

Free Online Library: Romance Reading on the Book: Essays on Medieval Narrative presented to Maldwyn Mills. by "Yearbook of English Studies"; Humanities, general.

Plot summary[edit] King Arduus of Aragon and his wife, Margaret, have no children, so he pledges to go on crusade in the hope that God will grant him an heir. A son is conceived the night before he leaves for the Holy Land, though neither of them know it. In retaliation, when the king comes home Marrok tells him that the queen was unfaithful while he was gone and that the child is not his. The king exiles the pregnant queen without explanation, and she leaves court accompanied by an old knight, Sir Roger, and his dog, True-Love. As they pass through the woods, Marrok and a company of his retainers attack the queen and Sir Roger who, despite his lack of armor, fights valiantly with the aid of True-Love but is killed. Arduus hangs Marrok posthumously and gives him an ignominious burial. Sir Roger is buried with great honor, and True-Love remains at the gravesite until he dies. She gives birth to a son, Tryamour, [6] in the woods, and they are found by Sir Barnard, who takes them to his home where they are cared for and live for years. In his youth, Tryamour wins his first joust; the prize is Helen, the seven-year-old heiress of the king of Hungary, her lands and her people. He must be a strong and just ruler, able to inspire fear and respect in the people, and be of noble lineage or superlative prowess. She chooses Tryamour based on his victory against many powerful knights from diverse lands in the jousts. After the tournament Tryamour removes his armor and is attacked by a jealous opponent whom Tryamour had defeated, Sir James, son of the emperor of Germany. Sir Barnard and King Arduus come to his aid, and Tryamour kills Sir James, but he is badly wounded and returns home to his mother to be healed. When Helen prepares to announce the victor and finds Tryamour gone, she will accept no one else and sets a two-year respite in which to search for him. The emperor and Arduus agree to settle the conflict through a combat between champions at a day set, and the siege is halted. Coincidentally, Tryamour goes into Aragon and gets caught poaching deer. Rather than pay the penalty of losing his right hand, he kills the foresters. In need of a champion, when the king hears about a man of such prowess, he has him brought to the court. While awaiting the day of combat, Arduus and Tryamour spend time together at sport and pleasure. When the hiatus ends and before the battle begins, Arduus knights Tryamour. The king also offers to make him his heir, but Tryamour defers the subject until a later time. Tryamour wins the combat after a fierce battle and wins great honor, then remains for some time with the king, who gives him many rich gifts, kisses him upon their parting, and repeats his intention to make him his heir. Tryamour travels to many lands, winning fame for his victories in combat. When he tries to return to Hungary, his way is blocked by two brothers who guard the pass, waiting for Tryamour in order to avenge the death of their brother Moradas. They inform Tryamour that their other brother, Burlond, intends to marry Helen and is attacking her lands and barons. If she does not find a champion by a certain day, she will have to marry the giant Burlond. Tryamour kills the two brothers, goes to Hungary, and meets and defeats Burlond by dismembering him. Helen greets Tryamour and grants him her love, her barons acknowledge him as their lord, and the wedding day is set. Having successfully defended Helen and her land, Tryamour sends for his mother and asks again about his father. She tells him it is King Arduus and how she had been exiled without explanation, and that they had been fostered by Sir Barnard. Tryamour invites Arduus to his wedding, and after the ceremony and his coronation as king there is a great feast. She identifies herself and relates her story, after which they are blissfully reunited. Arduus acknowledges Tryamour as his son, and he and Margaret return home to Aragon and live happily. Tryamour and Helen also live joyfully together and have two sons. Themes and Motifs[edit] Sir Tryamour is a straightforward, relatively swift episodic narrative. The ornately detailed descriptions, supernatural elements and intense romantic relationships found in many romances are minimal or absent, while there is a focus on marital and familial relationships. The poem is composed of a number of literary and folktale themes and motifs common to Middle English romance, including separation and reunion, the knight in search of his unknown father, the need for an heir, the wrongly accused queen, the traitorous steward, the winning of a bride through combat, the seeking of knightly adventures and renown, and the display of prowess. Critics compare Sir Tryamour to

