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Béroul the minstrel

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Béroul the Minstrel

This study makes no attempt to examine Béroul's Romance of Tristran from the point of view of linguistics, nor is it a detailed consideration of the derivation and development of the plot of the story. Such studies have been published by experts in those particular fields and can be consulted by those for whom they are of special interest.

The present study is an attempt to re-assess the poem in its twelfth-century context so that the reader may be able to visualise the story as the author conceived it and as it would have been received by its contemporary audience, but it must not be considered as a comprehensive commentary on the poem. That would be impossible in the space available. It is merely a discussion on some points raised by the text and on a few aspects of contemporary Cornish history which may explain the story.

Béroul's romance belongs to the second half of the twelfth century when literacy was rare outside clerical circles and story-telling for secular entertainment was largely in the hands of minstrels. The term 'minstrel' has been loosely used to cover a wide range of persons. Some were from the upper classes, men who, for a variety of reasons of health, wealth, or temperament, preferred the role of entertainer to the more usual profession of knight-at-arms, and who travelled from one baronial home to another, bringing news and entertainment to brighten the long dark hours of winter. At the other end of the social scale there were the coarse but quick-witted jongleurs, often accompanied by dancers or acrobats, who could entertain the peasants on the village green or stage a show at the local fair. There were also others, more sedentary by nature, who sought a post attached to a royal or baronial court, whose task it was to compose works on themes suggested by their patrons.

In considering Béroul's poem it is important to remember that it was almost certainly intended for oral recitation, delivered in successive periods over quite a long time. The poet makes frequent appeals to his audience for their sympathy with the hero or condemnation of the villains. Moreover, a minstrel had to cope with the problem of an audience which might vary from one evening to another, or with the impact of special occasions.

There seem to be at least two instances where Béroul has broken his narrative in order to interpolate an episode adapted for some special event. The first occurs just after Iseut and Tristran have escaped from the leper band and have reached the forest. Béroul interpolates the episode of the dwarf Frocin and his betrayal of the secret that King Mark is afflicted by the possession of a pair of horses' ears. It is a farcical incident, [1] unique to this version of the Tristran legend, akin to the folklore 'Midas' tale of Mark

popular in Wales and Brittany. One can only suggest that it is introduced because the occasion was one of those feasts such as Christmastide, when a recital of the hardships and sorrows of the exiled lovers might be considered too sombre; or, possibly, a time when an important but youthful guest was expected.

The second instance is the disproportionate amount of attention that is given to the adventures of Tristran's hound, Husdent, its escape from captivity at Lancien, its tracking of Tristran's flight, the reunion in the forest, delightfully told, Tristran's anxiety that its barking will betray the fugitives, and the detailed account of the way in which the hound was trained to hunt in silence.[2] The loving care with which the scenes are worked out would be justified if the recitation took place at the close of some large hunting party. The subject was one that might hope to catch the interest of tired men and to provoke a spirited discussion of alternative methods of dog-training!

For itinerant minstrels such as Béroul, flexibility in the presentation of a story was a necessary gift and a quick-moving plot with little or no philosophising but plenty of vivid detail was needed. If it could be spiced with a compliment to the host, or a reference to some recognisable place-name, so much the better. This, of course, meant that a tale might have to be revamped to meet local conditions and the re-shaping might leave loose ends of a plot and a danger of inconsistency in the treatment of some incidents. Those critics who accuse Béroul of carelessness in such matters are forgetting the difference between the skill of a minstrel and that of a poet preparing his work for issue as a written book.

In his third edition of Béroul's Tristran, Muret makes the significant point that the fragment of the poem which survives is not a 'fair' copy,[3] but is rather 'un brouillon de l'exemplaire qui servait à la fois à la composition et à la récitation du roman'. Such a copy might easily contain certain passages for interpolation on special occasions which the minstrel would plan either to integrate smoothly into the finished whole, or omit in the final redaction.

We do not know whether the performance followed the text exactly as we have it written. It is more than likely that some of the inconsistencies were 'ironed out' in the actual recital. For instance, much has been made of the killing of one of the wicked barons early in the adventures of Tristran and Iseut in the forest,[4] an incident ending with a grisly joke when Governal, Tristran's tutor and companion, hangs the decapitated head in the fork of a tree so that it confronts the lovers as they wake. Later on, Béroul seems to forget this incident and introduces all three of the barons, alive and energetically harassing King Mark with the aim of trapping Iseut into a trial by ordeal.

It seems not at all improbable that when it came to the recital, Béroul had second thoughts about the earlier incident, and decided to omit it but did not bother to delete it from the MS.; possibly he thought it might be useful on some other occasion.

Nothing is known about Béroul the man. Arguments drawn from internal evidence led to conflicting conclusions as to his nationality and the probable date of his poem. These are usefully summarised by Ewert in the introduction to his commentary.[5] The general consensus of modern opinion suggests that Béroul was a Norman, probably from the south of the province. As a minstrel he would have travelled and he betrays some knowledge of Carhaix in Brittany.

Nothing precise is known about the date of Béroul's career but he seems to have been active during the last quarter of the twelfth century. Towards the end of the poem a spy makes a reference to Malpertuis,[6] the lair of the fox in the Roman de Renart which was composed about 1180, which indicates that Béroul's work could not have been earlier than that. On the other hand, if we accept Tristran's remark that his disfigured hands, when he was posing as a leper, were the result of the mal d'Acre,[7] he appears to be referring to the epidemic which afflicted the Crusaders at the siege of Acre in 1190 and 1191, which suggests that Béroul was writing at least until the end of the century. This particular indicator is not agreed by all critics as it rests on an obscure passage. It is probably safest to think of Béroul simply as living in the last quarter of the twelfth century.

When or where Béroul visited England has been a matter for much debate but it is now widely accepted that he had some first-hand knowledge of Cornwall. He alludes to places in the north and east of England but shows no knowledge of the south-east. A minstrel, unless he was a man of substance, needed a patron. Again, in Béroul's case, we have no direct evidence but one or two possible persons can be suggested and will be discussed.

Béroul was almost certainly a clericus though not a priest. Nor does he seem to have been of a scholarly temperament though he can bring out the tags of classical references when he thinks they are required. Possibly he received his education in one of the larger monastic schools where, in some instances, poetry was being cultivated. One wonders whether he was a pupil at the Abbey of St Évroul in Ouche, Normandy. At the end of the garden scene with Iseut early in the surviving section of the poem, Tristran is left in a state of despair with every expectation that King Mark will exile him, leaving him without money or arms[8] or companions except for Governal. In a fit of despondency Tristran leans on the grey marble steps and invokes 'beau sire saint Évrol'. Béroul had a habit of identifying himself with the predicament of his characters and this is very much the lament of a young man

remembering the high hopes of his youth and contrasting them with the bitterness of the present. Alternatively, the name may have been introduced to catch the interest of some distinguished Anglo-Norman patron. No dedications to St. Évroul are known in England but the name would be well known to the Norman-born nobility. Moreover, the abbey had been under the special patronage of Roger Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury.

The Romance is a skilled piece of work by a very individualistic writer with a keen eye for detail, an appreciation of colour and an imagination controlled by a firm grip on realism. There are times when he seems to be aiming at the women in his audience - the patron's lady could be as influential as her husband in the career of a minstrel - as when he lovingly describes the dress of grey-brown silk stitched with a fine gold thread[7] that Iseut wore on her way to her threatened execution, and by contrast her splendid new outfit when she came back from the forest to be reconciled with Mark. This last episode has its amusing side. We have been told how the clothes of the lovers had been torn and spoiled in the months spent in the forest and it is understandable that the hermit Ogrin, with whom they were staying while waiting for Mark's reply, should seek to give Iseut the reassurance of new clothes. Bêroul tells how the old man rode to the fair at the Mount - that is, St. Michael's Mount where the markets were famous - and bought quantities of material, furs and silks, escarlat which was a costly woollen cloth not necessarily scarlet, and chainsil which was fine linen. Iseut had barely two days to work on these, [10] and she had no maid with her. Yet on the day set by Mark, she was able to ride to meet him in all the glory of a bliaut (a fitted silk robe with wide sleeves) over which she wore a rich tunic and a mantle of scarlet. She must have been a fast worker; did the ladies in the audience quiz the minstrel after that session?

Men's clothes seem to have held less interest for Bêroul and about Tristran on that occasion we are only told that he wore his coat of mail under his tunic as a precaution against Mark's possible treachery. Plenty of detail is given when Tristran is disguised as a leper and when he and Governal take steps to conceal their identity before the jousts at the gathering for Iseut's trial. All descriptions are treated in a realistic way and tally with what we know of late twelfth-century costumes.

Bêroul's realism is an important characteristic and it leads him to make significant modifications to the traditional story. Realising that the wind-swept headland of Tintagel did not suit the story of the lovers' meetings in the garden with its pool under the pine tree, Bêroul devised a second residence for Mark, the 'palace' at Lancien set on the wooded slopes above the Fowey estuary. His use of the term 'palace' is precise and his audience would have understood just what it meant. A castle was a fortress against enemies and residential requirements were secondary. Although the early

Norman motte-and-bailey castle with its wooden keep set on a high mound within the encircling palisade was making way for more elaborate stone-built castles with a shell-keep and a central courtyard, nevertheless the residential quarters were still cramped and every nobleman of wealth endeavoured to spend as much time as possible, when no war threatened, at manor houses or hunting lodges built in the countryside. These varied from simple structures comprising a hall and chamber with a detached kitchen, to an elaborate arrangement of separate units loosely grouped within a palisade and ditch. [11]

An appreciation of this point is necessary to make sense of Béroul's description of the palace at Lancien. For instance, he tells how the forester had to run up the steps to the great hall when he wanted to warn the king that the lovers had been found, but when Tristran visited the palace at night, he could reach up to the window-sill of the king's chamber which must have been on a lower level than the hall. So, also, the queen's chamber must have been on the ground level. Béroul pictured the palais at Lancien as lying just outside the 'city' of Lancien very much as the palace of Beaumont stood close outside Oxford walls, but separated by a ditch and stream.

When Tristran reached the palace to deliver his letter to Mark, he hears 'les gaites cornent à merville', [12] which has been unhappily translated as 'the sentries sounded their horns loudly', suggesting that his entry has been discovered and making nonsense of his ability to reach the king's window. Here, however, the 'gaites' were the city watchmen whose duty it was to sound their horns at intervals to assure the citizens that they were on guard against fire and theft. Where the lord could afford the expense, it was customary to recruit musicians; it was their tuneful efforts that Tristran was admiring.

