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CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES AND THE ROLE OF ARTHURIAN ROMANCE
IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURNAMENT

BY

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A glossary of terms which may seem unfamiliar to some readers and which are intended to serve as a reference can be found following the endnotes of this paper.

INTRODUCTION

From life-long medievalists and scholars to those who remember from their childhood the magic of the legends of King Arthur, the first image that instinctively appears in our mind upon mention of the middle ages is the knight in shining armor astride a great warhorse. Images of kings, castles, damsels, and dragons are ingrained into western thought, as is the tournament. Or is it? It is actually the joust, an individual contest between two mounted knights, that joins these other images in our natural reflection upon the middle ages. The word "tournament" has come to be a catch-all term for the various forms of contests that developed from the original event, a team-oriented contest born in the last half of the eleventh century which eerily resembled actual warfare and which we now refer to as the "tournament proper."

The natural visualization of knights in shining armor, moat-surrounded castles, and jousts are not so much an incorrect picture of the middle ages as they are an incomplete picture. These are perceptions and developments of but a moment in the millennia of history which we refer to as the middle ages. Before a knight encased himself in steel, his ancestors had donned chain mail and boiled leather shirts. Before the great Edwardian castles dotted the Welsh landscape, the Normans had erected in England their great stone keeps, which replaced the motte and bailey fortresses before them.

But how did the joust as an event come to replace the tournament proper? The answer and focus of this paper lies in the old saying that life imitates art. The answer, though, like the question, is much more complex than it may at first appear. The relationship between art and life is of a cyclical nature, meaning that it does not stop with art's imitation of life, but continues with the roles reversed. Artists draw their inspiration from life and present their work in familiar and

spectacular representations, both to which the audience responds and often imitates. This was the relationship between Chrétien de Troyes and the medieval nobility.

We shall see in this paper that Chrétien's tournaments are both authentic representations and of his own design, making them familiar to his audience, yet very different from the tournament proper, the event of his era. Whereas the tournament proper was a *mêlée* fought amongst two teams for cavalry training and for sport and by the individual for gain, for Chrétien's heroes it was a sport of individual deeds fought for renown, honor, and to demonstrate one's prowess. The chivalrous society quickly responded to this notion of individual feats of arms and eventually replaced the *mêlée* with contests fought man-to-man. The influence of Arthurian romance on the tournament does not stop here, however. In their imitation of the matter of Britain, the patrons and participants of the tournament even went so far as to appear in costume of Arthurian characters and to incorporate motifs and scenes of Arthurian romance into the tournament.

In the first chapter, we will examine the tournament proper, roughly the tournament of the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries, its origins, rules, etc. Chapter two is a detailed examination not only of tournaments in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, but of many martial episodes, as the exploits of the Knights of the Round Table are as important to the development of the tournament as are Chrétien's tournaments themselves. I have chosen to examine only the works of Chrétien because he is the father of Arthurian romance and because he was writing during the era of the tournament proper, thus providing us with an interesting game of "compare and contrast," both to the tourneys of his day and after. The final chapter then is an analysis of the evolution of the tournament from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, the rise of new contests,

and the influence that Arthurian romance had in this fascinating and strangely powerful relationship between literature and medieval society.

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY TOURNAMENT

To an extent, the origins of the tournament are lost in the obscurity of the past and we will most likely never know when and where the first tournament was held. Thirteenth-century chroniclers are quick to lend luster to the name of their patrons by assigning a death in a tourney to an ancestor of the family. Lambert of Ardres, for example, who was writing at about the same time as William the Marshal's biographer (circa 1220's), says that Radulph, Count of Guines and ancestor to his patrons, died in a tourney in 1034.¹ Another thirteenth-century chronicle claims that the tournament was invented by an Angevin knight, Geoffrey de Preully, who died in 1066.² In 1110, however, Geoffrey of Malaterra writes in his chronicle that in 1062 the men from the armies of warring brothers Robert Guiscard, Duke of Calabria, and Roger, Count of Sicily, jostled against each other and that their brother-in-law was killed.³

Although the distance in time between the events and the date of composition lends suspicion to the validity of the two thirteenth-century chronicles, and numerous others, Geoffrey's reference is quite possibly true due to its proximity to the date of events and to its early date of composition, for the tournament was most likely born sometime in the last half of the eleventh century, which is, as Maurice Keen writes, precisely the same time that the concept of knighthood and the order's ceremony of admission were becoming clearly defined.⁴ There are two main factors, examined below, which led to the tournament's rise at this time, probably in France, as the early generic name *conflictus gallici*, used by the English chroniclers attests.⁵ First and foremost, the tournament was a training for war, an opportunity for cavalry units to practice maneuvers and charges, and for the individual it afforded practice in striking

with a new weapon, the couched lance. We are told that Count Charles the Good of Flanders (d.1127) "frequented the tournaments in Normandy and France, and outside that kingdom too, and so kept his knights exercised in times of peace and extended thereby his fame and glory and that of his country."⁶ The second development which led to the rise of the tournament occurred at the end of the eleventh century when the decentralization of power had begun to stabilize in France and the Low Countries, as the tournament also proved to be a substitute for the petty wars which plagued post-Carolingian society.

By briefly examining each of these two developments, we will gain a good understanding of the tournament's purpose. Despite these developments, viewing the tournament only as a training ground for war, however, would be wrong, for it was much, much more. For the participants and spectators, it was sport and entertainment; and, for the former the tournament could lead to riches, prominence, and higher social status -- everything a knight could desire. We will also see that due to its close similarity to actual warfare, death and injury were inevitable by-products and that the church, officially, became opposed to the tournament. Lastly, we will survey the tournament proper, the tournament of the eleventh and twelfth centuries and of Chrétien de Troyes' era, in which the warlike mêlée was the principle contest.

EARLY REFERENCES:

The earliest mention of a tournament in literature is found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c.1136). Geoffrey writes that after King Arthur had returned to Britain from his conquest of Gaul, the king held a great feast at Whitsun and that the knights,

invigorated by the food and drink they had consumed... went out into the meadows outside the city and split up into groups ready to play various games. The knights planned an imitation battle and

competed together on horseback, while the women watched from the top of the city walls and aroused them to passionate excitement by their flirtatious behavior. The others passed what remained of the day by shooting bows and arrows, hurling the lance, tossing heavy stones and rocks, playing dice, and an immense variety of games: this without the slightest show of ill-feeling. Whoever won his particular game was then rewarded by Arthur with an immense prize. The next three days were passed in this way. On the fourth day all those in the office [in] which they held [and who] had done Arthur any service were called together and each rewarded with a personal grant of cities, castles, archbishoprics, bishoprics, and other landed possessions.⁷

Larry Benson dismisses this episode as being a tournament because of its similarity to an older Germanic sport of equestrian display without weapons, as weapons are not mentioned here.⁸ The Germanic practice to which Benson refers above involved teams of cavalry charging one another, though at the last minute one team would turn and make a retreat, pursued by the other team and thus giving us the term "feigned flight".¹³ One of the primary differences between this cavalry practice/equestrian display and the tournament is that the latter involved actual combat. The passage from Geoffrey contains a phrase which clearly, in my mind, shows that the author is referring to a tournament, as he is careful to note that the games were played "without the slightest show of ill-feeling." If any of the games to which he refers could spark ill-feeling, the greatest chance of such lies in the "imitation combat," and there would be a much greater chance of anger developing in a tournament than in a Germanic-styled equestrian display. How Benson arrives at his conclusion is a puzzle, for Geoffrey is most definitely writing of a tournament, as I hope to show.

The *Historia Regum Britanniae* was probably written in the early years of the reign of King Stephen (1135-1154), during which tournaments flourished in England. Stephen's predecessor, Henry I (1100-1135), had prohibited tournaments in England but not in his continental holdings; nor did Henry deny his English knights from tourneying across the Channel. This prohibition has

been lost, but we hear about it in William of Newburgh's *Historia Regum Anglicarum* (1198), and a charter surviving from Henry's reign refers to the painted lances that Osbert of Arden takes to tournaments on the continent.⁹

It was only some twenty-odd years before the *Historia Regum Britanniae* that Geoffrey of Malaterra had written of the jousting in his chronicle, but it is the papal prohibition issued at the Council of Clermont in 1130, examined below, which provides some extremely useful insight into the tournament's rise and literary history, as the tourney would have had to enjoyed a great deal of popularity by this time to warrant a papal prohibition. But, as Juliet Barker shows, the jargon of the tournament had apparently not yet reached the clerics, who refer to the tournament as "*detestabiles...nundinas vel ferias*,"¹⁰ markets and fairs simply being a part of many tournaments, as the thirteenth-century *Roman du Hem*, which details the tournament held in 1278 at Hem, attests, for merchants who sold food, wine, saddles, and armor were present as well as knights.¹¹ The cloudy, non-specific phrasing of the prohibition provided a loophole for the participants, who sometimes claimed that they did not know that the decree applied to tournaments. At the third Lateran Council, held in 1179, the church added, "*quas vulgo torneamento vocant*,"¹² which in the common parlance are called tournament -- clarifying the prohibition's target. We should be cautious but not doubtful, therefore, in asserting that Geoffrey, writing at about the same time as the Council of Clermont, is writing about a tournament, though he, like the papacy, was not quite sure what to call it.

MILITARY ORIGINS AND WEAPONS:

The weapons used in the early tournament were weapons of war (*à outrance*): the sword, the mace, etc. The dress and armor therefore were also the same as that used in warfare, usually comprised of a mailcoat beneath a

sleeveless surcoat but over a padded *acton*, mail *chausses* for the legs, and a helmet with a nose-guard or visor which covered the entire face. This was only natural as the tournament was a training field for pitched battle. However, it was a new weapon (the couched lance), the practice needed to master it, and the resulting new military tactics that were instrumental in the tournament's birth and rise.

Until the development of the couched lance -- so called because it was tucked between the body and the arm -- cavalry units had three methods of striking with a spear: by throwing it, which was not very effective, or by stabbing with it either overhanded or underhanded. The couched lance, however, proved to be much more advantageous. Firstly, the momentum of the charge was transferred to the blow, thereby delivering a tremendous amount of force. Secondly, due to the manner in which the lance was held, the rider was able to use a stronger, heavier, and longer lance which would keep the attacker distanced from the defender. The Bayeux tapestry depicts all four uses of the lance against the English infantry at Hastings in 1066, suggesting at this time that the couched lance had not yet replaced the previous methods of striking with a lance, as it soon would. Nonetheless, it proved to be an immeasurable aid in the Norman conquest of England and in their subjugation of Italy, and for the Franks on the First Crusade, as Anna Comnena notes in her *Alexiad*, referring to the "irresistible first shock" of the cavalry charge.¹⁴

There were various ways for the individual to practice striking with the couched lance, two of which, the *quintain* and the ring, were both popular games at tournaments; but, as we shall see, the tournament proper -- the *mêlée* -- was the most important training device, both collectively and individually, and a substitute for actual warfare. The *quintain* was a pole with an arm, on which was fixed a shield at which a knight or squire could practice striking with the

couched lance. The object was to pierce the shield or to break the lance. A variation was a two-armed pole with a target on one arm and a weight on the other. Here the rider was to strike the target with lance or other weapon in a charge quick enough to clear the *quintain*, as the striking of the shield would send the weight spinning towards the rider. Another option for cavalry practice or while on foot was to strike and duck, so as not to be hit by the weight, or to deflect the "return blow".¹⁵ The ring was a small ring hanging from a pole, through which the rider would try to place his lance, thus training his handling of and aiming with lance.

Although the *quintain* and the ring provided individual training for the knight, it was only at the tournament where a cavalry unit could learn to operate as a team, thereby utilizing the maximum effect of the couched lance: the shock of a full cavalry charge at full speed. Sheer numbers were important, as an overwhelming cavalry force could usually not be stopped. However, a smaller, well-organized cavalry attack could defeat a less-organized larger force.¹⁶ A passage in *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* (circa 1220's) stresses the importance of the well-maneuvered cavalry charge, praising those who conduct it masterfully in a tournament:

Ja s'aperceivent li conrei:
Li un correient a desrei
& li autre sagement vient,
Serre en bataille se tienent:
E il porvit bien son afaire
Com cil qui bien le saveit faire.¹⁷

The tournament taught the unit how to operate as a team, which was as important to winning the field as it was to winning a pitched battle, for as we shall see below, those who fought together on a tournament team also fought alongside one another in war, thus furthering the similarity between the two.