other romances with similar themes, such as the search for a father in King Horn [4] and Sir Degare, [7] and the calumniated queen in Octavian, [8] although many of the themes listed above may be found in a number of other romances, such as Ywain and Gawain, Sir Launfal, Havelok and Sir Amadace. Some critics observe that martial combat dominates the romance and distinguishes it from others, [10] but chivalric adventures involving the testing and use of prowess are common in romance. The seeming prevalence of combat may be attributed to the perceived lack of development of romantic relationships, causing an imbalance compared to other romances, and to the number of opponents faced by the hero, which is perhaps notable because they are individualized. Based on generic expectations, critics and readers familiar with romance may observe an underdevelopment of love in Sir Tryamour. There is another possible interpretation: Like love, combat is a means for self-discovery and improvement through the internalization of values needed for personal and social integrity. Sir Tryamour features didactic themes of moral and cultural relevance found in romance and other genres such as complaint and protest literature, [15] particularly *trouthe*, which includes the interrelated concepts of loyalty, fidelity, honesty, integrity, the keeping of promises and oaths, and justness and innocence. Sir Tryamour is also concerned with the social values of knighthood, kingship, and kinship relationships. Popular Literature in Medieval England. There are few extensive studies of Sir Tryamour, which may be attributed to several factors: Fellows, for example, finds that "stylistically Sir Tryamour leaves much to be desired. Sir Tryamour was apparently successful judging by its popularity, being reprinted into the sixteenth century. Opinion is divided over the assessment of Middle English romances, which have traditionally been categorized as "courtly," meaning of high quality and appealing to the aristocracy, and "popular," of lesser quality aimed at the lower classes. This has been reevaluated in recent years, [17] but Sir Tryamour may be caught in the cycle of "popular" works considered to be of inferior quality compared to more sophisticated poems. Cambridge University Library Ff. Hales and Frederick J. Of Love and Chivalry: An Anthology of Middle English Romance. Four Middle English Romances. Medieval Institute Publications, There were at least two early printed editions of Sir Tryamour in the mid-sixteenth century by Willyam Copland. In Sir Tryamour the stanzas vary from three to eighteen lines Fellows xvii. Baker Books, , p. Pearson Education Limited,

Chapter 2 : Sir Tryamour - Wikipedia

Chivalric Romance Maldwyn Mills, Elizabeth Williams, Flora Alexander, Rosamund Allen, W. R. J. Barron Interchapter B: Arthur in English Society.

Admission to the second year, i. They blend Classical myth with Celtic mystique, and oriental exotica with local concerns. Romances tell stories about King Arthur and his court, the crusades, and ancient English princes, many of which recur in the works of Shakespeare, Tennyson, or Eliot. In this course we will explore the romance tradition in England, with special attention to the origin and development of the Arthurian canon, the political meaning of Englishness and Britishness, the self-examination of courtly ethics and gender relations, and the ideological origins of the British Empire. The course will not only examine the aristocratic culture of medieval England but will also demonstrate how premodern writings inform the literature of later periods. Each week there is a two-hour lecture followed by a two-hour class later in the week, in which we will study fragments of Middle English and, in translation, Latin and Old French texts in combination with their historical and literary background. The lectures will offer structured readings of texts and offer cultural background. In preparation for each seminar there are secondary reading materials announced on Nestor. The reading material should be studied carefully; it will be referred to during class, and knowledge will be tested at the final exam. Students make an active contribution to the module by writing a short, word essay during the course. In each class, we will work through set passages of primary texts, which will be taken from James J. Mode of assessment Written assignment Final written exam b. On the first day of week 4 a brief word timed essay will be due via Nestor. The topics will be announced on Nestor 48 hours in advance. The consultation of secondary literature is mandatory for the essay. The mark for the essay is based on its content and 3 form. Bibliographies have to be properly organised and the essay must be formatted according to MLA format. The course will conclude with a two-hour written examination. Examples of tests For past exams, go to: Conditions for taking exams No credits will be granted to students who are absent in more than 2 seminars throughout the block. Absence means not being present during part of the seminar or the entire seminar. Clear evidence of non-participation may be marked as evidence at the discretion of the instructor. Absences cannot be compensated for by extra assignments. If you have special circumstances, turn to your study advisor. Students are expected to check the Nestor site regularly. You may not miss more than two seminars. In the event of insufficient participation students may be excluded from the course. Assessment criteria The essay and exam will be judged on: Knowledge and understanding B: Awareness of context and intertextuality C: Response to the question D: Appreciation of literary aspects E: Structure and clarity of argument 4 F: Formal use of language See the appendix for a detailed description of assessment criteria and performance levels b. Calculating preliminary and final marks The grades for the essay and the exam will be calculated as a straight average of the criteria above, with the following exception: Criterion F must be a pass in both instances, irrespective of the average. The mark for the exam must be 5. If the final mark is not sufficient or the mark for the exam is lower than 5. No passes exams or essays may be rewritten. Most of the materials below, and certainly all of the bold items, are available electronically via the RUG. Henk Aertsen and Alasdair MacDonald. Free University Press, The English Romance in Time: Oxford University Press, Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy. Columbia University Press, The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance. Cambridge University Press, Howell Chickering and Thomas H. The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature. The University of Wisconsin Press, Mediaeval Arthurian Literary History. Saunders, Corinne et al. A Companion to Romance: From Classical to Contemporary. Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean 18 The Rise of Romance. Romance in Time, pp. If no page numbers are given, you are expected to read and prepare the entire extract printed in The Romance of Arthur. All teaching material is protected by copyright. Students may not make photocopies of teaching material, exams and lectures other than for their own study purposes. In addition, teaching material may not be further distributed in any format. Deliberate violation of copyright is a criminal offence. The University of Groningen will take appropriate measures upon detecting such violations. Programme-level learning outcomes Article 3. Knowledge of a range

