BnF, nouv. acq. fr. 1104:  
Marie de France and “Lays de Bretagne”

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S. 1104\(^1\) (late thirteenth century) is an important collection of “lais de Bretagne.” It is of particular interest to Marie de France scholars because it contains nine *lais* attributed to her, a number second only to the twelve with the General Prologue found in BL, Harley 978.\(^2\) Originally, 1104 consisted of ten gatherings of eight folios plus a single leaf, totaling 81 folios,\(^3\) but two leaves in the fifth gathering, following fol. 35, were excised before the manuscript was foliated, as was a bifolium temporarily attached to the first gathering.\(^4\) The explicit appears at the end of fol. 79\(^{v}\), with the second column left blank. Later hands filled the empty space with a love lyric, doodles, and jottings. Finally, part of a commentary on Job (fols. 80-83, 86-87), with a fragment of Aldobrandino da Siena’s *Regime du corps* inserted in its midst (fols. 84-85), was subsequently bound with the “lais de Bretagne” to complete the codex, and foliation continues in a recent hand. Excepting the accidental additions, 1104 is a self-contained anthology. The question remains: Is there a sense in its organization?

The contents of 1104 are indicated by the following rubrics:

1 \(^{ra}\)  *Ci commencent les lays de Bretagne*

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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1(^{ra})-6(^{rb})  <em>Cist est de Guimar [Guigemar]</em></td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>6(^{rb})-10(^{va})  <em>C’est le lay de Lanval</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>10(^{va})-15(^{va})  <em>C’est le lay de Desirré [Desiré]</em></td>
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3 Catchwords are found at the end of all gatherings.

4 Remains of the four folios are clearly visible.
Could 1104 have transmitted more texts than these? Keith Busby suggests that it “may have contained more” than the nine *lais* by Marie (*Codex*, vol. 2, 499). I used to hope so. As the anthology’s outer limits are clearly marked, other works can have appeared only on the four missing folios. Before fol. 1 and between fols. 8 and 9 appear remnants of the bifolium, which probably bore no new text appropriate to the discussion. The first leaf may have served as a cover when the manuscript was sewn together—perhaps to protect the large illumination that introduces the anthology. The second leaf would have fallen in

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5 The scribe’s note to the rubricator (“C’est le lai de Tyolet”) was misread. Many such marginal inscriptions disappeared when the manuscript was trimmed, but they exist wholly or partially for *Lanval*, *Guingamor*, *Espine*, *Lecheor*, *Equitan*, *Conseil*, *Aristote*, and *Oiselet*.

6 The last word is badly rubbed, but faintly legible; it is clear in the note to the rubricator. The word is also rubbed in the text (v. 118). The term must have disturbed a reader or certain readers.

7 The rubric, at the end of the column, is circumscribed by wavy lines.

8 Musical staves (fols. 70v-72r) are empty.

9 The explicit, written in black ink at the end of the column, is set off by wavy lines.

10 Busby, *Codex*, vol. 1, 470, mentions just three folios perhaps because the first fell outside the “lays de Bretagne.” On the illumination, see the discussion below. Its