Unlike many other versions of the Tristran legend, Béroul uses no fantasies such as the Grotto of Love or the Cave of Images. He tells of the world as he knows it. Though Husdent the hound is given to Iseut as her lover's parting gift and will be cherished by her for his sake, it is very much a flesh and blood animal and a hunter's valuable companion. This is quite unlike the fairy lap-dog, Petitcreiu, which the poet Gottfried von Strassburg describes [13] with its many-coloured coat and a collar with a bell that soothed all sorrows. Nevertheless, Béroul was a man of his times and in the matter of Iseut's rings he shows his belief in the symbolism and potency of precious stones. When Mark surprises the lovers in the forest, asleep in their shelter, he slips from Iseut's finger the emerald ring that he had given her and replaces it with one that she had given him. The incident is subtly narrated. The ring slips off easily because Iseut had grown thin through the privations in the forest, but emeralds also signified chastity and she had lost that virtue. Similarly, the ring that Iseut gives to Tristran at their parting is set with

jasper which was considered an antidote to the poison of serpents and also staunched bleeding.[14] Was Bêroul using deliberate irony in this choice of gemstones? In all versions of the legend Tristran died either from poison or from exhaustion from wounds.

It is a thousand pities that we do not have Bêroul's own account of the contest with the Morholt and the fight with the dragon, although there are references to both themes throughout that portion of the poem which has survived. It would have been extremely interesting to see how the minstrel, with his realistic approach, would have dealt with these two supernatural episodes which were traditional elements in the story. It is, I think, significant that both episodes have a strong Irish background, and although Ireland had been a present reality for the inhabitants of Britain for hundreds of years, the details of its history and geography seem to have been somewhat hazy to the average medieval individual in Britain and were probably still more unreal to a minstrel traveller from Normandy.

Knowledge of Ireland and the Irish by Bêroul and his audience would have been powerfully influenced by the chain of Ostman states along the eastern coasts of Ireland and the Scandinavian culture to be found there. 'Oastmen' (men of the east) was the term used in the twelfth century for the descendants of the Norwegian and Danish Viking raiders who, in the ninth and tenth centuries, captured the southern and eastern seaports of Ireland and established their trading settlements in Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, Cork and Limerick, using them as bases from which to attack the coasts of Scotland, Wales and Cornwall. Lack of warships at first prevented the Irish from repelling these invaders as did the chronic inability of the Irish tribal subdivisions to unite in policy even against a common foe. As the years went by, however, the Irish learnt to build their own fleets of warships and in 939 an Ulster fleet raided the Hebrides though it appears that the ships were actually manned by Norse mercenaries or by 'foreign Irish', i.e., men who had been fostered by the Norsemen and had lapsed into heathenism.[15]

A curious love-hate relationship seemed to exist between the two races. There was much inter-marriage and inter-fosterage while as mercenaries and traders the Norsemen could be found on whichever side it proved advantageous to be on at the time. This uneasy co-existence continued throughout the tenth century and the Norse trading settlements developed into small independent kingdoms, sometimes fighting one another but always holding a latent threat of combined action.

The situation altered after the Irish forces, united - more or less - under Brian Boru, defeated the Norsemen at the battle of Clontarf in 1014. Thereafter, although the settlements remained distinct, the kingdoms became technically vassals of the Irish High King. Trading overseas remained

predominantly in the hands of the Norse seamen and the mixed population became known as the Ostmen. Viking raids subsided as the Normans consolidated their power, though the slave-trade continued to flourish with Bristol as one of the chief collecting centres on the English side of the Irish Sea.

Thus, from the Norman point of view, 'Ireland' meant the half-Scandinavian Ostmen settlements behind which lay the relatively unknown kingdoms of the Celtic Irish. There seem to be traces of this in the early sections of the Tristran legend. Iseut herself is described by Béroul as of blond colouring, color rosine, fresche et blanche, [16] though this may be the minstrel's lip-service to the convention that all heroines were golden-haired. Her uncle, the Morholt, is akin to the popular conception of the massive, much-feared, Norse warriors. He came to Cornwall to enforce the demand for a tribute of children; a tribute of slaves is stated to have been expected by the Irish kings in the ninth and tenth centuries. [17] Moreover, the reputation of Ireland as a noted purchaser of slaves was still alive in the twelfth century, a fact to which their own church bears witness. In 1170, in the early stages of the Norman invasion of Ireland, a synod of bishops met at Armagh to consider the situation. Their conclusion was as follows:

> ... it appears to the synod that Divine vengeance has brought this judgement upon them for the sins of the people, and especially for that they had long been wont to purchase natives of England from traders, robbers and pirates and to reduce them to slavery ... The synod therefore decreed that all Englishmen throughout Ireland who were in a state of bondage should be released to freedom. [18]

There have been various suggestions concerning the name of the sinister knight who came to Cornwall to demand the tribute. Rachel Bromwich was of the opinion that there is a connection between the name 'Morholt' and that of the Fomorians, the evil misshapen demons from the northern seas who, in early Irish mythology, warred against the first settlers in the island. [19]

Whatever may have been the ultimate origin of this strand in the story of Tristran and Iseult, by the time it reached Eilhart von Oberge and Béroul, the mythological aspect had disappeared. The Morholt is a formidable fighter with the reputation of being ruthless in character and invincible but he is entirely human, the brother of the Irish queen and a much respected member of the Court. Emphasis is laid on his size and strength but that is predictable - Tristran's victory is enhanced thereby. The use of poisoned weapons by an enemy was to be expected by a medieval hero. In fact, if twelfth-century chroniclers are to be believed, the use of poison was widespread amongst the less scrupulous baronage in their internecine bickerings,

though it is probable that gangrene in infected wounds and ptomaine poisoning in badly-cured food were the causes of most instances of sudden death.

It is of some interest to note that the particular form of the duel between Tristran and the Morholt is more akin to the Scandinavian custom of holm-gang than it is to the contemporary Norman single combat which took place in a roped-off space. It is true, as Bruce notes, [20] that island combats were frequently found in early French romances. However, it is probably valueless to labour the point. When a contest between two national champions was involved, there were obvious advantages in an island site if a suitable one was available, ensuring that the fight would be uninterrupted by over-enthusiastic followers. Moreover, the barrier of river between two rival factions would lessen the danger of a murderous aftermath. In any case, Béroul had two excellent examples for his choice of an island setting, one from literature and the other from history. Geoffrey of Monmouth's description of Arthur's fight against Frollo on 'an island that is without the city, all the folk watching what might be the issue' has much in common with the widespread tradition that Tristran's fight with the Morholt took place on an island. Incidentally, Frollo, like the Morholt, was killed by a blow on the helmet, after Arthur himself had been wounded. [21] The historical incident was the well-known duel between Henry of Essex and Simon de Montfort in 1163 'on an eyot in the Thames' near Reading. [22]

The name of the island does not seem to have been given in the early forms of the Tristran legend but it is identified in the Erec and Enide of Chrétien de Troyes. [23] Here it is unequivocally named St. Sanson's Isle which led Bédier to suggest that the reference was to one of the Scilly Isles off Cornwall. This would make nonsense of the combat as traditionally related where the two knights row themselves and their horses a relatively short distance.

It has been tentatively suggested that, at least in Béroul's version, which is so consistently localised in Cornwall, he may have thought of it as taking place on an eyot or sand-bank in the Fowey estuary. There was one large one between St. Winnow and Lantyan Creek. [24] This suggested location would fall into line with several others in the Lantyan district where, according to Béroul's own statement, there appear to have been remnants of local folklore of an early Cornish legend of Tristran.

Though Béroul has no 'marvels' in his story, in the sense of something fantastic or incredible, there are at least two instances where he accepts as credible, elements which to our minds would be accounted as abnormal; they are, the existence of dragons as creatures of the wilderness, and the reality and power of love-potions.

A twelfth-century man would have no difficulty in believing in dragons for they were vouched for in both the Old and the New Testaments and representations of St. Michael the Archangel in his fight with the dragon were to be seen in many church wall-paintings. Admittedly a dragon was not a creature to be found in everyday life; the dragon, so to speak, personified the horror of desolation, whether it be the dark and frozen wastelands of the north or the arid deserts of the south beyond Egypt. Because it dwelt beyond the haunts of men, its non-existence was as difficult to prove as its existence. Dragons were firmly embodied in international folklore and were familiar as national emblems.

The medieval dragon was always reptilian and, for the medieval artist, most reptiles, including snakes, were equipped with wings. Many had legs and claws although they were classed as serpents. It would have been interesting to know whether Béroul's dragon would have been the loathly worm-type that killed by crushing, or a fire-breathing, Scandinavian type such as we find in Gottfried von Strassburg's version. Unfortunately, in the section of Béroul's poem which has reached us, there is only one direct allusion to his fight with the dragon when he calls it 'le grant serpent crestê'. 25 This sounds as though it is influenced by one of the twelfth-century Bestiaries.

Possibly one of the strangest things about the dragon in the Tristran story is that it should be described as living in Ireland. For centuries St. Patrick had been credited with the expulsion of all reptiles from the island. If the hero's contest had originated in Celtic Ireland, the monster would have been a water-beast such as those said to haunt the loughs of the west. Perhaps this is another pointer to the fact that many of the Irish elements of the Tristran story reached the minstrels through the Scandinavian-dominated zones of East Ireland. The Norseman use of the dragon emblem was known, of course, wherever their ships came raiding for plunder.

Although the theme of the love-potion, accidentally drunk by Tristran and Iseut, begins in Ireland and the scenes of the concoction and drinking are lost to us in Béroul's poem, it is a central theme throughout the story and we still have Béroul's many references to it and its effects. The concept would be entirely credible to a contemporary audience. The idea that those wise in the use of herbs could concoct a drink that would powerfully affect the emotions and morals of an unwitting victim is very old and is not yet completely extinct.

Béroul's Tristran accepts the fact of the effects but roundly blames it as poison. What we do not know is how Béroul looked upon the queen's plot. From other versions we know that the queen's intentions were good, though the results were tragic. Iseut, in Béroul's version, recalls that the love-potion had been entrusted to Brengain by the queen, with the instruction

that it should be placed in the cup of wine which would be drunk by King Mark and by Iseut on their wedding night. Her daughter was travelling alone, except for Brengain her companion, to a foreign land and an unknown bridegroom under the escort of a man who had killed a much-loved uncle. Iseut makes more than one reference to her feeling of isolation in Cornwall where feeling was traditionally hostile to the Irish:

> Rois, n'ai en cest païs parent
> Qui por le mein destraignement
> En feïst gerre ne revel. [26]

Through an accident (Iseut blames Brengain for criminal negligence), the wrong couple drank the vin-herbé and the two were hopelessly locked in an obsessive passion which dominated them for three years. During this time they are beyond the power of rational thought or will to withstand the drug, but, in Béroul's version, when the fading power of the drug makes it possible for each to assess the situation and to realise its consequences, both are still bound by an unbreakable bond of deep affection. Iseut can bring herself to return to Mark, but still she swears to Tristran that if need arises:

> Ne tor ne mur ne fort chastel
> Ne me tendre ne face errant
> Le mandement de mon amant. [27]

The love story and adventures of Tristran and Iseut is a theme that has a long history of literary criticism which in turn sought to identify Pictish, Irish and Breton sources, but in a recent study, Oliver Padel contends that there is no evidence to support these theories. He believes that the only background that can be proved is Cornish and that the Cornish tradition can be traced back to the tenth century. [28]

The Cornish elements in Béroul's work may be due to the influence of a powerful Cornish patron - we shall consider some possibilities later - and to the entertainer's desire to spark the attention of a local audience. As a minstrel it was part of his stock-in-trade to know the outlines of a number of tales, some love adventures and some warlike chansons de geste. It was up to him to re-tell them in the most striking and attractive manner. Béroul was a strongly individualistic character and it interested him to re-clothe an old theme in contemporary guise.

