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The Romances of Chretien de Troyes

Joseph J. Duggan

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Twelfth-century French poet Chretien de Troyes was one of the most influential figures in Western literature, for his romantic poems on the legend of King Arthur gave rise to a tradition of storytelling that continues to this day. This important and fascinating book is a study of all of Chretien's work. Joseph J. Duggan begins with an introduction that sets Chretien within the social and intellectual currents of his time. He then organises the book in chapters that focus on major issues in Chretien's romances rather than on individual works, topics that range from the importance of kinship and genealogy to standards of secular moral responsibility and from Chretien's art of narration to his representation of knighthood. Duggan offers new perspectives on many of these themes: in a chapter on the influence of Celtic mythology, for example, he gives special attention to the ways Chretien integrated portrayals of motivation with mythic themes and characters, and in discussing the Grail romance, he explores the parallels between Perceval's and Gauvain's adventures.

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