M. Taylor ([2013](#)) had to mention it. Her assiduous and in-depth exploration of medieval Arthurian manuscript collections is as impressive as it is unavoidable, but also illustrates how the prestige of this kind of (re)discoveries sometimes make us confer undeserved credit to the speculations that accompany them, and makes us overestimate their novelty.

It is also often considered that it was Bogdanow who discovered that the *Folie Lancelot* took over from the Post-Vulgate *Suite du Merlin*, filling a gap in the cycle, or even crediting her with the discovery of the text as such, after all her title *La Folie Lancelot: A Hitherto Unidentified Portion of the Suite Du Merlin Contained in Mss B.n. Fr. 112 and 12599* indicates this quite clearly.

However, such a discovery must be put into perspective. For a long time, the only known manuscript of the Post-Vulgate *Suite du Merlin*, the Huth manuscript, only covered part of the text (§§1-443, to take Roussineau’s edition) and the Cambridge manuscript (containing a bit more text, §§1-480) would only come to light in the 1940s, but before that Wechssler had already noticed in 1895 that the Huth text was concluded by a portion of BnF 112 that overlapped with its end (covering §§419-581) cf. [Wechssler 1895:13](#). Said portion was edited by [Sommer in 1913](#), the adventures (*Abenteuer*) of Gawain, Ywain and the Morholt but, being preserved only by the very particular compilation of manuscript BnF 112, was it really, originally, part of the *Suite du Merlin*?

Roussineau, its recent editor, considers that it was, on the basis (rather evanescent, it must be said) of the coherence of the narrative. (Roussineau 2006:lvii-lviii). Once it was accepted that the BnF 112 preserved the end of the *Suite du Merlin*, it is not that surprising that other people would try to find the stories fitting in the same continuity, within the same manuscript. In 1959, Pickford published part of the *Folie Lancelot* (chapters 2, 3, 5, 9 and 11 of Bogdanow), seeing it as the first part of a “*Erec in prose*” which he dated to the late 13th or early 14th century — just like the second part, recounting Erec’s predicted downfall, which is only found in BnF 112 (IV.101b-114a) and the Iberian *Demandas*.

In 1965, Bogdanow retorted that Pickford was correct in editing these chapters, but not to isolate them from the rest of the *Folie Lancelot*, which she then published and dated to 1235-1240, along with the rest of the Post-Vulgate (1965:xx and *passim*) — the ‘second part of the romance of Erec’ is also rightfully connected to this text, but because for her these are episodes specific to the ‘Post-Vulgate’ version of the *Queste* of the Grail, which continues the cycle.

You can therefore see that attention was already being paid to the text shared by BnF 112 and 12599, that the continuation of the *Suite du Merlin* had long been sought in BnF 112, etc. Connecting these texts to the Post-Vulgate did not come out of nowhere.

And even on this front, when most people discuss the Post-Vulgate, it is actually not substantially different from [Bruce’s 1923 discussion](#) of the cycle of the Pseudo-Robert de Boron (as it was formerly known). What is the point then of introducing the Post-Vulgate by saying that it was “discovered” by Bogdanow?

Admittedly:

1. There were various competing theories, for example about whether or not a *Lancelot* was still part of this cycle (probably not, despite Brugger’s opinion), etc. the portrait of the cycle was therefore very flexible from one researcher to another (Morato 2023:84) — if it is easy to criticize Bogdanow’s reconstructions it is also because she moves away from the cumbersome flexibility that could dominate before and proposes more precise links. Moreover, she adds to her theories a more accurate vision of the other prose cycles and is therefore sometimes closer to the modern consensus on other texts.
2. Regarding the story, there was a long gap between the *Suite du Merlin Suite* and the Post-Vulgate *Queste du Graal*, occupied by the *Lancelot* in the Vulgate. But Bogdanow brought this Folie Lancelot to the fore, which would fill this void... more or less, as she herself would point out.
3. She was able to reconstruct the text of particular versions of the *Queste-Mort Artu* from the Portuguese, Castilian versions, from late French compilations and manuscripts of the *Prose Tristan* and the *Queste del Saint Graal*, which would have preserved fragments of the cycle. Since this involved Castilian or Portuguese texts, many specialists of medieval French would not necessarily have been able to tackle this work. She therefore does not only put forward this old hypothesis, she has proposed a reconstruction, an edition of the text which reconstructs these particular versions of the *Quest del Saint Graal* and the (very short) *Mort Artu*.

However, recent decades have seen an accumulation of criticisms that undermine these three points.

First, if the theories on this cycle preceded Bogdanow, the question arises as to the validity of the details that her reconstruction brought to the table. It seems that her theory finally prevailed, especially among the Anglo-Americans, but not without criticism in Germany (always criticizing), in Spain and Portugal (where the Iberian versions are considered more for themselves) or in France (never happy). From Alexander Micha (1967) to the last editor of the *Suite du Merlin*, Gilles Roussineau (2006), we find skepticism about the unity of the cycle, never assembled as such in the manuscripts. Shared episodes could be explained by the influence of the *Prose Tristan*, or come from different additions which strengthen each other over time, rather than a coherent project of a cycle to replace the *Lancelot-Grail*... Philippe Ménard devotes [an article to a critique of Bogdanow’s reconstruction of the Queste in 2021](#) : does it make sense to sew together French, Spanish or Portuguese pieces?

“When you amalgamate, you destroy the unique character of each version, you mix pieces of different ages, languages, and sometimes styles. In short, you create a completely arbitrary agglomeration, an artificial text, which in fact never existed in this form. Fanni Bogdanow’s hypothetical reconstruction

published from 1991 to 2001 presents a recomposed text. It is a kind of poorly sewn tunic, made of makeshift patches.” ([Ménard 2021:162](#))

Her text of the Post-Vulgate *Queste* thus accuses twenty-five changes of base manuscript, between the eight manuscripts chosen for this purpose, changes which are in fact neither explained nor justified. (Morato 2023:75, 79)

The “Post-Vulgate” texts and the *Prose Tristan* share some episodes and characters, with differences. The heart of the debate therefore lies in which one influenced the other or whether they draw from a third common source, a debate which comes much closer to the questions we raised here about Segurant. In short, Bogdanow started believing that the original form of the Post-Vulgate *Romance of the Grail* had completely preceded and influenced the *Prose Tristan*, before shifting her theory to assert instead that the first version of the *Prose Tristan* (short, V.I, represented by the very particular manuscript BnF 756-757) would have influenced the Post-Vulgate *Queste* which would in turn have been taken up by the common version (long, V.II) of the *Prose Tristan*. The edition of the *Prose Tristan* showed more and more clearly that this was untenable. In the last volume of the long version (V.II), Harf-Lancner (1997:36-8) noted that Bogdanow’s edition downgraded her hypothesis to two possibilities:

1. The Post-Vulgate *Queste* inspired the quest for the Grail in the *Tristan* V.II (Bogdanow’s thesis)
2. The *Tristan* V.II inspired the Post-Vulgate *Queste*, which would then be “a late compilation, made of bits and pieces from the *Prose Tristan*” (Ménard in the preface to Harf-Lancner 1997:9)

This last option deprives the Post-Vulgate *Queste* of all primacy, but does not necessarily pose more problems... Not to mention the possibility of a lost source (Harf-Lancner 1997:38), which Philippe Ménard also considers. Indeed, *Tristan* V.II seems to have been influenced by a particular *Quest for the Grail*, attributed to Robert de Boron, because the text refers to it. ([Ménard 2021:173](#), cf. Ménard 2009) But this source, says Ménard, has since disappeared and we cannot reconstruct it by pasting together the pieces of texts that we think are its distant descendants:

“Neither the *Demandas* nor 15th-century manuscripts can replace the disappearance of a mid-13th-century text. Perhaps wisdom would be to reject risky hypotheses, to acknowledge that a complete version of a new *Queste* may have existed, but that it has disappeared, and therefore to avoid any vain attempt at resurrecting it. It would be miraculous to succeed in exhuming it from the deep tomb of oblivion. In our time, extraordinary miracles almost no longer occur.” ([Ménard 2021:178](#))

Of course, if Ménard rejects this hypothesis, it is also as editor of the *Prose Tristan*, a romance which manifests a much stronger unity, despite its few versions, than the Post-Vulgate or even the *Lancelot-Grail*: “Certainly, an editor of the *Prose Tristan* may find himself shocked to see that this text is being recreated with materials taken from the very real romance he has worked on. He may feel that his property is being stolen.” ([2021:177](#)) But its perspective was anticipated by Cedric Pickford, noting sixty years earlier the very derivative character of the French source thus postulated:

“The original French source of the *Demandas* is nothing other than a relatively late compilation composed of fragments of chivalric adventures, of prophecies amplified to form more or less independent episodes, the whole thing existing in an embryonic form in the *Prose Tristan*, in the Huth-Merlin or even in the prose *Lancelot*. It is far from being the romance inspiring Map’s *Quest* [in the Vulgate] or the source of the *Prose Tristan* [...] The romance of Pseudo-Robert is not a source, it is rather like a dead sea into which the other Arthurian romances flow as tributaries” (Pickford 1960:106-7 quoted by [Ménard 2021:172](#))

The same exact question arises as to the *Folie Lancelot*. It was the publication of this text that launched the adventure of this edition, its unpublished materials brought to the attention of the public serving largely as fuel to affirm that the hypothesis of a cycle had been renewed and reinforced in its very essence. Certain discoveries even came to reinforce its reconstruction: for it the particular version of the war in Gaul (chap. I, 20-21) of the BnF 12599 was part of the original text even if it was only attested in this manuscript, the other, the BnF 112,

directly interpolating the version of the *Lancelot a prose*. However, the discovery of the Krakow fragment (Gall. 188, cf. Busby 1984, Tylus 1997) confirmed this choice since it attested to the text of this portion, which was therefore not a distortion or a creation of 12599 — adding a witness from the second half of the 13th century which further illustrated that the text had spread outside of these two very particular manuscripts. That said, from the time of publication, it was obvious that, despite some original episodes, the *Folie Lancelot* is much more of an anthology, a compilation of known episodes, typical of late and derivative texts, rather than a foundational and original romance (Morato 2023:78 referring to [Micha 1967](#)). Episodes, moreover, which do not fulfill the imperatives which should occupy the cyclifier imagined by Bogdanow, and only very imperfectly fill the gaps which they should fill in this scheme. It could well be that it belongs more with the *Livre d'Yvain* (cf. [Arioli 2021](#)) or the *Demandas*, rather than with texts actually dating from before 1240...

And finally, to be sure, all this was followed by the publication of the *Queste-Mort Artu*, from 1991 to 2001, but it would be anachronistic to justify the theory on the merits of this edition, since she had been advancing said theory for many decades before that. In 1959, Roger Sherman Loomis edited *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages, A Collaborative History*, a classic collective work whose chapters deal with the various aspects of medieval Arthurian literature, and Fanni Bogdanow *already* writes a chapter defending her theories on “The *Suite du Merlin* and the Post-Vulgate *Roman du Grail*” (pp. 325-335) which does not bring forward that many new elements, but already contains Bogdanow’s theories whose main lines would not shift much in the following decades.

It can be noted that her edition of the Post-Vulgate *Queste* occupies 1074 pages (admittedly, in a particular format) against the 280 of the Pauphilet edition of the Vulgate *Queste*. ([Ménard 2021:177-8](#)) — it is more than the ~380 pages of the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (Koble/Berthelot) augmented by the ~280 of the Cardinal Version, but the same question arises, does the length of this reconstruction of the *Ur-Prophecies* remain plausible?

All this being said, despite the flaws in Bogdanow’s theories and reconstructions, it remains interesting, from a literary perspective, to examine the texts of the “Post-Vulgate” side-by-side since they constitute a series of compatible variants within the Arthurian canon, which explains the inertia of her theories. Similarly, regardless of which theory prevails, it remains interesting in itself to edit together all these stories about Segurant. Of course, questions remain about the choice of episodes included in the edition or discussed in Arioli’s study, which seem to oscillate between thematic criteria (the texts discuss Segurant) and philological criteria (related manuscript traditions). Not to mention the descendant stories that his edition does discuss, in the alternative version of 358, before §226 (episodes IV and V for Arioli: Segurant and Love in Sorelois, Hector at the Giant’s Bridge, etc.), you find Lathuillère’s episode §225, which is firmly associated with the §226 in the manuscript tradition but concerns Helyanor and Escanor, not Segurant, and is therefore not included in the edition, logically (unlike the Cardinal Version, where off-topic episodes were only excluded from the non-academic translation). The same applies, in the other direction, to the death of Golistan, which is found at the end of the BnF 358-363 compilation. I’m not certain of the passage’s status, but if the aim was to select episodes based on their connection to Segurant’s material, the death of one of his companions would at least deserve to be mentioned (which it isn’t, unless I’m mistaken), especially since it comes from a compilation whose other variants are also edited. I’ve even come across English readers who were quite fond of Golistan’s character and were disappointed that his tragic death wasn’t included in the edition...

Menard’s theory on lost *Quest*, beyond the reach of reconstruction is very similar to the conclusions of Damien de Carné mentioned above: the “matter of Segurant” attested in the 13th century and century may well have been influenced by a text about Segurant, but that has since been lost, and the surviving texts would only indirectly reflect it. Ferdinand Lot is right, we must be careful not to “ride the hippogriff that leads you into the ethereal regions of ‘primitive texts’ that complacently conform to all hypotheses.” ([1918:120-2](#)) but insisting on explaining everything only by the texts that remain today, when it is obvious that we have lost a certain number of them, can also lead to error.

However, we notice that times have changed. Even if everything seems to be done to make the general public believe it (by insisting on the search for manuscripts whose pieces allow the reconstruction of a text) Arioli does



not, in fact, go so far as to reconstruct a romance by gluing together pieces taken from different periods or even languages; quite the contrary, in his academic work he maps a galaxy of texts while keeping them carefully separate from the “Cardinal Version,” his “monolithic block”, unassailable on the philological level since it comes from a single manuscript. Marketing will do the rest.

### Criticism and response to criticism

That such a theory poses problems is normal, and those just discussed are far from fatal to the essence of Arioli’s reconstruction. An audience looking for a direct discussion of such problems might have seen them briefly discussed in 2016, sometimes more so than in the 2019 *Étude* and edition and certainly more so than in Arioli’s media tour. As for the responses from his colleagues, they are not really to be found in the media, which is not helped by the fact that Arioli simply seems never to mention them — which can be justified, as we said in the introduction. In his interview, Nota Bene asks him if his theory has been accepted by his colleagues. In his response, not a word about them. [Another interview on the Literary Salon](#) (~15’45), Adrien asks him why no one had noticed this famous Arsenal manuscript before him. Arioli replies that it was necessary to connect the different texts concerning Segurant to shed light on such a manuscript. This was certainly an important part of its “rediscovery”, but a more direct answer would have been: this manuscript *had been noticed before me*, it was described by Paton in 1926, Koble published an article specifically about its original episodes one year before I started my research, and I studied under her, etc., etc. (It is possible that we missed counterexamples in his many interviews).

We would like to tell you what Arioli thinks about the critical remarks of his colleagues, but generally, at least so far, he has not responded much.

Arioli presented his perspective on *Rusticien II* in the journal *Romania* in 2018 (“[Nouvelles perspectives sur la Compilation de Rusticien de Pise](#)”). The same year, in another issue, Lagomarsini replied to him (“[Perspectives anciennes et nouvelles sur les compilations de Rusticien de Pise et le ‘Roman de Segurant’](#)”). In his 2019 *Étude*, Arioli incorporates his 2018 article, modifying it slightly (some paragraphs change place, notes are adapted, etc.) but without taking into account, it seems, Lagomarsini’s response.

For example: Arioli points out the three errors which would distinguish a family of manuscripts in Lagomarsini’s classification (he cites the *Aventures des Bruns*, 2014) compared to his own classification.

The first [error] would be the passage that we analyzed in § 3.2 [...]. However, ms. 5229 does not have the gap that affects all the other manuscripts supposed to belong to the same family [...] The third would be the small gap that we pointed out in § 3.3 [...]. In reality, ms. 5229 does not have this gap.

In his response, Lagomarsini feels obliged to clarify ([p. 394](#)) :

These turns of phrase might suggest that I have wrongly attributed to 5229 two deficiencies that it does not have. I wish to clarify that this is not the case. [See AvBruns, *ed. cit.*, at pp. 110 and 111, where I state very clearly that 5229 does not have the deficiencies in question]

And, indeed, this is what more than one person will read into Arioli’s formulation. Lagomarsini’s response is not cited in his bibliography and Arioli reproduces the criticized passage identically in his 2019 *Étude*. (p. 332) Clearly, this stems from a simple lack of time in preparing the book, that prevented this from being taken into account, since it went to press before the *Prolegomena* to the edition of Guiron le Courtois was published (cf. *Étude* 2019:35n10) that is in June 2018, but therefore strange to see Ferlampin-Acher affirm that Arioli shows that he “[takes] into consideration” Lagomarsini’s theses ([2021:200](#)) when he mentions them more than briefly, referring only to the “updated version” of his article. (*Étude* 2019:57-8)

In 2023, with the translation, the documentary, etc., the second printing of the two-volume edition of Segurant was released. While we were producing our short video on Segurant, we thought that it might complete some of the points we were addressing with renewed clarity, that it would respond to criticisms or shed light on some blind spots. After purchasing the two 2023 volumes, we had to realize with some disappointment that the only update consisted of a preface informing of the publication of the documentary about Segurant, the comic book



about Segurant, and the other comic book (for a younger public) about Segurant. Strange reversal of priorities where the reissue is (slightly) expanded, not to correct it or enrich it with the remarks of one's colleagues, but to accompany the release of its tie-in products.

Personally, we don't think it's necessarily a bad thing to present one's theory, flat on the table and announce all round that it's take it or leave it, and that those who want to amend it can do so themselves. It can also be problematic when, conversely, some great scholars change a comma in their theory every time they are criticized, claiming that their analysis has thus been completely renewed and no longer has any of the problems that were pointed out.

But knowledge is also developed through dialogue and criticism. If we do not understand alternative hypotheses, other reconstructions, debates, if we do not understand anything about the *Prophecies de Merlin* and the *Guiron le Courtois* extended universe, we don't understand what Arioli really put forward.

Perhaps we have an insoluble tension here: communication obeys different rules in different environments. Academia encourages the production of arguments that cannot be easily debunked, rather than clear, unambiguous, and comprehensive arguments. Protecting oneself against attacks and communicating clearly are two different goals, which do not always go well together and favor the "technically true."

Perhaps it is enough for us if the average public imagines that we have found a manuscript that was "never studied before" and then sewn together fragments (also never studied), but if we wish to make people understand what has really been unearthed, that is another story.

### III. Segurant before Arioli

That being said, what was actually discovered here? How much of this material was truly unknown? As we said in our 2023 video, it's an open, relative, and even philosophical question: what counts as a discovery? But a retrospective of the discussions remains interesting.

#### The Arsenal manuscript was summarized by Paton

The Arsenal manuscript was not substantially edited, but was it unknown?

Nota Bene asks Arioli if he was afraid that the rug would be pulled out from under his feet, that someone would stumble upon it and publish it before him, which shows the assumptions of the public and the interviewers. But it is indeed a possibility since the contents of the manuscript had been described almost a century earlier and Nathalie Koble had just drawn attention to it in her book on the *Prophecies de Merlin* and her article on the Arsenal manuscript, which details its contents.

In 1926, in her edition of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, Lucy Allen Paton already summarizes at length the unique episodes of manuscript Arsenal 5229, that is, Arioli's Cardinal Version. You can read this summary for yourself, in English on pages [423-448](#) of the first volume of her edition. She also edits the text from folios [10a-d](#), [21c-23d](#) (and a few other passages, so technically the manuscript wasn't 100% unpublished, but that's nitpicking).

Obviously she does not follow quite the same division as Arioli, where he distinguishes 39 episodes, according to the *entrelacement* formulas, Paton distinguishes 32, which follow about fifteen narrative threads (centered respectively on Segurant, Dinadan, Galehaut...), some episodes separated by Arioli are thus merged (thus Paton n°1 = Arioli n°I-II; 4 = V-VIII; 10 = XIV-XV; 15 = XX-XXI; 17 = XXIII-XXIV; 19 = XXVI-XXVII; 26 = XXXIV-XXXV) and she counts two episodes in the thirty-ninth and last episode (30. liberation of the knights of Pommenglois and Méléagant by Segurant 31. plot of Méléagant against his sister) also mentioning one [last episode](#) that Arioli logically excludes from the cardinal version: the Lady of the Lake who protects Urien from a plot by evil fairies — as the episode is also found in version I (long) of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (Paton logically refers [to the summary of the long version she previously made, p. 372](#)), it is therefore not unique to the Arsenal manuscript, and in fact the only “romancec” episode that the two branches share, one of the cruxes in the complex question of the *Prophecies de Merlin*'s manuscript tradition. ([see fig. 1 the Venn diagram of the tradition](#))

#### Other branches of tradition before Arioli

So were the other parts of the tradition unknown? Again, not really. The guironian compilations, the episode of manuscript BnF 12599 and the particular version of BnF 358 were discussed from the end of the 19th century onward, Paton's edition therefore knows of them. On the other hand, some manuscripts have been added to the corpus:

1. *Prophecies de Merlin*:
  - a. Long version: Bodmer manuscript 116 was in the hands of an auction house, Paton was not allowed to publish its unique episodes (which sometimes could be later additions). Acquired by Bodmer, it is not immediately available to researchers (e.g. [Bogdanov 1972](#)), and was published by Berthelot in 1992 then [Koble in 2001](#). [PDF]
  - b. Short version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*: ms. Bruxelles Royale 9624 (described in [Debae 1995:195-7](#) [\[x\]](#)) then by Koble, *Prophecies* 2009:124)
  - c. Fragments of the *Prophecies de Merlin*: Dijon ([Vermette 1981](#)), Krakow (Busby 1983 ; [Silent 2002](#)), Trier (mentioned by Paton, rediscovered by Arioli). Numerous fragments, taken from several manuscripts, are found in Modena and Bologna. A fragment from Modena ([Bogdanov 1972](#)), allows to fill a “*saut du même au même*” (Homeoteleuton), where a scribe overlooks the part of the manuscript between two similar words and forgets to transcribe it, here a lacuna of about ten words (read by ultraviolet light by Arioli, 2019:II.116). The fragments of Bologna were mainly studied by Monica Longobardi in the 1990s. Stefano Benenati edited all the known fragments of the *Prophecies* in his 2019 thesis (not online, we were unable to consult

it) cf. cf. [I frammenti delle Prophecies de Merlin: due episodi inediti](#), in [Gensini 2020, pp. 121-144](#); [Benenati 2021](#) and our [Appendix 4](#).