POLITICAL ORIGINS:

The other major development which contributed to the rise of the tournament was the stabilization of central and ecclesiastical authority in France and the Low Countries. This process began at the end of the eleventh century and, simultaneously, the tournament proved to be an outlet for martial energies, replacing the petty feuds and warfare which had ravaged medieval society during the post-Carolingian fragmentation of authority. Even in a society such as ours, one based on the idea of nationhood, it is hard to imagine the ongoing ferocity and violence of these private wars. All wars, whether eleventh-century or twentieth-century, begin with a perceived injustice, oppression, greed, or sheer hatred. However, what for us becomes a war amongst nations, peoples, or religions, was at this time reduced to a smaller unit: that of region, household, or family. One eleventh-century feud between two Burgundian houses lasted for over thirty years and caused the deaths of eleven men in one battle alone, and ten brothers fell in another battle.¹⁸ These skirmishes were both training and real-life experiences for the knight, and the cessation of their bloodshed and of their potential for destabilization were two factors behind Pope Urban's call in 1095 for martial energies to be directed towards the Holy Land and the Muslims and not against Christian brothers. The growth of secular centralized government and ecclesiastical authority constrained these once constant small-scale wars, and by the early twelfth century the tournament proved to be an outlet not only for martial training but for martial energy as well.

ECONOMIC ORIGINS:

Despite the fact that the tournament was an invaluable exercise in horsemanship, training with arms, and a substitute for the petty wars, martial training was not its only purpose, for we must not forget the medieval knight's

love and need of booty. In times of peace, which were becoming more and more frequent and of longer duration in the early twelfth century, booty was less accessible and the tournament could be a very lucrative sport when one was not at war. Bertran de Born, a contemporary noble of William the Marshal (c.1146-1219), states frankly that his aim in both tournament and war was the acquisition of booty.¹⁹ For William himself, a fourth son and landless knight, the tournament provided an opportunity to acquire wealth and to display military skill in hope of being seen by and called into the service of a wealthy, prominent noble, which is precisely what happened.

The importance of the possibilities of riches and fame that could be gained in the tournament cannot be understressed, for it can be viewed as being one of the primary reasons that the tournament was so successful in becoming a substitute for private warfare. In his study on medieval warfare, J.F. Verbruggen notes that in an area as densely populated as Flanders, there was simply not enough land to be distributed to all the sons of a large noble family, thereby leading to intra-family warfare as the "disenfranchised noble" grew envious of his wealthier brothers.²⁰ *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, written in the 1220's and only discovered in the late-nineteenth century, is one of the earliest, most vivid, and important sources on the early tournament which has survived.²¹ An anonymous, long biographical poem written for the Earl William's son, it is the story of the fourth son and landless knight mentioned above who through his deeds and prowess in tournaments entered into some of the most elite circles of Western Europe and rose to become tutor to Henry the Young King,²² son of Henry II, King of England (1154-1189), and heir to the throne; and, late in his life the Marshal became regent of England during the minority of Henry III (1216-1272). Whereas some of the eleventh-century Flemish princes sought riches

through fighting their elder brothers, William earned his firstly through his deeds in tournaments and later in war.

At the age of twenty or twenty-one, William the Marshal entered into his first tournament in 1167 at Le Mans in the service of his lord, William of Tankerville, Chamberlain of Normandy, as the knights of Normandy, France, and England joined against those from Anjou, Poitou, Maine, and Brittany. William was in a bit of a predicament, though, as he was without a horse, his having been killed in a recent battle against the Flemings at Drincourt, at which battle he had been knighted. William could not afford to buy another horse and although normally it would be the responsibility of the lord to furnish him with another, the Chamberlain refused because William had not made the most of his opportunities at Drincourt to capture horses. This was William's second reminder that he was to seek prizes in battle, for during the celebrations following the victory at Drincourt, the Earl of Essex chastised William for not having reaped the rewards of victory.

The night before they were to leave for Le Mans, the Chamberlain decided that William had learned his lesson and he gave the Marshal another horse. William performed extremely well at Le Mans, capturing four and a half²³ horses and arms and armor as well.²⁴ At a tournament in Maine shortly thereafter, William was awarded the chief prize of the tournament, a warhorse from Lombardy.²⁵

Ten years later, after he had been appointed by Henry II to tutor Prince Henry in arms and chivalry and to protect him in tournaments and war, the Marshal entered into a business proposition with Roger de Gaugi, also of the Young King's household, agreeing to tourney together for two years and to split all the profits. A list kept by the Young King's clerk shows that during the first

ten months, between Lent and Pentecost, William and Roger captured one-hundred and three knights.²⁶

The ransoms and the booty collected by the two must have been immense, but the warhorse was the most valuable item to be won. Well into the fourteenth century, warhorses were used in tournaments,²⁷ thus enabling horse and rider to train together. This was very important as the warhorse, bred for size and strength, had to be strong enough to withstand a blow so as not to fall, which would put the rider at risk of being trampled or dragged. The horse would learn in a tournament to charge and to withstand the noise and commotion of combat, as would the rider.

Due to the expensive risk of losing a horse in war or tournament, it was expected for the lord to pay for its replacement or ransom. The values of these horses varied greatly.²⁸ During his youth, the future Edward I spent two years on the tournament circuit in France from 1260-1262 and incurred debts of 70 pounds for horses lost by his men.²⁹ The warhorses bought by Saint Louis for his Crusade averaged £85 *livres tournois*.³⁰ The seven horses of Geraard de Moor, lord of Wessegum, were valued in 1297 at £1200 *livres tournois* (or £960 *parisis*), ranging from £40 for his horse for the march to £300 for "the best horse, called Mouton".³¹ The chargers of his squires varied in value from £40 *parisis* to £60 *parisis*. Geraard's brother had a horse valued at £100 *parisis*, and those of Geraard's vassals ranged from £16 *parisis* to £121 *parisis*.³² Gilbert, Earl of Gloucester, had to pay £6.13s.3d., 100s, and £20 for horses lost by his men at a tournament at Dunstable in 1309.³³ With such a value, we can easily understand why, at a tournament in 1179, William Marshal became so angry when two French knights took from him two horses which he had captured and was leading away on foot. An apparent breach of the rules, William appealed to the

two knights' respective lords, who demanded that the Marshal be given his property.³⁴

DANGERS, DEATH, AND THE MALCONTENT:

Any large gathering of armed men seeking combat had the potential to turn into real battle or to be the scene of accidental deaths. In 1169 Philip of Flanders attacked Baldwin of Hainault when the latter joined the French team instead of his Flemish allies. The following year Baldwin brought a large number of infantry, a reported and probably exaggerated figure of 3000, to a tournament at Trazegnies because he feared being attacked by the Duke of Brabant, with whom he was having a quarrel.³⁵ In 1273 at a tournament in Chalons, Edward I had the upper hand on the Count of Chalons and, in desperation, the latter seized the English monarch around the neck and tried to pull him from his horse. By this time an attack such as this seems to have been an apparent breach of the rules, for Edward was so angered that an actual battle broke out and consequently both sides suffered heavy casualties.³⁶ It was from then on remembered as the Little Battle of Chalons.

A list of those who were fatally injured in tournaments includes a roll call of medieval nobility. We cannot begin to estimate the number of severe injuries or deaths sustained in tournaments, as the chronicles only mention the unfortunate prominent victims who throughout the tournament's history have suffered so in the sport. Hugh Mortimer is the earliest known Englishman to die in a tournament, having done so in the reign of King Stephen (1135-1154).³⁷ Geoffrey of Brittany, third son of King Henry II of England, died in 1186 from being dragged by his horse after getting his foot caught in the stirrup.³⁸ Geoffrey of Mandeville, Earl of Essex, was trampled to death in 1216.³⁹ The family of Count Florence of Holland suffered greatly. He was killed in a tournament in

1223, and his two sons, Florence and William, suffered the same fate in 1234 and 1238.⁴⁰ Gilbert Marshal, Earl of Pembroke and third son of Earl William the Marshal, died in at a tournament in Hertford in 1241 when his reins broke, causing him to fall and to be dragged to death.⁴¹ In 1279 Robert of Clermont, the brother of Philip III, King of France, was left incapacitated for the remainder of his life after suffering a head injury in his first tournament,⁴² and particularly tragic was the tournament at Neuss in 1241, at which over eighty knights are said to have died, having suffocated in their helmets from the heat and dust.⁴³

An episode such as the Little Battle of Chalons was, as far as we know, a spontaneous affair, and the deaths noted above were all accidental, but the tournament could also be the site of the murder of an enemy or used by disaffected nobles against their lord. Ernald Munteny, for example, was killed by Roger Leyburn in 1252. As it was known that the two were at odds, the lance shaft was removed from Munteny's body for examination. The tournament was fought *à plaisance*, with blunted weapons, but Leyburn's lance was fixed with a pointed iron tip. In a conciliatory gesture, Leyburn took the Cross as a self-imposed penance, though shortly thereafter he received a royal pardon from Henry III.⁴⁴

In her book *The Tournament in England 1100-1400*, Juliet Barker stresses the role of tournaments being used against weak kings, particularly Henry III (1216-1272) and his grandson Edward II (1307-1327), noting, quite importantly, that these two kings were not participants or patrons of tournaments, the foremost display of chivalry. For example, under the pretenses of holding a tournament, certain rebellious earls opposed to Edward II met and murdered Piers Gaveston,⁴⁵ thought by some to have been the monarch's paramour. The lords who forced King John (1199-1216) to sign the Magna Carta met at tournaments to

discuss their plans, and in what were clearly friendly meetings of arms, tourneyed against the French lords who supported their cause.⁴⁶

ECCLESIASTICAL PROHIBITIONS:

The debacle at the Little Battle of Chalons, murder, and political uprising were certainly not the norm but did occur throughout the tournament's history, as did the plethora of accidental deaths and severe injuries. It is not surprising, therefore, that in 1130 at the Council of Clermont, Pope Innocent II (1130-1143) states in the ninth canon that

we firmly prohibit these detestable markets and fairs at which knights are accustomed to assemble to show off their strength and their boldness and at which the deaths of men and dangers to the soul so often occur. But if anyone is killed there, even if he demands and is not denied penance and *viaticum*, ecclesiastical burial shall be withheld from him.⁴⁷

The ecclesiastical prohibition, like the preaching of the First Crusade (1095) and the Peace and Truce of God, which prohibited fighting on feast days and from Friday to Monday, was in part an effort to curb needless bloodshed and to direct martial energies towards recovering the Holy Land from the Muslims. Pope Innocent's prohibition, though, was totally ineffectual, as we can see from the number of tournaments mentioned in chronicles and charters. The author of *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* says that William was participating in a tourney every other week⁴⁸ and, as we shall see later, Richard I of England used them as a source of revenue to finance his campaigns and to provide ransom monies by establishing an entry fee payable to the crown.

Ecclesiastical burial was rarely denied to a knight who died in a tournament and there were financially practical reasons for this. The church would often receive more oblations and endowments for masses from the family of a knight slain while tourneying than one who died of natural causes. The

mendicant orders, frequently present at tournaments, received income from knights who sought communion before a tournament.⁴⁹ Despite (or perhaps due to) the ineffectuality of the prohibition, it was repeated in 1139 at the second Lateran Council, in 1148 at the Council of Rheims,⁵⁰ and again at the third Lateran Council in 1179,⁵¹ during Chrétien's period of writing and during the illustrious careers of William the Marshal and his protégé, Prince Henry of England, son of Henry II and heir to the throne.