We do not know how Béroul came to Cornwall, which was somewhat of a backward area, cut off by poor road communications from the more popular parts of England. In Béroul's time there was only one town, Bodmin, and the beginnings of another at Truro. There were virtually no roads, only trackways

across the moorlands or inland from the ports. A traveller from Normandy or Brittany would probably arrive by sea and for hospitality he would be dependent on a local landowner or the guest-house of some monastic establishment. If he took the traditional route, his most likely point of entry would be by the Fowey estuary which was navigable as far up as Lostwithiel. This would have taken him straight into the orbit of one of Cornwall's largest landowners, the descendants of Turold the dapifer (or seneschal) of Robert of Mortain, to whom most of Cornwall had been allocated by the Conqueror, William I. The family in the last quarter of the twelfth century had residences at Cardinan and Restormel. Whether Béroul found a temporary home either at Cardinan Castle or at the newly-established shell-keep of Restormel, a mile or two upstream from Lostwithiel, he would have found himself within a few miles of the scenes which he described in the Tristran love story.

In the versions of the Tristran legend that were being built up on the Continent, King Mark's traditional capital was known as Tintagel, though it is very doubtful if many of the authors knew the place except by name. It seems that Béroul found it quite unsuitable for the tale that he wanted to tell. The garden scene in the Tristran story was a well-established element and so was the stream passing near, or through, the queen's chamber on which Tristran floated the sticks or leaves which signalled a meeting of the lovers. Neither was credible in the Tintagel locality. The poet seems to have turned his attention to the more fertile southern valleys and found Lantyan at the head of a valley opening from the Fowey estuary.

From the topographical point of view, Lancien - the name which Béroul gave to Lantyan - is a focal centre of the poem as we now have it. Here, Béroul imagined Mark's palais, here were the lovers' meetings in the garden, here they were trapped and condemned to death by burning. From Lancien, Tristran was taken past the chapel on the cliff beside the river from which he made his escape by a spectacular leap. (Béroul remarks that the spot was known locally as 'Tristran's Leap', which suggests that an early version of the story had already been localised there and survived as local folklore.) From the sandy margin of the tidal river, Tristran fled inland and met with his tutor, Governal, with a horse and arms, and together they lay in ambush on the outskirts of Lancien 'town' and so were able to rescue Iseut from the band of lepers to whom King Mark had consigned her. Once reunited, the lovers reached the countryside, wooded at this period, and so to their refuge in the Forest of Morrois to the west.

It was back to Lancien that Iseut was taken to be reconciled with Mark and from there she made her thanksgiving procession up the hill to the 'minster' of Saint Sampson in Golant, a church still in existence. Here again Béroul mentions a fragment of folklore apparently still current in his day, the tale that Iseut donated a rich robe which was made into a chasuble

and was still displayed in the church on great occasions.

The closing section of the poem as we have it is also set in Lancien when the wicked barons try to spy on Tristran in Iseut's bower. The spy is said to have taken cover behind the lush growth of jaglois[29] growing beside the stream near the queen's chamber.

Béroul did not completely ignore Tintagel, it was too much a part of the traditional story, but he gives it a subordinate role as a fortress tower at which Mark and Iseut planned to clear her name by a trial by ordeal. More of Tintagel will be said later.

Lancien was identified by J. Loth[30] as Lantyan on the west bank of the Fowey estuary, in the parish of Golant. It is now a very small hamlet with some indications of a ruined manor building half way up the hillside; a few houses straggle beside Lantyan Creek which empties itself into the Fowey river. In earlier times it is understood that the Creek was deeper and penetrated further up the valley. There may have been more houses on the hillside but it was never a 'town' as Béroul suggests. Nevertheless, although he used poetic licence to magnify the village into a 'city', as a fitting neighbour to Mark's 'palace', when Béroul could have known it Lantyan had its own importance. In the twelfth century it gave its name to a group of manors, known as the Honour of Lantien and Manelly, which were part of the possessions of the powerful Richard de Lucy, who had been justiciar of the realm for Henry II.

When the Domesday Survey was made in 1086, Lantyan was one of six manors held by Osferd (Osfert, Osfers) as tenant of Robert Count of Mortain, half-brother to the Conqueror, to whom vast estates in Cornwall had been given. Since five of the manors held by Osferd had been held by him TRE,[31] there is reason to believe that he was a Saxon who, for one cause or another - possibly collaboration with the Normans - had been permitted to retain certain portions of his former landed property. It is, however, to be noted that in most instances he was only allowed a fraction of the estates, and examination of the Domesday record shows that their total value, in 1086, was relatively small. The manors included Manelly, Bochoned (Boconnoc) and Trenant (Great Trenant in Duloe), all east of the Fowey river, Manelly being almost opposite Lantyan. The remaining members of the group were Glin (Glynn north of Lostwithiel) and Pennalt (now Penhalt) in Poundstock, near the north-eastern coast.

There is no record as to how long Osferd remained in possession of these lands. Although the main divisions of landed property between the King, the Church, and the major landowners remained relatively stable in Cornwall for about a hundred years after the Domesday Survey, a vast amount of

redistribution of individual manors took place, each of the more powerful tenants trying by exchange or by blatant encroachment to consolidate his scattered holdings into convenient units. There were shifts of ownership by marriage or by deaths. In the latter case (where there was no direct or acceptable heir) lands might revert to the Crown or to feudal overlordship.

Possibly the most likely time for a local upheaval and a transference of ownership was some fifty years after the Domesday Survey, 1140, when the social fabric of the Cornish landowners was shaken by the abortive attempt of Reginald de Dunstanville to seize the earldom, vacant because of the life-long imprisonment of William of Mortain by Henry I against whom he had rebelled. Henry died in 1135, leaving the Count still a prisoner. Stephen freed him to the extent of allowing him to drag out the last few years of his old age as a monk at Bermondsey but did not create a successor to the earldom.

Meanwhile, young de Dunstanville, a bastard son of Henry I, without the protection of his royal father, was left impoverished and took the opportunity of King Stephen's quarrel with Matilda, Henry's only surviving legitimate heir, to attempt to seize the Cornish earldom. Lantyan could not have escaped the resulting turmoil, for its close neighbour, the powerful Cornish magnate William fitz Richard, had allied himself to the young insurgent by giving him his daughter in marriage and by handing over Launceston Castle which he should have held for the king. William fitz Richard, amongst much other property, owned the Honours of Cardinan and Bodardle, and Bodardle included the site of Restormel, barely two miles north of Lantyan.

King Stephen reacted with characteristic swiftness, sending into Cornwall the notorious Alan the Black, Count of Brittany and of Richmond (Yorks) with his ferocious Breton followers. With him came Richard de Lucy, an experienced soldier but better known later as the benefactor of Truro and an administrator. The next that we hear of Lantyan is that, with Manelly and a re-grouping of other manors, it had become the possession of Sir Richard de Lucy and his family. What happened to Osferd's descendants is not recorded.

De Dunstanville and his father-in-law were temporarily reduced to the possession of only one castle - probably Cardinan - but were saved from complete disaster by a turn of fortune when King Stephen found himself beseiged at Lincoln and Count Alan had to hurry away from Cornwall in an unsuccessful attempt at rescue. Matilda had her brief moment of royalty as the Lady of the English and Reginald de Dunstanville, who was, of course, her half-brother, was legally created Earl of Cornwall by her. 32

William fitz Richard recovered his property, Cornwall settled down again, and the year's turmoils were quickly forgotten, but Sir Richard de Lucy

prospered and became Henry II's right-hand man and Justiciar of England. The Honour of Lantyan and Manelly remained in his family and descended to his granddaughters. By Béroul's time the manor was in the hands of Richard de Lucy's grandson, Robert fitz Walter, who was to distinguish himself in 1215 when he was made 'general' of the baron's army when tension between King John and his vassals built up until John was forced to sign the Magna Carta at Runnymede.[33] It is worth remembering that, when Béroul knew it, Lantyan was small but, as the caput honoris of a medium-sized estate, not an insignificant hamlet in an obscure valley, and would have had at least local importance. There is also another implication in this outline of Lantyan's history. If the area had remained in the holding of Osferd the Saxon and his descendants until the mid-twelfth century, this small area of Saxon lordship amidst the surrounding Norman influence, could have preserved some fragments of folklore reflecting an early Cornish version of the Iseut/Tristran/Mark legend before it was transferred and remodelled by Continental influence.

There are at least two instances where Béroul alludes to some pre-existing folklore: these are his reference to 'Tristran's Leap', when Tristran escapes from the chapel on the cliff, the other is his account of the relic, said to be exhibited at St. Sampson's church. Unlike those occasions when Béroul appeals to the evidence of some book that he knows to confirm his version of an incident which has been given another interpretation by others, in both these instances he quotes local testimony.

> Encor claiment Corneualan
> Cele pierre le Saut Tristran.[34]

and

> Encore est ele a Saint Sanson
> Ce dïent cil qui l'ont veüe.[35]

The localisation of Tristran's Leap has been confused by J. Loth's unfortunate identification with Chapel Point in Goran, apparently because, two centuries later in 1485, Henri de Bodrugan made a similar leap at that place. This is to ignore Béroul's carefully detailed story. Thanks to the dwarf's stratagem with the sprinkled flour, Tristran and Iseut were in the king's chamber in the palace and both were securely bound by the barons. Tristran was taken first on the way to execution, the place of which is not described except that it was near the town of Lancien so that the townsfolk could witness it. Tristran and his guards were on foot; there is no mention of horses. On the way they pass a small chapel on a hill, perched on a rocky coin (?point) overlooking the sea and facing the north 'devers bise', so that the east window and wall of the chapel were flush with the steep drop to the sea below. Tristran tricked his guards into allowing him to enter to make his last prayers

and his bonds were loosened. Tristran pushed open the window and made the celebrated leap, landing on the sand below, having had his fall broken by a projection of the cliff face and by the wind in his garments.

If Loth's suggestion of Goran Point is accepted, it would have meant a detour of many miles from Lancien palace, with Tristran and his guards on foot and Mark waiting near the place of execution back at Lancien 'town'. On the other hand, the south bank of Lantyan Creek, where the stream reaches the tidal estuary of the Fowey river, rises sharply to a high ridge. A track from the palace could have taken the guards and their prisoner in sight of the chapel and, at low tide, the sandy margin of the river would have provided the necessary landing ground. The tidal estuary might well have been mistaken for an arm of the sea by a casual visitor. We cannot, of course, identify the Leap with certainty but when Béroul had taken pains to select Lantyan, a real place, for the setting of his story, it seems a pity to distort his story into nonsense when there is another possible interpretation.