2. *Rusticien II*:
  - a. Paton did not include the manuscripts Vat. Reg. 1501 and that of Florence, although discussed by [Löseth en 1924](#). (Brugger reproaches her for it)
  - b. Access to the manuscript [Bodmer 96-1](#) And [96-2](#) was refused until 1970 (Lathuillère 1966; [Bogdanov 1967](#)) Cf. Lathuillère 1970; [Vielliard 1975:66](#) (mentions Segurant on the quintaine, the Tournament of Winchester)
  - c. Rusticien II b2 : ms. Berlin Staatsbibl. PK Hamilton 581 ([Bogdanov 1991](#))
3. Version of BnF 358 :
  - a. Continuation of version 358?: Bologna fragment published by Monica Longobardi in 1996. A few additional words deciphered by Arioli using ultraviolet light.
  - b. The Oxford Bodleian Library fragment, Douce 383, fol. 4 (LXX) — contains only the interlacing formula that concludes Episode II of Version 358.
4. In the later particular versions derived from Rusticien II, the most important gap: the London-Turin version was not properly discussed, it seems, until the 1960s, notably because the Turin manuscript partially burned in 1904 and the London manuscript, acquired by the British Library in 1902, passed under the radar.
5. *Queste 12599*: already summarized by Löseth, the text of the “complementary episode” was edited by Lagomarsini (2014:516-525, because it is analogous to the episode of *Rusticien II*, p. 454-469) and then by Arioli in 2019, but the entire text by Damien de Carné in 2021 ([He discusses it in 2018](#)).

In 1891, the Norwegian scholar Eilert Löseth published a book attempting to sort through the *Prose Tristan*, the Palamedes (that is to say *Guiron le Courtois*) and the compilation of Rusticien da Pisa, essentially from the Paris manuscripts. And he had already come across Segurant le Brun, and the Brun (*Brown*) family in general: Hector le Brun, Galehaut le Brun, Branor le Brun (family tree from [BnF 358, p. 437](#), cf. [fig. 9](#)) which appear in the *Guiron le Courtois* extended universe, but which are notably absent from certain parts of the cycle, from certain typical manuscripts. He therefore imagined that their adventures must come from a “*Geste des Bruns*” a “Saga of the Browns”, a separate work devoted to the adventures of these characters.

“It is possible that all the stories about the Bruns derive from a common source, a *Geste des Bruns*, containing the biography of the most illustrious representatives of the ancients.” ([1891:434](#))

Compared to the tradition collected by Arioli, we can also see that Löseth covers a good deal of the same ground:

“Other stories about the Bruns [= Segurant le Brun and his family] can be found in [BnF] 358, in the compilations of Rusticien and [BnF] 12599, as well as in the *Prophecies de Merlin*” ([p. 434](#))

Löseth does not go into detail here and he has not really been followed on this idea of an independent source. He summarizes only very little of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (e.g. p. 466, 478, 485) but he notes there some of the adventures of Segurant, the “Complementary Romance Version” as well as the chronological disorder of Perceval’s adventures ([Löseth 1891:490-491](#)):

Between the fourth and fifth days of the tournament are interspersed, in the *Prophecies*, the adventures of Perceval, who left the hermit whose companion had died (Perceval’s stay with the hermit has not yet been recounted in [BnF] 350); he finds a cleric locked up by Merlin in a *jaiole* [*jail*] and having to be freed by the knight with the dragon, kills two thieves, whose prisoners he frees, and arrives at a castle where a chained damsel can only be freed after the defeat of her oppressor. [...] Segurant le Brun ([f° 417](#)), pursuing his dragon, arrives at the Cité Fort and is victorious, against Gui, son of the queen of Brequestanz, in a tournament whose prize is the hand of the daughter of the king of the city. [...] Segurant gives the [hand of the] princess of the Cité Fort to Richier. [...] Adventures of Segurant le Brun ([f° 431](#)).

Le père de Guiron était de la maison de France et le fils de *Lestoc de la Rachine*, un des quatre fils de Febus le fort, qui descendait de Clovis, et qui abandonna ses terres pour en aller conquérir d'autres dans des régions lointaines, comme on promet de nous le raconter par la suite (mais les aventures de Febus manquent dans 358, dont nous n'avons d'ailleurs pas la fin); du côté de sa mère, une noble dame de la lignée d'Hector le brun, notre héros tint d'une des filles de *Ellain le gros*, neveu de Joseph d'Arimathie. Le père, suivant l'exemple de plusieurs membres de sa famille, se fit anachorète lorsque son fils eut cinq à six ans, et la mère en mourut de chagrin; les sujets, n'ayant pu décider leur seigneur à revenir auprès d'eux, le laisserent dans la compagnie de Lestoc. (Cf. la généalogie donnée dans le *Palamède*, § 636, où Febus a cinq fils, et où on ne parle pas d'Hector le brun.) Guiron, à l'âge de vingt ans, va d'abord à la cour de Pharamont, pour être armé chevalier par le roi, et s'y distingue; puis il part pour la Grande-Bretagne, désireux d'en tenter les aventures. Ayant triomphé de six frères d'armes gardant un pont, il est logé, en Nogalles, par le seigneur de *Homme*, dont la femme et la jeune et jolie fille reçoivent bien Guiron, leur seigneur lige (f° 111), dans le gracieux château du *Bois verdoiant* (ainsi d'après le texte confus des ff. 41, 52, 53, comparés au f° 65); les jeunes gens ne tardent pas à se plaire l'un à l'autre. Après avoir battu vingt chevaliers du château du *Trespas*, Guiron est hébergé par un châtelain qui a été un compagnon de jeunesse de Galehaut le brun, et qui expose brièvement la généalogie des Bruns (f° 51): « le grand héros est le fils du célèbre *Hector*, mort, ainsi que son frère, moins renommé, qui s'appela *Ellain*, et dont les trois fils sont *Hector*, *Branoir*, *Bruhault*; ce dernier Hector est le père du jeune Segurant, le neveu (c'est-à-dire le fils du cousin) de Galehaut. — Guiron met en déroute six chevaliers postés devant un pavillon, trouve le fameux Galehaut le brun, son cousin (plus loin, son proche parent), qui avait à cette époque cinquante à soixante ans, fait route avec lui, triomphe des deux défenseurs d'un pont, combat le géant *Fribault*, qui est tué par Galehaut (cf. le récit semblable du *Palamède*, § 633), et met à mort les cinq frères de Fribault. Les deux compagnons (qui ne se disent pas leurs noms; plus loin ils se connaissent quand même) secourent le seigneur de l'*Estrange Marche*, assiégé par le comte de *Cambenie*, désarçonnent Meliadus avec le bon chevalier sans peur, vont regarder la belle dame de Malehault, nouvelle mariée, qui passe escortée de vingt chevaliers, et, provoquée, ont le dessus à la joute. A l'hiver, Galehaut se rend au *Fal Brun*, et Guiron va au *Bois verdoiant*, où il est reçu avec joie, surtout par la jeune demoiselle dont il était amoureux (f° 76). Le récit passe à Segurant, fils de Hector le brun et cousin de messire Hector le brun. Il est vainqueur au château du *Trespas*, dans une lutte contre *Bortoullars* et ses vingt-quatre chevaliers, combat un dragon, qu'il chasse et poursuit vainement, délivre un ermite de trente chevaliers, triomphe de Lamorat de Listenois et du Morhout, puis se remet à la quête du dragon. Guiron quitte le *Bois verdoiant* pour aller à la fête de la Pentecôte, célébrée tous les ans par l'herpdragon au château de l'*Ombre*; une demoiselle qu'il a privée de son chevalier l'accuse, pour se venger, de déloyauté, et le roi le fait promener dans la charrette infâme. Tournai à l'occasion de la fête; le roi Bohort en remporte le prix. Un jour adient que Guiron trouva Danain le roux, dont il se fit le compagnon d'armes; ils viennent en aide à une demoiselle maltraitée par Escanor. Guiron, allant de nouveau à la fête, tue un géant, désarçonne *Herri d'Erreil* (l. *Herri de Rivel*), le roi Loth d'Orcanie, *Sadot* de Nogalles, *Uther* de Camaaloth et autres; il est vainqueur dans le tournoi, où il arrive en conduisant treize demoiselles, qu'il vient de conquérir;

1. Voici la table généalogique des premiers Bruns, selon 358, dont les indications ne sont ni complètes ni toujours claires:

Hector   Galehaut	Ellain (frère d'Hector)   Hector, Branoir, Bruhault	sœur d'Hector et d'Ellain, épouse de Lestoc   Guiron
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Segurant (cousin de Segurant)

Segurant étant appelé parfois le neveu de Galehaut, et ce dernier l'oncle de Segurant, il serait possible qu'Ellain eût été inventé plus tard, peut-être par quelque confusion avec le neveu de Joseph d'Arimathie, le célèbre Helain le gros, de qui, dans le *Palamède* aussi, Guiron est le descendant, du côté maternel. — Rusticien (§ 622) connaît un quatrième Hector, cousin de Branoir, à moins que *cousin* ne soit une faute pour *frère*.

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cupati poco di lui, l'Al. poté con maggiore libertà foggiarlo sul Priamo omerico. Il figlio Clodino richiamerà la nostra attenzione, quando ci occuperemo dell'episodio, ov'egli massimamente campeggia. Soltanto, adunque, le figure di Segurano, e Palamede formeranno oggetto al nostro studio.

La genealogia, che l'Al. ci dà del primo di essi, l'eroe d'Avvarco, è assolutamente arbitraria:

Febus (Av., IX, 63)

↓

Ettore il Bruno (*Ibid.*, 64)

↓

Galealto (*Ibid.*, 64)

↓

Segurano (I, 11; IX, 62).

Si aggiunga, poi, che Gironne il cortese è detto esplicitamente *cugino* di Segurano in Av., II, 151 e IX, 64.

Di gran lunga diverse sono le genealogie, che risultano dalle fonti romanzesche; e noi siamo costretti ad esaminarle, perchè ci riveleranno il criterio seguito dall'Al. nella formazione della sua.

Ecco, anzi tutto, per la parte che ci riguarda, quella del ms. 358, che (è bene ricordarlo) fu probabilmente conosciuto dal nostro poeta (cfr. Lōs., p. 437, n. 1):

A)

FEBUS I.		
Hector I.   Galehaut	Ellain   Hector II.   Segurant	Una sorella (di nome ignoto) sposa di Lestoc de la Rachine   Guiron (il Cortese).

Con questa si confronti la seguente, che, sempre per ciò che si riferisce al nostro assunto, risulta dalla fusione dei dati

1. Al nostro scopo non gioverebbe occuparci degli altri quattro figli che il *Palamede* regala a Febus I; per essi cfr. Lōs., p. 460.

Fig. 9: Family trees of the Brun family by Löseth (1891:437) in BnF 358, taken up by Umberto Renda (1899:77), which discusses the *Avarchide* of Alamanni.

It also summarizes the episode of the *Queste 12599* (pp. 219-220) as well as the alternative version of BnF 358 (p. 437).

In 1905, he continued this examination beyond the Paris manuscripts in *Le Tristan et le Palamède des manuscrits français du British Museum: étude critique* [PDF], but these thirty pages mainly concern manuscripts of the *Prose Tristan* (Add. 23939, Harley 49, Harley 4389, Add. 5474, Royal 20.D.II, Egerton 989) and two Guironian ones (the *Meliadus* in Add. 12228 and the *Guiron* in Add. 29930), which does not concern Segurant, since Löseth was able to examine these manuscripts between August and September 1901, while the London manuscript (Add. 36673) which contains the London-Turin version was not acquired by the British Museum until 1902, so he just missed it... What's more, he published this review in 1905, when the British Library catalogu which mentions the acquisition was only published in 1907. Moreover, he already discussed the Turin version in 1891 (because its prologue was published in 1875), but its manuscript was seriously damaged in the fire at the Turin library in 1904, and what remained of it would take a long time to be restored. Bad luck all around.

In 1924, on the other hand, in *Le Tristan et le Palamède des manuscrits de Rome et de Florence*, he already discusses the Tournament of Winchester and the “additional episode” from *Rusticien II*:

“We will now deal with the fragments of other writings of the *Palamedes* [Guiron le Courtois] preserved by the ms. L [the Florence manuscript] and by the Vatican ms., Reg. 1501, which we will designate by R. We have already mentioned above one of these fragments (Segurant le brun and Dinadan), placed in L following the part of the beginning of the ordinary *Palamedes* that he gives. Indeed, L, having reported that the Morhold, wounded by an archer, abandoned the Queen of Gaul, wife of Pharamonde (see before) he continues it thus (beginning of the fourth and last column of f° 131): *savoir nos fet li contes que quant mess. segurans le brun le filz au bun hector le brun ci qui le cheualier au dragon estoit apelles quant l hoi uancu li tornoiement de uincestre a celui temps que il fu quintaine a tous le boens cheualier deo munde, Lancelot feri a mess. segurans deus foies de deus glaiues qui quintaine li estoit, mais il ne put le remuer de la selle*. [the tale lets us know that when Sir Segurant le Brun, the son of the good Hector le Brun, the one that was called the Knight of the Dragon, when he had vanquished the

Tournament of Winchester, in that time when he took the role of quintaine for all the good knights of the world, Lancelot struck Sir Segurant twice, from two lances, he who was at the place of the quintaine, but couldn't move him from his saddle] (This detached piece, which may have been part of a *Geste des Bruns*, is found in essence in the compilation of Rusticien of Pisa, where Segurant le Brun is called Segurades le Brun; see [Löseth] [Analysis, p. 432](#)). Lancelot, ZL continues, only made Segurant's shield fall to the ground and, ashamed of not having unhorsed him, he wanted to renounce bearing arms forever, but a young lady of the Lady of the Lake made him change his mind. None of the other knights, in this Tournament of Winchester, there *u m. segurans fu quinteine a maintes buon chevalier* [where Segurant was the quintaine for many good knights], could not make him empty his saddle, nor King Arthur, nor Gawain either. Segurant, having left the tournament, does not return to the Isle Non Sachant but decides to search out adventures. He walks in the company of a squire Galistain (and: Golistan), who would like to take revenge on Tristan, the murderer of his father (the Morholt; cf. [Analysis, p. 219](#)). Segurant fell ill and stayed at Roche Dure Castle for two months before being cured. He had contracted his illness by following the dragon for many days, on the orders given to him by the young lady of the Lady of the Lake on the last day of the tournament, when this dragon appeared in the middle of the *place en un grant feu* [in the middle of the place in a big fire]. Dinadan keeps company with the sick Segurant, who finds great pleasure in his words. Dinadan told him that Lancelot was the best knight in the world & *m. tristanz le filz au roy meliadus de leonois li tiers estoit m. pallamides li paienz* [and Sir Tristan, the son of King Meliadus of Leonnoys [was the second?] and the third was Sir Palamides the Pagan]. Segurant would like to measure himself against them. (Golistan, having heard Tristan's name, often asks Segurant to knight him so that he can avenge his father's death, because, as a squire, he would not dare lay his hands on a knight, but Segurant does not yet want to satisfy him. Cured, he goes one Sunday morning to hear mass, then he sets off with Dinadan and Golistan and, in the evening, the three companions lodge at the house of a holy hermit. Segurant has a good appetite: he ate *bien viande a dis homez* [enough meat to feed ten men]. The hermit brings some to him, in quantity for *doux* [12] men, and Segurant devours everything. Dinadan, laughing: "Do not be surprised," he said to the hermit; "Segurant is the brother of the wolf, who devours everything that is served to him." They left the next day and were lodged that evening by a peasant from the forest. Segurant was housed in one house, and Dinadan in another, the dwellings being too small for both of them. Dinadan wanted to rape the villain's daughter, but he was taken in his shirt and the peasants, twenty in number, put him on a pack horse [*roussin*], took him far from the house and beat him with *coroies noires* [black lashes]. Segurant gets up and calls Dinadan who, he is told, has been gone for a long time. He leaves the place, hears Dinadan's cries and goes to deliver him from the peasants, whom he makes promise never to lay hands on a knight; then he continues his march with Dinadan. One day, in a forest ten leagues from Camaaloth, the two companions find knights at a fountain: Lancelot, Tristan, Gawain, son of King Loth of Orcania (shortly after: Gawain, Arthur's nephew), then Palamedes and Keu, Arthur's seneschal. Jousting (the following passage is almost illegible). Segurant overthrows the four [knights] and, in the end, Gawain (here suddenly this episode ends in L; it is the last in the series of fragments of this manuscript (f° 132).") ([Löseth, 1924:88-9](#))

Further he discusses the fact that episodes VIII and X of Arioli, or §223-224 of Lathuillière, the fight of Segurant against Galehaut etc. are found in the manuscript Vatican Reg. 1501 and the BnF 358. ([p. 107-112](#)) So, between 1891 and 1924, Löseth was already touching on episodes concerning Segurant in BnF 12599, in *Rusticien II*, including the alternative version of BnF 358. He summarized some episodes from the long version of *Prophecies de Merlin* concerning Segurant ("Complementary Romance Version"), but not at all (it seems) the Arsenal manuscript, nor the version of London-Turin, which he had not been able to consult.

For the first of these two, we would have to wait for the edition of the *Prophecies de Merlin* by Lucy Allen Paton in 1926-1927.

Not only does she summarize the episodes specific to the manuscript of the Arsenal (Cardinal Version), the adventures of Segurant in the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* ("Complementary Romance Version") and edit the prophecies about Segurant ("Complementary Prophetic Version", except for the three prophecies that Arioli adds to the roster) while noting that these presuppose that stories about Segurant are known to the readers and authors of these texts, notably about the Tournament of Winchester, the quest for the dragon or his father Hector's treasure ([II.280](#)) what one would expect from an edition of the *Prophecies de Merlin* — but her discussion also includes

- The link between these stories and the adventures of Segurant in the wider Guiron le Courtois tradition, with manuscript 358 and that of Turin, in other words the two "alternative" branches as pitched by Arioli. ([II.287](#)) However, she relies here on the announcements of the Turin prologue, the manuscript still being too damaged by the 1904 fire to be readable.



- The summary of the episode specific to ms. BnF 12599 ([II.289-290](#)) and the assumption that it must derive either from X (= the Ur-Prophecies) or from “the version of *Guiron* that X had used” if there existed such a separate source. Similarly, she notes that the 125999 author knows about the Tournament of Winchester, the Lady of the Lake forbidding the Lancelot/Segurant joust and that the enchantment of Segurant could only be dispelled by the Grail, elements that are found in the manuscript of the Arsenal. ([II.290](#))
- A discussion, despite its “weary length of inedited disorder”, of Segurant in Rusticien’s compilation, she notes that we find there “Segurant and Hoderis” (ep. VIII) and “Segurant and Galehaut at the bridge” (ep. X), another redaction of the 12599 episode, and the short summary presenting Segurant after the dragon:

“In the vast compilation of Rustician of Pisa the adventures of Segurant and Horderis (see above, I, 430) and of Segurant and Galeholt at the bridge (see above, I, 431) are narrated, and still another episode of Segurant which recalls the tilting scene of 12599 that we have just been examining (see Löseth, *op. cit.* pp. 431, 432). Here Segurant (Segurades le Brun), spoken of as the Knight of the Dragon and victor of the tournament of Vincestre, whom as “le maistre vous fait assavoir,” none, not even Lancelot, could overthrow, is wandering in Logres with his squire Golistan, who hates Tristan, because he has killed his father (namely Morhout). At a fountain they meet Lancelot, Tristan, Gawain, Palamedes, and Kex, all of whom Segurant unhorses with the exception of Lancelot, with whom the Dame du Lac has forbidden him to joust. This adventure is immediately preceded in Rustician by another in which Segurant figures (not connected with the *Prophecies*), which also immediately precedes the tilting scene in 12599. These resemblances should be noted, although they cannot serve for any trustworthy argument while the texts of Rustician remain in their present weary length of inedited disorder (see Löseth, p. 473, on the manuscripts and early editions of Rustician) ; but on the surface they suggest the possibility that in this section of Rustician we have a redaction of that same version of the *Palamedes* that influenced X.” ([Paton II.290n1-291n](#))

While pointing out the disordered state of the tradition of *Guiron le Courtois*, which prevents any definitive conclusion, Paton believes that it is in one of its particular versions that we should find the ultimate source of the adventures of Segurant, which would contain, according to her, “the Isle Non Sachant and the conquest of the giants preserved in A [Arsenal], as well as those episodes which we have found are common to both the Prophecies and 358.” ([II.288](#)) — because the prologue of Turin already mentioned the valley of the Bruns “full of giants” delivered by the Bruns. (edited by [Rajna 1875](#) ; [Lathuillere 1966:181-183](#)) This hypothesis “went without saying”: rather than imagining sources for which we would have no traces, it was more economical to imagine that the character of Segurant had been introduced in one of the numerous versions of *Guiron le Courtois*, this constantly updated romance. But it rested on shaky ground, namely the widespread confusion between *Guiron* and Rusticien, which the labyrinthine books of Löseth and Lathuillère had barely clarified. The hypothesis therefore fit with this wobbly chronology: the cycle of *Guiron le Courtois* being *a priori* attested in 1240, it had a few decades to demultiply and the bequeath the character of Segurant to the *Prophecies de Merlin*, written in the 1270s.

At the end of the 1930s, Ernst Brugger made various corrections to Paton’s theories while extending several of them, in a series of (long) articles which, taken together, reach the size of a monograph and discussed Segurant at length:

- “Verbesserungen zum Text und Ergänzungen zu den Varianten der Ausgabe der Prophecies Merlin des Maistre Richart d’Irlande.” *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, vol. 56, no. 4 (1936), pp. [563-603](#).
- “Die Komposition der *Prophecies Merlin* des Maistre Richart d’Irlande und die Verfasserfrage”, *Archivum Romanicum*, 20 (1936), pp. 359-448. [[PDF, 8mo](#)]
- “Kritische Bemerkungen zu Lucy A. Paton’s Ausgabe der ‘Prophecies Merlin’ des Maistre Richart d’Irlande”, *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*, 60 (1937), pp. [36-68](#) et [213-223](#)



- “Das arturische Material in den *Prophecies Merlin* des Meisters Richart d’Irlande mit einem Anhang über die Verbreitung der *Prophecies Merlin*”, *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*, 61 (1938), p. [321-362](#), [486-501](#) et 62 (1939), p. [40-73](#).

We can only summarize these ~267 pages for you (without being able to completely criticize them since specialists often limit themselves to quoting them in bulk to appear thorough without discussing the contents of the articles, e.g. Arioli, *Étude* 2019:37n21, Benenati 2021:38n10) but in addition to critical remarks on Paton’s critical apparatus (the bulk of the articles from 1936 and 1937), this attentive reader has not failed to discuss the matter of Segurant and its ramifications at length, which includes the question of the composition of the *Prophecies*. Already in his first articles: Segurant will visit the tomb of Merlin ([Verbesserungen 1936:573](#)) which was to be told in a lost part, like other adventures of Segurant. ([Komposition 1936:419](#)) he is stronger than Lancelot ([Ibid. 408](#)) and a main character of the cycle alongside Meliadus ([Ibid. 423-4](#)). He proposes a stemma of manuscripts, the “compilation” group, being closer to the original archetype and the only one to preserve the materials of the “book of Tholomer” which were in the original. ([Brugger 1937:44](#), see above [fig. 2](#)) Like Paton ([II.348](#)) before him, he had first thought that the *Prophecies de Merlin* were originally composed only of the common core of the short version (Merlin’s prophecies and story), before the episodes of the long version or the Arsenal ones were added to it separately, but the density of cross-references, notably to the matter of Segurant, makes this impossible ([Brugger 1939:66](#)) — a good chunk of it must go back to a larger text which gave birth to these different branches, some *Ur-Prophecies*, if you will.

But above all: his article on the Arthurian materials of the cycle actually concerns *mainly the Segurant material*, in addition to the questions surrounding the episodes of the Tournament of Sorelois or the adventures of Alexandre the Orphan, which can be found in several other compilations.

