

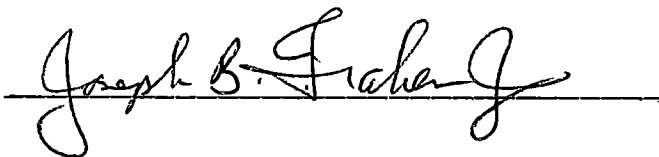
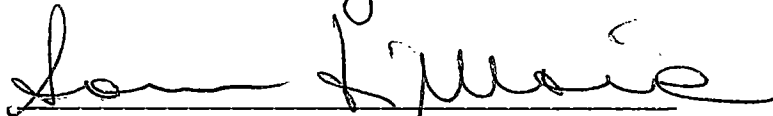
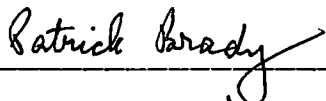
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Anna Morton entitled "The Woman Traveller in French Literature of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Modern Foreign Languages.



Paul Barrette, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

THE WOMAN TRAVELLER
IN FRENCH LITERATURE
OF THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Anna Morton
May, 2000

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Jerry, whose sustaining love is my joy and solace.

Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge the inspiration and guidance of my chairman, Dr. Paul Barrette, and his tireless, unrelenting efforts in monitoring the progress of this dissertation. I appreciate the work and patience of my committee members, Dr. Patrick Brady, Dr. Salvatore DiMaria and Dr. Joseph B. Trahern, Jr.

The formatting of this document would have been extremely difficult and time-consuming without the expertise of Charlotte Duncan. The courteous and friendly help of the library staff at the University of Tennessee, particularly that of the staff in inter-library loan and in circulation, has brightened many of my days.

I would not have been able to continue my studies without the warm support and crucial assistance of Dr. Paul Barrette, Dr. Susan Martin, Dr. Patrick Brady, Dr. Jerome Morton and Dr. Anne Mayhew, warriors all.

Abstract

This dissertation studies the woman traveller in French narrative literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with emphasis on the courtly romance. It examines factual aspects of women's travel in the literature under study, offering for comparison some factual material from other sources. The study shows that a focus on the travel of women often allows their identities to emerge sharply and to develop as they respond to the challenges, foreseen and unforeseen, of the road. Following women's travel in this literature reveals shifts in their portrayal that correspond to chronology, theme and genre. In the twelfth century, the theme of the shorter narrative forms is the intense love that motivates the travels of often persecuted women who have the full sympathy of a narrator who values the love they experience. The classic romans courtois of the great twelfth-century poet Chrétien de Troyes present the theme that love should be integrated into a broader societal perspective in which a chivalry of service is of first importance. Women travellers, usually strong and resourceful, value and serve this idea. In the thirteenth century, competent, independent women travellers are depicted in the romans d'aventure. Although the travel in the romans d'aventure is motivated by love, still a prominent theme, the idea of women's self-sufficiency is important as well. However, in the thirteenth-century Arthurian romances, the themes of chivalry and the camaraderie of knights receive increasing emphasis. More and more, the woman traveller serves the knight's story. Sometimes the traveller in these romances deteriorates in character from her usually high-minded

counterpart in the work of Chrétien de Troyes. In thirteenth-century verse and prose romances, fairly frequent examples of the unsavory types of women travellers that overrun Guiron le Courtois appear. The contrast between twelfth-century depictions of women travellers where love is an important theme and those in Guiron le Courtois where the theme is a chivalry reduced to the camaraderie of severely misogynistic knights emphasizes the widely differing incarnations of the woman traveller in this literature

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Introduction

This dissertation proposes to study the woman traveller in French narrative literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with emphasis on the courtly romance (le roman courtois). From time to time it will offer for comparative purposes factual material concerning women's travel in the medieval period. The factual component of the dissertation covers a wider time span than does the imaginative literature: information of a factual nature specifically about women's travel in any part of the medieval period is scant and must sometimes be derived indirectly. Facts from any moment in the period are therefore precious and deserve to be included in an attempt to provide a context for the representation of women's travel in imaginative literature.

Two reasons account for the choice of the genre emphasized. First, a lot of women's travel occurs in French courtly romances. Secondly, factual material about women's travel in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has been even more difficult to find than for earlier and later medieval centuries and therefore invites investigation. This scarcity leads us to see what imaginative sources say about the topic; in some cases the fictional representation seems to provide a realistic picture of certain aspects of women's travel and to give as accurate a portrayal of those aspects as we are likely to find.

The study will take into account the various physical aspects of the woman traveller's journey, such as mount and apparel, terrain and distance covered, lodgings and people met or travelled with. It

will also, of course, examine important intangibles: her reasons for travel, her relationships to companions or people met on the journey, the attitudes of her narrator and of society toward her that the journey reveals. It will look at the traveller's social and economic station, her personality, her character. It will observe traits the journeys bring out in her and changes she appears to undergo as a result of her journey.

The life-changing journeys of saints, taken without leaving their domiciles, remind us that such journeys may affect that individual and the world more importantly than those of concrete travellers, as may the metaphorical journeys taken by women who stay at home. But the experiences of the concrete traveller seem easier to see, to speak of, to imagine, to understand; the social and psychological changes in the literal traveller's life as a result of her journeys may be more obvious or more readily discernible than those of her counterpart who remains at home or in the cloister. To construct an appealing narrative about a woman at home may require more than to write one about a woman on the road, where much, foreseen and unforeseen, may feasibly be invented to test her resources, to show who she is and how she develops as a result of her adventures while travelling.

An extensive sifting of titles in bibliographical sources reveals no study to date of the type proposed here. Book sections, articles or paragraphs that deal with aspects of travel by either sex in imaginative French literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries have been difficult to find. No work that I have found

specifically treats as its focus the actual, historical travel of French women during this period. However, numerous studies, such as an excellent recent one by Jean Verdon, provide information relevant to both fictional and actual travel.

In addition, many subjects are peripherally relevant to concerns the present study touches upon; almost any commentary involving women characters or historical women of the period could possibly have some bearing here. Many articles in recent years have dealt, for example, with the relevant topic of attitudes toward women as expressed in Arthurian literature. Such considerations account for titles in the bibliography that might seem to have little to do with issues central to travel topics.

The discussions in this study look at the representations of travelling women first in twelfth-century literature and then in thirteenth. First examined are twelfth-century narrative genres that do not belong to the study's genre of emphasis. These works are studied with an eye toward comparing and contrasting their treatments of travelling women with those in the study's major genre. Sections treating the latter then follow. Thirteenth-century literature is covered subsequently in a similar fashion. Historical information is inserted into these discussions to provide insight into the relationship of the fictional representations to what has been found about real-life travel of women in the medieval period.

Chapter One: Women Travellers in Twelfth-Century French Literature

Section One: Women Travellers in Twelfth-Century Narrative Genres Minor to the Study

The Oxford version of the epic (the "supreme" epic, as one critic has justly called it) La Chanson de Roland was composed about the year 1100 in 291 unequal stanzas of ten-syllable assonanced lines. The manuscript itself probably dates from the second quarter of the twelfth century (Owen, 13).¹ This epic recounts the travels of one of the first women in twelfth-century French literature, Bramimonde, the widow of Marsile, the Saracen king conquered by Charlemagne's forces and dealt his death blow (the severing of his right hand) by Roland himself at Roncevaux. Having accomplished final victory at Saragossa over the Saracens of Spain and the forces from the East who arrive tardily to help them, the French king and emperor receives from the Saracen queen the city's fortifications. "E Brami[mund]e les turs li ad rendues:/Les dis sunt grandes, les cinquante menues" (3655-3656) ("From Bramimonde he has received the towers,/Ten of them high, the other fifty small"). Marsile has by this time died and "L'anme de lui as vifs diables dunet" (3647) ("His soul he gives up to the fiends of hell"). Charlemagne offers the

¹English interpretation of the Old French language and English quotations from the text are from Owen's translation throughout this discussion; the Old French is from Segre's edition.

choice of death or baptism to all the Saracens but one, Bramimonde, whom he wishes to take back to Aix with him and convert to Christianity through love of the faith. He in fact does this, and Bramimonde takes the Christian name of Juliane. Numerous French noblewomen act as her godparents (3982-3987). Bramimonde's journey and voluntary conversion give us evidence of Charlemagne's mercy and magnanimity (Keller, 116) and of the futility of pagan idols. Thus they are important to two of the narrator's purposes: the epic glorification of Charlemagne and of Christianity. Bramimonde's involuntary journey to Aix as Charlemagne's captive illustrates a point critical to all discussion of women travellers here: like Bramimonde, those travellers (unless they are the creations of Marie de France's narrators, and even they are inevitably influenced by a male-serving culture) are the prisoners of narrators created by male artists, just as they are the prisoners of narratives of which the usual primary purpose is to glorify male protagonists. These points, though familiar, require acknowledgment.

Hans-Erich Keller concludes that the Bramimonde episodes which show Bramimonde's volatility and penchant for violence contrast with the majestic dignity of Charlemagne (112), who wants to convert her through her own love of God. To support his argument that the narrator's intention is to show the difficulties that this woman presents to Charlemagne, Keller offers information about the possible significance of the name Bramimonde. He states that in the Oxford version the name would be the rough equivalent of the modern French adjective gueularde (114), pointing out that the Old French

verb braire, which signifies "crier très fort, gueuler" (114), is in the Oxford version given its Anglo-Saxon equivalent "brammen 'mugir; rugir; grogner (en parlant d'un porc en chaleur)'" (114). The word Bramimonde would not be related to the (differently spelled) word immonde, which came into the language about 1220 according to Le nouveau petit Robert (1130).

Nevertheless, Bramimonde is treated with some respect in this epic. She is never spoken of directly in derogatory terms. At her first appearance in the story she conducts herself with dignity. The Saracen leaders have been giving Ganelon gifts to show their good will, for he has just agreed to betray the French. In laisse fifty Bramimonde follows suit:

Atant I vint reïne Bramimunde:

-Jo vos aim mult, sire, -dist ele al cunte

-Car mult vos priset mi sire e tuit si hume.

A vostre femme enveierai dous nusches;

Bien i ad or, matices e jacunces:

Mielz valent eles que tut l'aveir de Rume.

Vostre emperere si bones ne vit unches.--

Il les as prises, en sa hoese les butet. AOI. (634-641)

(Then there stepped forward Bramimonde the queen:

'I love you well, sir,' to the count she said,

'Since my lord and his men esteem you so.

To your wife I will send two necklaces

Heavy with gold, jacinths and amethysts:

They are worth more than all the wealth of Rome.

Your emperor has never seen their like.'

He took them both and stuck them in his boot. AOI.)

Bramimonde's remarks show pride in her royal largesse. The poem's audience, however, may see what she says as a display of stupidity and arrogance or, at kindest, naivety. Two gold necklaces set with semi-precious stones are not worth all the wealth of Rome.

Much of her behavior afterward is less than regal to occidental eyes--the ones that matter in this case--in that she displays neither reserve, as Keller notes, nor, more importantly, the proper courage. Dissimilar to the resourceful and ever active converted Saracen princess Guibourc of the William cycle, another of the great twelfth-century French epics, Bramimonde faces adversity with a less than iron resolve. Moreover, she vocalizes her distress in the presence of a mortally wounded husband and royal counselors. Bramimonde is dissimilar as well to the spirited, resourceful, always cheerful and constantly travelling Saracen princess Nicolette of the thirteenth century's playful *chante-fable*, Aucassin et Nicolette. Bramimonde merely laments that there is no one to kill Charlemagne (2608), offering no clever scheme to get him killed. In fact, out of fear and awakening admiration, she repeatedly praises the courage and valor of Charlemagne (2605-2606; 2734-2741). Finally, the dying Marsile can stand it no longer and tells her, "--Laissez ester!" (2743) ("No more of that!"). Later, she bewails the fact that Charlemagne has slain Baligant, the aged emir come to assist Marsile's decimated forces. Charlemagne the evening before has slain in battle Baligant's valiant son; Baligant's brother has also

fallen. Hearing his wife mourn Baligant's demise, her husband Marsile turns his face to the wall and dies (3641-3647). Clearly, Bramimonde is deficient in the nursing skills possessed by twelfth-century women travellers such as Iseut.

However, Bramimonde's thoughtless volubility (and in garrulous, forthright speech she is no different from the admirable Guibourc, who directs male travel but does not travel herself) establishes some of her nobler qualities. She is in despair because her husband is gravely wounded (and this distress would imply sincere love); she has high esteem for him and is dismayed about her country's loss of his leadership (2576-2579). Of course, her condemnation of her pagan gods (which occurs upon Marsile's return to Saragossa in defeat [2580-2591] and upon the arrival of the emir Baligant's messengers [2714-2720]) and her awed commentary about Charlemagne set up the credibility of her conversion after her arrival at Aix. Bramimonde's war-influenced conversion brings to mind the legendary conversion of Clovis, who, about to lose a crucial battle, prays to his wife Clothilde's God for aid. He wins the battle and converts to Christianity as a result, Clothilde having long tried to persuade him of the value of becoming Christian.

Curiously, Bramimonde's voice, heard several times before Charlemagne's arrival at Saragossa, is thereafter never heard again. We are told of a great change in her. Charlemagne says to his assembled bishops, "-En ma maisun ad une caitive franche;/Tant ad oït e sermuns e essamples,/Creire voelt Deu, chrestientét demandet" (3978-3981) (I have a noble captive in my house/Whom

parables and sermons have induced/To trust in God and seek the Christian faith"). After her baptism the narrator reports that "Chrestiene est par veire conoissance" (3987) (Christian she is and knows the one true faith"). However, we can only imagine how she might now express herself as a result of her journey to Aix and how different she might seem from her former self.

We are told nothing of Bramimonde's particular progress in her journey with Charlemagne to Aix. She seems to mount a horse along with Charlemagne and his army: "'M[unt]et li reis e si hume trestuz/E Brami[mund]e meinet en sa prisun;/Mais n'ad talent li facet se bien nun" (3679-3681) (The king and every one of his men mount,/With Bramimonde, led to captivity--/Yet he intends nothing but good for her"). One can assume that her itinerary coincides with Charlemagne's. On the return to Aix, the army conquers the city of Narbonne, then goes to Bordeaux to place the oliphant that Roland blew on the altar of Saint Seurin's. Thereafter, "Passet Girunde a mult granz nefes qu'i sunt" (3688) (The host crosses the Gironde "with great ships." At Blaye Charlemagne has Roland, Oliver and the barons of Roncevaux buried. The emperor then crosses mountains and valleys without resting until he arrives at Aix (3689-36960). Charles dismounts from his horse at the perron (3697) in front of "sun paleis halçur" (3698) ("his lofty palace"), and Bramimonde is surely there, too, at least soon. How much she witnesses of the battle of Narbonne and the ceremonies at Bordeaux and Blaye we know not. We do not know how long the journey from Saragossa to Aix takes, nor how Bramimonde is provided for along the way. The

line about Charlemagne's intentions and his subsequent mention of her to his bishops as his noble captive gives us to believe that she is cared for as well as possible.

Charlemagne does not mind, it seems, to travel with women. Ohler writes that the imperial annals from the year 780 announce that Charlemagne intends to journey to Rome to pray (but Ohler explains that political or military motives probably also account partly for his trip), and they record that he took Queen Hildegarde with him. She is his second wife, having married him at the age of thirteen in the year 771; she bears him nine of his at least eighteen children. The lady is fourteen or fifteen years old when her first child is born. Her next to last child, Gisela, is born in 781 and baptized at Milan; so Ohler concludes that she is born between Rome and Milan (158-159). "This would mean," says Ohler, "that her mother was heavily pregnant when she had to travel along roads and tracks, over passes and rivers, through mountains and woods" (159). Ohler provides an excellent discussion of the necessity of royal travel, including travel by a queen, in the middle ages, and of travel to Rome by a European ruler. His description of physical conditions bears repeating in his words:

The information we have highlights the burden that fell on both a ruler and his wife. Those in leading positions paid a high price for the respect in which they were held because of their office. They had to travel in wind and weather and even in summer could get drenched to the skin; a chill might rapidly turn into fatal pneumonia.

Nights were spent in shabby inns or windy tents; wrapped in damp bedcovers and plagued by fleas, bugs, the scrabbling of rats and mice, perhaps painful chilblains--not to mention restless bedfellows--there was little sleep to be had. Although they could not count on getting refreshing sleep, they had to appear calmly the next day: give orders to servants, send messengers, receive secular and spiritual princes with due ceremony. These would throng round the ruler's retinue on their way, begging, beseeching or threatening, trying to get a hearing for their petitions--and trying to win the Queen's sympathy for their cause. It states repeatedly in the records that this or that gift, sanction or endowment was made 'at the request of our dear wife.' Then they had to pack up again, set off and travel farther. Everything that had to be transported had its proper place on a certain pack animal, or later, in a certain vehicle. The methodical loading and unloading was a routine task, which is only indirectly mentioned in the sources (158).

Ohler speculates that such a journey must be one of the many stresses contributing to the death of Queen Hildegarde at the age of twenty-five.

Charlemagne, his biographer Einhard tells us, also likes his daughters to accompany him on his travels, because he is so attached to them that he can hardly bear to be apart from them. (For the same reason he does not permit them to marry, a situation which

leads to embarrassing results always ignored by Charlemagne [81].) From Gregory of Tours we have information about bridal trips royal women make between France and Spain before the time of Charlemagne and from Einhard reference to the bridal travel of Charlemagne's wives. In discussion of royal female travel in the thirteenth century epic about Charlemagne's mother, Berthe aux grands pieds, these pieces of information will find their place.

We turn now from the woman traveller in the French epic of the twelfth century to those who travel in the shorter forms of courtly narrative romances of that time, the lais and the fragments of Tristan and Iseut's story, all of which are written in octosyllabic lines rhymed in couplets. The traditional conception of the roman courtois divides this genre into three parts: 1) the romances of antiquity (romans d'antiquité), 2) the romances of Bretagne (romans or matière de Bretagne) and 3) the aventure romances (romans d'aventure). Included as well in each genre are contes (short tales) of each type. Among the earliest and most important examples of the matière de Bretagne and of short narrative form in French are the Lais of Marie de France (written about 1160), which vary in length from less than 200 lines ("Le Rossignol") to nearly 1200 ("Eliduc"). Certain other lais of unknown authorship have also survived. The fragments of the Tristan and Iseut story belong to narratives easily of roman length, but that story does not survive in its entirety in an Old French manuscript, although each of the two fragments which give major portions of the story have several thousand lines. One of these fragments was written by a poet named

Bérout, somewhere in the last third of the twelfth century, (according to Norris Lacy in the introduction to his edition and translation of Bérout's text [xi]); the other by Thomas of England, who may have written it about 1175 (Lacy, xii). In addition to the fragmentary condition of the manuscripts, the poems themselves are structured episodically.

We will divide the women's travels in these works into two groups. In the first group, which includes the lais "Yonec," "Guigemar" and a set of journeys in the Tristan narratives, women take impromptu, unplanned journeys under the impulse of some strong, irresistible emotion, under the workings of magic acting as metaphor for emotion or under circumstances that force her to flee. All these journeys are related to adulterous love affairs which by definition are conducted outside the rules of civilization and apart from or in defiance of a courtly or community life. The journeys come about when the forces of civilization intrude abruptly upon the lover's lives, and those journeys reflect the disarray of violent emotions and violent events.

Before the journeys, the lovers inhabit a private, closed world where chivalry recedes far into the background; their love becomes their entire preoccupation. The desperation and seclusion of their circumstance bind them all the more tightly. Each ardently desires the other's welfare; each is necessary to the other's well-being. For one another they would give their lives. Infidelity is out of the question. No hardship or separation diminishes their love, which endures throughout their lives. The quality of the love these women

travellers feel seems pure, passionate, to be treasured. They, their confidants and their narrators see their love as sanctioned by God, even though the relationship is adulterous. These travellers move in a world of narrators who prize lovers with passions of an all-absorbing strength. These women are seen as good, noble people, just as their lovers are. Either because the adultery seems justified by mistreatment the woman has received or because we value the quality of their love, the reader's sympathy for the distraught woman travelling in haste and at hazard in these journeys is fully engaged.

The second group consists of planned journeys and includes Iseut's journey to marry Mark, her journey to return to Mark after her three years in the forest with Tristan and her final journey to Brittany to heal Tristan's his wound.² In this group also are the journeys of fairies, which are taken in organized, dignified fashion, for these travellers direct their love affairs and their journeys. In the lais "Lanval," "Graelent" and "Guingamor," powerful fairies choose their lovers and journey to put themselves in their paths in order to woo them. Later in the story they journey to rescue their lovers. In both cases they travel in a stately, deliberate fashion, usually with magnificent clothing and equipment. These female figures seem at certain points in the stories to have distanced themselves emotionally from their lovers because the latter have broken a prohibition. It is unclear at what point the fairy might have

²Bérout calls the lovers "Tristan" and "Iseut;" Thomas calls them "Tristan" and "Yseut." The different spellings are respected in discussing the different versions.

been able to reverse the results of the lover's rule-breaking: whether, irritated with the lover, she permits him to suffer when she could have made a journey to stop his pain; or whether a specified magic time limit really makes her unable to travel to help the lover before the time is up. At any rate in these three lais we have powerful women travelling to render crucial assistance to knights who love them although the women themselves seem able to do without the men's love. We see as well another sign of the resources and authority of these powerful travellers: travelling women who work for them--damsel messengers

An additional traveller treated in this part, Guildeluec, the wife of Eliduc, also travels in a planned attempt to rescue her beloved. Her love is of the highest, most altruistic variety. Her journey leads her to act for her loved one's well-being in a way that shows enormous spiritual capacity.

Bramimonde was a prisoner of war. The women who travel in Marie de France's lais "Yonec" and "Guigemar" are prisoners of elderly husbands who are afraid they will commit adultery if given any freedom whatsoever. Each receives a true lover who comes to her by magical means; each is separated from the lover by the husband's efforts. After the lover's departure each takes a journey on the strength of her desperate emotional condition.

In "Yonec" a close imprisonment of more than seven years has so depressed the lady's spirits that she wishes only to die as soon as possible (45-50). The details of her captivity engage the sympathy of the reader toward her adultery with the bird who flies into her

window and becomes a handsome young knight, the likes of whom she has yearned for just a moment before. He tells her that he has long loved her but has had to await the call of her wish for him. She is careful to ascertain that he is Christian before she agrees to love him. The obvious well-being that the love affair restores to her arouses the husband's suspicions and leads him to set a trap of sharp blades that mortally wound the bird as he flies in the window. The lover must leave at once to regain his own territory, and his lady, wild with grief, makes a journey in his pursuit that is a metaphor of her love for him and of her anguish at losing him. Much later she will take a second journey during which the son born of their love will avenge her lover's death and her loss of his dear company.

The lady's journey in pursuit of her wounded lover is surely one of the most dramatic that any woman takes alone in French medieval literature. This spontaneous journey, taken without care for her safety or dignity, reflects her emotional state, and the image of blood throughout is a constant reminder of the violence done to her life by the murder of her lover. Flying wounded into the room, the bird assumes human form. Collapsing upon the bed and drenching the sheets with blood, he seeks to comfort his lover. Then, blood still gushing forth from his wound and suffering atrociously, he re-assumes his bird form and flies away. She follows him, screaming, and leaps from the window through which he has flown, landing without enough injury to stop her although the window is a good twenty feet high (338). Heedless of her attire--it is daytime and "Elle esteit nue en sa chemise" (341) ("she was nude except for her

chemise")³--she follows the path of blood drops left as he has flown away. This lack of concern for appropriate dress emphasizes her emotional turmoil and the determination to find her lover that the strength of her love affords her. Similarly, in Thomas's Tristan Iseut forgets to wear her royal cloak upon hearing that Tristan is dead.

The countryside through which the traveller in "Yonec" passes seems to cover a long distance and includes some stretches that could be frightening, all of which represent of course the great lengths and extraordinary measures to which she is prepared to go to rejoin her lover. Part of it also seems mysterious and magically beautiful, especially, as it should, around the city where her lover of the magical powers dwells. The path of blood leads to a blood-covered door set into a hillside. She passes through the door at once although she can see nothing beyond it and travels in pitch darkness until finally the tunnel in the hill leads out into a beautiful prairie. Here again is blood: the grass is wet with it, and the sight of it plunges her once again into anguish. Following the path of blood across the prairie, she comes to a walled city richly built of what seems to be silver, with nearby marshes, forests and hunting preserves. On the other side of the city, toward the keep, flows a river, where more than three hundred ships are anchored. This noble city, the lover's city, suggests the prestige of the lover and the

³Old French quotations are taken from Micha's edition of Marie de France's Lais. The English translations, our own, closely follow Micha's modern French translation.

great worth of their relationship. It also suggests perhaps the joy and serenity that might have been hers in a life here with her lover.

Surely some travellers in the middle ages must have come upon gleaming castle cities near shimmering water and soft green surroundings. Certain casts of light must have made ethereal visions of such scenes. To this extent we are perhaps experiencing what twelfth century travellers saw from time to time. Some of the details that follow concerning her entrance into the city and her exploration of her lover's palace may reflect aspects of architecture and interior decoration of that day that travellers entering a castle might see.

She enters the city through the ground-floor door, continuing to follow the path of "sanc novel" (371). As she crosses the "burc" (374), she meets no one--which emphasizes her utter solitude without her lover. When she arrives at the palace, the pavement, too, is covered with blood. What she sees inside again suggests the great worthiness of the lover. She enters and at length finds the golden-posted, richly draped bed surrounded by lighted candles in which he lies dying. Their behavior reinforces the impression of the strength of their love and of her lover's concern for her welfare even in his death agony. Having reached his bed, she falls in a faint upon his body. "Cil la receit ki fortemente l'aime" (397) ("The one who loved her passionately received her in his arms"). He comforts her again when she revives and tells her she must leave, for the people of the town will hold her responsible for his death and mistreat her. "Pur vus sui dolent et pensis" (409) ("I am distressed and concerned

for you"), he tells her. She replies that she would rather die with him than live unhappily with her husband. Her husband will kill her anyway if she returns, she tells him. But the lover gives her a magic ring that will make the husband remember nothing at all about what has happened. He gives her also his sword, with which their son, grown up, will kill the old man when he learns what happened to his father, which he does in the course of a journey that the three of them make for their pleasure and religious inspiration. However, it is the first journey, especially, the journey of love and anguish across blood-strewn fields, that illustrates the type of twelfth-century passion that motivates certain women travellers.

The lady imprisoned by her jealous old husband in "Guigemar" is visited by a lover, who, though not himself of magical powers, is transported to her on a small ship which suddenly appears before him at a place on the shore where ships never come, apparently when powers beyond him dictate that it should. Her journey, too, is later made on this craft, which is one of the most interesting aspects of this travel episode. Its mysterious properties seem to make of it a symbol of the love destined for both its passengers. Marvelously beautiful, this silken-sailed boat has fittings of ebony, gold, ivory and cypress. Within its decks lies a sumptuously appointed bed, a welcome resting place for the wounded Guigemar and later for a woman weakened by love's sufferings. Pierre Jonin brings to our attention the fact that the pillow on this bed has magical properties: those who put their heads on it will never have white hair (178-

180). We would add that this property could signify the enduring quality of love, love's eternal youth.

For both passengers, first the knight Guigemar and years later the lady, the boat is there whenever they need it. For both passengers the boat awaits them on a shore unaccustomed to the arrival of sea-craft. Both are suffering terribly when they climb aboard. Both board the ship without considering their action. Both are prevented from getting off. Both wish to drown (Guigemar on his trip away from his beloved) if they cannot rejoin their lovers. Undirected by any visible hand, the craft whisks away to sea as soon as the passengers are aboard. And in both cases the boat takes the passengers to a destination at which the lover will find them.

Clearly, like love, the boat has an irresistible power to allure and to carry away. Emanuel J. Mickel, Jr. has suggested that the ebony of the boat may be meant to symbolize the strength and enduring quality of a true, pure love. He cites various classical uses of this wood as such a symbol and points out that, even if Marie were not acquainted with this classical significance of ebony, she might very well have invented such a meaning herself. Indeed, we would add that the other materials of the boat's construction are of equally pure and precious material and could have similar significance. Mickel's interpretation here fits with the lady's desire in "Yonec" that her lover be Christian. Guigemar also comments to his lady about the honesty of her love for him, saying that the honest woman is not a coquette who withholds her favors to convince her lover that she is not a woman of easy virtue (515-523). The

narrator has already offered statements about the nature of love (482-495), saying that many do not take it seriously but court a lot of women and then boast of their amorous successes. Such behavior is not love but folly, dishonesty and debauchery (488-492). All of these passages seem to support Mickel's suggestion about the symbolism of the boat's ebony, as do the vows of eternal fidelity that the lovers in "Guigemar" make to each other.

When Guigemar is discovered by the husband and forced to leave, the lady is imprisoned even more strictly than before. She suffers greatly from it and from the loss of Guigemar and finally feels that if she could get out, she would drown herself at the spot where Guigemar's boat had been. Having said this to herself, the lady gets up and goes to the door. For some reason it is open; she finds no key, no lock. Surely this is the work of the supernatural, although the narrator makes no comment about it. She goes out, and at the port, strangely enough, as we have noted, she comes upon Guigemar's boat just at the place where she had thought to drown herself. She climbs aboard, irresistibly and inexplicably drawn, it would seem, to this boat just as Guigemar had been. Thinking that perhaps her friend had drowned instead of departing, she would drown herself as well but has not the strength to get to the side of the boat and throw herself into the water. (As soon as the thought of her friend's death occurred to her, she had fallen down.) At once, the magic boat embarks with her.

The place of departure for Guigemar's lady is identified only as an "une antive cité,/Ki esteit chief de cel regné" (207-208) ("an old

city, the capital of this kingdom"). "This kingdom" is Brittany, Guigemar's home. The boat also comes to shore in Brittany, below an imposing castle. The lady is cared for by the lord of the castle and at length Guigemar finds her and takes her away--not without a war to wrest her from the castle lord. The lovers had remained faithful to one another throughout their long separation.

Fidelity to one another also marks the love of Tristan and Iseut. Great concern for one another's welfare is another hallmark of their love, as the journey we are about to discuss reveals. When, according to Bérout's version, Mark and the dwarf catch Iseut and Tristan in bed together, Iseut's wrists are tightly bound and she is led out to be burned. On the way, a leper suggests to Mark that giving Iseut to the lepers to satiate their lust would be a far worse punishment than burning. The furious Mark in fact does this, but by this time Tristan, also being led to execution, has escaped and has been found by Governal, his squire, who brings him his horse and his sword. They ride to the road where Iseut is being led away by the lepers, and Governal strikes down the one who is holding her. Then Governal, Tristan and Iseut ride away into the forest of Morrois. This trip brings out one of Iseut's most noble qualities and one that she shares with Tristan: Iseut always thinks first of Tristan's welfare, and he of hers. As they make their perilous and at the moment in question separate ways from the court after Mark's surprising them, each wants only to be assured of the safety of the other. Iseut does not care what happens to her as long as Tristan is safe, and he is of similar sentiments towards her.

During the life of the couple in the forest, they journey daily to a new area to keep away from those who might be tracking them. We learn from Bérout's version that after Mark happens upon them while they are sleeping and leaves evidence of his being there, they set out for Wales, so frightened are they by the conviction that Mark means to return with help to kill them.

Li rois sevent fel et engrés.
 Torné s'en sont bone aleüre,
 Li roi doubtent, por l'aventure.
 Morrois trespasent, si s'en vont,
 Grans jornees par poor font,
 Droit vers Gales s'en sont alé. (2124-2129)
 (They knew the king was a violent and angry man.
 They left hurriedly,
 fearing the king because of what had happened.
 They passed through Morrois, and kept going,
 putting in very long days because of their fear.)⁴

The Wales spoken of would be North Wales, the northern part of the Cornish peninsula, Devon. Tintagel, Mark's Cornwall castle, is about halfway up the western coast of the peninsula. At one point when the lovers are in the Morrois forest, the narrator remarks that they are about two leagues from Mark's castle. A journey to Wales would have been a much more ambitious undertaking than simply to move about in the forest of Morrois.

⁴The Old French and English quotations from Bérout's version are from Lacy's edition.

Tremendous emotional disturbance precedes this journey toward Wales. Just after Mark has slipped away, Tristran (as Bérout calls him) is awakened by Iseut's crying out during a dream. He notices the items Mark has taken and has left and quickly draws his alarming conclusions. Bérout presents the drama of this sequence very effectively. Tristran says to Iseut, "Dame, fuion nos en vers Gales./Li sanc me fuit.' Tot devient pales" (2099-2100) ("Lady let us flee toward Wales./I am faint!' He became pale"). The burden of their apprehension is somewhat relieved by the return at this point of Governal (Tristran's squire, who has always been with them) to whom Tristran explains the situation.

This manner of life makes evident another of Iseut's traits: her physical stamina. Norris Lacy has pointed out that to live three years in the harsh conditions of the forest, travelling each day to a new area, Iseut must be a physically sturdy person, a trait that might not come immediately to mind when conjuring an image of one who may be for many the most beautiful blond of all time. We would add that nothing leads us to believe that she does not live and wander in the forest in good humor, as does Tristran, and that this quality is another measure not just of her physical hardiness but of the strength of her love for Tristan. To this couple privation is a small price to pay for the joy of living with one another. Christiane Marchello-Nizia gives the opinion, to which we subscribe, that the potion, in making the couple incapable of other behavior than that of obedience to their relentless passion, is merely a metaphor for love-and a metaphor that relieves us of assigning the blame for their

conduct to one or the other of the lovers (xxxiii). Love drives Tristan and Iseut and makes them able to endure their constant travels in the forest and all other difficulties forest life brings, a love so incredibly compelling that it might as well be magically induced.

Part of the intensity of the love that is behind the women's impromptu travel in states of emotional and physical disorder in "Yonec" and "Guigemar" may be accounted for by the great contrast between their blissful states of mind in the presence of the beloved and the abusive deprivation they experience while imprisoned by their husbands. The imprisonment with even stricter confinement experienced by Guigemar's lover after his departure and the despair from fearing that she would never again see Guigemar are motivation for her escape in the hope of drowning herself. The appalling imprisonments experienced by the women travellers in these two lais point out the emotional split in a culture that produces such advocates of love as Marie and Béroul yet countenances such marriages. Of course, for reasons of economic aggrandizement, daughters were often as good as sold by the family to the highest bidder. They carried with them a dowry, the amount of which was an important measure of their worth as marriage partners. Sometimes a young woman was desired as a child-begetter so that an old man might have heirs for his fortune, as in the case of the wife in "Yonec." The terrible burdens these economic facts could place on twelfth-century women is vividly illustrated by

the journeys in "Yonec" and "Guigemar" to which we have borne witness.