THE TOURNAMENT PROPER:

The tournament of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, including those participated in by the patrons of Chrétien de Troyes and by William the Marshal, were unregulated, dangerous free-for-alls, distinguishable from actual warfare only in that the tourneyer did not try to kill his opponent but instead tried to capture him. The tournament took place over a prescribed area, usually between two villages, for example between Braine and Soissons or between Salisbury and Wilton. All territory between these two points, including forests, barns, vineyards, and other villages, if any, was the field of the tournament. The teams would usually be drawn up by allegiance on regional and/or political grounds, such as the French versus the Flemings, or in England the Northerners versus the Southerners. Footsoldiers and mounted knights were present. Joining the wrong team could have grave impact, as we see when in 1169, at a tournament between the French and the Flemings, Baldwin of Hainault joined the French instead of his Flemish allies, as the former were outnumbered. Despite the chivalric nature of Baldwin's act, Philip of Alsace, Duke of Flanders and one of the greatest patrons of chivalry of his day, was so offended and outraged by this treacherous act that he attacked Baldwin with his army of cavalry and footsoldiers as if it were a real battle.⁵²

The tournament began with a *commençaillies*, a haphazard joust between one member of each team in the field between the two armies, and was followed by the *mêlée*, the principle event. The two teams would make an initial charge with lances couched. When the lances were broken, one could draw another weapon, including sword and mace, as the weapons used were weapons of war (*à outrance*) as opposed to abated weapons (*à plaisance, à courtois*), which came to be used later in the tournament's history. The only rest areas were *recets*, roped-off safe-havens where participants could disarm, rest, or take prisoners.

The object, and difference between tournament and war, was to capture one's opponent - not to kill him, as a captured opponent was forced to pay a ransom and usually had to forfeit his horse, armor, and weapons. Once the ransom, often negotiated before the tourney, was promised, the captured knight was usually released and could try to buy back his horse and other losses as well. There seems to have been nothing preventing a released knight from returning to the field, so long of course as he had the equipment to do so. Victory went to the knight who had captured the most opponents and to the team who held the field at the end of the day.

An episode from Chrétien's *Erec et Enide* (circa 1170) provides as vivid a picture of a *mêlée* as any factual account:

A month after Pentecost the tournament assembles and opens in the plain below Tenebroc. Many a pennon flew there, vermilion, blue, white, and many a wimple and sleeve that had been given as love tokens. Many a lance was carried there painted in silver and red, others in gold and blue, and many more of different kinds, some banded and some spotted. That day one saw there many a gold-trimmed helmet laced and many of steel, green, yellow, vermilion, gleaming in the sun. And there were so many coats of arms and bright hauberks, swords carried at the left side, so many good shields, fresh and new, resplendent in silver and red, others blue with gold bosses, so many fine horses, dark with white patches, sorrel, tawny, white, black, or bay. All come together at full speed. The field is completely covered with arms. The ranks

shudder on both sides, and from the clash there rises a loud din, with a great cracking of the lances. Lances break and shields are holed, the hauberks are torn and rent, saddles are emptied and riders tumble, the horses sweat and lather. All draw their swords on those who clatter to the ground. Some dash up to accept their surrender, others in their defence.⁵³

The rules were minimal and it does not seem at this period that there were any judges or referees; nor was it frowned upon or uncommon for a group of knights to attack a single defender after the squadrons had broken up. Deceit and trickery were even applauded, as we see in a “tactic” of Philip of Flanders. On occasion, it seems, Philip would keep his men out of the tournament until he saw that the other tourneyers, weary of fighting, were easy pickings. The tables were turned, though, in 1176 as Prince Henry of England and his men, including William the Marshal, who had so often been the victims of Philip’s ploy, pretended to sit out the contest, waiting for the most opportune moment to attack Philip’s men, which they did successfully.⁵⁴

The *Histoire* provides some colorful and rare pictures of the tournaments of this period. As in so many cases of using contemporary records, we frequently see an incomplete picture, looking only at the chain of events and the principles and causes behind them, often neglecting the tiny bits of humanness which bring the picture into focus and the participants to life. Following a tournament at Pleurs in 1177, William the Marshal was awarded the prize of the tournament but was absent from the drinking festivities following the tournament. Eventually he was found in a blacksmith’s shop, his head on an anvil, and the blacksmith was trying to remove the Marshal’s helmet which was stuck on his head due to the beating he took.⁵⁵ Two years later at a tournament between Anet and Sorel-Moussel, near Chartres, William came upon fifteen French knights trapped in a farmhouse by a larger force of William’s allies. The French, having

seen the Marshal, agreed to surrender to him, probably more to annoy the besieging party, now deprived of prisoners, than to surrender to such a renowned knight.⁵⁶

In this chapter we have outlined the factors that led to the birth and rise of the tournament proper, a sport barely distinguishable from actual warfare, which simultaneously served as both a training and substitute for the real thing. For some it was an extremely profitable event, and for others it was their end. Two of the great patrons of the late-twelfth-century tournament were Count Philip of Flanders and Count Henry of Champagne, the former a lifelong friend of William the Marshal, and it is here that the contemporary connection to Chrétien de Troyes begins to take shape. Both Philip and Henry's wife, the Countess Marie, were patrons of Chrétien. The tournaments that we have examined here would be those that Chrétien would have known, but as we shall see in the next chapter, however, they are similar to but yet quite different from those about which he writes.

CHAPTER 2:
MARTIAL EPISODES IN THE ROMANCES
OF CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES

Medieval authors of romance were frequently concerned with presenting their works as a pseudo-history, a plausible re-telling of past events, and to help accomplish this aim they were quick to authenticate their stories by citing a source, commonly referred to as a very ancient book. In the *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c.1138) Geoffrey of Monmouth claims he was presented with just such a book by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, which provided Geoffrey with the accounts of Arthur's reign.¹ The last great medieval author of the Arthurian saga, Sir Thomas Malory, and whose work, *Le Morte D'Arthur*,² is filled with a sense of psychological, dramatic realism which greatly exceeds the works that of the works of his predecessors, even in 1470 often refers to a "French book" as his source. Chrétien is no different and in two of his tales, *Lancelot* and *Perceval*, mentions being given a source by his patrons who commissioned these two works, Countess Marie of Champagne and Count Philip of Flanders, respectively.

Chrétien's Arthur and the knights of the Round Table are anachronisms. They wear twelfth-century armor, are victims of courtly love, live in twelfth-century castles and generally lead twelfth-century lives, though their lives are much more adventurous than those of the average twelfth-century king and knight. The fact that the tales are not presented in a sixth-century setting which the real Arthur would recognize reflects the medieval world's faultless lack of understanding of the dark ages, but it also exhibits Chrétien's careful attempt to portray in his romances accounts of courtly life with which his audience could identify and to which it could compare itself. Yet there are numerous examples of

episodes which would seem to his contemporary listeners to be totally fantastic, such as the (greatly toned-down) Celtic-inspired supernatural accounts befalling Arthur's court, or other episodes that the audience would find as plausible elements of courtly life, though not necessarily of the court they know.

Tournaments in Chrétien's romances are one such example. That Chrétien's heroes do not participate in what we have outlined as a typical twelfth-century tournament cannot be overstressed, as the difference between the tournament in his romances and of those of his contemporaries are markedly different, exhibiting an intentional attempt to paint a picture that does not reflect the landscape he sees around him. Whereas the tournaments of William the Marshal's life provided training for war and for the training of cavalry units, Chrétien's tournaments stress the deeds of the individual. Larry Benson calls Chrétien's tournaments "a field of honor,"³ and rightly so as they display individual prowess and serve to magnify one's honor. Chrétien's tournaments are bloodless affairs, and whereas many medieval knights fought for booty, Chrétien's heroes fight for and exemplify more noble and chivalric values, such as honor, prowess, largesse, and the cult of love. Chrétien paints a picture of what chivalry and the way of the knight should be, not just in the instances of tournaments of course, but in the entire knightly ethos and lifestyle. What is so astonishing about this is that in regarding the tournament, he seems in many ways to have succeeded in influencing chivalric culture, though it would be unwise to attribute these developments solely to his writings. Social and political concerns, as we shall see in the next chapter, played a part in the tournament's development. In this chapter, we will examine the tournaments and some scenes of combat from Chrétien's romances, where we will see the similarities and differences between Chrétien's tournaments and the actual tournaments of his era, outlined in the preceding chapter.

EREC ET ENIDE:

Chrétien's earliest romance is *Erec et Enide* (c. 1170). It is the story of Erec, the most praised and handsome knight of the round table,⁴ who after marrying Enide, becomes *recreant*, spending all his time with her, giving up tournaments and an active chivalrous life.

He very seldom went far from her; but never on that account did he give his knights less in the way of arms, dress, or money. There was nowhere any tournament to which he did not send them richly equipped and accounted. Whatever the cost to him he gave them well-rested chargers for the journey and joust. All the nobles declared it a great shame and pity when a man as gallant as he used to be did not wish to bear arms.⁵

Erec is not lacking in largesse, but he is neglecting the order of chivalry, the ideal of prowess, and his position as military leader, and thus is bringing shame upon himself, made even greater by the fact that he is heir to his father's throne of further Wales. Enide, of course, is the unwitting and innocent cause of Erec's *recreance*, and the shame to her is just as great. Enide tells him of the accusations and Erec immediately sets off with only Enide at his side, seeking adventure and the attainment once more of his honor.

Despite the fact that Erec does set out seeking to establish his name once more in feats of arms, Chrétien has him do so not in tournaments but in combat that arises for the knight errant by chance encounters. Since at a tournament Erec could display his prowess to many, that he does not seek the knight's favorite game may at first seem a puzzle. The answer lies, I believe, in Erec's personality and the hierarchical order of combat.

Erec is seeking firstly to regain his honor for himself and for Enide's happiness. He does not simply have friendly jousts with knights he encounters on the road, but defends himself and Enide against criminal knights not worthy of belonging to the ideal order of chivalry. He encounters first a knight "who

lived by robbery"⁶ and who has two companions who covet Enide's palfrey and its dressing which are "worth a thousand pounds in Chartres coin."⁷ Their intention is, of course, is to take Enide as well and to leave Erec in no condition to offer assistance, and so they attack. Our hero fiercely defends himself and in a charge kills the first attacker, puts his lance through the breast of the second, and unseats the third. He takes their horses with him.⁸

Not much further along, another five robber-knights spy Erec and Enide and plan to divvy up the winnings.

One said he would have the maiden or die in the attempt; the second said that the dappled steed would be his, for he wanted nothing more from all the booty; the third said he would have the black one. 'And the white one for me!' said the fourth. The fifth was no coward, for he said he would have the knight's charger and his arms. He wanted to win them in single combat, and so would be the first to attack him.⁹

Chrétien lightly reminds us that "covetousness is an evil thing".¹⁰ This bunch fairs no better against Erec, as four are killed, one drowning under the weight of his horse in a ford. The last, fleeing, abandons his weapons and jumps from his horse. Unarmed and obviously seeking mercy, he is left by Erec, who takes the five horses as his spoils.¹¹ Erec later slays two extremely large, villainous knights who are leading away a knight, Cadoc of Tabriol, whom they have captured, stripped and bound to a horse.¹² Two counts are Erec's victims, one who, while allowing Erec and Enide to stay at his castle, seeks Enide's love, and when she refuses, promises that he would then kill Erec.¹³ The other count, believing Erec dead, forces Enide to marry him and slaps her when she will cease lamenting Erec, who regains consciousness and slays the count.¹⁴

All the men whom Erec kills are guilty of base, criminal, and unchivalric acts, and this is of much greater value to his honor and prowess than feats performed on a tournament field. Although the tournament was a venue for

display of martial prowess, the hierarchical order of combat quite naturally yields more praise to feats performed in war, just as it places more value on tournaments fought *à outrance* than it does on jousts fought with abated lances. The fourteenth-century *Livre de Chevalerie*, written by the French knight Geoffrey de Charny, tells us that “war passes all other manners of arms,” and war fought in a foreign country, such as on crusade, deserves higher praise than war fought on one’s own soil.¹⁵ Although de Charny was writing nearly two centuries after Chrétien, there is no reason to see this as a new concept, though it was perhaps a newly written concept; and if asked, surely Geoffrey (and Chrétien) would place Erec’s victories over base and criminal knights between the tournament and war.

Throughout Erec’s wanderings, the hero makes Enide ride on in front of him and commands her to keep silent. At every sign of danger, she warns him and urges him to defend himself and, when she believes him dead, laments him greatly. With the death of the second count, who had slapped Enide, Erec believes his recreance to have been ended and he knows that Enide loves him and does not consider him a coward. His honor and prowess have been restored in his own mind, but his deeds will not go unknown to others. After being saved by Erec, Cadoc offers to serve and accompany him, but at Erec’s command he goes to Arthur to tell him and the court of Erec’s deeds.¹⁶ His worldly renown is complete when he confronts the adventure of the Joy of the Court at the end of the romance. After defeating and granting mercy to Mabonagrain, Erec is rewarded with the opportunity to sound a horn. If it produces no sound, he will die, but if it does sound, “his reputation and honor will thereby increase and surpass that of all those in the land and he will have gained such respect that everyone will come to honor him and regard him as the best of them all.”¹⁷ With the sounding of the horn, Erec’s reputation is restored for all to behold. To regain this honor he set off alone with his wife defeating the enemies he encountered,

the enemies of chivalry. He did not seek to increase honor flagrantly by seeking tournaments where he could show off in front of all, but instead restored his prowess first in his own eyes and in those of his wife. By overcoming criminal and unchivalrous knights in deadly combat, his successes are of even greater worth than if he had won the prize of many tournaments.