Brugger already realizes that the narrative thread about Segurant continues roughly from one manuscript to another and offers his analysis in the reading order suggested by Arioli: the episodes of the Arsenal ([1938:352-362](#)), then the episodes of the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* ([1938:486 sqq.](#)), the complementary episodes of the *Queste 12599* and *Rusticien II* ([1938:490 sqq.](#)), and finally the prophecies about the future of Segurant, his disenchantment by the Grail ([1938:491-8](#)) his crusade and his coronation in the Orient ([1938:499-501](#)), his quest for Merlin’s tomb ([1939:40 sqq.](#)).

He regrets having access to the romance episodes only through Paton’s summaries ([1938:348](#)) or Löseth’s ([1938:490n59](#)) which he considers insufficient to analyze the texts, and he is indeed sometimes misled by them, taking at face value in the Cardinal Version when Morgana announces to the knights looking for Segurant that he will find the dragon in its lair and defeat it, while she is in fact trying to trap them. ([1938:494](#)) He also doubts whether the order of some episodes is correct. ([1938:355n41](#))

Following Paton, he knows the network of “Séguranean” texts between *Rusticien*, BnF 358 and BnF 12599 ([1938:353](#)) but regarding *Rusticien II* reproaches her for not knowing the Florence manuscript, described by Löseth in 1924.

For Paton, allusions to various lost stories presuppose a lost source, probably of a Guironian nature ([Paton 1927:II.280](#)) but for Brugger the crusade, the prophecies on the coronation of Segurant, certain adventures of the long version, etc. are coherent and would come purely and simply from the author of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, we would simply have lost portions of the text, hence the missing material. ([1939:44](#))

On the other hand, on the Segurant side, he actually thinks that it is the cycle of *Guiron le Courtois* (also called *Palamedes*) which forms the most important source.

Segurant is a “Palamedesfigur” ([1938:337](#)), the youngest character in “Palamedes” ([1938:353](#)), that is to say *Guiron le Courtois*, and like his squire Golistan, he would come from this cycle ([1939:45](#)). Contrary to what Paton believes, says Brugger, the Tournament of Winchester, the ban on the Lancelot/Segurant fight by the Lady of the Lake, Golistan who wants to be knighted by Segurant, would have their source, not in the *Prophecies de Merlin*, but in a Guironian source. ([1938:491](#), see also [1939:65](#) on the Guironian source of Segurant)

In Rusticien, the dragon appears “in a great fire,” which could simply be that the dragon breathes fire ([1938:358n47](#)). Brugger believes that that the *Prophecies de Merlin* have drew from a similar Guironian version: the dragon no longer breathes fire in the Arsenal ms., but the narrator keeps the fire by the wall of fire projected by Sibylle. For Paton, these elements, the fact that the dragon is a demon, summoned by Morgana and her acolytes, or that Segurant is enchanted, showed that the episode was more coherent in the universe of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, and therefore had to come from there. For Brugger this simply shows that the story, borrowed from a Guironian source, was harmonized with the particular interests of the *Prophecies de Merlin*: in *Rusticien II*, no need for a particular motivation to pursue the dragon, Segurant sets off in pursuit like any good self-respecting knight errant, but for the moralist writing the *Prophecies de Merlin*, it must be justified by an enchantment of the wicked withces and this whole story about shapeshifting demons. ([Brugger 1938:358-360](#)) Similarly, he thinks that it is Rusticien or a Guironian source which inspires the complementary episode in the *Queste 12599* ([1938:488](#)) which would then inspire Golistan’s final adventures in the extended version of *Prophecies de Merlin*. ([Brugger 1938:488-489](#))

As you will have understood, Brugger’s approach is based on *Quellenforschung*, good old-fashioned “source-hunting”, and is not afraid to postulate lost or recomposed sources, based on arguments about their content or their insertion in manuscripts. He is also a specialist of byzantine theories with many moving parts regarding the formation of prose cycles: in 1905-1910 he claimed that they would have evolved from a Little Cycle of the Grail in four branches (instead of three) which would then have integrated the *Perlesvaus* before giving way to a *Lancelot* (close to Sommer’s theories, cf. [Bruce II.136-141](#)), that the Post-Vulgate *Suite du Merlin* was actually the remnant of a larger (and lost) *Conte du Brait* ([1939:61](#)) — a widespread confusion surrounds this term used by medieval scribes, it seems, to designate different texts: in the prologue of the *Prose Tristan* it designates the *Prose Tristan*, while the *Suite du Merlin* clearly distinguishes “Conte du Brait” and *Tristan*. Gaston Paris ([1886:xxxvi sqq.](#)) already postulated that the spanish *Baladro del Sabio Merlin* preserved traces of this text, while for Bogdanow, the *Conte du Brait* never existed, the *Baladro* would only develop unresolved announcements from the *Suite du Merlin* ([1962:336](#)). If we were to believe all the allusions to the adventures that we should find in the *Brait*, its dimensions would be imposing, but, precisely, it might simply be an excuse or in-joke for the scribes: if you do not want to recount an adventure, simply say that you will find it in the *Conte du Brait*. (cf. [Lendo 2001:422](#))

And it was still Brugger who staunchly defended, against all odds, that the “Post-Vulgate” cycle of the pseudo-Robert de Boron should contain a *Lancelot* like the Lancelot Grail. ([Brugger 1939:62-63](#))

It is precisely against this kind of theories that Ferdinand Lot warned:

“The continuous explanation of difficulties by the system of interpolations is the open door to all chimeras. We mount the hippogriff which carries us into the ethereal regions of the ‘primitive texts’ which complacently bend to all hypotheses.”

“L’explication à jet continu des difficultés par le système des interpolations c’est la porte ouverte à toutes les chimères. On enfourche l’hippogriffe qui vous entraîne dans les régions éthérées des ‘textes primitifs’ qui se plient complaisamment à toutes les hypothèses.” ([Lot 1918:120-2](#))

This is the state of the question at the end of the 1930s. Arioli’s merit does not really lie in having exhumed these different traditions, but in reopening a neglected dossier and proposing, by bringing together various elements, a chronology of texts perhaps closer to the facts, and which postulates fewer lost sources.

In 1966, Roger Lathuillère discussed and classified the different episodes present in *Guiron le Courtois* (in the broad sense, since the boundaries of the work are not that obvious), including some of these adventures of Segurant, but a separate source, a “Geste des Bruns” was, for him, a gratuitous hypothesis to explain such late compilations, often less than coherent and without definitive forms. ([1966:128](#)) For Paton, “it almost goes without saying” that the cycle of Segurant developed on the side of *Guiron le Courtois* before being inserted into the *Prophecies de Merlin*. ([II.285](#)) Indeed, the other members of the Brun clan (Galehaut le Brun, Branor le Brun, etc.) seem to be a development within the *Guiron le Courtois* universe ([Lathuillere 1966:128](#); [Vermette](#)

[1981:282n18](#); Arioli *Étude* 2019:60). So if we do not assume a separate source like Löseth, it would be an economic hypothesis to imagine the same thing for the youngest of the family, their nephew Segurant. And this is the hypothesis that Ernst Brugger, Fanni Bogdanow and Nathalie Koble would follow, that is to say pretty much all of Arthurian studies. (See [Brugger 1938:353, 491, 1939:45, 65](#) ; [Bogdanow 1967:332n1](#) ; [Koble 2009:61](#) ; [Carné 2018:§3](#), debate summarized by Lagomarsini 2014:89 *sqq.*)

Koble also says that the relationship between Golistan and Segurant is “borrowed from the romance of *Guiron le Courtois*” (Koble *Prophecies* 2009:61) while noting that “Segurant le Brun only appears in the second part of *Guiron le Courtois*, in particular late versions, the oldest of which is represented by the composite manuscript Florence, Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, Codici Ashburnhamiani, Fondo Libri, n°50, which dates from the 14th century.” (*Ibid.*)

But, precisely, if we only find Segurant in late Guironian manuscripts, and if we owe his presence there to the influence of *Rusticien II*, these late manuscripts cannot claim to be the source of his whole story.

According to Arioli’s bibliography, the London manuscript is not discussed between [its brief mention in the British Library’s acquisitions catalogue in 1907](#) and [Bogdanow’s 1960 article](#). In Paton’s edition, the Turin manuscript is mentioned only to lament that it is illegible. ([II.288](#))

In 1965, Bogdanow mentions in passing the presence of “Ségrade le Brun” (“Part III of the Turin version of *Guiron le Courtois*: a hitherto unknown source of MS. B. N. fr. 112” in *Medieval Miscellany presented to Eugène Vinaver*, Manchester University Press, 1965, pp. 45-64) while discussing the adventures of Galinant, adapted from Rusticien, which take place “Some time after Segurades le Brun accompanied by Dinadan and Le Morholt’s son Golistan had unhorsed by a fountain a number of knights of the Round Table” (p. 56). She claims that the Turin manuscript is identical to the London one (as far as we are concerned, the London-Turin version of Segurant, it seems true) and that the first two volumes are still awaiting restoration. (p. 61)

As for the Turin manuscript, Lathuillère claimed that only 28 leaves of the first two volumes remain. (1966:82-5) Arioli suggests that the rest may still have been in the restorers’ workshop, something Bogdanow mentions the year before. Arioli does not often mention the theories of his predecessors; he takes the opportunity to quote Lathuillère here, especially when “successive studies have repeated this information” (*Étude* 2019:86, for an example see Albert 2010:130), and he can now correct this error: we actually have hundreds of folios from these first two volumes. Arioli insists a lot on these burnt fragments and on the fact that he found them, in the documentary of course, but also in his works: the translation specifies that the fight against the dragon is found in a manuscript from London “and in a volume of those that *I have discovered* in Turin” (“et dans un volume de ceux que *j’ai découverts* à Turin”, 2023:235). He insists so much in fact that I took him at his word, and believed, until the first version of this article, that he was the first to bring these volumes out of the oblivion to which Lathuillère’s error had condemned it... Before realizing that no other than Bogdanow had in fact already made the correction explicitly in 1968:

“Mr. Lathuillère claims that all that remains to us is ms. L-I-9 and 28 leaves of mss. L-I-7 and L-I-8, which, with L-I-9, make up a *Guiron le Courtois* in three volumes (pp. 82-85). In reality, the manuscripts, although damaged, have not been destroyed: the text is recoverable. Mrs. Caudana has undertaken restoration work that will be completed within a few years.” ([Bogdanov 1968:78](#))

Arioli never mentions it, of course.

The irony about these recovered folios doesn’t stop there either. The Turin manuscript contains, all volumes combined, 938 folios, while Pasini’s 18th-century counts counted 864. Dozens of additional folios, it seems. Arioli therefore claimed that it had been augmented with folios from other manuscripts during its restoration (ed. 2019:II.42 ; *Étude* 2019:433), without presenting it as anything other than a certainty, and without mentioning this time that the idea was found, in the form of a less affirmative hypothesis, in Lathuillère (1960:83) regarding the third volume. In 2023, however, Véronique Winand noted that this is a very hasty conclusion. By cross-checking the counting errors over time, the difference between the original and current

state of the manuscript is in fact reduced to... four folios. (Winand 2023:228-230) Even if it obviously remains possible that some leaves do in fact come from other manuscripts, particularly those which are too burnt or out of order, or that other fragments of the manuscript will be found elsewhere in the future, like the Parma fragment. (Winand 2023:231-2, cf. [Winand 2024](#) on the Parma fragment)

Although it is often held up as a “rediscovered manuscript” which made this edition possible, on the Segurant side the text of the portions which were not burned can only serve to slightly correct the text of the London manuscript, which it follows almost perfectly — and therefore only for the London-Turin version, furthermore an *a priori* late version. But it is quite common in philology that the usefulness of a manuscript is to paradoxically prove its uselessness.

In 1966, Lathuillère identified all the episodes of *Guiron le Courtois* (writ large) that he could find, and tried to classify them, numbering each episode, as Löseth had begun to do. In this material, he actually finds Arioli's episodes VIII and X, his alternative versions, etc. (see [Table 4 above for the correspondence of the BnF 358 and London-Turin version in Lathuillère, Lagomarsini and Arioli](#)). In 2007, [Trachsler](#) uses it to describe the episode of Segurant killing the dragon in the London manuscript. (citing Lathuillère §259, 1966:487-9)

[In 1967, while reviewing the New York manuscript](#), which had been pointed out to him by Vinaver, Fanni Bogdanow describes these “intertextual episodes” of the knight of the dragon (the VIII and X of the cardinal version) and lists all the manuscripts which include these episodes, including the manuscript of the Arsenal and those of London and Turin but in fact practically all those that Arioli used. In fact, three are missing:

1. Bodmer 96-1 and 96-2, with its illustrations of laughing horses, which was “inaccessible”: in 1966, Lathuillère could only lament that the bibliophile Martin Bodmer had refused him access, it was not until 1970 that he received his august authorization to make a description of it, which moreover mentions Segurant on the quintaine. (1970:573) The classic description of [Françoise Viellard \(1975:66\)](#) also mentions Segurant on the quintaine and the Tournament of Winchester. (This is the section *comment Seguran le brun fu quintaine*, [Bodmer 96-2 fol. 273c](#)) Not much suspense as to his presence in it.
2. The Berlin manuscript, [that Fanni Bogdanow herself describes in 1991](#).
3. And the fragments of Bologna, edited by Monica Longobardi in the 90s (see: [works cited](#)).

She notes that the Tournament of Winchester is only described in the Arsenal manuscript but, as a sign of the vagueness that still reigns, postulates that it must have appeared in the second part of *Guiron le Courtois*:

“The Tournament of Winchester is related neither in the New York MS. nor in Rusticien, but it is found in the version of the Prophecies de Merlin preserved in Arsenal MS. 5229. If, as I shall show later, it is very probable that Rusticien derived some of his material from the now lost sections of Part II of the Palamède, the Tournament of Winchester no doubt also figured in Part II.” ([1967:334n1](#))

The guironian manuscripts tend to announce that they will follow a tripartite plan, which had become a cliché announcement in the prose cycles at this point. Here, Bogdanow takes it at face value and still imagined that the guironian cycle must originally have included a Quest of the Grail and the end the Arthurian kingdom (like in the Mort Artu) as is the case in the other prose cycles after all (*Lancelot-Grail*, Post-Vulgate and *Prose Tristan* — this last one for the Grail quest but not the end of the Arthurian kingdom]).

In 2015, Bubenicek saw that guironian studies were progressing rapidly and that it was now or never to publish his outdated edition of the *Suite du Guiron*, while doing so under the confusingly obvious title of *Guiron le Courtois*. In the accompanying discussion, he provides a description of the rubrics of the Turin manuscript, noting, like Arioli, that the examination of its neglected beginning should be completed:

“The Turin ms., partially destroyed in the fire of 1904 – see Lathuillère (1966, 82 n. 1–3), and most recently, Giaccaria (2007, 335–353) –, has been the subject of a description by our late Master [i.e. Lathuillère] and of an article by Bogdanow (1965, 45–64); however, both require to be completed, particularly with regard to the beginning of the first volume, in order to verify that T indeed provides

the text identical to L3.” (Bubenicek 2015:901n41)

The Turin version present in sheets 29d-35c is then described, as well as its correspondence with the London manuscript and the numbered paragraphs of Lathuillière. (pp. 913-916) Notably on sheet 30d: “Miniature: Segurant’s fight against the dragon”.

Here, we are in 2015, when Arioli had already defended his thesis at the École des Chartes in 2013 but before he published his reconstructions in *Histoire littéraire de la France* (2016). Bubenicek, as a good disciple of Lathuillière, correctly identifies the “London-Turin version” in the Turin manuscript, apparently without relying on Arioli’s work. But you never know, these days you find people that don’t even credit their sources and predecessors, imagine that.

Likewise Bubenicek identifies the episodes that the “alternative versions” share with *Rusticien II*:

“This design – to integrate Guiron into the “geste” of the Bruns – leads our two editors to share certain episodes; thus for those which involve Sugurant le Brun [*sic*], nephew of the famous Gahehout le Brun, hero of §§ 223 and 224 [of Lathuillière] stories inserted both in [Turin] T-I-3 and in 358.” (p. 42)

### Segurant in the Arthurian studies

So, Segurant’s adventures across these different traditions were already discussed.

It is certainly true that people did not always remark upon the scope of these different links and a systematic analysis, conscious of all these past analyses and based on them, was not always carried out. Many researchers thus touched upon Segurant’s material without always realizing its scale, or the questions it had raised in the past.

Let’s take two examples from 2009. Even she leans towards seeing it as a late compilation, [Koble does mention the hypothesis](#) that the Arsenal manuscript preserves ancient fragments, recalls that Segurant is “already present in the Prophecies de Merlin, the compilation of Rusticien de Pise, and some versions of Guiron le Courtois” notably the BnF 358, where we find the dragon hunt... but this last link does not change much: it is also a very late manuscript, like that of the Arsenal. All the links are evoked but without the profound re-evaluation of the meaning of the influence or its chronology that Arioli will attempt later.

In [her 2009 thesis on the BnF 340 manuscript](#) Juliette Pourquery de Boisserin notes: “A dragon, in particular, is mentioned without much conviction on folio 75r, to explain the cause of Segurades’ illness” (242n382, Segurant is called Segurades in this manuscript) — obviously if we focus on the BnF 340 manuscript alone, the mention of the dragon, which is never mentioned again, seems to come out of nowhere. She does not connect it here to the *Prophecies de Merlin*.

Koble said of the Arsenal manuscript that its “position, unique in the manuscript tradition of Arthurian romances, explains why none of the monographs devoted to Lancelot, Tristan and Guiron le Courtois have, to our knowledge, mentioned this strange manuscript, which remained hidden behind the dense bush of the Prophecies de Merlin.” ([2009§12](#))

Indeed, there is so much to do with the Lancelot-Grail, the *Prose Tristan*, the “Post-Vulgate”, etc. — not to mention the verse romances, and not to mention other languages — that even if you are a medievalist and even if you study Arthurian literature, there is a good chance that you know the *Prophecies de Merlin* only from afar, and their fragmented tradition will have rightly dissuaded you from investing further. The reference books on the “main romances” do not mention them, and if Arthurian studies have not completely forgotten Segurant, we have often forgotten to read the studies that remembered him, Lucy Allen Paton first and foremost. The same goes for Rusticien and Guiron.

Even among the already small group of Arthuriana specialists, those who will be familiar with Segurant will not be numerous.

The case was therefore not unknown in the strict sense, but it certainly deserved to be reopened.



On the other hand, when the newspaper Le Monde, the *quotidien de référence*, the daily paper of record, [goes so far as to assert that](#) “existing university studies didn’t know about Segurant” (!) it is perhaps necessary to make a short anthology of the mentions of Segurant that could be found in Arthurian studies.

Paton herself only very briefly addresses the state of research in her time ([1.1-2](#)) citing as previous discussions of the *Prophecies de Merlin* :

- [Ward Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts. British Museum, I, 1883, 371-373.](#) (description of manuscript BL Add. 25434)
- [Sanesi, Storia di Merlino, 1898, pp. lvii sqq.](#)
- Taylor, *Political Prophecy*, 1911, [pp. 141-142](#), [147](#), [150](#). (mentioned in passing)
- [Herself \(too early\) on the manuscripts P.M.L.A., XXVIII, 1913](#)
- [Bruce, The Evolution of Arthurian Romance, 1923, II, 28 ff.](#)

Brugger ([1937:36](#)) complete with the mentions of:

- A short overview by [Hersart de la Villemarqué, Myrdhinn ou l'enchanteur Merlin, 1862, p. 344-64.](#) (for Brugger, although he cites manuscripts, he must rely on the 1498 edition)
- Mentioned by Gaston Paris as a “composite sequel” of the *Merlin* ([Merlin, 1886:XXV](#)) very brief discussion of the contents of the French and Italian printed versions, listing the characters of the scribes ([XXXII 1](#)) and mentioning that Merlin’s entrapment follows the *Lancelot* version. ([68n1](#))
- Löseth, *Roman en prose de Tristan*, 1891, p. 466, 481-5, 490 *sqq.*, [§282b-e](#) (Alexandre the Orphan and Tournament of Sorelois), §639a, pp. 217, 219.
- Summer, *Malory’s Morte Darthur*, 1891, III, [291-2](#), [297-333](#). (publishes two episodes, the adventures of Alexandre the Orphan and the Tournament of Sorelois)
- Freymond, *Zeitschriften für Romanische Philologie*, 1892, p. [106](#), [112-14](#), [126](#).
- J. Ulrich, *Zeitschriften für Romanische Philologie*, 1903, [p. 173-85](#).

Not really an Arthurian specialist, but we would add that one could for example see the printed edition of 1498 being discussed and reproduced in [La forêt de Brocéliande ; la forêt de Bréchéliant, la fontaine de Bérenton ; quelques lieux d’alentour, les principaux personnages qui s’y rapportent](#) (1896) (see also [volume 2](#)) by François Bellamy. (It is according to his text that [Zenker cites an episode in 1926:25](#)) Some prophecies of the *Prophecies de Merlin* are briefly mentioned by Jean Rodolphe Sinner in 1759 in his *Extraits de quelques poésies du XIIIe XIIIe & XIVe siècle* ([pp. 60-63](#)). The *Bibliothèque universelle des romans* devoted a few pages to them in July 1775 ([vol. I, pp. 134-140](#)) in particular to reject their attribution to Merlin (logical).

Löseth briefly discusses Segurant in the extended version of *Prophecies de Merlin* (and outside, of course), but in this list, apart from that, we only note two mentions of Segurant in the *Prophecies de Merlin*, by Freymond in 1892: only Segurant the king of Abiron will visit the tomb of Merlin ([p. 112](#)) and by Sanesi in 1898: only Segurant and Méliadus will find it ([pp. LXV](#)).

After this examination, we therefore consider that it is not unreasonable to attribute to Paton the honour of being the first to have seriously looked into the place of Segurant in the *Prophecies de Merlin*, and especially in the Arsenal manuscript, [his 1913 article](#) mentioned it without describing its particularities, like its mention [in the Catalogue des manuscrits de la bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, vol. V, 1889, p. 169](#). (Of course, if you have previous discussions that prove the contrary, please forward them and we will amend this judgment.)

And his edition had a certain influence.

In the *Tavola Ritonda* which is a big Italian Arthurian compilation, Segurant is 170 years old, he represents, it seems the *Tavola Vecchia*, the Old Round Table, from the time of Uther Pendragon, and thus comes to measure himself against Tristan. (*Étude* 2019:134-9, [ed. Polidori 413 sqq.](#)) This contest of knights across different generations is a recurring theme in Italy, in the *Livre d’Yvain* for example. We also notice here a somewhat ironic inversion: Segurant becomes an *old knight*, while the Old Knight of Rusticien’s compilation, Branor, his



uncle ([Löseth §623](#)) had found himself adorned with his title of knight of the dragon, when the mention of his nephew was cut by certain manuscripts (BnF 340, 350, Berlin, Bodmer 96-2) in the sentence “Branor li Brun, *oncles de mesire Siguranz le Brun*, li Chevalier au Dragon” thus becoming “Branor li Brun, li Chevalier au Dragon” (Cf. Arioli *Étude* 2019:122n9, [Romania 2018:88-89n27](#))...

What is more interesting is that when discussing it in 1930, [Edmund Garner](#) says that it is obvious that this Segurant has nothing to do with the Segurant from the *Prophecies de Merlin* or from the *Palamedes* (that is *Guiron le Courtois*). ([p. 174](#)) What Joseph Loth repeats in the 1933 report he made about it in [Le Moyen Âge t. 43, n°1, p. 113](#).