A practical consideration, the making of a marriage appropriate to her royal station, also persuades Princess Yseut's kinsmen to allow her to leave Ireland with Tristan, who comes to get her as a bride for his Uncle Mark, king of Cornwall. This is of course a planned journey, but on the journey plans go awry. Yseut's marriage with Mark is arranged, but Iseut's mother, to insure that this marriage does include love, sends along a love potion to be drunk by Iseut and Mark on their wedding night. We learn the full story of this couple only from sources in other literatures, German and Nordic, that scholars believe are adapted from the twelfth-century French versions. (Other brief twelfth-century narratives in French which relate episodes from the story are the two versions of "La Folie de Tristan" and Marie de France's lai entitled "La Chevrefeuille"). Both the fragment by Bérout and the fragment by Thomas begin well after the voyage from Ireland. However, the recent discovery of a one hundred fifty-four-line fragment, badly abused (in fact, cut up to make covers for a thirteenth-century book of records in a Cistercian abbey not far from Carlisle called Holm Cultram), has given us Thomas's version of the sea voyage from Ireland to Cornwall beginning right after Iseut and Tristan's accidental drinking of the potion. The Carlisle fragment, as this discovery is called, lets us see the reactions of the lovers as they become aware of their love for one another. We learn more here about the identity of this traveller Yseut. We have confirmation of

Iseut's subtle and supple intelligence so amply shown later by her poised and quick-witted behavior in such episodes as the orchard scene in which Mark attempts to spy on the lovers. In the voyage scene, to let Tristan know how she feels, Iseut plays upon the words for love, sea and bitter (amer, la mer, amer).⁵ These words have similar sounds; and she chooses her phrases in such a way that, unless the listener is receptive to her meaning because he shares her sentiments, he may perceive her words as meaning that the sea has put a bitter taste in her mouth--especially if the words are spoken in a sea-wind that muffles the voice, as one critic has pointed out. Perhaps Iseut's verbal skills have been sharpened by listening to clever jongleurs at her father's court. Cautious, Tristan repeats that interpretation to her; but she corrects him and thus leads him to avow his love for her. With the complicity of Brangien, Iseut's servant, who by mistake has given them the potion and to whom they confess their feelings, Yseut and Tristan make love at every opportunity during the rest of voyage to Cornwall. Upon their approach, a young noble goes to alert Mark, who is in the forest hunting. For his effort, Mark makes the young man a knight, "...molt lié se vait" (109) ("...so joyous is he) at his bride's arrival. He goes to meet them at the shore and then convenes all his barons. Honoring Iseut properly, he leads her in cortege to the palace, where they marry amid general rejoicing. All spend the rest of the day in

⁵Quotations from the Old French for the Carlisle fragment and for Thomas's Tristan et Yseut are taken from Tristan et Iseut: Les premières versions européennes. English interpretation is based on the modern French translation in the same edition.

festivity. Beyond these bare facts Thomas gives no details. He gives a lengthy account of the wedding night deception that the voyage makes necessary: the lovers persuade Brangien to take Iseut's place for the first few hours in the marriage bed so that Mark will not know that Iseut is no longer virgin. The ruse works.

Certainly this voyage has wrought an enormous change in Iseut. The beginning of the Carlisle fragment has words which remain incoherent because so many have been either cut off or effaced but which refer to Yseut's murderous hatred of Tristan when she discovers that he has been the one to slay her uncle, the Morholt: "...ne vus ocis/...laschesce ne fis/...[m]on [on]cle vengé [ëu]sse" (8-11) ("I did not kill you/I did not act as a coward/I would have avenged my uncle"). We learn of this incident, which occurs before they leave Ireland, from other sources. Her first impulse upon this revelation is to kill Tristan herself. Nevertheless, she has accepted passage under Tristan's escort; but the events of the voyage see her love for Tristan become as strong as her earlier hatred.

In addition to the change just discussed, in the substitution of Brangien in the nuptial bed, we see a craftiness in Yseut (of course, Tristan helps in this maneuver). The events of the voyage make this deceit necessary if she is to be Mark's consort; furthermore, they make it necessary for her to hone skills of deception at one level or another for the rest of her life. However, she is quite well-equipped to practice this art (although we can point also to passages which show that her double life takes its emotional toll). We have already witnessed her subtlety on board ship. Another evidence of her

intelligence shown earlier in the narrative is her skill in medical arts: twice she has healed Tristan of grievous wounds, of one inflicted by the Morholt, of one by the dragon of the Irish coast. She has a quick and sophisticated mind, a native intelligence cultivated by an upbringing in court circles. Well aware of what is expected of a royal mentality, of a wifely mentality, and endowed also it would seem with a natural goodness of heart attested to by the love of the people of Cornwall, Yseut/Iseut is always ready with the word, demeanor and action ideally suited to her audience's expectations.

The next planned journey of Tristran and Yseut occurs when, after three years of life in the forest, the potion wears off. Tristran and Iseut are relieved of the strong and constant sexual desire for one another that they have experienced since drinking the potion. In addition, each becomes nostalgic for the pleasures of civilization. Their love, their mutual esteem, their will to help one another as an absolute priority remain intact. Lines 2686-2782 of Bérout's version give ample evidence of these sentiments, as does their conversation when they first catch sight of Mark at the actual leavetaking (2778-2842).

With the help of the hermit Ogrin who has long advised them to give up their sinful life, they effect a reconciliation of Mark with Iseut, claiming innocence of sexual misconduct backed by Tristran's offer to prove that innocence in single combat. Mark sets the meeting where Tristran will hand over Iseut to take place at the Perilous Gué.

It would not be fitting for the queen to appear at this meeting in ragged clothes; so in preparation for their journey to meet the king, Ogrin takes it upon himself to secure the proper finery for her. He goes to the Mount, that is, to Saint Michael's Mount in Cornwall, to get it (2733). Jacques Chocheyras, in citing the work of André de Mandach, tells us that as early as 1070 mention is made of a weekly market held on Thursdays at Saint Michael's Mount near the town of Treiwal (396).⁶ Chocheyras remarks that, although the hermit was perhaps not able to obtain all he might have at a fair, he is nevertheless able to obtain very fine merchandise:

Li hermites en vet au Mont,
 Por les richeces qui la sont.
 Après achate ver et gris,
 Dras de soie et de porpre bis,
 Escarlates et blanc chainsil,
 Asez plus blanc que flor de lil,
 Et palefroï souef anblant,
 Bien atornez d'or flanboiant.
 Ogrins l'ermite tant achate
 Et tant acroit et tant barate
 Pailes, vairs et gris et hermine

⁶Chocheyras, citing André de Mandach and Michel Mollat, notes that boats came to the island of Ictis in this area from the Mediterranean in the fourth century before the common era for tin, copper and gold. In 495 of the common era fisherman reported seeing Saint Michael on the shore. In consequence the place became a pilgrimage site. A daughter house of the French Mont Saint-Michel was founded at this place in 1135 on land ceded to the French monks previously by William the Conqueror. The thirteenth century saw annual fairs at both the French and English abbeys. This location has a bay with a "mount" facing it (396).

Que richement vest la roïne (2733-2744).
 (The hermit went to the Mount,
 because of the rich market held there.
 He bought gray and white furs,
 silk and rich purple fabrics,
 fine wool and linen
 far whiter than lilies;
 and he bought a gentle riding-horse
 with a harness of brightest gold.
 The hermit Ogrin bought
 and bartered and acquired by credit
 enough precious cloth and gray furs and ermine
 to dress the queen richly.)

Apparently the meeting place is not too far from Lantyan, the residence where Mark is staying. The relatively short distance seems implied by the lines, "Ore chevauchent li baron/Vers la cité tot a bandon" (2955-2956) ("The barons all rode/quickly back to the city") which occur after those that recount Tristan's handing Iseut over to Mark. However, the distance between the hermit's home in the Morrois and Lantyan appears to be a matter of hours: when Tristan and Governal ride from the hermit's to deliver a letter to Mark's bedroom window by night (2449-2476), they leave the hermit's just after sunset and, having ridden hard, reach Lantyan while the king is still sleeping; they arrive at the hermit's again at dawn. Even when Tristan is picking up or leaving letters at the Red Cross in the middle of the White Heath (2440) while he and the king

are arranging for Iseut's return, it takes him most of the night to make the journey to the Red Cross and back to Ogrin the hermit's. But only two lines (2771-2772) tell of the hours Tristan, Iseut and Governal spend actually riding to the Perilous Gué from Ogrin the hermit's and those lines simply say that Tristan and Iseut ride until they reach "le merc" (2771) (the stone marker).

However, lengthy passages are devoted to the arrival and reception of these travellers. Mark has the reconciliation announced throughout his kingdom; "N'i remest chevalier ne dame/Qui ne vienge a cel' asenblee" (2750-2751) ("Not a knight or lady remained/Who did not come to the gathering"). The narrator attributes this crowd not to curiosity nor to dutiful attendance at a royal ceremony but to their affection for the queen. "La roïne ont molt desirree:/Amee estoit de tote gent,/Fors des felons que Dex cravent! (2752-2754]) (They had long desired the queen's return;/she was loved by all,/except the evil ones, [may God curse them!])." Those attending have many pavillions and tents set up in the meadows. We have the details of the arrival ceremony:

Li rois venoit molt fierement
 Le trait d'un arc devant sa gent;
 O lui Dinas, cil de Dinan.
 Par la reigne tenoit Tristan
 La roïne, qui conduioit (2845-2849).
 (The king rode out proudly,
 a bow's shot in front of his men.
 With him was Dinas of Dinan.

Tristran held the reins
of Iseut's horse and led her forward.)

Tristran and the king go aside to talk for a few moments and leave Iseut in the care of Dinas, Mark's honorable seneschal who has always been a supporter of the valiant Tristran and the noble Iseut. Bérout's narrator provides details about these moments with the kind and smooth-demeanored Dinas and gives us meanwhile a description of the beautiful queen:

O la roïne geue et gabe,
Du col li a osté la chape,
Qui ert d'escarlare molt riche.
Ele out vestu une tunique
Desus un grant bliaut de soie.
De son mantel que vos diroie?
Ainz l'ermite, qui l'achata,
Le riche fuer ne regreta.
Riche ert la robe et gent le cors:
Les eulz out vers, les cheveus sors.
Li seneschaus o lié s'envoise.
As trois barons forment en poise:
Mal aient il, trop sont engrés! (2880-2891)
(Dinas chatted and joked with the queen,
and removed her rich scarlet cape
from her shoulders.
She was wearing a tunic
over a silk chemise.

What can I tell you of her mantle?
 The hermit who bought it
 never regretted the great cost!
 The robe was rich and Iseut was beautiful.
 Her eyes were green, her hair golden.
 The seneschal enjoyed her company,
 to the great displeasure of the three barons:
 May they be cursed for their viciousness!)

In the last line we see the narrator's customary anger at anyone who sees Iseut or Tristan in less than a favorable light. Dinas's sympathy is also significant; he has been established earlier not only as Mark's most trusted man but as an upright person of generous impulses. Those impressions are reinforced here. Like Marie de France, Bérout's narrator cherishes above all else the welfare of true and reciprocal lovers; and Iseut, the woman traveller in his story, circulates in the milieu of his approval.

As expected, no one is ready to accept Tristran's challenge to single combat. The barons advise Mark not to retain Tristran in his service at the court but to allow him to go to serve in some other kingdom. When Tristran takes leave of the queen, the lovers look at one another tenderly, and the queen blushes. The king offers Tristran anything he might want, but Tristran accepts nothing from him. Mark and his barons escort Tristran to the sea, with Dinas alone going with him the last part of the way. Bérout provides a poignant image of this parting. "Vers la mer vet Tristran sa voie./Yseut o les euz le convoie;/Tant con de lui ot la veüe/De la

place ne se remue" (2929-2932) ("The young man set out toward the sea./Iseut's eyes followed him,/and as long as he was in sight,/she did not move").

But the events of Iseut's arrival do not conclude with Tristan's leave-taking. Iseut receives a magnificent welcome. Dinas comes back to the heath where the king is waiting for him, and all ride to the city of Lantyan. "Tote la gent ist de la vile,/Et furent plus de quatre mile,/Qu'omes que femes que enfanz;/Que por Yseut, que por Tristranz/Mervellose joie menoient" (2957-2961) ("All the people came out of the city,/and there were more than four thousand of them--men, women and children--who were wildly rejoicing/for Iseut and Tristan"). The people of the town do not yet realize that Tristan has left. Bells ring everywhere; every street is hung with brocade or tapestry and flowers are underfoot along the queen's path. She and the barons ride together "Tot contrement, par la chaucie" (2972) ("up the hill, along the road") to the monastery of Saint Samson. "Evesque, clerc, moine et abé/Encontre lié sont tuit issu,/Daubes, de chapes revestu" (2977-2979) ("Bishops, clerics, monks and abbots/all came out to greet her/dressed in cassocks and copes"). She goes into the church, led by the bishop, and with proper reverence puts on the altar a rich cloth, treasured ever after (2979-2996). The dignified color of her dress is noted: "D'une porpre inde fu vestue" (2980) ("She was dressed in dark blue"). Then with the king and noblemen she proceeds to the palace, where great festivities are held. All may enter and be fed that day (2997-3002).

The king gives one hundred serfs their freedom; he knights twenty young men and provides them with equipment (3007-3009).⁷

However, despite their attempt to live apart, Tristan and Iseut's love continues to make them yearn to see one another; and through Tristan's machinations they manage to do so several times before Iseut's final journey. On one occasion, Iseut travels to a gathering where she will swear that she is innocent of infidelity. She sends word to Tristan, who has remained secretly in the forest to make sure Iseut is well-treated, to wait for her the trial meeting place disguised as a leper. At her request he hoists her on his back and takes her over a mudhole where many were sinking in and spoiling their clothing. Her position on his back enables her to swear that she has had no man between her thighs except for Mark and the leper, thus technically avoiding a lie. In another episode recounted in Marie de France's *lai* "Le Chevrefeuille," Tristan waits hidden in the woods for the queen and her company as they pass on their way to a convocation of Mark's barons at Tintagel. He gets her attention by putting in the path a signal he had used before, a branch of hazel carved with a message. The queen orders her cortege to stop so that she can rest, and, taking Brangien back into the woods with her, meets Tristan. Her stopping the cortege and separating herself from it arouses no surprise that the narrator mentions; perhaps such

⁷A horn blowing, bells ringing and streets strewn with flowers (in this case rushes, gladioli and mint are specified [*Erec et Enide*, 2324-2325]) and hung with banners (brocade rugs and silk drapery [2296-2297;2326-2328]) greet the arrival of Erec and Enide in another twelfth-century narrative. All the people come out to see them. In addition, Erec and Enide attend church and make rich offerings during their arrival procession.

a procedure was not unusual in the travel of twelfth-century queens. The symbolism of this branch, as Tristan tells the queen in his famous formula, is that, like a hazel branch and the honeysuckle that entwines itself around it, the two lovers cannot live apart: "Ne vus sanz mei, ne jeo sanz vus" (78) ("No you without me, nor I without you").

Tristan's words are the lesson of Yseut's final journey, recounted in Thomas's version: without one another they cannot live. Tristan, once more grievously wounded, is sure that Yseut would be able to cure him. He sends his brother-in-law, Kaherdin (for Tristan has married, hoping vainly to secure, as he believes Iseut has, some measure of peace and pleasant life), from Brittany to London, where Mark and Yseut are residing for at least a time. Disguised as a merchant, Kaherdin works his way into Iseut's presence, presents the ring she had given to Tristan as proof of the authenticity of his message, and gets her consent to cross the Channel to Brittany to care for Tristan's wound.

Kaherdin had crossed the Channel without incident; however, on the return journey to Brittany with Iseut the ship encounters a five-day storm and then a dead calm that allows the vessel no movement. But at last the ship nears shore. Tristan has asked Kaherdin to hoist a white sail if Iseut had come with him and a black one if she had not. Tristan's wife has overheard the conversation between her husband and her brother and is angry with Tristan because of his love for Yseut la Blonde. She lies to Tristan that the

sail is black; and, in despair, he dies. When Iseut comes to shore, she lies down and dies beside him.

Another Channel storm occurs in "Eliduc" during the voyage--a planned but clandestine journey--in which he and Guiliadon, who has eloped with him, are making their way to Brittany. This is another planned journey in which unplanned events wreak havoc. A common medieval belief held that the presence of an impure person aboard ship would bring on a storm or other disaster. One of the sailors, frightened during the storm and knowing that Eliduc is married (Eliduc had never told Guiliadon; he is presented as a very honorable man, but he could never bring himself to reveal this fact to her), blurts out this information in the presence of Guiliadon. The shock of this news throws her into a state of unconsciousness on which all the rest of the story hinges, as we shall see later.

Thanks to the work in 1840 of Augustin Jal, a naval archeologist who was familiar with marine terms in ancient and modern forms of several European languages and who also knew Old French literature, we have some knowledge about vessels used to cross the Channel in the twelfth century and about sailing practices of that time. Translating a passage from Wace's roman de Brut that had defied translation by Old French scholars and that had mystified with its vocabulary those well-versed in marine terminology, Jal explains about two dozen words in the passage and reconstructs a twelfth-century Norman ship of the type in Wace's lines with one square sail, a rudder on the right side and ropes precisely identified as to purpose and position. The passage from Wace has a fleet of

Arthur's ships departing for a Channel crossing from England. Jal remarks that Wace's style here is hurried and appears a bit haphazard but is actually very exact as to marine technology and is appropriate to the brisk movement of the sailors. He is entirely complimentary as to Wace's knowledge of ships and sailing in this and other passages (a five-day storm in Brut, the embarkation of William the Conqueror in Le Roman de Rou). He reminds us that Wace was born on the island of Jersey in 1110 and informs us that Wace could well depict the sailing of William the Conqueror to England since his father was one of the mariners with William and since he himself probably was taught sailing by his father and his father's comrades (213). He remarks that what Wace says happens to the boat during the storm would be an accurate depiction and makes the same comment for Thomas's description of the storm's effects on the ship in Tristan et Iseut. The type of ship he describes from the Wace passage would probably be like the one that brings Iseut to Brittany. Jal does not say differently in his comments on the Thomas passage. Jal praises Thomas's representation of the wind's hitting the sail in front and pushing it back and his depiction of the mariner's maneuver when the wind "jumps" (he comments that the phrase "la saute du vent" is used in sailing today [195]). Chocheyras, in exploring the question of how sailors guided their boats at night in the absence of stars, tells us that the prevailing winds in the Channel, which blow from the north-west to the south-west (386) helped assure the sailor of the proper direction on a dark night.

Events go wrong even on planned journeys, as Iseut's Channel crossing illustrates. When fairies organize their journeys, however, the travel goes smoothly. These journeys, in which a powerful woman comes to love, care for and rescue a knight in need, may be explained in part by a theory held by George Duby. In his book Women of the Twelfth Century Georges Duby tells us that in the early part of the twelfth century in northern France the custom had begun of allowing the eldest son to inherit the family's property so that the estate would not dwindle away in smaller and smaller parcels. Consequently, reports Duby, only the oldest son was a good marriage prospect for women of his social class. This practice deprived a large group of young men of marriage and set them up to covet the wife of whatever castle lord they might be serving. Adolescent males went away from home and served at the courts of powerful lords to receive training as knights and to earn their keep. They were thus also deprived early of the attentions of a mother, and the longing eyes they cast at the chatelaine yearned for care from a woman as well as for sexual love, according to Duby's thinking. Duby believes that these economic arrangements may help account for the mystique of such enchanting heroines as Iseut, for example, about whom he is preparing to comment as he makes these assertions.

As stated above, Duby's theories help to explain the identity and the journeys of the women who travel in "Lanval" as well as the journeys of women in two anonymous lais of the twelfth century, "Graelent" and "Guingamor," which are stories similar to "Lanval"

(though each has its special twists and turns). In each of these stories a benevolent and powerful fairy becomes--through journeys made or directed by her--the lover, caretaker and rescuer of a maligned and mistreated young knight. This young man has his sexual favors solicited by the wife of the lord whom he serves. Of course, he refuses to participate in such an outrage to his lord. In retaliation and sometimes through fear of exposure, the woman may see to it that her husband thinks less and less of the knight and denies him the proper remuneration for his knightly work. Or the king may have neglected to provide for him for unrelated reasons. But the fairy takes care of all of that: she becomes his lover and puts at his disposal all the wealth he can use and give away (as a proper knight, son of a king, should do). Furthermore, his every wish for her brings her to him, invisible and inaudible to all but him. The fairy and even her handmaidens are prettier than the chatelaine, who is haughty about her looks. Sometimes a beauty contest proves the superior beauty of the fairy, humiliating the chatelaine and showing just how much the young knight doesn't need her. Stories of sexual harassment and retaliation such as this probably really happened, but this one also works as a very satisfying fantasy scenario for a disgruntled twelfth-century male adolescent fed up with having neither love nor money.

The first women travellers in "Lanval" (55-80) help to begin a tradition that we will follow throughout this study: the tradition of the messenger damsel. The changes in the representation of this character are intriguing comments on currents of thought in twelfth

and thirteenth-century French literature. Who a messenger damsel serves, her social rank, her capability and her appearance vary with her different incarnations. These first messenger damsels in "Lanval" serve the fairy who has come from her own country far away to ask Lanval to be her lover. The mistress they serve is extraordinarily powerful, as evidenced by the comparisons the narrator chooses to describe her wealth. The tent in which she has camped nearby is compared in its richness to what might have belonged to Semiramis, a mythical Assyrian who ruled after the death of her husband, conquering various kingdoms, establishing the city of Babylon and remaining always voluptuous and beautiful. "La reine Semiramis,/Quant ele ot unkes plus aveir/E plus puissance e plus saveir,/Ne l'emperere Octovian, /N'esligasent le destre pan" (82-85) ("Semiramis, at the height of her wealth, /Power and wisdom,/Or Octavius Caesar/could not have had the right panel of this tent"). Even though temporary, the fairy's abode is lovelier and costlier than the possessions of these two rulers.

The prestige of the messengers, therefore, is enhanced by the importance of their employer. In addition, they are the most beautiful young women Lanval has ever seen (readers of French medieval literature are used to this particular superlative; countless women are the most beautiful the onlooker has ever seen). They are wearing rich garments (the garments are "bliauts") of deep purple (a royal color, of course), tightly laced. What they are carrying is a subject of current critical musings. "L'eisnee portout uns bacins/D'or esmeré, bien faiz e fins" (61-62) (The elder of them

is carrying basins /Of pure gold of fine workmanship). The narrator expresses some astonishment at what the other one is carrying: "Le veir vus en dirai sanz faile/"L'autre portout une tûaile" (63-64). ("I'm telling you the truth,/The other one was carrying a towel"). They are headed purposefully for Lanval and upon reaching him make no mention or use of the articles in their hands. One critic has suggested that these implements are tableware for the meal served later to the fairy and Lanval. Another suggests that they are symbols of purification, indicating the purity and high quality of the love that will unite the fairy and Lanval. (On the idea of purity in love: this era sees a faithful love as chaste, therefore [one could say] pure.) The second interpretation would correspond to the suggestions made earlier about visible signs of the purity, beauty and strength of love in "Yonec" and "Guigemar." These messengers speak politely, greeting the knight and addressing him by name and title; and they honor their mistress who has sent them to him by recommending her as "pruz e sage e bele" (71-72) ("generous and wise and beautiful"). They then assure him that they will take him safely to her pavillion. It is important to observe and remember the positive features of these messenger damsels. They are among the earliest of their type in French literature, and theirs are the standards from which later messenger damsels deteriorate.

It is also important to note well the condition of Lanval as the messengers approach. He has not yet been offered the queen's adulterous favors (this queen is no less than Guenièvre; we suppose this is a pre-Lancelot Guenièvre). However, Lanval is in a sorry

state because Arthur, although generous with all the other knights, has neglected him. Lanval is the son of a king of a faraway country; proud perhaps, he never asks Arthur for anything; and Arthur never gives him anything. His possessions have grown really shabby, and he lives in poverty. One day for diversion he takes his horse into a meadow and allows it to graze while he rests. (The horse had trembled mysteriously while Lanval was on it, so he got off. This trembling might have been deliberately caused by the fairy so that Lanval would stop and be easily available to her--another evidence of her power.) When he sees the messengers approaching, he is lying down in the meadow, with his folded "mantel" (49) (cloak) beneath his head. "Mut est pensis pur sa mesaise,/Il ne veit chose ki li plaise" (51-52) ("He is dispirited that he has become so poor,/He sees nothing around him that comforts him"). His low physical position as he lies there on the ground corresponds to his low spirits. The poor young knight is passive, helpless and miserable--and he is rescued by the efforts of a powerful woman who journeys with the purpose of making him her lover.

At the end of the story, despite his breaking a rule she had set for his conduct, the fairy decides to make a journey to rescue Lanval from dire consequences about to be imposed by Arthur's court. Preceding her, employees of the fairy, elegant messenger damsels, two pairs of them, arrive on palfries separately and ceremoniously to request graciously of Arthur that luxurious quarters be prepared for their mistress, who will arrive soon. The eldest, who acts as spokesperson, is described as being "curteise e sage" (533)

("courteous and wise"). These majestic and seductive ladies (one set is dressed only in a single garment of purple taffeta worn over nude skin) turn the heads of the barons convened to decide Lanval's fate. The barons stop working to watch as they ride up, as they explain to Arthur, who comes to hurry them along with their decision. Then the mistress herself arrives, lovelier and more stately still. The narrator devotes many lines to description of the personal appearance of these ladies and of their fine and finely caparisoned horses. The riders are "Vérité en marche", as Francis Dubost characterizes them in Amour et merveille: les lais de Marie de France (53). The mistress sees to it that Lanval is acquitted of the queen's false accusation that he tried to make love to her and that he is absolved of the angry boasting that got him into trouble. Then she takes him away to Avalon, land of the fairies.

The penalty for breaking the rule the fairy had set for him was loss of the fairy and thus of her love. Lanval languishes a long time, accused by Guenièvre and awaiting trial, without any communication from the fairy, who has simply disappeared, it seems, forever. Unlike the women who travel for love in "Yonec," "Guigemar" and the Tristan stories, this fairy can live and maintain her well-being without her lover. However, she relents and rescues him--comes to get him and takes him away. We are not told what thoughts and emotions persuade her to rescue the lover and to restore to him her love. It is important to savor the fact that we have a woman traveller here who is powerful and benevolent, in the right in every way, who is the benefactor and rescuer of a helpless

knight. Soon journeys by women travellers show a reversal of male-female roles, and some fairy travellers are evil. Few ever travel as Lanval's lover and her messenger damsels do.

However, as we have stated, fairies very much like them do travel also in "Graelent." Once again, two pairs of damsels, the fairy's handmaidens precede her arrival at the king's court to rescue Graelent; all are as beautiful as the queen, who had tried to seduce Graelent and made the king neglect to provide for him because the knight, loyal to his king, had rejected her. We shall examine in "Graelent" two other types of journey of the fairy lover. We simply hear of the first one, which may be just a short excursion, well after it has been taken. Like the fairy lover in "Lanval," she has journeyed to deliberately place herself where she knows Graelent will be in order to make him her lover. She confesses this manoeuvre only after she has played out a charade of resisting his advances (one of the rare instances in these *lais* or in the previously discussed narratives where we see a feigning, even initially, of a lover's feelings and intentions) in the course of a rather aggressive seduction conducted by Graelent. Sara Sturm concludes that she also puts in front of him the white deer which, out hunting, he chases to the spring where he comes upon her bathing naked (29). Her trip to the spring to lure Graelent with her naked beauty prepares all his subsequent joys and sorrows.

The fairy visits Graelent often in the course of a year, but on these occasions she is invisible to all but him. Her third public journey provides a commentary on her power and on the power and

nature of love, for which all these fairies seem to act as symbols. Having secured the acquittal of Graellent at the king's court by proving his statements about her beauty to be true, she makes her departure. The details of her simple but dignified leavetaking receive the narrator's attention. We note them not only for their dramatic quality but also because they present typical protocol and procedure in medieval courtly leavetakings:

Quant ele ot fet ce qu'ele quist,
Et ot oï que la cort dist,
Congié demande et prent du roi,
Puis monta sor som palefroi;
De la sale se departi,
Ses puceles ensemble o li. (668-672)

(When she had done what she wanted to do,
And had heard what the court said,
She received permission from the king to depart;
Then she mounted her palfrey;
Out of the hall she went,
Together with her maidens.)⁸

She asks and receives the king's permission; her horse is not outside but in the castle's hall, which is perhaps of vast proportions.

She has so far had no verbal exchange with Graellent himself; desperate for a reconciliation, he follows her. It is probably more

⁸The Old French and the English quotations from "Graellent" and "Guingamor" are from Weingartner's edition and translation throughout the discussion.

efficient to recount this part of their journey in the poet's own expertly chosen words than to paraphrase it:

Graelent monte et vet après,
 Parmi la vile a grant eslés,
 Tot jors il vet, merci criant,
 Mes ne li respont tant ne quant.
 Tant ont le droit chemin tenu,
 Qu'il sont a la forez venu;
 Parmi le bois lor voie tindrent,
 Et tant qu'a la riviere vindrent,
 Qui en mi la lande sordoit,
 Et parmi la forest coroit.
 Molt en ert l'eve clere et bele.
 Dedenz se met la damoisele;
 Graelent volt après entrer,
 Mes el li commence a crïer:
 "Fui, Graelent! n'i entrer pas!
 Se tu t'i mes, tu noieras." (673-688)
 (Graelent mounted up and followed her
 Through the city at great speed,
 Never stopping, crying out for mercy,
 But she replied to him not at all.
 They kept to the straight road
 Until they came to the forest;
 They maintained their route through the woods
 Until they came to the river

Which had its source in the middle of the heath
 And ran through the forest.
 The water in it was clear and beautiful.
 The young woman rode into it;
 Graelent tried to enter it after her,
 But she began to cry out to him:
 "Flee, Graelent! Don't come in!
 If you enter, you will drown!")

In this passage the Old French poet not only enables us to visualize the landscape and the dramatic pursuit but also enhances our enjoyment of the moment with a particularly successful use of sound in rhythm and rhyme.

The river here is the well-known boundary between fairyland and the real world. Since water is also often interpreted as a sexual symbol, we have an association between love and the miraculous. Notice that this river is extensive: it starts in the heath and continues in the forest. It is also clear and beautiful, reminding us of the purity symbols associated with love that we have come across in the lais of Marie de France. Furthermore, the young man plunges into it, refusing to heed his lover's warnings. The woman traveller, who has led this love affair all along, conducts herself quite capably in it. Since it is the boundary to her homeland, it is familiar to her. Graelent goes under; she comes and pulls him to the shore. She tells him, "N'i pouez passer,/Ja tant ne vos savroiz pener" (695-696) ("You cannot cross,/No matter how much you struggle"). She orders him to go back. Then she enters the water again; once

more he follows her on horseback, for "...il ne puet mie souffrir/Que de lui la voie partir" (699-700) ("...he could not bear/ To see her depart from him"). The current carries his horse away from him, and Graeent is close to drowning. Now the fairy's attendants begin to scream, imploring her to save her love. At last moved by their cries, she pulls him from the water and takes him to the fairyland side where she takes off his drenched garments and puts her coat around him. Then she takes him off to her country, and he is never seen again. His horse, left behind, neighs sorrowfully for its lost master. It haunts the riverside, and the sound of its neighing is still a reminder of Graeent's final journey with his fairy mistress.

Like the fairy lover in "Lanval," Graeent's mistress loves him enough to come to court and rescue him from his predicament. The laments of her maidens, which echo perhaps the cries of her own heart, persuade her to save his life once again and take him on to fairyland, we presume as her lover. Both fairies are able to break fairy rules and accomplish what they wish for mortals. The fairy in "Graeent" is apparently quite irritated with him. What does this indicate about this powerful woman's character? Does she set the fairy rules? Is her imperiousness arbitrary and her irritation the result simply of Graeent's disobeying her, or does she have to go to a lot of exasperating trouble to effect her journey? She is the only character in the works under study in this section who fails to respond immediately and warmly to her lover's presence. At any rate, compassion and probably love for Graeent finally win out with her.

In the lai "Guingamor," a story reminiscent of "Sleeping Beauty" and "Rip Van Winkle," female characters once again journey to rescue a knight who gets into difficulty by breaking the rules of fairyland. The two women who come for Guingamor are apparently handmaidens of the fairy mistress with whom he has tarried what he believes to be three days and what is actually three hundred years. Guingamor recrosses the river (once again the boundary between fairyland and the world of mortals) into his uncle's kingdom, unable to believe what the fairy explains about the passage of time when he asks to go back to court. He intends to return to her if he finds she is correct but forgets that his mistress has warned him not to eat anything in the territory of men. Having eaten an apple, he grows old and weak and is near death. Two beautifully dressed damsels ride up, scold him for having disobeyed, gently put him on a horse, lead him to the river and take him across it in a boat.

One of the few comments about travel of a factual nature that we can make from these three lais is that the women ride palefrois. As Jean Verdon notes, this was a riding horse as opposed to a battle horse; it was the type of horse customarily ridden by ladies and was also used for riding on state occasions. One elegant lady in these lais rides a Spanish mule. Verdon reports that harnesses were developed in the second half of the twelfth century (45) and that black horses and white ones were highly prized.

In the last three lais discussed, fairies or ladies in their service (whether or not the latter are fairies is unclear) have taken journeys to rescue knights. In "Eliduc," the lai that is placed last

(perhaps with purpose) in Marie de France's book of lais, a loving wife takes a journey, carefully planned, to perform a service for her husband that rescues his emotional life and in so doing makes an altruistic decision that is the remarkable testimony of the metaphorical distances a loving soul can travel. She travels into the forest to see where her husband, recently returned from England, goes each day. She has become concerned about his brooding preoccupation, not at all his mode of behavior before he went. Before going into the forest herself, she provides a servant with arms and horses and has him secretly follow her husband. The servant finds out that he goes to a hermitage and weeps inconsolably, but he does not know what grieves him. Therefore the lady, Guildeluec, takes the servant and goes herself. Her reaction to what she discovers reveals her superior character. This remarkable lady, seemingly devoid of human ego, experiences no irritation with what she discovers of her husband's behavior although other women might have plotted his death for what he has done. Far from withholding comfort or assistance, she actively and immediately seeks to arrange matters for his greatest happiness.

On a bier in the hermitage she finds a girl, who though apparently dead, retains her lovely complexion. This is the Guilliadon who was mentioned earlier in the discussion of Channel crossings. She admires her beauty, saying that she "de beuté resemble gemme" (1021-1022) ("is as beautiful as a pearl"); and she herself grieves that the lovely girl is dead. She understands at once what has happened. As she and the servant stand musing, a weasel

runs out from under the altar and scurries over the corpse. The servant kills the little animal with a stick, but when its mate comes and sees it dead, the mate runs out into the woods and returns with a red flower that she puts into the dead weasel's mouth. Seeing the dead weasel come to life, Guildeluec retrieves the flower and puts it in the mouth of Guilliadon, the dead girl. When she comes to life, she laments her fate and the betrayal and abandonment of Eliduc; but Guildeluec corrects her, saying that he loves her very much and is terribly sad. Guildeluec then says that she will take the veil and establish an abbey on land that Eliduc will give her so that the two of them can marry. All of this takes place, and Eliduc and Guilliadon spend many happy married years together. In later years they take religious retreats themselves, Guilliadon being warmly received in the abbey by Guildeluec and Eliduc living nearby. They all live in harmony and pray for one another. The women and Eliduc keep in touch in order to know that all are in spiritual comfort. Eliduc gives most of his land and possessions to the church at the time of his retreat.

None of these developments would have occurred without the journey which Guildeluec takes on her own initiative in a spirit of loving service. She is able to accept the knowledge the journey brings her as God's will and to seek only to communicate the love of the Holy Spirit through her behavior toward her fellow human beings instead of seeking to follow her own will as conditioned by ego demands. And, it turns out, she acts not only for the earthly satisfaction of two others but for the spiritual growth of all

concerned. "Eliduc" is the last lai in Marie de France's collection, probably deliberately so; for Guideluec's journey and consequent decision is the ultimate story of human love, an expression, it would seem, of the highest spirit of the Middle Ages.

To summarize this portion of the discussion, the journeys of women in the lais and in the Tristan narratives reflect the state mind of the travellers. The disorders of imprisonment and of love unsanctioned by society can precipitate events that lead to wild journeys taken on the spur of the moment: the distraught lady in Yonec jumps out the window in her night-dress and relentlessly follows the path of blood left by her wounded lover; the despairing lover of Guigemar stumbles unexpectedly out of her prison and is whisked away in a boat before she forms any intention to travel. Planned journeys progress more calmly; yet even on planned journeys all can suddenly go wrong, especially, it seems, on sea voyages. When fairies travel, however, their progress is orderly, stately and beautiful; for they are in control of what happens. In following the progress of these women travellers we have made some observations about the nature of the love that often motivates their journeys. We have also seen that the events of their journeys sometimes reveal that they love even more than they realized.