of linguistic theories as have demonstrated knowledge and understanding applied to varieties of the English language in a field of study that builds upon their general secondary education, and is typically at a level that,

2. Knowledge of a range of literary theories as whilst supported by advanced textbook, includes applied to English literature some aspects that will be informed by knowledge of the forefront of their field of study. Knowledge of key authors and a broad range of literary texts written in the Anglophone world over a period of years

4. Knowledge of the cultural contexts in which texts were composed

2 Applying knowledge and understanding

1. Capacity to generate new ideas Students can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a

2. Ability to search for information from a variety professional approach to their work or vocation, of up-to-date, academically-relevant secondary and have competences typically demonstrated sources through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study. Ability to identify, present and resolve problems

4. Ability for abstract and analytical thinking

3 Making judgements

1. Ability to justify a standpoint or decision based Students have the ability to gather and interpret on the collection and synthesis of relevant relevant data usually within their field of study to information inform judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues. Ability to identify information relevant to contemporary social issues

3. Ability to be critical and self-critical

4 Communication

1. Ability to interact with others in a cooperative and constructive manner

5 Learning skills

1. Ability to identify and fill knowledge gaps Students have developed those learning skills that

2. Ability to connect knowledge and are necessary for them to continue to undertake understanding from across the modules of the further study with a high degree of autonomy. Ability to work effectively and autonomously

9 4. Ability to use IT applications

10 Appendix 2. Knowledge and understanding a How well does the student know the works studied? Achievement level

0 Fail. No gradable effort has been made. No discernible familiarity with the texts in question. Little knowledge and understanding of the texts. Partial knowledge and understanding of the texts. Few quotations from the works. Few references are made to the works in question. Adequate knowledge and understanding of works used to answer the question. References are made to the works in question. Appropriate references to the works. Detailed and pertinent references to the works. Detailed and persuasive references to the works. Detailed, persuasive, and original references to the works. Awareness of context and intertextuality a To what extent has the student demonstrated an awareness of the significance and influence of the historical context in which the texts have been written and received? No awareness of context. Little awareness of context. Little awareness of context and intertextuality including references to historical background or other literary texts.

Chapter 3 : Maldwyn Mills (Editor of Troilus and Criseyde)

"*Sir Gowther*," in *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. Maldwyn Mills *The Double Bind of Chivalric Sexuality in the Late-Medieval English Romance*. In: Brown J.

