Arthuarian Romances

Call Number: Beinecke MS 229
Language: French
Date: s. XIII^ex [ca. 1275-1300]
Subjects: 
  Illumination of books and manuscripts, Medieval
  Manuscripts, Medieval--Connecticut--New Haven
  Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in Beinecke Library
Genres: 
  Illuminated manuscripts
  Miniatures (Illuminations)
  Illustrations
  Historiated initials
  Hand coloring
Type of Resource: text

Description: Script: Written in elegant gothic textura by one scribe, with a few interlinear corrections in later hands (14th and 15th centuries).

The decoration of this lavishly illuminated manuscript consists of seventy-seven large column miniatures, fifty-one smaller miniatures, and thirty-six historiated initials. Miniatures and historiated initials by at least two artists, the scale and quality of whose work distinguish the manuscript from contemporary and most fourteenth-century Arthuarian manuscripts. Large miniatures, 12- to 11-lines, one column, framed and usually divided into two registers by thin bands, gold, red and/or blue with white highlights, edged in black, sometimes with arched canopies, often with architectural elements protruding (a few frames composed of thicker bands); figures in black pen against burnished gold (occasionally with painted gold diaperwork), blue or black grounds; chief colors: light blue, dark blue, grey, light brown, white, maroon, with some orange, green and gold. Borders on folios with large miniatures of a variety and inventiveness that defy strict classification: gold, red, and blue bands, edged in black, also running between, below and/or above text columns, terminating in dragons, dragon or human heads, grotesques or, most commonly, floral spirals, some with frets, blue and red with white highlights and orange and green dots, against gold, blue and/or maroon cusped grounds, often with pinwheel-like projections. The borders are populated with magnificent grotesques and marginalia in the same style as the miniatures, many of them of a narrative or satirical character; some of these incorporate coats of arms.

Small miniatures, 5- to 6-line, 1/2 text column, often with a 2-line initial inserted in upper right corner, otherwise as above, with border decoration on a smaller scale and unattached to miniature. Historiated initials, 5-line (letters without ascenders or descenders) to 13-line, red and/or blue, with geometric motifs in paler shades of red and blue, white, with touches of orange, against gold grounds, edged in black, with long dragon and floral serifs, as above, against cusped gold grounds; figures in same style as miniatures, against gold grounds. Illuminated initials, 3- to 1-line, gold, with globular serifs, edged thickly in black, against irregular red and blue grounds, also edged in black, with white floral filigree or heraldic birds, in white; flowers touched in with orange. On folios without miniatures (except ff. 2v-8v), a thin gold band runs along the left side of each text column, interrupted by initials, with a thin red pen-line on either side; adjacent, to the left, a column of I's each 3-line and blue and red alternately, with small spiral and curlicue flourishes, terminating in large flourishes in red or blue on alternate openings, each with pinwheel-like arms projecting from a central spiral with small petals and flourishes in blue and red; design of the terminal flourishes varies from one gathering to another; some with naturalistic leaves and flowers or fleurs-de-lis; terminals on ff. 1v-2r by the same hand as penwork initials on those folios. Line-fillers of varying design: two pairs of blue and red tapering bands, heraldically arranged and joined at center by red flower; undulating red line with red and/or blue balls under and over each crest and trough; red zigzag with blue infilling and spiral flourishes at terminals; alternating red and
blue flowers; red and blue dots, etc.
Some folios stained; f. 253 slashed in margin; f. 361 cut right across and glued together.
description. Former binding stored in separate box: 18th century. Light brown calf blind- and
gold-tooled. Sewing holes in inner margins.
Abstract: Lavishly illuminated manuscript consisting of 77 large column miniatures, 51 smaller
miniatures, and 36 historiated initials. Miniatures and historiated initials by at least two
artists, the scale and quality of whose work distinguish the manuscript from contemporary
and most fourteenth-century Arthurian manuscripts.
Manuscript on parchment of 1) Le livre de Lancelot du Lac, part III. 2) La queste del Saint
Graal. 3) La mort au Roy Artus.
Physical Description: 1 vol.
color illustrations
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au teignor de loens kii lo doun-vn yon
guy qii se fou. don et l or qii gii pasor
qu'il se fui. Si vous pens ez vous tii
floses sa perte. Si vous dit qeu ce soue
il meurt volentams. Sii soin qa mer
venh 5 son 2 schi. les sens pour tii
villu au tour de gen. Sii meurt me dure run
Guerech de choz kii bui si bien sa perte et
vuee. Sii meurt le teignor de foie kii sas
le de scher teemll. Sii meurt la teignor de
foie kii sas le de scher teemll. Sii meurt le
steur de tuee en vn tour vell cleu qui
venh au de le tour. Sii firez le peneur de
steur Guerech plus qua na smbme fust de
sous a sa fille. Si aum dit de le tol nez
il chaour qii il sii amus amont. Sii firez
il meurt Guerech ouvert a vous gii
voui tiste de oeu. Sii firez tois ki fui coudz.
les ses partez le laul w dans. Sii Dante
este tuee tout el dans. en all tes
vent sur le tour deau. Sii aum venu
en tour mus vui de sous de femmes le fut
leus par atar a chambren qii qii vient
denir le porte. Sii troua tuiznes a xqho
mes armes. Sii amir derrr. Sii meurt
lentem par les sous qui se tumu
les sous. Si venh a le chambren ou ses
foues fois. Sii emett a le drit fire. Sii
eus alliz vosser musier. Sii cev ke
nos sons mus. Sii eus lins all es fes
qii aum vent sur le tour deau. Sii
fou sku se vosse port
et a la souzle. a chzien. xqho
mes armes. Sii vous aum derrz fi en one po
ou. Si il poimer beus fruit. car ses
foues pouer de gne. Sii tout alias. Sii
pour mus tou caes. Sii qua
denir a Guerech fi teueuin. Sii drit
surer. Sii vous emmre sau sie a aum
musier. Car une amiz sont chaus
geny. Elle chou vosse feu Guerech par
fus sur fure. Sii ont de sous touue.
Sii ne geere teur fi emmre chaus od
nous. Sii per chou vosseiere nsen et
leur le ne volonr pas kii vosse tour
presen. Car Guerech qui chou qui
sas qii demande ses armes. Sii tu
chou per le qii il il et armes. Sii per chou
et per le qiper. plus venu en la tule. Sii
furex se armes tuiznes a xqho mes
et reni. Sii lacemr.