Trot, one of the anonymous twelfth- and thirteenth-century lais based on Celtic tradition, has at its point the idea that love between a man and a woman is necessary to human happiness. The protagonist, Lorois, goes to hear the nightingale sing. On his way he sees eighty ladies on horseback, each accompanied by her ami, her

beloved. All these people are happy and well-dressed. Further on he sees one hundred shabby young women riding poor horses unaccompanied by men and one hundred unkempt men, also on miserable horses, unaccompanied by women. Clouds and storms hover over these two hundred people. The happy ones have served love, the narrator tells us; the others have not. Trot could stand as an emblem piece for the all-important theme in the Lais of Marie de France, in the Tristan stories and in the anonymous lais. The theme is not chivalry but love, and the importance of that theme is evident in the journeys we have studied. In the twelfth-century literature we shall examine next, chivalry takes at least an equal place with love, and the journeys women take reflect that shift.

Section 2: Women Travellers in the Romans Courtois of the Twelfth Century

Aldo Scaglione, writing about one of the romances we shall consider, says, "The plot of Yvain may also confirm Chrétien's overarching concern for the knight's chivalrous duties toward society as a higher moral commitment than love itself..." (127). In the world of these romances, civilization and social pressure are paramount; and love cannot exist comfortably without bowing to society's demands. Most of the lovers are married. Consequently, the demands of chivalry and civilization condition a good many of women's journeys in these works, and their narrators give them different identities from those of many in the narratives just considered. Wisdom and prudence are greatly prized in these

travellers, as stands to reason since they conduct their lives within the orderly bounds of civilized society. We shall examine women's journeys in Erec et Enide (1170), Cligès (1176), Yvain (1177-1181), Lancelot (1177-1181) and Perceval (1185), all of which are novels written by the great Chrétien de Troyes. We shall also look at women's travel in one other twelfth-century novel, Ille et Galeron. In discussing a traveller in Yvain we shall mention some in the romance of Alexandre.

While not forgetting entirely to observe whether journeys in this section are planned or unplanned (especially for the first journey discussed) we shall group these journeys according to whether the women travellers are accompanied or unaccompanied. Some journeys are classified as unaccompanied when the woman actually has people with her but has initiated and directed the journey: she is not on the journey as the companion of a man.

First, we shall examine accompanied journeys. Our first woman traveller here, Enide, wife of Erec of Erec et Enide, illustrates ideally the shift in emphasis from love to chivalry explained above. The journey she takes is unplanned; it is taken on the impetus of sudden, strong emotion. Although she loves Erec truly, as her extensive travelling with him reveals, even because she loves him truly, Enide becomes so distressed that she weeps because Erec has neglected chivalry to spend most of his time making love to her. The other knights of his father's court, where he and Enide live, are making fun of him and saying what a good knight he used to be. Enide has learned that she is being blamed and is further upset by

the guilt this accusation makes her feel. When Erec observes her weeping and insists on her explaining why, having half-heard her murmur the explanation while she thought he was asleep, he immediately sets out with her on a journey in search of chivalrous adventure. Social pressure is thus the background reason for this journey; it prescribes their behavior and the place they give to love in their lives together.

Erec's embarrassment and irritation at having his shortcoming pointed out by his wife is his immediate reason for setting off on the journey, however. Enide's reason for taking the journey is that Erec orders her to go with him. He punishes her by refusing to communicate with her as soon as she has told him about people's criticisms. She does not even know where they are going or why they are departing and thinks at first he is leading her into exile. It is ironic--and humorous--that he loves her so much that he takes her with him adventuring but expresses his anger with her by not letting her talk to him on the journey.

Although the journey would not take place without the pressures of chivalry, it gives Enide many opportunities to show her vigorous and unswerving devotion to Erec. We learn as does Erec that she truly loves him. As Jeanne Nightingale says, this romance is the story of the "couple's epic journey toward fulfillment" (58). Nightingale rightly sees Enide as leading her husband toward a higher life, one of service to the larger society. Deborah Nelson also sees their journey as providing events that deepen the couple's love

(362). Growth toward a broader outlook, then, turns out to nurture their love.

Enide's journey with Erec reveals much about several topics. We learn of course about many of Enide's good qualities. We learn about behavior acceptable from a husband, about behavior expected of a wife and about the emotions of a loving twelfth-century wife in the face of unreasonable husbandly domination. We learn under what conditions the son of a king is expected to travel (Erec is the son of King Lac of Estre Wales). Furthermore, we learn what kinds of people a twelfth-century knight and lady may encounter as they travel along roads and through forests. We learn how lodging and food may be found by such travellers.

Exactly how rash Erec is when in his anger he takes Enide out adventuring is made very clear. When Erec had brought Enide the four days' journey from King Arthur's court (where he had married her) to his father King Lac's court, King Arthur had provided him with an escort of "Seissante chevaliers de pris/A chevax, a veir et a gris" (2557-2558).⁹ ("Sixty valiant knights/ on horseback and dressed in gray fur"). In addition, Erec had the one hundred forty men of his own house, "Entre sergenz et chevaliers" (2271) ("sergeants as well as knights"). Their journey took them by "puiz et rochiers/Et forez et plains et montaignes" (2272-2273) ("hills, rocks forests, plains and mountains") but they apparently made smooth progress

⁹Old French quotations are from the Gallimard edition of Chrétien de Troye's works published under the direction of Daniel Poiron. The English paraphrases and translations, our own, follow very closely the modern French translations in that edition.

and had no untoward encounters. The provisions and baggage for this group are not mentioned; we can nevertheless assume that with such a large, aristocratic group all such matters were looked after in good fashion. A substantial and well-provisioned group also accompanies Erec and Enide when King Guivret rides with them back to Erec's land by way of Arthur's court from Guivret's. The narrator explains that upon their approach to Arthur's court "...ja estoit el borc venue/ La rote de la gent menue,/Garçon, et queue, et botellier/Por les ostex aparellier" (6641-6444) ("the troop of domestic helpers: servants, cooks wine-servers had gone ahead into the town to prepare lodgings"). "La granz rote venoit après./S'etoient ja venu si pres/Qu'an la vile estoient antré" (6445-6447). ("The larger part of the company came afterward/They followed them so closely/That they had already entered the city"). That Erec is ill-advised to set off on the journey with Enide as he does is also clear from the reaction of his father and people of his household. After his conversation with Enide he tells her to put on her best dress and he goes to the gallery and puts on his armor. Then he orders horses for them both and sends word to Enide, who still does not know what he has in mind, that she is keeping him waiting. King Lac comes out and with kindly paternal solicitude asks Erec where he is going. Knights rush up and offer to go with them. All present offers their services for the journey. Lac urges him to take thirty or forty knights, beasts of burden loaded with provisions, gold, silver, all that a person of his rank should have. Even if he is just going to a single combat he should have at least a squire and

some knights, his father tells him. A king's son should not ride alone, Lac says. Erec refuses all offers. Without any food, extra clothing, money or companions other than his wife, off he will go. Erec finally explains why he must go: "li conte tot" (2729) ("He tells the whole story"). He fully understands the dangers the journey entails, for he asks his father to love and care for Enide and to give her half his land during his lifetime if he, Erec, should die and Enide should return. He further asks Lac to provide for his companions, to supply them with the horses and arms they need. Lac promises all. He says to his son, "Mes de ce que aler t'an voi/Sanz compaignie, ai mout grant duel;/Ja ne le feïsses, mon vuel" (2746-2748) (But to see you leave/Without company distresses me greatly;/I would never permit it if it depended on my will"). Erec recommends him to God, and says it can be no other way. Lac cannot keep from weeping when Erec and Enide leave. (In fact, he never sees his son again. Lac dies just when Erec and Enide are about to return to Carnant, Lac's city.) All the knights and ladies of the court weep as they hug and kiss Erec as he is about to leave. Some of them fall down in a faint. Some are nearly ill with grief. The narrator remarks that he doubts they would have felt worse if they had seen him mortally wounded (2754-2764)). Erec tries to comfort them by saying he's come to no harm at this point and will return, God willing. Recommending them once more to God, he separates from the group "...a mout grant poinne" (2777) ("...with great difficulty"). And so, "Erec s'en va, sa fame an moïne,/Ne set ou, mes en aventure" (2778-2779) ("Erec goes away, taking his wife,/ he knows not where, but to look for

adventure"). In the notes for this romance Peter Dembowski remarks that "en aventure" has a strong meaning, "un sens fort," in the Middle Ages, that the phrase implied not only what one would meet by chance but also danger (Chrétien de Troyes: Oeuvres complètes, 1091).

It seems shocking that Erec would expose his wife to such dangers as the people of the court know almost certainly lie ahead, especially when he has other options. It seems cruel that he would make no provision for her comfort, bringing not even food or money. At his whim and without consulting her, he exposes her to whatever travelling through a lawless wilderness may bring. His unreasonable behavior towards his wife manifests itself again as soon as they set out. He tells her to ride fast and not to dare to say a word to him under any conditions unless he speaks to her first. He also makes her ride ahead of him. Jeanne Nightingale points out that her position in front of him indicates her superiority to him in wisdom (73).

The fears of Lac's household, the almost certain knowledge that dangers lie in store for the couple, are confirmed very shortly, possibly even within minutes, of their departure: a group of three knights bent on robbery assails them. These overcome, they have gone not a league further before Erec must conquer a group of five other robber knights. Achille Luchaire tells us that brigands were rampant in the late twelfth century in France, so much so that finally the people organized to curb them and were having some success until the church and nobles decided that their organization

was a threat to the established order (8-18). Erec and Enide encounter other hazards: a count who comes to see them in a house where they lodge one night decides he must have Enide and plots Erec's death to get her. Erec and Enide flee, but the count gives pursuit with an army. Erec is obliged once again to fight. King Guivret sees them approaching and with no provocation rides out to fight with Erec, a combat that Erec wins but which leaves him with many bad wounds. Later, when Erec leaves Enide alone to answer the cries of a distressed woman (he disposes of two giants during this adventure), he is worried on his way back that someone may have come upon Enide and raped her. So badly wounded that he collapses upon reaching her, he, presumed to be dead, is transported by a passing nobleman, Count Limors, to a castle. However, this Count Limors also has decided he must marry Enide, and in fact has a ceremony pronounced. Only the loud protests of the uncooperative Enide whom the nobleman strikes twice in the face for her refusal to obey him awaken Erec, who promptly kills him. Thus the couple does indeed meet danger at every turn.

In addition to these dangers, they have no dependable way to provide for their daily needs for food and lodging. They have none for the first day and night and part of the following day. The first night they simply camp under a tree, for they had come upon no dwellings at all. When they come out of the forest, a squire who sees them realizes that they would not have eaten for a long time "C'une jornee tot antor/N'avoit chastel,vile ne tor,/Ne meison fort ne abauie,/Ospital ne herbergerie" (3147-3150) ("Because for a day's

march all around/There was no castle, town or tour,/No fortress or abbey,/No hospice or inn"). This squire has with him two valets who are taking food and wine to the people who are reaping Count Galoain's fields. They have with them "gastiax et vin/Et cinq fromages de gaïn" (3137-3138) ("...galettes and wine/And five fat-laden cheeses"). The squire offers food to Erec and Enide, and they accept. The squire spreads a cloth on the grass and serves them. In payment Erec offers him his choice of one of the eight horses that he has taken from defeated foes, and the young man chooses the black one. Erec asks them to arrange lodging for them in town; the squire does so. They are lodged comfortably that night in the house of a bourgeois who welcomes them gladly and treats them in a kindly manner. In the morning Erec gives the host as payment the remaining seven horses he had confiscated from his enemies. The horses were at that moment a burden to him because he needed, although the host did not know it, to escape the count who intended to kill him to possess Enide. This count, who had learned about them from his squire, had paid them a social call at their lodging the night before (and had ended up by plotting evil against Erec). Perhaps so few people came that way that it would have been unusual for people of their rank not to have come to see them. As soon as he enters, the count offers to pay for his lodgings, but Erec does not allow that.

Few specific details are given about the lodgings. Erec has things done according to his usual rich manner: he has many candles lit (3274-3277). When Erec and the count talk, they are seated "Sor une coute blanche et mole" (3285) ("On a soft white feather bed").

When he converses with Enide, the count sits "...sor un bas eschame" (3323) ("on a low stool"). In a room apart two beds are prepared, one for Erec and one for Enide.

They lodge the following night with King Arthur, who on Gauvain's recommendation has set up his pavilions right in the middle of the road to be in Erec's way as he arrives there, for Erec has refused Gauvain's invitation to ride to Arthur's camp. This day has seen the count's pursuit, the battle with Guivret and an encounter with Keu, whom Erec has had to knock off his horse; Erec has many wounds. Erec accepts one night's lodgings for himself and Enide and has his wounds attended to. For supper that evening they have "...poissons et fruit,/Luz et perches, saumons et truites,/Et puis poires crües et cuites" (4366-4368) ("...fish and fruit,/Pike and perch, salmon and trout,/And then cooked and raw pears"). He and Enide sleep apart, Erec in a bed alone so as not to disturb his wounds. Enide sleeps with the queen in another room "Sor un grant covertor d'ermine" (4278) ("On a big ermine coverlet"). The following night finds them at the Count Limor's until Erec awakens to Enide's cries and kills him. On the road again, about midnight they meet Guivret, who, having become Erec's friend after their combat and having heard about his death and Enide's plight, has ridden forth to rescue her. They accept Guivret's hospitality until Erec recovers and then Guivret's escort to Erec's land by way of King Evain's court and King Arthur's, so their food and lodging needs are henceforth met. As it turns out then, they have had only one night without food

or lodging, despite travelling through some desolate and dangerous land.

Meanwhile, however, Enide has experienced inconveniences. The first day out when Erec takes the horses of the knights he has defeated, he has Enide lead them. That night when they camp under a tree, Enide insists on keeping watch so that Erec, worn out from conquering eight knights, can sleep. Loving Enide spreads her own coat over her husband from head to toe. Furthermore, she continues to hold the eight confiscated horses by the reins all night. So Enide gets no sleep that night. The following night, when they lodge at the bourgeois's, she keeps vigil all night once again. When the count who comes to visit them requests her love and she refuses, saying she'd rather be burned, he says he will draw his sword and kill Erec in order to have her. Enide therefore tells him he can come early in the morning and take Erec by surprise and she will go with him. Enide knows she will have to get Erec up very early the next morning so they can flee (she does not trouble him with this information the night before), so she stays awake all night. The next day they get away early but are pursued and attacked. Erec manages to fight off the count and his men well enough to regain the forest, which functions in this incident as a haven of safety for them, as Marie-Luce Chênerie observes (146), rather than a place of constant menace.

Erec's feats of arms receive ample attention in this narrative, but the revelation of Enide's love, loyalty, courage and intelligence is the real story. She loves her husband in all humility and will

accept any treatment from him without resentment. Her husband sees over and over again how much she loves him. Though she must wrestle to overcome her timidity, and in some cases a real fear that Erec may abandon her in the woods for disobeying him (3750-3757), she speaks to warn him in spite of his order of silence each time she sees that he is in danger. He always scolds her, saying he'll forgive her this time but not to do it again. Enide, who is only too ready to accuse herself and carries on an anguished interior monologue about how wrong and foolish she was to have told Erec what people were saying, never wavers in the loving attitude she feels toward Erec. When he scolds her for warning him about the second band of brigands, she says sweetly, "...Nel ferai gié/ Ja mes, biaux sire, se vos plect" (2934-2935) ("I'll not say a word, handsome lord, since that is your desire"). The second time she speaks, he even tells her he hates her and that he detests it when she speaks to him. By the time she speaks out to warn him that Guivret is approaching (by this time she has warned him about two sets of brigands and Count Galoain), he scolds her still but sees that she loves him more than anything and knows that he loves her so much that he could not love her more. When the count asks for her love at the bourgeois's, we see first her loyalty in her adamant refusal, then her clever intelligence in the ruse she invents to save her husband's life, finally her determination and stamina in keeping vigil all night to ensure their safety. As she rides with Count Limor who is taking Erec's body to his castle, she weeps inconsolably and faints repeatedly in her grief for her husband. Even though she thinks Erec is dead, she refuses the count's

advances and will not even eat his food. A woman less staunch might have accepted the promises of riches, honor and love given her by either of the two counts who fall in love with her, especially after such treatment as Erec has been giving her; but for Enide such conduct is out of the question. Once they escape Count Limors, Erec tells her he forgives her and loves her and knows that she loves him. Enide is very happy to hear these words and to receive his kisses and embraces. As a final illustration of her desire to protect Erec any way she can, she gives Guivret a loud and severe scolding when, after their escape from Count Limor, Guivret, not knowing who Erec is, jousts with the enfeebled knight and unhorses him.

Enide's travels show her to be idealistic, strong, courageous and loving. To make a more positive portrait of a woman than this one given her circumstances would be difficult. I differ therefore with views of her representation such as the one presented by Lynne Tarte Ramey, who finds her characterization misogynous. Ramey finds that Enide, who speaks only to save her husband (as opposed to the stereotypically garrulous woman), who remains faithful throughout rigorous tests even though she is seductively beautiful (as opposed to the typical woman who tends to infidelity) is represented as a paragon too good to actually exist, thus reinforcing negative medieval stereotypes of women (382).

As the events of this journey show us Enide's love and courage, they also provide humor. The situation and the verbal exchanges, the contrast between Erec's rash and unreasonable behavior and Enide's

self-deprecation and timidity, courageously overcome for her husband's benefit, allow for many humorous moments.

Although the women travellers in Cligès have occasional long monologues, they and their situations lack the living vibrance and believability of an Enide. As Margaret Switten observes, "Cligès focuses our attention immediately upon chivalry" (424). In Cligès, Alexandre, son of the emperor of Constantinople, comes to Arthur's court to study chivalry and be knighted by Arthur. Shortly after his arrival, Arthur decides to go to Brittany and takes Alexandre with him. The queen goes as well and takes one of her maidens, Sordedamour, Gauvain's sister. As they cross the Channel, the two young people fall in love, deliver long monologues on the subject of their love but never declare their feelings to one another, much in contrast to the lovers in the lais discussed and in the Tristan narrative. During the crossing, the queen notices Soredamour's discomfort but believes seasickness must be the problem. On this occasion the narrator imitates the word play on amer, la mer and aimer that is found in the Carlisle fragment. Many feats of arms involving Alexandre, including war against the traitor nobleman in whose care Arthur had left England, intervene before the lovers learn one another's sentiments; and it takes the queen acting as intermediary to bring the two together. As for the Channel crossing, no information about it other than what has been mentioned is given.

Many years later, the son of Alexandre and Soredamour, Cligès, accompanies his uncle, the present emperor of Constantinople, to Cologne to bring back his uncle's bride, Fénice. Fénice is the

daughter of the emperor of Germany and was promised to the Duke of Saxony. This latter gives chase and battle to the returning Greeks, escorted by the German emperor and his men, despite the German emperor's efforts to fortify his garrisons and deter conflict. The returning group camps one evening at Ratisbonne (Regensburg) in a field beside the Danube near the Black Forest (3350-3356); the Saxons are on the other side of the river. The Greeks and Saxons become embroiled in a battle during which twelve Saxons, taking advantage of the Greeks' absence from their tents, go into Fénice's tent and abduct her. We are given no description of this scene nor any indication of Fénice's emotions, then or as they ride away with her. The reason for this lack of information about Fénice is that this is really an episode designed for Cligès to show his prowess. Cligès, alone on a high hill, sees them taking her away and sets out after them. The Saxons mistake him for their Duke coming to meet them. Six of the Saxons gallop out to meet him while the other six go on with Fénice. Cligès kills or conquers all six of them and then does the same for the six escorting Fénice. He and Fénice then ride back to camp on their white horses, conversing about banal matters (3863-3866).

Now, Fénice and Cligès have fallen in love with one another before the wedding in Cologne but have declared nothing to one another. Fénice has had her nurse prepare a potion for her husband that makes him think he is making love to her when he is simply dreaming; he never makes love to her at all. Fénice wants to save herself for Cligès and not sleep with two men at the same time as

Iseut does. Here, as they ride back to camp together, is a good chance for them to reveal their sentiments to one another; but fear of rejection-- a fear which the narrator feels is a sign of true love (3841-3852)--keeps them from it. This fear also makes the knight more ready to perform deeds of valor to prove his worth to his beloved. Indeed, Cligès is delighted to be able to defeat all those knights in front of Fénice (3706-3709). Fénice, for her part, when Cligès is fighting the knights, wishes it were he without knowing that it is. The narrator tells us that, watching him fight and wishing that it were he, she fears for his death but hopes for his glory and that this combination makes her a sincere friend (3742-3743). This attitude, which is also Enide's, tells us the kind of woman the narrator approves of. As for more on what makes a proper woman, the narrator states also in his discussion of love in this section that a young lady ought to be modest and fearful (3790-3791) when it comes to speaking of her love. Chrétien's approval of Fénice's hopes and fears for Cligès also tells us that the world Chrétien's women travellers move in is one that prizes chivalry and connects it to love. In Cligès far more space and attention is given to feats of arms performed by Alexandre and Cligès than to their love stories.

The arrival of Cligès and Fénice at camp provides great relief and joy for their sorrowing friends who had presumed them dead.

Much later in the story after Cligès has gone to Arthur's court and performed many excellent deeds of chivalry, Cligès returns and the lovers declare their love to one another. A ruse arranged by

Fénice's nurse, Thessala, allows them to convince everyone that Fénice is dead; they live for some time together in a tower but are finally discovered and forced to flee. The emperor has people out looking for them. Fénice and Cligès need fear nothing, however, because Thessala's magic would keep any enemy too far from them to do them harm (6444-6451). Furthermore, Cligès has friends who would be glad to hide them from those pursuing them (6572-6575). Although they do not spend the nights in the cities, Thessala through her magic obtains for them all that they want (6583-6587). The magic is used with too much ease in this romance to make characters and events convincing; Thessala's potions and powers solve too many problems for the lovers, when they journey and otherwise, providing facile resolutions to practical and moral problems, preparing their flight to the tower and eliminating danger when they are forced to flee the tower.

After about two weeks the emperor's men return to Constantinople. Cligès (with Fénice and Thessala) goes to Arthur and explains the circumstances under which his uncle has attempted to disinherit him. Arthur prepares a fleet to go to Constantinople to attack the emperor when the news arrives of the latter's death.

In Yvain, women who travel with knights are women who customarily travel alone; they will be discussed in the next section.

One of very few women travellers with strange behavior in Chrétien's romances appears in Lancelot. Although she is first met travelling alone, her travels with Lancelot are much more significant; she will therefore be dealt with here. She is in the

story to illustrate that Lancelot is utterly impervious to the charms of any woman except Guenièvre; in other words, that his chastity is exemplary. Meeting Lancelot on the road, she offers him hospitality on condition that he sleep with her. Telling her he'd rather not, he accepts her hospitality nevertheless. Perhaps to tempt Lancelot with the sight of her naked body, she stages a rape in her own house. Lancelot, hearing her cries, conquers many, only to have her call off the men, who are actually her servants. She then takes him to her room and has him lie down with her but excuses herself and gets up when she sees he really is not interested in making love.

The next day, she enunciates an extremely important principle for women travellers: the Rule of Logres. According to that rule, a woman travelling alone could travel unharmed by any honorable knight. However, a woman travelling with a knight was subject to be taken from him in single combat. The conquering knight could treat her as he pleased. Chrétien's romances contain few examples of the Rule of Logres in practice. Knights in Chrétien's narratives do not engage in taking other knights' amies from them. But in later literature this rule will be practiced to great extremes. The young woman who cites the rule wants to ride a certain distance with Lancelot on her way somewhere but wants to be protected from a man who loves her. Lancelot is able to assure her he can protect her, and he does. However, it is important to note that the knight who wants to challenge Lancelot for the damsel has loved her for a long time. She is not a stranger to him. In later literature many damsels whose knights are conquered so that the victor may have them are

complete strangers to the conquering knights. Roberta Krueger points out that apparently some women travelling alone were seized since there had to be a rule against it to guide honorable knights' conduct. She reasons further that women were by this rule victims of a chivalric system that did not protect them from men's violence whether they were accompanied or not, since they both needed men's protective escort but were made vulnerable by it (40).

In Perceval the women who travel in the company of knights are in the story to help the hero toward his chivalric destiny, but their roles differ according to the part of the story they are in. The narrative splits into two parts, the first part dealing with Perceval and the grail and the second part dealing mainly with miscellaneous adventures of Gauvain. In the first part chivalry and its use in restoring the larger community to a state of well-being through the attainment of an exalted ideal symbolized by the quest for the Holy Grail is the most important element of the narrative. Aldo Scaglione characterizes Perceval as "a clear, programmatic wedding of warrior ethic with Christian mission" (128).

However, in order to set out on the quest for the Holy Grail, Perceval must first undergo a maturing process; love has a part in that process; it is Perceval's gaining the love of Blanchefleur that starts him on the path toward sensitivity to others' feelings and ultimately to his exalted project. He starts out to find his mother, whom he has treated insensitively, right after he and Blanchefleur fall in love.

Love is definitely subordinate to chivalry in this romance, however; and the travelling women in the story are there to help Perceval become the mature knight who is ambitious to set things to rights in the kingdom. Travelling women give him information and experiences crucial to his development. The travelling woman as giver of information also appears in Lancelot and becomes very common in later romances. The travelling women in Perceval are usually either distressed or in poor condition, as befits the inhabitants of a kingdom in as sorry a state as that of the Fisher King.

Soon after he leaves the castle of the Fisher King, Perceval comes upon a woman who is holding her decapitated lover in her arms. In her grief she says she has no longer any reason to live. This woman turns out to be a cousin of his who was brought up by his mother. She supplies him with the meaning of two of his crucial experiences up to this point. She informs him that his mother has died of grief over his leaving, and she tells him the significance of what happened at the Fisher King's. He was unable to ask the proper questions at the Fisher King's and thus restore the king to health and his kingdom to prosperity because of his having ignored his mother when she fell in grief as he left. The lesson seems to be that a lack of compassion can leave one unable to intuit what is necessary to accomplish great deeds.

Shortly after meeting his cousin, Perceval comes upon a woman he had met when she was travelling with her lover soon after Perceval had left his mother's house. In the lover's absence,

Perceval, uncouth from a lack of social experience and unable to interpret his mother's advice properly, kissed the girl and took a ring from her. The lover believed his mistress had been unfaithful and had henceforth deliberately neglected to care for her properly as punishment. When Perceval meets her this time, she is so ragged that her breasts are uncovered. Her hair is disheveled, and she is riding a thin palfrey. She is murmuring prayers for deliverance from the knight who causes her to lead such a hard life. Perceval takes responsibility for what he has caused, identifies himself to the woman, conquers the man in single combat and tells him that his lady does not deserve the treatment he has given her. He has the knight take her to the nearest castle to be cared for and then has him take her to King Arthur's court. The encounters with this travelling woman reveal Perceval's inappropriate behavior as a rustic and then allow him to make amends. The second episode with her provides his first opportunity to exercise effectively his new-found sense of responsibility for others' welfare after he leaves Blanchefleur.

In the second part of the narrative, Gauvain meets two women travellers. They are there for the purpose of giving Gauvain chivalric tasks to perform, to put obstacles in his way, perhaps to develop his patience. Gauvain's development here seems more everyday, more pedestrian than that of Perceval. Gauvain is not headed, like Perceval, for an appointment with the cosmos that will enable him to restore humanity to well-being. Thus the roles of the travelling women in assisting his development are somewhat

mundane. In observing these travellers, it is important to note that the love a woman feels for the knight errant with whom she travels is of enormous importance to her and that her knight holds her in high esteem. Later women who travel with knights do not always share such sentiments or enjoy such approval.

First Gauvain comes upon a woman whose lover, with whom she has been travelling, has been grievously wounded. The woman does not want Gauvain to wake the man, whom she says she loves very much. The man, whom Gauvain does awaken, says that his lady is noble, generous and well-brought up and he requests that Gauvain come back to take care of the girl after he dies. Gauvain does later come back and is able to cure the man with a plant he has gathered.

During this incident Gauvain is accompanied by a woman whom he comes upon in a garden and invites to go travelling with him although he is warned about her bad nature. This woman insults him repeatedly and says she hopes that ill-fortune and even death will overtake him that day. When the knight whom Gauvain cures with the plant returns Gauvain's kindness by stealing his horse, the spiteful woman ridicules Gauvain. A bit farther on they come to a large river. She puts her horse in a boat there and climbs in herself. At that point Gauvain must fight an approaching enemy. When he finishes, the boat and woman have disappeared. A few days later she re-appears and challenges Gauvain to the ordeal of the Perilous Ford. Gauvain succeeds in this challenge; and afterward, suddenly, the woman changes her ways. She confesses that her perverse behavior was caused by the grief she felt upon the death of her lover. In

subsequent romances spiteful and perverse behavior on the part of women travellers will often appear but will receive no such explanation to soften the heart of knights and the reader. It is probably far more important for later literature that the woman be mean than that she be mean because she has lost her love. She is one of very few examples of rude, abusive women in Chrétien's romances; but later they will abound. Here, however, we again have women who truly love the knights errant with whom they travel, even if grief turns one perverse. The women travellers that Gauvain meets enable him to show his goodness of heart or his prowess, and they show their own essential goodness.

As we have just seen, many women in Chrétien's romances travel accompanied by men, but in Ivain and Lancelot several women travel alone. Given the hardships and dangers of the road recounted in Erec et Enide, it may be hard to imagine that the women in medieval French fiction who travel alone for considerable distances reflect what was actually practiced. The Rule of Logres that respected women travelling alone is after all a literary creation. Surely only under the most desperate of circumstances would women have made extensive journeys alone. Nevertheless, a recurrent figure in courtly romance is the lone, far-ranging messenger damsel. She appears in the version of the twelfth-century romance of Alexandre written in twelve-syllable lines by a poet called Alexandre de Paris. Here she is in the East, not exposed to France's brigands, but she soon operates in France as well. (It appears from

the coronation episode in Erec and Enide, Chrétien's first romance, that he has read some version of the Alexandre romance.)

In Alexandre, as in the fairy lais, the messenger damsels work for a woman. Their mistress in Alexandre is the Amazon queen. Like the messengers of the fairy lais, these damsels are models of feminine perfection, and on their travels men treat them with great respect and affection. Since this romance is read less often than others, we shall recount the motivation, progress and accomplishment of their mission in some detail. One damsel who has discovered on her morning ride that Alexandre is on his way reports this news to the queen (7340-7381).¹⁰ The night before the queen has had a dream which a seer interprets as meaning Alexandre is coming to conquer her lands. The seer advises the queen simply to grant him her lands and thus prevent their devastation (7305-7334). Prompted by the messenger's report, the queen sends two damsels, Floré et Biauté, out together to give the advised message to Alexandre as well as to give him rich presents (7420-7433). Though they are together, they are of course without male escort and in that sense are unaccompanied. These beautiful girls are elegantly dressed and have rich equipment for their palfreys (7404-7417). To carry the costly cloth, spices, silver and gold for Alexandre they have nine horses and four camels (7420;7432). As they ride along, they sing (7452). Among their songs is one about Narcissus (7453-7462). Two of Alexandre's men, Aristé and Clins, hear them singing

¹⁰Line references are to Branch III of The Medieval French Roman d'Alexandre, vol II, edited by E. C. Armstrong, et. al.

and send a servant out to see who is making the lovely music (7466-7477). The damsels tell the boy their message and request that his master escort them to Alexandre, so the two men come to meet them (7491-7538). They find the damsels under four olive trees (7527), the only element of the landscape mentioned on their journey. On the way in to court, Clins and Florés fall in love, as do Aristé and Biauté (7549-7574). Alexandre graciously receives their message, saying that as soon as she has rendered homage, all the queen's lands and possessions will be given back to her in fief; and the queen needn't send, as she has offered to do, a yearly tribute of presents like the ones they bear (7622-7627). Alexandre praises the damsels' beauty, courtesy, youth and parentage and says their mistress is wise to send such fine messengers (7617-7620). As soon as the damsels have delivered their message and received Alexandre's reply, the men tell Alexandre they wish to marry the girls (7629-7633). Alexandre wants to know if the damsels wish to marry them and if they consent to it (7634-7635). Having received their affirmative answers (7636-7639), he has a chaplain marry them at once (7640-7641). Alexandre then sends for the queen (7644), who comes with one thousand of her maidens (7666), all magnificently dressed and wearing swords (7648-7653), to offer as soldiers for Alexandre's army (7672). Upon arriving, the queen approaches Alexandre on foot, in sign of her homage to him (7669). In the course of her visit with Alexandre, he asks to see a demonstration of the Amazonian maidens' martial skills, which they proudly give (7686-7698). Then

the queen returns home (7709). The messengers acquitted themselves well of their responsibilities.

It is interesting to see that the messengers, although they belong to an entirely independent and self-sufficient group of women, are susceptible to love. Furthermore, though they have lived without men, they have cultivated their taste for beautiful attire; and they are courteous and accomplished. The wisdom and prudence of their travelling queen is also notable. By trusting her intuition and intelligence instead of a useless pride, she gains everything.

We see the messengers in Alexandre at work just once, but in Ivain a messenger damsel, Lunete, becomes a well-developed character. Lunete also is the servant of a mistress. In the course of the narrative she makes three important journeys. Lunete's travels are a necessary catalyst to the story's action. Her trip to court before the story begins to take a message to King Arthur for Laudine makes possible Ivain's marriage to Laudine. Except for that trip Lunete would not have saved Ivain's life in gratitude for his attention to her at court; and it stands to reason that her acquaintance with him there as a worthy man also contributes to her persuading Laudine to marry him. Her second trip to court to announce Laudine's refusal to take Yvain back introduces the major conflict and leads to Ivain's insanity. Her journey to find Yvain and invite him to come back results in his reconciliation with Laudine, which closes the story.

Lunete's role is to support the interests and activities of Laudine and Ivain. She is a satellite character, as her name reminds

us. However, because her travels involve her in experiences brought to the reader's attention, she appears more frequently and is revealed more fully than the "main" character Laudine, who stays at home. Lunete's travels not only illustrate but probably also develop some of her personal qualities.

Lunete makes the two trips to King Arthur's court mentioned earlier; during the forty day delay she is given to look for a champion whose defense would save her from being burned, she goes there once more and reports going as well to a lot of other courts that remain unspecified. What were the regions like which she traversed? No physical details of Lunete's trips are provided. However, Calogrenant and Yvain travel to the fountain; Yvain goes from King Arthur's court to it, but Calogrenant's starting point is not mentioned. Some details describe the territory they cover, which would be at least in part what Lunete crossed. Calogrenant speaks of going through

...une forest espesse
 Mout i ot voie felenesse,
 De ronces et d'espines plainne;
 A quelqu'enui, a quelque painne,
 Ting cele voie et ce santier.
 A bien pres tot le jor entier
 M'en alai chevalchant issi,
 Tant que de la forest issi,
 Et ce fu en Broceliande.
 De la forest, en une lande

Entrai, et vi une bretesche
 A demie liue galesche; (179-186)
 (...a thick forest
 along a rather treacherous path
 fulls of briars and thorns.
 With some difficulty, some pain
 I followed this path.
 I rode almost a whole day
 before leaving the forest
 And this was in Broceliande.
 From the forest, into a moor
 I entered, and saw a small fortress
 half a Welsh league away).

Calogrenant is well-lodged that night in the fortress he has seen,
 and the next day he comes across the hideous but civil peasant who
 guards a herd of wild bulls. From the peasant he receives directions
 to the fountain.