The poem consists of eighty-six twelve-line stanzas in tail-rhyme. The rhythm is somewhat bumpy, and the iambic pattern is frequently broken. Though it is doubtful that such a poem was ever recited in the "market-place," certainly its bourgeoisie origins seem likely, perhaps among the great wool merchant houses of East Anglia. This lay preserves a version of what is known as the "Constance-saga," a narrative which was quite popular in late medieval literature. The story appears in a twelfth-century English document written in Latin, the *Vita Offae Primi*, as well as in several fourteenth-century English texts: Here we find an accused queen, the monstrous birth in this case, alleged , magic clothes, exchanged letters, an incestuous father, a persecuting mother-in-law, and a child who redeems its parents. In the "Constance-Saga," an innocent girl is accosted by her own father, is exiled or flees from him, travels incognito across the sea or into a forest , and eventually marries a prince of another land in accordance with one of the basic Cinderella tropes. While her husband is away, she is accused of a crime connected to the birth of her child: The accuser is often a relative, in this case, the mother-in-law. The story frequently features an exchange of letters which harm the protagonist. Exiled, imprisoned, or mutilated, the Constance figure is eventually redeemed from her persecution, often by her own child. Stemming from the Eros of folktale rather than from the Thanatos of mythic tragedy, the conclusion of the Constance narrative is usually an affirmation of love, a reunion of the family, and a reaffirmation of community. The suffering in the narrative does not go unrewarded; it is what Tolkien has called the "good catastrophe. Moral complexity or confusion only exists in relation to an object: Characters are two dimensional, character development nearly non-existent. The tale denies the finality of evil, reminding us that the realm of magic is still accessible, that the ugly may be transformed, the lonely be found, the victimized, redeemed. Here - as in *Le Freine*, also included in this volume - the narrative focuses on a female protagonist. As Dieter Mehl notes, "the significance of her pitiable fate depends on its being completely unmerited," and "she comes very near to being a kind of secularized Saint. Penelope, who suffers silently as a hostage on Ithaca, weaving and unweaving a shroud, trying to hold off the suitors until Odysseus returns; Ariadne, who helps Theseus escape from the labyrinth by giving him a ball of thread to unroll and then follow back out; and Philomela, raped and mutilated, left speechless, who weaves her story into a tapestry to communicate the crime. Within the domestic romance, her role is to suffer adversity relatively passively. Typically, her only departure from passivity is resisting rape, in this case, incest. Her extreme suffering and her endurance of that suffering form the plot. Even when she is exiled on the sea, left to die in an open boat, she does not curse those who mistreat her; instead, she speaks harshly to the sea: Whereas the wilderness certainly offers hardships for male protagonists in medieval romance, it can also offer the arena for heroism, usually in the form of combat even if linked to religious faith. For the female protagonist in this English lay, the wilderness offers an arena only for acts of faith; in her second sojourn on the sea, she suffers through her trial with her face hidden in her cloak, lying face down on the keel of the boat. Ramsey suggests that this kind of punishment ostracism "perhaps represent[s] the life to which the medieval woman saw herself condemned: Her words take on considerable power. The "glysteryng" garment receives a description of ninety-eight lines in a poem that is, itself, only lines, so that the lengthy description calls attention to the importance of the object. It is exotic, enchanting, and foreign. In examining the robe, scholars have interpreted its meaning in various ways. Mortimer Donovan finds its images of true lovers to represent a "gallery of ideals. Yet another reading of the enchanted robe is possible: Reading the garment this way connects it with the incest taboo which, likewise, has been identified as a cornerstone for the development of civilization and order. Ross Arthur adds another reading:

Chapter 4 : Maldwyn Mills | LibraryThing

Robbins Library Digital Projects • TEAMS Middle English Texts • The Middle English Breton Lays • Emare: Introduction Chivalric Romances: Maldwyn Mills.