We therefore see that, already in the 1930s, shortly after Paton's edition, the adventures of Segurant were known extensively enough among specialists to identify that this episode had nothing to do with it. Garner quotes Paton's edition extensively, and knows most of the adventures of the Knight of the Dragon, for example:

“From the last-named romance, the figure of Segurant le Brun is elaborated to appear as a hero second only to Lancelot in valour and knightly achievement; he follows his quest, the pursuit from land to land of a mysterious dragon, eventually goes upon a crusade, and becomes King of Abiron.” ([p. 46](#))

He thus quotes ([p. 46](#)) her discussion of the fact that material on Segurant must be lost ([Paton II.279-292](#)) and clearly considers the whole “Geste de Segurant” contained in the prophecies as constituting a *whole*, which makes him the equal of Lancelot or Tristan.

Brugger (1938-1939) who thought that the cycle of Guiron le Courtois was the source of Segurant's adventures (see above) is quite typical: because of the widespread confusion about Rusticien/Guiron, his presence in the Guironian tradition was much more *overestimated* than underestimated or forgotten.

Löseth already notices versions of Guiron without the Bruns, imagines a separate source, but as for the versions that contain them, he says, “they feature, besides Galehout, the members of a side branch of the Bruns family, Hector, Branor, and especially Sigurant (Segurades).” ([1891:434](#)) *Especialy Sigurant*. If we open for example the index of the edition of the manuscript BnF 340 by John F. Levy (unpublished) we find “Segurades, Segurant le brun, one of the chief characters of the Guiron” (p. 344).

Paton, Brugger and Koble thought that Segurant must have a Guironian source, and after them Pickford (1960) Baumgartner (1975) or Damien de Carné ([2018](#)) treat him as a character who must first be analyzed in the Guironian universe. (See below) We had to wait for the work of Arioli or researchers gravitating around the Groupe Guiron to shed some light on the transmission of these different traditions.

Similar phenomenon when Lucy Allen Paton considered that the BnF 358 version should, in some episodes, reflect the version of *Guiron le Courtois* which had inspired the whole biography of Segurant ([II.286-9](#)) and postulated that in the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* the adventures of Alexandre the Orphan, and some others, actually find their source in *Guiron* ([II.263 sqq.](#)). Pickford agreed for Alexandre (1951:xx cited by [Winand 2020:76-8](#)). Brugger already argued that they had to emerge in the *Prophecies de Merlin* or from a shared source ([Brugger 1938:339, 342](#)) on the other hand he claimed that some stories about Segurant must come from *Guiron le Courtois*, including the Tournament of Winchester ([1938:356](#)) on which he will be followed by Bogdanow ([1967:334n1](#)).

Right.

Was the Arsenal manuscript forgotten post-1945?

In 1925, Vinaver already mentioned the subversive character of Dinadan and thought that this was enough to date the two versions of the *Prose Tristan* at two eras of the 13th century ([1925:29](#)) in 1964 he returned to this, completing his portrait of Dinadan with his presence in *Escanor* and... the *Prophecies de Merlin*, notably the unique version of the Arsenal manuscript. ([Mélanges offerts à Maurice Delbouille, 1964:II.682](#))

As for Segurant himself, there are still a few mentions where he is recalled in Arthurian studies, which testify to the fact that he is not completely forgotten but which also illustrate very well that he is rather poorly situated,

often in the Guiron extended universe, and that the dossier of the *Prophecies de Merlin* is was, all in all, not dealt with thoroughly.

In 1960, Cedric Edward Pickford published *L'Évolution du roman arthurien en prose vers la fin du Moyen Age, d'après le manuscrit 112 du fonds français de la Bibliothèque nationale* (*The Evolution of the Arthurian Prose Romance towards the End of the Middle Ages, based on manuscript 112 from the French collection of the Bibliothèque nationale*) which examines, in particular, the sources used by this ambitious compilation. From the *Prophecies de Merlin*, this manuscript mainly takes up the adventures of Alexandre l'Orphelin and the Tournament of Sorelois, so Pickford's presentation (chap. X) remains very brief. He barely touches on Segurant: after explaining that "four of the thirteen French manuscripts contain, in addition to the prophecies themselves, a collection of episodes based on Arthurian romances" (the "long version"), he specifies "a fifth manuscript contains an isolated series of similar episodes", the note actually states "Ms. Paris Arsenal 5229" without a single further word on the content of these isolated episodes. In the chapter on Guiron le Courtois, also called the Palamède, there is a single mention of Segurant le Brun: "Among the knights of the previous generation", sharing the stage of the Guiron le Courtois cycle, "are Guiron le Courtois, Segurant le Brun, Herve de Rivel [...]" (p. 114)

Quite symptomatic: he does mention the Arsenal manuscript, but does not do more than mention it, and on the other hand Segurant is firmly place in the guironian cycle.

Similar conjunction in the *Tristan en prose, essai d'interprétation* (1975) by Emmanuelle Baumgartner. "Sigurant le Brun" is cited as a character in *Guiron le Courtois* (p. 48, 65) particularly in the context of her brief discussion of BnF 12599. Similarly, she is particularly interested in the *Prophecies de Merlin*, for their episodes interpolated in the *Tristan* (Alexandre l'Orphelin, Tournoi de Sorelois), so we seem to note some imprecisions on the substance — Bréhus would be son of Merlin (p. 65, apparently taking up [Löseth 1891:490](#) who quotes [BnF 350 fol. 382-3](#)) ? She claims that the "wise cleric of Wales" refers to Merlin (p. 77) is this not rather an allusion to the Wise Cleric, a character in his own right? etc. etc.

The episodes of the Tournament of Winchester were discussed more clearly in 1959 by Roger Sherman Loomis, a key figure in Arthurian studies.

"A unique text of the Prophecies, contained in ms. Bibl. de l'Arsenal 5229 and unknown to Zenker, relates that on another occasion Morgain sent evil spirits in the form of knights to a tournament at Vincestre (Winchester). [note : *Prophecies* ed. Paton, I, 439 f.] Suddenly a dragon, who was really Lucifer himself thus transformed by Morgain, appeared and proceeded to devour the other diabolic knights. Sebile caused fires to burst from the ground at various points. The Round Table knight Segurant attacked the dragon and drove it from the field." ([1959:347](#), reedited in [Studies in Medieval Literature, 1970:13](#))

To quibble, one could say that Segurant is technically not a knight of the Round Table at this point.

And in 1974, [Edina Bozóky](#) compares the quest of the *Bête Glatissante* (Questing Beast) by Palamedes and the quest for the Dragon by Segurant, in the *Prophecies de Merlin* and (wrongly) in the *Prose Tristan* (she seems misled by the title of Löseth's book, attributing all stories catalogued inside to the *Prose Tristan*):

"The motif of the quest for this monstrous beast can be compared with the dragon hunt by Segurant in the *Prose Tristan* and in the *Prophecies de Merlin*. [note: E. Löseth, *Le roman de Tristan, le Roman de Palamède et la Compilation de Rusticien de Pise*, New York, 1970 (réimpr.), pp. 219-220; L.A. Paton (ed.), *Les Prophecies de Merlin*, New York-London, 1926-1927, t. I, pp. 439-42] In this case, we deal with an almost magical attraction exerted by the monster on its pursuer. Segurant, enchanted by Morgan Le Fay (later, he will be disenchanted by the Grail), is as incapable of abandoning the dragon hunt as Palamedes the beast hunt. Segurant's case is perhaps the best example of the almost interminable hunt, but marvelous animals often attract the heroes of medieval romances towards difficult adventures, towards the marvelous otherworld." (p. 147)

Before that she mentioned the adventure of Palamedes fol. 131-134 therefore ep. XXXII of the Cardinal Version. (p. 143)

Also in 1974, Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Vidal-Naquet wrote together the article “Lévi-Strauss en Brocéliande” which appeared in issue 325 of the magazine *Critique* (June 1974). They discuss the beginning of the Cardinal Version, with the shipwreck of Galehaut le Brun and Hector le Brun on the Isle Non Sachant:”

“If further proof is needed, it can be found in the late thirteenth-century anthology of *Merlin's Prophecies* [*Prophecies de Merlin*, ed. L.A. Paton (New York, 1926).], in which two knights, Galeholt the Brown and Hector the Brown [Their names evoke the bear], land on a desert island teeming with wild animals and in a sense reinvent civilization at its most primitive level. Their first act is to make a bow. [*Prophecies de Merlin*, pp. 424-425.] Thus the bow is an ambiguous symbol, capable of signifying either a lapse from civilization or a revival of civilization.” (It was reprinted in Le Goff, *L'imaginaire médiéval*, 1984, here we reproduce the english translation, slightly adapted for the notes in brackets, [1988:112](#))

Segurant is not mentioned here, but it shows two very renowned names from French Acadamia, and even French Letters writ large, touching on the Cardinal Version through Lucy Allen Paton's summary, and considering that it is indeed part of the *Prophecies de Merlin*. Back in the more closed circle of Arthurian studies, Danielle Régnier-Bohler refers to “Lévi-Strauss en Brocéliande” in a 1983 article, which also discusses the “Robinsonade” of the Bruns which introduces the Cardinal Version. ([1983:70-71](#)) Same goes for Bernard Sergent on the theme of the bow in the Indo-European domain. ([1991:236](#))

In 1978, we can notice that in his *French Arthurian Prose Romances, An Index Of Proper Names*, G. D. West actually mentions Segurant's place on Guiron's side, his brief appearance in the “first” compilation of Rusticien, and his place in the *Prophecies de Merlin* ([1978:277](#)), but only discusses the episodes of the long version (rescues the princess of the Cité Fort, destroys the mechanism of the tower of the copper knights). However, without discussing the episodes of the Arsenal manuscript, he refers to [Paton II.279-300](#), her discussion cited above on the matter of Segurant, which therefore mentions the Arsenal manuscript and its crucial place.

In 1991, Berthelot mentions for example that the Arsenal manuscript “belongs to another family of manuscripts” but the only one of its episodes that she discusses... is the conversation of the Lady of the Lake with Bohort?

But one cannot claim either that Bodmer 116, and, say, manuscript 5229 of the Arsenal, which belongs to another family of manuscripts [*refers to the classification of Paton's manuscripts, I.I*], contain the same work. Both scribes favored romance material over prophetic material. One did so, however, with more subtlety than the other, and furthermore, they did not choose the same romance episodes. There are constants: the tournament of Sorelois, for example; but “scenes from daily life” from the Lady of the Lake and Bohort, which are not found in Bodmer 116, are found in Arsenal 5229. It is impossible to determine whether the scribe who introduced these modifications to the text originally available to him did so based on his personal tastes or to obey the express request of a sponsor. In any case, at one level or another, there is work of creation, or rather of re-creation: the scribe is perhaps not a writer in his own right, but he comes very close to being one.

[Berthelot, \*Figures et fonction de l'écrivain au XIIIe siècle\*, 1991:108](#)

A paragraph that is quite unclear and seems to imply that the Arsenal manuscript recounts the Tournament of Sorelois (confusing it with that of Winchester?), which does not mention that the conversation between the Lady of the Lake and Bohort is shared by the Berne manuscript, the Arsenal manuscript and (in part) the Vêrard edition of 1498 (Paton already says as much cf. [I.22](#), [I.223.sqq.](#)), and does not actually mention episodes unique to the Arsenal manuscript.

It seems that there has always been a tendency to consider the long version as the standard version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, neither [Garner's 1930 summary](#) nor [West's 1978 index of names in Arthurian prose romances](#) did mention the Arsenal episodes, but it is quite possible that Berthelot's 1992 edition of the Bodmer

manuscript contributed to reinforcing this forgetfulness: now that we have access to the *most complete manuscript* of the long version, we can more easily consider it as the basic version of the text and the rest of the tradition as variants...

In 2007, Sophie Albert devoted an article to Galehaut le Brun, in which she mentioned Segurant, and the competing genealogies of the character “The version summarized by Eilert Löseth corresponds to a second redaction [in BnF 340]; Hector becomes, as in the *Prophecies*, the father of Segurant, and the editor adds new episodes to the history of the Bruns.” (§20n16) — even if it is discussed in the context of Guiron, we notice the link to *Prophecies* and the fact that it appears in later versions, which also depend on Rusticien: “Segurant, in accordance with an episode in the second version of Rusticien’s Compilation, even triumphs over Galehaut in the joust, which indicates his superiority (§ 224 of [Lathuillière’s] analysis)” (§24n20).

In 2009, Koble published her book on the *Prophecies de Merlin* and her article on the Arsenal manuscript, thus shining a spotlight on Segurant, while recognizing that all this is essentially absent from all reference works on the great Arthurian cycles. (2009§12)

In 2010, discussing hair color in the Middle Ages, Myriam Rolland-Perrin mentions in passing “Galehot le Brun, Segurant le Brun, Hestor le Brun (his father)” in the *Prophecies de Merlin* to illustrate that “brun” (“brown”) seems a neutral qualifier. (§130)

Still in 2010, Sophie Albert stated, in passing, that the familial links between Segurant, Branor and Hector, as well as the places associated with the characters (Val Brun and Isle Non Sachant) had been borrowed from the *Prophecies de Merlin* by the compilation of Rusticien. (2010:148)

In 2014, for the index of the *Arthur of the Italians*, the Ségurades/Segurant of the Guironian compilation (p. 28) and the Ségurade, cuckolded husband of the *Prose Tristan* (p. 97-8) are one and the same character.

[In 2015, an article by Anne Berthelot](#) on the test of the copper knights tower in the *Prophecies de Merlin* (long version), won by Segurant, which is part of Arioli’s “Complementary Romance Version”.

In 2018, for Damien de Carné [discussing the \*Queste 12599\*](#), the episode which “features Segurant le Brun, is clearly borrowed from a pre-existing Guironian text” (§3) — which would be the case if we imagine that the *Queste 12599* takes it from *Rusticien II*. In a note, he mentions that opinions differ (Koble, Arioli, Lagomarsini) but concludes “Whatever the case, the character of Segurant, from the Bruns lineage, belongs primarily, so to say, to the Guironian intertext.” (n. 7) thus illustrating this very established tendency of the discipline to place Segurant in the Guironian universe rather than in the *Prophecies*.

In short, a presentation far from exhaustive, and furthermore in French, but you will have understood by now that Segurant *was* discussed, even if it was often in passing, often in a superficial manner, and that the fog persisted around Guironian traditions led most specialists to believe that he must have originated there, along with the rest of the Bruns family, or at least that he belonged much more fully to this continuity.

### **The state of the question in Arioli’s work**

It is to Arioli’s credit that he reopens an important dossier, that he reevaluates its various elements and refocuses some neglected writings in the discussion. His meticulous study forces us to consider them more than we have done before.

Nevertheless, it becomes ironically difficult to distinguish what is new and unprecedented in his work, perhaps because he only very indirectly confronts the dense bush of theories of his predecessors. Certainly, one can find them cumbersome, and therefore clearer to wipe the slate clean in order to establish with certainty what we actually know, to get rid of the erroneous habits of the discipline, which we have just seen.

However, the passage that comes closest to a confrontation between his theories and those preceding them is found on page 47 of his 2019 *Étude*:

As Lucy Allen Paton, Ernst Brugger and Cedric Edward Pickford have done, we can assume that the work, for its romance episodes, reuses — at least in part — previous materials.

No footnotes refer to their work, or discuss how it went beyond mere “assumption,” and included articulated theories that largely anticipate his own, including the main part, for the two volumes of Paton’s edition and the 267 pages of Brugger’s articles: the fact that (at least some of) the Arthurian episodes in the long version and the Arsenal manuscript, especially Segurant, were an integral part of the original form of the *Prophecies de Merlin*. ([Paton II.282](#), [Brugger 1939:66-7](#))

Take the index of his *Study*, and examine the rarely substantial mentions of Lathuillère and Paton. He refers to Paton’s edition, thus repeating her chaptering and dating of the prophecies, as well as situating their redaction in Venice, but none of her analyses of their content, their history or even the links with other manuscript traditions, *Queste 12599* or “alternative versions”. Conversely, it is common in the field of guironian studies, to refer, for practical reasons, to the numbering of the episodes devised by Lathuillère (see our [Table 5](#) above for an example), but Arioli never does it or rather, the only place where he does it is somewhat revealing: in the revised version of his article in the *Romania*, because you can’t avoid conforming to that standard when you publish in an academic journal. That said, these paragraph numbers are thrown in bulk into a single footnote. (*Étude* 2019:330n16)

The rare substantial mentions consist of correcting their errors: Lathuillère believed that the first two volumes of the Turin manuscript were lost (an important correction, certainly), and Paton that the Trier fragment was lost. (p. 34) That said, if we are going to indulge in the “technically correct”, let us be precise, she never says it was *lost*, she simply indicates that she only knows it through a review. ([1913:124](#) ; [1926:1.19](#))

Apart from that, their work is barely touched upon. In several places, it is surprising not to see it mentioned that Paton or Brugger were already discussing some elements and anticipating certain analyses.

Regarding the Arsenal manuscript, he says that Koble proposed a *synthetic analysis* (*analyse synthétique*) but regarding Paton that she *described* the Arsenal manuscript. (p. 24) The note refers, for Paton, to pages [1.28-29](#), her description of the manuscript, but strangely does not refer to the 25 pages where she describes, at length, the content of the unpublished and unique episodes, which is the whole area of interest of the document. For the summary of his [2013 thesis](#), the manuscript was “briefly described in 1926 by Lucy Allen Paton.” In 2016, he still stated: “Lucy Allen Paton inserted a rough summary (*résumé sommaire*) of most of these episodes at the end of her edition.” (*Étude* 2016:6n11) — we invite you to peruse the twenty-five pages of Paton’s summary ([1.423-448](#)) in order to check whether it seems to you much more “rough” than Arioli’s summary which runs over thirteen pages in his edition (I.65-77). That Paton had already identified and summarized the episodes specific to the Arsenal manuscript is no longer mentioned at all in 2019, it seems to us, neither in the *Étude*, nor in the edition. The summary was too “*sommaire*”, too “briefly described”, to keep this mention, no doubt. It is true that these things are always subjective, as far as the romance episodes of the long version are concerned, for example, Koble rather considered that Paton gave a “very detailed summary”. (Koble *Prophecies* 2009:495n1)

Brevity does not explain this absence; it would only take a few words to allude to the fact that the Arsenal manuscript was already analyzed in 1926, and would seem perfectly logical. Why this absence?

In one of the final tables that compares the different traditions of the *Prophecies* (p. 357), Arioli notes the correspondences with the editions of Paton and Koble. For the conversation between the Lady of the Lake and Bohort, we therefore refer to “[note p. 223-7](#)” in Paton. On the other hand, the cell remains empty for the “Bern-Brussels fragment”, although Paton also transcribed the text of the Berne manuscript in a note ([1.253n5](#)) and noticed ([1.20-21](#)) that it must have been, along with other fragments of the genre, snippets of abridged stories. (which is discussed by Koble *Prophecies* 2009:128-9, cited by Arioli, *Étude* 2019:41n36, or [Winand 2020:61n53](#)) Here it may be a simple typo, after all we also see what seems to be an error in the numbering of the folios in the Bern manuscript (*Étude* 2019 last column p. 357, we would expect 55v instead of 65v, same



goes for next page, we would expect 58r instead of 68r, unless we are mistaken.) but this unfortunately adds to a tendency to minimize Paton's analyses, when they are even mentioned.

Do we necessarily have to give the whole history of a subject before tackling it? Should we have to sing the praises of the theories we want to correct? Certainly, summarizing all the past theories that you think are false before presenting the one that seems correct to you is very often the best way to create confusion and boredom when a reader is looking for a clear and concise explanation. Giving the history of a discipline is generally not the best introduction to that discipline. But think about how it combines with the communication strategy we discussed in the introduction. Simplification is inevitable, but in the absence of such clarification, a novice, their head full of the simplifications of the Arte documentary or Arioli's interviews, could skim the translation of *Segurant* and even the 2019 scholarly *Étude*, without dispelling in the least the misunderstandings stemming from their first contact with Segurant.

The documentary presents the London-Turin version as the culmination of Arioli's quest, the final piece of the puzzle. Without referring to his 1966 summaries, which for the novice have the advantage of being written in modern French, how should a new reader discover that this fight against the dragon was already discussed by Lathuillière at the time?

It would be easy to believe that no one had even read the Arsenal manuscript before Arioli. If we only talk about manuscripts *discovered*, about *exhumed* fragments, of a *reconstituted* romance. How could we know that most of these texts were already discussed and sometimes even published before 2019?

If the documentary shows us Arioli suddenly understanding that the tradition of the *Prophecies de Merlin* perhaps owes its fragmented character to their blacklisting by the Council of Trent, a good natured spectator will imagine that it is a somewhat theatrical staging of what had been a real flash of brilliance, a real discovery of Arioli. Why would one suppose that this hypothesis was in fact already mentioned, from Jane Taylor in 2011 ([p. 100](#)) to Felix Bellamy in 1896? ([II.556](#))

Arioli discusses *abundantly* the fragments of manuscripts, missed by Paton (Trier) or Lathuillière (Turin) and which he himself fortunately saved from perdition and brought back to light, unfortunately without specifying their true importance for his edition, which often turns out to be very limited. The burnt manuscript of Turin allows for some corrections to be made to the London one, but these are sometimes obvious. The fragment of Modena allows for the filling of a sentence omitted by the other manuscripts. Some do not contribute at all to the edition, the fragment of Trier, found and therefore mentioned in the 2023 preface to his translation, does not concern *any* of the episodes about Segurant. The Oxford fragment contains an interlacing formula which follows an episode of the BnF 358 version — it therefore does not contribute much text but figures in the list of the now famous 28 manuscripts nonetheless. Without further details, the average reader will probably imagine a patchwork romance consisting mainly of corners of parchment patched together, far removed from the reality where the entire text that Arioli attributes to a lost romance about Segurant... is in fact found in the Arsenal manuscript. (See the following section for a series of clarifications on various misunderstandings)

In short, if we could certainly justify separately the choices of the communication strategy and the *Étude*, taken together, this can only maintain a general misunderstanding of the nature of Arioli's work and what it truly contributes in terms of analysis, thought — its true merits.

One can never talk about everything at the same time, but we are reminded of [this verse from Horace](#) : *Paulum sepultae distat inertiae celata virtus*. There is but little difference between hidden virtue and buried cowardice. Silence always buries both.

## IV. Misunderstandings

*This section will mostly rely on the French media coverage of Segurant, and might be augmented by English examples if the media ends up doing the same on that front.*

The main misunderstandings found in the public and the media seem to come from the fact that the major theme dominating the presentation of the edition and translation of “Segurant” was that of the *fabulous discovery* of the *lost manuscripts*. Television always loves “discoveries,” Bourdieu remarked, but it is a register, it must be said, which has the egalitarian virtue of leveling the field of discussion: if we’re talking about a completely unpublished Arthurian text, we perhaps feel less intimidated by the centuries of legends and decades of analyses that specialists know, for them too it will be a first read, as fresh for them as for us, we have less catching up to do, we therefore feel more invited to read it. In one word, it feels more welcoming. Read [online reviews](#) of the translation by random people, you will notice on one side a lot of enthusiasm for the *incredible discovery*, and on the other side people [disappointed](#) by the contents of the edited text, ultimately not that incredible. Even [for the comic book, some people notice that](#) “If you don’t know the story of this recent rediscovery (which was my case), it is quite useful to read the preface and the postface (perhaps even before reading the comic book section).” *The incredible discovery* becomes the main source of public enthusiasm and interest in the text, rather than the text itself.