The instance of Iseut's relic at St. Sampson's church is rather different. No commentator seems to have denied that the poet was intending to refer to the church of St. Sampson in Golant, sited on high ground south of Lantyan valley. The criticism generally centres on Béroul's description of the church as a mostier, which has been sometimes translated as 'minster' and derided because that term in our modern usage generally means a cathedral Church! In fact, Béroul used the same word moutier when he refers to the hound Husdent's attempt to track down Tristran and reaches the chapel on the hill and here it is quite plain that it was a very small building. It is true that Béroul ennobles the church at Golant as being served by a concourse of exalted ecclesiastical persons, but he does not say that they were part of its normal clergy. The occasion was a great royal thanksgiving for the reconciliation of Mark and Iseut and neighbouring clergy would be expected to assemble. (The mention of a bishop amongst those present was an anachronism. Cornwall had lost its bishopric in 1046 when the see was moved to Crediton, but Béroul the minstrel may be excused for not knowing the details of Cornwall's ecclesiastical status. He was more interested in the procession and in the supposed origin of the relic shown at the church.)

There are several interesting points in the poet's description of the festivities. King Mark had distinguished the event by liberating a hundred serfs and by giving arms and hauberks to twenty young men whom he had knighted. Iseut's contribution, which Dinas the seneschal presented on her behalf, was a rich garment made of heavy silk adorned with orphreys. These were ornaments in gold thread and silk, often incorporating precious stones, which were appliqued to the material. They were often used for ecclesiastical vestments and the gift would have been specially suitable for conversion into a chasuble which, according to tradition, was later displayed in the church on special occasions.

It has been said that Golant church in Béroul's time had been eclipsed by Tywardreath Priory, of which it had become a mere chapel. It is true that the Priory had been founded and endowed by the Norman barons and particularly by the lords of Cardinan. Amongst its earliest endowments were the church of Tywardreath with its chapel of St. Sampson in Golant. But in spite of its wealth, the Priory, dedicated to St. Andrew, was itself dependent on the great Abbey of St. Sergius and St. Bacchus at Angers, whereas the church at Golant is claimed to be a sixth-century foundation established by St. Sampson on his way across Cornwall to Brittany. If the Sampson tradition is correct - there are some who believe that Sampson's foundation was at Southill in East Cornwall - then it is possible that the Saxon successor to the Celtic mission foundation may have been one of the early minster churches. These were monastic in character and, under the bishops, were centres of pastoral organisation, serving areas that were much wider than those served later by parish priests.[36] It is possible that Béroul had listened to local tales of its former importance in comparison with the Norman Priory which had greedily snatched at its privileges.

There is yet another topographical feature in the Lantyan area which Béroul wove into his story. This is the Croiz Roge, or the Red Cross. When the forester discovered Tristran and Iseut sleeping in the forest, he hurried to give the news to King Mark who was sitting in Council with his barons at Lancien palace. The king, who wanted to confront the lovers himself, bade the forester go

> A la Croiz Roge, au chemin fors,
> La on enfuet sovent les cors,[37]

The interpretation of this passage is somewhat doubtful, though the general sense is evident. Ewert rendered it 'where the road forks,[38] but Reid prefers 'crossroads'.[39] If the next phrase is to be translated as 'there where they often bury the corpses' is correct, Reid's version is preferable. Fedrick's translation as 'the road near the cemetery' is surely misleading.[40] The qualification that the corpses were often buried there suggests that there were occasions when the normal burial in the cemetery was not available and reminds us that crossroads were traditionally places in which suicides - not eligible for Christian burial - were interred. The folklore explanation was that the restless ghost of a self-murderer would be confused by the choice of roads and less likely to be able to track down an enemy whom it might wish to haunt.

The interest of this introduction of the Red Cross as a known landmark in the neighbourhood of Lancien, used both for this rendezvous for Mark and his forester and, later in the story, for the spot chosen by Tristran for the deposit of King Mark's reply to his offer of a reconciliation, is that in the

twelfth century there seem to have been a succession of marker-crosses along the trackway on the ridge above Lantyan leading from Lostwithiel south to Castle Dore and Fowey, with a cross-track which now, and probably then, led east to Lantyan and west to Tywardreath. One of these crosses still stands at Nomansland, near the top of the track from Lantyan Creek. It is very unlikely that it is exactly in its original site (it was once utilised as a stile) but it can be accepted as representative of a topographical feature familiar to Béroul. We know from Cornish charters that it was not unusual to paint the crosses in some distinctive colour.

A traveller continuing northwards on the high ground would eventually come into sight of Restormel Castle on the west bank of the Fowey river, a short distance north of the 'town' of Lostwithiel. This stood at the point where one of Cornwall's few east to west main trackways crossed the peninsula south of the dangerous Bodmin moor and just sufficiently far inland to escape the obstacles of Cornwall's southern rivers and estuaries, Looe, Fowey and Par. This reference to one of Cornwall's most famous twelfth-century castles brings us to a consideration of Béroul's patron, for it is obvious that whoever could have staged such a lengthy recitation by a minstrel, lasting for a period of some weeks, must have been one of the wealthier magnates.

There were, in fact, a number of wealthy landowners but they seem to have stayed mostly within their own borders with occasional visits to Exeter or to their own possessions in Devon. Looking at contemporary charters and other documents, they are seldom listed as witnesses far afield and, by the social standards of Westminster or other court circles, it is probable that they would have been classed as 'provincial'. It is interesting to notice that this quality seems to be reflected in Béroul's poem. There is no suggestion that he himself had served in a royal retinue and although he can speak of royal pretensions and authority, it is rather as if he knew them at second hand through the gossip of fellow minstrels.

It is noticeable, in fact, that King Mark's court, with occasional exceptions, shows little trace of royal dignity or retinues of personal attendants. Frocin, the dwarf, seems to have been Mark's only servitor in the early part of the story and his companions, with the exception of Dinas, seem minor barons of his realm. It comes as something of a shock when we are told that at the time of the reconciliation with Iseut, he bestowed hauberks (coats of mail) and arms on twenty <u>danzeaus</u> (esquires) whom he had knighted. This crowd of young men, aspirants for knighthood, is what one would have expected at a royal court but they are conspicuous by their absence from hall or chamber in other parts of the story. It is as if Béroul knew, most likely by hearsay, what retinue and entourage would be normal in a royal establishment but was consciously or unconsciously toning down his descriptions to suit an audience accustomed to provincial standards. What he describes would have

been normal for any of the wealthier barons of his time.

Occasionally he lapses into allusions which are out of tune. One such lapse occurs when Tristran in the forest began to realise that the spell of the love-potion had faded. He paused in his endless labour of chasing deer for food, to daydream how different it would have been if he had not been exiled on Iseut's account:

> Hai Dex, tant foiblement me vet!
> Or deüse estre a cort a roi,
> Et cent danzeaus avoques moi,
> Qui servisent por armes prendre
> Et a moi lor servise rendre. [41]

Similarly, Iseut, when the potion loses its power over her, laments the loss of her position at court where

> Les demoiseles des anors,
> Les filles as frans vavasors,
> Deüse ensemble a moi tenir
> En mes chambres, por moi servir. [42]

Yet in the early part of the tale, Brengain appears to be the only 'maid of honour'; not even a serving woman is mentioned.

This is a point when it is time to look at those who might have been Béroul's patrons and hosts in Cornwall. Because of Cornwall's isolation from the rest of England, her social structure seems to have remained surprisingly stable during the first hundred years after the Norman Conquest. In part this isolation was geographical. There were virtually no roads, only trackways, and transport was easier coast-wise by sea than across the hazardous moors and the almost equally dangerous river valleys in both Devon and Cornwall.

A more important factor was the accident by which Cornwall itself became largely independent of the central government. It was virtually a palatinate, though not formally accounted as such. The situation dates back to the years soon after the Conquest. Robert, Count of Mortain, to whom the Conqueror had allocated vast estates in Cornwall, was a military leader in close association with William I. Because he had many responsibilities other than the care of his Cornish possessions, Robert appointed a select band of his personal retainers to administer Cornwall on his behalf. They included Turstin the Sheriff, Reginald de Valletort, the marshal, to whom was given the custody of the royal castle at Trematon controlling the southern end of the border with Devon, and Turold, dapifer or seneschal who represented the Count himself.

There are several pre-Conquest references to a Turold in Robert of Mortain's entourage. As Turoldus miles he is a signatory to Robert's grant to the Abbey of St. Wandrille (c.1031),[43] and he is cited in a document referring to Toustainville in the Chartulary of Préaux.[44] It has also been suggested that he may have been that Turold portrayed in the Bayeux Tapestry in the scene where two messengers from Duke William come to rescue Harold from Count Guy who captured him on his landing in Normandy. The 'label' enclosing the name is placed immediately above the head of a dwarf who is holding the horses: it may, however, be construed as pointing to the taller of the two messengers.

Be that as it may, Turold the dapifer to Robert of Mortain in Cornwall was granted twenty-eight estates, second only to Reginald de Valletort who held Trematon. This Turold was probably fairly elderly and by the time of the Domesday Survey it is his son, Richard, who held the lands which became the Honour of Cardinan in the twelfth century. Richard is known to have been alive as late as 1103-6 when he witnessed a charter of Count William de Mortain, Earl of Cornwall, who had succeeded his father in 1090. It seems probable that Richard followed his father as the earl's seneschal for when William rebelled against King Henry I and was defeated and imprisoned for life at Tinchbrai in 1106, Richard fitz Turold remained undisturbed in his honours.

Richard fitz Turold was in turn succeeded by his son, William fitz Richard, whose rule over the Cardinan Honour overlapped the period of disturbance caused by Reginald de Dunstanville's first attempt to capture the vacant earldom. William had allied himself to de Dunstanville by giving him his daughter in marriage and probably lost control of his estates in the defeat by Count Alan. The loss was temporary. Meanwhile, Robert fitz William had married Agnes, the heiress of the neighbouring Bodardle estates and so came into possession of the earliest form of the castle of Restormel which seems to have been started by Baldwin, the father of Agnes. As Baldwin was descended from that Turstin who had been made Sheriff at the Conquest, William had not only acquired large new estates but had socially united two of the leading families in Cornwall. Moreover, he was now father-in-law to the demi-royal Reginald de Dunstanville who was fast rising in the service of King Henry II.

William died in about 1143, and his son Robert fitz William died about 1171, so it would have been his grandson, Robert fitz Robert, who would have been contemporary with Béroul if we accept the poet's period of the composition of his romance as between 1180 and 1200. It is probable that the shell-keep of Restormel Castle had been completed in the lifetime of Robert fitz William and the family may have moved their residence and headquarters from the old castle of Cardinan to the improved conditions at Restormel, but

the peak of their affluence does not seem to have been reached until the days of William's grandson, Robert fitz Robert, who now assumed the title of Robert de Cardinan and Bodardle and claimed baronial status. He now held fifty-one fees, [45] and was only surpassed by the de Valletort family who held fifty-nine, including some Devon estates. Robert de Cardinan was the grandfather of the heiress, Isolda de Cardinan, who became well known in the thirteenth century.