As we shall see, this importance of individual deeds permeates Chrétien's romances, whether it be in tournaments or actual combat, thereby greatly increasing the prowess of the heroes in the eyes of the audience -- and Arthur's court as well. Although Erec does not seek the field of the tournament to overcome his *recreance*, he is naturally as successful at the sport of fighting as he is in actual combat, as we see in the one tournament that appears in *Erec et Enide*, held by Arthur in celebration of Erec and Enide's marriage.

We have already looked at Chrétien's depiction of the opening charge in this passage, where he so vividly describes the thunder of the charge and crashing of the opponent's weapons against one another. Chrétien, though, is not concerned with squadron maneuvers and moves immediately to individual deeds of prowess. He speaks of the knights that Erec unseats, remarking that those who saw Erec joust "were quite amazed and said that anyone who pits himself against so good a knight has to pay too high a price," for when Erec strikes the King of the Red City, he sends him toppling to the ground still in his saddle and the reins still in his hands.¹⁸ Erec bravely and fiercely turns from one opponent to another, but unlike the other knights "his main concern was not capturing horses or riders, but to joust and do well so as to show off his prowess." Although he does eventually capture a few horses and riders, he does so "to discourage his opponents all the more."¹⁹

The theme of developing, earning, and keeping one's honor and reputation through feats of martial prowess is the most prominent issue in

Chrétien's earliest romance. Erec's rise to prominence reaches its zenith following the tournament, as he becomes the most gallant knight of the Round Table and Arthur's favorite, aside from Gawain alone in both accounts,²⁰ but soon falls into *recreance*, which, as we have seen, he overcomes through his martial feats. Prowess, though, is not the only chivalric quality with which Chrétien is concerned, but coupled with honor, they are the dominant themes of this romance. Erec's largesse (not solely his duty as lord) keeps his knights equipped for tournaments, and when a passing squire, knowing that Erec and Enide have spent the night in the woods, invites the two to his lord's court, Erec is quick to reward the squire's generosity with a gift of one of the horses he captured from the robber knights.²¹

CLIGÉS:

Prowess and largesse are again explored in the romance of *Cligés* (c.1176), and although they may take a back seat to the main theme of love, nowhere are they absent in the romance as these chivalric qualities cannot be separated from Chrétien's heroes, who are mirrors of the ideals of chivalry. *Cligés* is actually two stories, the first being of Alexander, heir to the throne of the Eastern Empire, who travels to Britain to serve "the best king who ever was or ever may be in the world,"²² and while there he falls in love with the beautiful Soredamors (Gawain's sister). The second part is the story of Cligés, son of Alexander and Soredamors, and his love Fenice, who is married to his uncle.²³

When the young Alexander requests his father's permission to seek knighthood at the hand of Arthur, he says that he still needs training in arms, and that in such a renowned court and by traveling there, he would have the opportunity to earn even more honor, for

repose and reputation don't go well together; for a man of substance who remains idle gains no renown at all. To a base man prowess is heavy to bear, and to a man of valor baseness is a burden's slave: that's how distinct and opposed the two things are. And a man is a slave to his wealth if he goes on keeping and increasing it.²⁴

The emperor then tells his son to be generous at Arthur's court, as "generosity... is the mistress and queen that gives luster to every virtue"²⁵ and Alexander, giving and spending liberally as befits his wealth and as his heart dictates,²⁶ is praised at Arthur's court for his largesse. When he is presented with the gold cup promised by Arthur to whoever captures the traitor count Angrés, Alexander in turn passes it to Gawain, his closest friend.²⁷

Cligés contains a stunning battle scene when Arthur, aided by Alexander and his Greek companions, besieges the castle held by Angrés. Described are the defences made by Angrés to the interior of the castle and the brutality afforded traitors as Arthur draws and quarters four captured knights whose body parts he distributes over the field. The individual exploits of Alexander in this battle are at the center of Chrétien's storytelling as are those of Cligés following his father's death. Whereas in *Erec et Enide* the martial exploits occur during Erec's wandering, in *Cligés* they are all scenes of pitched battle except for two tournaments, the first between two soon-to-be warring parties. The second tournament, though, is of great concern to us as its influence on actual tournaments will become apparent when we look at the tournament's development in the next chapter.

Fulfilling the promise he made to his dying father, Cligés travels to Britain to seek his great-uncle Arthur and his uncle Gawain and to measure his chivalry. Alexander tells Cligés that "you will never know the extent of your prowess and ability if you don't first put yourself to the test with the men of Britain and

France at King Arthur's court." Cligés is to disguise himself until he has "measured [himself] against the flower of that court."²⁸

Upon arriving in Britain, Cligés hears that Arthur has sponsored a four-day tournament to be held near Oxford. The Greek prince buys three different colored sets of arms and sets off for the tourney. Each day he dons a different set and bravely rides forth for the *commençaïlles*, the preliminary joust, to face the flower of Arthur's court. On the first day he faces Sagremor the Impetuous, a pillar of strength, and Cligés rests only for an hour the entire day. On the second day he faces Lancelot, and Perceval on the third. All three he unseats and captures many others as well, earning the victory each day, but at the end of the day he rides off to his lodging where he displays the arms he will bear the following day, so that no one may find him.²⁹

On the fourth day, bearing his true arms, he jousts in the *commençaïlles* with his uncle, Gawain, who does not know his opponent's identity, but who has caught on that the victorious knight of the previous days was one and the same. Both Gawain and Cligés fall as they strike and immediately draw their swords and fight on foot to a standstill as Arthur stops the contest. Despite the ferocity of the contest, there is of course no anger between these two chivalrous knights and at Arthur's suggestion, Gawain happily invites Cligés to court, where he discloses his identity and releases all his prisoners from the pledges of ransom.³⁰ Thus, Cligés has demonstrated both his prowess and chivalric generosity.

In this tournament Chrétien luminously describes the *commençaïlles*, and although he mentions the *mêlée*, he does not offer us a description, but instead continues his stress on individual deeds and exploits. Only in *Erec* do we actually feel as if we are in the middle of a twelfth-century *mêlée* when Erec rescues Sagremor from certain capture.³¹ However, in *Cligés*, Chrétien introduces us to a concept that is entirely of his own imagination, for we are

told that the combatants do not attack Cligés “two or three at a time, for that was not the accepted custom of the day.”³² It was, however, the custom of Chrétien’s day and, as Benson writes, to Chrétien’s audience it might have seemed “impractical, if not downright silly.”³³ It must have seemed even foolish when Chrétien makes a similar comment in *Erec*, regarding the three robber-knights who attack Erec.³⁴ Why three knights who were planning to rob, rape, and murder would be chivalrous enough to attack one at a time baffles me, and I am certain it must have confused Chrétien’s audience as well. Nevertheless, for Chrétien it was an unchivalrous act for a tourneyer to be attacked by more than one opponent and the tournament will in many ways come to resemble those of Chrétien’s actual imagination, becoming dominated by the joust and being grand examples of largesse. Knights will begin to disguise themselves as Cligés does, and as Lancelot does in *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* (c.1177), Chrétien’s third romance.

LE CHEVALIER DE LA CHARRETTE:

Le Chevalier de la Charrette, or *Lancelot*, is a story of the adulterous relationship between Lancelot and Guinevere, who is rescued by her lover after being kidnapped by Meleagant.³⁵ Whereas Chrétien states his disapproval of adultery in *Cligés* and joins the lovers honestly, he does not show any disapproval of the relationship between Lancelot and Arthur’s queen. In both romances, though, he does seem to jest at the pains suffered by those in love, going so far in *Lancelot* as to make the hero seem foolish by subjecting himself to the ridicule he suffers by entering the cart,³⁶ all in the name of courtly love. There are a few reasons, though, why Chrétien does not condemn the adultery in *Lancelot* or at least show his disapprobation, the first of these being that, as an artist, he simply chooses not to. The patron of this work, Marie, Countess of

Champagne, was a great patron of courtly love, and Chrétien, therefore, might have feared offending Marie if he had openly disapproved of the affair, or that since she provided him with both the *matiere et san*, his views would not fit into the story successfully if he was unable to keep his emotions at bay. Another possibility is that since Chrétien obviously had problems concluding his romances, a view I share with Professor Owen,³⁷ the ending supplied by Godefroi de Lesgni might not be reflective of Chrétien's intentions or personal views.

Lancelot is unlike any of Chrétien's other heroes, as his heart dictates all matters. His prowess is proven through his rescue of the Queen and the defense of her name when Melegant accuses the Queen incorrectly of sleeping with Sir Kay. Lancelot proves his honor by keeping his word to the lady that he will return to his imprisonment immediately if she will release him for the tournament. It is only at this tournament that we see Lancelot concerned about demonstrating his prowess, though he performs to the worst of his abilities at the Queen's wishes.³⁸ When she bids him to do his best, Lancelot "is inflamed with the desire to show off all his prowess."³⁹ He comes to the tournament disguised in red armor since he is supposed to be imprisoned and although he hurries back to the jail to keep his promise, we know that Lancelot is content enough with honoring his Queen and exhibiting his prowess. Horses and ransoms are unimportant.

The tournament in *Lancelot* does not offer us anything new for our study, although it does strengthen the argument for a strong influence of romance on the tournament, as the theme of individual prowess is repeated here, as is the motif of the disguised knight. More importantly, perhaps, it does touch on the subject of the presence of women at the tournament, which greatly increases in the thirteenth century, as we shall see. For now, let us note that this tournament

is not sponsored by Arthur, but by maidens who proclaimed that they will marry the knights who perform well.⁴⁰ The maidens are present,⁴¹ watching the tournament with Guinevere, who attends at their invitation.⁴²

LE CHEVALIER AU LION:

Whereas the majority of Erec's martial encounters occur mostly during his errantry and for Alexander and Cligés in war, Lancelot's occur during his quest and twice against knights guarding a pass, the first being a ford and the second a stone passage. To cross both of these, Lancelot must defeat the pass's mysterious guardian. *Le Chevalier au Lion*, or *Yvain*, (c. 1177) begins in the same manner, as Calogrenant tells of a marvel for which Yvain seeks out. Beside a spring, we are told, there is a *perron*, a large stone mound or slab, where a terrible tempest erupts with lightning, thunder, and hailstones. When it subsides, a knight soon appears to challenge Yvain, whom Yvain mortally wounds. This feature of Arthurian romance, a pass guarded by a mysterious knight who challenges all who seek to pass, will be imitated by the medieval world as well, as rich nobles will issue challenges that they will defend a pass against all comers, as we will discover in the next chapter.

Yvain, possibly written concurrently with *Lancelot* (c.1177),⁴³ explores a storyline directly opposite to *Erec et Enide*. Whereas Erec becomes recreant by not seeking feats of arms, Yvain joins Gawain on the tourneying circuit for fifty-eight weeks and loses the love of his new wife.⁴⁴ Chrétien's thematic opposites here might lie in the source material, shared by the Welsh tales *Geriant Son of Erbin* and *Owein*, or in the fact that Chrétien is acknowledging a happy medium in which both the heroes learn the hard way.

Despite the fact that Yvain tourneys for over a year,⁴⁵ Chrétien does not depict any of the tournaments. Instead, Yvain defeats Esclados the Red at the

spring, overcoming the shame Esclados inflicted on Yvain's family and his cousin, Calogrenant. And later, when Yvain has become the guardian of the spring, he unseats Kay,⁴⁶ avenging himself against the shame suffered through Kay's wicked tongue.