Calogrenant may not have set out from the court because Ivain's
 journey from court to fountain seems to take him a little longer than
 Calogrenant's and over more ground. "Einçois erra, chascun jor,/Par
 montaignes et par valees,/Et par forez longues et lees,/Par leus
 estranges et salvages,/Et passa mainz felons passages,/Et maint
 peril et maint destroit,/Tant qu'il vint au sentier estroit/Pleins de
 ronces et d'oscurité" (760-767) ("Thus he wandered, each day,/

Over mountains and valleys/Through forests long and wide./ Through
 unknown wild places/ And passed many treacherous places/Many

dangerous and narrow passages/Until he came to the narrow path/Full of briars and darkness"). Yvain stays at the same lodging as did Calogrenant and finds his host and the host's daughter yet more excellent than in Calogrenant's description. Although this fortress is so close to the fountain that Lunete may not have stayed there on her trips, other parts of the narrative show that lone women travellers also are graciously received at houses by the wayside. Ivain, incidentally, also comes the next day to the grotesque peasant minding his herd. He was apparently a long-time fixture on a path used by Lunete.

Lunete's own remarks to Laudine when the latter becomes impatient to marry Yvain and secure the fountain indicate that the distance between Laudine's castle and King Arthur's court is more than one day. At first Lunete tells Laudine that Yvain can be there in five days, which may have represented a feasible time for the round trip. (Ivain, of course, is on the premises the whole time.) However, Laudine says she wants him there that evening or tomorrow at the latest. This comment would seem to reveal an unreasonable impatience on Laudine's part, an impatience that may result from a lack of travelling experience. Lunete's travels have led her to more realistic expectations, and this aspect of maturity may have carried over to other parts of her life as well. Lunete replies, "-Dame, ne cuit pas c'uns oisiax/Poïst tant en un jor voler./Mes je i ferai ja aler/Un mien garçon qui mout tost cort,/Qui ira bien jusqu'a la cort/Le roi Artus, au mien espoir/Au moins jusqu'a demain au soir,/Que jusque la n'iert il trovez" (1826-1833) ("My lady, I don't

believe a bird /Could fly that distance in a day,/ But I will send one of my valets who is very fast/Who will arrive tomorrow evening at Arthur's court if all goes well./It will be impossible to reach him before that").

A journey of such a distance across such terrain requires of Lunete physical strength, stamina, courage and the intelligence to avoid unnecessary difficulties. Lunete's interaction with Laudine and Yvain in the beginning of the story (in saving Ivain's life and looking after him, in persuading Laudine to marry Ivain) show the last three of these traits as well as related qualities that would also serve her well in her travels and doubtless are sharpened by her them. She is quick, decisive, energetic. She sees what needs to be done, seizes initiative and takes charge of the situation. Thus, she offers sensible advice in a spirited manner to both Yvain and Laudine. She sees that she must caution Yvain to maintain his self-control instead of rushing impulsively out to keep Laudine from scratching her lovely face, and she speaks to him at once. Her intelligence combines with her concern for Laudine's welfare and works around Laudine's grief and pride to arrive at an honorable solution to her mistress's problems. She sees that with unexpected but logical reasoning she must hammer away at Laudine's resistance, presenting her again and again with the idea that she should marry Ivain. She does not hesitate to assert her opinion while being prudent enough to secure Laudine's promise beforehand that she will not be angered by her proposals; and she dares to emphasize her points with some comments of contempt when indeed

Laudine becomes angry, as she knew she would. She tells her on one such occasion, "Bien i pert que vos estes fame,/Qui se corroce quant ele ot/Nelui qui bien feire li lot" (1652-1654) ("It's plain to see that you are a woman,/For a woman becomes angry when she hears/Someone give her good advice").

Lunete's habit of speaking her mind plainly has already appeared in the course of her argument: she tells her mistress that her knights are worthless. Her audacity and quick energy show up again later in the story when, upon her arrival at Arthur's court, she condemns Yvain with every term she can think of. In addition, when the stunned Yvain does not immediately hand over the ring of Laudine's she has just asked for, she springs over to him and wrests it from his finger herself.

Meanwhile, a warm loyalty and a sincere interest in Laudine's welfare are part of Lunete's motivation to travel on her mistress's behalf. Her warmth and wit provide at the same time for the satisfaction of her friend Ivain's wishes. Lunete is a wonderful combination of heart and head, and the sight of her in action at the beginning of the story and elsewhere inspires confidence that she could indeed execute the formidable journeys attributed to her.

Various direct statements in the text confirm these elements of Lunete's character that influence her travel. Laudine knew that Lunete was giving her good faith advice to marry "Que trop est sa leax amie" (1750) ("because she is too much her loyal friend"). In a use of litotes when Yvain asks Lunete to plead his case with Laudine as Lunete rides with him for some little distance after Yvain has

rescued her from burning, the narrator remarks that Lunete will do so; for she is "Ne recreanz ne pereceuse" (4650) ("neither cowardly nor lazy"). On the occasion of King Arthur's visit to Laudine's castle, the narrator portrays Lunete's exemplary fidelity and devotion by comparing her to the moon: "Et de celi refaz la lune/Dom il ne puet estre que une, /De grant foi et de grant aïe" (2411-2413) ("And she is like the moon/Of which there can be only one,/Of great loyalty and devotion"). He continues, "Et fu une avenanz brunette,/Mout sage, et vezier, et cointe" (2418-1419) ("And she was an engaging brunette/Very prudent, intelligent and clever"). It seems appropriate to Lunete's working life that the narrator does not give very much information about her looks and her dress. Nowhere is she depicted as being extremely beautiful, or richly dressed, or as riding an exquisitely caparisoned horse. No doubt her dress and equipment are quite adequate, but her concerns for others probably keep her from giving them much thought.

Lunete's bent toward kindness and compassion may receive stimulation from her travels, for it may be in travelling that she becomes acquainted with the poor women who gather with others around the stake where Lunete is tied up for burning. The women lament that Lunete will be lost, saying that she has been their only help and support at court, and she asks Laudine to give her old clothes to them. Lunete may even have made journeys to deliver such items to these poor women.

Certainly her journeys enable her to help others in their travels, as this kind and outgoing young woman gladly does. When

the friend of the disinherited younger sister arrives at Barenton, people on the road tell her that Lunete, who is praying in the chapel, may be able to give her information about Ivain. In response to her inquiry, Lunete saddles up her palfrey and rides with the traveller to the point some distance away that she had ridden to with Yvain as he left after rescuing her. Her help puts the traveller on the path that soon leads her to the sought-after knight.

Perhaps it is the long practice of difficult service to others in her travels that enables Lunete to reach a supreme moment of unselfishness. Yvain comes upon her imprisoned, waiting to be burned at the stake the next day. Although she has long sought a champion, in this desperate moment she tells Yvain not to come back to save her the following day. One death, hers, is better than two, she says; for Yvain would surely die in a combat against three men, the ordeal that will face him if he comes to rescue her. Both noble and practical from start to finish is Lunete.

In Perceval, another woman travelling alone comes to Arthur's court with the purpose of delivering three pieces of information. Since she is apparently not sent by anyone, she is not a messenger damsel. She is perhaps the condition and the message of the country personified. She first tells Perceval that he could have cured the Fisher King and prevented the death of many people and the devastation of much land had he asked questions about the grail and the bleeding lance. He should have asked why the lance bled and what rich lord the grail was to serve. Since Perceval has already received the information the damsel gives from a cousin he met in

the forest, this repetition emphasizes the great significance of Perceval's behavior. This woman then gives news of a tournament that the knights may attend and of the siege a young woman is undergoing at Mount Esclaire. The damsel's message has its effect. Some of the knights choose the latter two adventures, but Perceval vows to spend the rest of his life searching until he knows the answer to the questions he should have asked at the Fisher King's. He vows to maintain this quest so diligently that he will never rest two nights in the same place. Fifty of the knights join him in his quest, but Gauvain is called away for a time to defend himself against an accusation of having dishonorably slain a knight.

The appearance of the woman who comes to Arthur's court to tell these things receives detailed description from the narrator. She arrives on a fawn-colored mule and is holding a whip in her right hand. She is the ugliest woman in the world. Not even in hell would you find an uglier creature. She has two big black braids; her neck and hands are blacker than iron. Her sunken eyes are as small as a rat's; her nose is like a monkey's or a cat's; her ears are like a cow's or a donkey's. Her teeth are a reddish color tending toward egg-yellow. She has a beard like a billy-goat's. She has a big hump in the middle of her chest as well as on her back, a deformed body and twisted legs (4612-4635). Her hideous appearance is in harmony with the disastrous condition of the Fisher King's domain. She is like a creature from hell, and the Fisher King's realm is in a hellish state. Several women travellers in Perceval seem to reflect the unhappy state of the Fisher King's land. The ugliness of this

traveller is perhaps also meant to correspond to the distressing nature of what she tells Perceval, and part of its effect may lie in the contrast between her appearance and the festivities that Perceval's arrival has occasioned at the court. We shall meet a messenger damsel who very closely resembles her in a narrative of the thirteenth century, Guiron le Courtois; the reasons for that damsel's ugliness, however, seem to have little to do with any symbolism central to the narrative.

The altruism of Lunete also characterizes another lone woman traveller in Ivain. When a disinherited younger sister falls ill at a friend's house after going through "mainte contree" (4823) in a vain search for Yvain to champion her cause, her friend takes up the search for her. Details of the friend's journey give a sense of the vigorous efforts she makes. She has a disagreeable experience during the first twenty-four hours of the journey, as the following lines tell:

Et l'autre erra au lonc del jor,
 Toute seule, grant allure
 Tant que vint a la nuit obscure.
 Si li enuia mout la nuiz,
 Et de ce dobla li ennuiz
 Qu'il plovoit a si grant desroi

 Et fu el bois mout au parfont,

 Et li chemins estoit si max

Que sovant estoit ses chevax
 Jusque pres des cengles en tai;
 Si pooir estre au grant esmai
 Pucele au bois, et sanz conduit,
 Par mal tans, et par noire nuit,
 Si noire qu'elle ne veoit
 Le cheval sor qu'ele seoit (4836-4841; 4843; 4847-4854).
 (And the other travelled the whole day,
 All alone at a rapid pace
 Until dark night came.
 The night made travelling very difficult
 And what made it doubly hard
 Was that it was raining heavily.

.....
 It was deep in the woods

And the road was so bad
 That often her horse was
 Nearly up to the cinches in mud.
 So certainly quite dismayed
 Could a young girl without escort be
 In bad weather on a dark night,
 So dark that she could not see
 The horse she was sitting on.)

Other details show her conscientiousness and persistence.
 Having found lodging that night after much prayer, thanks to the

sound of a horn, at a place where Yvain has recently stayed, she is up the next morning at dawn impatient to be on her way. The host shows her the road Yvain took, the road that leads to the fountain. She makes inquiries about Yvain of people passing on the road and learns that Lunete, who is praying in the chapel near the fountain, may have helpful information. It is here that Lunete rides with her to the point where she had ridden with Yvain a few days earlier; on the way Lunete tells her that Yvain rescued her. Lunete also tells her that Yvain badly needed ointment for his wounds; this information may encourage the traveller to believe he may have stopped not far away to allow his wounds to heal and she therefore may be close to locating him.

Indeed, on this road the traveller comes to the castle where Yvain and the lion have stayed to recover from their injuries; and she learns that Yvain has just left. The host tells her that if she hurries she may catch up with him in a few hours and directs her to go straight up the road he points out. The suspense mounts, with the traveller always a little closer to finding Ivain. This time she sets off at a gallop although the horse has maintained a good speed as it is. She travels over muddy roads and dry ones until at last she sees the knight. At that point she hastens so much that sweat is running off the palfrey in little rivulets.

Having found Yvain at last, the traveller breaks into a speech that reveals some of the strain she has endured on this trip. "Et se ge nul mal I ai tret/De rien nule ne m'an deshet,/Ne ne m'an pleing, ne ne m'an menbre" (5065-5067) (If I have had some difficult

moments/I do not regret them at all/I do not complain about them or even remember them"). The journey has caused her physical discomfort. "Tuit ne sont allegie le manbre/Que la dolors m'an fu anblee,/Tantost qu'a vos fui asanblee" (5068-5070) ("My legs feel better/ They forgot that they hurt/As soon as I reached you"). In presenting her friend's case to Ivain, the traveller reveals the high esteem in which she holds her friend, "Miaudre de moi a vos envoie,/Plus gentix femme et plus vaillanz" (5072-5073) ("Someone better than I sends me to you/ A kinder and more valiant woman"), but the traveller's capacity for appreciation speaks of her own generosity.

Yvain and the traveller have a long, hard journey: "D'errer a grant exploit ne fine/Tretoz les jorz de la semaine" (5814-5815) (He does not stop travelling at a rapid pace/All the days of the week) to reach the castle where she left the woman in need of Ivain. The narrator remarks that the young girl acts as a guide to Ivain (5816-5817), who of course would not know where the house was. Perhaps she travels often in the region around her family's castle. Her confidence may come from more experience than just having covered territory between the two points recently.

This woman traveller shows courage during her journey. The difficulties of that first dark, rainy night when her horse was mired in deep mud do not deter her from getting on the road as soon as possible the next morning. Her tenacity and perseverance and her continuing conscientious efforts to reach Yvain as quickly as possible show a real determination to serve her friend.

She did, apparently choose friends of similarly high character; her esteem for her friend finds support in the latter's behavior at King Arthur's court to which she rides with Ivain. (The disinherited sister had of course made a long journey alone until she came to her friend's house. Her journey with Yvain receives only the briefest mention except for the information that the two took modest lodgings outside Arthur's castle in order to keep their presence unknown until going to court for the next morning's showdown.) The younger sister shows her appreciation of Ivain, who is helping her "S'eüst il mout aillors a feire" (5951) ("Even though he had much elsewhere to do"). Even at the moment that she is standing up for her rightful inheritance, she speaks in a kindly manner of the older sister who is trying to deprive her of it. "Ma dame, ma tres chiere suer,/Que j'aim autant come mon cuer" (5957-5958) ("My lady, my very dear sister,/That I love as much as my heart.") She tactfully states that her sister "... feroit cortesisie et bien/.../Se ele mon droit me lessoit" (lines 5956;5959) ("...would show courtesy and goodness/ If she left me what was rightfully mine").

The story of the woman who travels on behalf of her friend seems included in part to reinforce the renown of the illustrious Ivain, whose exploits are recounted by those of whom the traveller makes inquiries at every step of the journey. In addition, the traveller herself contributes to the impression that Yvain is greatly to be treasured with her words of ecstatic appreciation when she at last reaches him. The detailed account of her vigorous efforts can be interpreted as merely showing the lengths to which people will

go to secure the services of this knight of great prowess. And, of course, this entire incident culminates in the proof that Yvain can stand up to single combat with Gauvain, that best of knights. Even so, the nobility of a lone woman traveller remains highlighted.

Another woman in Ivain who at first is riding with two other women but later rides alone shows the tact and the genuine concern for others' welfare displayed by travellers we have just discussed. She, her mistress and one of the mistress's other ladies-in-waiting are out for a short excursion (not for a long expedition like those undertaken by the other travellers) when about a half a league from their castle they spy a naked man lying asleep in the woods. The woman in question gets off her horse, goes to examine him and concludes from a scar on his face that he is Ivain, whom she has seen several times before. Returning to her companions, she reports this astounding discovery, thus providing another occasion to praise Ivain, whom she says is "Le chevalier mialz esprové/Del monde, et le mialz antechié" (lines 2924-2925) ("The world's best, most able knight"). She reasons that some intense suffering must have pushed him into insanity. When she points out that if he regained his sanity he could defeat Count Alier who has invaded her lady's lands, her lady remembers an ointment given her by "Morgue la sage" (2955) ("the wise Morgan") which will cure insanity.

Already Ivain's discoverer has shown herself to be compassionate, intelligent and, like Lunete, quick to see the practical side of a situation. The three women ride back to the castle, and the mistress sends Ivain's discoverer back to him alone

with the ointment. "Et tant sa garison covoite/Que de l'oindre par tot esploite" (2995-2996) ("And she wants him to be cured so much/That she puts the ointment all over his entire body"). The ointment needs only to be applied to his forehead and temples, as her mistress has instructed her to do, but her enthusiasm makes her extravagant. In fact, she empties the jar, which her lady expects back nearly full without even remembering what her lady had said. (2997-2999). She believes at the time that she's using good judgment (3001). Once again this passage expresses a woman traveller's ardor to help a person in need and at the same time an unsparing admiration for the hero.

At this point in the incident the lady uses considerable tact to save Yvain from embarrassment. Leaving clothing near him, she hides behind a tree. Indeed, she is right to do so; for as Yvain wakes and dresses, he looks around to see that no one is coming through the woods. As soon as the lady sees that Yvain really is too weak to stand or to walk alone, she gets on her horse and passes close to him, pretending not to know he is there. Even when Yvain begins to call her to help him, she looks all around and pretends not to see him until he speaks again. As the narrator remarks, her doing so shows "san et corteisie" (3065) ("intelligence and courtesy"). As a result of the conversation that follows, she takes him back to the castle where he recovers his strength. On the way, she prudently casts the empty ointment jar into a stream they cross and invents a little lie to tell her lady about dropping it by accident when the horse lurched.

In Lancelot lone women travellers seem to abound. For example, Lancelot meets three in one day the first day he is out looking for the captured Guenièvre. The first one, who gives information for the promise of a return of their service when she requires it, shows Lancelot and Gauvain the two roads to the kingdom where the queen is held. This type of traveller, who wants a reward for her information, will appear often in later literature. The second traveller comes to keep company with a knight who is guarding a ford in a stream. A third whom Lancelot meets on the road offers him hospitality for the night. She is the woman discussed earlier as riding under Lancelot's protection according to the Rule of Logres.

But one exceptional lone woman traveller in Lancelot takes an extended journey to give crucial assistance to Lancelot. The sister of Meleagant, overhearing her brother, learns that he has Lancelot imprisoned. Lancelot has once done this woman the favor of fighting once again an adversary that he had just defeated with the agreement that if Lancelot were victorious he would decapitate his opponent. The woman wanted to carry away his head. What had happened to make her hate him so much is not told, but she assures Lancelot that he is an evil man and that she will help Lancelot one day in return. Lancelot does end up cutting the man's head off. The woman, who had suddenly ridden up to the place where Lancelot and the man were fighting, rides off again with the severed head.

Now that she has learned that Lancelot is imprisoned, she that she will not rest until she knows where he is (6394-6397). At that

very moment, without making the least noise, she selects a fast, easy-riding mule and slips away all alone, telling no one where she is going. She simply takes the first road she comes to and rides in all haste. She goes from place to place, never staying long anywhere, persisting in her search for him. Before she finds him she will have looked all around in many regions (6420-6423), still having learned nothing. She takes many different roads, crosses mountains and valleys, goes up hill and down dale for a month or more (6426-6428). Then one day as she is crossing a field, lost in sad thoughts, she sees an isolated tower built on the shore of an inlet of the sea; somehow she knows that that is where Lancelot is. She is correct, and she gets him out. Then she nurses him back to health and without any attempt to keep him lets him go back to Arthur's court. Ellen Germain states that Lunete is unlike any other character Chrétien creates (23), but I hold that in her independence, her persistence and her service to the hero the sister of Meleagant resembles Lunete strongly. In fact, Lancelot's rescuer's travels require more stamina and determination than any demanded of Lunete.

The last twelfth-century romance in which we will consider the women travellers is Ille et Galeron by Gautier d'Arras, a work that Anthime Fourrier characterizes as an "Anti-Eliduc" in the manner that some critics have called Cligès an "Anti-Tristan" (285). As in "Eliduc" (and the hero is the son of Eliduc), the hero loves two women, but the author works out a way for him to marry the second

during the life-time of the first and still meet all moral obligations (286).

In the first part of the story a woman travels alone for love, which in this work keeps the reader's attention more than does chivalry, although the knight, Ille, certainly distinguishes himself on the battlefield and in administrative service to his lords. Much more space is given to his valorous deeds than to love and the lady's travels. Nevertheless, the real interest of the first part of the story is not in recounting his accomplishments but in telling of the devotion and diligence with which his wife travels far and wide to find him. Galeron was the daughter of Ille's lord; and Ille, despite his illustrious career, was never quite able to rid himself of the idea that he was not good enough for his wife. When he gets his eye put out in a tournament, he feels sure she will no longer be able to love him; and he flees. He goes to a remote castle to heal. Of course, Galeron's love remains constant. She finds out where he has gone and follows him, alone, covering the distance of a four-day journey in two days and a half. This is all we are told of her journey, except that she rides a palfrey. When she arrives and they will not permit her to see Ille, she disguises herself as a man and gains entry to his room. She assures him of her love and tells him that one must be strong in difficulties. Unconvinced, however, he again flees secretly. Again, Galeron follows him. Her journey this time is not alone, but she is not accompanied by friends, simply by fourteen knights whom she hires to go with her. She directs the journey. Galeron shows initiative and confidence in organizing her trip; with

her lands as guarantee, she borrows one thousand marks for her travels, which are extensive. With her company she goes to Normandy and crosses the Channel. She goes to Britain, to the mountains of Wales and on to Ireland. Then she returns to Northumberland. They search Scotland, Norway, Denmark, Frisia, Hungary, Saxony and all the Slavic lands. Beyond the names of the countries to which Galeron and her knights go, we are told nothing of the journeys except that many difficulties beset them.

Meanwhile, however, Ille has gone to Rome where he puts himself in the service of the emperor and rises to a high position. Galeron feels it is her fault that Ille has left and that Brittany, their province, is no longer rightfully hers. She decides to go to Rome to do penance. By this time all who accompanied her are dead and buried, which may mean they were worn out by their travels. In her urgency to get to Rome, she travels day and night, paying no attention to difficulties. At Rome she speaks with the pope and then takes up residence under the protection of a good man who gives poor workers shelter. She supports herself by sewing. On the day when he was about to marry the emperor's daughter (not having found Galeron in a search for her) Galeron discovers Ille's identity and reveals hers. She assures him that her land, Brittany, and her possessions mean nothing to her without him. They return to Brittany and resume their life there.

However, the story does not end there. After having nearly died at the birth of her third child, Galeron takes the veil, having promised to do so if she survived. Ille then sets out for Rome to see

what has happened to Ganor, the princess he almost married. Meanwhile, Ganor has set off with ten people to Brittany to find Ille to help her against the emperor of Constantinople who is attacking her. They miss one another, but Ille arrives at Rome, vanquishes the enemy and rescues Ganor from a hostile group who have captured her on the battlefield, reminding us of Fénice's rescue by Cligès. Ganor and Ille marry, have children and bring Galeron's children to Rome as well. In the first part of the story, then, a woman travels to regain her love; in the second, a woman travels to secure knightly services. Both take charge of their situations and organize their journeys.

We may summarize this section as follows. Enide stands out for her admirable personal qualities among accompanied travellers. Fénice travels great distances but relies more on magic than on her own resources to get out of difficulties. The minor characters who travel with knights as their companions and usually as their sweethearts will appear constantly in thirteenth-century romances. The Rule of Logres, enunciated by one of them but seldom practiced in Chrétien's romances, will in later romances truly reduce women to object status. The perverse and spiteful traveller who accompanies Gauvain will also find herself repeated often later but without the explanation that makes her behavior understandable. As for women who travel alone, many women alone on the road will give knights information about the roads or people they are seeking and sometimes will act as guides for them. Numerous messenger damsels will appear later. Some will serve with distinction, but none will ever be as fully and as memorably developed as Lunete.

The valiant traveller who rescues Lancelot will not see her equal, but we shall meet a traveller reminiscent of Galeron. In this section as in the previous section on twelfth-century women travellers, many have been courageous and able. Almost all of them have had their narrators' sympathy, and those narrators have made the reader's attitude toward them favorable as well.

Chapter Two: Women Travellers in Thirteenth Century French Literature

Section One: Women Travellers in Thirteenth Century Narrative Genres Minor to the Study

We shall begin this section with a woman traveller in a thirteenth-century epic, Berte aus Grans Piés, which is composed in laisses of twelve-syllable lines (alexandrines), after 1273 or 1274 by a poet called Adenet le Roi. Berte is a princess who makes a journey to marry a king who has asked for her hand, a kind of travel common in the Middle Ages, as Gregory of Tours's History of the Franks attests. In his introductory volume to Gregory's History, O. M. Dalton points out several journeys of this type that Gregory speaks of and supplements Gregory's statements with information found in the writings of Fortunatus, a poet contemporaneous with Gregory. Berte's journey experiences and those of the princesses Gregory writes about are similar in several respects.

In 566 Brunhild, daughter of Athangild, king of the Visigoths, travelled north to marry the Merovingian king Sigibert at Metz (111). Soon afterward, Sigibert's disreputable brother Chilperic, not to be outdone, asked for the hand of Brunhild's sister Galswinth (111-112). Chilperic already had several wives including the strong-willed and malevolent Fredegund, but he promised to put them all away for Galswinth. Fortunatus, a poet contemporaneous with Gregory, writes that Galswinth went with great foreboding and that

on the day she left Toledo, she embraced her mother again and again (112). The car she rode into Rouen was plated with silver. The evil Fredegund soon supplanted Galswinth, who asked to be allowed to go back home, leaving the treasure she had brought with her. Shortly thereafter, Galswinth was found dead in her bed. Observant people suspected Fredegund.

Years later Chilperic sent his daughter Rigunth to Spain to marry the Visigothic prince Recared. A great convoy of wagons bearing treasure accompanied the Frankish princess. However, while she was on her way, her father Chilperic was murdered. He had gone hunting on his land at Chelles, not far from Paris. Returning at twilight, he was stabbed by an assassin as he dismounted from his horse. When the news reached Rigunth's escort, she was robbed and abandoned and had to return home (122). People wondered if Fredegund, who had taken a lover and knew that either her days or Chilperic's were numbered, had arranged Chilperic's murder. Such accounts as these make Berte's legend easy to believe.

In Berte aus grans piés the king of France, Pépin le Bref, sends emissaries to Strigon in Hungary to ask for the hand of the princess Berte. The French accept no present, just the princess. On the day she must leave, in saying good-bye to her father, Berte falls on her knees and weeps (171-172).¹¹ Berte sets out on a Monday morning on a bay palfrey. Her mother accompanies her to Saxony to the home of her other daughter, who is married to Duke Nicholai. Before they

¹¹Quotations and paraphrases from Berte aus grans piés refer to the edition by Albert Henry. English translations are our own.

part, Berte's mother asks her for a ring of hers. She says she will often kiss it and weep. At the moment that her mother leaves, Berte falls down in a faint. Her sister gathers her into her arms (197-222).

We can imagine how heart-wrenching it must have been for a young woman to leave her family and go far away to marry a man she did not know. She would be leaving all she knew, all whom she loved. Sometimes she might never see her family again nor even hear from them.

Adenet le Roi gives us the names of many places through which Berte and her escort pass. They go through Germany without delay. At Saint Herbert they cross the Rhine. They pass through the Ardennes with "nul detriement" (234). At Rostemont on the Meuse River they take lodging at "Un tres reiche chastel qui siet molt noblement:/Entre deus grans rivieres siet seignoriement,/Forés et praeries, tout ce n'i faut noient" (235-237) ("A very rich castle which is very nobly seated:/ It sits in lordly fashion between two great rivers./Forests and prairies [surround it], nothing is lacking"). This is the home of a worthy man, the count Namles, commonly called Namur. He is a cousin of Berte's father, and he receives her party with great honor (240-244). The count offers rich presents to the French escort, but again they accept nothing. They leave in the morning and go next through Hainaut and Vermandois. On a Sunday they arrive at Paris, and the city welcomes Berte: bells ring loudly; every street is covered with rich drapery and strewn with grass;

ladies dressed for the occasion carol and sing; all of Paris is resplendent with jewels and riches (260-267).

Berte's parents have given her three servants, two women and a man. One of the women, who resembles Berte, substitutes herself in the marriage bed, pretends later that Berte has stabbed her and has Berte taken out to be killed. The male servant Tybers, keeps Berte in a room, giving her no food or drink. Finally she is gagged; her hands are tied, and she is led on a five days' march into the forest of Le Mans (568-582). When at last under an olive tree Tybers prepares to kill her, one of her guards, Morans, takes pity on her and threatens to kill Tybers if he harms her. Morans removes her gag and tells her to flee. As they leave, Morans tells Tybers that in this forest are many bears and leopards; it won't be long before the girl is devoured anyway (648-649).

That day in the forest of Le Mans rain, thunder, lightning, sleet and strong wind all make conditions worse for Berte (639-640;707-708). Berte continues to wander all day, praying and lamenting. Finally she mounds up some leaves to rest on (937-938), but before long two robbers come upon her. They start to fight one another over her with a knife and she is able to escape (941-959). After a long, cold night in the forest, Berte comes upon a hermit the next morning. He directs her to the house of Symon and Constance. They take her in; the family becomes very fond of her and she teaches the daughters fine needlework. Berte stays with the family for nine years (1075-1444).

After her daughter has been gone eight and a half years, Blanche flour has a disturbing dream in which she was attacked by a bear and an eagle (1679-1681). She decides she wants to go to France to see her daughter. Apparently she has heard from the royal family, because she and Floire know the names of their "grandchildren," Rainfroi and Heudri, and Floire asks that she try to bring one of them back with her (1700-1701). The king sends one hundred knights with her (1710) and rides with her himself for a day and a half (1720). In parting with her he kisses her tenderly and commends her to God (1721-1722). Before they get to France, "Mainte terre trespasent, mainte forest antie/Et mainte grant riviere qui bien porte navie" (1725-1726) ("They cross many lands, many old forests/And many great rivers that carry ships"). Before they arrive in Paris the queen learns that the people hate her "daughter" and is greatly puzzled. A poor man meets her and blames her daughter for his poverty. Blanche flour gives him one hundred sous (1757-1774). As she approaches Paris, Blanche flour sends word to the king. Pepin rides out to Cambresis to meet her, but the queen pretends to be ill, on the advice of her two accomplices, and has herself shut up in a dark room guarded by Tybers (1798;1804; 1869-1870). Blanche flour, who hears mass on Montmartre, looks over the city of Paris from that vantage point and thinks how lucky her daughter is to live in such a beautiful place. She looks at

...la valee,

Vit la cit de Paris, qui est et longue et lee,

Mainte tour, mainte sale et mainte cheminee;

Vit de Montleheri la grant tour quarnelee;
La riviere de Saine vit, qui molt estoit lee,
Et d'une part et d'autre mainte vigne plantee; (1962-1967)
(...the valley,
She sees the city of Paris, which is long and wide,
Many towers, many halls and many chimneys;
She sees the great crenellated tower of Montlhéry
She sees the river Seine, which is very wide.
And many vines planted here and there.)

The poet goes on to name various sections of the city that she sees. Albert Henry states in his introduction to the text that this description is one of the earliest ones we have of Paris (19).

Blancheflour, not allowed to see her "daughter," one day breaks into the "sick-room" and discovers that the queen is not her daughter. The guilty are punished. Berte is finally discovered by the king when he is hunting one day in the forest of Le Mans. However, she will not admit her identity, so Pepin sends to Hungary for her parents. Berte's identity is established, and she is reinstated as queen. All of Paris turns out to meet her as she journeys back to the city (3340-3346). Berte becomes the grandmother of Roland (son of her daughter) and the mother of Charlemagne.

characterizes her psychological portrayal as modern in its realism (37). Certainly she is apprehensive on her trip to Paris; certainly she is terrified when she is marched out into the woods.

Berte is not in charge of her journeys. In that sense she is similar to many women travellers in the thirteenth-century Arthurian romances. Another strand of thirteenth-century romances, les romans d'aventure, however, features a number of strong women travellers who direct their journeys. In spirit they resemble our next traveller, who appears not in a romance but in what its author calls a chantefable, a term hardly translatable but which indicates that the text is interspersed with song passages; the music has been preserved. Aucassin et Nicolette is the only text we have identified as a chantefable. In it, assonanced seven-syllable lines (or eight-syllable lines in the case of feminine rhymes) are arranged in strophes (stanzas) which end with a five-syllable line. The author says these parts are to be sung. Alternating with them are sections in prose which he says are to be spoken; they are usually monologues or dialogues. The song portions continue the story recounted in the prose parts.

Like Berte, Nicolette is a princess; but no one knows this until the end of the story. Sold as a slave to parents who have reared her from early childhood as a daughter, she and the knight Aucassin fall in love. Aucassin's father will not permit such a misalliance, and Nicolette's father cooperates in preventing the marriage. Both sets of parents imprison the young people. Their plight is reminiscent of

that of Floire et Blanchefloire, a twelfth-century couple whose parents separate them.

Aucassin et Nicolette is the story of several trips made to preserve the lovers' life together, and the interest of these journeys is in the initiative taken by Nicolette. The energy of this resourceful young woman contrasts comically throughout the work with the weakness of her lover. Although he conquers his father's enemies in battle, Aucassin's usual response to his problems is to wail (XI. 10) or weep (XIII. 10-11; 21-22). When Nicolette's father tells him must have nothing to do with Nicolette, Aucassin goes to his room in the palace and laments (XI. 10; 40-42). Nicolette, on the other hand, does not have time for tears. She decides at once what she will do to solve her problems--it's usually to travel--and then does it. At the beginning of the story she proposes to Aucassin that she make a sea-voyage alone: "Por vous passeraï la mer,/s'irai en autre regne" (XIII. 13-14) ("For you I shall cross the sea/I shall go to another country").

Her first excursion, to go find Aucassin and arrange a way that they can go away together, shows that she is brave. Imprisoned in an upstairs room, she waits until the old woman guarding her falls asleep, wraps herself in her best silk mantle, makes a rope of sheets and towels and lets herself down out of the window. On the ground, she hikes her skirts up to protect them from the dew. Although she knows that Aucassin's father has men patrolling the streets and she'll be killed if discovered, she crosses the city. The moon is

shining brightly, so she keeps to the shadows (XII, 30).¹² She finds the tower where her lover is imprisoned and speaks to him through a crevice. They talk for a few minutes; then a guard, who has mercy on them, comes along and warns Nicolette and she leaves. She goes to the castle wall and climbs over a part of it that has fallen down (XVI, 5-7). Before her is a big, steep, dangerous-looking moat, which gives her pause (XVI, 9-14). She slides down the deep moat, bruising and cutting her feet and hands; with the help of a sharp stick, she works her way up the other side (XVI, 15-24).

Now she faces the forest, which lies about two lance lengths before her and is about thirty leagues wide and as many long. She hates to go in because all kinds of wild animals and snakes live there; it also occurs to her that she could be taken back to the city to burn (XVI, 24-28). She enters the fringe of the forest, hoping to escape the wild animals that way, and sleeps under a bush. The next morning she is awakened by shepherds, whom she pays to tell Aucassin a coded message that she is in the forest, once again taking advantage of all her opportunities. Aucassin, freed because of the news that Nicolette is missing, does make his way there and finds the bower she has built.

As soon as Nicolette has put Aucassin's shoulder back into joint from his having fallen and dislocated it because he was distracted by thinking of her, they set off on Aucassin's horse and make their way to the sea. There they board a ship. Blown off its

¹²Line references are to the Old French edition by Mario Roques. English paraphrases are checked against the English translation by Eugene Mason.

course by a storm, it lands in the strange country of Torelore, where the king gives birth to children and the queen fights wars with cheeses, fruit and vegetables. Aucassin and Nicolette stay there three years, but are then carried away in separate ships by pirates who come and ransack the city.

A storm blows Aucassin's ship eventually back to Beaucaire, his town; but Nicolette is taken to Carthage. She remembers the place from her early childhood and knows she is the daughter of the king of Carthage. She is recognized and cherished as such. At once they want to marry her richly, so after three or four days in the palace, Nicolette puts her wits to work again to figure out how she can escape and find Aucassin. She teaches herself to play the viol (XXXVIII,11-12), escapes from the palace one night just before her father is about to make her marry and spends the night with a poor woman by the shore (XXXVIII, 13-15). The next day she darkens her face with an herb, disguises herself as a minstrel and persuades sailors to give her passage for her music (XXXVIII, 15-19). She lands at length in Provence and once again uses her intelligence to get back to Aucassin.