In the last decades of the twelfth century, therefore, the leading families were the de Valletorts at Trematon, Sir Richard de Lucy whose daughters were established at Lantyan, and Robert de Cardinan and his relatives. The de Dunstanvilles no longer count, for Reginald had died in 1175, leaving no legitimate male heir; his daughters had married and though they individually retained some property in Cornwall, they do not seem to have been resident. The only representative active in Cornwall was Henry fitz Count, a bastard son who, though he held some official positions under King John, would not be socially influential. Robert de Cardinan at Restormel seems to be the most likely patron.

Before this topic is closed, one must consider the theory put forward by Dominica Legge in her note 'Place-names and the date of Béroul'.[46] In this she suggests that the poem might have been composed for the festivities held in connection with the marriage of Conan IV of Brittany with Margaret of Scotland, sister of the Scottish King Malcolm IV. The suggestion certainly gives a plausible reason for Béroul's introduction of Durham, Carlisle, Galloway, and other north-country names into his poem and the allusion to the pilgrimage to St. Andrews. On the other hand, her theory implies a much earlier date for Béroul's work than 1180 which Ewert and others suggested, because of his reference to the Reynard the Fox Romance. Apart from the question of date, it seems unlikely that Conan would have chosen the subject for his marriage festivities. The family's relationships with Cornwall were not particularly happy. Conan's father, Alan the Black, Count of Brittany and Richmond (Yorks) had had to withdraw from his attempt to claim the earldom of Cornwall and had been completely thwarted by Reginald de Dunstanville. His retreat in order to save King Stephen had led to the defeat and captivity of both Stephen and himself from which he only emerged after a humiliating ordeal. His stay in Cornwall was only a matter of months and although he showed interest in the monastery at St. Michael's Mount, there is no evidence that the manor of Lantyan meant anything to him. Yet, as we have seen, Lantyan was the focus of Béroul's poem.

It is true that Conan's marriage festivities might have been a suitable gathering for the recitation, but it is not impossible that a similar Cornish occasion might have been its setting: that is, the wedding of Robert de Cardinan's son and heir, Andrew. Moreover, Andrew became the father of

Isolda de Cardinan and the name is suggestive.

Restormel Castle would have been a wonderful setting for wedding festivities and it was almost certainly occupied by the de Cardinan family in the last part of the twelfth century. It is sited in the parish of Lanlivery on a natural hill overlooking the River Fowey, on the west bank about two miles upstream. The ground was part of the manor of Bodardle given to Turstin the Sheriff after the Conquest. Baldwin, his son, is commemorated by a bridge in the neighbourhood, and it is thought that the first castle on the site, of which virtually nothing remains, was built by him to protect a bridge or ferry at this point. It does not seem to have been one of the usual early Norman motte-and-bailey type, for the mound has been made from earth dug from the encircling ditch piled against the wooden palisade. This first castle may have been destroyed in the 1140 troubles of Reginald de Dunstanville's attempt to seize the earldom. It could have been occupied by Reginald when he is said to have seized upon various castles only to be dislodged by Count Alan. The Bodardle estates were close neighbours of the de Cardinan lands and fighting would almost certainly have taken place in the neighbourhood. This is conjecture but it could explain why there are so few remains of the first castle. When the estates were united by the marriage of Robert fitz William to Agnes, the heiress to the Bodardle estates, the mound would be an obvious place on which to build a finer and much more ambitious successor.

This second castle was a stone-built structure in the newly-fashionable circular style enclosing a space in which timber residential and other structures were grouped. It is thought that the entrance gateway on the south-west and a square tower projecting from the wall on the north-east have stonework surviving from this period. The tower defended the approach from the River Fowey.[47] The ruin as it exists now incorporates the extensive improvements and reconstructions undertaken by Richard Duke of Cornwall and his son Edmund in the thirteenth century. Richard obtained the castle from Isolda de Cardinan, the heiress, about 1270 when she was a childless widow nearing the end of her life.

The thirteenth-century reconstructions included the addition of stone-built rooms and halls within the circular ramparts to replace the earlier timber buildings and would therefore be later than Béroul's time.

Restormel Castle was set in a large area of parkland, though until it came into the hands of Richard of Cornwall, it does not seem to have been licensed as a deer-park; the king was jealous of the royal monopoly of deer-hunting. The forester, responsible for preserving and defending the lord's domain from unlawful hunters, was an important member of the king's staff as we find from Béroul's references to the forester when Tristran was illegally hunting.

Below the castle, within the park, in the twelfth century was a hermitage of the Holy Trinity which Robert de Cardinan granted to the Priory of Tywardreath with its gardens and land and known as the hermitage of Baldwin's Bridge. Hermits and hermitages play a large part in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century romances in which England is represented as one great area of forest or rocky desert in which the only hope for a benighted traveller was a hermitage with its adjacent chapel. In fact, it became a 'fashionable' charity to ape the romances and to erect and maintain a hermitage on one's estate so that the Hermitage of Baldwin's Bridge was one more mark that the de Cardinans were leaders in Cornish society. There is also the intriguing possibility that the existence of the hermitage may have inspired Béroul to introduce his figure of Ogrin the hermit, though that shrewd and worldly-wise person cannot be related to the saintly patterns of the hermits of Perles-vauz and other romantic fiction.

Time has been spent on this castle of Restormel, not because there is any direct evidence that the de Cardinan family were hosts to Béroul the minstrel but to illustrate the type of hospitality that he could have hoped to receive. Topographically it would have been a suitable background for his romance and the local audience would have been the type to whom the story could have appealed. Men and women drawn from that neighbourhood would have known Lantyan and recognised his use of the setting. The forest of Morrois where the lovers fled into exile lay west of the castle and could probably be seen in the far distance. The Gué Aventuros might have been a jocular reference to the River Par valley. The name might be freely translated as 'the Perilous Ford' but it could also be given the interpretation of a gully or watering-place where 'adventures are prone to happen'. In Béroul's time most Cornish fords were dangerous, not only because of their swift-flowing streams but because they were favourite spots for robbers to waylay travellers.

The Gué Aventuros in Béroul's poem lay between the eastern fringes of the Forest of Morrois and Lancien and it was in the meadows there that Iseut was brought by Tristran to be reconciled with King Mark. As the lovers ride to the meeting place, it is the sight of the 'merc' or boundary stone that warns Tristran that it is time for him to make his farewells. It is impossible on the evidence to be precise about the locality of the 'Perilous Ford', but the rocky valley through which the River Par flows between Luxulyan and St. Blazey would suit the sense of the references very well.

The Gué Aventuros was not far from, if not actually part of, Mal Pas and that brings one up against the formidable obstacle of making sense of the modern tradition that Mal Pas was the ferry across the River Fal. In thinking of this, one must be very careful to distinguish Béroul's descriptions of the place and incidents from the Continental version of Gottfried von Strassburg. In this, where Iseut was to disembark from a ship and arranged to stumble into

the arms of the disguised Tristran, the Mal Pas near Truro might be credible. In Béroul there is no question of a ship; the crossing is on a section of a river, which can be crossed with ease a little down-stream by Dinas and Andret. The Mal Pas was where the main trackway crossed which had been churned into a boggy pool by the traffic of sightseers on the way to the scene of the trial. A plank had been extended over part of it, but Tristran, in disguise as a mendicant leper, took delight in misguiding his enemies into the worst of the quagmire.

Béroul relates the whole incident with a zest that suggests that he may have had in mind some real occasion that would be remembered by his audience because of the discomfort suffered by certain unpopular members of the company. He delights in Tristran's cool impudence as the disguised leper with his successful levy of alms from both Mark and King Arthur - gay green leggings from Arthur and Mark's fur-trimmed hood. He equally revels in Iseut's self-assurance, her splendid beauty and deftness with the trappings of her horse and her brazen staging of the transport on Tristran's back which will provide her with her ambiguous oath in the approaching trial. There is bravado and true comedy in the scene, heightened by the knowledge that the lovers are gambling with their lives at stake.

The Mal Pas as a name has little geographical significance. It is a descriptive term found also in Chester, in Monmouth and elsewhere. Under its modern equivalent, the Foul Slough, it can be found in most country maps before the advent of macadamised roads!

What place might have been meant by Béroul's name of Blanche Lande has also been long and widely debated, the most recent examination being that by Oliver Padel, [48] which merits careful study. The main obstacle to its acceptance is that, like the Truro identification of Mal Pas, it cannot be reconciled with Béroul's own location. Before going further, one must take note that the name was widely used both in geographic location and in romance. In romance it tends to be associated with open, deserted landscapes and it is possible that Béroul was using Blanche as blanc (fem. blanche) meaning empty, sterile or, in a landscape, unpopulated.

The first introduction of Blanche Lande into Béroul's poem is when Tristran rides from Ogrin's hermitage, which is somewhere on the outskirts of Morrois, to collect Mark's reply to his letter. He leaves soon after nightfall and before midnight he has crossed Blanche Lande:

> Ainz que venist la mie nuit,
> La Blanche Lande out traversee. [49]

Mark, we know, is at the palais at Lancien. This would mean hard going by night, but not impossible if Ogrin's hermitage was not far from the upper Par River Valley which we have suggested may have been Béroul's Gué Aventuros.

This would indicate that Béroul was thinking of Blanche Lande as being the sparsely populated uplands north-west of the head of the River Par.

This was, in fact, Tristran's second ride to Lancien by night. On the earlier occasion, which does not mention Blanche Lande, he was to take his letter from the hermitage to the king.

> Anuit, aprés solel couchier,
> Quant li tens prist a espeisier
> Tristran s'en torne avoc son mestre
> Bien sot tot le pais et l'estre
> A Lancien, a la cité. [50]

Having delivered the letter to Mark, they return:

> Tristran s'en vet, plus n'i remaint ...
> Tant ont erré par le boschage
> Q'au jor vindrent al'ermitage: [51]

If the distance between the hermitage and Lancien was such that a return journey by horse could be accomplished between dusk and dawn on a summer night (it was not long after the feast of St. John, 24 June, when the power of the love-potion ended), it could not be many miles. Such a double ride would have been hard going, but it would have been incredible if Blanche Lande had been the manor of Goodern, west of Truro.

The relationship between Lancien and the Forest of Morrois tends to be vague except for the incident when the forester finds the lovers sleeping in the forest. Then it is explicit,

> D'iluec endroit ou il dormoient
> Qui, deus bones liues estoient
> La ou li rois tenet sa cort. [52]

Two 'good leagues' would be a little over six miles, i.e., not far beyond the Par River. The manor of Moresk, in St. Clements, is near Truro, which is much farther to the west. It was, however, a rather indefinite term for in medieval times the great forest covered an area of 12,800 English acres. [53] Probably its wooded outskirts extended still farther and Béroul probably had little exact information except that it was a vast area within which fugitives could be hidden successfully, stretching across southern Cornwall south of the central uplands.