Honor and loyalty become the dominant chivalric themes in *Yvain*, though the ideals still are superseded by love as the dominant theme, as is the case in each of the romances we have looked at previously. By not returning to Laudine by the promised time, Yvain has broken an oath sworn to his wife and betrayed the loyalty that he promised her as well. He overcomes this by becoming a champion to damsels in distress. He first defeats Count Aliers who had wrongfully besieged a lady's castle,⁴⁷ and next, with the aid of the lion he has befriended, slays a giant who is demanding a nobleman's daughter whom the giant intends to see deflowered at the hands of his fiendish friends.⁴⁸ Having discovered that Lunete, who saved Yvain after he slew Esclados the Red, was being accused of treason, Yvain successfully defeats her three accusers⁴⁹ in a judicial duel before liberating a castle of maidens suffering under two demons.⁵⁰

Like Erec, Yvain is seeking the restoration of his honor through the wanderings of knight errantry; but, whereas Erec can demonstrate his prowess to his wife who accompanies him, Yvain is forced to make amends to his love by defending all women who seek his aid. Though honor and service to Laudine are at the forefront of Yvain's mind, Chrétien firmly re-establishes Yvain's prowess at the end of the tale (as he does with Erec), just in case we are still not convinced, by pitting Yvain against Gawain, one's identity unknown to the other. The battle is a draw, and when they learn one another's identity, both are quick to concede victory to the other.⁵¹ Erec's honor is thus fully restored and he can return to his wife.

LE CONTE DU GRAAL:

Le Conte du Graal (c.1182-1190), or *Perceval*, the last of Chrétien's romances, was left unfinished at his death and thus leaves us with many unanswered questions about its themes and Chrétien's motives. The first part of the story concerns Perceval's introduction to and initiation into the order of chivalry, a fitting theme since the work's patron, Count Philip of Flanders, a friend of William the Marshal, was himself a flower of chivalry. *Perceval* is the only one of Chrétien's romances in which the way of the knight is thematically dominant over love. Love is far from absent in the romance, as the scene in which Perceval stares into the snow dreaming of Blancheflor attests,⁵² but it could be that the courtly love motif is just a part of the initiation into chivalry. Although the poem was left unfinished, it would be wrong, I feel, to suggest that Chrétien would have made love the primary theme had he finished the romance. Perceval's immaturity causes him to fail to ask the questions at the Grail Castle and thus once his chivalric qualities have developed and matured, the completion of the Grail Quest was to have been the climax of the romance.

It is in *Perceval* that the grail makes its first appearance in Arthurian literature. Although it would come to be seen as the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper and in which Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood dripping from Christ's wounds, these Christian interpretations would not become dominant until they appear in the continuations of Chrétien's romance, written after his death, and in Robert de Boron's *Joseph d'Arimathea* (c. 1192). Chrétien does not make it clear whether his grail (from Old French *grail*: a deep, wide serving dish) is a mysterious magical object or a Christian symbol.⁵³ Despite whatever might have been Chrétien's intention, it does seem clear that his grail is related in origin or inspiration to a Celtic magical cauldron or serving dish.⁵⁴

Perceval's schooling in the order of knighthood is put to the test during his period of knight errantry, and like Yvain he becomes a champion of women besieged or treated in a malicious manner. He does not deny mercy to those he vanquishes. He sends his prisoners to Arthur's court to tell Kay that the Seneschal will suffer for slapping the laughing maiden who said to Perceval, "I am convinced that in the whole wide world there will not be, nor has there been, nor will anyone ever hear of any knight better than you."⁵⁵

The second half of the romance deals almost entirely with Gawain's adventures. In the introduction to his translation of Chrétien's romances, D.D.R. Owen briefly states that he believes the story of Perceval and that of Gawain to be two separate romances, partially because he feels that "Chrétien had a target length for each of his major romances of something near 7000 lines,"⁵⁶ whereas the unfinished *Conte du Graal* stretches past 9000. The switch of focus from Perceval to Gawain occurs at about line 4741 when Perceval vows to seek the Grail and Gawain vows to defend a damsel whose castle is besieged. Perceval reappears briefly when he encounters a hermit who tells him who is served by the grail and of its holiness.⁵⁷ As Owen notes, this brief, hastily inserted episode's authenticity is questionable,⁵⁸ and at the center of the debate then is Chrétien's meaning of the grail.

Gawain, like Perceval and all of Chrétien's heroes, accomplishes most of his feats of arms in hostile combat and, as we have seen, martial deeds performed in this context were due higher praise than those in a tournament. However, the Gawain section contains a tournament which is of great interest to us. The tournament is proposed by Meliant of Liz against Tibaut of Tintagel. When Gawain hears this, he replies, astonished, "God! But wasn't Meliant of Liz brought up in Tibaut's house?"⁵⁹ Meliant's act is a complete breach of his allegiance to Tibaut, his foster father; and, if we remember, in 1169 Baldwin of

Hainault joined against his ally, Philip of Flanders (Chrétien's sponsor for this romance), and Philip attacked Baldwin's forces. Tibaut's counselors, too, see this tournament as possible cover for war, urging their lord to cancel the tourney.⁶⁰ To guard against the possible eruption of war, Tibaut has all but one of the entrances to the castle walled up.⁶¹

However, a *vavasour* of Tibaut tells his lord that he sees a knight of the Round Table and that "even one can win a tournament," urging his lord not to cancel the tournament. He continues, "...my advice would be for us to go confidently to the tourney, because you have good knights, good men-at-arms, and good archers who will kill their horses."⁶² We have already noted the presence of footsoldiers at tournaments, but archers and crossbowmen are another matter. References to their participation are scant, but a monk of Montauden remarks that one thing he hates to see in a tournament is the use of "darts and quarrels" (arrows and bolts).⁶³ The employment of archers and crossbowmen in a tournament was not seen in a favorable light,⁶⁴ and it is easy to see why, as their presence would be extremely dangerous in an already dangerous sport, the object of which was not to maim or kill. If the use of archers was somehow controlled enough only to bring down horses, the knights would not be exceedingly happy at the slaughter of their prizes. It might be that projectiles were used only in tournaments which actually were a cover for war or in tournaments of extreme violence; or, perhaps the presence of archers was used as a visible show of strength by one side for the tournament to be kept a tournament and not to evolve into an actual battle. Each of these possibilities apply to this tournament in *Perceval*.

Whatever their purpose, in reality or for Chrétien's intentions, we are told that at the end of the day, "there had been many knights made captive and many horses killed."⁶⁵ Unfortunately, Chrétien has supplied a small detail on which he

does not elaborate. We do not know if the horses are killed by lance, sword, or arrows, but as he only mentions in this tournament the use of archers, whose purpose it is to bring down horses, and it is only in this tournament that he writes of horses being killed, we can cautiously assume, I believe, that the horses are indeed felled by archers.

This slaughter is not in keeping with Chrétien's tournaments, which are in all other cases bloodless affairs; but, this is unlike any of Chrétien's tournaments in the fact that the threat of real battle evolving from the sport is seen with suspicion by the court of the challenged lord. The presence of archers, the death of horses, and the mentioning of the presence of merchants⁶⁶ might make this tournament in some ways seem the most accurate of Chrétien's tournaments, though it is the least descriptive, both visually and verbally. Another view is that even though Chrétien does not condemn the archers' presence, by simply mentioning them, he causes his audience to frown upon their participation and he thus sets this tournament apart from the truly chivalrous tournaments held by Arthur and his court in the other romances.

Gawain only joins the tournament on the second day at the urging of the Maiden with the Small Sleeves, who beseeches him to be her champion.⁶⁷ He refrains from entering the contest the first day because he fears being delayed by injury or captivity from answering a charge of treason leveled against him.⁶⁸ The damsel who asks him to fight seeks a champion to avenge the shame inflicted upon her by her elder sister, Meliant's lover. When the Maiden with the Small Sleeves proclaims Gawain to be more handsome than Meliant, she is slapped by her elder sister.⁶⁹ Gawain of course cannot and does not want to deny the Maiden with the Small Sleeves and unhesitatingly grants her wish. On the second day of the tournament, he rides forth in the *commençailles* to face Meliant of Liz, whom

he unseats.⁷⁰ He presents Meliant's horse to the maiden and send the others that he captures to the family of the lord who housed him the previous night.⁷¹

Gawain leaves the field at midday and is still proclaimed the victor of the tournament.⁷² He has demonstrated his courtesy, largesse, and prowess, while avenging the shame suffered by the Maiden with the Small Sleeves. He has avenged himself as well, for on the first day, while sitting beneath a tree and watching the tournament, he hears the ladies accusing him of cowardice and saying that he must be a merchant dressed as a knight, hoping to escape the levy which merchants were forced to pay at tournaments.⁷³ Like all of Chrétien's heroes before him, he has also defeated a villain, whose challenge against his lord would have been viewed by Chrétien's audience as treasonous.

The rest of Gawain's martial exploits occur during his wanderings, and he is constantly faced by adversaries who have a mortal hatred for him. At the court at which he is accused of treason for killing the lord without a challenge, the townspeople besiege the castle and try to kill him.⁷⁴ His horse is stolen by a knight whom Gawain, as a penalty for kidnap or rape,⁷⁵ forced to eat with the dogs on the floor.⁷⁶ At the Perilous Ford he meets Guiromelant (whose father was slain by Gawain's), who challenges Gawain to a duel in a week's time.⁷⁷

It is at this time, unfortunately, that Chrétien seems to have died, leaving us with many unanswered questions. Both the story of Perceval and the exploits of Gawain are the most complex of Chrétien's tales and their conclusions would seem to lie in a direction thus far unexplored by Chrétien. Is the *graal* the cup of Christ or a non-Christian and perhaps magical symbol; and, what is Perceval's destiny and his relation to the *graal*? Likewise, what is the meaning of the lance with bleeding tip, argued by some to be the spear of Longinus used to pierce Christ's side at this Crucifixion, which will destroy Logres?⁷⁸ And why is Gawain confronted by so many who hate him, unlike the unknown knights who

challenge our heroes in the other tales? Sadly, we will never know Chrétien's intentions.

Although *Le Conte du Graal* leaves many unresolved mysteries, Chrétien's romances provide us with a wealth of descriptive examples of the forms of martial combat and the ideals that motivated the heroes and which, quite importantly, make them flowers of chivalry. We have seen that although love is a dominant theme in all the romances except *Le Conte du Graal*, the ideals of chivalry, namely prowess, largesse, honor, and courtesy, are the foundations of the stories and of the knights themselves. Chrétien's heroes are ideal examples of chivalry, possessing all the chivalric qualities, and they are quick to aid those who need or seek their help, being victorious against villains and oppressors.

The heroes demonstrate their prowess in a variety of settings: tournament, war, judicial duel, against guardians of a pass, and against villains lurking in the forests and on the road; but, always Chrétien stresses the deeds of the individual. His tournaments are presented in an extremely realistic and accurate manner, while at the same time differing slightly from those of his own era and of his patrons. He presents ideals and the ideal tournament: bloodless, chivalric affairs. His audience might even have found them surprising, for they are stories of individual contests, in which the hero is the main feature and the unit-oriented aspect of the tournament is totally absent. Ransom is rarely taken, captured horses are given away and blood is never spilt. Chrétien's tournaments are truly "a field of honor"⁷⁹ and exemplify the ideals of chivalry much more than the real sport. His characters, tournaments, and the emphasis he places on individual deeds and jousting were to have a deep effect on the tournament and the knightly ethos. He paints a picture of an ideal knight, an ideal tournament, and an ideal court. Never did he think these ideals would be reached, but his

influence in the development of the tournament is astounding. Other writers followed his examples and, as we shall see in the next chapter, the medieval world quickly responded to these more chivalric and individualistic notions, and at times directly and intentionally imitated Arthurian romance.

CHAPTER 3: THE INFLUENCE OF ARTHURIAN ROMANCE ON THE TOURNAMENT

In the thirteenth century the influence of Arthurian romance on the development of the tournament begins to take shape, chiefly in that the deeds of the individual become the center of attention and the concepts of prowess, largesse, and courtly love become prime motivators for the knight, as they are for Chrétien's heroes. The tournament was to become in most instances a better regulated, less dangerous event, a bloodless affair like those of romance.

At times they became elaborate spectacles in which the participants appear dressed as characters from Arthurian romance, and the participating role of women grows tremendously due to imitation of romance and the influence of courtly love, which is of course directly tied to romance. To credit all these developments to Arthurian romance, though, would be incorrect, for games of martial combat fought *à outrance* did not cease to exist and the tournament could be used as a powerful political tool. Nonetheless, from the early thirteenth century, the tales of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table were the backbone of the tournament's evolution, due to the stress that Chrétien de Troyes and his successors placed upon individual honor and prowess.

