

The Complete Story of the Grail: Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval* and its continuations (Arthurian Studies)

Chrétien de Troyes

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The mysterious and haunting Grail makes its first appearance in literature in Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval* at the end of the twelfth century. But Chrétien never finished his poem, leaving an unresolved story and an incomplete picture of the Grail. It was, however, far too attractive an idea to leave. Not only did it inspire quite separate works; his own unfinished poem was continued and finally completed by no fewer than four other writers.

The Complete Story of the Grail is the first ever translation of the whole of the rich and compelling body of tales contained in Chrétien's poem and its four Continuations, which are finally attracting the scholarly attention they deserve. Besides Chrétien's original text, there are the anonymous First Continuation (translated here in its fullest version), the Second Continuation attributed to Wauchier de Denain, and the intriguing Third and Fourth Continuations - probably written simultaneously, with no knowledge of each other's work - by Manessier and Gerbert de Montreuil. Two other poets were drawn to create preludes explaining the background to Chrétien's story, and translated here alsoare their works: The Elucidation Prologue and Bliocadran.

Only in this, *The Story of the Grail*'s complete form, can the reader appreciate the narrative skill and invention of the medieval poets and their surprising responses to Chrétien's theme - not least their crucial focus on the knight as a crusader. Equally, Chrétien's original poem was almost always copied in conjunction with one or more of the *Continuations*, so this translation represents how most medieval readers would have encountered it.

Nigel Bryant's previous translations from Medieval French include *Perlesvaus - the High Book of the Grail*, Robert de Boron's trilogy *Merlin and the Grail*, the *Medieval Romance of Alexander*, *The True Chronicles of Jean le Bel* and *Perceforest*.



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