To return to Blanche Lande, it should be noted that it is the area of open, uncultivated ground where the Cornish were to meet King Arthur's

knights to witness the trial of Iseut. In this account it is quite definitely associated with the Gué Aventuros where Tristran and Governal hid to disguise themselves before taking part in the jousts that were held in the afternoon before the trial. We are told that the testing ground was approached by a green meadow between two valleys:

> Par un vert pré, entre deus vaus
> Sordent sus en la Blanche Lande. [54]

The track to the meeting point for the trial evidently passed through the Mal Pas and thus the Gué Aventuros and Blanche Lande were in the same area which could be identified with the Par River Valley and the high ground to the west beyond Luxulyan. The coverts of the Gué would provide the screen into which, after the joust, Tristran and Governal disappeared with such suddenness that Arthur's knights exclaimed that they were apparitions. It is worth noting that, contrary to his practice in most of the poem, these three places are given romantic French names with no pretence of identifying them with real Cornish geography. Yet, if we take Béroul at his word, the episodes achieve a surprising coherence and the whole Tristran and Iseut drama in Cornwall is played out on a background that would be familiar to anyone who knew Lantyan - the one undisputed key-point in the poem. This leaves us with Perinis' excursion into South Wales, and with the castles of Tintagel and 'Dinan' on which a few remarks may be noted.

In spite of his apparent familiarity with Cornwall, Béroul gives few descriptions of identifiable places. He refers to Tintagel as Mark's tor but wastes no words on it. He states that Ogrin the hermit rode to 'the Mount' (St. Michael's Mount), but only in connection with his purchases of dress materials and a horse for Iseut with no mention of the abbey on the summit that was a place of pilgrimage. There is a passing reference to St. Lubin, a place where it is said that Mark is to visit. Muret suggests that it might be a garbled reference to St. Leobinus, a bishop of Chartres, but it has been more plausibly suggested that it is a copyist's error when transcribing a Cornish name such as an early form of Luxulyan. The de Cardinan family had close connections with that area.

Perhaps out of the scanty number of place-names in that portion of the poem which has survived, one of the most intriguing is Dinan, the castle of Dinas, seneschal to King Mark. It has been recognised that Béroul had second thoughts about the name. In Eilhart von Oberge's version, the seneschal was named Tinas of Lidan, but in all but two minor instances Béroul has called him Dinas of Dinan. It seems very probable that the change was made after Béroul had composed most of the poem - the change does not affect the metre of the verse - and it must have been made deliberately to meet a special situation.

The seneschal stands out as one of the most estimable of the characters in the story. He is courteous, wise, kindly to the lovers, and Béroul takes pains to show him as the ideal administrator of his fief. This praise for the seneschal would almost inevitably remind a local audience that Robert de Cardinan, now lord of Restormel Castle, was the descendant of Turold, the dapifer or seneschal of the great earl of the days of the Norman Conquest, and it was this seneschal who had virtually ruled Cornwall in his master's absence. One has to remember that most, if not all, in the audience would be Norman by birth - the true Cornish were still a submerged element in the society of the twelfth century; one glimpses Norman contempt for them in Béroul's references to 'the Cornishmen'. Dinan was an obvious contraction for Cardinan, the castle from which Robert and his family took their title; the character of Mark's seneschal would be a subtle compliment to his host if Béroul was indeed a member of the company at Restormel.

The ruins of Cardinan Castle lie on a hilltop near the north-eastern borders of the Cardinan estates, facing the great central moors. The site is eminently defensive and an early British fortification may have been there before the present motte-and-bailey type castle. The name appears to be Cornish meaning fortress and Caer may have been prefixed at a later date - with the same implication of a defensive point - when the meaning of the original name became obscure. The same duplication is to be found in Castle-an-Dinas. One cannot be certain of the date of the existing ruins which still require careful excavation but the castle was probably built by either Richard or William in the early part of the twelfth century, W.M.M. Picken suggests that it might have been one of the 'adultrine' or unauthorised castles erected during the anarchy of Stephen's reign but Cornwall's only direct involvement in those troubles seems to have been during the short period in 1140 when Reginald de Dunstanville attempted to seize the earldom. It seems more likely that it had been built rather earlier to protect the caput honoris of the Cardinan Honour about a mile to the north, now known as the village of Trezance. Cardinan is not recorded in the Domesday Survey but Thersent is noted as the head of the manors granted to Richard fitz Turold. That place, near Cardinan church, was identified as modern Trezance by Charles Henderson. [55]

The castle was probably still the headquarters of the family in William fitz Richard's time and may have been the one castle left to Reginald de Dunstanville, then William's son-in-law, in the time of his rebellion against King Stephen during his defeat by Count Alan. [56] The castle may well have been damaged during the hostilities and that may have encouraged the de Cardinans, when they were re-established, to embark on the enterprise of building Restormel.

In an earlier essay on the medieval history of Tintagel, I hazarded the

opinion that a castle on the 'island' of Tintagel had been built by Reginald de Dunstanville about 1150. [57] Archaeological excavations there have disclosed no evidence of twelfth-century buildings except a small portion of worked stone in the chapel wall. Further study of Reginald's life also shows that he was so involved in the struggle between Matilda and Stephen, and later so occupied about the king's business when Henry II succeeded to the throne, that it would be most unlikely that he would have had either time or resources to undertake such a structure on a remote Cornish headland which had no immediate strategic importance. Yet the Norman poet Béroul knew it, at least by name, as one of King Mark's personal possessions.

Although the love story of Tristran and Iseut was a theme known much earlier than the twelfth century, it is difficult to be certain how early Mark was associated with Tintagel by that name or by some earlier designation given to the headland. The name Tintagel appeared first in Geoffrey of Monmouth who used the locality for his story of the seduction of Igerne, wife of Gorlois, Lord of Tintagel. In this version, Mark is not mentioned; the subsequent birth of Arthur has no apparent link with the Tristran legend, yet, if as fragments of folklore suggest, there was a much earlier Cornish version of the Mark and Tristran association, Tintagel, now known to have been a centre of Dark-Age occupation, may have been associated with Mark under a Cornish name now lost to us. [58]

Because the opening sections of Béroul's poem are missing, we do not have his account of Tristran's life as a young man training as a squire at Mark's court before his encounter with the Morholt, yet it is this portion of the story which, in Continental versions of the story known to us, is traditionally located at Tintagel even when the writer may be extremely hazy as to the position of Cornwall itself.

Once Béroul had seen, or heard about, the actual geographical conditions at Tintagel, he must have found himself in a dilemma. He must have realised that the Continental versions of the legend which represented Tintagel as surrounded by fertile woodlands and included a garden with a pool beneath a tree large enough to hide Mark could not be located on the Cornish headland with any hope of credibility for a local audience. As we know he solved the problem by adopting Lantyan as King Mark's palace but because Tintagel's name was woven into the already existing legend, he introduced it as Mark's tor or tower.

If Béroul was dependent on contemporary gossip, he would know that the manor of Tintagel, together with the neighbouring Bossiney, had been granted to the de Hornicote family by Henry fitz Count, bastard son of Reginald de Dunstanville who had died in 1175. Since there was no legitimate male heir to succeed, the earldom escheated to the Crown, and Henry seems to have exercised some of his father's rights. Just when the de Hornicotes obtained the land is not clear, but the property remained in the family for three

generations and by Béroul's time Robert, son of Gervase, had changed his name to de Tintaiol. Eventually the manor was transferred to Richard of Cornwall in exchange for three other manors in 1233 and then Richard built a fine stone castle whose ruins still exist. It is clear that in Béroul's time there was no castle on the headland. The de Hornicotes must have had some accommodation and they may have built some simple tower-keep. Béroul refers to some such structure as the tor, the home of a minor baronial family.

Béroul's references to the tower are singularly stark and contrast with his descriptions of Lancien which is plainly residential and not a fortress.[59] According to his version, Mark goes to the tor in the course of a hunting trip when the dissident barons goad him into a confrontation with Iseut. He was unaccompanied and terrified Iseut by striding in with his sword drawn. There appear to be no retainers and Iseut had no Brengain or waiting-woman at hand so that when she fainted it was Mark himself who had to tend her. The impression is of a barely furnished strongpoint, untenanted except when needed as a refuge from attack. Since the opening of the poem is lost, we do not know how Béroul treated 'Tintagel' in the early part of the story. It seems that Tintagel as he found it was a disappointment and he shows no interest in the place itself or in the Tintagel villagers. He makes Frocin the dwarf an inhabitant of the locality, which is not in its favour, but he states that the dwarf could not impair the loyalty of the villagers to Tristran. He goes no further.

Béroul's use of Arthur is highly individual for he has no direct connection with Cornwall. Béroul thinks of Arthur as an independent and illustrious monarch whose territory is ill-defined but seems to be centred on Wales and has vague connections with the north and east of England such as Carlisle and Durham. At the end of Iseut's trial they go their separate ways:

> Chascun s'en vient a son roiaume;
> Li rois Artus vient a Durelme,
> Rois Marc remest en Cornoualle.[60]

There does not seem to be any formal relationship between the kings, though Mark pays deference to Arthur in spite of the latter's apparent youth. Iseut calls upon Arthur to act as her representative at the trial with a confidence that suggests that she had already met him. Arthur's alacrity in responding to her call for help and his remark that he had been hoping for a message from her also suggests that they were known to one another. It is possible that in that portion of the poem that is lost and which covered the voyage from Ireland, Béroul devised a visit to Wales en route to Cornwall. In the portion of the poem left to us, King Arthur appears in only two episodes, the visit to Wales by Perinis, Iseut's squire, to gain Arthur's help, and Arthur's own appearance at the trial.

This seems a suitable place in which to comment on Béroul's use of the phrase 'vers Gales' to describe direction of the flight of the fugitives. To go by land from Cornwall to Wales in the twelfth century would have involved a long and difficult journey, much of it over treacherous moorland, through Devon and Somerset, the thickets of the Forest of Dean, a crossing of the River Severn, and the further forests of Wentwood between the Severn and the Usk. To the dweller in Cornwall in the twelfth century and for some centuries later, the normal lines of communication were north and south and the obvious way to Wales was by boat. Yet Béroul never makes any reference to a journey by ship.

It has been suggested that Béroul's knowledge of local geography was so hazy that he thought of the division between Cornwall and Wales as being little more than a river, [61] but for anyone with his apparent knowledge of mid-Cornwall that particular mistake would be almost impossible. On the other hand, if Béroul had come from Normandy or Brittany direct to south-west England - and he shows no knowledge of south or eastern England - it would be quite possible not to realise the extent to which the Bristol Channel stretched east from mid-Cornwall. There were no reliable maps and it would be easy to think of the Bristol Channel as being in the nature of a great bay round which it would be possible to ride from Cornwall into Wales with only a river to cross by ferry. [62]

There is no evidence that Béroul ever visited Wales himself. Such knowledge as he appears to possess of some towns in the south and of general characteristics of Welsh life, could have been gleaned in conversations with the veterans of the group which had accompanied Earl Reginald from Cornwall during the five-earl expedition to Wales in 1160 when they had failed to dislodge Rhys ap Gruffydd from his lairs in the Cantref Mawr. [63] The expedition was unsuccessful and Béroul's King Arthur may be a reflection of the indomitable Lord Rhys.