Each time there has been a need for action, for travel so that the two lovers could be together, Nicolette has taken charge of the journey: she escapes from her room to find Aucassin and plot their departure; she sends word to him from the woods so that he will come to her and they can leave; she escapes from Carthage with great forethought and initiative and persists until she is once again with Aucassin.

The travels of the woman in La Fille du Comte de Pontieu, a prose narrative of about six thousand words written at the beginning of the thirteenth century, are as far-flung in distance and in believability in the second part of the narrative as are Nicolette's sea voyages. However, the Count of Pontieu's daughter's travels in the first part recount all too painfully events that seem likely. The lady and her husband decide to take a pilgrimage to Saint-Jacques de Compostelle to pray that they will have an heir. The Count tells them that he will help supply what they need for the trip: "Palefrois et roncis et somiers je vous liverrai asés, et autre avoir" (69-70) ("I will let you have plenty of palfreys and work-horses and pack-horses, and other goods").¹³ They set off and approach Saint-Jacques de Compostelle in less than two days (73-74). One night they stay in a good town; and the husband, Tiebaus, asks the host about the road they will take the next day. The host tells him that near the town there is a little forest to pass through but after that the road is fine (76-78). In the morning, Tiebaus "trova un peu pesant sen sanc" (82) ("found his blood a little heavy"); he awakens his valet and asks him to awaken his people and send them on, but for the valet to remain with him and turn his mattress because "je sui un peu pesans et mehaitiés" ("I am a little heavy and sore"). Tiebaus does not stay much longer after his people leave; it is scarcely day yet, but is a beautiful morning. He, his wife and the valet set out. As they approach the forest, Tiebaus sends the valet to ride quickly on ahead

¹³The line references to the Old French quotations from La Fille du Comte de Pontieu are from the edition by Clovis Brunel. The English translations are our own.

and tell his people to come back and rejoin them, because "Laide cose est a dame de chevaucier parmi forest a pau de compaignie" (95-96) ("It's a bad [laide=ugly] thing for a lady to ride in the forest with little company") they see two roads entering it; Tiebaus chooses the one that looks a little wider. After they have gone about a quarter of a league, "La voie commença a estreuer et raim furent bas, et il dist: 'Dame, moi samble que nous n'alons mie bien'" (105-108) (The road began to narrow and the branches were low, and he said 'Lady, it seems to me that we are not going well').

Now the narrator has already told us that thieves lie in wait along this road to prey on pilgrims passing by. At this moment four thieves on big horses appear in front of them and four behind them. Tiebaus knows their intention when they do not return his greeting. He manages to grab one of their swords and kills three of the eight. Then they overcome him, strip him of his clothes, tie his hands and feet and throw him into some briar bushes. The lady they take into the woods and rape; then they bring her back and set her out on the road. Her husband at once asks her to untie him, but instead she takes a sword and tries to kill him. He manages to escape her first blow, and when she cuts his arm, she cuts the cords enough that he gets loose (110-1154). Her attack has not aroused her husband's anger. Apparently he understands that she was motivated by shame that he had seen her undergo this humiliation. Years later she explains that shame had caused her to try to kill him (464-645). Her motivation has been the subject of considerable critical discussion, as Dietmar Rieger points out. Rieger cites the opinion of Emil

Winkler that the woman loves her husband so much that she cannot bear for him to be haunted all his life by the memory of her dishonor (102). Rieger points out the lady's lack of any shame about her attempt to kill her husband, as indicated by her remark to her father, "Sire", fait elle, "pour çou q'encore me poise ke jo ne le fis" (215-216) (Sir, she said, it still bothers me that I did not do it") (Rieger, 95), which would seem to support Winkler's interpretation.

To return to the journey, Tiebaus takes the sword from his wife and they walk back to the edge of the forest (160-162) where they found their people. That night they find a good town to lodge in and Tiebaus asks the host if there is a religious house where his wife could stay. There is, and he puts her there with some of the servants to stay while he finishes the pilgrimage. Then he comes back and gets her, and treating her very well but not sleeping with her he takes her back home (161-181).

But the lady's travels are not finished. When Tiebaus tells his father-in-law what happened, the Comte is infuriated. He says he would have killed her on the spot for what she did (100-203). What the Count does instead, although it grieves Tiebaus and the lady's brothers (232-233), is to put her into a boat alone and send it adrift at sea about two leagues out (224-232).

Herewith ends the plausible travels of the lady, but the story recounts that she is picked up by merchants from Flanders on their way to the land of the Saracens (237-238). When they arrive at Aumarie, they give her to the Sultan as a present, for she is extremely beautiful (262-270). The Sultan marries her and they

have a daughter and a son; the lady learns to speak the Saracen language well (280-286).

When she has been there with the Sultan about two and a half years (284-285), her father begins to repent of his sin against her; he, his son and Tiebaus decide to make a pilgrimage of penitence to Jerusalem. When in the course of their travels they by chance arrive at the Sultan's, a recognition and reconciliation take place between them and the lady, who secretly arranges to set sail with them for France. The ship takes them first to Brandis, where the lady sends the sailors back to the Sultan to tell him she has left with his son (564-569). With the help of merchants and of the Knights Templar, who willingly lend them money (570-572), they go on to Rome where they confess to the pope and have the son baptized as Guillaume (570-583). They then go on to Pontieu. In the course of several voyages, the lady and her father have learned to forgive one another, and the family is reunited.

The Knights Templar had extensive land-holdings in Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and became so wealthy that they acted as bankers. They were also particularly concerned with travellers, for whom they sometimes acted as police escorts. Therefore, the detail about the Templars adds a touch of authenticity to the story.

La fille du Comte de Pontieu is the basis of a similar story (B. Munk Olsen, CI) written in verse in the first third of the fourteenth century and entitled Le dit des anelés. If this work had been composed some thirty years earlier, we would give it much

attention; for the traveller who corresponds to la fille undergoes a transformation into a gentle but complete independence from a husband, who, unlike la fille's husband, humiliates and abuses her cruelly. This lady's husband discovers her in her preparations to commit adultery. Despite her pleas that he not reveal her conduct to her children, he shames her before her entire family and puts rings on each of her ten fingers, rings so tight that they cut into her flesh. Then, like la fille's father, he sets her adrift in a boat for the sea to take her wherever it will. She, too, reaches land; but she never forms another love relationship although the kind man who rescued her would gladly have married her. Instead, she builds a life for herself in service to others. When her husband comes to her many years later and forgives her, the rings--which, in penitence, she has never removed--miraculously drop off; but she gently refuses the husband's invitation to come and be his wife again. This story, a culmination of a tradition of stories of which La fille du Comte de Pontieu is one (B. Munk Olsen, CI), recommends itself to the reader's attention for the artistry with which it is told. Its unity, its lack of wildly romanesque incidents, its psychological plausibility, its sustained sombre tone give it appeal lacking in La fille du Comte de Pontieu.

Pilgrimages were, of course, major forms of medieval travel. From the earliest days of the Christian era, pilgrims made their way to Rome and to Jerusalem (Stokstad, 16). In the year 1300, two hundred thousand pilgrims came to Rome to celebrate the Jubilee proclaimed by Pope Boniface VIII (Verdon, 262). In the ninth century

Santiago de Compostela became a pilgrimage site and was at the height of its popularity from the end of the eleventh century to the end of the twelfth (Verdon, 262). Although pilgrims were supposed to be accorded special protections and privileges (Verdon, 266), Marilyn Stokstad, citing examples from the famous twelfth-century Guide du pèlerin written by Amery Picaud for the information of those going to Santiago de Compostela, tells us that "the pilgrim was often robbed or mistreated by bandits or unscrupulous local residents" (27), as were the pilgrims we met in La Fille du Comte de Pontieu. Organizations of knights developed for the protection of pilgrims.

The Guide du pèlerin describes in detail many aspects of the pilgrim's experience on the way to Santiago de Compostela but gives little information specifically about women travellers. Debra Birch reports that Saint Bona of Pisa (d. 1207) was prompted by a vision to go to the Holy Land, where a hermit instructed her about places to visit. On the way back Muslims attacked her; but she was able to return to Pisa, where she lived as a recluse except for going on pilgrimages. She went several times to the tomb of Saint Peter in Rome and travelled an astonishing nine times to Santiago de Compostela. When she went on pilgrimage, she ate very little and kept herself bound by chains (158). Birch made a random examination of eleventh-century cartularies, charters noting pledges and benefactions by people about to go on pilgrimages. She lists the names of individuals there recorded. Among these are the names of three couples going to Rome (among about twenty other

pilgrims), but no couples or women are listed in the cartularies for Rome and Compostella (160-163).

The discussion of pilgrimages reminds us that religion was central to people's lives in the Middle Ages. Many lives of saints were composed during that period, and among those in verse of the thirteenth century are several that feature women travellers. In La Vie sainte Paule, composed in the second half of the thirteenth century, Sainte Paule, for example, leaves her wealthy life as the widow of a Roman senator and goes to Jerusalem with her mentor, Saint Jerome, to lead a religious life. She leaves behind all but one of her five children (who were grown). The poet gives us a picture of the children weeping on the shore as she departs. Averting her eyes from them, Paule looks heavenward. The poet explains that, despite appearances, she does indeed love her children and that it is difficult for her to part with them; however, she loves God more (284-324).

As told in her life composed at the end of the thirteenth century (edited by Lennart Bohm) Sainte Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris, who protects the city in times of war and famine, travels in the course of many years to several French cities, including Laon (1236-1238), Troyes (1977), D'Arcy (2033) and Orléans (2217;2491). In each place she performs miracles, including numerous cures. Even after her death she travels and heals the sick: her relics are transported to various towns to protect them during threats of invasion, and in each place miracles occur around her relics.

Sainte Marie Magdaleine with several companions sails from the Holy Land to Marseille to preach the gospel, according to her life as written by Guillaume le Clerc de Normandie in the first third of the thirteenth century. A prominent man of the area and his wife, whom Marie Magdaleine has enabled to conceive a child (60-149), embark for the Holy Land for confirmation of what Marie Magdaleine tells them (163-170). En route, during a terrible storm, the wife gives birth to a son; but she herself dies (250-298). To prevent the sailors from throwing her corpse overboard, the man pays to have her taken to a mountainous island. There he tries to bury her; but finding the ground too hard, he simply puts his coat over her, places the infant near her breast and leaves them there (336-389). After two years in the Holy Land, he returns to the island and finds the child on the shore, tossing pebbles into the water (567-571). Frightened at the sight of the man, the child runs back to his mother and crawls beneath the coat and nurses. By a miracle of Marie Magdaleine, the mother's body, though immobile, has been preserved as if alive; she has nursed the child all this time. (446-456; 588-594). At the sight of his wife, the man speaks of his faith in Jesus Christ as good and all-powerful. This affirmation awakens his wife (627-630), who tells him that she has been with him, thanks to Marie Magdaleine, all during his travels in the Holy Land and has learned all that he has learned (641-649). Their faith assured by all these miracles, they return to Marseille (670-680) and receive baptism (704).

The travels of Sainte Audree in La Vie seinte Audree, composed at the beginning of the thirteenth century in Anglo-Norman by an English nun named Marie, are motivated by an idea dear to the Middle Ages: that celibacy is the ideal state. Audree, the daughter of a king, is married twice but never has sexual relations with either husband. The first husband, of a similar religious bent, is content with this arrangement (856-872); but the second, King Egfrid, goes through periods of wanting to sleep with Audree. At last he permits her to retire to Coldingham Abbey but then changes his mind and comes after her. Luckily, the abbess sees him coming and warns Audrée, who flees to the island of Ely, which she owns. When Egfrid follows her there, she camps out with two guards on a rock surrounded by deep water. Egfrid cannot follow her there (1269-1424). However, he later continues his pursuit, and she is forced to flee from town to town. Audree, because she has remained chaste thanks to her travels, performs many miracles, including many cures.

The travels of Marie l'Egyptienne also relate to sexual concerns. La Vie de Marie l'Egyptienne, a poem of 1308 lines written by the remarkable poet Rutebeuf, who died in 1285, is the story of a "vehement, extreme, passionate personality, who throws herself into a life of sin, and then reverses this to an equally intense commitment to penitence" (Stevenson, 26).

Marie leaves her home at the age of twelve and goes to the city of Alexandria to become a prostitute. For seventeen years she enjoys a raging success at this occupation. Then she decides to go

to Jerusalem on a ship carrying pilgrims. In the course of the voyage she seduces every man on the boat. Tempests and storms do not cause her to desist. She sets up shop in Jerusalem, where once again she has no dearth of clients (31-155).¹⁴

One day, a day of Ascension, she decides to attend church; but at the threshold she finds herself unable to go further, restrained and pushed back by a mysterious force (184-211). She realizes that she is prevented from entering because she is a sinner and that she will go to hell; she says as much to God in a humble prayer (219-228). Then, weeping copiously, she falls on her knees before an image of the Virgin Mary outside the church (252) and pledges to abandon her life of sin, asking Mary to teach her what to do (349-355). A voice, that of Mary, tells her to go to the Chapel of Saint John and from there to cross the Jordan River. Then she is to enter the forest on the other side and live there in repentance for the rest of her life. She will then go to heaven (356-370). So Mary's wanderings in the wilderness will be not only a literal, earthly journey but also a journey to heaven.

Marie sets out for the chapel. On her way a pilgrim gives her some money with which she buys three loaves of bread to take with her into the wilderness (376-380). That evening she comes to the

¹⁴The line references to La vie de sainte Marie l'Egyptienne are from the edition by Edmond Faral and Julia Bastin in volume two of Oeuvres complètes de Rutebeuf. English quotations are from the translation by Brigitte Cazelles in her anthology of thirteenth-century women saints' lives entitled The Lady as Saint. Paraphrases closely follow that translation. Peter Dembowski in his 1994 review of Cazelles's book in Romance Philology takes issue with Cazelle's translation of some lines in this work as well as with her interpretive approach to the lives she treats in her book.

bank of the Jordan near the Chapel of Saint John and camps on the bank for the night (383-385). She eats half of one of her loaves and drinks the sanctified water of the Jordan (388-389). Having drunk this water, she feels joyous (390). She washes her hair in the river. This, too, fills her with gladness (391-392). That night she feels tired, as if she had worked hard (393). She sleeps on the hard ground.

N'ot point de couche appareillie

Ne dras de lin ne oreillier:

A terre l'estut 'sommeillier.

S'ele dormi, ce ne fu gaires:

N'ot pas toz jors geü en aires (394-398)

(She had no made-up bed

No linen sheets, no pillow:

On the ground she had to sleep.

If she slept, she scarcely did:

She has not always slept out in the open air.)

The next day she receives communion in the chapel, then crosses the river "en un chalan" (406) ("in a rowboat").¹⁵ Then she goes into the woods. Now she has only two and a half loaves of bread, the poet reminds us (415). God will have to help her, for she can hardly live on so little to eat (416-418). "En Dieu a mis son cors et s'ame" (420) ("In [the care of] God she has put her body and her soul"). She walks all day; and when night covers her, she lies down

¹⁵This translation and those that follow that are marked with an asterisk are our own. These passages Cazelles has omitted from her translation.

beneath a tree "En lieu de biau palais de marbre" (423) ("Instead of in a beautiful marble palace"). She eats a little of her bread before she goes to sleep (425-426). The next day she travels on, going straight east (427-429).

Marie lives in the forest for over forty years with nothing to eat except the rest of the three loaves and grass (467-468; 470; 479; 486). With the passage of time, the weather destroy her clothing (442-443). Her skin blackens; her breast becomes mossy (425-454). The devil tempts her daily for seven years but finally gives up (487-518).

Marie's journeys bring great changes in her. Her journey to Jerusalem leads to her repentance. Her journey to the wilderness and her wanderings therein lead her completely to forget her evil ways and lead a life so close to God that she becomes endowed with powers beyond the natural. We see that she can live nearly half a century without proper food or clothing. Her chance encounter (an encounter really arranged by God) with the monk Zozimas, who is spending some time in the desert before Easter, shows us other abilities that her closeness to God affords her. To Zozimas's astonishment, she knows his name without being told. He observes that when she prays she levitates (879-884). This phenomenon frightens him, for he thinks she may be an enchanter (885-890). However, Marie reads his thoughts and assures him that she is simply a sinner living a life of repentance (891-900). Marie also predicts an illness he will have during lent of the next year and says when he will be cured of it(945-955). These events occur as

predicted (989-995). On Zozimas's second visit to her a year later, Marie walks across the Jordan River without getting wet (1032-1035). At the end of the visit, she calls upon the power of God to transport her back across the river, and it is done without efforts of her own (1117-2119). And when she dies shortly after the second visit, she does so just by requesting that God take her to heaven (1122-1141). The body remains miraculously preserved (1157-1162) and is revealed to Zozimas on his third visit a year later by a holy light shining around it (1191-1192). Writing on the ground near it reveals Marie's name (1198-1200). These various occurrences show us that Marie's journeys transform her from a person absorbed in earthly pleasures to one who lives in spirit--nearly so, it seems, even on earth.

Women travellers in the other works in this section take far-flung voyages. Like Marie, two among them are often in charge of their journeys. Another, Berte, is rescued because another woman, her mother, becomes concerned about her and takes a journey to see about her. But Berte has her own kind of strength; she endures and finally prevails. We shall find some other strong women travellers in the thirteenth-century literature to be discussed next.

Section 2: Women Travellers in Thirteenth-Century French Adventure Romances and Arthurian Romances

Nicolette in Aucassin et Nicolette is very much like the heroine of L'Escoufle, a roman d'aventures or adventure romance

written by Jean Renart between 1200 and 1202. This romance, like the three other adventure romances that follow in the discussion (Galeran de Bretagne, Guillaume de Dole and Le roman de Silence) and like the Arthurian romances in verse later discussed, is written in octosyllabic rhymed couplets, a standard medieval French verse form. Adventure romances do not feature King Arthur and his knights, nor do they include le merveilleux, the magic common to Arthurian romance. They often include details of everyday life.

As G.-T. Diller observes, in L'Escoufle "la quête d'un amant perdu se transforme pour l'héroïne en une conquête féminine du monde" (34) ("the quest for a lost lover transforms itself for the heroine into a feminine conquest of the world"). The young lovers In L'Escoufle, Aélis and Guillaume, have been reared together and promised marriage, with Guillaume becoming thus emperor of Rome. But upon the death of Guillaume's illustrious father, who has served the emperor peerlessly in military and administrative matters, the emperor's barons decide that Guillaume will not do as a husband for the emperor's daughter Aélis. The empress is on their side and at last the emperor yields. Guillaume is forbidden to go into Aélis's room (3016-3020).¹⁶ Aélis has been smart enough not to protest (3078-3079), but she begins at once to lay plans, Nicolette fashion. While her parents are at church the next day, she sends for Guillaume and gives him detailed instructions for preparing their

¹⁶The line references to L'Escoufle are to the Old French edition by Franklin Sweetser. The English paraphrases and translations are our own, closely following the modern French translation by Alexandre Micha.

departure. She is in a better position to act than Guillaume; but, like Aucassin, Guillaume can do nothing but lament and weep the night he leaves the palace and as he sits with Aélis when she sends for him (3098; 3176; 3390; 3474). However, Aélis's cheerful confidence lifts his spirits (3534). She reminds Guillaume that before his father Richard died men came from the province his father used to rule, Normandy, to request that Richard or Guillaume return to be their ruler. Now, she points out, they can go to Normandy and Guillaume can take charge of his ancestral lands (3482-3487; 3520-3537). Guillaume's mother lives in Venice. Aélis tells him to entertain his host well tonight and then to leave after a first sleep to go to his mother's. He is to have his mother secure the best two mules she can for them, to prepare raincoats, wool coats and tunics in dark Flanders cloth for both of them. She tells him to take a lot of money--silver, besants (gold and silver Byzantine coins) and riches--and solid Turkish leather purses to carry it in. Feed the mules well with oats and good-smelling hay, she instructs. Finish all the preparations in fifteen days, and bring men of arms or valets to carry her baggage, she tells him. He is to come to the palace wall to get her on an agreed-upon night two weeks from then (3552-3615).

The night that Aélis is to leave, her mother gives her her costliest ring. Aélis puts it in an almsbag and attaches it to her belt (3801-3831). In addition, Aélis has gathered up a lot of jewels and money, which she puts into a pillowcase (3866-3869). Like Nicolette, she ties enough sheets together to make one hundred feet

(3882-3883) and lets herself down from the window to join Guillaume. The height is frightening (3906), and Reason and Reflexion try to discourage her, but Love wins out and gives her the courage to descend (3908-3935;3948-3958). She hears Guillaume's mules below (3936-3939) and climbs up on the window sill, puts one foot and her right arm outside (3943-3944); she holds onto the pillar with all her might and hangs onto the sheets (3946-3947). She turns her face to the pillar (3960-3961) and before letting go and sliding down, she recommends herself to God (3962-3963). Guillaume has her dress in the clothing he has brought (3989-3993) and they are on their way. The servant that Guillaume has brought from his mother's takes them to the gate that leads to the road of France (4012-4013). When they are out of the city, Guillaume tells the servant to go back home with his compliments (4016-4025). The moon is shining (4015), and the mules take them along the *chaussée ferrée* (road reinforced with iron scraps as Roman roads used to be) at such a smooth pace that they hardly know they are riding (4036-4039). The lovers are very happy to be together and on their way.

"Bien ont andui mis en la mine/ Meres et parens et avoir/Por
acomplir tot lor voloir/Tot ont atorné au deduit" (5050-4053)
("They have sacrificed mothers, kinsmen, riches to satisfy their
desires; they consecrate all to their pleasure"). Their journey
toward Normandy makes them joyful. That night they travel more
than a long day's ride in Lombardy, and the mules do not stop in hill
or valley when the day comes (4056-4061).

Guillaume chooses their lodgings so that they cannot be found, always staying off the main roads and streets so that those the emperor had pursuing them would not find them. He sees that the mules have their saddles taken off and are given plenty of oats and hay (4232-4258). He and Aélis order plenty of good food--meat, fish, wines (4261-42630. Guillaume has patés made up in the evenings for them to eat as they travel the next day (4266-4267). He always observes good manners, never eating before his host is seated (4270-42710). His courteous ways and liberal expenditures convince their hosts that they belong to a noble family (4280-4281). Aélis does not watch every penny, paying rather more than less when the bill for the meal is totaled (4288-4291). The two young people are so gracious that after the meal the host himself makes their beds (4292-4293). Guillaume packs all the food for their next day's provisions: he wraps salt and cakes in a napkin, has goatskin canteens filled with wine, has the patés wrapped up in a bag, puts galettes in another, cold meat and roast partridge in another (4296-4303).

At mealtime during the day, Guillaume finds a spring; and they picnic near it (4315-4319). Guillaume gathers flowers and make a garland for Aélis's head (4332-4333). The lovers exchange kisses (4325). The mules fatten themselves on the fresh grass (4348-4349). In a week they arrive near Toul in Lorraine (4354-4355; 4358), where there are beautiful meadows, woods and rivers (4356-4357). Alice admires the beautiful hills and valleys, prairies and vineyards as well as the towers, bells and houses of Toul, which

they see at a distance (4372-4377). However, they stop by a spring to eat and rest because Aélis is tired and has a headache from the heat (4388-4405). Guillaume puts the wineskins to cool in the spring (4428-4429) and serves the meal very efficiently (4434-4449), as he always does. Just before she takes a nap, Aélis removes the aumonière (a small sack for alms) from her waist and gives Guillaume the ring her mother had given her. With it she tells Guillaume, she gives him her love and her person (4479-4489). He gives his love and his person to her in return (4498-5001). Attentive always and skillful at making Aélis comfortable, Guillaume places a garment under her head for a pillow (4520-4521) and sits in front of her to block the sun from her face (4540-4541).

Unfortunately, Guillaume has left the small sack with the ring in it some distance away, and as he is sitting by Aélis, a bird (a kite) comes and picks up the sack and flies away (4544-4560). Guillaume follows it for quite a distance (4638-4645). While he is gone, Aélis awakens, believes herself deserted, and makes her way into the town of Toul, having taken leave of a young man who happens by and revives her when she has fainted (4760-4780).

Riding into Toul, Aélis does not know how to secure good lodging the way Guillaume does (4870-4871). She is furthermore depressed; without Guillaume her life has no more interest or sense (4872-4873). Perhaps this state of mind accounts for her accepting the first opportunity for lodging that she comes to. She sees a young girl on the street who is carrying two pots of water (4879-4883) and asks her to keep her overnight (4918-4921). The girl

protests that she is too fine a lady to stay with poor people like her and her mother (4923-4925), but Aélis says she wants to stay away from people (4946-4949). The girl gets her mother's permission (4980-4991). The lodging is really a shed (4963); it serves as a barn and storage area for a bourgeois of the town who hires the girl's mother to look after his implements (4963-4974). The shelter has only a bed, a hutch and a piece of equipment for making guimpes (4964-4965), in which trade the two women engaged. Having no chair (5002), they make one for Aélis from some straw with a clean rag over the top (5003-5005). They do their best to take care of her, taking off her spurs and unfastening her coat (5007-5009). The young girl takes the bit out of the mule's mouth and is careful with its harness so that the harness does not get damaged. She sees that the mule has plenty of hay (5011-50210). Aélis gives the girl some money to go get food for the supper (5038-5049). She comes back with bread, wine and candles (5212-5216). For Aélis's bed they simply heap up a lot of straw (5233-5237), over which Aélis has them spread her own sheets and pillow (5243-5245); for her hosts have neither coverlets nor cushions (5229).

Aélis asks the young girl to sleep with her that night although the girl protests that she is just a servant and unworthy to share her bed (5264-5269). Aélis insists, and as they lie in bed Aélis tells the girl, Isabelle, her story and begs her to go with her to Normandy by way of Lorraine and Champagne (5304-5307) to look for Guillaume. Her mother consents the next morning. Aélis gives the mother her mule, and the two young girls set off on foot. Before

long Aélis is so tired that Isabelle carries her extra clothing for her (5324-5325).

They always take good lodgings and eat well (5327-5329), for A élis has plenty of money. Aélis dresses Isabelle in a complete set of rich new clothing(5340-5344). They make their way to Châlons (5331). As they travel, they make inquiries for Guillaume but in vain. Even in Rouen and Montivilliers no one knows him(5348-5351). Aélis begins to fear that his being count of Normandy may not be true since no one has heard of him (5352-5361). But, encouraged by Isabelle (5380-5397), she travels on; and they spend more than two years looking for him (5304-5305). They are fortunate that Aélis has enough money to support them during this time (5310-5311). Finally Isabelle suggests that they go to Montpellier and rent lodgings and that she can support them by making guimpes and handkerchiefs. Aélis says she can do fine needlework with silk and gold threads (5451-5463). They travel to Montpellier and set up housekeeping, earning their living by doing needlework and by shampooing the heads of noblemen (5508-5513). On holidays Aélis entertains people in her home by telling stories and playing such games as checkers (5524-5527). Everyone likes and respects Aélis and Isabelle.

Eventually a countess in Saint-Gilles asks them to live with her and her husband the count so that they can do needlework just for her (5948-5962). She sends messengers after them. Aélis makes sure all her debts are paid and articles that belong to her neighbors are returned. She goes around and tells all her neighbors

good-bye (6040-6053). More than fifty people turn out to see Aélis and Isabelle off (6082-6083). The good humor and witticisms of the messengers who accompany them to Saint-Gilles make the trip go fast (6094-6097), and they arrive the next day before dinner (6098-6099), the exact time of their departure not being given.

The young women remain happily with the Count and Countess until, seven years after Guillaume and Aélis have been separated, good fortune brings him to the Count's castle; and he and Aélis are reunited. The Count turns out to be a relative of Guillaume and sees to it that he is installed as lord of his ancestral province. The Normans are delighted to have Guillaume.

The Count and two hundred of his knights (7934-7935) accompany the couple to Normandy. Aélis's departure and journey receive much more attention from the narrator than do Guillaume's. The Countess gives Aélis so many presents--clothes, jewels and money--that one would think she were her mother the empress of Rome (7952-7929). Aélis rides a bay palfrey (7976). So many ladies of the castle come out to bid her good-bye that it becomes impossible to kiss them all (7977-7981). They take Isabelle, and she is richly dressed (7948-7951). As they go through Saint-Gilles, Aélis greets the crowds of townspeople courteously (8030-8031). Aélis is elegant in a scarlet cape with an ermine hood lined with sable (7994-7997). The Countess rides with Aélis for a short distance (7990-7991).

At a castle not far from Arques (8088-8089), they are welcomed with festivities. Bells ring; people dance all evening;

Aélis's room is hung with garlands and draperies (8196-8222). Word of their arrival is sent on to Rouen. Guillaume is given the keys to the city (8234-8235). Bells ring loudly and instruments are played as they enter (8276-8277). People have so filled the streets that no standing room is left, and others crowd the windows (8256-8261). The archbishop, who has recognized Guillaume as rightful lord of the province (8238-8239), meets and kisses them (8246-8247). An enormous number of rich presents are sent to the couple's palace (8304-8311).

After three years of wise rule in Normandy, Guillaume is invited to become emperor of Rome. Again, it is Aélis's departure that receives the narrator's attention. Aélis sends messengers to tell the many ladies who are her friends that she is leaving (8648-8653). More than sixty of them come to say good-bye (8654-8655). In addition, Aélis selects twenty young girls to take to Rome with her and bring up; they are all quite willing to go (8658-8663). All the people of the castle come out at the moment of departure. Aélis tells the ladies that she is always at their disposal, wherever she may go (8722-8723).

Similarly, at Rome large crowds come to greet them and many rich gifts are given the couple. The streets are strewn with gladioli, rushes and mint (8837-8838); they are hung with garlands and with draperies of silk, taffeta, satin and embroidered materials (8840-8843). The bourgeoisie have hung riches from their windows and put out gold Turkish vases (8852-8854). Church bells ring everywhere (8844)-- "...por feste de la dame" (8845) ("to welcome the lady"),

says the narrator. People play musical instruments (8856-8857). Not the least ornament of this procession is the gold of Aélis's hair (8850-8851), just as it was when she entered Rouen.

Before she is reunited with Guillaume and journeys to a life of glory in Rouen and Rome, Aélis manages her journeys and her independence as competently as we would expect from one who plans her elopement trip so efficiently. She travels to Montpellier and becomes mistress of her own little world.

Our next traveller, Frêne, in the adventure romance Galeran de Bretagne, is like Aélis in several ways: she is reared with the young man with whom she falls in love; she travels and is thus separated from him because their love is disapproved of, and she makes an independent life for herself. Years later she is reunited with her beloved. Like Aélis, she is strong enough to direct her own travels and her own life. She also makes a spirited use of her verbal skills to defend herself, thus bringing about the necessity for her first journey and the successful outcome of her second.

Galeran de Bretagne is another romance which some scholars believe was written by Jean Renart; others believe a poet named Renaut is the author. It was probably written after L'Escoufle. The beginning of this story is like the beginning of the lai "Frêne" by Marie de France. In both narratives a new-born baby, a twin, whose birth is an embarrassment because of its mother's indiscreet remarks concerning the parentage of twins, is secretly taken from its home and left in an ash tree near an abbey. Each of the abandoned babies is wrapped in an exquisite blanket that bespeaks noble birth

and each is taken in by the abbess and tenderly reared. In Marie de France's lai, a woman servant bravely journeys alone and at night to take the child away. In Galeran de Bretagne, however, a man makes this journey.

In Galeran de Bretagne the discovery of the baby in the ash tree occurs just at the moment when the abbess, Ermine, is about to leave her abbey in Beauséjour to go see her sister Ydain, the Countess of Brittany, who lives in Nantes. The Countess has just given birth to a baby boy. The abbess puts off her trip to the next day to see that the foundling is well cared for.

The abbess travels in style: her car has curtains of Reims tapestry. She travels with five of her nuns, all noble and excellent Christians; a chaplain named Lohier, a man of finest character; and many squires (901-905).¹⁷ Her pack animals are loaded with "drap, livrez et joiaus" (906) (clothing, books and jewels). When she is ready to leave Nantes, the narrator speaks of her "males" (1063) ("trunks") . Before she leaves Nantes, she tells her sister about the baby found in the ash tree and asks the Countess to allow her to take the new-born boy back to the abbey with her to rear. The parents agree to this (110-1101), so Galeran is taken to be reared with Frêne.

As Frêne grows up, she becomes an accomplished needlewoman (1158-1164) and harpist (1166). Taught music by Lohier (1167), she

¹⁷The line references to Galeran de Bretagne are to the Old French edition by Lucien Foulet. English paraphrases and translations, our own, closely follow the modern French translation by Jean Dufournet.

knows and can sing beautifully many songs and lais. She learns pantomimed dances and "toutes notes sarrasinoises" (1169) (all the Saracen music) as well as that of Gascony, France, Lorraine and Brittany (1168-1171). When the two youngsters grow up, they fall in love (1130-1151). This development becomes known to the abbess when Galeran, who, after age fifteen is supposed to be away studying chivalry, returns constantly to the abbey to see Frêne. Their love angers the abbess, who feels that Frêne, a mere foundling, is not good enough for the future Count of Brittany (2968-2972).

Finally, one day, the abbess starts an argument with Frêne that becomes more and more bitter and insulting; for Frêne makes spirited replies to the abbess. When the abbess offers ironically to let Frêne enter the convent, Frêne replies that she has observed enough of the life there to see that the nuns enter there to live at their ease and comfort and that she, Frêne, would choose a more austere place should she become a nun (3838-3851). Frêne insists that she has a noble heart and noble tastes and could become a countess (3875-3893). The abbess calls her "Vieus garce, chïoche covee" (1919) ("Base trollop, filthy creature") and tells her she was found in a tree outside the door (3920-3921). As proof, she shows Frêne the beautiful cradle, pillow and the elaborately and richly embroidered blanket that Frêne was left in (3952-3958). However, Frêne turns these items to her own account, in saying that their quality shows that she is from noble stock and worthy of marrying Galeran (3964-3975). Infuriated, the abbess tells her that she will have to leave the abbey (3976-3978). She gives Frêne the items she

has just shown her (3979), but Frêne gives back the cradle saying that if some nun or other woman gives birth, she might need it, but that she, Frêne is blameless (3988-3997). The abbess allows Frêne to stay until the next day (3986-3987).

Frêne spends the rest of the day packing her bags (3998-4000). But Frêne does not leave in bitterness. She tells the prioress, sister of Lohier who has recently died, that she forgives the abbess because she has reared her in comfort. She forgives any who may have injured her and asks forgiveness for any she may have hurt (4038-4049). She embraces all the people of the house and says good-bye to them (4050-4051). All of them voice repeated exclamations of lamentation (4056-4071). Faith Lyons points out that this is a "plainte collective en forme de choeur" (75) ("collective lamentation in the form of a chorus"), which of course helps to dramatize this forced leave-taking. The prioress would reconcile her with the abbess, but Frêne will not agree to have that done (407-4078).

The next morning, when she is about to leave on foot with her suitcase and her harp (4081-4083), the prioress gives her the mule that her brother had bought for her (4087;4089). It has a brand new harness (4088), an elegant saddle blanket (4096), a soft cushion (4096) and a golden bit (4097). Frêne puts the suitcase behind the saddle and the harp around her neck (4094-4095). Frêne is dressed in a blue coat of costly Flanders cloth (4100-4101). The prioress wants to send someone with her--a servant, man of arms or a companion--but Frêne wants to go alone, saying that the countryside

is quite safe and that she has plenty of money for all her needs(4103-4109). Getting onto her saddle, Frêne weeps (4098) and cannot speak as she leaves, but nods good-bye to the prioress (4111-4119), who prays for her (4122-4125). Frêne then rides away from Beauséjour and travels alone all day (4129-4130).