Perhaps the most delightful and memorable testimonial to his celebrity is offered by Lady Bertilak the first morning she visits the knight in his bedroom, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. He alone, she says, possesses "The prys and the prowes that plesez al other" [line That al the rous rennes of thurgh ryalmes so mony] [*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, lines Almost all of these were composed or written down in the fifteenth century or later. Moreover, the only surviving copy of a Latin pedigree produced for Gawain - *De ortu Waluani* [*The Origins of Gawain*], an account from the twelfth or thirteenth century of his youth and early exploits modeled after the pseudo-history of Geoffrey of Monmouth c. His slayer and half-brother Mordred eulogizes Gawain as "makles one molde," "the gracioseste gome. I am uttirly undone" lines , *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* elaborates upon this reputation, establishing its hero as the sterling exemplar of chivalry even as it probes the contradictory links between courtesy and violent death, private conscience and public honor, within the ethos of knighthood. The glowing testimonials of the Gawain-poet and Chaucer do not, however, primarily pay tribute to a fame conferred upon Gawain by books and translations. The casual quality of their allusions depends for its resonance not upon reading knowledge, but upon pervasive recognition that the name of Gawain was the proverbial equivalent of courtesy itself. These associations may explain why the popular English Gawain romances consistently and distinctively set their action near the northern city of Carlisle, close to the border with Scotland. As knightly prowess, chivalric honor, and sexual love become central motifs in Arthurian narrative, Sir Gawain Walwanus in Latin, Gauvain in French, with initial G and W sounds interchangeable in Middle English becomes an increasingly favored hero. In later French medieval narratives, his character varies from comic inadequacy to moral imperfection as in the *Queste del Saint Graal* to complicity in the downfall of the Round Table, to outright villainy. In German stories, for example, he plays a mixed role, and in romances from the Netherlands he enjoys an almost entirely positive portrayal. Only in the popular romances in English, however, does a genuine cult of Sir Gawain emerge, making him the unsurpassed flower of chivalry. Like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, these poems celebrate Arthurian chivalry in its glorious, even reckless youth, and the vigorous exploits of Sir Gawain offer only an occasional glimpse of the eventual downfall of the Round Table. For the last one hundred and fifty years readers have come to know the medieval Sir Gawain through *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. This fourteenth-century alliterative poem roughly contemporary with *Awntyrs*, the *Alliterative Morte Arthure*, and the *Stanzaic Morte Arthur* presents the most elegant and subtle portrait of his chivalric courtesy and valor. Although the composer possessed extensive knowledge of Arthurian story, he only hints at the downfall of the fellowship. In this, he follows the almost unswervingly favorable view taken in the popular Gawain romances, which by far surpass in number those on any other Arthurian or non-Arthurian hero, and all of which are collected in this volume. The abstract noun knighthood did not exist in Old English, for the social role and the code of values it describes did not come into being until the High Middle Ages after the year Knighthood is the English equivalent for the French chivalrie, which in its primary sense meant a troop of mounted warriors; through the use of stirrups, swords, and lances, these fighters on horseback had awesomely increased the level of damage a warrior might inflict, and conferred upon knights as a group undisputed preeminence among the secular, land-holding aristocracy. But more and more, chivalrie came to mean the ideals - self-consciously proclaimed, but acknowledged by other classes in society as well - that gave a chevalier or knight his identity. So powerfully did the moral and social authority of this role enhance the identity of the secular aristocracy that by the later Middle Ages even kings and emperors considered themselves first of all knights. Chivalry or knighthood therefore emerged as a code when those who already possessed power claimed this identity for themselves as proper, desirable, and exclusive. Though the first documents to mention knights "milites," the Roman word for soldiers occur in Latin, the official language of the Church, knighthood is clearly a secular or lay aristocratic form of life. The deeds of famous knights seem first to have been memorialized in vernacular

oral poetry, like *The Song of Roland*, and great lords and noble fighters must have supported composers and singers who celebrated a warrior ethos in their own tongue before their own entourage. In this way, chivalry worked to define group consciousness, and so consisted not simply in great deeds but in their communal preservation. The earliest literary versions of chivalry in themselves demonstrate that the leap had already taken place from oral, memorial poetry, celebrating a hero among his own group, to a culturally endorsed chivalry, presenting a hero whom an entire society, with its different estates and diverse interests, might celebrate as its ideal representative. These ancient roots sanctioned its existence and strengthened its prerogatives, but also made every chivalric deed no more than a pale imitation of some lost perfection. Even the earliest Arthurian writings feature this element of nostalgia, and so present chivalry as a normative fantasy. This idealizing tendency continues to shape late medieval aristocratic institutionalization of chivalry as a class code, through the establishment of national and international Orders of Knights with written statutes. This legendary and literary influence is especially clear in Britain, the land of Arthur. In the late thirteenth century, when King Edward I wished to increase his prestige and power as a national figure and military leader in his struggles with the Welsh, he associated himself with Arthur, and held a number of tournaments and feasts that made the Round Table a central feature. Though Edward eventually abandoned these explicit Arthurian parallels in founding the Order of the Garter, the interplay between social reality and literary mythification continued throughout the Middle Ages and into the early modern era, as the *Morte Darthur* and *Don Quixote*, for example, make clear. In offering a vision of chivalry that is both timeless and nostalgic, the romances actively worked to mediate or veil the various conflicts embedded in such interests, at least for their most enthusiastic audiences. Knights, starting with the king, recognized the power of knightly spectacle to produce chivalric sentiment in all audiences. Edward III, "remembering the deeds of the ancients, and considering how much the use and love of arms has exalted the name and glory of knightly men, and how much the royal throne would be strengthened and dissensions reduced," offered his endorsement of a tournament as a festivity beneficial for all members of society. Popular romances, in substituting idealizations of knightly conduct for the conduct itself, may have had greater impact in creating and reinforcing chivalric sentiment in particular, among non-chivalric audiences than anything knights did for themselves. The Popular Appeal of Chivalric Romance