Perinis, the young squire who acts as Iseut's attendant and messenger, only appears in the story (as far as we know) after Iseut has been reconciled to Mark. He is sent in haste to seek out King Arthur and to ask him to act as Iseut's representative when the three dissident barons force a confrontation. He only has fourteen days in which to find the king and to allow time for the king to reach Blanche Lande on the Cornish side of the Channel. This is one of the few times when Béroul strains credulity.

Béroul stresses that Perinis rode at full speed without sparing his horse and that his first objective was Caerleon on Usk. There has been a suggestion that the Cornish Carlyon in Kea might have been intended which would, of course, make better sense of the journey as described, but the rest of the episode suggests that King Arthur, who is eventually located at Isneldone, was in

his own territory. Caerleon-on-Usk had been firmly associated with Arthur both in Geoffrey of Monmouth - which Béroul does not seem to know well - and in Wace's Brut and Marie de France's Lanvel, which he might have known better.

Over the name of Isneldone there has been much debate, some commentators equating it with Stirling. This unlikely interpretation arose from a fourteenth-century reference to a 'Round Table' at Stirling, [64] but it has now been accepted that it was a reference to Snowdon, or rather Snowdonia, where Arthur, the fabled hero of Welsh Nationalism, was said to be resting pending his return.

Perinis reached Isneldone by lonely ways in which his only contact was with a shepherd piping to his flock. Béroul is not much concerned with the life of peasants but in the Cornish section of his story we do get a glimpse of King Mark waiting for Dinas by a field of stubble, [65] and again a reference to the work of burning the brushwood in preparation for fresh cultivation. [66] There is no allusion to flocks or herdsmen. The contrast suggests some knowledge of actual conditions in Wales, for in the twelfth century, as Lloyd points out, [67] 'the economic basis of (Welsh) society was still the pasturing of flocks and herds. Agriculture held, in the purely Welsh districts, a quite subordinate position'. The loneliness of the countryside also suggests an area where the population was scarce and scattered, yet the shepherd's directions indicate that the king was not far away.

'Sire' fait il, 'il sit au dois;
Ja verroiz la Table Reonde,
qui tornoie comme le monde;
Sa mesnie sit environ.' [68]

The difference is striking if one compares this with the allusions to Lancien palace. At Isneldone there is no mention of any defensive ditch such as guards Lancien, nor of hall or chamber or tower. Whether 'dois' is taken to mean dais or a stream, the overall picture suggested is that of a sunken place - the squire who guides Perinis goes down a stairway to the king's meeting-place - a rocky amphitheatre, perhaps, with a raised platform for the king and his nobles and, in the centre, the Round Table rotating 'comme le monde'. At first glance this sounds like a surprising anachronism for in Béroul's time the terrestrial globe was understood to be a fixed centre with the celestial spheres circling round it, but Frederick Whitehead suggested that perhaps 'le monde' could be interpreted as the universe which, in the Ptolemaic system, certainly rotated. Whatever the exact meaning of Béroul's description, it does not seem to tally with any known conception of the Round Table. It seems likely that, in fact, Béroul had very little idea of what the Round Table was, beyond an idea that it was mysterious and a focus of Arthur's fellowship.

Apart from this detail, it is plain that Béroul does not visualise Arthur as enthroned in an imposing palace or within fortress walls. He is not the Normanized king of Geoffrey of Monmouth or of Wace. He resembles far more one of the Welsh princes who led the revolts against the Normans in the twelfth century. As Lloyd points out, mobility was one of the Welsh characteristics: 'They had no stake in the soil - no buildings they feared to sacrifice, no crops they could not readily abandon', they could cheerfully leave 'to the vengeance of the enemy the rudely fashioned huts of lopped timber and wattles that sheltered them and theirs for a season or two ...'[69] If we bear in mind the exploits of Rhys ap Gruffydd who was contemporary with Béroul, his conception of Arthur as a Welsh chieftain seems plausible.

Perinis has little difficulty in persuading Arthur to come to Cornwall as Iseut's representative since she had no one of her family who could do this. It seems obvious that Arthur had already met Iseut and admired her and his companions were full of eagerness to challenge the dissident barons. They named each of these and threatened dire punishment if the opportunity arose. Having offered hospitality to Perinis, Arthur himself escorted him on the beginning of his return journey and promised to be at Blanche Lande in a week's time. Arthur goes back to his court to exhort his followers to see that their equipment is at its best:

> Vostre escu neuf, riche vos dras
> Bohorderons devant la bele. [70]

Certainly there was no lack of mobility at Arthur's court and the whole company duly appeared at the place of the trial. There the joust before the trial did not go wholly in their favour, for they were opposed by Tristran and Governal, heavily disguised, who had been hiding in the Gué Aventuros. They rode 'deus chevaus riche de Castele', i.e., Spanish horses which were prized for armed combat, and these were draped with cloths, black for Tristran and white for Governal, while the same colours swathed the riders, faces and all. Charging from ambush they wrought havoc on all that they met. Andret fell with a broken arm and Governal thrust his lance right through the breast of the forester who had discovered the lovers and betrayed them. Seeing that the joust was turning to carnage, Arthur and Mark, who were supervising the proceedings, ordered that the strangers should be apprehended, but Tristran and Governal turned and disappeared so quickly in the thickets of the Gué, that Arthur's knights took them for apparitions. There is, in fact, a slight touch of cool amusement in Béroul's description of Arthur's companions. They had been so very boastful of what they would do when talking to Perinis, but after some excited chatter amongst themselves as to the possible identity of the strangers, when the combats turn serious, they are all only too glad to pick the excuse that the veiled knights must be phantoms!

The whole scene of the trial is lovingly painted, full of movement and colour, with the bright pavilions and the gay, rich clothes of men and women, the sporadic deer-hunting and the music and, after dark, the occasional mutter of thunder during the hot night. As the crowds of sight-seers increase, Béroul significantly remarks:

La Blanche Lande fu vestue [71]

particularly apt if he was thinking of the Blanche Lande as the 'Blank' or empty land.

The action is displayed on a background of the grassy uplands, set between two wooded valleys and is prefaced by a vivid description of the characteristic upland pre-dawn mist and cold, rapidly dispersed by the heat of the rising sun. Béroul had dated the fading of the love-potion to mid-summer so this would be an early autumn day.

After dawn the company gathered before the display of relics laid out in front of the two kings who sat with Iseut between them. The relics were laid on a piece of rich silk from Nicaea (a key-town in the campaign of the Crusades), and the poet mentions that it is embroidered with a design of beasts. He had already described Iseut's clothes when she risked soiling them at the ford. He stressed her royal splendour, a dress of silk imported from Baghdad, trimmed with white ermine, both bliaut and mantle being so long that they swept the ground.[72] Her hair was braided in plaits with linen bands and a gold thread and the plaits lay on her shoulders, while over her hair she wore a veil secured by a golden circlet. (Béroul does not mention the veil at the scene at the ford but we find that during the jousts Iseut laughed behind her veil when Governal killed her enemy, the forester.)

Rather surprisingly, Arthur opened the proceedings, although he was the younger man. Arthur, gay, young and impetuous, was self-assured enough not only to speak first but to admonish Mark. Béroul stresses the incident with his remark:

Li rois Artus parla premier,
Qui de parler fu prinsautier.[73]

Mark did not reply and Arthur turned to warn Iseut of the serious nature of the oath that she must take. Entirely composed Iseut invoked God and St. Hilary in the presence of the relics and swore her ambiguous oath which was immediately accepted at its face value by the sympathetic crowd.

It is interesting that Béroul, who was quick to appeal to his audience, makes no comment whatever on what was an outrageous blasphemy. Any

moralising that occurs is in remarks by Arthur, hardly an unbiased judge, who warned anyone who might now try to discredit Iseut that he, Arthur, was her champion and would avenge her. Mark meekly promised not to listen to slander and the kings parted company:

> Li rois Artus vient a Durelme
> Rois Marc remest en Cornoelle. [74]

The remainder of the poem as we now have it seems curiously flat as though Béroul had lost interest. It concerns Tristran's vengeance against the barons who continue to harass Iseut and spy on her meeting with Tristran. There are still flashes of his keen observation as when he describes Godoine taking cover in a thicket of jagloiz growing by the stream that passes the queen's chamber (the plant described is debated but wild iris - which is indigenous to Cornwall - might be a better translation than 'sword-grass'). But there is also a trace of coarse brutality in this part of the poem which is distasteful. Béroul was a man of his time and the twelfth century was familiar with violence and brutality but here it obtrudes. The Tristran who stalked Denolean while he is peacefully exercising his dogs in the wooded outskirts of Lancien, cold-bloodedly executed him without warning. Undoubtedly Godoine was a mortal enemy and Tristran's vengeance is in self-defence, but the cutting off of the long tresses of hair and stuffing them into his trousers in order that they could be displayed to Iseut, is as distasteful as the earlier episode, when Governal hung the decapitated head of his victim in the fork of a tree to frighten the awaking lovers.

We do not know how Béroul treated the end of the story, whether it was brought to a violent close by the death of Tristran at Mark's hands or whether, in common with the Continental versions, Tristran had to fly into long and frustrating exile. If the recital was given on some joyous occasion, such as the wedding of the heir, the patron himself may have decided that 'enough was enough' and that the long-drawn-out recital of mounting tragedy was unsuitable. We do not know and it is useless to guess. Where so much has been lost we can only be grateful for this glimpse of the work of a minstrel of intense individuality and for his zest of spirit which has survived the centuries for our delight.

APPENDIX

The King's houses

It is so customary to associate Norman kings with castles that it is sometimes forgotten that they also had other types of dwellings and so miss the significance of the term 'palace' which Béroul applied to King Mark's residence at Lancien.

A castle was built for purposes of war or for protection in times of unrest. Twelfth-century Norman castles were still relatively simple buildings consisting of a strong central structure called a keep or donjon and defended by a wall and/or a moat and strong palisades. A donjon was not necessarily a dungeon, though a dungeon or penal cell or pit might be incorporated in it. When Husdent the hound was tied up in the donjon, it was probably in the basement or sub-structure under the hall, often used for storage. The fact that it was furnished with stools[75] shows that it was not a penal cell which usually provided only the bare floor or a truss of straw for the prisoner.

The space between the keep and the outer defences was known as the bailey and was used for a variety of military purposes such as stables, stores, a smithy and so forth. There were private apartments for the use of the king and his immediate entourage but space within the keep was restricted and the earlier castles were usually not large enough for private apartments to be constructed within the walls of the bailey. In this type of plan there would be little privacy and very little suitable accommodation for women and children. In times of peace both the king and his nobles sought alternative homes outside the castle walls.

Béroul was a realist who could see that however grand might be 'Tintagel' as Mark's principal and traditional castle, it would be unsuitable for the love-story of Tristran and Iseut. He therefore describes King Mark as living most of the time at Lancien in the Fowey valley which he calls a 'palace'.