The tournament in England underwent continual periods of approval and disapproval of the English monarch, the strongest central authority during the tournament's early history. It is generally believed that Henry I (1100-1135) prohibited tournaments in England, and though William of Newburgh attests the prohibition in his *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* (1198)¹ the declaration has not survived. Apparently, however, English knights were not forbidden from tourneying on the continent, as we have seen in the charter of Osbert of Arden, during the reign of Henry I, which refers to the painted lances he carries

overseas for tournaments.² William of Newburgh also states that the royal prohibitions were not as effective during the weak reign of Stephen (1135-1154), as there is evidence of tournaments during the civil war.³ The sons of Henry II (1154-1189) were avid tourneyers, and Henry seems to have allowed some tournaments in England under the watchful eyes of his sons.⁴

The disapproval seems to stem from the potential hazards of violence and destruction that could arise from a tournament, but the ascension of Richard I (1189-1199), called Richard the Lion-Heart (*Coeur de Lion*), brought to the throne an avid participant of the tourneying circuit. In 1194 Richard issued a decree licensing tournaments in England in five places: between Salisbury and Wilton (Wiltshire), Warwick and Kenilworth (Warwickshire), Stamford and Warinford (Suffolk), Brackley and Mixbury (Northamptonshire) and Blythe and Tickhill (Nottinghamshire). Juliet Barker notes that all these areas lay within the most stable parts of the kingdom, i.e. not near the western or northern marches where royal authority was at its weakest.⁵

When Richard issued this decree, he had just returned from his captivity in Austria, having pledged a ransom of 100,000 marks to Emperor Henry VI. Although a *scutage* levied on his subjects helped to pay the ransom, the fees charged to all tourneyers and the fines levied against those who failed to pay the licensing fee were of great financial help to Richard, his treasury depleted by the crusade, the ransom, and his wars against Philip II (Augustus) and Richard's youngest brother John. Each tourneyer was charged ten marks for the license and an additional fee was charged according to rank: twenty marks for an earl, ten marks for a baron, four marks for a landed knight, and two marks for a landless knight. Foreign knights were not allowed to tourney in England, as it would be impossible to fine a foreigner who tourneyed without a license. The fines could

be extremely hefty, as Ralph Fitzstephen discovered in 1200 when he was ordered to pay £20.⁶

The writ also states that upon setting out for a tournament, tourneyers were sworn not to break the peace and were to take nothing by force from merchants. If two parties were involved in a feud, they were sworn not to carry that feud into the tournament. The royal forests and vineyards were also protected from devastation arising from a tournament.⁷ Richard's decree was the first of its kind and sought to minimize the potentiality of the worst possibilities arising from certain aspects of the tournament.

Although the licensing act of 1194 did not in any way affect the actual rules of the tournament, Edward I's *Statuta Armorum*, issued in 1292, did limit the number of armed squires to three serving each knight in the tournament and each of these three were to wear their lord's arms and were allowed to carry only a blunted sword. Foot soldiers and servants were not allowed to carry any weapons, but were allowed to wear light armor for their protection; and all spectators were forbidden to wear any armor or to carry any weapons.⁸ The *Statuta Armorum* was issued at the request of some of the barons and earls,⁹ and although it did not prohibit the knights in any manner, it, like the writ of Richard I, did further seek to secure the peace during and after the tournament.

Although Edward was a strong supporter of and an avid participant in tournaments, he, like his predecessors and successors, found it necessary at times to prohibit tournaments during periods of war, such as in 1302 and 1306 when the king was at war with Scotland.¹⁰ A warring king needed as many healthy and experienced soldiers as he could get, and if the king was on a foreign campaign, such as Richard I's wars in France and in the Holy Land, a prohibition prevented a large gathering of armed men who could have treasonous motives against an absent monarch. The sponsorship of tournaments, on the other hand, could also

yield tremendous political advantages and Edward I was the first English monarch to discover this, as he frequently sponsored round tables.

THE ROUND TABLE:

The round table is one of the most blatant imitations of the Arthurian legends found in the history of the tournament. The round table would begin and end with a large feast, and singing and dancing would continue long into the night after the tournament. Two thirteenth-century French romances, *The Prose Tristan* (1232)¹¹ and the *Sone de Nausay* (1235)¹² present the round table as a better-regulated and friendlier combat than the tournament proper, and abated weapons were always used in round tables.¹³ The thirteenth-century monastic historian Matthew Paris refers to the round table as being chivalrous, drawing a clear distinction between it and the tournament.¹⁴ As we shall see, the round table would frequently be an enormous spectacle, an elaborate display of largesse, and its participants would sometimes include costumed nobles playing various parts of the characters of the Arthurian legends.

The earliest round table of which we hear occurred in Cyprus in 1223, at which the knights "*contrefirent les aventures de Bretagne et de la Table Ronde, et moult manieres de jeus.*"¹⁵ Nine years later, Henry III prohibited one, which is the first time the term *round table* appears in England in this context.¹⁶ Edward I's first round table was held at Nefyn, Wales, in 1284, to celebrate the conquest of Wales, and another was held in 1302 at Falkirk, the sight of Edward's victory over the Scots and William Wallace four years earlier. In 1278 the monks of Glastonbury Abbey discovered a grave supposedly containing the bodies of Arthur and Guinevere, and Edward and his queen, Eleanor, journeyed to the abbey on pilgrimage to witness the reinterment of the bodies in front of the high altar.¹⁷ Also in 1284, Edward celebrated the birth of his son by holding a round

table at Caernarvon, Wales, and the monarch was crowned with the recently discovered crown of Arthur.¹⁸

The political implications surrounding these events are immense. Firstly, the discovery of Arthur's grave was a message to the Welsh that the legendary king of the Britons was not coming back to help them. Secondly, the round tables were a symbol of Edward's might, wealth, power, and prestige. The celebrations at Nefyn and Caernarvon were a sign of victory over the Welsh, who had supported Simon de Monfort in the Baron's war of 1264-1265, just as the round table at Falkirk marked a victory over the Scots who had allied with France and who had rejected Edward as overlord. Thirdly, the holding of a round table and the seizure of Arthur's crown marked Edward as Arthur's rightful heir. The capture of the crown, though, was more than an attempt by Edward to associate himself with the legendary Arthur. As conqueror and subjugator of the Welsh, Edward viewed possession of the crown as a right of victory, the same authority which led to the confiscation of the Scottish crown from King John Balliol (1292-1296) and to the removal of the Scottish coronation stone of Scone to Westminster in 1296.

The round table held at Canterbury, in 1299, is one of the most colorful of Edward's reign. Edward and his courtiers rode into the combat playing the part of Arthur and his knights. At the following feast, as Lodewijk van Velthem's chronicle (1316)¹⁹ tells us, a battered squire entered, saying that Arthur and his court were cravens, challenging them to avenge the attacks he had suffered at the hands of the Welsh. Later, a second squire arrived with a letter from the king of Iran, who pronounced "Lancelot" a traitor and challenged him to a fight. A loathly damsel (a squire in elaborate disguise), from the pages of Chrétien's *Le Conte du Graal* and later works, arrived next, commanding "Percheval" to ride to Leicester to take the castle from its lord, who was bullying his neighbors. She

also tells “Walewein” to go to Cornuaelge to end the conflict between the lords and commoners.²⁰

Roger Sherman Loomis sees these challenges as being representative of the major events of Edward’s reign, events which by the date of the round table Edward had dealt with successfully. The brutal conquest of Wales is alluded to in the first squire’s challenge, and Loomis argues that Irant is actually Scotland, the subjugation of which was the focus of the latter years of Edward’s reign. The Earl of Leicester was Simon de Monfort, leader of the baronial party, and Kenilworth, which Loomis argues is Cornuaelge and which fell to Edward I and prince Edward, was a stronghold of the rebel barons.²¹

In the article “Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast,” where Loomis makes these arguments, he writes not of the political advantages that Edward gained from associating himself with Arthur, but notes that during this period, the tales of the knights of the Round Table were in vogue.²² The thirteenth century witnessed the writing of some of the most popular and influential of all Arthurian romances. This was the period of the great prose romances such as the prose *Tristan* and the *Vulgate*, or *Lancelot-Grail*, cycle, and Arthur was surely all the rage. As we have seen, in 1223 a round table was held in Cyprus, and in 1240 Ulrich von Liechtenstein, discussed below, went on a jousting tour dressed as King Arthur. For Edward, however, he had the fortune of being King of Britain, as was Arthur, a connection that Edward’s grandson, Edward III, would further in his attempt to refound the Round Table and in his creation of the Order of the Garter.²³

Unlike his father, Edward II (1307-1327) was neither an able military commander nor a patron of or participant in chivalric sports. After the murder of Piers Gaveston in 1312 by angry nobles who committed their crime under the guise of holding a tournament, Edward frequently prohibited tournaments.²⁴

The ascension of Edward III (1327-1377) brought to the English throne another great patron of tournaments, round tables, and hastiludes. Even more than his grandfather, Edward I, Edward III turned to the cult of Arthur as the thematic inspiration behind many of the tournaments of his reign, thereby associating himself with the great king and his court with the Round Table and Camelot. Following his great round table in 1344 at Windsor, Edward's birthplace and the legendary site of Arthur's round table, Edward refounded the Round Table and received an oath from the 300 knights present whom he had chosen to join to imitate the chivalrous deeds and values of Arthur's Round Table.²⁵ An actual round table was to be constructed at Windsor in direct imitation of the *franc palais* in *Perceforest* (c.1300-1344). Both the *franc palais* and the building which would house Edward's Round Table were 200 feet in diameter²⁶ and both sat 300 knights²⁷ Construction was begun immediately but proved to be too expensive to the royal treasury, depleted by expenses arising from Edward's campaigns in France.

ROLE-PLAYING AND DISGUISED APPEARANCES:

In 1334 Edward III sponsored a tournament to be held at Dunstable, but Edward is curiously not included in the 135 participants in the *Second Dunstable Roll of Arms*. However, a mysterious Sir Lyonel is found and his arms match those supplied to Edward. Juliet Vale sees Edward's choice of Lionel, Lancelot's cousin, due to the presence of lions in Edward's royal arms, though they are technically leopards.²⁸ Edward named his second son Lionel and the prince seems to have been granted the traditional arms associated with the Lionel of Arthurian romance.²⁹ To appear in disguise at a tournament was a practice of Edward III and it reminds us of Cligés who appears in different arms each day. Edward appeared in two tournaments in 1348 in the arms of Sir Thomas de

Bradestone and Sir Stephen Cosington.³⁰ At a three-day series of jousts in 1414 in the Calais marches, Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, issued challenges to three French knights, revealing himself differently in each letter, first as the Green Knight with the black quarter, and as the Chevalier Vert, and lastly as the Chevalier Attendant. Each day he wore the arms of a different ancestor.³¹ Following a day of jousting in 1225 at Freisach, Ulrich von Liechtenstein (whose costumed jousting tours we will look at below) appeared on the second day of the joust clad entirely in green, as was his retinue.³² The changing of arms not only brings to mind Cligés but is also reminiscent of *le bel inconnu* (the fair unknown), a Celtic motif which entered into the Arthurian saga in figures such as Perceval and Galahad. The feats performed by disguised knights could only be due to one's prowess instead of reputation or rank. We have to wonder just how seriously the disguised jouster kept his identity hidden, but we should not be doubtful of serious attempts to appear incognito.