The dozen and more surviving Gawain romances form a unity not simply through their shared hero, but, perhaps even more, through their character as more popular than literary. As narratives, they manifest the features of romance in all its meanings: These tales celebrate the idealized chivalry of some distant Arthurian past, but in so doing they inevitably enhance the stature and prerogative of late medieval knighthood - an elite, aristocratic, warrior and land-owning class that largely controlled social, political, and military life. Yet the poems themselves do not originate in that class. These romances were composed for broad consumption, perhaps sometimes for audiences including knights, perhaps sometimes for readers, but mainly for listeners in large, diverse, and mixed groups. The manuscripts and the single printed edition in which they occur were not produced for the great households: The texts themselves are marked for oral recitation, with cues for the audience and reciter and conventional rhyme schemes associated with minstrelsy and oral performance. The narratives unfold through traditional plots and reiterated motifs, glorify a popular hero whom everyone knew, and eventuate in happy endings which bring the characters within the story to terms with one another, and which reconcile the audience outside the story to the structures and ideals epitomized by a "chivalric" or hierarchically ordered society. Yet the precise nature and extent of this popularity within specific social contexts has remained vague. Two pieces of evidence not much commented upon in the context of these Gawain stories help to clarify the environment in which popular chivalric romances flourished - how, when, and by whom they were composed, performed, listened to, read, and copied. In the later s Sir John Paston commissioned an "Inventory off Englysshe bokis" from his own library. The "Greene Knyght" which Paston had collected is almost certainly a retelling of the greatest of all English Arthurian poems. Nonetheless, the romance mentioned here as a single, anthologized item in "a blak boke" was probably neither Sir Gawain and the Green Knight nor the Greene Knight, but another, intermediary version of this Gawain story, probably more literary than the poem published in the present volume. As a reader, an owner, and thereby even a sponsor of popular Arthurian romance, Sir John Paston represents a telling segment of the audience for such