The white mule carries her along gently (4135). She does not dwell on the meanness of the one who spitefully carried tales about her to the abbess (4134-4135) but thinks instead of Galeran (4138). As she travels she sings lais and songs (4143). She travels nearly eight days (4244-4145), stopping at inns along the way. Everywhere she stops she brings joy and diversion (4246-4247), for she plays her harp. Often this obtains a sumptuous, clean bed for her at little or no cost (4250-4155). Unlike an English or Scottish woman, she always sees that her mule is well cared for before she takes her ease(4256-4159).

At last she arrives at Rouen (4160-4161); she goes about the streets there all day, concealing her face in her white guimpe (4163-4165), asking God to guide her (4167).

Finally, she sees a respectable looking lady sitting in front of her opulent house with her daughter and a servant (4168-4175). She requests lodging, recommending herself as best she can and saying that her name is Mahaut (4286-4219). The lady tells her that she does not run a hotel (4222) and that sometimes people are deceived by those they take in (4231-4232) and that she must go on her way (4233). However, the daughter intercedes, imploring her mother to take her in; and her mother does so (4239-4252). Frêne is well-

lodged there. She earns a lot of money with her needlework and teaches Rose, the daughter, to work with silk and gold thread. She never goes out except to church, reads her psalter, is charitable to the poor. Many come to seek her hand, but she refuses all. On holidays she plays checkers. She remains there in Rouen for a year and a half (4256-4325).

Meanwhile, the prioress has told Galeran what has happened (4331-4337). He sends twenty men to look for her all over Europe for a year, to no avail (4348-4359). Galeran engages in a life of chivalry and in the course of his adventures he meets Fleurie, the twin of Frêne, and courts her. Not in love with her but pressed by the people of Brittany to marry, he consents to do so because she looks like Frêne (4436-6446).

The news spreads far and wide that the Count of Brittany will marry (6447-6450). When Frêne hears it, she is grief-stricken (6460-6506). She realizes she should have let him know where she was when he came back to Brittany from studying chivalry in Lorraine (6506-6509). Finally, she confides in Rose, who says that they can go to Roche-Guyon, where the wedding will be held, and Frêne can let Galeran know she is there. They will use as an excuse that Rose needs to go to Saint-Denis to fulfill a vow of pilgrimage she made after an illness a year ago. Frêne adds that she can tell Rose's mother that she wants to sell her fine needlework at the wedding and that they will then go to Saint-Denis (6540-6611). Blanche, the mother, agrees that they may go, that they are old enough and prudent enough that she will not worry (6650-6659).

They make preparations (6661-6663). Frêne packs some ermine to line a garment with (6665). Early the next day they leave, Rose riding a borrowed mule (6671-6673). Both wear blue capes (6677); they carry pilgrim's sacks and staffs (6676-6677). Frêne carries her harp by a shoulder strap (6674-6675). They cross mountains and rocks, woods, plains and paths until they get to Roche-Guyon (6686-6689). The townspeople are preparing lodgings for all the guests who will attend the wedding Sunday (6691-6693). Frêne and Rose take modest lodgings with a widow, who assures them that she knows well how to make them a "wastel" (6730) ("cake") and that she has plenty of bedding as well as hay and oats for the mules (6727-6735).

Installed in their lodgings, Frêne sets to work to make herself a coat to wear. She sews onto it panels from the precious embroidered blanket she was wrapped in as an infant and lines it with ermine (6744-6762).

By Saturday evening crowds of people have entered the city (6775-6776), and merchandise of all types is available in the marketplace (6782-6795). Many minstrels have come to town (6797). Some stage fights between wild boars or between bears and dogs (6800-6802). Some show leopards or lions (6803).

Meanwhile Galeran is dreading to marry Fleurie, whom he knows he does not love (6838-6855). On Sunday before the wedding, Frêne, dressed in her elegant costume and resplendent in a jeweled belt and brooch of jewels given her by Galeran (6922-6933), rides with Rose to the palace. While Rose watches the mules (6968-

6969), Frêne takes her harp, goes into the room where Galeran is and begins to play. All are spellbound by her music (6972-7004). She then speaks to Galeran, making allusion to her name by a play of words (7025). Leaving Galeran stupified, she advances to the bride's chamber (7041), where Gente, the mother of Fleurie and Frêne, recognizes the embroidered material on her coat (7113-7121). Frêne reveals her story (7162-7407); she and Galeran are married (7681-7685); Fleurie, broken-hearted, enters a convent (7716-7721). Her fate contrasts with that of the corresponding character in Marie de France's *lai*; that twin, Coudre, makes a rich marriage. The abbess begs Frêne's pardon (7770-7773) and is graciously forgiven, Frêne recognizing always that the abbess had reared her in great kindness (7774-7780).

Once again we have a spirited traveller who insists on taking charge of her own life. She is able to support herself during her travels and at her destination. She gains the friendship of other women, and it is at the urging and with the support of a woman friend that she makes her next journey. Skill with words and readiness to defend herself and claim her rights have played no small part in Frêne's journeys.

Our next traveller, Liénor in Le roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dole, also a work written by Jean Renart between 1200 and 1211, travels to use her verbal skill very cleverly in order to clear her name of dishonor. Many critics have remarked about the importance of words, stories, songs and the imagination to this work. The emperor loves stories and songs. The whole story is

based on two fictions, two lies. Told that Liénor is as beautiful as the lady in a story he has just heard, the emperor Conrad falls in love with her. He invites her brother to court, and the emperor's seneschal, jealous of the honor and attention given Guillaume and of the position Guillaume will have if the emperor marries Liénor, contrives a lie about her that will change the emperor's mind. The seneschal goes to Liénor's home, where he sees her mother but not Liénor. In the course of the visit, the mother mentions the rose birthmark that Liénor has on her thigh. The seneschal takes this information and tells the emperor that he has slept with Liénor. When she learns about this, Liénor makes up her own lie to expose the seneschal's lie. She travels to court and accuses the seneschal of raping her. The seneschal says he has never seen her and proves it through surviving an ordeal. That very denial and proof, however, show that he has not slept with Liénor, who because she has the courage to take a journey and the wit to defend herself, becomes empress. In a romance that is, as Norris Lacy says in " 'Amer par oïr dire': Guillaume de Dole and the Drama of Language," "about a society...devoted to language, to literature and to imagination" (780) this woman traveller triumphs on those terms: she invents a fiction that traps her accuser and frees herself (785).

Of her journey, we are told that she takes two knights (4058-4059)¹⁸ with her, a few squires and her nephew (4088-4089), who

¹⁸Line references and quotations are to the edition and English translation of Le roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dole by Regina Psaki. Paraphrases follow Psaki's translation closely.

had brought the bad news. Two coffers are packed with a quantity of fine clothing, which she owns in abundance (4066-4069). Before she leaves, the whole town weeps that she has been slandered so (4084-4086). We are given no details of her party's progress on the trip but told simply that they travel until they reach Mainz. It had taken the nephew about seven days to reach Liénor's house from Mainz (3954-3955), but he had gone as fast as he could, night and day (3910-3912).

As they approach the city, Liénor sends her nephew and one of the squires ahead to get lodgings, telling them that she wishes to be as far away as possible from her brother and his companions (4197-4208). They find pleasant lodgings with a lady, on a street not close to the center of activity. The room and stable are comfortable, and the lodging has gardens and a well. The next day Liénor dresses in extraordinarily beautiful clothing and goes to court to clear her name.

The travellers examined in the last three works have proven quite capable of directing their journeys and their lives. The travels of a woman in the Roman de Silence, written in the second half of the thirteenth by Heldris de Cornuälles, show her in fact to be as capable as any man at tasks usually or even always performed by men.

When Silence is born in England, the king of her country has just proclaimed that women may not inherit property. So that she may inherit, her parents bring her up as a boy. As an adolescent, she spends part of her time away from home learning male-oriented

activities at the home of her father's seneschal in the forest. She will study chivalry. One night two minstrels come to the seneschal's home to spend the night. Silence helps them get settled comfortably for the night, and they appreciate "his" service. Silence decides that she will run off with them and learn their trade, which she feels will serve her in good stead if she turns out not to be so good at chivalry (2839-2864).¹⁹

Early in the morning she awakens the minstrels and tells them she is going hunting but will not do so if they can stay that day (2881-2884). As a result, they reveal their travel plans, which are to go to the sea and take a ship for Brittany (2892-2995). Silence tells them that the sea is narrow at that location (2901) and that if they hurry they could be in Brittany by nightfall (2899-2900) if they have a good wind. She tells them that it is only ten leagues to the port (2905-2906).

To disguise herself, Silence darkens her face with the juice of a weed she has gathered from the forest (2909-2910). Then she rides to the seaport and boards the boat that the minstrels later board as well (2915-2917). Silence does not let them know who "he" is during the trip across the Channel (2927-2931); but when they disembark, he asks them where they are going and goes with them to Nantes (2931-2941). That night they discover who he is and gladly

¹⁹Line references are to the Old French edition of Le Roman de Silence by Lewis Thorpe. English quotations are from the translation by Regina Psaki. Paraphrases closely follow this translation.

agree to let him go with them as their servant (2979-2983). Silence humbly asks them to teach him anything they will (2965-2966).

Silence travels with the minstrels for four years. (3164). He learns to play instruments and becomes far better at it than his masters and earns them a lot of money (3139-3943), facts which frighten and enrage them and make them hate Silence (3152-3154). Caroline Jewers attributes her success partly to her "androgynous beauty" (103) and "in part to the extraordinary circumstances that enable her to ape masculine poetic discourse and at the same time give a more authentic expression to the woman's voice so prominent in the lyric ethos" (103).

One day the minstrels and Silence come back from Gascony and go to the Duke of Burgundy (3215-3216). Silence is far more appreciated there than are they (3240-3241). That night they plot to kill Silence (3295-3347), but she suspects them because of a dream she has (3360-3368) and manages to persuade them simply to let her leave them and split the money (3413-3476). This they do and depart, leaving Silence at the Duke of Burgundy's.

Silence then returns to England, a journey about which no details are given. He identifies himself to his father, and when the king hears he has returned, he retains him at court. Unfortunately, however, the queen falls in love with Silence and asks him to be her lover. When he refuses, she tells the king that he had tried to rape her. The king sends Silence to France, with a letter of introduction, he believes, but the letter that actually arrives is one substituted by the queen that asks that Silence be executed. The French king

refuses to do this. Silence remains at the French court and becomes a good knight. Then war breaks out in England and the king needs Silence's help. He sends for him, and Silence returns and vanquishes his enemy. No details are given about either of the journeys between England and France.

Silence's fourth journey results from another attempt of the queen's to take "his" life, for Silence still refuses her love and once again she tells the king he is trying to make love to her. She tells the king that to avenge himself he should order Silence to find Merlin to interpret a dream for him (5807-5809). (Although this is not an Arthurian romance, we do have the appearance of Merlin, an Arthurian character.) If Silence cannot bring Merlin back, then Silence will be banned from the country (5812-5813). The queen and king know that Silence can never catch Merlin, for only a woman would be able to do that.

Poor Silence gathers his equipment and sets off alone on his horse (5857-5858). Utterly without joy, he is weary and disheartened (5868-5872). One day after six months of hopeless travel, he meets an old, white-haired man who tells him how to trap Merlin. The old man describes Merlin as "Cho est uns hom trestols pelus/Et si est com uns ors velus/Si est isniels com cers de lande./Herbe, rachine est sa viände" (5929-5932) ("He is a man who is hairy all over,/ like a furry bear,/ and he is quick as a deer. /Herbs and roots are his food." The old man shows him the woods where Merlin roams and a spring where he comes to drink that is at this time dried up (5933-5936). To catch Merlin, he instructs Silence to

roast some meat, which he will bring to him tomorrow along with some honey, milk and wine. Merlin will be human enough not to be able to resist the smell of the roasted meat. He will also eat the honey and drink the milk and, most importantly, drink the wine because he will be thirsty from the salt in the meat. Then, unaccustomed to the wine he will fall asleep and Silence can catch him (5940-5976).

The next day, when Merlin smells the meat, he is so greedy for it that he scratches himself on the thorns and briars getting to it quickly (6095-6097). All goes as planned, and Silence brings him back to court where Merlin reveals the queen's malicious lies. She is "a chevals detraite" (6656) ("drawn and quartered") and Silence, whose sex Merlin has told, marries the king. The law banning inheritance by daughters is abolished.

We turn now from women travellers of the adventure romances to those who travel in thirteenth-century Arthurian romances in verse and prose. The roads teem with these travellers. A few are outstanding or unusual in some respect, but many of them are stock characters, anonymous women, their persons and journeys largely undescribed; their travels forward the knight's story in some way. In fact, service to the knight's story is the purpose of all the women travellers in these romances. As Françoise Paradis states about the prestigious women travellers--queen, fairy, and the fairy's noble messenger damsels-- who launch the thirteenth-century Lancelot into the world of high chivalry, women travellers are "au service de l'exaltation du héros" (175). Whereas in the adventure romances the

women travellers we examined are well-developed persons in their own right and, usually because they are separated from their lovers, develop independent, self-sufficient lives treated in parts of the romance separated from the knight's adventures, in the Arthurian romances under consideration women travellers' activities are present as helps or hindrances to the knight. These romances concentrate much more on chivalry than on love. A striking illustration of this principle is that in the Tristan en prose, Tristan, who has imprisoned Marc and brought Iseut to Logres, then spends a solid year away in chivalrous activities without ever coming home to see Iseut although he is free to do as he pleases.

We shall mention various categories of women travellers met frequently in these romances. As we look at each of the romances discussed, we shall indicate which type or types of these travellers appear most often. The following list is not exhaustive but gives an idea of the type of traveller included: 1) the damsel travelling as companion to a knight, 2) the damsel met on the road who gives important information in response to the knight's request, 3) the damsel met on the road who conducts knights to places they need to go, 4) the damsel who protects or assists knights in other ways, 5) messenger damsels, 6) damsels in distress. In thirteenth-century French Arthurian romances, women travellers who are unpleasant, intent on harm to the knight or treated poorly by knights are much more common than in twelfth-century French works of this kind. Negative portrayals reach a height in Guiron le Courtois, where nearly all women travellers are devalued or are blatantly treated as

property by knights. Among these types are damsels who taunt knights about their prowess or otherwise verbally abuse them, damsels who betray knights in various ways and damsels who are companions to knights but serve as little more than prizes for the winners of single combats.

Our discussion will focus on a few journeys that stand out because they are dramatic or unusual, because the traveller is well-developed or because details about the journey are given. We shall look first at Arthurian romances in verse, then in prose. Alexandre Micha, writing in Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters, says that the French thirteenth-century verse romances can be divided roughly into two types: the romance featuring Gauvain's adventures and the quest romance (380). We shall look at travellers in two Gauvain romances, Le Chevalier à l'épée and L'Atre Périlleux, and in two quest romances, Le Chevalier aux deux épées and Le Bel inconnu.

Not atypically for her century, our first woman traveller behaves less than admirably on her journey. She is the only woman traveller in this brief, anonymous story, Le Chevalier à l'épée, which was written in twelve hundred six verses at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Gauvain has been a year and a half at the paternal home of a woman he has married in the aftermath of a strange adventure in which a sword hanging above a bed where he had been invited to make love to her threatened to kill him. At last he tells her father that he must return to his homeland so that his relatives and friends will know what has become of him. He asks the father to

see to it that she is attired and equipped in such a manner that will do Gauvain, her father and her place of origin credit and that all will see that Gauvain has a beautiful lover. We notice that Gauvain's, not the lady's, feelings are considered here. Of how she is outfitted we are not told, except that her palfrey has a fine bridle and saddle.

She and Gauvain have hardly set out when she asks him to go back for the greyhounds she has raised, and he does so. Shortly thereafter, they meet a knight, who brusquely rides between them, seizes the reins of the lady's horse and rides away with her the way he came. The lady makes no protest. Gauvain challenges the knight and the knight suggests they set up a contest: they will put the lady in the middle of the road and themselves step off on either side. The lady will belong to whichever knight she walks over to. To Gauvain's complete astonishment, she chooses the stranger knight! The narrator explains that the lady wants to find out how the knight performs (as a lover) since she already knows how Gauvain does (984-987).²⁰ The narrator comments as follows:

Sachiez trestuit, petit et grant,
 Qui qu'en rie ne qui qu'en gronde,
 N'a gaires nule feme o monde,
 S'ele estoit druë et moillier
 A tot lo mellor chevalier
 Qui soit jusqu'en Inde Major

²⁰Line references are to the Old French edition of *Le Chevalier à l'épée* by R. C. Johnston and D. D. R. Owen. English quotations are from *The Knight with the Sword*, translated by Ross G. Arthur. English paraphrases closely follow this translation.

Ja par lui n'avroit tele amor
 Que, s'il n'estoit preuz en l'ostel,
 Qu'el lou prisast un dor de sel--
 Vos savez bien de quel proëce (988-997)

("There is hardly any woman in the world--even if she were the lover and the wife of the very best knight from here to India--who could ever have such love from him if he wasn't hardy at home--you know the kind of prowess I mean--that she would value him at a pinch of salt.")

The knight and lady set off together and Gauvain sets off for his home with the greyhounds. A little way off, however, the lady remembers the dogs and tells the knight she will not be his lover unless she has them. Gauvain proposes to the knight that they set up the same type of contest as before and the knight agrees. The dogs go to Gauvain. When the knight tells Gauvain to let them go, Gauvain takes that opportunity to compare a woman's fidelity with that of a dog, to the dog's favor. The knight challenges Gauvain to a fight. Gauvain wins, wounding his opponent badly. The lady then beseeches Gauvain not to leave her there, claiming that she acted as she did because she was frightened, Gauvain not being fully armed, as was the knight. Gauvain refuses in a long, bitter speech, saying her words are deception, and that women are often of such a nature, that they have been since the first one God made. The better a man treats them, the worse treatment he has from them (116501189). Gauvain then leaves her there in the forest and never sees her again.

Instead of seeing mere misogyny in the depiction of this woman traveller's behavior, Lawrence de Looze, in emphasizing the recurrence of the words contredire and contradiction as well as actions which demonstrate oppositional behavior, sees the lady's conduct as a rejection of the "dominant ideology of chivalric culture," (189) a culture which, like Gauvain, "disregard[s] the feminine" (189).

In L'Atre Périlleux , an anonymous work of about 6,600 lines composed in the middle of the thirteenth century, Gauvain rescues or acts to the great advantage of a series of women--none of whom is an unsavory character. The rescued damsel, some of whom have been travelling with knights, is definitely the featured type of woman traveller in this romance. The first of these women is perhaps the most interesting because of her uncommonly bad luck and the extraordinary circumstances from which Gauvain rescues her. Driven insane and forced to leave home by an evil stepmother, this damsel meets the devil, who promises to restore her sanity in exchange for her sexual favors. She consents. The devil keeps her in a tomb in a cemetery; each night he appears to have his way with her. Travelling, Gauvain spends the night in this cemetery, despite warnings, rather than leave his horse outside the castle walls. He rescues the lady and decapitates the devil--a boon to the whole countryside--which the devil has regularly laid waste.

The rescued damsel then asks to go to Gauvain's home country with him. They ride together, along with a squire Gauvain met in the cemetery, until Gauvain puts the young man in charge of her and of

another damsel he rescues and sends them to King Arthur's court. Gauvain does this to answer the cry of another damsel in distress without endangering the two he has with him.

While the damsel rescued from the cemetery rides with Gauvain, she proves to be most helpful; for she is grateful to him for rescuing her. She says, "--Mix vaudroie estre, fait el, morte,/Que vous perdisciés devant moi/Par force nis le petit doi,/Car de dolor m'avés jete" (1552-1555) ("I would rather be dead," she said, "than see you forced to lose even a little finger, for you have delivered me from my misery!")²¹ She gives him useful information she has acquired from the devil about an opponent he will face: this adversary is strong and weak at certain hours of the day, so Gauvain can plan his attack accordingly (1556-1574). Gifted with awareness beyond what is normal, the damsel tells Gauvain that his mother had said he would win against all combattants--except perhaps this one (1575-1589). Because of this information, Gauvain decides to kill his opponent after defeating him.

The dangerous journey that opens Le Chevalier aux deux épées, an anonymous poem of 12,000 lines written during the first third of the thirteenth century is taken by a brave and determined woman, the Queen of Cardigan. More than perhaps any other woman traveller in these narratives, she journeys to carve out her own destiny. However, what she does sets up the situation which causes the knight to go out on quest.

²¹Old French quotations are from Brian Woledge's edition of L'Atre Périlleux. English quotations are from Nancy Black's translation.

A messenger (male) arrives at King Ris's to tell him that his sweetheart, the Queen of Iceland, would like him to put the shackles he is delivering on King Arthur and send him to her as a prisoner. For reasons that seem to have nothing to do with logic, King Ris believes this situation demands that these shackles be put on the altar of the Gaste Chapelle. King Ris went there recently and laid his coat on the altar as an altarcloth. He hints at bizarre events that occurred on his way back. However, no other person who has set out for the Gaste Chapelle has ever returned; and none of the nine hundred knights present at his court that evening will agree to go even though King Ris says that he will grant any request whatsoever to anyone who will go there and return with a piece of his cloak.

In the hall, though, is a beautiful, delicate girl of about twenty in a purple dress trimmed in gold. She is serving the king but is unhappy. She is, in fact, the Queen of Cardigan; and King Ris has just conquered her land and imprisoned her people.

She will go that very night, she says. The king tries to dissuade her, saying, "Trop fol afaire aves empris" (591) ("You have proposed a reckless escapade")²² which will put her "En point de mort" (595) ("in mortal danger"), but she insists. The king has her mule fetched; she mounts and rides into the dark forest.

Inside the forest the night is so black that she cannot see her mule's ears. Whipping the mule, she rides right into a thicket of

²²Old French quotations are from the edition of *Li Chevaliers as deus espees* by Wendelin Foerster. English quotations are from the translation by Ross G. Arthur and Noel L. Corbett and paraphrases follow their translation closely.

briars and brambles which lacerate her face and body and shred her clothing. At last, she comes to a meadow, only to be terrified by the roars of lions and bears and by the strange sounds of other animals. Then come a tremendous clap of thunder and dazzling lightning. A great wind tears oak trees up by the roots and blows them along in front of her. The wind dies down only for a huge fire to appear that seems to reach the sky, In it she sees two black men running about and tossing a head between them. In the light of the fire she sees a knight in full armor approaching, lamenting over the body of a knight he is carrying across his horse (637-719).

She hurries on and loses sight of him, arriving at last at the chapel. She leads the mule inside and hides it and herself behind the altar because she feels sure the knight is coming. He does indeed, and buries the knight before the altar, weeping and fainting as he works and saying that the knight was the best man in the world. Finally, he girds the knight's sword on the dead body and says that anyone who finds the sword and girds it on cannot have it removed except by someone as noble as the knight or by someone who could become as noble (720-798).

After the knight leaves, the Queen of Cardigan removes the sword and girds it on, vowing to marry no man but the one who can remove it. Then she returns to King Ris, again getting badly cut up by the branches of the forest, and demands and gets her land, her prisoners, compensation for her losses and Ris's promise that he will leave her town and never return (807-1042).

A few days later, she dresses in her most beautiful clothing and goes to Arthur's court in search of a knight who can unfasten the sword (1088-1227). After three hundred sixty four knights fail to do so, a young unknown succeeds. He has just become a knight, so he sets out in quest of adventures by which he may become as worthy as the dead knight and thus worthy as well to marry the Queen of Cardigan (1309-1670).

The most frequent type of travelling woman in Le Chevalier aux deux épées is also the damsel who has been rescued. In the course of his adventures, the knight with two swords frees nine women from imprisonment. They then request that he take them to King Arthur. They are on the road three nights, and for each night the narrator gives details about their lodging. The first day after riding all day long, they come upon a church connected to a convent. They take lodging with the nuns (after persuading them with some difficulty to come to the door with some difficulty [8264-8265]). At supper, the tables are covered with tablecloths. The guests have fish and the ale that the nuns have as their daily beverage (8305-8307). They are given comfortable beds, stuffed "bien haus/De faine n'est pas du nouiaus" (8405-8406) ("stuffed quite full of straw--but not new, fresh straw") (which we gather would not have been soft). Each bed is made with two sheets which are "Bien delies et graeles" (8408) ("smooth, finely woven") They are offered plenty of blankets and many kinds of pillow (8410-8413).

The next evening they come upon the shepherd of a vavasor (8566-8567) and ask if there is any "Recet ne ville ne manoir"

(8571) ("fortified place or town or manor house") where they could get lodging. The shepherd tells him that the vavasor, a "Mout preudomme et mout aaisie" (8575) ("worthy and wealthy man") will be glad to provide hospitality. His estate is surrounded by a "soif de pex" (8577) (picket fence). The vavasor is seated on a wooden staircase in front of the house, (8587-8588) which is attractive and spacious. The meal that evening is very well prepared and includes "Tartes .../De gayn, ki mout bien lor plorent,/Et puis apres porciaus forsis/Et pigon en paste et rostis" (8615-8618) ("meat pies, which pleased them greatly, stuffed suckling pig, and tiny roasted birds in pastry"). After the tablecloths are removed and all is washed up, they sit and talk a long time; but, knowing they are tired, the vavasor speaks of bedtime early and the servants start at once to make the beds (8621-8630). Wanting an early start, they do not stay for breakfast despite the vavasor's cordial invitation (8645-8653).

The third night the knight with two swords becomes afraid he will not find food and lodging for the ladies. At sunset he hears the sound of a horn and rides toward it (8785-8794). As it grows dark, they see the light of a fire and go to it (8805-8807). Some huntsmen have just killed a deer and invite them to stay with them, saying that not for a night and a day's ride would they find lodging (8808-8819). They do stay. The huntsmen cut up the deer and roast it over many spits (8825-8826). Meanwhile, the knight prepares several bowers of leaves (8828-8829). They dine without tablecloths, and they have no bread or wine or salt to eat with the venison; but there are some flagons of beer (8831-8837). Their beds

that night are made of moss and small twigs (8840-8842). They sleep without undressing(8844-8845). The next day the knight delivers the ladies to King Arthur.

On the three succeeding nights we have seen three types of lodgings that probably were typical of that time.

In Le Bel inconnu, written by Renaut de Beaujeu (or Bâgé) in 6,266 verses in the first third of thirteenth century, the lady who is rescued or helped by the knight is the most common type of traveller. However, the most interesting traveller and the one whose journey we shall look at is an excellent damsel messenger. She serves a lady, the daughter of King Gringars. She is beautiful beyond compare--"Face ot blance com flors d'esté" (139) ("Her face has the whiteness of summer flowers")--and is as richly dressed as if she herself were a princess.²³ She wears silk, and on her head is a diadem of gold set with precious stones. Her magnificent palfrey's saddle, ornamented with jewels and enamels, is a work of art. She is accompanied by a dwarf, an elegantly dressed, courteous dwarf (135-162). But what is most memorable about this lady is her eloquence. She asks for help for her lady and depicts her plight in such a way that her audience must surely feel her lady's distress. She asks for just one knight, but he must be the best knight there is. At once, a handsome, unknown knight, whose skills are untried, volunteers. Arthur protests that he is too inexperienced for this

²³Old French quotations refer to the edition of Le Bel Inconnu by C. Hippeau. Paraphrases and English translations, our own, follow closely the modern French translation by Michèle Perret and Isabelle Weill.

difficult task, but the knight reminds Arthur that shortly before he has promised to grant the knight's first request (200-219).

Hélie, the messenger damsel, is adamant that this knight will not be the one to return with her. Once again, the emphasis with which she expresses herself is arresting. However, Arthur cannot go back on his word. Wishing them all bad luck, Hélie rides away rapidly with the dwarf (225-256). As soon as he can gather his equipment, the Unknown and his squire, Robert set off after her and soon catch her. The Unknown pleads with her not to judge him before even knowing what he can do. But once again, Hélie expresses herself forcefully, urging him to return. We see that she is concerned not only for her lady's welfare but for his: she tells him that he will never survive the trip because of the formidable encounters he will have (257-316).

Hélie belongs to the type of damsel who doubts the knight's capabilities and tells him so. However, she is not taunting him just to be hateful. She sincerely believes that he will be of no use to her in a desperate situation and that indeed he himself will be at risk. Hélie and other damsels who doubt knights' prowess or who have hateful tongues may be descendants of a character brought to our attention by Glenys Wichard Goetinck. An Irish national goddess, the Sovereignty of Erin, scoffs at knights in order to spur them on to great achievement. Similar goddesses appear in Welsh literature also, according to Goetinck. This goddess in her scoffing mode is hideously ugly, like the messenger damsel who comes to Arthur's court and reminds Perceval of his shortcomings. At other times she

is beautiful; her union with the hero means he has assumed responsibility for his kingdom (355). Hélié, though beautiful, serves in the spurring-on capacity to some extent; moreover, her doubts serve to point up the Unknown's impressive achievements, as do those of other damsels of her type. In some romances, however, a gratuitously hateful tongue is all that is left of the Celtic goddess.

Despite Hélié's forceful objections, the Unknown stubbornly persists in going with her. He shortly proves victorious in two perilous situations (317-810). After the second victory, in which he kills two giants who have abducted Sagremor's sister Claire from her parents' yard, Hélié apologizes (819-839). After that, she relaxes so much that she even involves the Unknown in a combat for a seemingly frivolous purpose: she picks up a little white dog, whose master, a knight, comes along shortly afterward. Hélié will not give up the dog, and the Unknown is forced to joust with the knight so that she may keep it (1272-1496). Later, they meet Hélié's cousin Margery, sister of the king of Scotland; and Hélié gives her the hard-won dog as a present (1841). In addition, the Unknown jousts to conquer a sparrow hawk for her. In a structuralist analysis of this work that sheds light on many of its puzzling or mysterious aspects, Alain Guerreau explains that the little dog incident is not an illustration of frivolity. Guerreau points out that research has shown that from at least the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries the little dog symbolizes the maternal line of parentage (62). Hélié's insistence on possessing it establishes her as belonging to the maternal wing of the family, and

the Unknown's willingness to fight for it denotes his acceptance of her status: the two have grown more reconciled with each combat (64). Hélié's giving the dog to Margery represents their familial link (64). The gift to Margery of the sparrow hawk, the corresponding symbol of the paternal line (62), stands for the restoration to her, a widow, of male familial support (64).

Despite the episodes concerning parentage, Hélié stays focussed on her mission: they stop for the night at the home of a beautiful woman with certain powers of enchantment. Hélié knows if they remain there the Unknown will in effect be her prisoner, for she means to marry him. Therefore, Hélié arranges for them to slip away (2291-2344; 2450-2470).

She shows that she had not misrepresented the dangers of the ordeal through which the Unknown must pass to rescue her mistress by bursting into sobs when he is approaching her mistress's palace. Moreover, a knight who was accompanying them from the preceding castle also starts sobbing at this point (2820-2823). Their fears are needless, however. The Unknown prevails in all his trials, wins the lady and her land and learns his identity.

In the assortment of women travellers we have examined from the thirteenth-century Arthurian romances in verse, we have, among the many damsels who need rescuing, one who succeeds in a dangerous journey and another who, admirable for the force of her personality, travels to serve her mistress.

Turning now to the thirteenth-century Arthurian romances in prose, we shall consider women travellers in the Lancelot en Prose.

This romance is part of a cycle of romances sometimes called the Vulgate and the Post-Vulgate of the Lancelot-Graal. The Vulgate contains five romances; the Post-Vulgate, three. The entire cycle is about 2500 pages. The Lancelot itself, sometimes called the Lancelot Proper, is the heart of the cycle and is half the length of the entire cycle. The travellers we shall consider are in the Lancelot Proper except for a few who appear in the Post-Vulgate romance called the Merlin Continuation. We include some from the latter work because they illustrate a point in the discussion. We choose the Lancelot Proper because it is the main romance of the cycle and because a cursory examination of the other volumes finds fewer women travellers than in the Lancelot Proper. We shall also look at women travellers in the Tristan en prose and Guiron le Courtois. All of these works contain numerous travelling women, especially of the stock character type. We shall continue to state which types are most prevalent in which romances and to focus on a few journeys which merit attention.

The stock women travellers in the Lancelot are for the most part helpful to knights. Some travel with the sole purpose of assisting a knight and actively work to protect him. Others, travellers met by chance on the road, give useful information or act as guides. Among those whose mission is to help, a few have distinct personalities and perform valiant deeds. Those we shall examine.

In addition to these characters, Lancelot's mother and his foster mother, the Lady of the Lake, take dramatic journeys. The

romance opens with Lancelot's mother's journey. She is Queen Elaine, wife of King Ban of Benoic, who is losing a war of aggression waged against him by King Claudas and must flee his lands to ask for the help of King Arthur. He seeks his wife's opinion in making the decision to go for help from Arthur, and she is eager for him to do so. He will take her and their infant son Lancelot with him but only one squire, for he wants Arthur to be affected by his pitiable state. He tells his wife they must leave that night and directs her to collect any valuables in the castle that she may know of, such as jewelry, gold and silver and to put them in strong trunks. He has the squire prepare the packhorse and leaves the care of his castle in the hands of his seneschal. After sleeping a few hours, he departs in time to travel three leagues before daylight (3: 6-7).²⁴

King Ban has his party go down the hills and valleys surrounding the castle by a path secure from the enemy and crosses the river by a "petit ponchel de cloies" (7: 10) ("short wattle bridge" [2: 5]).²⁵ Here the narrator mentions a groom who is riding a spare horse, carrying the king's spear and leading the packhorse laden with treasure. The squire rides a packhorse, has Lancelot in a cradle in

²⁴Reference numbers for the Lancelot refer to page numbers in Le Livre de Lancelot del Lac, volumes III and IV of the Old French edition of The Vulgate Version of The Arthurian Romances by H. Oskar Sommer. Quotations in Old French are taken from this edition. Quotations in English are taken from volumes II and III of Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and Post-Vulgate in Translation, general editor, Norris J. Lacy. Volume II is translated by Samuel N. Rosenberg (Parts I and III) and by Carleton W. Carroll (Part II). Volume III is translated by Roberta L. Krueger (Part IV), William W. Kibler (Part V) and Carleton W. Carroll (Part VI). English paraphrases closely follow these translations.

²⁵This detail is taken from Alexandre Micha's edition of the Old French text, which the translators of the English version used to supplement H. Oskar Sommer's edition.

front of him and carries Ban's shield. The queen rides a fine saddlehorse (3: 7).

After riding through the marsh by the river, they enter a forest and go on for about half a league until they come to some open country. At the other end of this plain, they come to a lake below a high hill. King Ban wants to wait here until daylight so that he can climb the hill and look back at his castle, which is his favorite of all castles (3: 7-8).

As he stands gazing at his castle, black smoke starts pouring from it, then flames. The walls crumble in the conflagration. King Ban is overcome with grief. He dreads the life of poverty his noble wife and his son will lead, for he feels this castle is necessary to regain his lands. A terrible spasm wracks his chest. Fainting, he falls from his horse, nearly breaking his neck. He regains consciousness long enough to commend his soul to God (3: 12-13).

The frightened horse bolts back down the hill; the squire goes up, and finding King Ban dead, cries out. Alarmed, Queen Elaine leaves the baby Lancelot on the ground and runs up to see what has happened. Fainting and lamenting in turns, she "tire ses caux qui molt estoient bel & blont & deront ses dras & iete en uoie & egratine son tendre vis si que le sans vermaus li coule tout contreal les ioes" (3: 14) ("She tore at her beautiful blond hair; she ripped her clothes and threw tatters to the ground; she clawed at her delicate face until the red blood ran down her cheeks" [2: 8]). She speaks mournfully of all her husband's kindnesses and his exploits. In her overwhelming grief she has forgotten about the baby. She fears he

may have been trampled by the horses. In the grip of terror and grief, she faints again before she reaches the lake. On the shore she sees a young woman who is holding the child and kissing him. She speaks to the lady and asks her to let the child go, but the woman makes no reply. Instead, the lady goes to the lake with the child and plunges in. Once again, Elaine faints; and when she awakens, the lady and the child are nowhere to be seen. At this point Elaine would dive into the lake herself had the squire not restrained her (3: 14-15).

