



The Knight With the Lion, or Yvain (Garland Library of Medieval Literature Vol 48 Series A)

Chretien de Troyes

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Yvain, the Knight of the Lion (French: Yvain, le Chevalier au Lion) is a romance by Chrétien de Troyes. It was probably written in the 1170s simultaneously with Lancelot, the Knight of the Cart, and includes several references to the action in that poem. The main character, Yvain, is derived from the historical Owain mab Urien. Chrétien's source for the poem is unknown, but the story bears a number of similarities to the hagiographical Life of Saint Mungo (also known as Saint Kentigern), which claims Owain mab Urien as the father of the saint by Denw, daughter of Lot of Lothian. The similarities suggest the works had a common Latin or Celtic source. Yvain survives in seven manuscripts and two fragments. It comprises 6,808 octosyllables in rhymed couplets. The first modern edition was published in 1887 by Wendelin Foerster. Yvain had a huge impact on the literary world; German poet Hartmann von Aue used it as the basis for his masterpiece Iwein, and the author of Owain, or the Lady of the Fountain, one of the Welsh Romances included in the Mabinogion, recast the work back into its Welsh setting. The poem exists in several versions in different languages, including the Middle English Ywain and Gawain.

Chrétien de Troyes was a French poet and trouvère who flourished in the late 12th century. Little is known of his life, but he seems to have been from Troyes, or at least intimately connected with it, and between 1160 and 1172 he served at the court of his patroness Countess Marie de Champagne, daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine, perhaps as herald-at-arms (as Gaston Paris speculated). His work on Arthurian subjects represents some of the best regarded of medieval literature. Chrétien de Troyes is generally considered as the first identified major French Language novelist. - Wikipedia

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