Perhaps one of the grandest thirteenth-century tournaments, and certainly one of the best documented of all, occurred at Le Hem in Picardy in 1278, sponsored by Aubert de Longueval and Huart de Bozentin. No *mêlée* was held, possibly due to Louis IX's prohibitions of tournaments, but the festival did feature two days of jousting. Le Hem was entirely Arthurian in its theme and was captured in verse in *Le Roman du Hem*, by the minstrel Sarrasin. In the poem we hear that Queen Guinevere, played by Longueval's sister, presided over the affair. *Le chevalier au lion* (Robert of Artois) was present, complete with lion, and sent defeated knights to his queen. A knight was required to bring a damsel with him, imitating the rarely companionless knight errant of romance. The purpose of the jousts was to give the knights opportunity to champion a damsel who was being beaten by her lover for declaring the Knights of the Round Table to be the most noble of all.³³

Arthurian role playing was not limited just to tournaments and round tables, but also occurs in examples of more individualistic contests, such as jousts and challenges, which were becoming increasingly popular throughout the thirteenth century, doubtlessly due in part to the importance placed upon individual feats of arms by the writers of romance. In 1493 at Sandricourt, Duke Louis Orleans assembled a host of knights and fitted them each with the arms of one of Arthur's knights and with armor of antique design. Each knight was to be accompanied by a damsel and a dwarf³⁴ and they rode through the "waste forest" outside the castle to seek "chance" encounters.³⁵

Some of the most colorful accounts of a costumed knight-errant that we have are the tales of Ulrich von Liechtenstein, a thirteenth-century Bavarian knight who went on two jousting tours and later wrote them up in his *Frauendienst* (*Service of Ladies*). In 1227 Ulrich set out on his *Venusfahrt* traveling from Italy to Bohemia and dressed in drag as Frau Venus, issuing a challenge to all comers to joust with Ulrich in honor of his lady. A gold ring was presented to all who broke three lances. If Ulrich won the contest, the defeated knight was to bow to the four corners of the earth in honor of Ulrich's love, but if Ulrich was defeated, the victor won Frau Venus' horses. According to his own testimony, Ulrich broke 300 lances in one month.³⁶ In 1240 the Bavarian knight, dressed as King Arthur, set out on another jousting tour, in honor of a new lady, promising all who could break three lances with him would be invited to join his Round Table. His companions in the *Artusfahrt* likewise assumed names of Arthurian characters.³⁷ We gather from Ulrich's jousting tours that a system of scoring had developed and a judge was present to rule the contest. Unlike the twelfth-century *mêlée*, being unhorsed in a joust meant instant defeat, for in the *mêlée* the participant was not officially captured until he acknowledged so or was in a position where he could not argue the point.

The story of Ulrich von Liechtenstein provides us with a very important contrast between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and acts as a stepping stone to other developments in the tournament's history. Ulrich's contests were individual jousts, like the numerous accounts at which we looked in the romances of Chrétien. Already, by the middle of the thirteenth century, a greater importance was being placed upon individual feats of arms than they had enjoyed before. The death of the *mêlée* would not actually occur for another century, but it was being edged out slowly by knights like Ulrich who sought to honor their ladies, to demonstrate their prowess, and to increase their honor through individual contests.

JOUSTS AND CHALLENGES:

By the mid-fourteenth century, the joust had all but replaced the *mêlée* as the most usual form of the tournament. In England, Edward III sponsored all forms of *hastiludes*, but particularly the joust; and, there is good evidence that the twenty-four members of the Order of the Garter, which he founded in 1344 or 1349, actually comprised two twelve-member tourneying teams, particularly in the 1350's and 1360's.³⁸ An annual joust called the *Roys de l'Espinette* (King of the Thorn) or *L'Epervier d'Or* (The Golden Sparrowhawk) was held in Lille since 1278 and its prestige and importance led it to be exempt from a prohibition on jousts issued in 1338 by Philip IV of France.³⁹ The winner of the joust received a golden thorn, symbolizing a thorn from the crown of Christ, and the victor seems to have been invited back the next year to participate in the opening ceremonies.⁴⁰ The festival was also referred to as the Festival of the Lord of Joy in direct imitation of the episode of "the Joy of the Court" from Chrétien's *Erec et Enide*.⁴¹

From 1361 to 1365, Peter I of Cyprus jousted throughout Europe while seeking support for another crusade. In 1363 he arrived in England where Edward III honored him with a joust at Smithfield and Peter attended a joust in France in celebration of the coronation of Charles VI the following year. Emperor Charles VI honored him with a tournament in Prague in 1364, and a few months later, the Emperor joined him in the lists in Cracow.

Jousts such as these were always fought with abated weapons, but as we saw in the examination of the martial exploits of Chrétien's heroes, feats of arms performed in war were worth greater praise than those of a tournament. Likewise, a joust fought *à outrance* would garnish more praise than a joust fought *à plaisance*. There is no shortage of the jousts of war in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the propensity for these to occur between warring nations was great, especially between the English and the French or Scots. The elaborate jousts with their pageantry and rules had removed the tournament from a feeling of warfare, but those who sought a more dangerous form of combat found it easily.

One of the most famous of such a combat occurred in 1351 at Ploermel, Brittany. Known as "the Combat of Thirty," thirty French knights fought on foot against an equal number of English with an unlimited choice of weapons *à outrance*, with the result of six French and nine English fatalities.⁴² In 1390 when the English and French were under a truce during the Hundred Years War, three French knights proclaimed a jousting festival at St. Inglevert in the Calais marches, offering a choice of jousts fought *à plaisance* or *à outrance*. This joust was open to all comers, but the majority of challengers were English, all of whom fought *à outrance*; but, unlike at Ploermel, there were neither fatalities nor serious injuries.⁴³

The English found the Scots to be as anxious to enter combat fought with weapons *à outrance* as were the French. In 1338 Henry, Earl of Derby, challenged twenty Scots to joust *à outrance* against twenty English knights. When the Scottish captain, Alexander Ramsay, proposed that the jousters should carry plain shields, Henry replied that no honor could be earned if one could not be identified. Both sides suffered fatalities and the knights who dealt mortal blows were awarded prizes from the opposing team.⁴⁴ In 1393 four English and four Scottish knights traveled to London under license of Richard II to fight a joust of war on London Bridge, first with lances and next on foot with daggers. The victorious Scots were awarded prizes by the English king.⁴⁵

As challenges such as these naturally arose between neighboring garrisons, individual challenges also developed. These too were fought with weapons of war, were similar to duels and were thus presided over by a lord; but, as the chronicle of one such challenge tells us, the contest was fought "without any defamatory quarrel, but solely to acquire honor."⁴⁶ In 1408 the seneschal of Hainault wrote to Henry IV of England, seeking to fight twelve courses with sword on horseback and another twelve each with sword and axe on foot against three Knights of the Garter, as the Order of the Garter was the successor to the Round Table. When Henry replied that it was foolish to challenge more than one knight at a time, the seneschal consented to fighting just one man, provided that the number of courses would be tripled.⁴⁷ Challenges such as these were a means for young knights to earn honor and to demonstrate their prowess. The presence of the king or his representative assured that the casualties would be kept to a minimum as he had the right to stop the contest.

PAS D'ARMES:

Perhaps the most interesting martial contest to arise in the late middle ages is the *pas d'armes* (passage of arms), in which a knight or group of knights issued a challenge to defend a pass or site against all comers with weapons *à outrance*. The origin of such a motif is difficult to ascertain, for we have seen examples of the *pas d'armes* in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes. Esclados the Red is the guardian of the *pas* in *Le Chevalier au Lion* and Yvain in turn becomes the guardian after defeating Esclados and marrying his widow. The *pas d'armes* became a stock motif in Arthurian literature, but, curiously, it is not until the late fourteenth century that it becomes a form of martial pastime. However, the *pas* was not an invention of Chrétien's. The *Alexiad* of Anna Comnena mentions a French knight in Constantinople in 1096 who says:

at the crossroads in the country where I came from there stands an old sanctuary, to which everyone who wishes to fight in single combat goes ready accounted, and there prays to God while he waits in expectation of the man who will dare to fight him. At those crossroads I have often tarried, waiting and longing for an antagonist.⁴⁸

As Maurice Keen notes, "the *pas* was a kind of re-enactment of a classic military situation" and was a motif of early epic.⁴⁹ Probably the most famous literary pass, and one about which every medieval knight would know, is the pass at Roncesvalles, where Roland and the rear-guard were slaughtered. However, although the rise of the *pas d'armes* seems natural in the context of the tournament, one would have expected it at a much earlier date. Imagine the stories Ulrich von Liechtenstein could have recorded if, on his jousting tours, he kept coming across guarded passes as well.

The *pas d'armes* can be viewed as the climax of the various forms of contests in the evolutionary history of the tournament, in which knights

gradually more and more sought to perform individual deeds of prowess. Like the round table and the great joust before it, the *pas* was extremely theatrical and Arthurian themes frequently appear in its history. We have already looked at the *pas d'armes* at Sandricourt in 1493 where the knights bearing arms of various knights of the Round Table entered the waste forest seeking chance encounters. Frequently found in the *pas* is a *perron*, a large stone or pillar, on which hung different shields which would indicate either the type of weapon to be used or the defenders of the *pas*, and the touching of one shield would indicate the weapon chosen and the defender challenged. In *Le Chevalier au Lion*, beside the basin at the spring is a *perron* over which Yvain pours the water from the spring, causing the tempest and Esclados the Red to appear.

The *Pas du Perron Fee*, held in Gruges in 1463, “came to be” as Philip de Lalaing “happened by” a *perron* one day, and, after blowing the horn hanging from the *perron*, was taken prisoner by a dwarf who served the Lady of the Perron Fee. His condition of release stated that Philip was to hold a *pas d'armes* at the court of the Duke of Burgundy. Before the combat, he would be released from the *perron*, in which he had been imprisoned, and Philip would return to the *perron* afterwards. He faced forty-two challengers over a period of three weeks, at the end of which a damsel in the service of the Lady of the Perron Fee unlocked the *perron*, setting Philip free and enabling him to hold a feast to celebrate the end of the *pas d'armes*.⁵⁰

Philip's uncle, Jacques de Lalaing, held a splendid year-long *pas*, the *Pas de la Fontaine de Pleurs*, near Chalon su Saone in 1449. A pavilion was set up, at which a herald would be present on the first day of each month to accept challenges. Also, there was a model of a woman with a tear-stained dress and a unicorn from whose neck hung three shields, also covered with tears. The different colored shields indicated not only the weapon of choice, but a penalty

imposed upon the challenger if he lost. Touching the white shield indicated choosing to fight with an axe. Defeat meant having to wear a golden bracelet until the challenger found the lady who had the key to unlock it, at which time she was to be presented the bracelet. A sword combat on foot was fought if the violet shield was touched, and if forced to the ground, the defeated knight was to present a ruby to the most beautiful woman in the realm. Choosing the black shield indicated twenty-five courses with the lance, and if unhorsed, Jacques's lord, Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, was to be presented with a lance by the loser. At the end of the *pas* the challenger who had fought best with each weapon would receive a golden replica of the weapon with which he fought. Twenty-two combats were fought, and at the end of the year, a feast was held and the prizes were awarded. The Lady of the Fountain appeared and told Jacques that his service to her was finished, thus ending the *pas*.⁵¹

WOMEN AND TOURNAMENTS:

The *pas d'armes*, like the Round Table, often included women participating in the theatrical elements and questions the presence and the role of women in the twelfth-century tournament and the influence that romance had on this role. Unfortunately, these issues are largely ignored by scholars, and although I cannot provide a definitive study here, I do believe that women were present at twelfth-century tournaments in some capacity, and hopefully my ideas can support this belief. We find in two of Chrétien's romances, *Lancelot* and *Perceval*, women as spectators at the tournament. In the case of the former, it is the maidens of the court who have organized the event. The question that faces us asks if the presence of women is an example of Chrétien's authentication or actual imagination.

In *Le Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, women are mentioned as being present at the tournament at Joigni (1180), where William is found entertaining the dancing ladies with a song before the mêlée.⁵² The poem reports that the countess had come, attended by a train of beautiful maidens and ladies, to watch the event.⁵³ During the festivities following the tournament at Pleurs in 1177, it is “a lady of high degree,”⁵⁴ possibly Countess Marie de Champagne,⁵⁵ who presents the prize of the tournament. In the *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1136), Geoffrey speaks in the tournament passage of the ladies watching the event from the walls, arousing the men with their flirtatious behavior;⁵⁶ and, in his condemnation of the aristocratic sport, one of the most valuable pieces of evidence for the presence of women during this era, Innocent II (1130-1143) says that the role of women at a tournament encourages lust.⁵⁷

That such a frail number of references to the presence of women exists from the tournament’s early history should not deter us from believing that women were indeed there. After all, we rarely hear at this time of just exactly who participated and fell in the sport. Although Chrétien does not mention women at the tournament in *Erec et Enide*, we are told that the participants carry love tokens into the mêlée, as does Gawain in *Perceval*. Would not then the women be watching their champions in *Erec et Enide* as they do in *Perceval*? It seems clear, therefore, that women were often present at the early tournament, which rises at the same time as the cult of love, although their role was most probably limited to being spectators. However, by the thirteenth century, they became a central part of the tournament and its branches, as they are clearly present not only as spectators but even as participants, as we have seen above, in the costumed festivities of the round tables, jousts, *pas d’armes*, and gala tournaments sponsored by great lords. We can view this development as a more

indirect influence of Arthurian romance, intertwined with the influence of courtly love.