A few minutes later, along the road comes an abbess with two nuns, a chaplain, a monk and two squires. Elaine implores the abbess to let her enter the convent, for there is nothing left in the world for her; she says she is "la roine as grans dolours" (3: 15) ("the Queen of Sorrows" [2: 9]). The abbess agrees, and so the noble Elaine, descendant of the Biblical King David, spends the rest of her days in the convent. However, daily she comes and sits by the shore, yearning for her son (3: 15-16) and climbs to the top of the hill, regretting the loss of her husband (3: 41).

The woman who had jumped into the lake with the baby Lancelot is the Lady of the Lake, who rears Lancelot lovingly as her son. Despite the fact that she kidnaps Lancelot, the Lady of the Lake is a very noble, honorable person, wise and commanding. As Françoise Paradis notes, the Lady of the Lake presents "une image féminine rassurante, positive" (167). She instructs Lancelot in the high virtues that knighthood requires (3: 111-117). When the moment arrives for Lancelot to leave her estate (which by her

enchantment appears to be under the lake), she prepares elaborately for the journey in which she will accompany him to King Arthur's court (3: 118). Able to see the future, she knows that Lancelot is destined for greatness. Because of this, she feels the timing of his becoming a knight is very important and plans the journey accordingly. The Feast of Saint John is nearing, and she wants him to be knighted on that day because Saint John was the best man ever born of a man and a woman; similarly, Lancelot will be the best of knights (3: 118). Saint John's day will fall the day after their arrival.

In preparation for this journey the Lady of the Lake has long been collecting knightly equipment for Lancelot. She has chosen all items in white or silver: a white hauberk, a white shield, a silver helmet, a powerful white horse. For his knighting ceremony she has clothes made for him of white satin; lining the cloak with ermine and the tunic with white silk taffeta (3: 118).

They set out on a Tuesday (3: 118). The feast of Saint John's will be a week after the following Sunday, so their journey is a little more than ten days. The forty riders escorting her dress entirely in white and ride white horses. With her also are Lancelot; her lover; five hundred knights; three young women, at least one of whom has travelled for her on important missions; her other adopted sons Lionel and Bors and their tutor Lambegue as well as many other young men (3: 118).

They ride to the sea and cross the Channel to England, arriving on Sunday at a port called Floudehueg (3: 118). Informed that Arthur

will be at Camelot for the Feast of Saint John, they secure royal credentials and ride toward Camelot (3: 118-119). Thursday evening they arrive at a castle called Lawenor, which is about twenty-two English leagues from Camelot (3: 119). Early in the morning they leave to escape the June heat as much as possible and ride through a forest that extends to within about two leagues of Camelot. The Lady of the Lake, sad that she will soon be parting from her beloved Lancelot, says little and weeps during this part of the journey (3: 119). It is to her credit that she allows him to leave to become a knight despite her grief. She knows it would be a sin to detain him. The Lady of the Lake is religious even though she has magic powers (3: 111-117). As Françoise Paradis notes, her association with supernatural powers "confère au héros la marque et le prestige de l'autre monde" (167).

On this day Arthur is out in the forest hunting with his men. He sees the Lady of the Lake's procession approaching and is amazed at the elegance of such a large group, all wearing white and riding white horses. The Lady of the Lake is dressed in white satin, with her cloak and tunic trimmed in ermine. The body of her small palfrey is gracefully shaped. Its bridle, breastplate and stirrups are of pure silver. The ivory saddle is intricately carved with figures of knights and ladies. The saddle blanket reaches to the ground and is made of the same white satin as the Lady's clothing. Beside her rides Lancelot, wearing a Breton cape of white wool (3: 121).

She has hurried along to meet Arthur; and he has waited for her, seeing she wishes to speak with him. He greets her first, and

she removes the wimple from in front of her mouth to speak with him. She greets him as "li millor roi des terriens rois" (3: 122) ("best of kings in this world" [2: 63]) and then gets right to the point, asking him to knight the young man when he requests it (She has told Lancelot when to have it done). As a special request she asks that he be allowed to wear the clothing she has provided at his knighting ceremony. Arthur says it has always been the custom for him to provide the clothing, but the Lady insists: if Arthur cannot comply with her wishes she will have someone else knight him or will do it herself. This last assertion is another evidence of her authority and power. As Stacey Haun notes, the Lady of the Lake "possess[es] all the accoutrements of courtly prestige" (145). Yvain intervenes and beseeches Arthur to agree to her wishes, and he does so. The king then asks her to stay, but she says she cannot. Arthur asks at least to know her name, and she tells him that she is the Lady of the Lake (3: 121).

As Lancelot rides away with her for a short distance, she instructs him not to give any information about her. She also tells him that he is the son of a king and queen (and that he will know more later about his identity) and that Bors and Lionel are his first cousins. She says that their being with her for a few more years will help her recover from the loss of Lancelot. She gives him a ring which can detect and expose magic spells. She again encourages him to be the best of knights and tells him that she knows he will be; his prowess will equal his beauty. Then she kisses him on the mouth,

cheeks and eyes and turns away, mute with grief (3: 122-123). Of her return journey we are told nothing.

The Lady of the Lake continues to monitor Lancelot's progress, and when she sees he is in need of help, she sends out damsels to assist him. For example, when Lancelot is undertaking the dangerous conquest of the Dolorous Guard, she sends him a maiden who meets him at the castle door and tells him about the castle's customs. She tells him he can overcome the difficulties there. Throughout his two-day ordeal she tells him what he must do. She has three shields for him, each shield more able to protect him than the one before. During Lancelot's combats at Dolorous Guard she stands by and hands these shields to him as the need arises. She also gives him a fresh helmet in the middle of his combats and a spear (3: 144-152). The help that this damsel has travelled to give Lancelot in this extremely important victory at the beginning of his career seems indispensable. Another damsel gives subtle hints to Arthur's knights about Lancelot's identity; her work helps to establish his prestige (3: 196). On another occasion the Lady of the Lake is warned by an oracle that Lancelot will attempt to kill himself when he discovers Galehout's tomb unless he is prevented. She therefore sends a damsel who gives him another way of occupying himself. She has him take Galehout's body to be buried in the tomb marked for him at Dolorous Guard, for he and Lancelot are to be buried in the same grave. Prescient herself or else informed by the visionary Lady of the Lake, the damsel tells him that he will have to fight to take the

body away. She tells him the Lady of the Lake forbids his excessive mourning (4: 277-278)

The most dramatic journey taken by one of the Lady of the Lake's damsels occurs, however, early in the romance. The Lady of the Lake learns that King Claudas has imprisoned Lancelot's cousins Bors and Lionel, the two young sons of King Bors of Gaunes, whom Claudas has killed. She decides to send one of her damsels, Saraïde, to get the boys and gives her detailed instructions that are implied in Saraïde's actions. Saraïde takes with her two squires and about ten more riders. They ride to the meadow of Gaunes, where King Claudas has been celebrating the anniversary of his coronation (3: 48). Saraïde arrives on the Feast of Mary Magdelene at the time that Claudas has sat down to eat, a good moment for an audience with him. Leading two greyhounds with her, she goes into the palace and speaks to him at length, getting him to agree, through a combination of flattery and scolding, to release the boys (3: 49-50). The next day Claudas has the boys brought into the room where he is. Saraïde, who is present also, goes up to the boys and puts garlands on their heads and fastens cloaks around their shoulders with jeweled clasps. Now these garlands and clasps have magic powers, and they cause the boys, already incensed over what Claudas has done to their father and their land, to attack him. Offered a cup of wine, Lionel throws the wine in Claudas's face and grinds the rim of the cup into Claudas's face and head. Then he seizes the crown from its nearby holder and throws it to the ground, knocking out the jewels and crushing the gold. Meanwhile, Bors grabs the sceptre and starts

striking out with it, finally bringing it down so hard on the head of Claudas's son Dorin that the skull cracks and Dorin is killed. Claudas recovers, grabs his sword and chases after the two boys. Saraïde, following her Lady's instructions, casts a spell that changes the boys into greyhounds and the greyhounds into the boys. Then she thrusts her body between Claudas and the boys and takes a blow to the face from his sword which cuts her from eyebrow to chin and marks her for the rest of her life. Saraïde hurries out with the boys (greyhounds) while Claudas chases after what he believes are the boys. Outside, Saraïde has one of the squires quickly bandage her face with her veil and they set off on their horses, holding the boys in front of them. They ride to their attendants who await them in the forest and continue on their way, which leads them over "grignors destroys" (3: 57) ("high, narrow passes" [2: 30]). They spend the night at a lodging where they had stayed the previous night; they arrive there far into the night. Saraïde changes the greyhounds back into boys (3: 54-57).

She is very solicitous of their welfare, telling them that their tutors will not be harmed by Claudas and warning them not to tell anyone who they are. That night she keeps the two children in her own bed. In the morning she is up as soon as it is light. The group sets out at once and rides until they reach the Lady of the Lake's (3: 57).

The journeys of important women and of the damsels who travel for the Lady of the Lake help to launch Lancelot into the world of chivalry and assist him as he makes his way in it. One of the

Lady's damsels also rescues his young cousins. As the damsels travel about assisting Lancelot, they also help other knights as the occasion presents itself. For example, one travelling with Gauvain for a time because both she and he were looking for Lancelot saves Gauvain's life by letting attackers know they have been misinformed about who he is (187).

Other travelling young women in the Lancelot serve as guides, messengers or sources of information. Because these travelling women know what is going on and where things are, they lead knights to important adventures. Two maidens conduct Lancelot and two hundred and fifty of his followers to the Wicked Pass to help Arthur do battle (1: 331).²⁶ A maiden met on the road tells Lancelot and Gauvain about the Lost Bridge and the Sword Bridge, the two entrances of Gorre, where Guenièvre is held captive (4: 167-168). A damsel seeking to free, among many others, her niece from the power of a lord who makes people give their children to him leads first Clarence, then Yvain and Lancelot to the adventure of Escalon the Dark (4: 109-110). Later a damsel associated with the Escalon the Dark adventure works with the purpose of increasing Lancelot's renown by enabling him to free many people. She takes him to Morgan's Valley of No Return knowing that because of the purity of his love he will be able to free the knights imprisoned there (4: 119-120). These incidents are contrived to show that Lancelot is the

²⁶This is a second detail which is found in Micha's edition.

best knight in the world. Nevertheless, they show travelling damsels doing good works.

Other travelling damsels act to protect knights, to serve justice or to seek help for others. Some travelling maidens save knights' lives or free them from imprisonment. For example, when Hector is threatened by a large group of people angry because he has killed one of their own in the course of defending someone else, a lady whom Hector has recently helped comes along and rescues him (3: 354). One maiden who at last succeeds in securing Hector's services to defend her sister has gone to King Arthur's court twice a year for five years to seek aid for her imprisoned sister (3: 390-391). These examples by no means exhaust what can be told of helpful travelling women in the Lancelot.

A few travelling women in the Lancelot and others in the rest of the romances in the Vulgate and Post-Vulgate Cycle called the Lancelot-Grail behave or are treated in disturbing ways. These acts range from discourteous speech by the women to extreme violence against them by knights. For example, in the Post Vulgate Merlin Continuation, at a spring in the woods, three knights come upon three damsels who are apparently seasoned in the practice of accompanying knights. These women agree to go with Gawain, Yvain and the Morholt on their adventures for one year. They gain this privilege by throwing out insults, saying that the knights haven't the heart, courage or ability to succeed in the adventures of that country and that they will go with them to witness their lack of success.

One of them even insults Gawain for his small stature (2: 245-247).²⁷

Other travelling women in these cycles commit more sinister misdeeds. A woman claiming to be the real Guenièvre travels to court and convinces King Arthur she is really his wife (4: 10-16; 45-58). Morgan la Fée directs the travels of damsels who imply to King Arthur that Lancelot and Guenièvre's are having an affair (he remains unconvinced) (4: 140-141), who go to find and imprison Lancelot (4: 913) and who in the Merlin Continuation deliver a poison mantle to King Arthur (he escapes its ill effects because of a warning from the Lady of the Lake) (Paris and Ulrich, 2: 250-252). One traveller in the Lancelot Proper who has previously acted twice as a reliable guide and information source (3: 400; 406) leads Gauvain, Lancelot, Galehout and Hector into a trap where they are imprisoned (3: 411-412). She betrays them by telling them she will lead them to rescue King Arthur from the Saxons.

The Rule of Logres (by which a maiden accompanying a knight may be seized by another knight whom they meet by chance if the accompanying knight cannot defend her) is commonly practiced. Hector's sweetheart is advised by the Queen and the Dame of Malehout that she must not accompany Hector because if he were defeated, his enemies would do with her as they wished (3: 307). That the damsel won at joust is merely a game piece shows also

²⁷Merlin Continuation references are to the edition by Gaston Paris and Jacob Ulrich entitled Merlin: Roman en prose du XIIIe siècle.

when knights who have insisted on winning her decline to take her with them after all (3: 135).

Most disturbing, though, is the violent treatment some women travellers undergo. We know that violence against women permeates the Arthurian romances, but it becomes more disturbing when depicted graphically. Agravain is ready to rape a woman he has seized from the knight with whom she was travelling just because she was beautiful; he stops only when he finds her legs incrustated with infection. Then he speaks cruelly to her (3: 318-319). One knight in the Lancelot, believing his sweetheart was unfaithful, wants to "la rueroie ie une longaigne & la penderoie la sus a mon chesne par les treches" (3: 324)) ("throw her in a latrine and hang her up by the hair in one of those oaks" [2: 178]) . He does try to drag her by the hair, but Hector stops him (3: 324). Hector, Yvain and Sagramor come upon a knight "qui emmenoit une pucele a forche par le fraim" (3: 352) ("forcibly dragging a maiden by the reins of her mount" [2: 194]). Yvain goes to rescue her. In another incident Sagramor's sweetheart is tied by the braids from a tree branch while Sagramor is beaten (4: 98).

We turn now to the Tristan en prose , a romance of vast proportions; the recent edition of one of the versions, the edition used in this study, has about 2000 pages. This anonymous work was first composed probably between 1230 and 1240. Most of the few women in the romance, which concentrates on knights and chivalry, are women travellers. The most frequent among these travellers are messenger damsels. The travels of those who carry messages

between Iseut and Tristan and between Arthur's court and Marc's serve one of two functions: to reveal Tristan's renown or to convey information that causes the story to advance. Later messenger damsels help to inaugurate a Grail Quest. The next most frequent women travellers are people who are up to no good or are for some reason less than admirable.

Fairly early in the Tristan en prose Iseut sends a damsel "u ele mout se fioit et qu'ele avait nourrie des s'enfance" (2: 192) ("in whom she greatly trusted and whom she had reared from childhood")²⁸ from Cornwall to search all over Logres for Tristan as discreetly as possible. She instructs her that if he is nowhere to be found, she should then go to King Arthur's court. Iseut will send no letter by her but asks her to tell Tristan that it seems to her that he has forgotten her more than she would have imagined. She tells the damsel that she may take anyone she likes with her, and the young woman chooses to take one of her brothers. (2: 192) She leaves within two days at Iseut's request. She and her brother leave by the sea and by good luck land in the early morning of the next day very close to Camelot (2: 193) She and her brother ride toward Camelot and meet a knight whom they ask about Tristan by describing his shield, which is red with two little crowns of gold. The knight

²⁸Old French quotation are taken from volume two of the Tristan en Prose, which is one of a series of nine volumes of this work edited under the direction of Philippe Ménard. Volume two is edited by Marie-Luce Chênerie and Thierry Delcourt. English paraphrases and English translations, our own, follow closely the modern French translations in the accompanying series of volumes of this work, also done under Philippe Ménard's direction. Volume two is translated by Marie-Luce Chênerie. Other volumes will be indicated by the appropriate volume number with editors and translators referenced only in the bibliography.

replies that he has heard the knight who carries this shield spoken of at King Arthur's and in many other places. He has recently performed great feats of arms and is now talked about everywhere all over the kingdom. Asked if he has ever seen him, he replies that he has not but that he has heard several other knights who have seen him describe him as the handsomest knight in the world and very tall (2: 193-194).

With this encounter is begun a series of similar ones in which the damsel's inquiries for Tristan result in great praise of him. No doubt the reason we are given this damsel's itinerary is to allow us to hear all this praise of Tristan. A woman with whom she spends the night hates him because he killed her son; but she admits that Tristan is a great knight, having killed thirty knights with the help of only one not very good knight (2: 194-195). Another time the damsel meets an old knight who tells of seeing Tristan defeat Keu and Sagramor (2: 202-203).

Early on into her journey the damsel meets Palamède. When she comes upon him, he is sleeping; and a damsel who acts sometimes as a messenger or news-gatherer for Palamède asks her please not to wake him because he needs sleep badly. The two damsels get into a discussion about the best knights in the world, and the damsel from Iseut praises Tristan herself. When Palamède wakes and learns that she is from Cornwall, he asks for news of Marc, Iseut and Tristan. Palamède reveals his name to her, and she remembers that he has a hopeless passion for Iseut. Out of tact she tells him that Cornwall is peaceful and that the king and queen are

happy now that Tristan is gone. This news pleases Palamède. Out of tact again, the damsel does not reveal her mission to Palamède but instead tells him that she has a secret message to deliver to a lady. She takes courteous leave of Palamède and continues her journey (2: 196-202).

One day as she approaches a spring, she sees a horse that she and her brother recognize as Passebreuil, Tristan's horse, and sleeping near the fountain she finds Tristan himself. At first she is not sure it is he; for his face is blackened from wearing his helmet, and he is thinner than usual. Feeling pity for him that he leads such a life of discomfort and unhappiness, she weeps quietly as he sleeps. When he awakens, she gives him her message and asks that he give her one in return so that she may go back at once to Cornwall as she has been asked to do. However, he asks that she stay for a tournament that will be held shortly so that she can find out how knights from Cornwall (he is the only one) perform against the men of Logres. She agrees to do so (2: 214-216).

The day before the tournament the damsel remains in the pavilion but hears in the evening of Tristan's prowess in jousting with knights he has met (2: 267). That same evening Palamède sends a damsel to try to find out Tristan's name, to no avail (2: 269). Her visit is further evidence of the interest Tristan's jousting has aroused. The next day the damsel attends the tournament (one of the main events of the entire romance) and witnesses nearly all of Tristan's great feats of valor (2: 274-302). At the beginning of the day, Palamède is thrilled that she is there because she will be able

to tell Iseut that he did well (2: 280). She tells Queen Guenièvre that she is Iseut's damsel and that Iseut is well (2: 276).

As the damsel rides back to the pavilion, she hears a knight crying and sends her brother to see about him. It is Palamède, but he runs the squire off (2: 302-303). At the pavilion she tells Tristan about Palamède; and he goes to get him, remaining incognito. Palamède is disconsolate that he has not been the most outstanding knight at the tournament. Tristan brings Palamède back to the pavilion, sending the squire on ahead to warn the damsel not to let Palamède see her and to tell Persidès, who has recently been in conflict with Palamède, to treat him well. Everyone welcomes Palamède and makes him comfortable (2: 305-313). So the damsel is able in the course of her travels to cause a service to be done for a sad, lonely knight; but she is also functioning to let Tristan show his magnanimity since Palamède considers himself Tristan's rival in chivalric contests.

Late in the second day of the tournament Tristan is wounded by Lancelot and quits the field. With Gouvernal, his squire, and Dinadan he goes off to find lodging away from the areas where he knows the rest of the participants in the tournament will go (2: 333-343). The damsel, who apparently was not at the tournament when he was wounded, goes first to King Arthur's castle to see if he is there, but he is not (2: 374-375). Then she goes to his lodgings of the night before. No knights are there, but the squires tell her the knights have just gone out for a while and will be back soon. Not knowing that they have been instructed to tell her this lie to detain her, she

waits a long time; finally only Dinadan comes. He tells her that the knights will lodge elsewhere that night and that he will take her there if she tells him the name of the knight with the black sword who did so well at the tournament. She tells him (it is Tristan), and he says there is no need for him to go back there tonight since he has the information he was seeking. From further conversation she realizes that Dinadan does not know where Tristan is and was simply tricking her to get Tristan's name (2: 376-380). Of course, Dinadan's ruse is once again a tribute to Tristan's prestige: knights burn with curiosity to know who he is.

The dāmsel stays there that night, and the next morning the squires and Dinadan tell her that Tristan was badly hurt at the tournament. (The reader has learned earlier that Tristan's wound is not too serious and will easily heal.) Dinadan tells the damsel he has no idea where Tristan is (2: 390). Very much distressed, the damsel goes to the sea, still seeking news of him (2: 381).

The next day Lancelot is out looking for Tristan. Arthur has sent nine other knights out as well; for Tristan had won the tournament, and he wanted to honor him. Suddenly a girl comes riding toward him at full speed, obviously very much frightened. It is Iseut's damsel, and she tells Lancelot she is being chased by a knight who means to kill her. This knight soon appears; it is Bréhus sans Pitié (Bréhus the Merciless), notorious killer of women. Lancelot hates this evil knight for his criminal ways. Challenging him, Lancelot tells him that the moment of his death has arrived. But Bréhus turns around and rides off quickly, for he fears Lancelot's

prowess. Lancelot gives chase; but Bréhus always chooses very fast horses on purpose to escape from knights with whom he doesn't want to fight, and Lancelot loses him.

In response to his inquiries and guesses, the damsel tells Lancelot her mission. He can see by her clothing that she is from Cornwall. Lancelot tells her his name. When she asks Lancelot's advice about continuing to try to find Tristan or going back to Cornwall, he advises her to keep trying and invites her to ride with him since he, too, is looking for Tristan. Lancelot is very sorry to have wounded Tristan; he would not have done so if he had known who he was. The damsel accepts his invitation. They find lodging that night at a castle. The story turns to other matters, and much later we again see Lancelot and the damsel when they meet Keu and Gaheriet who are returning from Cornwall where they have looked for Tristan. Despite Lancelot's urging to go to Sorelois and continue searching with them, the damsel says she must now go on to Cornwall.

The damsel travels again in a subsequent part of the story. Here, Marc goes to Logres seeking to kill Tristan, but ends up being obliged by Arthur to reconconcile with Tristan and to take Tristan back to Cornwall. From Cornwall Tristan sends letters to King Arthur and Lancelot, for whom Tristan has great affection, by this same damsel who had come to Logres looking for Tristan earlier. We are told nothing of her trip but that she simply arrived one day at the court (4: 252). She is not recognized at once, but all can see that she is a messenger damsel and she is warmly received (4: 252).

She stays ten days and is honored (4: 257). Her letters are treated as if they were great treasures (4: 256). She is given letters to take back, one to Tristan and one to Marc (4: 257). Of the return trip we are told simply that it went smoothly and she arrived safe and sound at Tintagel, to the great satisfaction of Tristan, at whose feet she kneels as she presents her letters (4: 257-258). However, from her later conversation with Marc, we learn that the journey did not quite take ten days (4: 264).

Although the trips themselves are given no attention, the exchange of letters she facilitates sets the story moving and leads to a journey taken by Iseut. When the damsel gives Arthur's letter to Marc, she praises Arthur's court, slighting Marc's by implication, and thus adds fuel to the fire that is about to ignite. She says that there is "nule court si houneree ne si vaillant com est cele le roi Artu. Che est la cours u toute hounour terrienne repaire" (4: 264) ("no court so honored or so valiant as Arthur's. It is the court where all earthly honor resides"). What Arthur has written to Marc is complimentary to Tristan but not to Marc, and warns Marc to treat Tristan well (4: 265). Arthur's insulting tone angers Marc and sets off an exchange of hostile written communications between the two courts, with the addition of a scathing lai written by Dinadan and sung to Marc by a jongleur (4: 270; 272-273; 278-280). The result is that Marc becomes so angry that he imprisons Tristan, who is liberated by a knight from Logres only to be re-imprisoned by Marc. This time Tristan imprisons Marc and takes Iseut to live with him in Logres.

About this momentous journey no information is given except simply that they go (4: 349-350).

When they arrive in Logres, however, Tristan defeats fourteen of the knights of the Round Table whom he meets (5: 71). Lancelot then comes forth to avenge this dishonor; but Tristan tells him who he is, and Lancelot is overjoyed to see him. Tristan wants to keep Iseut's presence a secret, so Lancelot takes them at once to his castle, Joyeuse Garde, and has them live there (5: 71).

Further on in the narrative messenger damsels again become important when they are associated with the beginning of Galaad's career as a knight and with the beginning of the quest for the Holy Grail. Their appearance and their sometimes oracular pronouncements increase the drama of this part of the narrative. We are told only of their arrivals, not of their journeys to deliver the messages. These damsels bring to mind that in Chrétien's story Perceval set off for the Grail Quest immediately after the arrival at court of the damsel who reminded him of his failure to ask proper questions at the Fisher King's. The first messenger comes to fetch Lancelot to knight Galaad (6: 241-2420). The second rides up to Lancelot and Galaad as they stand by a river where Galaad has just drawn a sword from a stone; no one else had been able to do so. The messenger informs Lancelot that he is now no longer the best knight in the world; the withdrawal of this sword proves that Galaad is. Lancelot concedes this truth (6: 260-261).

The messenger then rides on to King Arthur's and tells him that because of the merit of another, he will receive the greatest honor

ever shown to a king of Britain: the knights of the Round Table will be fed that day by the Holy Grail. Her message comes from the prophet Nascien (6: 261). A third messenger, beautifully dressed, arrives at court before the knights leave on the quest and asks that every knight by turns hold the sword that her squire carries. Each does; but when Gauvain holds it, it bleeds. She says that this means that Gauvain will kill many of the questing knights who set forth (6: 276)

A few other messenger damsels, in addition to several women that knights meet on the road, give knights help. One messenger damsel sent to find out who killed her lord's son discovers it was Tristan. Knowing his worth as a knight, she does not divulge this information (7: 191-194). Once again a messenger damsel's behavior indicates or augments the great respect all have for Tristan. Another messenger damsel finds out that Bréhus sans Pitié, who has imprisoned Galaad, intends to move him. She sets out to find a knight to free Galaad during the move and does so (7: 210-218). A young woman out riding and practicing falconry tells Hector and Perceval about Lancelot's jousting habits on the island where he has hidden himself away for years and thus enables them to find him (6: 209).

One other woman's journey of a pleasant nature is treated with some detail in the Tristan en prose. That is Iseut's journey to King Arthur's tournament at Louvezerp when she and Tristan are living together in Logres. When Tristan invites Iseut to go, she says she will go since Tristan wishes her to and because she would like to

meet Guenièvre. Tristan asks her to be ready the next morning and to select three ladies and three damsels to go with her. Iseut assures him that she and her ladies will cause no delay (6: 233).

Tristan sends squires ahead to set up two beautiful tents that Lancelot had given him. They find a pleasant place in the Louvezerp forest near a spring, a little away from people and from the road. One of the tents will be for Tristan and his companions and the other for Iseut and her ladies (6: 233).

Louvezerp is about a half day's journey from Joyeuse Garde. They set out the next morning after Tristan has heard mass (6: 234). Palamède has been staying with them; he and Tristan's other companions take three squires each with them, as does Tristan. Without the knowledge of his companions, Tristan is taking three different colors of shields so that he can change them and fight without people realizing he is someone they have seen before. The group descends the butte of Joyeuse Garde and goes on out to the highway (6: 234). They ride unhurriedly, amusing themselves and talking of this and that adventure (6: 234). Dinadan and Gaehriet ride up front with the ladies following, flanked by the squires on either side. Tristan and Palamède bring up the rear (6: 233). Iseut's appearance and that of her damsels is distinctively sumptuous (6: 234).

Shortly after they enter the forest that extends to Louvezerp, they meet ten knights. Very much impressed with the beauty and noble bearing of Iseut and her group, one of them wants to know her name; he is actually the king of Sorelois. He rides up to Tristan and

courteously asks Iseut's name. Tristan as courteously tells him that she is a lady going to the tournament but that is all he can now say (6: 235). The king, a corpulent fellow, decides he has been insulted and determines to do battle with the four knights of the entourage with four knights of his own. He approaches Iseut and when Tristan protests, he says that unless he can know her name, he will seize her according to the Rule of Logres (6: 235-236). Palamède, angry at this threat, comes up and tells Tristan that he will take care of this little matter, that it is unworthy of Tristan, who should continue on his way. Tristan laughs and does just that (6: 236-237). Palamède stays behind and unhorses each of five knights, one by one, the king first. The king admits that he has been foolish; he laughs when his other knights want to fight Palamède and does not permit them to (6: 237-238).

About four English leagues farther on, they meet Gauvain, Sagramor, Dodinel and Yvain. Gauvain wants very much to know who Iseut is. Of course, Tristan will not tell him (6: 238-240). Once again, Palamède volunteers to meet Gauvain's challenge by jousting with him and his companions; once again, Palamède unhorses them all (6: 243-244). He is absolutely delighted to have had all this success under the eyes of Iseut (6: 245). Tristan is unaware of his feelings for Iseut (6: 245), as is she. The narrator gives much attention to describing the jousts in both these incidents.

One of the squires that Tristan has sent on ahead meets Tristan's party on the road and leads them off it to the place where the tents are set up. The place has many trees covered with leaves

and flowers as well as several springs with brooks running from them. The squires have a delicious, plentiful meal prepared. At once tablecloths are laid out on the grass in front of the brooks, and they eat at their leisure (6: 249). It is about noon. Tristan and Dinadan go to see how the tournament preparations are coming along. Gaheriet and Palamède stay at camp. The ladies retire to their tent and sleep (6: 249-250).

On the first full day of the tournament, Iseut and her damsels, so sumptuously appavelled that they excite the admiration of all, go to watch (6: 270). Guenièvre has been unable to attend this tournament; she lies sick in a nearby castle (6: 258). Elevated seats in an enclosure with windows have been reserved for ladies to watch the tournament. Those who are present come to greet Iseut, seeing from her appearance that she is a very noble lady; they put her in the most advantageous place. Tristan meets two knights from Joyeuse Garde and asks them to stay with Iseut. Then he leaves and goes onto the field (6: 270).

On the first day, Palamède takes much of the glory, to the delight of Tristan (6: 286) ; but on the succeeding days Tristan excels. On the second day Iseut becomes irritated with Palamède (6: 340), who attacks Tristan vigorously and repeatedly (6: 324-341). Both knights have changed shields; Tristan does not know who Palamède is. Palamède knows full well who Tristan is (6: 330), but pretends not to after the day's combats are concluded. As the knights and Iseut ride back to the pavilion, Palamède reveals to Tristan who he is, Tristan having tried to run him off (6: 341-342).

At supper, Iseut expresses her anger to Palamède, calling him discourteous, disloyal, jealous and cruel (6: 343-344). Palamède, chagrined to have incurred the anger of the very woman who inspires his valor, protests that he did not know who Tristan was; and Tristan supports Palamède. Iseut says no more but is not reconciled (6: 344).

Arthur and Lancelot come to visit them in their pavilion that evening specifically to see Iseut (6: 345-346). Arthur tells Iseut that she is the most beautiful woman in the world and that Tristan is the most valorous and handsomest knight in the world (6: 347). There is great celebration in the tent that evening (6: 348). In the course of the evening Arthur insists that Palamède had attacked Tristan too often that day (6: 348-349).

When Iseut rides out to the tournament the third day, her surpassing beauty fills Tristan with the great joy of his love for her. She seems to the onlookers to be not a woman, but a spiritual being, a goddess (6: 360). This promenade vividly illustrates the characterization of Iseut in this romance given by Emmanèle Baumgartner in Tristan en prose: essai d'interprétation d'un roman médiéval as "inspiratrice de toute vaillance et de toute prouesse, capable de faire naître chez tous ceux qu'a touchés le rayonnement de sa beauté...l'ardent désir de devenir, pour l'amour d'elle, le meilleur" (222).

A few days after the tournament Blioberis enthusiastically praises the beauty of Iseut to Guenièvre, who is sorry to have missed seeing her (6: 375-377).

Iseut's return journey to Joyeuse Garde is not mentioned.

As in the Lancelot en Prose, in the Tristan en prose some women travellers are less than admirable. Early in this version a woman whose very name is la dame de la Méchante Langue (the lady with the hateful tongue) is travelling with the knight of the Cotte Tailladée (Slit Coat) (1: 63). We do not get to witness her evil speech, but the knight reports it in rebuking her. She had belittled Lancelot's prowess at one point when they were travelling together. When we meet her, Lancelot has just released her and the knight (and others) from prison. As they ride along together the knight tells her how mistaken she was about Lancelot. She is apologetic, but protests that Lancelot was not courteous to her. The knight replies that nobody could be courteous to her (1: 105-106). Later in their travels she encourages the knights as they endure ordeals and gives them valuable information; her hateful side is put away entirely in these episodes (1: 117; 124-125; 129). In these episodes she shares with these knights information that reflects more knowledge than she could naturally have. Commenting on this aspect of her persona, Jacques Ribard characterizes it as a "dimension de la femme-fée ou sorcière" (267).

The early volumes of this narrative have more unsavory women travellers than the later ones. Soon after meeting the lady of the Hateful Tongue, we hear that Lancelot rescues a white-haired traveller accused of treachery--she had caused the death of a knight--and is about to be executed for it (1: 76). Morgan la Fée has travelling damsels up to no good. We meet them on four different

occasions. One of them actually turns out to be helpful: she is crying because Lancelot is about to be ambushed and thus alerts his friends. Morgan had sent her to invite an enemy of Lancelot's to see his body, which she expected soon to have on hand (2: 98-99). A second one of Morgan's damsels tries to draw Tristan into an ambush of thirty knights (2: 176-185). Gauvain tells her he will have one of his squires cut off her head if she doesn't admit what she's doing (2: 184). Tristan insists on going on to the tower she has mentioned and the thirty-four knights who are supposed to kill him are afraid to come out (2: 186-187). Gauvain says it would be better to have all the damsels in Logres killed than Tristan (2: 184-185). Once again a travelling damsel has pointed up Tristan's prowess, this time inadvertently. Another of Morgan's travellers tries to sow shame and discord by coming to Arthur and telling him that Tristan's shield dishonors him (3: 150-151). After Tristan by accident kills Morgan's lover, Morgan sends a damsel to get his lance. Once Tristan has given it to her, the damsel tells him it will be used to kill him. (3: 148-149). Late in the story a treacherous damsel not of Morgan's band leads Galaad into an ambush which results in his imprisonment (7: 149-165).

Also early in the narrative an episode very similar to the one in Le Chevalier à l'épée occurs. In this incident (3:165-177) a woman elopes with a lover, leaving a valiant knight who loved her very much but to whom she was indifferent. As the story develops she is asked to choose between the two men; then the dogs she is very fond of choose between her and the man she refused. She

deserts the man she had first chosen to go with (the one with whom she had eloped) to go with the one whom the dogs choose. She has found occasion to verbally abuse each of the men during these proceedings. Now, neither man will have her and she is left alone in the road. The valiant knight whom she had first left offers some comparisons between the constancy of dogs and women, the latter losing the contest of course, as was the case in Le Chevalier à l'épée. This woman is a good example of the type of traveller in the later prose romances who does not love her knight companion, is not interested in his welfare, goes from lover to lover and speaks abusively to knights.