However, the procession of striking images evoked by these descriptions, even when they are technically correct, quickly leads the public astray, when the communication strays too far from the Gricean maxims. Grice’s maxims are one of those learned concepts that are often referred to in an elliptical way, not because they are too complicated but, on the contrary, because once described in common terms they seem obvious (following maxims adapted from [Grice 1975](#) and the french version in [Grice 1979](#)):

- Maxim of quantity (quantity of information): “Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange) but do not make your contribution more informative than is required.”
- Maxim of quality (veracity of information): “Do not say what you believe to be false nor that for which you lack adequate evidence.”
- Maxim of relation (relevance of information): “Be relevant.”
- Maxim of manner (clarity of information): “Be brief, orderly, avoid ambiguity and obscurity.”

Communication around Segurant, although often simple and effective, creates various blind spots: by omitting simple elements that would immediately change the public’s perception (quantity); by presenting hypotheses as established facts, to the detriment of other, more certain facts (quality); by contextualizing in a way that does not help to represent the context (relevance); by lacking precision on certain admittedly complex distinctions (clarity). The above presentation of texts, theories and critiques already helps to correct that... but probably contains much more information than necessary for someone discovering all this. As a tribute to these maxims, we return here point by point to some of these misunderstandings.

### Common Misunderstandings

#### Arioli discovered the Arsenal manuscript.

A communications manager for the Éditions du Seuil, which publishes the children’s album on Segurant, [goes so far as to say that the Arsenal manuscript has never been studied](#) and the newspaper *Le Monde* that “[existing university studies ignored Segurant](#)” (!). But the Arsenal manuscript was not really forgotten by specialists [Paton had already analyzed it at length in 1926](#), as well as [Koble in 2009](#) before Arioli began his research. Furthermore, in his edition, Arioli thanked Koble for introducing him to Arthurian studies, and in 2021, an editor’s note in the *Romania* claims that Koble herself oriented his researches in that direction. And in the meantime his unique episodes had not been completely forgotten (see for example [Garner 1930](#), [Loth 1933](#), [Brugger 1936-1939](#), [Loomis 1959](#) [1970], [Vinaver 1964](#), [Bogdanov 1967](#), [Bozóky 1974](#), [Vidal-Naquet and Le Goff 1974](#); [Regnier-Bohler 1983](#); [Berthelot 1991](#), probably many more).

Arioli says that *after* having found the Arsenal manuscript, he had to look elsewhere to see if the story was *continued* there. Maybe that's the order it happened in *for him*, but this suggests that these "continuations" were in fact unknown and that he had to discover them by chance. However, as we have shown, they were already known to specialists, perhaps more so than the Arsenal manuscript: in 1992 the edition of the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* by Anne Berthelot joined the classic edition by Lucy Allen Paton which already discussed at length the adventures and prophecies surrounding Segurant; Löseth already summarized the episode of the *Queste 12599*; in 1966, Lathuillère summarized the episodes of the alternative versions, etc.

In contrast, the staging of the documentary, for example, may suggest that he consulted the manuscript at random and discovered its contents without preparation. While it can certainly encourage happy accidents, we would not recommend this method; it seems more judicious to us if you are going to consult a manuscript containing a unique version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, to read the more common versions beforehand and to research the manuscript. But that risks taking away some of the magic; when you come across Segurant, he will no longer really be an "unknown knight". And sometimes we no longer pay attention to what is familiar, that is true.

For example, in the postface to the Segurant comic book (vol. I), he uses vocabulary which perhaps emphasizes the solitary nature of this quest far more than is reasonable:

"Without saying a word of this to anyone, I then conceived and undertook my wildest dream: to set out in search of the missing parts of this story. No sane mind would have embarked on such an undertaking, but the naivety and ardor of youth led me to imagine that it would only take a few months... In reality, I was venturing into an almost insoluble enigma whose clues were scattered throughout Europe: it took me a decade to solve it and reconstruct this lost work."

However, how long did he actually keep silent about this famous quest? An editor's note in the journal *Romania* (2021:200) tells us that it was Nathalie Koble who oriented his research in this direction, so she must have been involved quite early in the process...

What's more, he kept this to himself too, if we are to believe his interview with Nota Bene, because he was afraid that someone else would publish the manuscript before him, that someone else would usurp his "discovery." And this was indeed a possibility, since the contents of the manuscript had been described almost a century earlier by Lucy Allen Paton, and that Nathalie Koble had just drawn attention to them in her book on the *Prophecies de Merlin* and her article on the Arsenal manuscript, which details its contents folio by folio, just before Arioli began his research. He could rightly fear that someone else would get hold of the file, but his discretion could not really prevent these publications from being read.

### Was there really a separate 13th-century Segurant romance?

Probably not. While not impossible, there are many factors that argue against this idea.

As discussed at length in this article, several elements from Segurant's story are attested in texts dating with certainty from the end of the 13th century. Arioli considers that the episodes of the Arsenal manuscript (dated 1390-1403) which are not found in the rest of the tradition of *Prophecies de Merlin* would in fact be remnants of a lost romance that would have been recycled by the primordial form of *Prophecies de Merlin* before being preserved only by this single manuscript. He provides elements to support this idea, but without telling us whether some of these 39 episodes were in fact added along the way, which seems more than likely. (see [Carné 2022](#)) A rather revealing sign: his translation only kept 22 episodes, the remaining 17 often having so little to do with Segurant that they would have invited more suspicion regarding the scholar's reconstruction.

It does seem that part of this story dates from the 13th century, but even Arioli's theories imply that it could have undergone at least two layers of rewriting, additions, and changes, not to mention the signs of inconsistency that actually suggest that different sources were combined and that they might never have been assembled in a Segurant romance before being woven into the Arsenal manuscript or its model.

In short: possible, but very far from being certain, with a very large number of difficulties which go against this idea and are barely discussed by the editor of the texts, who rather takes advantage of the ambivalence of the term "roman" (romance/novel) to move from assertions which might be true regarding the Arsenal manuscript

(in his theory, at least) and others which might be true about the “*ensemble narratif*” (narrative collection), the galaxy of texts that extend the story of Segurant (likewise, in his theory) — as we will see in the following section.

The confusion is such that in 2025, after more than one full year of media hype, documentaries, comics, and interviews, two specialists saw fit to politely question the clarity of the communication surrounding Segurant, starting with Nathalie Koble:

“Let us point out in passing, to dispel recent confusion about the status of the stories surrounding the character of Segurant, that the texts and fragments surrounding this knight — edited, commented on, and then translated by Emanuele Arioli (*Séguant: le chevalier au dragon*, Paris, les Belles lettres, 2023) — fully belong to the manuscript tradition of the *Prophecies de Merlin* in prose. [...] There is no autonomous medieval Segurant romance as [Arioli] reminds us in his academic works [...]” ([Koble 2025:n34](#))

And Maria Colombo Timelli, in a review of the translation:

“[...] some statements seem a little too precise, although they are due to the very spirit of this book and of the collection: that this “rediscovered romance”, which has “slept for more than seven centuries”, has enjoyed “considerable success” by “circulating extensively in France and Italy” as well as in Spain and Great Britain (p. 7) seems somewhat simplistic, insofar as such phrases immediately convey to the non-specialist reader the image of a “romance” [*roman*], namely of a continuous narrative, developed in the Middle Ages as such. Nevertheless, we must recognize [Arioli]’s great skill in promoting and making “his” text known, whether on Radio France or Arte, or even in a comic book album (Dargaud, 2023).” ([Timelli 2025:195](#))

We would almost want to use stronger words.

### The text is assembled from fragments

A sort of puzzle analogy seems to come naturally to most discussions of the matter:

- “A specialist in the legend of King Arthur, he discovered, **reconstituted** and published a previously unknown 13th-century romance.” ([Presentation by the Revue des sciences humaines](#), 2022)
- “Arioli reconstructs an entire unknown Arthurian romance, from scattered fragments of archives” ([Otchakovsky-Laurens in Le Monde](#), 2023)
- “The meticulous search for traces of this missing link in 28 fragmentary manuscripts spread across libraries around the world, in France, Belgium, Great Britain, Switzerland, Germany, Italy and even the United States, manuscripts which have allowed the historian, after seven centuries of oblivion and ten years of complex research, to **reconstruct the complete romance**.” ([France Culture](#), 2023)
- “After the work of **reconstitution** conducted by Emanuele Arioli from fragments scattered in a myriad of manuscripts” ([Poisson-Gueffier 2023](#))
- “The paleographer and doctor of medieval studies haunted European libraries to retrace, **fragment by fragment**, the deeds of the knight who had left his memories.” (Duplan in [Le Temps](#), October 15, 2023)
- “To rediscover today a new romance from the Middle Ages, an unknown Arthurian romance, is exceptional. [...] To reconstruct the entire romance is a prodigy of erudition, intelligence and sensitivity.” (Michel Zink, on the cover of the 2023 translation.)
- “His story is **fragmented** in manuscripts, **scattered** puzzle-style in compialtions.” ([Boulevard Voltaire](#), 2024)
- “You have **reconstituted** the adventures of a knight of the Round Table, Segurant le Brun. He is the character of a forgotten romance scattered in several fragmentary manuscripts throughout Europe. First of all, how can we explain that this text was forgotten and why is it scattered in various libraries?” ([Philitt 2024](#))
- In 2025, [even the BnF website seems a bit confused](#), and believes that the Arsenal manuscript contains the “beginning” of the book.
- etc. etc.

Here we find that widespread confusion between the *Segurant romance* that he postulates, which would found essentially in the Arsenal manuscript alone, and the wider *tradition of Segurant* (“ensemble narratif”) which has spread beyond that.

In addition to the above quotes, the preface to the translation provides a good example. It begins by stating that you are holding in your hands a “rediscovered romance” that “had been dormant for more than seven centuries, scattered among a large number of medieval manuscripts” (2023:7). This romance has undergone “extensions and rewritings,” we are told (*Ibid.*) before specifying that the cardinal version of the Arsenal manuscript “could also correspond to the remains of an earlier romance, probably unfinished” (p. 11). We are first told very affirmatively of a *rediscovered romance* before specifying that the existence of the text in the form of a separate romance is hypothetical. To crown this bait-and-switch, the whole constellation of stories is finally described as an “ensemble narratif” (narrative collection, p. 11), a more flexible term than *roman* (novel, romance). (In the translations in other languages that I have been able to check, this nuance tends to disappear, it seems.)

The interviews thus oscillate between discussing the fact that this tradition involves separate works, and not a single text — Arioli regularly pointing out, sometimes to the confusion of his interlocutors, that his edition includes continuations and variants by other authors, spread over several centuries — and the vague description of the feat that was the *reconstruction of the romance*. Obviously the average listener will imaginera that he assembled paragraphs drawn from his famous 28 manuscripts before putting them together to create the romance of Segurant which was scattered between said manuscripts before.

If the Arte documentary or the preface and postface of his comic book leave the exact same impression, when reading his works, we realize that his reconstruction is quite different.

Segurant’s romance would in fact only be directly preserved by the cardinal version, that is to say the episodes of manuscript 5229 of the Arsenal which are not found in the long, “standard” version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*.

However, 36 of the 39 episodes of the cardinal version, which would preserve the lost romance of Segurant, are *only found in the Arsenal manuscript*. Episodes VIII and X are taken up by Rusticien, and therefore present in some other manuscripts deriving from there, but without major changes.

Episode II can be found in the short versions (and “compilation” versions) of the *Prophecies de Merlin*. A folio is missing from the Arsenal manuscript, so the episode is completed according to the Chantilly manuscript... but Arioli considers that this episode *was not part of the original plot*, that it served to connect prophetic storyline and Cardinal Version (*Étude* 2019:50-51). In other words *the entire text* supposed to come from this lost romance about Segurant can be found in *one* manuscript, the Arsenal manuscript.

By insisting on the search for manuscripts which made it possible to reconstruct the text, what proportion of the public will have understood that this famous rediscovered romance can in fact be found in a single manuscript?

There is indeed a reconstructed romance in Arioli’s works: the Ur-Prophecies. But a certain ambiguity is left hanging when one does not distinguish between Segurant’s lost romance, Ur-Prophecies, and the rest of the stories involving Segurant.

#### **Translation made from “rediscovered” manuscripts.**

Arioli, it is said, would have made an “edition of the rediscovered manuscripts” (postface of the comic book) a translation “based on rediscovered medieval manuscripts” (subtitle of the translation).

The only damaged and neglected manuscript containing a significant amount of text seems (to us) to be the Turin manuscript, which has certainly been forgotten for a while, but its text follows perfectly the London manuscript in much better condition. Admittedly, this manuscript acquired by the British Library in 1902 did not attract attention until 1960: Löseth had examined two Guironian manuscripts there in 1901, thus before its acquisition, but 1960 is not yesterday either. But again: this is a particular, late version which derives from *Rusticien II* and which according to Arioli’s own theories does not particularly inform us about the formation of this tradition.



Certainly, the Turin manuscript, in the portions that did not burn, seems to preserve a text in better condition, which serves to correct about twenty minor errors, the most substantial being a sentence missing from the London manuscript.

But many of these mistakes could probably have been corrected anyway. For example, at one point the scribe of the London manuscript slips and writes “s’il rencontroit le *dragoit*” (if he met the *dragoit*), an error that is not found in the Turin manuscript. We have not studied at the École des Chartes, but we assume that even without the Turin manuscript, Arioli would have understood that we were talking here about the *dragon*. Does this manuscript really radically change our understanding of the text and assorted tradition?

The same question arises for the other “finds” put forward, what do these fragments bring to the table?

- Bologna: already edited by Monica Longobardi (1996), in his edition Arioli deciphers 5-6 additional words with the help of an ultraviolet lamp.
- Modena: allows to fill a gap, a sentence that was missing because of a homeoteleuton (when the same word is found a few lines apart and the scribes mistakenly start writing again at the second word, skipping the words that are in between).
- Trier: Paton claimed to know it only through a review ([1913:124](#) ; [1926:I.19](#)) but Arioli was able to see that the fragment was indeed still in Trier. The fragment does not concern any of the texts that make up his edition and therefore does not contribute to it.
- Oxford: contains an interlacing formula from the BnF 358 version (so not much text)

After listing these fragments, he states: “after these isolated finds, what was left to do was, above all, to connect the various fragments to make them speak, and reveal to us the existence of a still unknown medieval romance” (trans. 2023:13) but without explaining how these fragments have anything to do with this unveiling.

Considering the amount of information presented and the effect it will have on the audience, is it reasonable to insist so much on these elements, compared to their real importance in the “reconstruction” process?

### **“Dismembered parts” in a “poor state of preservation” in “poorly exploited collections”**

Finding a fragment of text is a part of the process that is easier to present than the philological debates on the stemma of *Rusticien II*, but by reducing the complex reflections that this implies to a more or less random search for manuscripts, we somewhat gloss over the complexity of the process. To compensate for this, we must raise the difficulty of the quest a little, by explaining in particular why said quest had not been accomplished earlier, how this “mysteriously disappeared” romance was then “miraculously found” ([preface to the comic book](#)) — it is necessary to thoroughly deepen the thickness of the *mystery* that the arrival of the *miracle* must then dissipate.

In our video, we were surprised by a sentence that could in fact serve this purpose:

“If this romance has remained unknown until now, it is because its dismembered parts are in a poor state of preservation or are found in less exploited libraries and archives.”

*Segurant*, translation, 2023, preface, p. 10.

At the risk of repeating ourselves, if we leave aside the “*ensemble narratif*” or “*ensemble romanesque*” which covers 28 manuscripts to focus on the “lost Segurant romance” preserved by the “Cardinal Version”, then the text of the “romance” is *preserved in full by the manuscript of the Arsenal n°5229*, and its unique episodes were *already summarized by Lucy Allen Paton in 1926 and described folio by folio by Koble in 2009*. Reading this, one imagines fragile little bits and pieces of parchment scattered about, but in reality only one leaf is missing from the voluminous Arsenal manuscript, the only one to contain the most of the “romance”.

But let’s assume that he uses the term romance here for the “*ensemble*” of the whole tradition.

In 2019, he states that these different parts were neglected either because of their condition (which seems to us to be generally erroneous), “or because they belong to the late [arthurian] tradition” (*Étude* 2019:31) which already seems to us a more relevant factor: if the BnF 358 compilation, the London-Turin one and the Arsenal manuscript were dated to the 15th century (1390-1403 for the latter, according to Arioli), why would they enlighten us on the original composition of the *Prophecies de Merlin* in the 13th century, seemingly a century

and a half before that? Only the re-evaluation of the possible antiquity of the Cardinal Version can change the genealogy of the texts, which were essentially known.

A more direct explanation would be that the episodes concerning Segurant were well known but were part of complex traditions that were difficult to map properly (*Prophecies de Merlin*, *Guiron le Courtois*, *Queste 12599*), their summaries, available in Paton's edition or Lathuillère's study, are therefore found in a mass of other episodes that would discourage many a researcher. But this would involve discussing the work of his colleagues and the laborious evolution of the discipline.

That being said, perhaps we lacked charity [in our video](#), this turn of phrase about "poorly exploited collections" was perhaps only a diplomatic way of mentioning that Arthurian studies have regularly been slowed down by collections... which were indeed difficult to access.

When Lucy Allen Paton published her edition of the *Prophecies de Merlin* in 1926-1927, she had been working on it for over a decade, since at least her article on their manuscripts (1913), but the manuscript that is now Bodmer 116 was still in the hands of the auction house Maggs Brothers, who did not want her to publish too much text or even too detailed summaries of the romance episodes ([Paton I.9, I.51](#)) — but the whole interest of the document stems from that, it is the only manuscript to contain its final episodes in full! When she states that she hopes to return to it when a public collection has acquired it, but at the same time that the romance material is so trivial that it would perhaps not be worth editing and that summaries would serve specialists just as well (Brugger reproaches her for this) — it should probably be seen as spite about the fact that the diktat of the manuscript owner prevents the completion of a work of thirteen years. It was not until the end of the 20th century that it was published by Berthelot and then Koble.

Similarly, when Lathuillère published his analysis of the entire cycle of *Guiron le Courtois*, cataloguing the manuscripts and episodes, he had to lament that the bibliophile Martin Bodmer had not given him access to the manuscript in two volumes, Bodmer 96-1 and 96-2. (1966) The following year, Bogdanow still mentioned that the Bodmer manuscript was "unavailable" ([1967:328](#))

It was not until 1970 that Lathuillère finally received Bodmer's august authorization to consult the manuscript and note that it "brings no new text to the table." ("*n'apporte aucun texte nouveau.*" 1970:574) his original quirk consisting of juxtaposing different versions (which complicates its classification). He concludes with a small prostration:

"I wish to express my very respectful and deep gratitude to Mr. Martin Bodmer who kindly allowed me to consult this manuscript and to work in his library." (1970:574)

We can regret that the delay has placed this analysis in some *Mélanges offerts à Jean Frappier* instead of in the reference work on *Guiron le Courtois*.

And yet, in both cases, scholars were eventually able to access the texts, but other manuscripts are simply missing, probably in an inaccessible private collection, and we can only hope that they will resurface someday. This is the case of the "[manuscript X](#)", one of the only manuscripts of the *Continuation Guiron* with the BL Add. 36880 (L4), and the only one to contain some passages. It was part of the property of Baroness Alexandrine de Rothschild, it was looted during the war, before being restituted, and specialists only know about it indirectly. In 1966, Lathuillère relied on notes by Jacques Monfrin who was preparing an article on it (never published) — it was perhaps during a change of ownership that he had access to it, in any case we do not know who holds it today. For its edition, the Guiron Group relied on old photographs of the manuscript which circulated among specialists. ([See their page about Manuscript X](#))

### Are 28 manuscripts a lot?

"For us, 28 manuscripts is very few, but it is a lot compared to some fundamental texts of the period for which only one, five or ten copies remain. By comparison, the most copied French text from the Middle Ages is the *Roman de la Rose*, preserved in nearly 300 manuscripts, but this is an exception.

This large number of manuscripts (28), sometimes in fragmentary form, makes the late rediscovery of Segurant all the more incredible.”

[Xavier Fornerod, CNEWS \(27 oct 2023\)](#)

Also compared to the five surviving manuscripts of Marie de France (on [Retronews](#), [Philitt](#), etc.)

But as he readily admits, “I was able to discover a coherent plot that continues from one manuscript to another and I was then able to reconstruct an unknown romance collection [*ensemble romanesque*]. It is not a single romance, but several distinct versions.” ([Philitt](#)) — we are not talking about 28 manuscripts of the same work, so what sense can there be in comparing the two numbers?

With the Arsenal manuscript, there are 14 manuscripts of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (including the fragment from Modena, and not counting the other fragments of the *Prophecies*, which do not help his edition), the intertextual episodes (VIII+X) are found in 14 manuscripts (the Arsenal manuscript + 13 of the different versions of *Rusticien II*, including the Bologna fragment and the Oxford fragment). The Arsenal manuscript therefore bridges the connection between the two traditions, sharing text with them, but the last manuscript is BnF 12599 which does not directly share text with the rest, but we find there the “complementary episode”, which is also found, in a slightly different form, in *Rusticien II*, therefore another link.

There are therefore links between these different manuscripts; it is expected that they be part of his edition, but by only mentioning their total number we do not really convey the extent to which these links can be tenuous, and we will probably give more unity to this “romance collection” than is necessary.

In absolute terms, it is normal to contextualize the number of manuscripts so that the public understands whether it is a lot for a medieval work or not, but in such a particular case, it would first be necessary to find an analogous case. The manuscripts of the *Continuations* of the *Conte du Graal*, perhaps? (Seems like a bad example too.)

### **Our only trace of Segurant was found in armorials and catalogues of knights**

Arioli said in several conferences and interviews that Segurant was only known indirectly, through mentions in large lists or catalogues of knights, which did not suggest that a romance about him existed.

“We only know Segurant indirectly, so to speak, that is to say that at the end of the Middle Ages, a sort of encyclopedia of the Knights of the Round Table was compiled, collecting about 150 knights, and Segurant is included in them, so Segurant was known only as one of these 150 knights who were listed at the end of the Middle Ages, to whom a coat of arms was given, that’s with a description of three or four lines, but that was basically all that was known about him, we didn’t imagine that there was a romance about him.”

Arioli, [Interview with Nota Bene 35’21-36’22](#) (personal translation, as usual)

“We knew the name, and we still didn’t know it well, that is to say, at the end of the Middle Ages there were works that made lists of Knights of the Round Table, and at the end of the Middle Ages in a list of 150 knights we also find Segurant le Brun with a biography of three or four lines but that was all we knew of this character. We didn’t know that there was a romance linked to his story.”

Arioli, [Presentation at the École des Chartes 12’25-12’48](#) (*idem*)

He thinks here typically his description in [BnF fr. 12597 fol. 4r](#) or [Arsenal 4976 fol. 5v-6r](#), which also contains an illustration of our knight with the slain dragon. (In 2024, he would translate the text that goes with this tradition in *Les Chevaliers de la Table Ronde*. Note that a [critical edition of the text of the Armagnac “armorial à biographies” by Stephanie Wittwer has been published by the Classiques Garnier, freely available online since March 2025.](#))

However, this leaves aside the fact that before Arioli we actually knew of many adventures of Segurant, even if they were not considered as independent works: without counting the Arsenal manuscript described by Paton,

Brugger, etc. (let's say they were forgotten) there would in any case be the adventures of Segurant in the *Prophecies de Merlin*, and the Guironian episodes which descend from *Rusticien II*, which in fact constitute the complementary and alternative versions that he supposedly "discovered". (Also, said alternative versions of the guironian cycle, 358 and London-Turin, were actually already classified as such by Lathuillière.)

