



Perceval and Gawain in Dark Mirrors: Reflection and Reflexivity in Chretien de Troyes's Conte del Graal

Rupert T. Pickens

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An innovative author of verse romance, Chrétien de Troyes wrote in northern France between 1170 and 1190. Credited with the first Arthurian romance, he composed five works set in King Arthur's court, culminating with an unfinished masterpiece, the *Conte del Graal* (*Story of the Grail*). This text is the first to mention the banquet serving dish that became the Holy Grail in early efforts to rewrite or complete the text. This book focuses on the *Conte's* narrative depiction of mirrors real and metaphorical: shining armor, a polished golden eagle, the Grail itself, St. Paul's enigmatic looking glass, the blood drops in snow in which Perceval sees the face of his beloved. The last chapter joins the controversy over Chrétien's intended conclusion, and proposes a climactic ending in which Perceval, heir to the Grail kingdom, confronts his double, Gawain, heir to Arthur's Logres.

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