Arguably the most hateful-tongued travelling woman in the whole romance is one of the messenger damsels. After the first of the two great tournaments in the romance, that of the Château des Pucelles (The Castle of Young Maidens), Arthur and Guenièvre send this damsel to the lodgings where Tristan happens to be staying. Her mission is to see if Mordret is really there, badly wounded and in bed as they have heard (2: 235-237). On her way she comes upon Palamède, who is sitting utterly disconsolate by a stream, into which he has obviously fallen a short time before. Palamède is mourning that he was not the very, very best at the tournament, just as he will do again after the tournament at Louvezerp (2: 352). She tells him he seems to be thinking more than a knight ought to. He tells her to please go on her way and leave him with his thoughts. She replies that he is discourteous, and they get into an argument over who is the more discourteous. Then she asks who he is and he

tells her he is the unluckiest knight in the world. It serves him right, she tells him, for cowardly, rude, evil-tongued, inept knights ought to find shame and insulting treatment wherever they go. She adds that he should have died in the water he fell in a while ago because evil knights ought to incur shame and misfortune. He replies by saying she is badly reared and full of rude and mocking words and implores her to have enough courtesy just to leave him to his grief. She hopes he dies of it, she tells him. Then she goes on (2: 353-355).

When she arrives at her destination, she is well-received because she is from Arthur's court (2: 355). Mordret is glad to see her and asks her for news of the recent tournament. She says that the marvelous exploits of a knight with a black shield (the reader knows that is Tristan) were the talk of the tournament (2: 356). (The pattern of women travellers advertising Tristan's fame continues.) Then she relates her encounter with Palamède, recounting all that was said, a behavior that would seem to show that she is shameless. Tristan interrupts as she is speaking to ask what kind of shield the knight had (2: 357). Deducing that the knight is Palamède, Tristan, without revealing his identity to Palamède, goes to get him to stay in the same lodgings that night (2: 357-358). At their host's, Palamède grumbles about how he would like to avenge himself on the knight with the black shield (2: 359). Dinadan tells him he had plenty of chances to do so all day, but that he noticed most knights who came up to challenge the knight with the black shield actually avoided conflict with him. There's no use to

threaten him behind his back, declares Dinadan (2: 359-360). Palamède is furious with this discourse; then the damsel chimes in, implying that Palamède is a bad, cowardly knight and that although he will threaten his enemy behind his back, he will do nothing to him face to face. Immediately, Tristan tells her to be quiet, not to speak ill of this knight and to go elsewhere to express insanities. The damsel accuses Tristan of discourtesy (2: 361). When Tristan does not find an effective reply, Dinadan succeeds in shutting her up. He compares Arthur's court to a fountain that both fine horses and vile asses come to. The fountain does not change their nature. The damsel, whom he calls rude, falls under the second category. That is why Guenièvre sends her away on a mission worthy of a young errand boy, in order to get rid of her (2: 362-363). Left speechless, the damsel leaves the room and goes into Mordret's room. He can see that she is angry and says that if he were able he would get up and avenge her (2: 363). However, the narrator has earlier qualified Mordret as an unworthy knight (2: 353). Of course, the whole incident reflects Tristan's magnanimity.

As we have seen, the Tristan en prose does have a variety of women travellers whose misbehavior ranges from rudeness to treachery; others, however, are courteous and well-intentioned. Two journeys treated at some length feature a fine messenger damsel and a queen beloved by all. Nor are women travellers constantly mistreated in this narrative. On three different occasions in one part of the narrative Bréhus sans Pitié chases women travellers with the intent to kill them (3: 60-63; 198-203;

233-234); once he actually does kill a woman traveller right in the presence and proximity of Palamède, who was accompanying and protecting her (3: 233-234). But Bréhus's behavior is considered criminal and outrageous in this narrative; he is roundly condemned. As Marie-Luce Chênerie observes in "Vengeance et chevalerie dans le Tristan en prose", "Le spécialiste de la vengeance par trahison sera Bréhus sans Pitié" (212).

The Rule of Logres, important to women travellers, comes in for some criticism in this book. The reader's sympathy is secured for Espinogre, who loses his true love by the Rule of Logres (6: 58-61). In addition, Kahédin, a wonderfully witty knight, speaks eloquently about this terrible custom (1: 197). Certainly none of the best knights in this romance have any use for the Rule of Logres, nor do knights travel always or even usually with a damsel as companion. In all, then, as thirteenth-century romances go, the Tristan en prose presents women travellers often as well-intentioned and has them treated courteously.

The same cannot be said for Guiron le Courtois, an anonymous work composed before 1240. Our observations refer to Lathouillière's Part One of the romance, which remains largely unedited but has been made available in an analyse critique with the episodes provided in detail in modern French by Lathouillière, who leaves certain portions in Old French to retain a thirteenth-century flavor. Part One, about 177 pages, represents the basic and oldest version of the romance (Lathouillière, 122;187). In this romance the type of woman traveller most frequently occurring is the one who

accompanies the knight-errant as his companion. She does not have her separate purpose for travelling; her role is simply that of companion to the knight. As such, she is most often treated as property, as part of the knight's travelling equipment. In fact, we shall see that in one exchange knights compare how often their respective damsels must be fed--once or twice a day--as if they were horses. The damsels accompanying these knights may be won as prizes, without any consultation of their own wishes. Indeed, the most common type of adventure in this romance features a joust for ownership of one another's damsels between two knights who meet by chance in the woods. A perfect stranger jousts to take charge of a woman about whom he knows nothing. Philippe Ménard in his article "Le Chevalier errant dans la littérature arthurienne: Recherches sur les raisons du départ et de l'errance" notes that in thirteenth-century texts, especially in the prose romances-- the Lancelot, the Tristan en prose "et plus encore, semble-t-il" in Guiron le Courtois --are many examples of "combats deraisonnables et des exploits absurdes" (303). He is quite right that they do increase markedly in Guiron. Ménard's phrase "semble-t-il" gives the impression that he is perhaps not too familiar Lathouillère's presentation of Guiron le Courtois. If he were, we believe this eminent scholar would note the joust-for-damsel combat as the most prevalent type of fight and the most unreasonable type in the Guiron. In addition to the jousts for women travellers, many are simply seized and abducted from their knight companions (another example, although he does not offer it, of the "perversion de l'idéal

chevaleresque" (303) that Ménard notes in the thirteenth-century prose works. Abduction is only one of several forms of violence against women travellers in this work.

More significant is the negative character of many of the women who travel in this work. Often downright evil, they betray their companion knights in cruel fashion and out of sheer perversity. Instead of returning a good deed to a knight who has rescued her or helped her, as women travellers do in other romances, the rescued damsel often does her benefactor harm. Women travellers make unreasonable decisions, and they perform very few noble or even helpful acts. A not infrequent discourtesy of speech makes the travelling damsel even more unattractive. Messenger damsels almost reliably deliver messages meant to lead knights into harm's way. No woman traveller in Guiron le Courtois is powerful, highly respected or prestigious. Only two admirable noblewomen travel briefly; both are associated with Guiron himself and their nobility of character enhances his image.

Women travellers abound in this work. The almost obsessive frequency with which women travellers appear in Guiron le Courtois is one of its distinctive features. In many long passages nearly every other paragraph presents either a damsel accompanying a knight as his companion or a damsel messenger, and the narrative becomes monotonous because of the repetition of the joust-for- maiden adventure. However, journeys themselves are not treated: purposes, distances, time spent, apparel, equipment carried, lodgings--the practical or realistic aspects of journeys-- do not

receive attention. What is especially highlighted in the travel of the woman is her behavior and her treatment by the knight as a piece of property.

Indeed, she is even spoken of as property, and as such is valued for her youth and beauty. Knights repeatedly speak disrespectfully of a travelling damsel's old age and ugliness and do so in her presence. The travelling woman's feelings are not consulted or considered. Frequent incidents of violence emphasize their status as property. We see women forced to walk barefoot with their hands tied. Scenes of utter degradation feature women travellers, often old and ugly, physically fighting with dwarves. Sometimes women travellers are murdered.

The first woman traveller in Guiron le Courtois is a damsel messenger aged about fifty years (194),²⁹ whose dirty face and wrinkled, black neck seem to foreshadow the repugnance of a string of women travellers who follow her. She comes to ask for a champion for her mistress. The treacherous damsel messenger makes her appearance early in this work. A woman that the Morhout knows comes to tell him that her lady (with whom he is having an affair) wishes him to come and see her that evening. This woman, however, is working for the husband; and in the end the Morhout and his lover barely escape being burned at the stake (197-198). Later Leodagan, just released from prison, complains bitterly that a damsel messenger had betrayed him (240).

²⁹References are to page numbers in Guiron le Courtois as prepared by Roger Lathuillere.

Betrayals by women travellers in this romance result in consequences that range from humiliation or disappointment to long, insanity-producing imprisonment and death. The Morhout, disappointed that, instead of staying with him, a woman traveller he has rescued chooses to return to a husband who refused to help her(271), is consoled by stories told by Pharamond and Meliadus of their own humiliations at the hands of ungrateful damsels.

Pharamond rescues a young woman traveller tied to a tree and beaten by two squires. When they go to court, she repays him by confirming lies that disgrace him with the king (272). Meliadus very honorably escorts a damsel he has won to court, not pressing her for her love since she says she is a virgin and is on her way to court to be married. Once there he sees that she is clothed in finery and agrees to take vengeance on a knight that she says has killed her relatives. She then publicly humiliates Meliadus, saying that she hates him and loves the one she says was her father's and brother's murderer (273-274).

This kind of senseless and unnatural behavior is attributed to female travellers often in Guiron le Courtois. Meliadus had had an earlier encounter with a treacherous female traveller. Finding a damsel crying beside her slain lover, he takes her away and becomes her lover himself, only to be betrayed when one of her former lovers, whom she claims is her cousin, joins them on the road. Meliadus does not immediately realize that she is being unfaithful to him with this man, but when the "cousin," a coward, steals Meliadus's arms when they get to court so that everyone will think it is he, not

Meliadus, who has won a tournament and that Meliadus was the coward who refused to fight, the damsel sides with the villain. Meliadus is forced to leave (243-244).

Two travelling damsels are among the most persistent in their efforts to betray knights. The first is the notorious Elyde, responsible for the deaths by betrayal of more than one hundred knights. Although she has grown old and "laide com un chien" (279) ("ugly as a dog") in her pursuit of wickedness, she apparently retains a mysterious charm because the knight with whom she rides says he loves her more than he would the most beautiful woman in the world; yet she won't love him (278). By a ruse she has her lover insist through a joust that the Morhout become her riding companion, but she does this for the sole purpose of having him imprisoned (278-279). Not allowing him to rest on the way, she leads him to Dolorous Guard, where he must fight several adversaries; but to her consternation, he overcomes them. On the way the Morhout has been warned of the peril by a vavasor but feels honor-bound to continue to his destination (279). "La diablesse" (279) ("the female devil") mocks him and says she is sure he is trembling with fear. In contrast to her doubting words is the Morhout's prowess as is her treachery to his scrupulous honor. The narrator informs us that she is so cruel and wicked that she would let herself be imprisoned to see the Morhout imprisoned and killed (281). No motive for her hatred is exposed.

The day after the adventure at Dolorous Guard, a knight whom they meet recognizes Elyde as someone who has caused the death of

over one hundred knights, including his own brother. He asks the Morhout to hand her over to him, but the Morhout says he is honor-bound to see her to her destination. The knight insists on jousting, and the Morhout wounds him mortally (280). After the Morhout has defended her from this man who wished to kill her, Elyde allows them to stop for the night on the estate she knows belongs to the dead man's father; and when news of the death arrives, she denounces the Morhout to the father, who promptly imprisons him. Elyde herself slips away before she can be recognized as someone who has also caused death in the family. Ironically, the messenger who arrives with news of the death interrupts a story of a travelling woman's betrayal that the host was telling (281). Again, in this story a damsel is befriended and escorted by a valiant knight. He is warned that his companion is a criminal, a traitor who has shamed and killed all her lineage. True to her reputation, she tries to see to it that he is beheaded, and, that failing, has him imprisoned.

Yet another story of a traitorous rescued travelling maiden (294-295) as well as one of an unfaithful travelling sweetheart (292) intervene in the narrative before the appearance of a travelling damsel who seems well on her way to becoming another Elyde. This traveller betrays three companions in a row. Beloved by a knight, this fifteen-year old girl falls in love with the knight's companion, who though attracted, refuses her advances out of loyalty to his friend (303). Having arrived at the knight's castle, through evil machinations involving a false claim of rape, she has the knight she lusts after imprisoned and frees him only to lead him

to kill his friend, her knight companion, under false pretenses (303-304). She then, amazingly, persuades him to be her lover, and he loves her dearly. They go riding out again as knight-errant and damsel companion, but she now decides she must have his riding companion. Unable to seduce this man, she denounces both for a murder they did not do, and they are rescued just short of execution (304).

Guiron himself saves her from execution by the former lover, who catches up to her; but Guiron tells her he hopes the dreaded Bréhus sans Pitié, notorious for abusing and even killing women, gets her (304). This attitude is a change from that in the Tristan en prose, in which Bréhus is condemned; here even Guiron, the best of the knights in this narrative, seems glad there is a Bréhus to treat women the way knights are not supposed to.

Shortly after Guiron saves this woman traveller, Bréhus does get her; but for once in his life, melted by the sad and untrue story she tells him, he falls quite in love with her and makes her his lover (305). He dresses her like a queen, but the wretched damsel tries to think of ways to lead him to his death. At last she discovers a cave that she lures him to fall into and leaves him to a death from thirst and starvation (306). (Bréhus does not, in fact, die but has an intriguing adventure (307-314).) These examples by no means exhaust the stories of betrayals by women who travel in Guiron le Courtois.

Another disturbing feature in the life of the woman who travels in this work is the constant threat of abduction, a far more

prevalent event in this romance than in any other we have examined. At least eighteen different incidents of abduction or attempted abduction of women travellers occur in Guiron le Courtois, and many of them are committed by knights of prestigious reputation, such as Lac (242;252), Meliadus (219-220) and the Morhout. Sometimes this act seems prompted by a sudden, reckless lack of self-control, as when the Morhout, visiting in Gaunes, chases away the queen's escort and carries her off (197). Hector and Helyan intend to abduct the same lady; if the first can't do it, the second will. They plan to abduct the bride of the King of Orcanie as she rides away from her wedding festivities under heavy escort. In his attempt, Helyan kills four of her escort of thirty, ten of whom were her brothers and the brothers of Helyand's fellow knight, Adalon, who has long been absent (268).

That the damsel accompanying the knight in his travels is his property finds expression in her treatment. A number of statements and circumstances leave the impression that this damsel is part of the knight's equipment, as are his horse, his arms and his squire. For example, Bréhus sans Pitié complains that all knights except him have damsels, that none will stay with him (277). At one point Guiron is mocked for not having a damsel with him (288). The conditions set for ordeals often make plain the expectation that a damsel will be with the knight. The consequence for failure to succeed in one is loss of horse, arms and lady (315). In another a knight guards a river that he will permit no knight without lady or maiden to pass (347). In a story he is telling a knight mentions that

Uterpendragon heard that his son was killed and his horse, arms and lady taken (349). Writing of Guiron le Courtois, Michel Olsen confirms the observation that women are treated as property in this romance, remarking that "une femme ne se distingue guère d'un autre objet de valeur, armure ou épée, par exemple" (74).

From time to time, the accompanying damsel is even spoken of as property. The former knight of an ugly old lady is referred to as her "ancien propriétaire" (278) ("former owner"). A dwarf to whom Arthur gives a demanding, discourteous damsel is called "son nouveau maître" (354) ("her new master") . Keu and a knight he meets chat about feeding their damsels as if they were livestock. The knight complains that his damsel wants to eat twice a day. Keu says his only eats in the evening and tells the knight that he must have gotten her into that bad habit (344).

But the most obvious evidence of the accompanying damsel's status as property is that she is a game piece, the prize, in the knight's favorite amusement, jousting with the other knights whom he meets in his travels. If the knight loses the joust, he loses his lady to the other knight. In this work jousting for another knight's damsel occurs at least twenty times, far more often than in any other romance examined. Occasionally the damsel won is through some courtesy given back to the knight (252; 281-282; 356-357). Occasionally also a damsel is allowed to choose with whom she will go, but her choice always show a lack of loyalty or judgment, in the narrator's opinion, especially when she makes the unthinkable choice of going with a dwarf (256; 289).

As property perhaps if not as sweethearts, the damsels who accompany knights as a sole purpose in travelling become their sexual partners. Among the passages that make this clear is one in which a knight suggests to a damsel he has just acquired from another knight that they leave the road and go back into the woods. The young woman tearfully protests that she is a virgin destined for marriage. (This adventure is one of Meliadus's referred to earlier.) The knight says he thought it was understood that damsels who travel with knights are not virgins. Later, when they arrive at court, Meliadus is mocked that this young woman with whom he has travelled extensively remains, as evidenced by her style of dress, a virgin (273-274).

One violent initiative by an ugly old woman on the road saves a young girl from abduction. The old lady is travelling with a lovely young woman, two squires and a dwarf but no knight. By the Rule of Logres such a party is not to be bothered. However, the noted coward, Henor de la Selve, comes up to the young girl and seizes the bridle of her horse. Upon this, the old lady grabs a sword from one of the knights who happened to be resting nearby, overthrows Henor and rides off with her companions (258).

Other acts of violence committed by travelling women, however, sink them into complete degradation. On one occasion Arhtur gives a hateful damsel--just as she has requested--to the first comer, a dwarf. She jumps on the dwarf and pulls his hair; he hits her in the face (354). On another occasion a still uglier fight occurs. A damsel Keu had given to a dwarf mistreats her habitually.

The dwarf is met by a company of knights; but since the rules of chivalry do not permit knights to joust with dwarves, none of the knights can liberate her. However, Febus, accompanied by an old and ugly woman, suggests to her that since she is not a wandering knight but a wandering damsel and therefore not subject to the laws and customs of chivalry, that she fight the dwarf to free the damsel. a noble mission, perhaps, but what follows is hardly a dignified scene: a volley of insults exchanged, a nasty dispute, blows. The young girl runs to help. They throw the dwarf down, drag him by the hair, gouge his eyes and tie his hands. Arthur has him untied, and he promises to get him some news that he wants (344).

Discourteous words but also physical violence inflicted by knights assail the woman traveller in Guiron le Courtois. On several occasions knights meet women being led, walking barefoot or scantily clad, hands tied (278; 292; 294). Often the woman is being punished for infidelity, usually with the knight's companion or dwarf, and is sometimes tied to her companion in misconduct (278;292). Sometimes she is being led to her death or is rescued (302; 326).

However, at other times women travellers are murdered by knights. Bréhus san Pitié, angry because he learns that a damsel messenger betrays the Morhout into a dangerous situation, kills without any preliminaries the first woman he comes across, one accompanying Yvain (198) Ariohan decides, for reasons not divulged to the reader, to kill a damsel. He takes her into the forest and has

his squire do the job (239. At least two other murders of travelling women occur (322; 325)

One slaying of a woman traveller might draw some sympathy from the reader. Le Bon Chevalier, long the prisoner of a giant who allows him to wander his lands, receives word from a damsel messenger that he can kill his adversaries if he follows her. In fact, she is the giant's emissary; and she leads the knight into a trap. Imprisoned thereupon for many years, he at last goes insane and is released again to wander the giant's lands. One day he comes upon the messenger damsel and kills her. The giant, though he employed the woman to betray the knight, does not blame the murderer (324-325).

The depiction of this violence against woman travellers speaks (as does so much else in this work) of animosity toward them. Like Keu, who takes satisfaction in seeing an irritating damel slapped savagely in the face by the dwarf he has given her to and then trampled on by the dwarf's horse (344), the narrator seems to relish scenes in which women are made to suffer. Roger Lathouillère notes that certain critics want to put Guiron le Courtois in "le courant traditionnellement misogyne" (147) of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but, he says, "il n'en est rien" (147). This assessment of Lathouillère's denies overwhelming evidence, as is amply demonstrated by Michel Olsen. Toward the end of an article in which he cites numerous examples of anti-feminism in Guiron le Courtois, Olsen refers to the "misogynie généralisée du roman" (91).

Among the few positive portrayals and treatments of women travellers in Guiron le Courtois is the occasional honest messenger damsel. Two report to other knights the imprisonment of their fellow knights, and one warns a knight that he himself runs the risk of imprisonment in that region (343; 351). King Arthur meets a messenger damsel who apparently takes messages as a long-time career. She is "veillarde grant et fort et dure a merveille" (355) ("a tall and strong and and marvellously hard old woman"). Arthur greets her because he has seen her quite often and remarks that "les chiens de Loenois e dou roiaume de Logres e de Norgales te conoissent ja a trente ans passez" (355) ("the dogs [of several kingdoms] have known you for thirty years"). He mentions the dogs perhaps since in their function as sentinels, they would be on the road by dwellings to monitor passersby. She has just come from Kammalot and gives the king news of it; he sends her back to give them news. She is apparently a hard task-master. Arthur gives her his dwarf, and she says he will go barefoot and eat once daily. She even has a name, Dalide (355).

There are two admirable noblewomen who travel. One is the daughter of the King of Scotland, whose father sends her on a diplomatic mission to one of Guiron's ancestors, Febus, to sue for peace (310). Even she inadvertently causes his death (313-314). The other good woman is Bloie, the beloved of Guiron. She is once abducted by Denain, who is supposed to be Guiron's best friend but has fallen in love with her (301-302). She remains faithful to Guiron. When she is at last reunited with him, their travels together

result in their imprisonment together for seven years (335). During that time, Bloie dies in unassisted childbirth (335).

As for positive actions of knights toward travelling women, many damsels are rescued by knights. One of these incidents illustrates that a fellow knight's welfare was of more concern to the rescuer than that of the damsel. Caradoc finds the damsel for whom he is searching comfortably bedded down in a pavilion. At the foot of the bed is a wounded knight who declares that he has no interest in her but to protect her. He had rescued her from a knight who was abusing her; and, having learned that she is Caradoc's sweetheart, he intends to return her to Caradoc, although the latter, his liegelord, had exiled him for his misdeeds (287).

We have seen that in a number of examples of thirteenth-century French literature--an epic, a chante-fable, an early nouvelle (La Fille du Comte de Pontieu) and several adventure romances--a number of women travellers are strong, competent individuals. All are seen in a positive light by their narrators. Several of these narratives provide details about the practical side of travel at that time, as do certain ones of the verse romances. Although we can point to women travellers like the Queen of Cardigan who stand out for their strength and resolution, we see others in Arthurian verse romances whom we cannot admire. The same is true for Lancelot and Tristan en prose. In Guiron le Courtois the admirable woman traveller is almost non-existent. If the other Arthurian prose works examined are scant on travel detail, almost no attempt is made to provide such material in Guiron le Courtois. That fact in itself

seems to point to the lack of realism in its depiction of women travellers and their journeys.

To close the chapter on a note that we would prefer to think better represents French medieval portrayals of women travellers and their journeys than does Guiron le Courtois, let us return to glance briefly at a journey of enchantment in a thirteenth-century work written in verse, La Première continuation de Perceval. In the branch of the work called "Guerehet," the knight of that name, after humiliation and persistent, arduous effort, succeeds in an ordeal that will enable the body of a knight to be transported back to his own country, a fairyland where he will be brought back to life. In returning to King Arthur's court where the body of the knight has long lain in state, Guerehet is transported magically by the resources of a beautiful woman from the knight's land. Guerehet falls asleep on a silk carpet, which carries him close to Arthur's court. Then he and the lady arrive by water, drawn by the enchanted swan-boat upon which the body of the dead knight had reached Arthur's shores (605-607). On the same boat the lady from fairyland takes her knight back home to live again.

Conclusion

French narrative literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries offers opportunities to observe women travellers. The representation of the physical aspects of travel provides at times a detailed and probably accurate picture of women's travel in that period. The literature also reveals much about the traveller herself: her reasons for travel, her social status, her character, her personality, her relationships to companions and people met on the road. Travel, which can lead to encounters with the unexpected, affords a narrator an excellent opportunity to invent adventures that test the traveller. Her reactions to these events reveal her traits and affect her development. The narrator's attitude toward these travellers serves as an index to societal attitudes toward women. Attitudinal changes from narrator to narrator correspond to thematic ones. The narrator's attitude is related to the importance of the woman traveller in the narrative, which in turn is a function of the theme.

Bramimonde's twelfth-century journey illustrates well how the importance of the woman traveller is subject to the work's thematic concerns. Travelling as Charlemagne's prisoner, she is not only in literal subjection to him, but her identity is shaped in relation to his glory. Bramimonde's travel serves the epic's theme: Charlemagne and his forces as Christian conquerors. In the short forms of twelfth-century courtly romance, the woman traveller is much more the focus of the narrative than in the epic; and her representation indicates a complete narratorial sympathy with her.

For here the theme is love, love of a peculiarly intense and ardent type; its distresses serve to motivate the woman's travel. This type of love obtains part of its intensity from the fact that it is usually adulterous and from the fact that the woman is often the prisoner of a wretched husband. The traveller's journeys are sometimes unplanned, precipitated by the husband's discovery of the adultery and the ensuing disasters.

However, even planned journeys, of course, sometimes contain unexpected, life-altering events as does Iseut's voyage with Tristan from Ireland to Cornwall. On the other hand, certain planned journeys in short courtly romances proceed perfectly, for the women travellers who take them are powerful fairies who control what happens. The twelfth-century fairy traveller of magical and beneficent powers who travels repeatedly to rescue or comfort the knight whom she has chosen as her lover could not exist in a time bereft of respect for women and for love. As if in confirmation of this attitude, the fairy who sets out to rescue her lover finds her counterpart in a human traveller, Guideluec, whose short excursion rescues her husband's emotional life and brings out in herself an extraordinary nobility of character.

A thematic shift once again affects women travellers in the romans of Chrétien de Troyes and in Gautier d'Arras's Ille et Galeron, for here chivalry is at least as important as love. Chivalry serves civilization, exemplified in courtly life. Love exists for the most part within civilized bounds: the lovers are married or get married. Sometimes lovers are more restrained and hesitant in declaring

their love than in the twelfth-century works discussed earlier. Women travellers often serve the knight--chivalry's focus--in various capacities. Furthermore, their identity extends beyond their purely emotional lives: creatures of civilization, they are expected to exercise wisdom and intelligence on their journeys. Often, they turn out to be quite resourceful and capable. Those qualities are put to work usually in the knight's service. Even when a woman's travels serve another woman, her efforts redound to enhance the knight's glory. However, we wish to emphasize that although their travels help knights in some way, those travels at the same time reveal noble qualities in all of these women.

In Lancelot and in Perceval certain incidents with travelling women involve traditions that will appear frequently in later romances. The Rule of Logres, whereby a woman may travel freely if alone but if travelling with a knight is subject to seizure by another knight if the knight who accompanies her cannot defeat the challenging knight, is enunciated in Lancelot. Practiced very little in Chrétien de Troye's works, the Rule operates much more in thirteenth-century Arthurian romances. The appearance of a perverse young woman with an abusive tongue, whose behavior in Chrétien's story is explained and made forgivable, provides an example that is repeated much more frequently and misogynistically in representations of travellers of thirteenth-century romance.

Thirteenth-century French literature is not devoid, however, of sympathetic and often strong, competent women travellers. Certainly our sympathies are engaged by the first thirteenth-century

traveller that we examine, the future mother of Charlemagne, Berte, of the epic Berte aus grans piés. Berte, a Hungarian princess who journeys across Europe to marry the French King Pépin le Bref, brings to our attention the common plight of such princesses: with great sorrow they leave their home and families, whom they might never see again. What awaits them is unknown and may be nightmarish. Gregory of Tours, with his accounts of the experiences of Merovingian and Visigothic princesses who travel to marry, makes us able to believe the violence and betrayal to which Berte is subjected after her arrival.

We get a sense of Berte's progress across Europe from descriptions of the way-stations; details also help us imagine her mother Blancheflour's journey years later to Paris, a panoramic view of which we are given on Blancheflour's arrival.

Like Berte, two other travellers in miscellaneous narrative genres of the thirteenth-century suffer ordeals. The victim of rape by robbers who attack her and her husband during a pilgrimage to Saint Jacques de Compostelle, the daughter of the Count of Pontieu is later set adrift alone at sea. She survives, and her strong spirit shows its recovery when she organizes an ambitious and clandestine journey years later. Marie l'Egyptienne journeys from Jerusalem to the Jordan River and to the forest beyond it, where she lives and wanders with hardly any food or clothing for more than forty years. In so doing she forsakes a life of prostitution for one of repentance and devotion to God, evolving into a state so close to spirit that she is endowed with powers beyond the natural.

These travellers show strength, as does the effervescent Nicolette of the chanteable Aucassin et Nicolette, a traveller much like those of the adventure romances of the thirteenth-century. The travellers in these narratives take risks, initiate journeys of escape, plan and manage journeys quite effectively. Often separated by circumstances from their lovers, they conduct well-organized journeys to search for them, in the tradition of the twelfth-century Galeron of Ille et Galeron. The sections of the narrative in which the traveller is without her lover allow the narrator to focus on her development without attention to male activities. On their journeys to find lost lovers, these heroines often earn their way by means of their skills in music and/or needlework. When the search for the lover proves unsuccessful, these women typically travel to a pleasant town and settle down, establishing themselves as well-respected and self-supporting citizens. The verbal skills of such travellers often help them achieve their ends, as does the eloquence of Liénor of Le Romance de la rose ou de Guillaume de Dole. One astonishing member of this independent company of travellers in the thirteenth-century romans d'aventures lives her life disguised as a male and vanquishes a nation's foes by her military prowess. These travellers' adventures are a testimony to woman's ability to live independently of a male companion and to do so in comfort and tranquillity.

The adventure romances often supply abundant details about some of the factual aspects of travel--means of travel, baggage, food, lodging, landscape. Nearly every work considered has given

some insight into such matters; Erec et Enide stands out in this respect, as does, in the thirteenth-century, Li Chevalier aus deus espees.

In thirteenth-century Arthurian romances in verse and prose, even more so than in twelfth-century narratives of this type, the thematic emphasis is on chivalry; and the woman traveller usually serves the knight's interest in some way. Fewer women travellers have much attention given to their development as characters. We meet many more women travellers of stock types, such as damsels who accompany knights as their companions, messenger damsels and damsels who need rescuing. Negative portrayals of women travellers become more frequent. In the verse romances the eloquent and determined messenger damsel Hélié and the brave Queen of Cardigan are positive exceptions, but both serve principally to highlight a knight's prowess and facilitate his opportunities for glory.

In the prose romances, the minor women travellers in the Lancelot Proper are mostly helpful; some give information or guidance to the knight when met on the road; others travel with the specific purpose of protecting or assisting the knight. Of the prose romances, the Lancelot Proper is the most positive in the treatment of women travellers. Two powerful women closely associated with Lancelot take dramatic journeys: his mother, Queen Hélaine, and the Lady of the Lake. In flight with her husband from an invading enemy, Hélaine on this brief journey loses both husband and son, but her identity as the good and noble mother of Lancelot is established.

Hélaine is of the lineage of the Biblical King David, which further enhances our impression of Lancelot's superiority, as Françoise Paradis remarks (162). This same journey coincides with one taken by the Lady of the Lake, who comes from her estate to kidnap Lancelot. She knows that he is destined for greatness, and she rears him with great affection, instilling in him the ideals of knighthood. A person of courtly authority, years later the Lady of the Lake journeys with Lancelot to present him to Arthur for knighting. The completely white apparel of her entourage creates a dazzling impression, an other-worldly vision, as Françoise Paradis points out; Lancelot's association with the Lady of the Lake's supernatural powers makes of him a more ethereal and exalted character (171). The Lady of the Lake and her messenger damsels continue to protect and assist Lancelot at moments of crisis in his knightly career.

A few women of unpleasant manner or evil intention travel in the Lancelot-Graal. Some insult knights. The damsels under Morgan la Fée's direction spread destructive rumors, attempt to imprison or even kill knights. Another damsel who has twice before given trustworthy information leads several knights into a trap where they are imprisoned. The Rule of Logres is widely practiced. A few violent incidents are graphically depicted.

The Tristan en prose is very much a romance of chivalry; most of the few women in it are travellers, and most of them are messenger damsels. They relay information that advances the plot, or they allow the narrator to reveal Tristan's renown. Occasionally, a woman of scurrilous character travels in the Tristan

en prose. Some violence threatens women. Bréhus sans Pitié chases women with intent to kill them on three different occasions, but he is considered criminal by all in this romance. He is aware that decent knights would kill him if they could catch him and rides fast horses to get away from them. Furthermore, the Rule of Logres receives criticism more than once in the Tristan en prose.

The negative portrayals of women travellers seen from time to time in the Lancelot Proper and the Tristan en prose reach a height in Guiron le Courtois. Women travellers appear with obsessive frequency, most often as the companions of knights, who treat them as property. The most common adventure in this work is the joust-for-damsel in which the knight's female companion is the prize for the winner of a joust. Knights joust to win these women even though they are complete strangers to them. When we first encounter the Rule of Logres in Chrétien's Lancelot, the knight who wants to challenge Lancelot for the lady riding with him at least is in love with her and has been for a long time.

Messenger damsels in Guiron le Courtois almost reliably deliver messages meant to bring knights to harm. Other evil women betray knights, even knights who rescue them or have otherwise saved their lives. Such stories of treachery occur over and over again. When Elyde, who has caused the death by betrayal of over one hundred knights, is in the process of betraying her present companion the Morhout, their host is in the midst of telling a story about a woman's betrayal of a knight.

Violence by and toward women travellers is not uncommon. Degrading scenes in which women fight physically with dwarves are depicted. From time to time knights meet a woman being led, barefoot, scantily clad, hands tied behind her. Usually such a person is being punished for infidelity. Once Keu takes pleasure in seeing an irritating damsel slapped in the face by a dwarf and then trampled on by the dwarf's horse. The violence of Bréhus sans Pitié is covertly appreciated. On four occasions travelling women are murdered.

Among the few positive portrayals of women travellers is that of Bloie, Guiron le Courtois's faithful love, and a seasoned messenger damsel, Dalide, apparently a professional who serves the general need and who has been at her trade for over thirty years. Although her face is weathered, we get the impression from a conversation with King Arthur, whom she meets on the road, that hers has been an honest and useful life.

In summary, these literary works give their authors' impressions of what travel was like for women of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The picture of factual aspects is sometimes detailed and probably accurate. A focus on the travel of women often allows their identities to emerge sharply and to *dévelop* as we see them respond to the challenges, foreseen and unforeseen, of the road. Following women's travel through French narratives of these two centuries has enabled us to see shifts in their portrayal that correspond to chronology, theme and genre. The shorter narrative forms of the twelfth century often depict persecuted travellers who

have the full sympathy of a narrator who values the intense love that motivates their travels. The classic roman courtois of the great twelfth-century poet Chrétien de Troyes present a woman traveller who knows that love should be integrated into a broader societal perspective in which a chivalry of service is of first importance. This traveller often exhibits strength and resourcefulness. She seems related by those qualities to the competent, independent woman traveller of the thirteenth-century romans d'aventure. Much of the experience of the traveller in this genre is treated in a separate part of the narrative from the adventures, usually chivalric, of her lover, from whom she has been separated. However, in the thirteenth-century Arthurian romances, chivalry and the camaraderie of knights receive increasing emphasis. The woman traveller, even in her most exalted forms, as in the natural and other-worldly mothers of Lancelot, Queen Héléine and the Lady of the Lake, serves the knight's story. Sometimes the traveller in these romances deteriorates in character from her usually high-minded counterpart in the work of Chrétien de Troyes. In the verse romances and in the great prose romances of the thirteenth century, we see fairly frequent examples of the unsavory types of women travellers that overrun Guiron le Courtois. Interestingly, a lack of realistic detail in the representation of women travellers in this work is accompanied by a paucity in other literary aspects. Unlike Chrétien de Troyes, unlike the unknown author(s) of the Lancelot en prose, he who wrote Guiron le Courtois seems to have made little effort to engage the reader's sense of

noble ideas. In this work, a woman traveller who is not evil is hard to find, in astonishing contrast to twelfth-century travellers. This contrast serves to emphasize that our study has brought sharply into focus several incarnations, sometimes widely differing, of the woman traveller as she is portrayed in French narrative literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

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