Here we are again, tapping the big blackboard covered with Grice's maxims: implying that these armorials and lists were *the only known trace* of Segurant before his work, while avoiding any mention of the fact that the "complementary" and "alternative" versions were in fact discussed beforehand can only mislead, and lead to the belief that Arioli discovered the entirety of these texts.

#### **"Segurant's adventures end mid-sentence."**

Arioli sometimes writes in such a way as to suggest this, as in the postface to his comic book:

"My emotions were at their peak, but the manuscript abruptly ended, leaving the adventures of this mysterious hero pursuing a dragon hanging."

Or among many other interviews:

"There is only one drawback, but it is a major one: the manuscript is incomplete. "It stopped in the middle of a sentence, leaving the adventures of this mysterious hero chasing a dragon hanging."  
([Tribune de Genève, 11 Oct 2023](#))

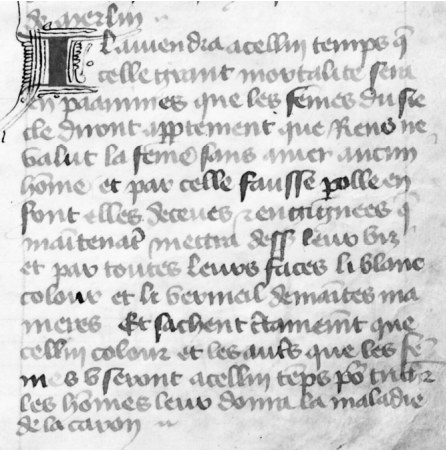
However, [Le Monde goes beyond the ambiguity and attributes the following remarks to Arioli](#) :

"I immediately noticed a fragment of a story unrelated to the rest, on a half-blank sheet, which stopped in the middle of a sentence," he told *Le Monde des livres*. "Very quickly, I wanted to know if the same episode was found elsewhere."

Taken literally, it doesn't make sense, but we're going to defend Arioli and assume that the journalist from *Le Monde* has collapsed sentences that didn't exactly say that.

The last page of the Arsenal manuscript is actually filled on the front and empty on the back, [you can even check it out online for yourself](#). (fol. 173) But the "fragment of a story" on the front, which stops in the middle of a sentence, is not "unrelated to the rest", and does not speak of Segurant, since it concerns... prophecies proffered by Merlin that we find for example in the "standard" version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, the long version! Here, the "prophet of the English," Merlin, announces that women who wear makeup will suffer from "Lazaron disease," a kind of leprosy, one imagines, since it seems to allude to Lazarus. One would have to believe that Arioli was so astonished by the content of this single text, which was interrupted, that he embarked on a frantic quest to find its conclusion. But if he was talking about the actual last folio, one would not have to look very far: it is found in the other manuscripts of the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin* (and thus their editions) which conclude this passage, for example in the Bodmer manuscript (see below).

Table 10: continuation of the text concluding the Arsenal manuscript in ms. Bodmer 116

Ms. Arsenal 5229 fol. 173r (end of the texte)	Bodmer 116 fol. 187rb-va (Berthelot 1992:369, Koble 2001:345)
	<div> <p>ge par la bouce de muerlin. Il          ventra aceliu tans q'cele grant          mortalitas terra en paienime          q'les femmes dou siecle diront          tout apiertement / q'la feme          ne vaut riens sans amer aucun          homme. Et par cele fausse parole          euseront eles de cheues et engig          nis. Car maintenant metront          de sour lor vis et sour lor faches          la blanche coulour et la viermelle          de maintes manieres. Et scies          certainement ke ces coulours          et les autres q'ces femmes usseront          aceliu tans pour trechier          les hommes lor donra la mala          die de lazaron ausi com ille don          na alui autans q'il muoit. Il a</p> </div> <div> <p>voit une damoisiele en son pais          la mlt saut bñ afaire cele          peinture. Et pourcou q' lazaron          ne vaut coucher ali ele fume          durement courouchie. Et tant          q'ele destrempra plusieurs filon          noit aboie cescun iour dont          il dormoit mout fort. Et cele          li eucoulouroit cescun iour sa          fache dont par cele occoillon          et par cel malisse emprisist il          la maladie q'ie vous di. Or voel          iou q'.i. autre le sachent q'la          mere l'enseignera ala fille. Dont          cou serra pechie. car on le sen          tiera a putes et li en pierdront          les ames et les cors.</p> <p><b>D</b>ex aide fait muerlins          alu meisme narone des          honte l'une delautre. car bñ sa          vront eles le feront et pour          cou el el aint pointes la face</p> </div>
<p>Il avendra a celluy temps que          celle grant mortalite sera          en paanimes que les femmes du siecle          diront ap[er]tement que riens ne          valut la femme sans amer aucun          homme et par celle fausse parole en          sont elles deceues &amp; engignees que          maintenant mattrra dessus leur vis          et par toutes leurs faces li blanc          colour et le vermal demaintes manieres          et fachtent certainement que          celluy colour et les autres que ces          femmes useront a celui tans pour trechier          les hommes lor donra la maladie          de Lazaron ~</p>	<p>par la bouce de Mierlin. «Il avenra a celui tans que cele grans mortalites serra en paienime, que les femmes dou siecle diront tout apiertement que la femme ne vaut riens sans amer aucun homme; et par cele fausse parole en seront eles deceues et engignies. Car maintenant metront de sour lor vis et sour lor faches la blanche coulour et la viermelle de maintes manieres. Et scies ciertainement ke ces coulours et les autres que ces femmes usseront a celui tans pour trechier les hommes lor donra la maladie de Lazaron, ausi com il le donna a lui au tans que il vivoit. Il a [187v] voit une damoisiele en son pais ki molt savoit bien afaitier tele peinture; et pour cou que Lazarons ne vaut coucher a li, ele fu molt durement courouchie; et tant que ele destempra puisons, si li donnoit a boire cescun iour, dont il dormoit mout fort; et cele li en coulouroit caseun iour sa fache, dont par cele occoisson et par cel malisse em prist il la maladie que ie vous di. Or voel iou que .i. et autre le sachent que la mere l'enseignera a la fille, dont cou serra pechie; car on les en tenra a putes, et si en pierdront les ames et les cors.</p>

Le Point said the same:

“Two more chapters continue the epic tale of this enigmatic knight on an illusory quest. Indeed, the dragon is nothing more than a chimera created by the fairy Morgana. The story ends there, with a cut-off sentence! But the young researcher’s curiosity is piqued. He wants to know what happens next and understand why this knight is not mentioned anywhere else.” (*sic*)

Not mentioned anywhere else... Anyway.

In short, Arioli regularly invokes this last page, which is not filled in, perhaps to dramatize a little the beginning of his research into the adventures of Segurant: even if this last page does not mention Segurant, and the copyist seems to conclude his work with a small wavy line afterwards, the words that are missing compared to the rest of the tradition could suggest that the archetype of the text he copied still contained material, this is a relevant argument. However, since in the media Arioli generally only mentions Segurant’s adventures and does not go into the (admittedly complicated) details of the rest of the manuscript tradition, everyone imagines that the manuscript must end in the middle of a sentence where Segurant rides towards the sunset. He never says it explicitly and directly, but everyone jumps to the obvious conclusion that his sentences would seem to imply, if one does not already know the material in question. *Le Monde* only made the mistake of attributing this conclusion *verbatim* to Arioli.

We believe he is obviously more careful when choosing his words.



### Addendum (2025): once more, but with Alexander the Orphan

In our 2023 video, to put the “discovery” of Segurant into perspective, we compared this hero to the texts about Alexander the Orphan, another knight whose adventures are found in the long version of the *Prophecies de Merlin*, and to which Arioli himself already compared him. Since then, he has decided to renew his publishing success and is offering a translation of Alexandre’s adventures. If you allow us to quote [the critical review](#) that we have written about it:

For [Le Point](#) (December 11, 2024), Arioli has literally “made a specialty of unearthing forgotten manuscripts of chivalric literature from the depths of the archives.” After the story of Segurant, here comes that of Alexandre, “reconstructed from fragments and translated into French.” [Le Figaro](#), always imbued with confidence, tells us that after having “rediscovered” Segurant last year, Arioli offers for the first time in modern French the adventures of Alexandre, “Long removed from the admiration of the followers of the quest for the Grail”. For *Le Journal du Dimanche* (November 17, 2024), “The young Franco-Italian prodigy of medieval literature has struck again”. *Politique Magazine* adds: “Reading this lost romance, we find the same pleasure as with Segurant: the Round Table cycle is augmented by astonishing scenes” (edition of November 1, 2024). Not surprising when [Arioli himself affirms looking into the camera](#) that it is a “legend forgotten for five centuries” that he has “reconstructed from manuscripts from the Middle Ages”.

The same ambiguities, the same half-truths in the press: fragments found, manuscripts lost, forgotten legend finally brought to light thanks to the genius of the Italian scholar. The problem is that, with Segurant, we were indeed delving into a problem somewhat neglected by the wider Arthurian studies. We could be less acrimonious, and consider that the welcome work carried out by Arioli justifies a sort of payment in kind, that in return Arioli should be allowed to take any and all liberties to market “his” “discovery” and profit from some simplifications. Claiming that no one had heard of Segurant since the Middle Ages was still false, but claiming the same thing for *Alexander the Orphan* is downright ridiculous. Thomas Malory, author of *the* Arthurian book in English, the absolute canonical reference today for the matter of Britain, had retold his adventures and as such this tradition had interested specialists seeking Malory’s sources since the end of the 19th century. In addition to Löseth’s summaries, the adventures of Alexander the Orphan in the *Prophecies de Merlin* had been published by Sommer in 1891. In 1951, Pickford had published the four episodes included in other compilations. (of seven total, question is if the three somewhat derivative episodes included in the *Prophecies* were there from the beginning or an addition from the *Prophecies*) Even some Arthuriana fans on Babelio had already heard of him. Ridiculous, deeply ridiculous, to imply that he has just been discovered.

Arioli translates the 15th century continuation of these adventures, which is unpublished, but in doing so he tries to minimize the efforts of his predecessors, Sommer’s edition? Some *bribes* (snippets) et *extraits* (excerpts). Pickford’s? It only contains a “very small part of the whole thing” (*très petite partie de l’ensemble*), etc. In 2019, he made no fuss about speaking more objectively, even noting that Pickford also edited the variants of the BnF 362 compilation:

“In 1951, Cedric Edward Pickford edited four episodes [of Alexander the Orphan] and the beginning and end proposed by the ms. BnF fr. 362-363” (*Étude* 2019:202n15)

But now that these small and shorts variants have to be put forward to pretend that this translation of Alexander the Orphan’s adventures cover more original ground than is the case in reality, Arioli resists his usual habit of copy-pasting his previous works and meticulously cuts the end of this sentence to avoid saying that Pickford had already edited this text. Perhaps believing that his work will be better appreciated if he avoids making a complete history of the scholarship which preceded him. ([See our review, in French, for some details about these minimizations and omissions.](#))

And then what? Who will he claim to have “rediscovered”? The knight in the ill-fitting coat? Espinogres? On tour, Arioli recently stated that he had run out of ideas for lost knights that would form the basis of future translations. Let’s leave it at that, or let’s do better.

## Uncommon Misunderstandings

These examples illustrate the inherent dangers of scientific communication: even with the best communication, you are addressing people who will have difficulty understanding what you are presenting to them. When it is their first encounter with a subject, they will tend to extrapolate and assume that what you have presented must represent all there is to know.

## No Arthurian humor before Segurant

**“For the first time, humor finds its way** into an Arthurian romance, Segurant being perhaps the missing literary link, according to Emanuele Arioli, between the Arthurian legend and its parodic Spanish heir, *Don Quixote de la Mancha*” (Violaine de Montclos, [Le Point, 22 dec 2023](#))

This is completely false and an unfortunate statement.

We find famous counter-examples in certain major works saturated with religious piety (*These of the Holy Grail*) or a sinister fatality (*Death King Arthur*, which recounts the fall of the Arthurian kingdom — even if, even there, you can find a little bit of comic relief), but humor and even a certain burlesque are in fact a normal part of the genre that constitutes the Arthurian romance, from Chrétien de Troyes onwards and even before. We will see in the *Conte du Graal*, a burlesque scene where Gawain, attacked by a crowd, defends himself by throwing giant chess pieces at them, the naivety of Perceval has a comic effect in itself, etc. When Lancelot is so absorbed by his love for Guinevere that he does not hear a knight challenge him and is knocked down, is it a comic exaggeration, or the literal expression of the depth of his love? For Jane H. M. Taylor, the German *Diu Crone* is “distinctly comic and irreverent” (*Cambridge companion to the Arthurian legend*, 2009:66)

Some romances veer more towards pure pastiche: with its hillbilly knight in rusty armor, *Fergus* appears to parody the beginning of the *Conte du Graal*. We also see authors taking certain marvelous trials rather lightly: in *Hunbaut*, we see a Gawain who is too abrupt in his disrespect for the customs of the kingdom in which he finds himself to be read without a bit of irony. In a “*jeu parti*”, that English readers might know better from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, he must cut off the head of a man who will then cut off his own, but he breaks the enchantment by grabbing the man’s body and preventing him from reaching his head. This is followed by a duel of insults where, rather than responding, he straight-up kills the dwarf who has just disrespected him. The same goes in the *Merveilles de Rigomer*, Lancelot wins a race by grabbing the other rider’s reins and punching his horse repeatedly. Not the best example of chivalrous behaviour!

The knights’ brutality which short-circuits the marvelous nature of these trials plays on a tension between two logics which seems comical to us, but we could debate if they are really of a parodic bent, the *merveilleux*, the marvelous needs exaggeration after all... Thus in the *Dream of Rhonabwy*, a Welsh text from the 13th century, a knight dreams that he is transported to the time of Arthur, he is immediately pursued by a huge and terrible warrior: “And when [his] horse breathed forth, the men became distant from him, and when he drew his breath, they were drawn near to him, even to the horse’s chest.” ([trans. Guest](#) ; cf. also [Loth 1913:353](#)) Wonderful prodigy we should take at face value, or cartoonish comedy? Rhonabwy then looks upon the men of this era as literal giants, who despise the fact that their island will later be guarded by such contemptible little men. ([Ibid.](#) cf. [Loth 356](#)) Gigantism of the heroic age and derision of the present merge here. In fact, even *Culhwch ac Olwen* (c. 1000), our most archaic Welsh Arthurian text, perhaps the closest to the oral accounts that would originally have circulated about Arthur, has sometimes been described as parodic! For Echard we cannot know whether the Latin romance *Arthur and Gorlagon* parodies the codes of the Welsh romances or whether it simply adapts an “original Welsh text [that] was itself a parody along the lines of *Culhwch* or *Rhonabwy*.” ([Arthurian Narrative in the Latin Tradition](#), ed. Siân Echard, 1998:214)

Is it parody all the way down, or is it simply that this genre goes quite well with a bit of comic relief?

Another sign of the prevalence of humor in Arthurian romances before Segurant: when Arioli is asked to point out how the “Segurant romance” stands out, [he invokes](#) the character of the irreverent knight Dinadan, who does not respect the codes of chivalry, which adds a touch of comedy, of irony. However, he appears well before that, in the *Prose Tristan*, where for example he agrees to help Tristan against three knights before wanting to turn back when he learns that they in fact have to face *thirty* knights. Certainly, walking around with ten bodyguards

is unprecedented and his outrageous behaviour, in the Arsenal manuscript, the *Prophecies de Merlin* (long version) and the *Queste 12599*, take on a particularly crude and quite remarkable tone. It is probably the mention of this ironic knight as a peculiarity of the matter of *Segurant* which leads some journalists to believe that Segurant marks the arrival of humor in the Arthurian kingdom.

As for the shaky comparisons to Don Quixote, unfortunately we cannot avoid them — even though that book draws more from the *chansons de geste* than from arthuriana, even if Arthur makes an (interesting) appearance. Brugger already made the comparison in passing ([1938:359](#)), and Arioli leans into it, journalists cannot refrain from invoking a Classical Work that makes them appear Cultivated.

#### **“Fewer than ten Arthurian romances have survived.”**

An even more blatant example of people jumping to conclusions based on the assumption that by reading your work they now know everything there is to know: [Le Figaro](#) is pleased that an Arthurian romance has been rediscovered, “a find all the more miraculous given that fewer than ten medieval romances [on the Arthurian legend] have come down to us”.

Of course, there are many more than ten arthurian romances. Where could this error come from? It is a hypothesis, pure speculation on my part, but at the beginning of his *Étude* (2019:15-17), Arioli has a chronology that lists the “13th-century Arthurian prose romances” and, including Segurant, he counts nine.

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Robert de Boron’s Trilogy | 6. Guiron le Courtois      |
| 2. Lancelot-Grail            | 7. Segurant                |
| 3. Prose Tristan             | 8. Prophecies de Merlin    |
| 4. Post-Vulgate              | 9. Rusticien’s Compilation |
| 5. Perlesvaus                |                            |

The journalist from *Le Figaro* will no doubt have believed that this covered *all romances* in the matter of Britain.

But, first of all, this figure is obviously subject to debate. If we count Segurant and the *Prophecies de Merlin* as two separate romances (which, as we have seen, is far from being a given) it is difficult to see how to justify counting the three parts of the cycle attributed to Boron (*Joseph, Merlin, Perceval*), the five or six parts of the Lancelot-Grail (*Estoire del Saint Graal, Merlin, Suite-Vulgate du Merlin, Lancelot, Queste del Saint-Graal, La Mort le roi Artu*) or the various sections and versions of *Guiron le Courtois* as single romances. Furthermore, even incomplete, the *Queste 12599* should probably figure on this list, as should the *Livre d’Artus*. Certainly, the BnF 12599 manuscript could date from the very beginning of the 14th century but Arioli dates it from the “End of the 13th century” (*Étude* 2019:431) or “at the latest from the end of the 13th century” (trans. 2023:211)!

The obvious fact remains: there exist far more Arthurian works than *prose* romances from the thirteenth century. For example, Chrétien de Troyes, who is cited in the previous sentence of this article, wrote five verse romances all by himself in the previous century. And what’s more, medieval Arthurian romances are not all written in French! ([See our chronological infographic, for example.](#))

And we must insist here: even if it comes from Arioli’s table, the fault clearly lies with the journalist who could have done a little more research, even if it was a journalist from *Le Figaro*.

This is unfortunately unavoidable, and is absolutely not the fault of the author: when your audience treats your presentation as an exhaustive source on a subject, which it can never be, even a completely true presentation can mislead them.

#### **Some corrections**

Segurant makes an appearance in *Graal Theatre*, a series of Arthurian plays, which Arioli uses as an incipit:

SÉGURANT. – And I am not called Segurant the Brown, called Knight of the Three Fathers, son of Hector 6 or Hector 9 or Hector 13? Also called Knight of the Great Appetite, hero of the adventure of the Copper Tower?

GIRFLET. – It's not your turn. I'm calling the roll using a modern method developed by Merlin: alphabetical order. We're still on the letter B and you're on the letter S.

SEGURANT. – But I am a knight, I am not a letter.

SÉGURANT. – Et moi on ne m'appelle pas moi Ségurant le Brun dit Chevalier aux Trois pères fils d'Hector 6 ou d'Hector 9 ou d'Hector 13 ? Dit aussi Chevalier au Grand Appétit héros de l'aventure de la Tour de Cuivre ?

GIRFLET. – Ce n'est pas votre tour. Je fais l'appel selon une méthode moderne mise au point par Merlin l'ordre alphabétique. Nous en sommes encore à la lettre B et vous êtes à la lettre S.

SÉGURANT. – Mais je suis un chevalier moi je ne suis pas une lettre.

Florence Delay and Jacques Roubaud, *Graal Theatre*, Paris, Gallimard, 2005:128-130.

Arioli considers that Delay and Roubaud were inspired by the index of Lathuillière's book about *Guiron le Courtois* (*Étude* 2016:106, *Étude* 2019:159) which does mention the multiple incoherent genealogies of Segurant (sometimes from within the same manuscript) but this obviously cannot be the only source, since the adventure of the "Copper Tower" is found in the *Prophecies de Merlin* and would therefore not be discussed in a work about *Guiron le Courtois*...

The source seems rather to be West's *French Arthurian Prose Romances, An Index Of Proper Names* (1978:277).

The tower is not actually made of copper, the knight-automatons that guard it that are made of this metal, but that index speaks of the *Tower of the Copper Marvel* which becomes the Tower of Copper, *Tour de Cuivre*... It is of course possible that Delay and Roubaud drew from another intermediate source, upstream or downstream from West, but, to us, this seems a more plausible source than Lathuillière's index.

In the *Étude* (2019) we can also note:

- p. 44, it says "episode VIII" but it should be episode VII of the Cardinal Version (involving Tarant)
- p. 357, in the final tables, last column, we would expect, unless I am mistaken, 55v instead of 65v, and same column following page, we would expect 58r instead of 68r, for the foliation of the Brussels manuscript.

Not in Arioli's work, but Damien de Carné discusses Segurant in an article from 2016: "[Jeux de tournoyeurs, jeux de lecteurs. Renouveau ludique du récit de tournoi dans deux proses arthuriennes mineures \(la Queste 12599 et le Roman de Ségurant\)](#)", but several people seem to think that it predates Arioli's work, dating it to the year 2010, as [Poisson-Gueffier en 2023](#) or Ferlampin-Acher in the *Romania* in 2021: she notes that Segurant has not been discussed that much despite articles by Koble in 2009 or by Carné in 2010 (2021:196) this article would therefore precede Arioli's publications. However, the book in which the chapter is found was actually published in 2016. Having consulted its digital version, we must note that Carné explicitly thanks Arioli and that he cites works dating from after 2010, excluding a very unusual reworking, it must therefore be an error.

The error was found on the Arlima page dedicated to Segurant, which perhaps explains its presence at Ferlampin-Acher, since she mentions said page. (2021:214) Following a message from us in January 2024, Arlima had it corrected.

[December 2025] Breaking news, if this article has interested you but you'd wish for more serious contributions, in more serious outlets : Arthurian studies specialists didn't miss the marketing campaign around Segurant and, with Academia's slow pace, several publications should appear shortly, about the matter of Segurant and the philological problems associated. An enlightening synthesis article will appear in 2026:

- Emma Belkacemi-Molinier, "Cohérence de l'incohérence ? La philologie arthurienne face à Ségurant", dans Emma Coutier, Cassandre Crespin, Thibault Jouis, Louise Gay, Nicolas Mazel (dir.), *Querelles. Penser par la dispute, au Moyen Âge et aujourd'hui*, Classiques Garnier, coll. "Rencontres".

We even hear that new material about the *Queste 12599* is in preparation... This might be added to this article when available.

### What's new in Arioli's works?

We can be wrong, please feel free to correct us if we need to remove or add things to this list.