This would have been in accordance with contemporary practice for all the Norman and Angevin kings had, in addition to their royal castles, a number of unfortified dwellings which they visited in turn. Some were mere hunting lodges situated in or near the royal forests and consisted of little more than a hall and a chamber, a kitchen and other necessary offices, defended by a ditch and a palisade. Others might be larger, and like Beaumont near Oxford, sited only a short distance outside the walls of a city. (Beaumont was the birth-place of Prince Richard and Prince John, both to become kings of England.) Similarly, Mark's palace was said to lie on the outskirts of the 'city' of Lancien, close enough for Tristran to be able to hear the watchmen in the town blowing their horns at night while he was approaching the window of the king's chamber.

The essential difference between a castle and these domestic structures was that the latter were planned as a series of separate units, standing detached or very loosely connected with each other and added to as occasion arose with little attention to the layout as a whole. The basic elements of these houses were the hall, with its adjacent kitchen and domestic offices for the preparation and storage of food, and the chambers.

The hall, generally heated by a central hearth from which the smoke escaped through a louvre in the roof, was the centre of the life of the whole community. In it, at trestle tables, meals were taken, with the king and his highest-ranking courtiers accommodated on a raised dais at one end. In it, with the trestles folded, the household lived and slept.

The 'chamber' denoted the apartment or apartments set aside for the king's use. This could be little more than an annexe curtained off the hall but in almost all the larger dwellings would be a separate unit or cluster of units and the term 'chamber' would be applied to the whole group.

Thus, at Clarendon Palace near Salisbury, Wiltshire, one of Henry II's more important country residences, there was a pillared hall, 83 ft by 51 ft, 76 to the east of which was the King's Chamber with its own chapel and wardrobe. (A wardrobe was a room in which not only the royal robes were kept but also other valuables, and in which the king's clerks could carry out their secretarial duties.) Further still to the east was a group of similar apartments for the queen, while still other buildings offered accommodation for distinguished guests. These scattered buildings were, towards the end of the twelfth century, linked with one another and with the hall by covered passage-ways and the spaces in between the buildings were laid out as small gardens or grass plots. The whole complex would be bounded by a wall or ditch (as at Lancien), and at Clarendon there was a gatehouse guarding the entrance to the main courtyard which lay before the hall.

Béroul gives no precise description of Lancien palace but we can deduce a good deal from scattered references. The hall seems to have been built over a basement, where Husdent the hound was tied up, and we are told that the forester ran up the steps when he brought the news of the sleeping lovers. On the other hand, the king's and the queen's chambers seem to have been at ground level, for Tristran could reach the window-sill of the king's chamber when he brought the letter and the spy Godoine could touch the curtain of Iseut's window with little difficulty while standing in the garden by the brook.

There was some degree of luxury for when the lepers contrasted the life that Iseut would have with them in their squalid hovels, they refer to her former life en grans soliers de marbre bis which may be translated as 'in large rooms of grey marble'. (At Clarendon Henry II ordered Purbeck marble for the pillars of his hall.) When Tristran is re-admitted to the private apartments, he and Brengaine enter 'the painted room' - painted wood panelling was just beginning to be fashionable for the private rooms. One wonders how Béroul managed to keep abreast of these new court fashions; there is no hint that he had any contact with court circles but one suspects that, then as now, gossip about the king's expenditure on private luxuries percolated freely and

would be caught up by the minstrel fraternity who were aware of the attraction of such items to their provincial audiences.

Before closing this subject of Norman domestic architecture, a few words should be written about the famous scene in the garden when the lovers were saved from betraying themselves by seeing the reflection of King Mark, hiding in the pine tree, mirrored in the pool. We are led to assume that it was from this pool that the stream flowed near or through Iseut's chamber and was used by Tristran to float the leaves or chips of wood by which he signalled that he was waiting in the garden. A good deal has been said by critics concerning the 'primitive' character of this portion of the story, and if thought of in connection with a walled castle, it would seem incredible, but Béroul takes pains to point out that the garden scenes were set in the layout of a palace, not a castle.

By a curious chance it has been discovered that King Henry II constructed a similar water-garden layout at Everswell in the grounds of Woodstock Palace in connection with the retreat which he built for himself and his favourite mistress, Rosamund de Clifford. The ruins vanished when Blenheim Park was laid out, but fortunately the pools linked by water-channels and fed by a spring were sketched by Aubrey in the seventeenth century. Such a water-garden was unique in northern Europe at the time and some historians have suggested that there could have been a connection between 'Rosamund's Bower', as it came to be known, and the romance of Tristran and Iseut, which was certainly known to Henry II. It is just possible that the king found inspiration for his romantic retreat in the poem, but it is equally likely that he took the idea from the Ziza palace in Sicily where the king's apartments were cooled by a fountain which overflowed into water-channels and pools let into the marble floor.[77] The Angevin kings were familiar with the Moorish architecture which was patronised by the Sicilian royalty. It is less likely that Béroul had so much detailed information about the king's very private retreat at Woodstock.

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Because of Miss Ditmas' failing eyesight and loss of her library, she has been unable to correct or proof-read this article. We gratefully acknowledge the help of Oliver Padel (to whom Miss Ditmas sent a copy of the article before printing for comment) in this respect but wish to make clear that he is in no way responsible for any errors that may remain or views propounded. (Eds.)

NOTES

1. All references to the lines of the text are based on the edition by A. Ewert, The Romance of Tristran by Béroul, Oxford 1939, vol.1.
2. vv.1440-1623.
3. Béroul, le Roman de Tristan, ed. E. Muret, Paris 1928[3], viii.
4. vv.1685-1743.
5. Ewert, op. cit., vol.2.
6. Ibid., p.34.
7. Ibid., pp.34-35.
8. vv.234-35.
9. vv.1146-48.
10. v.2675.
11. Some descriptions of Clarendon Palace and Rosamund's Bower are given in the Appendix, p.69.
12. v.2456.
13. cf. Gottfried von Strassburg, Tristan, tr. A.T. Hatto, Harmondsworth 1960.
14. cf. English Medieval Lapidaries, ed. J. Evans and M. Serjeantson, E.E.T.S., London 1933.
15. A. Walsh, Scandinavian Relations with Ireland during the Viking Period, Dublin 1922, pp.35-36.
16. v.3911.
17. Walsh, op. cit., p.38.
18. E. Curtis, A History of Medieval Ireland from 1086-1513, New York 1938, p.52.

19. R. Bromwich, 'Some remarks on the Celtic sources of Tristan', Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymmrodorion, 1953, pp.32-60.

20. J.D. Bruce, Evolution of Arthurian Romance, Göttingen 1928^2, vol.1, 190, n.67.

21. Geoffrey of Monmouth, History of the Kings of Britain, tr. L. Thorpe, Harmondsworth 1966, IX, 11.

22. The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond, ed. Sir E. Clarke, London 1907, pp.104, 243.

23. Chrêtien de Troyes, Erec and Enide, tr. W.W. Comfort, London 1914, p.17.

24. C. Henderson and H. Coates, Old Cornish Bridges and Streams, London 1920, p.180. Cf. also E.M.R. Ditmas, Tristan and Iseut in Cornwall, Gloucester 1970.

25. v.2560.

26. vv.3239-41.

27. vv.2798-2800.

28. O.J. Padel, 'The Cornish background to the Tristan stories', Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies, I, 1981, 53-81.

29. jaglois has been translated as 'sword-grass', but the wild iris, which is indigenous to Cornwall, produces lush clumps of leaves, shaped like a Norman sword-blade, which would seem more appropriate.

30. J. Loth, 'Le Cornwall et le roman de Tristan', Revue Celtique, 33, 1912, 270-71.

31. TRE is the common abbreviation for tempore regis Edwardi, i.e., before the Norman Conquest.

32. Gesta Stephani, ed. and tr. K.R. Potter, London 1955, ch.48.

33. W. Sincock, 'Cornish Landowners in 1200', Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall, 10, 1890-91, 175.

34. vv.953-54.

35. vv.2994-95.

36. H. Mayr-Harting, The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England, London 1972, pp.244-45.

37. vv.1909-10.

38. Ewert, op. cit., 2, 183.

39. T.B.W. Reid, The Tristran of Béroul: a textual commentary, Oxford 1972, p.71.

40. The Romance of Tristan by Béroul, tr. A.S. Fedrick, Harmondsworth 1970, p.90.

41. vv.2172-76.

42. vv.2211-14.

43. J.H. Round, Calendar of Documents preserved in France illustrative of the History of Great Britain and Ireland, London 1899, p.526, item 1822.

44. J.P. Yeatman, The Early Genealogical History of the House of Arundel, London 1882, p.89.

45. W. Sincock, 'Principal landowners in Cornwall, AD 1165', Jour. Roy. Inst. Cornwall, 10, 1890-91, 150-68. Reference to Agnes' marriage is on p.154.

46. M.D. Legge, 'Place-names and the date of Béroul', Medium Aevum, 38, 1969, 171-74.

47. S. Toy, The Castles of Great Britain, London 1966[4], pp.62-63.

48. Padel, op. cit., pp.60-61.

49. vv.2652-53.

50. vv.2449-51.

51. vv.2475, 2481-82.

52. vv.1853-55.

53. L.E. Elliott-Binns, Medieval Cornwall, London 1955, p.419.

54. vv.4008-09.

55. W.M.M. Picken, 'Trezance, Lahays and the Manor of Cardinham', Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries, 26, 1955, 203-04.

56. Gesta Stephani, 67-68.

57. E.M.R. Ditmas, 'The invention of Tintagel', Bibliographic Bulletin of the International Arthurian Society, 23, 1971, 131-36.

58. For the early name of Tintagel, cf. the remarks by C. Thomas, A Provisional List of Imported Pottery in Post-Roman Western Britain and Ireland, Redruth 1981, p.4, and O. Padel, op. cit., p.29.

59. See Appendix.

60. vv.4263-65.

61. Cf. Gottfried von Strassburg, op. cit., p.369.

62. F.J. North, The Map of Wales (before 1600), Nat. Mus. Wales 1939, p.32, where the map suggests that the Bristol Channel was thought to be the width of a river that could be ferried.

63. J.E. Lloyd, A History of Wales, London 1939^3, pp.510-11.

64. The subject is treated in detail in E.M.R. Ditmas, 'The Round Table at Stirling', Bibl.Bull.Int.Arth.Soc., 26, 1974, 186-96.

65. v.2954.

66. vv.3035-37.

67. Lloyd, op.cit., p.605.

68. vv.3378-81.

69. Lloyd, op. cit., p.607.

70. vv.3512-13.

71. v.4085.

72. vv.3903-06.

73. vv.4139-40.

74. vv.4264-65.

75. v.1485.

76. The History of the King's Works: The Middle Ages, ed. H.M. Colvin, 2 vols., H.M.S.O. 1963.

77. J.J. Norwich, The Kingdom in the Sun, London 1970, p.240.