stories. Paston was a member of an influential and wealthy family, and may have studied at Cambridge University. Though perhaps less dedicated to the acquisition of property than his father, his possession of statute books and albums of armorial bearings reveals that his interest in knighthood was by no means anchored in fanciful romance. At the same time, life as a courtier made him a devotee of chivalry: This was performed by players from neighboring Coventry, led by Captain Cox, a mason by day who seems also to have been a performance artist of sorts - "an od man I promis yoo. These included an enormous "bunch of ballets [ballads] and songs all auncient," which Laneham records by their familiar first lines; "a hundred more [which] he hath fair wrapt up in Parchment and bound with a whipcord"; traditional tales like "Robin Hood," "Adam Bel," "Clim of the Clough," "The King and the Tanner," "The Seargeaunt that became a Fryar," "Skogan," and "The Nutbrooun Maid"; more current stories such as "Gargantua," "Collyn Cloout," "The Sheperds Kalender," and "The Ship of Fools"; and matters of "Philosophy both morall and naturall. Holt has assumed that the last named romance was Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, it seems quite unlikely that a performance artist like Captain Cox would have access to, or any interest in, so highly literate a text. Laneham presents the Captain as capable of reciting not only romances like "Syr Gawyn," but "many moe [tales] then I rehears heere: I beleeve hee have them all at his fingers ends. Clerical disdain found a counterpart in the literary scorn of popular narratives of knighthood that occurs in self-consciously artistic writers like Chaucer. Evidence that Gawain romances were much enjoyed in the late Middle Ages is abundant in the extensive allusions to his knightly courtesy, in the multiple production of copies for Awntyrs and Gologras , and in the multiple versions and retellings that survive Greene Knight, Marriage, and Carle all reprise earlier medieval romances, and the other renditions of Ragnelle together with the ballad-style narratives of Turke and Cornwall prove the wide circulation of these stories. Moreover, the worn state of several of the manuscripts that contain single surviving copies of these poems suggests that they were literally read to death, perhaps often before live audiences. When Captain Cox or any one of his nameless predecessors performed his "Sir Gawyn" before the Queen, a great lord, or even the Lord Mayor of Coventry, was he reinforcing the position of an elite class over him, or was he giving shape to an identity he as a stone mason shared with other workers, who must have constituted his chief audience? The censure of chivalric romance in high literary writing Chaucer , popular burlesque The Tournament of Tottenham , or ecclesiastical chastisement presents an emphatically negative view of popular culture; these imply that only the most simple and undemanding audience could sit through the exaggerations, absurdities, and contradictions of these tales, thereby making "popular" equivalent to ignorant or just plain bad. Yet the persistence of hostility towards chivalric romances from various quarters in itself proves that popular culture did not simply and irresistibly reproduce the values of a dominant order for mindless reception by a passive audience. Some medieval people - especially those in official positions, and those committed to refined or elite literacy - reacted to these tales as potentially subversive, and this rejection marks out one space for resistant or alternative readings and responses. A recent translator of the Gawain stories, for example, remarks that they are "primitive," "rustic," and "crude," though at times "charming" or "touching. The mixed character of the romances, their open disavowal of literary credibility in favor of the fantastic, their frequent comic tone and resort to extravagance and hyperbole, all have the effect of highlighting the absurdities, inequalities, and contradictions of a feudal order or chivalric ideals, even as they are idealized or celebrated. Chivalric romances achieved popularity by combining the narrative obviousness of a television sit-com with the ambience of a professional wrestling match. Having to read these romances, rather than hear and watch them performed, makes their participatory spontaneity difficult for modern audiences to relish, all the more so because they are in Middle English. Yet it was clearly as popular performance art, with strong elements of mimicry and burlesque, that they initially brought pleasure to the majority of their earliest listeners. Self-conscious writers considered the apparently simple meter of tail-rhyme and alliterative narratives to be chief among their literary offenses; Chaucer has his Host declare the romance of Thopas "rym dogerel" and "drasty rymyng. But partisans of popular romance did not seek the novelty of plot, individualized character, verbal ambiguities, subtle allusion, or variation in theme and image so dear to Chaucer. Like those who attend live musical concerts, they expected to hear lyrics they already knew, performed to a memorable beat that allowed them to vocalize along with the performer. Anyone who has