- Re-evaluation of the chronology by recalling all the “matter of Segurant” already attested in the 13th century, already discussed by the works of Paton or Brugger, but seldom mentioned during the 20th century.
- Another perspective on the transmission of the “second compilation of Rusticien”.
- The discipline often assumed that Segurant had been invented in the tradition of *Guiron le Courtois* then added to the *Prophecies de Merlin*, Arioli postulates that on the contrary he appears in the Ur-Prophecies, which recycle (perhaps) a lost, older romance about him.
- Paton thought it impossible to specify exactly the content of the archetype of the *Prophecies de Merlin* ([II.294](#)), Arioli proposes a specific reconstruction.
- Reassessment of the place of the short version of the *Prophecies*, notably :
  - What the presence of episode II of the cardinal version in the short version implies. Paton already notices this ([I.115n](#)) and even edits the passage in her summaries ([I.426-7](#)) but nothing more it seems.
  - The Bern-Brussels fragment is discussed by Paton and then Koble, but Arioli makes it a hinge of the two halves of his reconstruction.
- Arioli brings together three additional prophecies concerning Segurant.
- Fragments
  - Bologna decoded further (5-6 words)
  - Modena fills a gap in the long version of the *Prophecies* (a sentence)
  - Trier was not lost (does not concern Segurant)
  - The Turin manuscript allows some corrections to be made to the London text.
  - Oxford contains an interlacing formula from the BnF 358 version (so not much text)
- Segurant's past, the hypothesis that he could be inspired by Norse figures, like Sigurd. (Whether the evidence is very thin and the documentary insists too much on this is another question)
- The posterity of Segurant: he analyses his future in Italy and Spain quite closely. (we may not realize how hackneyed the subject is, being less familiar with these traditions)

(Erratum: contrary to what we said, in reality the fact that the first two volumes of the Turin manuscript were not lost was already [noted by Bogdanow in 1968](#))



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## Appendixes

### Appendix 1: Summary of the Cardinal Version of Segurant

Episode numbering according to Arioli (2016, 2019), see also Paton’s summary ([I.423-448](#)).

#### Shipwreck of the ancestors of Segurant

Episode I: The brothers Galehaut le Brun le Vieux and Hector le Brun le Vieux (Galehaut the Brown the Old and Hector the Brown the Old) flee from King Vertigier (Vortigern) and ask their wives to take refuge in Carmelide with their children while they embark on a ship. A storm washes them up on a deserted island, where they and four other castaways start a new life, build a shelter and hunt birds while the mariners pick apples. They discover a natural harbor, le “Port Trouvé” (the found harbor), and name the island: Isle Non Sachant. (= unknown island)

Episode II: Master Antoine reads Merlin’s prophecies to Galehaut le Brun le Jeune (son of Hector le Brun le Vieux). He states that the Salesbières tournament will be won by two men who have previously eaten only wild animals, small apples, and poultry for several months, and will then sleep with Carmelite nuns. (This is obviously Hector and Galehaut, who will be reunited with their wives who had taken the veil.)

Episode III: King Arthur fights against the Saxons of the *Roche aux Sesnes* (Rock of the Saxons) and defeats them. Galehaut le Brun le Vieux and Hector le Brun le Vieux distinguish themselves in the battle. The next day, preparations are made for the Tournament of Salesbières (Salisbury). Merlin has Arthur’s tent built on a rock from which he can observe the entire Salesbières plain. (We do not know how the two brothers left the island and we no longer have the episode of the tournament itself, which was apparently cut.)

Episode IV: Merlin, Arthur, and the two old men visit Master Antoine. Everyone then goes to the Trinity Monastery where their wives and children are. They then accompany Arthur to London. Léodagan asks Arthur to help him defend Carmelide.

#### Knighting of Segurant and confrontation of Galehaut

Episode V: Segurant distinguishes himself on the Isle Non Sachant by driving away lions. He is knighted along with 400 other young knights. A tournament follows, during which Segurant takes the place of the quintaine without anyone managing to unseat him. After lunch, no one dares to challenge him. An unknown knight attempts to do so, but is knocked down and taken back to his room. Segurant then discovers that it is none other than Hector le Brun le Jeune, his father, who is injured. Segurant is sorry to have knocked him down, but his father is proud of him.

Episode VI: Segurant sets out with four squires to confront his uncle Galehaut le Jeune in the Wild Kingdom. They set sail, landing in Carmelide, where he meets knights who are going to the Pas Berthelais to fight the pagans there. The captain offers to shelter Segurant, but asks for a favor in return. When they are attacked by 200 knights, he demands that they all dismount so he can face them alone. He kills 28 of them and drives the others away, earning general applause.

Episode VII: At Berthelais Castle, the pagans are alarmed by Segurant’s exploits. The son of the local lord, Tarant, offers to duel him; Segurant defeats him and beheads him. The King of Carmelide honors Segurant and

asks him to stay a while in his castle. News arrive about his uncle Galehaut: he will guard a bridge until the hero of the Pas Berthelais comes to confront him.

Episode VIII: Segurant leaves for the bridge guarded by Galehaut. He meets a knight, Hoderis, who asks him to accompany him to his castle. At a chapel, they are attacked by forty knights. Segurant kills 15 of them and drives the others away. He is acclaimed at the castle. On the way, they praise Galehaut's exploits, and he sends him a message that they will fight the next day. Learning that he is the hero of the Pas Berthelais, Galehaut joins him. Segurant does not tell him his name, but Galehaut notices that he resembles his cousin Hector (Segurant's father). They eat and then go to sleep separately.

Episode IX: Galehaut, son of the Beautiful Giantess, Lord of the Estranges Isles (another Galehaut, a character from the *Lancelot proper*) stays in Gorre for a month and a half with Baudemagu, his constable. A Saxon fleet threatens them. Baudemagu leads Galehaut's fleet which is going to confront them, but because of a few disobedient sailors, the Saxon admiral manages to escape. Galehaut has the prisoners sent to King Arthur and has the recalcitrant sailors burned on a boat.

Episode X: Segurant and Galehaut fight, Galehaut is unable to overthrow Segurant on the first go and so he takes off the shield that the Emperor of Rome had given him. On the fourth impact, Segurant manages to unseat Galehaut, dismounts and reveals to him that he is none other than his nephew. Galehaut therefore offers him his shield, and sends a messenger to the Isle Non Sachant to convey the news. Segurant remains to kill giants in the Wild Kingdom with Galehaut. (This last episode of the giants is only found in the Arsenal manuscript, the manuscripts that have taken up episodes VIII and X after Rusticien II stop before that)

#### Adventures of Dinadan

Episode XI: Dinadan, knight of the Ten Guards, because he is accompanied by ten guards, goes to a widow, who is attacked by a knight, whom Dinadan kills, but refuses to stay when the widow asks him to. He meets two young ladies who have taken refuge in a chapel to escape the assaults of two knights who covet them, he escorts them and kills their two assailants. Finally, he goes in search of Bliobéris, who "killed the serpent" as had been told before (not told before).

Episode XII: Galehaut and Segurant travel to Carmelide, where a three-day tournament is being held in Segurant's honor. Segurant wants to go meet Arthur, but he has promised Galehaut that he will go to the Isle Non Sachant, where he is greeted with joy. Galehaut returns to the Wild Kingdom.

Episode XIII: In the forest of Darnantes, Bliobéris seeks Dinadan and finds him at a widow's house. Dinadan then explains to her why he is protected by ten guards, ten villains, who accompany him *pour gaberie*, to play pranks, and to guard him against other knights. The next day he separates from his ten guards. Two young ladies are going to be abused by two knights and call for help, Dinadan kills them. He and Bliobéris then take the young ladies home. They arrive at the Camelot tournament, where they distinguish themselves. In the evening, Dinadan entertains the court with his jabs in front of King Arthur and Guinevere.

Episode XIV: The next day, the knights of London confront those of Camelot. Arthur participates incognito, Dinadan recognizes him and overthrows him, then they confront each other on foot. The knights of London capture Dinadan, and the knights of Camelot free him. During dinner, Dinadan continues to entertain the audience.

#### The Tournament of Winchester (Vincestre)

Episode XV: Segurant sends a message to Winchester to challenge all the knights there. King Arthur therefore organizes a tournament, and sends a message to the Fisher King, King Pellès, to find out if the knight who issues this challenge is the one who will accomplish the adventure of the Grail.

Episode XVI: Morgana plots against Arthur to destroy his relationship with his wife. She builds the prison she intends for Lancelot (in the *Lancelot proper*) where he will paint on the walls, notably depicting his relationship with Guinevere, as his only companion is blind. King Claudas asks Morgana for her support against Arthur, and offers to crown her Queen of Logres, but she replies that King Arthur has, in his service, a knight far too powerful. Claudas also talks with Marc.

Episode XVII: Dinadan leaves King Arthur's court and meets Palamedes in the forest of Darnantes. They then go to Winchester, but despite Dinadan's insistence, Palamedes does not stay for the tournament and goes to Ireland. Dinadan, however, awaits the exploits of Segurant.

Episode XVIII: Segurant sends 40 knights to Vincestre who install his tent there, adorned with a precious stone which gives off a marvelous light.

Episode XIX: Galehaut impregnates a woman, but after five days both the woman and child die. He is grief-stricken but builds a magnificent palace in Sorelois. Feeling that without the conquest of Logres, his coronation would be worthless, he postpones his coronation for three years, when the truce Baudemagu had agreed with Arthur has ended and he can resume the war. He encourages Baudemagu and his knights to go to Winchester. Two knights fight over a lady, but she wants neither of them, so Galehaut sends them packing.

Episode XX: Guinevere goes to Winchester on Arthur's orders, she visits Segurant's tent and admires its stone.

Episode XXI: The kings of Wales and Ireland arrive at Vincestre with their fleets, the latter with Palamedes. In his quest for the Glancing Beast, he had promised not to bear arms in Guinevere's presence for three years. When he sees her, he goes mad because he realizes he will not be able to participate in the tournament and so flees into the forest.

Episode XXII: King Marc and Claudas plot against Tristan. Marc accuses Hoël of the death of his cousin Aucert and asks Tristan to defend him in the judicial duel that follows. Tristan, learning of the Tournament of Winchester, postpones the duel so he can attend it. (Despite the announcement, Tristan is not present at the Tournament of Winchester.)

Episode XXIII: Segurant arrives in Winchester incognito and goes to his tent, which is empty, because all the knights of the Isle Non Sachant are jousting. Lamorat distinguishes himself in the tournament. In the evening, the knights of his island return to his quarters and find Segurant. Dinadan meets him and tells him about adventures from his youth during supper.

Episode XXIV: Segurant receives lance blows from everyone on the quintaine, but no one manages to unseat him. Lancelot also distinguishes himself, Keu leads him to Segurant who has just killed Caradoc and Méléagant.

Episode XXV: A young lady casts an enchantment to find out where Méléagant is, having fled from his forest. She learns that he is in Winchester but will be injured there. One of her maids goes to find him and brings him back on a stretcher. Once healed, he is enchanted and can no longer stop chopping wood.

Episode XXVI: A young lady of the Lady of the Lake forbids Lancelot from jousting more than once against Segurant, after a tantrum he complies and then leaves for the adjacent forest. In the evening, Arthur goes to Segurant's tent and compliments him, Dinadan entertains the public.

Episode XXVII: Morgana and the enchantress Sibylle summon demons, one of which, Lucifer, takes the form of a dragon. Behind the stands, knights, who are in fact other demons, are fighting when this dragon begins to devour them. A wall of fire summoned by Sibylle prevents the knights in the tournament from rushing to their aid. Segurant alone manages to cross it, but walking on a patch of enchanted land, he finds himself obsessed with the dragon's quest and charges after it. The next day, Arthur ends the tournament for the time being and decides to wait for the Knight of the Dragon for a fortnight.

### The Quest for Segurant

Episode XXVIII: Dinadan sets out in search of Segurant, finding himself in a pavilion with Morgana, Sibylle and the felonious knight Bréhu sans Pitié. After various threats and jokes, they inform him that everything that happened with the dragon was only an enchantment, so he abandons the idea of finding Segurant, which must also be an illusion, and returns to Vincestre to tell Arthur.

Episode XXIX: Lancelot kills a giant, the damsel of the Lady of the Lake brings his head back to Vincestre, which she hangs around the quintain, recounting her exploit. Meanwhile, Lancelot also frees a damsel threatened by a dwarf and two knights, and takes her home.

Episode XXX: The story tells us that Segurant will not be able to kill the dragon, which is an illusory form of the demon. King Solomon himself, when confronted with such demons, had only been able to lock them in a bottle and throw them into the sea, where they move around causing storms etc. Segurant is hosted by a hermit and a cleric whose provisions he devours, they notice his appetite. The next day, the hermit follows Segurant but flees at the sight of the dragon.



Episode XXXI: A young lady of Morgana comes to tell King Arthur that Segurant was part of an enchantment, a mirage. Everyone returns home except the knights of Isle Non Sachant and the King of Ireland. The latter asks his troops to look for Palamedes. Lancelot finally leaves the forest carrying Palamedes on his horse, so badly injured that he is not recognized until he reveals his identity. The King of Ireland is therefore about to leave, but Palamedes does not follow him. The knights who had gone to look for him have been killed by the giants of the forest.

Episode XXXII: Palamedes pursues Guerrehet who is running after the Glatissante Beast, they fight, unhorse each other, continue on foot. A lady asks them for help against her husband who mistreated her, Guerrehet wants to go, Palamedes releases him from the fight until he has helped her, they reveal their names, and abandon the fight. Palamedes meets three knights, unhorses two, the third flees but returns to push Palamedes into a river, he then finds him and defeats him. He finds the lady from before, who asks for his help after she was mutilated genitally for having sinned with one of her serfs. Palamedes reprimands her but agrees to fight her husband the next day. He sleeps at a squire's house.

Episode XXXIII: King Mark sends Count Gralier the order to begin war against Hoel. He also sends Tristan to Ireland in the hope that he will be killed there (if he is recognized, being the murderer of the Morholt). Gralier arrives in Cornwall, Mark offers him animals laden with the treasures he stole from Pellinor. Gralier uses these riches to build an army and attacks Hoel. Kahedin succeeds in conquering one of Gralier's castles.

Episode XXXIV: Baudemagu returns to Sorelois from the Tournament of Winchester and tells Galehaut des Estranges Isles about his adventures. He begins to attack the kingdom of Logres after the truce is over. Galehaut reprimands him, the story mentions that all this is recounted in the book by Gautier Map. (the *Lancelot proper*) But not the rest: Galehaut asks Golistan of the Puy Perdu to give him the keys to his cities, he kills the messenger and rides to Galehaut's court, with his head hanging from his saddle. Galehaut kills him in a duel and buries him with honors in Sorelois.

Episode XXXV: By bringing Yseult back to King Mark, Tristan had killed Galehaut's parents (in the *Prose Tristan*). Lancelot then stays with Galehaut, who dreams of having Tristan by his side as well. He would have gone to Logres following his promise but is then too much in love with Yseult, and he is still on good terms with Mark. During a chess game with him, he demands the organization of a tournament in Norhout to attract Lancelot there, which Mark accepts. Galehaut hears about it and understands that only the strength of love can keep Tristan in Cornwall, so they want to go to Norhout, but Gawain and Lionel arrive and it turns out that they must instead support Arthur at the Roche aux Sesnes.

Episode XXXVI: The squire with whom Palamedes is staying details the abuse suffered by the woman he is to defend. After a long fight, Palamedes decapitates his opponent. Seeing that Palamedes is injured, the squire takes him home. The lady has a monastery built on the site of the castle and takes the veil.

Episode XXXVII: 200 knights from the Isle Non Sachant set out in search of Segurant, in groups of fifty, for fear that they would be massacred like their ancestors who had set out in search of Merlin in the time of Uther. Fifty of the knights arrive at Morgana's castle, who promises to take them to the Dragon's lair, where Segurant will confront him. In reality, she sends them to the forest of Pommenglois, home of the damsel of Pommenglois who had already enchanted Mélégant. The damsel of Pommenglois asks Bréhus to bring them back to her house, and so a hundred knights are enchanted in Pommenglois.

Episode XXXVIII: At the Norhout tournament, the two halves of Cornwall clash. Frightened by the effect Tristan's prowess would have on Yseult's heart, Marc doesn't even let her know there is a tournament, but places a mannequin of her image in the stands in her place. He also has Brangain surveilled and tells her that the noise she can hear is just people selling horses. She nevertheless realizes the deception, manages to set fire to the tower where she is being held, and is rescued. She spends the night with Tristan, and the next morning goes to Marc to tell him that the knights are preparing for the tournament, including Tristan. Marc asks Tristan to bring Yseult to the lodges, saying that Andret had promised to do so the day before and that he had betrayed him: he orders that Andret's castle be destroyed. Tristan excels in the jousts, particularly in the place of the quintaine, driving Marc mad with jealousy. The following day, Marc leaves Yseult to Tristan and joins the fray himself. Lamorat wounds Marc so seriously that the tournament is interrupted for the day. Lamorat fears that he will take revenge (the narrator reminds us that Marc would have good reason to resent him since later it would be he who would send Morgana's magical horn to his court, with the power to reveal infidelity), so he flees by

sea. A storm sends him to Ireland, where the king discusses the Tournament of Winchester and Segurant's prowess with him.

Episode XXXIX: Segurant, still in pursuit of the dragon, enters the Perilous Forest, where he kills a giant armed with a large axe and frees the twelve maidens he was holding prisoner in a cave. They take the veil in an abbey. Learning that 200 knights have arrived in Winchester, a thousand knights are ready to set out in search of Segurant, but once again a servant of Morgana says that they are magicians who are as much a part of the illusion as Segurant. The search party is abandoned. Entering the forest of Pommenglois, Segurant frees the knights from the enchantment that holds them (because his enchantment is more powerful) and continues his quest. The knights of the Isle Non Sachant return to wait for him at Vinestre. Méléagant also escapes, returns to Gorre, and plans to kill his sister, accusing her of trying to poison their father to make one of her lovers king of Gorre. Baudemagu chases her out of the kingdom, but she takes refuge in one of her mother's castles. She would later take revenge by pushing Lancelot to kill Méléagant. (His storyline in Chrétien de Troyes' *Chevalier de la Charrette* and then the *Lancelot proper*).

## Appendix 2: Table of the 28 manuscripts in Arioli's edition

Group of mss.	Location, Ms. number.	Discussion before 2010
Prophecies de Merlin I (long)	<a href="#">Bodmer 116</a>	Paton 1926 I.9 ; Berthelot 1992, Koble 2009:95.
	<a href="#">BnF 350</a>	Paton 1926:I.9-10 ; Koble, 2001*:II.2 ; 2009:95
	<a href="#">British Library Add. 25434</a>	Paton 1926:I.10-18 ; Connect 2001*:II.4 ; 2009:95
	<a href="#">British Library Harley 1629</a>	Paton 1926:I.18-19 ; Connect 2001*:II.3 ; 2009:95
	<a href="#">Rennes BM 593</a>	Paton 1926:I.3-9 ; Koble 2009:95, 106-8.
	Modena, envelope fragments 11/1 fasc. 10	<a href="#">Connect 1997</a> , Koble 2001*:II.6 ; 2009:94-6
Prophecies de Merlin II (short)	<a href="#">Bern Burger Library 388</a>	Paton 1926:I.19-20.
	Brussels Royal 9624	Koble 2009:124 ; <a href="#">Debae 1995:195-7</a> [x]
	<a href="#">BnF fr. 98</a>	Paton 1926:I.24-27
	<a href="#">BnF fr. 15211</a>	Paton 1926:I.24-25 ; Koble 2009:124.
	Vatican Reg. Lat. 1687	Paton 1926:I.24-25 ; Koble 2009:137-9.
Proph. de Merlin III	<a href="#">Arsenal 5229</a> (Cardinal Version)	Paton 1926, Koble 2009; <a href="#">Bogdanov 1967</a> (ep. VIII+X)
Prophecies de Merlin IV (compilation)	Venice BN Str. App. 29	Paton 1926:I.35-7 ; Koble 2009:146.
	<a href="#">Chantilly. Bibl.château 644 (n°1081)</a>	Paton 1926:I.37-8
BnF 12599	<a href="#">BnF 12599</a>	<a href="#">Löseth 1891:219-220</a> summarizes the Segurant episode.
“Bnf 358”  Rusticien b1	<a href="#">BnF 358.</a>	<a href="#">Löseth 1891</a> ; Paton 1927 ; <a href="#">Bogdanov 1967</a> (ep. VIII+X)
	<a href="#">Vatican Reg. Lat. 1501</a>	<a href="#">Löseth 1924</a> ; Lath. 1966:80 ; <a href="#">Bogdanov 1967</a> (ep. VIII+X)
	<a href="#">Bodmer 96-1</a>	Lathuillère 1966 [access denied]; <a href="#">Bogdanov 1967</a> [ms. unavailable]; Lathuillère 1970 ; <a href="#">Vieliard 1975:66</a> (mentions Segurant on the quintaine, the tournament)
Rusticien b1 then b2	<a href="#">Bodmer 96-2</a>	
London-Turin (Rusticien b2)	British Library Add. 36673	Lathuillère 1966:49-50; <a href="#">Bogdanov 1967</a> (ep. VIII and X)
	Turin L.I.7	Patton 1927; Lathuillère 1966:82-5; <a href="#">Bogdanov 1967</a> (press.)
Rusticien b1	Florence, B.Med.La. Ashburnham 123	<a href="#">Löseth 1924</a> ; Lathuillère 1966:42-5; <a href="#">Bogdanov 1967</a> [x]
	[fragments] Bologna <sup>1</sup>	Longobardi 1992, 1996, edited in more detail by Arioli.
	New York Pierpont Morgan M 916	Lathuillère 1966:90-1; <a href="#">Bogdanov 1967</a> (ep. VIII and X)
	<a href="#">Oxford Bodleian Douce 383</a> [frag.]	<a href="#">Bogdanov 1964</a> ; Lathuillere 1966:56-7
Rusticien b2	Berlin State Library PK Hamilton 581	Bogdanov 1991
	<a href="#">BnF fr. 340</a>	Lathuillère 1966:59-61; <a href="#">Bogdanov 1967</a> (ep. VIII and X)
	<a href="#">BnF fr. 355</a>	Löseth 1891; Lathuillère 64-6; <a href="#">Bogdanov 1967</a> (ibid)

<sup>1</sup> Collection of manuscripts, envelope 7 (old number 1bis) n. 12 (Felini) and 13 (Folchi)

### Appendix 3: Composition of the different branches of the Prophecies de Merlin

[Also online, in French.](#) Compiled from Paton 1926-1927, Berthelot 1992, Koble 1997-2001, 2009a (*Prophecies*), 2009b (Segurant), 2020, and Arioli 2019a (edition, volumes I and II) and 2019b (*Étude*). For the correspondence of the manuscripts, given only very partially here, see Koble for the long version (2009a:97-103) and the short version (2009a:125-132, which, however, seems to skip from XXVIII to XXXIX) and the appendices of Arioli 2019b.