attended a sporting event easily understands the power of rhythmic clapping, whether initiated by the crowd, the scoreboard, or the piped-in music of Queen "We will, we will, rock you". It was just this kind of participatory and moving experience that made the reading event so enjoyable for the audiences of chivalric romances, and made the romances so disreputable with the keepers of high culture. The power of such simple meters remains obvious if one reads aloud the dense and richly echoic alliterative verse of *Awntyrs* or *Gologras*. There are elements of such alliteration in *Avowyng* as well as in some of the other romances, and a live performance even by a solitary modern reader softens the imputation of doggerel in the tail-rhyme romances as well. The strong beat that underlies the narrative and activates the audience is a striking residue of the orality that marks medieval and later popular culture. In the fiction as in its performance, identity abides in what one is seen to be or heard to say. What characters do or wear must be "ful clere" to all, and they must speak "on highe" so that all can hear, and so these frequently repeated phrases are hardly fillers; instead, they define the communal acknowledgment necessary for any action to have meaning or worth. The privileged role of spectacle within orality attaches as well to the rituals of combat, honor, and courtesy enacted by Gawain and the other knights. In a chivalric context, all speech and gesture including, for example, laughter require a proper form and an immediate response, or insult follows; knightly conduct therefore resembles the closed code of military speech, where each act demands a prescribed response, and only the unchivalric - Sir Kay, the Carle, Ragnelle - dare to overstep its limits, or speak out of turn. All of these have impressive literary pedigrees and an ease of accessibility for the modern reader that separates them from most of the other Gawain tales. Yet even among the "popular" poems published here there are striking degrees of difference in literariness: Nonetheless, these two poems shared in the popularity of their hero, for *Awntyrs* survives in four copies an exceptional number for a romance and *Gologras* was among the first printed books from the Scottish press. Gawain does, then, represent the central presence in these romances. It is crucial to note, however, that he holds these narratives together not through some novelistic sense of "character," as a unique and consistent personality with individualized traits, complexly drawn motives, or psychologized feelings. Instead, Gawain plays a role; he routinely facilitates the extravagant adventures that happen around him, and does so to such an extent that one might even think of him almost as a narrative function. The romances emphatically mark out, in social as well as narrative terms, just what this role encompasses: Gawain shares this slot in the social order with his brothers, *Aggravayne* and the illegitimate *Mordred*, but he is clearly the "good son"; despite his exuberance and superior physical prowess, he is unwilling to challenge the fatherly authority of the king. As the exemplary Young Man, Gawain remains unfettered by trammels of authority, the need to think hard about the future or make decisions of political consequence; he is on the loose, constantly ready for adventure. Over and over, Gawain proves the worth of familiar values by facing the marvelous or unknown, and rendering it manageable for the rest of his society. But his preeminence does not simply consist in unhesitating courage or unparalleled ability. Repeatedly, Gawain exhibits a willing restraint of available force or a refusal of the authority of position, which separates him from non-chivalrous opponents and also from the arbitrary bullying or domineering impertinence of Sir Kay. Each courteous conquest stages the general triumph of civility, ensuring that the rituals that organize social meaning prevail in spite of confusion or even threat to life. Yet in playing this background role to reckless adventure, Arthur seems sometimes less than dynamic and often ambiguous.

Chapter 5 : Lists That Contain Six Middle English Romances (Everyman's Library) by Maldwyn Mills

*The Arthur of the English have concentrated on the handful of chivalric romances, Lesley Johnson, Carole Weinberg, Dynastic Romance; * Maldwyn Mills.*

Search Search this site: Four Middle English Romances: Bibliography Four Middle English Romances: Boffey, Julia, and A. The British Library, Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, University of California Press, Rereading Middle English Romance: Cambridge University Press, Lordship and the Saracens in Sir Isumbras. Ad Putter and Jane Gelbert. Halliwell, James Orchard, ed. Selected from Manuscripts at Lincoln and Cambridge. Oxford University Press, Britton Harwood and Gillian Overing. Indiana University Press, Criticism, Ideology, and History. McSparran, Frances, and P. Six Middle English Romances. Zwei Mittelenglische Bearbeitungen der Sage. Lincoln and Cambridge texts; Southern: In Six Middle English Romances. Lincoln, Cambridge, and Huntington texts. Popular Literature in Medieval England. Tennessee Studies in Literature University of Tennessee Press, Wives and Mothers in Middle English Romance. Approaches to Old and Middle English Texts. A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, â€” Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, Sir Eglamour of Artois. Hales and Frederick J. Eine Englische Romanze des 14 Jahrhunderts. A Middle English Romance. Cook and Gustav Schleich. In Sir Eglamour of Artois. English Experience Series Da Capo Press, Mayer and Miller, In The Romance of Syr Tryamour. Richards for the Percy Society, Anna Johanna Erdman Schmidt. In Of Love and Chivalry: An Anthology of Middle English Romance. The English Medieval Minstrel. University of Texas Press,

Chapter 6 : A companion to medieval popular romance in SearchWorks catalog

Goodreads members voted Six Middle English Romances into the following lists: Everyman Library Classics.

Chapter 7 : Crescentia (romance) - Wikipedia

A companion to medieval popular romance. The manuscripts of popular romance / Maldwyn Mills and its subject matter ranging from tales of chivalric.

Chapter 8 : Emare: Introduction | Robbins Library Digital Projects

The Thornton Romances: In Six Middle English Romances. Ed. Maldwyn Mills. London: Dent, Ramsey, Lee C. Chivalric Romances.

Chapter 9 : Sir Gawain, Eleven Romances and Tales: General Introduction | Robbins Library Digital Project

Romance in Medieval England. Ed. Maldwyn Mills, Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows, & Carol M. Meale "Gawain and Popular Chivalric Romance in Britain."