Ms. Arsenal 5229 (Cardinal Version of Arioli)	Long version of the Prophecies de Merlin (Ms. Bodmer 116)	“Short” version of the PdM	Group IV “compilation”
In yellow, THE episodes of the cardinal version. (Numbering by Arioli, description inspired by those of him and Koble) In blue, THE episodes of the prophetic storyline, Merlin, his prophecies and his scribes, shared by the different branches. (numbering of the prophecies about Segurant by Arioli)	In orange the romance adventures specific to the long version. Among these, in light orange Arioli’s “Complementary Romance Version”, the adventures which involve Segurant. Chaptering by Nathalie Koble in <a href="#">her 2001 edition based on ms. Bodmer 116</a> . [ <a href="#">a PDF</a> ] See her summary of the long version. Paton’s numbering for the Rennes ms.	In green, episodes common to the Arsenal ms. and the short version.	Focuses mainly on prophecies, like the short version but out of order. The Vêrard edition shares materials with the Chantilly and Venise ms., but also some with the Arsenal and the long version.
			Fragment of a “Book of Tholomer” and additional prophecies?  <b>Prophecy XI:</b> Segurant becomes King of Jerusalem, no one dares to confront him (Chantilly 32r, 1498:17v)
Book of Antoine (1a-10d)	I-II. (Bodmer 116) Rennes I-XVII: Prologue of Richard of Ireland III. prophetic storyline	Additional Prophecy about the “Good Mariners” ( <a href="#">Paton 1.66-7n11</a> ) Bern 388 45ra-51rb; BnF 98 250r-254r; BnF 15211 1-33r; Br 1-11; (fragments in Vat. Reg. Lat. 89r-90r)	Chantilly 35va-49  Prophecy about the Good Mariners also partly in <a href="#">Vêrard 1498:CXXVc</a> , Venice 87d-88b
	Bodmer IV-V Prophecies about the Dragon of Babylon	Bern 53d-56a	
Episode I: The Bruns shipwrecked on the Isle Non Sachant			
Episode II: Prophecies to Galehaut	<i>Episode shared by the Arsenal ms. and the short version</i>	Episode II: Prophecies to Galehaut Bern 62rb ; BnF 98 f. 21r ; etc.	Chantilly f. 49r-50r (the only manuscript to contain the complete episode); Venice 87rb.
III. Battle at the Roche-aux-Sesnes tournament at Salesbières (announced) IV. The Brun lineage pledges allegiance to Arthur in the workshop of Merlin and Antoine			
prophetic storyline (27b-49d) • Book of Antoine (27rb-43vb) • Merlin’s imprisonment in his	7-15 A prophetic storyline. (Ren 50-134)	Bern 62v-74ra; Brussels 22r-36v BnF 98 276r-278rb,	Chantilly and Venice also contain these prophecies

<p>tomb (43vb-48ra)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Book of the Lady of the Lake (48ra-49vb)</li> </ul> <p><b>Prophecies I to VI about Segurant</b></p>	<p><b>Prophecy I:</b> a knight from the lineage of Galehaut le Brun will visit Merlin (Paton LXIII)</p> <p><b>Prophecy II:</b> Segurant will be crowned king in Abiron (Paton LV-LVI; Koble 7-10)</p> <p><b>Prophecy III:</b> The stones that Hector the Brown brought to the Isle Non Sachant from the Isle aux Griffons will be brought back to Jerusalem when Galahad reigns in Sarraz, and bought back by Greeks. (Paton LXXXVII; Koble XI)</p> <p><b>Prophecy IV-VI :</b> The only knight that will visit me (Merlin) in the Darnantes forest will be Segurant, king of Abiron and Babylone (Paton CXXI; Paton CXXIII-CXXIV; Paton CXXIX-CXXX = Koble XIV)</p>	<p>279r (gap)</p> <p>Bern 75v ; Bruxelles 39v ; BnF 98 280v</p>	<p>(rearranged)</p>
V. Knighting of Segurant (49vb)			
Prophetic storyline: Guinevere's Prophetic Dream (33va-35rb)	XVI. Guenever's Dreams (Rene CXXXIV)	Bern 79v ; Bruxelles 41r ; BnF 98 281r	Venice 60va
VI. Segurant at Pas Berthelais (55va)			
	XVII. prophetic storyline: A young lady goes to Master Antoine with a charter that Merlin sent her before his death: the scribe completes the book of prophecies. A war will break out between the Gasois and those of Filerne. The charter predicts other natural disasters, Intertwined with the Book of Meliadus? (chap. XX-XXVIII Koble)		
VII. Segurant against Tarant son of Berthelais (59ra)	XVIII: Mador de la Porte (36)		
	XIX-XX. Meliadus at the tomb of Merlin, Master Antoine collects his prophecies. (38) — Ren CXXXVII-CXLIX.		
Free from Meliadus (61d-62d)	XXI. Antoine reads the book of Blaise and the prophecies of Merlin		
<b>Prophecy VII on Segurant</b>	<b>Prophecy VII:</b> Segurant will leave Jerusalem to be crowned in Abiron, he will speak to the spirit of Merlin at his tomb (Paton CL; Koble XXI)		
VIII. Segurant finds Galehaut (63a-67d)			
Meliadus and the Lady of the Lake at Merlin's Tomb (67d-70b)	(XIX see above)	BnF 98 282r-287v	
IX. Galehaut, son of the giantess, the high prince, at Baudemagu's (70b-72d)			
X. Galehaut le Brun vs. Segurant (72d-75d)			
Meliadus and the Lady of the Lake at Merlin's tomb (75d-78a)	(XX see above)		
XI. Dinadan, "knight of the ten guards" (78ra-80vc)			
Book of Meliadus (80c-83a)	(end of XX)		



XII. Tournament of Carmelide in honour of Segurant (83a-85c) XIII. Dinadan and Bliobérés (85c-89c) XIV. Tournament at Camelot (89c-92d) XV. Segurant announces that he challenges all the knights at Winchester (92d-94b)			
Book of Meliadus (94b-95d)	XXII Ren 171-173		
XVI. In Morgana's castle (the image room) the text places it after Merlin's quest (96a-97d)			
XVII. Dinadan looking for Palamede. (97d-99b) XVIII. Segurant's Tent in Winchester (99b-100b) XIX. Galehaut des Estranges Iles in Sorelois. Death of his wife and their child at birth (100c-102b) XX. Arthur prepares for the Tournament of Winchester: arrival of Guinevere, visit of the tents (102b-103d)			
Book of Meliadus (103d-105c) <b>Prophecy VIII</b>	XXII (suite) <b>Prophecy VIII:</b> Segurant will be the victim of an enchantment at the Tournament of Winchester, then King of Abiron and at the tomb of Merlin (Paton CLIX-CLX; Koble XXII) [46b-47r?]		
XXI. Madness of Palamedes (105c-106d) XXII. Plot of Marc and Claudas, Tristan wants to go to the Tournament of Winchester (107a-107c) XXIII. Segurant goes to the Tournament of Winchester (107d-110c) XXIV. Tournament of Winchester (110d-113b) XXV. An enchantress finds out Meleagant was wounded at the tournament, and gets him back. (113b-d) XXVI. Lancelot break one lance against Segurant and flees the tournament (113d-118a) XXVII. Morgana and Sybièle the enchantress enchant Segurant (118b-120b)			
Book of Meliadus (120c-122b)	XXII.21-30 Meliadus at the Wise Cleric of Gales		
XXVIII. Dinadan seeks Segurant, delighted (122b-123c)			
XXIX. Adventures of Lancelot after the Tournament (123c-126c) XXX. Segurant le Brun chases away the enchanted dragon (126c-128a)			
Book of Meliadus (128a-129d)	XXII.31-42.		
XXXI. King Arthur is urged to forget Segurant after the tournament as he is told he was part of the illusion (129d-131d) 32 Adventures of Palamède and Guerrehet (131d-134a) XXXIII. King Mark wants to declare war on Hoel of Little Britain (134a-135d)			

XXXIV. Galehaut des Estranges Iles and Golistan du Puy Perdu (135d-137c)			
Book of Meliadus (137c-138d) <b>Prophecy IX on Segurant</b>	XXIII: reading of a prophetic charter reported by Meliadus  <b>Prophecy IX:</b> A marvelous source of boiling water will spring forth in Abiron from Segurant (Paton CLXXVII; Koble XXIII)	Bern 79v ; Brussels 43r	Venice 60va
XXXV. Tristan asks Marc to organize a tournament at Nohaut to attract Lancelot (138d-140a)			
* <a href="#">140a</a> -142c conversation between the Lady of the Lake and Bohort	<i>not found in the long version, specific to the other versions.</i>	<a href="#">Bern 81ra</a> ; Brussels 45r	+ edition <a href="#">1498:54v sqq.</a>
XXXVI. Adventures of Palamedes (142c-144a) XXXVII. Knights of the Isle Non Sachant in search of Segurant (144a-146d) XXXVIII. Norhout Tournament: Yseult replaced by a wooden puppet (146d-151c) XXXIX. Segurant confronts a giant in the Perilous Forest, Knights of the Isle Non Sachant enchanted. (151c-153a)  <b>End of the Cardinal Version.</b>			
Prophetic storyline: The Wise Cleric and Perceval (153b-154c)	XXIV. Ren 179-886 Wise Cleric flying off on the stone (52)	Snippets only in the short version: Bern 83va? Brussels 47v-52r	
	XXV. Wise Cleric on the Stone (53)		
	XXVI: History of the four stones on the crown of the Dragon of Babylon (55v)  <b>Prophecy X:</b> A precious stone belonging to Philip of Greece, taken by Hector le Brun from the Isle aux Griffons, will adorn Segurant's tent, then when he goes to the tomb of Merlin he will have inserted in the altar of Notre-Dame, and it will be recovered by the Dragon of Babylon, who will set it in his crown. (Paton CCV; Koble XXVI)	Fragment on Mark and the Seneschal of Leonois ( <a href="#">Bern 85ra</a> ; Brux 49v)  Fragment on the false Guinevere, ( <a href="#">Bern 86ra</a> ; Brux 52r?)  Fragment on Marc imprisoned, Percival winner of a tournament. ( <a href="#">Bern 89ra-b</a> Brux 55?)	
		Fragment of Bern-Brussels: Segurant at the widow's  <a href="#">Bern 91va</a> Brussels 55v	
–	XXVII. young lady arrives with a charter (59v) Ren CLXXXVII-CCXX	Brussels 55v?	
*154c-157a the Lady of the Lake saves King Urien from an enchantment	XXVIII. Lady of the Lake saves King Urien from an enchantment (61v-64)	<i>The only "Arthurian" story in common between the long version and the Arsenal ms. (Koble 2009)</i>	

Here the manuscript of the Arsenal concludes by grouping together the episodes of the "Book of Helias" where Perceval visits a hermit who owns a book about the young Merlin, which are interspersed with other adventures in the long version of the <i>Prophecies</i> (see below in detail). See Arioli, <i>Séguant</i> , edition t. I, pp. 33-7 for the composition of the manuscript and these concordances (pp. 36-7 for the end of the manuscript).			
Arsenal fol. *157a-159a	(LVII)		
*159a-164a	(LXII and LXVI)		
*164a-167d	(LXXV)		
*167d-171c	(LXXXII and LXXXIX)		
*171c-173b	(XCI) — below in the long version		
<b>End of the Arsenal manuscript</b>			
	XXIX. Golistan the Strong (64-68)		
	XXX. Alexander the Orphan (68)		
	XXXI-XXXV: Tournament of Sorelois and War against the Saxons (70)		XXXV.15-18 = Vérard <a href="#">1498:37a</a>
<i>Episodes about Perceval seem in disorder: he appears wandering in the forest of Darnantes, and looking for Corbenic but seems to happen after the final episodes where he recovers the book of Helias from the hermit and it would be logical that the quest for Corbenic (castle of the Grail) takes place at the end.</i>	XXXVI.: Perceval finds the Hermit in the spinning cage (79)	<i>misplaced: Perceval in the forest of Darnantes?</i>	
	XXXVII-XL: Tournament of Sorelois — continued (83)		
	XLI Perceval challenges a knight to free a young lady, copies an inscription and makes so she will be married (93)		
	XLII. Quarrels of Sibylle and Morgana for the knight Beranger (94)		
	XLIII. War against the Saxons, Daguenet the fool is regent. At Dover, Meleagant does not want to open the gates, he fights Gauvain, and both defeated entrust the city to a knight from London (97)		
	XLIV. Perceval on the road to Corbenic, saves two damsels from four knights, entrusts the land he has conquered to a knight errant (99)		
	XLV. Segurant at the Cité Fort (101)		
	XLVII. War against the Saxons (103)		
	XLVII. Morgana wants to take revenge on Sibylle with the help of Brehus (105)		
	XLVIII. Segurant at the Cité Fort — continued (107)		
	XLIX. War against the Saxons (108)		
	L. Saphar and Palamedes against Sagremor (109)		
	LI. War against the Saxons, Dinadan at the Danse of the Giants (Stonehenge), prophecies of Merlin uttered in the past about this place (111)		LI.8-12 = <a href="#">1498:38a-39c</a>

	LII. Lady of the Lake wants to knight Bohort (114)		
	LIII-LVI: War against the Saxons (115)		
157a-159a	LVII. Book of Helias: Adventures of Perceval (123v)	Bern 93r Bruxelles 58r	
	LVIII. Palamedes and Saphar against Caradoc (125)		
	LIX. War against the Saxons (127)		
	LX. Meanwhile in Sorelois (129v)		
	LXI. Segurant at the Hermit's (130)		
159a-164a	LXII. Book of Helias: Perceval at the Hermit's (132)	Bern 95v Bruxelles 60v	
	LIII. Brehus Without Pity and the Witches (135)		
	LXIV. War against the Saxons (137)		
	LXV. Alexander the Orphan (138)		
159a-164a	LXVI. Book of Helias: Perceval at the Hermit's (139v)	Bern 100v Bruxelles 63v	
	LXVI-LXVIII : Alexander the Orphan (142)		
	LXIX-LXXI. End of the war against the Saxons and beginning of the Crusade. (143)		
	LXXII-LXXIII: Crusade and Retrospective Account about Richard of Jerusalem. (148)		73.1-10 = <a href="#">1498:77a-78c</a> = Venice 49c-51a
	LXXIV. Savari, knight of Carmelide, challenges King Arthur, dies before the duel because he did not swear an oath. (151)		
164a-167d	LXXV. Book of Helias: Perceval at the Hermit's (153)	Brussels 65v	
	LXXVI-LXXVII Lady of the Lake and Bohort, adventure of the Tower of the Copper Knights, won by Segurant (156)		
	LXXVIII. Crusade		
	LXXIX. Alexander the Orphan (160)		
	LXXX. Eglantine of Avalon returns from India to Arthur's Court (162)		
	LXXXI. Alexander the Orphan		
167d-171c	LXXXII. Book of Helias: Perceval at the Hermit's (165)	Brussels 70r-70v (fine)	<a href="#">Winand 2020</a> : end of the original ms. tradition at some point after here?
	LXXXIII. Quarrels of Morgana Sibylle (167)		833 = <a href="#">1498:119c-122c</a> = ms. Venise 82d-85a
	LXXXIV. At the court of Mark (intertwined with the Crusade?) (170)		
	LXXXV. Adventures of Golistan (172)		
	LXXXVI. Lancelot avenges the queen	suspicious episode?	

	against Gehembiert, the German count who humiliated her by grabbing her breast. (174)		
	LXXXVII-LXXXVIII: Claudas tries to get rid of Lancelot by sending him on Crusade. (175)	(interlaced in LXXXIV with Mark?)	
167d-171c	LXXXIX. Books of Meliadus, Books of Merlin (sequel to LXXXXII) 177v		
	XC. Alexander the Orphan (tournament etc.) (181)		
171c-173b	XCI. Books of Meliadus, Books of Merlin (185v)	<i>Episodes from this point onwards are almost not present in the other manuscripts of the long version, but are abridged in the Rennes ms.</i>	
	XCII. Crusade (188)		
	XCIII. The Devil at Arthur's Court: the evil <i>Jubler</i> (= juggler/musician <i>a priori</i> ) (190)		
	XCIV. The witches visit Merlin's tomb, all changed into an apocalyptic element (191)		
	XCV. after the death of Claudas, Margot besieges the Castiel Fort (192)		
	XCVI. At Easter at court, episode of the misshapen baby. (195)		
	XCVII. Tristan in Cornwall (196)	[In the Dijon fragment fol. 8, cf. <a href="#">Vermette 1981</a> ]	
	XCVIII. Palm Tuesday, adventure of Hector des Marais, Bliobleris and Bohort (197)		
	XCIX. Books of Merlin, Wise Cleric reads prophecies to Blaise (198)	[Partly in Harley fol. 65]	
	C. Adventure of Hector (201)		
	CI. A young lady announces the arrival of the Holy Grail at Court (201-202)	[Partly in Harley fol. 66]	
	CII. Books of Meliadus (203)		

#### Appendix 4: [Table of the fragments of the Prophecies de Merlin](#) (incomplete)

Nb	Place	Matr.	Cote	Référence	Content (green=ep .otherwise unknown)	Text
1	Bologna	Bo1a	ASBo, Raccolta di manoscritti, Busta 1, fasc. 4	Benenati, La tradizione delle Prophecies de Merlin: i frammenti, cit., pp. 13-38.		Benenati
1	Bologna	Bo1b	ASBo, Raccolta di manoscritti, Busta 1, fasc. 4	Benenati, La tradizione delle Prophecies de Merlin: i frammenti, cit., pp. 13-38.	Morgana and Sybille, received by Queen Helyabel of Norgales, complain of the violence suffered at the hands of the brigand Anduin of Norgales. The queen replies that King Helyant of Norgales is aware of the situation but could not act because he was urgently summoned to Kamaalot. She promises that the criminal will be sought out the very next day. (recto) One of Morgana's servants, Ilners, stumbles upon Anduin's hideout on the road to Cambénic and returns to inform his lady. (verso)	<a href="#">Benenati 2020</a>

2	Bologna	Bo2	ASBo, Raccolta di manoscritti, Busta 1, fasc. 6	M. Longobardi, Altri recuperi d'archivio: le Prophécies de Merlin, in «Studi Mediolatini e Volgari», XXXV (1989), pp. 73-140.		Longobardi 1989
3	Bologna	Bo3a Bo3b	ASBo, Raccolta di manoscritti, Busta 1, fasc. 7	Longobardi 1989		Longobardi 1989
4	Bologna	Bo4a Bo4b	ASBo, Raccolta di manoscritti, Busta 1, fasc. 9	Longobardi 1989		Longobardi 1989
5	Bologna	Bo5a Bo5b	ASBo, Raccolta di manoscritti, Busta 1, fasc. 10	Longobardi 1989		Longobardi 1989
6	Bologna	Bo6	ASBo, Raccolta di manoscritti, Busta 1, fasc. 16	Longobardi, Monica, «Dall'Archivio di Stato di Bologna alla Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio: resti del Tristan en prose e de Les prophécies de Merlin », Studi mediolatini e volgari, 39, 1993, pp. 81-87. Benenati, La tradizione delle Prophecies de Merlin: i frammenti, cit., pp. 94-106.		Longobardi 1993
7	Bologna	Bo7	ASBo, Raccolta di manoscritti, Busta 2, fasc. 3	M. Longobardi, Ancora nove frammenti della Vulgata: l'Estoire de Graal, i/ Lancelot, la Queste, in «Giornale Italiano di Filologia», XLVI (1994), XLVII (1995), p. 104. Benenati 111-116		Longobardi 1994-1995
8	Bologna	Bo8	ASBo, Raccolta di manoscritti, Busta 2, fasc. 6	Longobardi 1994-1995		Longobardi 1994-1995
9	Bologna	Bo9	ASBo, Raccolta di manoscritti, Busta 2, fasc. 7	Longobardi 1993 p. 75-81, Benenati 121-137		Longobardi 1993
10	Bologna	Bo10	ASBo, Raccolta di manoscritti, Busta 2, fasc. 7	Benenati 138-145	Mador de la Porte is searching for Gaeriz de Bareu. He encounters a knight, Dayn the Proud, so tall that he mistakes him for the giant Aliz, and decides to challenge him. (recto) With a single blow, Mador unhorses him; he falls to the ground and begs Mador for mercy before fleeing by throwing himself into a fountain. He then sees knights dragging a naked knight in breeches. (verso)	<a href="#">Benenati 2020</a>
11	Bologna	Bo11a Bo11b	Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, Fondo Casini, Cartone XVIII, fasc. 1	Longobardi 1993, pp. 88-103		Longobardi 1993
12	Bologna	Bo12	Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio, A 2937	<a href="#">Longobardi, Un nuovo frammento delle Prophecies de Merlin dall'Archiginnasio di Bologna, in «L'Archiginnasio», 99 (2004), pp. 126-141.</a>	Percival at the hermit Helias, Prophecy about the “Son of Pepin” (= Bodmer 151vb-152vb)	<a href="#">Longobardi 2004</a>
13	Bologna	Bo13	Biblioteca Universitaria di	G. Brunel-Lobrichon, Un nouveau fragment des Prophécies de Merlin,		Brunel-Lobrichon 1988



			Bologna, BUB, 596 (HH) 6/2	in Miscellanea di studi romanzi offerta a Giuliano Gasca Queirazza per il suo 65° compleanno, a cura di A. Cornagliotti, et al, Alessandria, Edizioni dell'Orso, 1988, pp. 91-98.		
14	Modena	Mo1a-h (8 frag.)	Archivio di Stato di Modena, ASMo, Frammenti, busta 11/A, fasc. 4	F. Bogdanow, A New Fragment of the Tournament of Sorelois, in «Romance Philology», XVI, 3 (1963), p. 268 ; L. Mantovani, Le Prophecies de Merlin presso L'archivio di Stato di Modena: trascrizione e recupero testuale di un frammento inedito, tesi di laurea triennale, relatrice Prof.ssa M. Longobardi, correlatore Prof. A. Antonelli, Università degli studi di Ferrara, aa. 2012-2013 ; Benenati ; pp. 181-318.		Benenati
15	Modena	Mo2	ASMo, Frammenti, busta 11/A, fasc. 9	Bogdanow 1963	Tournament of Sorelois	<a href="#">Bogdanow 1963</a>
16	Modena	Mo3a Mo3b Mo3c	ASMo, Frammenti, busta 11/A, fasc. 10	Bogdanow, Some Hitherto Unknown Fragments of the Prophécies de Merlin, in History and Structure of French, a cura di F. J. Barnett, et al., Oxford, Blackwell, 1972, pp. 31-59. ; F. Bogdanow, A new fragment of Alexandre l'Orphelin, in «Nottingham Medieval Studies», 16 (1972), pp. 61-68.	Fight of Percival against the Knight of the Tower (= Bodmer 94a) Sagremor reproaches Arthur, war against the Saxons led by Daguenet, duel Gauvain vs. Méléagant.(= Bodmer 98b-100a) Mo3b : Segurant at the Hermit, Percival at the Hermit Helias (= Bodmer 131b-132b)	<a href="#">Bogdanow 1972a</a>
17	Dijon	Dia-e (5 frag.)	Bibliothèque Municipale de Dijon 2930	<a href="#">R. Vermette, An Unrecorded Fragment of Richart d'Irlandés Prophécies de Merlin, in «Romance Philology», XXXIV, 3 (1981), pp. 277-292.</a>	Various episodes from the long version about Alexander the Orphan notably.	<a href="#">Vermette 1981</a>
18	Cracovie	Kr	Bibliotheca Jagiellonska, Gall, fol. 178	<a href="#">BUSBY, Cultura Neolatina: «Quelques fragments inédits de romans en prose», vol. 3-4 (1983), pp. 125-166 ; P. Tylus, Fragment de Cracovie des Prophécies de Merlin, in «Romanica Cracoviensia», 2 (2002), pp. 201-206.</a>	Beranger at Sybille's castle	<a href="#">Tylus 2002</a>
19	Trier	Tr	Stadtbibliothek, Mappe VIII, fragment 4	F. Bonnardot, Fragments d'une traduction de la Bible en vers français, in «Romania», XVI (1887), pp. 177-213, a p. 178 ; Paton l'a pas consulté, Arioli le mentionne rerouvé (2016?) Benenati 385-398.	Bifolio that corresponds to fol. 1vb, 2va-3va et 5va-6rb in ms. Bodmer	Benenati