In this chapter we have examined the various forms of the tournament that evolved from the mêlée-oriented event of the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries that so resembled actual warfare. We have seen that at times it became a theatrical spectacle, and at others it still resembled actual warfare. In all its forms, however, it harked back to Arthurian romance whether it be in the more chivalrous round table, the rise of the joust, the *pas d'armes*, and the emphasis placed upon individual deeds, or in direct imitation of the Arthurian world. Although in many ways the later tournaments look nothing like those in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, in other ways they look exactly the same.

CONCLUSION

The power and magic of Arthurian romance is uncanny, but does it surprise us at all that it had such a profound effect upon the tournament? Perhaps being second only to the Bible, the saga of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table is one of the most popular stories in Western society. For over eight centuries, generation after generation has reinvented the saga and characters in literature, art, film, opera, and popular music.

Chrétien presented Arthur's court as the mirror of the most perfect and blessed of Christian kingdoms. He wrote the romances around the courtly life he knew, but changed some aspects of it, presenting the nobility's tournament as being more exemplary of chivalrous ideals than it actually was. Chrétien's tournaments were bloodless and good-natured affairs, demonstrations of prowess, largesse, and *courtesie*. The heroes' aim is not gain but honor, and still we see Cligés blush when he is praised by his tournament captives.¹

Medieval society quickly responded to Chrétien's tournaments and in many ways successfully imitated them. The effects of the stress that he places upon individual deeds of prowess can be seen in the rise of the joust, the *pas d'armes*, and other hastiludes of individual combat. And although political goals were behind much of the patronage of tournaments by kings such as Edward I and Edward III, it was also an imitation of the largesse displayed by Arthur. It was expected of the greatest and most powerful nobles to be both sponsor and participant. It was an expression and inspiration of chivalric ideals to which those who served them must subscribe.

The nobility went much further than seeking to express and follow the ideals that made Arthur's court the flower of chivalry. As we have seen, the participants frequently donned the roles of the characters of the Arthurian tales.

Scenes from the tales and the *perron* from the *pas* were frequent and the appearance of mysterious, unknown, or disguised knights appears throughout the various games. And it is perhaps the rise of the *pas d'armes* that is one of the strongest manifestations of the influence of Arthurian romance on the tournament.

Because of the elaborate display, costumes, and expenditure of some of these events, many scholars have come to regard the later history of the tournament as nothing more than a game played by costumed nobles and which was unrelated to the sport's original purpose of military training. Looking at events such as the jousts of war and the *pas d'armes*, fought *à outrance*, lends strong opposition to that argument. Although the value of military training from the fourteenth-century tournament can be seen as somewhat less than that of the twelfth-century tournament, what else explains the total and complete death of the tournament other than the fact that the changes in warfare, weapons, armor, tactics, and military status of knighthood made the tournament a useless pastime, especially when considering the costs and dangers?

Professor Ruth Huff Cline believes that the attention given to and inspiration drawn from Arthurian romance in the thirteenth century reflected a belief that chivalry was in a process of decay² and that feudalism was dead,³ and therefore the nobility sought to revive chivalrous ideals through "an appeal to Arthurian tradition."⁴ I do not believe this to be the case, for chivalry and feudalism were not to reach their highest point for quite some time. The medieval world was constantly looking backward for examples, to the Bible, Greece, Rome, Troy, and to Charlemagne and to Arthur. In the early thirteenth century, when the effects of Arthurian romance on society began to be felt and seen, chivalry was still in a stage of development. The romances and their heroes served a model. Thus, the tournament, which was becoming more and more

popular, evolved into a more chivalrous and courtly activity than it had been in Chrétien's day. The imitative relationship between art and life had come full circle.

NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS:

All abbreviations below refer to Chrétien de Troyes: *Arthurian Romances*. Trans. D.D.R. Owen. London: Dent, 1987.

Owen/CdT: Owen's introduction and notes to Chrétien de Troyes' *Arthurian Romances*

Erec: Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide*

Cligés: Chrétien de Troyes' *Cligés*

Lancelot: Chrétien de Troyes' *Le Chevalier de la Charrette*

Yvain: Chrétien de Troyes' *Le Chevalier au Lion*

Perceval: Chrétien de Troyes' *Le Conte du Graal*

CHAPTER 1: THE EARLY TOURNAMENT:

1. Barker, Juliet R.V.: *The Tournament in England 1100-1400*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1986, p. 5.
2. Keen, Maurice: *Chivalry*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 83.
3. Barker, p. 5.
4. Keen, p. 83.
5. Barker, p. 6.
6. Keen, p. 84.
7. Geoffrey of Monmouth: *The History of the Kings of Britain*. Trans. Lewis Thorpe. London: Penguin Books, 1966, ix, 14, pp. 229-230.
8. Benson, Larry: "The Tournament in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes and *Le Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*." *Chivalric Literature*. Eds. Larry Benson and John Leyerte. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1980, p. 3.
9. Keen, p. 84.
10. Barber, Richard and Juliet Barker: *Tournaments, Jousts, Chivalry, and Pageants in the Middle Ages*. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989, p. 6.
11. Barker, p. 71.
12. Barber and Barker, p. 6.
13. The Normans employed this manoeuvre in 1066 at Hastings and successfully drew the Anglo-Saxon army from their hill position. See R.A. Brown's "The Battle of Hastings" in *Anglo-Norman Warfare*. Ed. Matthew Strickland. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1992, pp. 161-181.
14. Comnena, Anna. *The Alexiad of Princess Anna Comnena, Being the History of the Reign of Her Father, Alexius I, Emperor of the Romans, 1081-1118*. Trans. E.A.S. Dawes. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967, X, 122-123.
15. It was not uncommon for the *quintain* to be dressed as a Saracen.
16. Recent scholarly study has been re-examining the role and value of the foot-soldier in medieval warfare and Juliet Barker notes their importance in resisting a cavalry charge, as well as the importance of archers, whose task it was to send the enemy into disarray, thus providing an opening for a cavalry charge (p. 20). We have also seen that foot-soldiers were present at and a part of the eleventh- and twelfth-century tournament, though this would change in the thirteenth century.
17. Barker, 19. (HGM ll. 1417-1422. Cf. ll. 2497-2500.) When referring to *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* (HGM), I will cite the source I have used and the line numbers of the poem to which the citation refers. *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* has not been translated into English. The Anglo-Norman French text is printed in a three-volume work by P. Meyer (*Société de l'Histoire de France*,

Paris, 1891-1901), the last volume of which is a modern French translation of the poem. Sidney Painter's work, *William Marshal: Knight-Errant, Baron, and Regent of England*, cited below, is virtually a rendering into English of Meyer's modern French translation with historical analysis added. The cited ll. of HGM refer to Meyer's Anglo-Norman text.

18. Verbruggen, J.F. *The Art of Warfare in Western Europe During the Middle Ages: from the 8th Century to 1340*. Trans. Summer Willard and S.C.M. Southern. Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Company, 1977, p. 31.

19. Bloch, Marc: *Feudal Society*. Trans. L.A. Manyon. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961, II, pp.293-299.

20. Verbruggen, p. 30.

21. As important as the *Histoire* is to the scholar of the tournament, John Gillingham argues in his article "War and Chivalry in the History of William the Marshal" (*Anglo-Norman Warfare*, ed. M.J. Strickland, pp. 251-264) that the poem's use as a source for the study of warfare has long been ignored by scholars despite the fact that nearly three times as many lines deal with warfare than tournaments.

22. Prince Henry was called the Young King because he was crowned in 1170 at such an early age and during his father's lifetime and reign. Prince Henry's crowning was one of the final disputes between Henry II and Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury (1162-1170), as the coronation was not performed by the archbishop as tradition demanded. On Christmas Eve, 1170, Becket condemned all those involved who were involved in the Young King's coronation to damnation. Five days later, he was murdered. For the full story, see Frank Barlow's *Thomas Becket*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1986.

23. If a group of knights captured a lone knight or an enemy group of knights, the winnings would be equally divided. In this instance, therefore, we can assume that William and a teammate together captured a knight and divided the value of the horse.

24. Painter, Sidney: *William Marshal: Knight-Errant, Baron, and Regent of England*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982, pp. 21-24. (HGM ll. 827-1380.)

25. *ibid*, p. 24. (HGM ll. 1381-1512.)

26. *ibid*, pp. 40-41. (HGM ll. 3381-3424.)

27. Barker, p. 173.

28. Verbruggen, p. 26. Cf. Barker, p. 174.

29. Barker, p. 174.

30. Contamine, Philippe: *War in the Middle Ages*. Trans. Michael Jones. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1984, p.96.

31. Verbruggen, p. 27.

32. Verbruggen, p. 26-27.

33. Barker, p. 174.

34. Painter: *William Marshal*, pp. 42-43. (HGM ll. 3884-4284.)

35. Barker, p. 25.

36. Keen, p. 86. Cf. Richard Barber: *The Knight and Chivalry*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970, p. 189.

37. Barber and Barker, p. 19.

38. Barker, p. 173.

39. Keen, p. 87.

40. *ibid*.

41. Barker, p. 173.

42. Keen, p. 87.

43. *ibid*. Cf. Barber, p. 188.

44. Barker, p. 48.

45. *ibid*, p. 47.

46. Barber and Barker, p. 29.

47. Keen, p.84. Cf. Barber and Barker, p. 17.

48. Painter: *William Marshal*, p. 43. (HGM ll. 4971-4976.)

49. Barker, p. 75.

50. Barber and Barker, p. 17.
51. *ibid.*
52. Keen, p. 85.
53. *Erec*, p. 30. The French edition which I have consulted is Chrétien de Troyes: *Romans*. Trans. J.M. Fritz, et. al. *Librairie Générale Française*. Paris: *Le Livre de Poche*, 1994. This edition is in Old French with a facing-page translation into present-day French and contains Chrétien's *chansons*, his *Philomena*, an introduction, bibliography, and an index of proper names.
54. Barber and Barker, p. 23. (HGM ll. 2715-2775, 3681-3683.)
55. Painter: *William Marshal*, p. 40. (HGM ll. 2875-3164.)
56. *ibid.*, pp. 42-43. (HGM ll. 3884-4284.)

CHAPTER 2: MARTIAL EPISODES IN THE ROMANCES OF CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES:

1. Geoffrey of Monmouth: *History of the Kings of Britain*. Trans. Lewis Thorpe. London: Penguin Books, 1976, i, x, p. 51.
2. Malory actually titled his work *The Whole Book of King Arthur and of His Noble Knights of the Round Table*, but William Caxton, who first printed it, used the title of the last tale, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, as the title of the entire book.
3. Benson, Larry: "The Tournament in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes and *Le Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*. *Chivalric Literature*. eds. Larry Benson and John Leyerte. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1980, p. 14.
4. *Erec*, p. 2.
5. *ibid.*, pp. 32-33.
6. *ibid.*, p. 37.
7. *ibid.*, p. 38.
8. *ibid.*, pp. 37-39.
9. *ibid.*, p. 39.
10. *ibid.*
11. *ibid.*, pp. 40-41.
12. *ibid.*, pp. 58-59.
13. *ibid.*, pp. 44-48.
14. *ibid.*, pp. 61-64.
15. Keen, Maurice: *Chivalry*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 12.
16. *Erec*, p. 60.
17. *ibid.*, p. 77.
18. *ibid.*, p. 29.
19. *ibid.*, p. 30.
20. *ibid.*, pp. 30-31.
21. *ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
22. *Cligés*, p. 97.
23. Chrétien clearly does not approve of adultery and the story is set-up as an anti-Tristan, as some scholars view it. The author therefore keeps Fenice chaste and contrives a plan for the two lovers to be untied. Fenice is quick to tell Cligés that she will not be spoken of as an Iseult (p.164).
24. *Cligés*, p.95.
25. *ibid.*
26. *ibid.*, p. 98.
27. *ibid.*, p. 122.
28. *ibid.*, p. 127.
29. *ibid.*, pp. 154-158.
30. *ibid.*, pp. 158-160.
31. *Erec*, p. 30.
32. *Cligés*, p. 158.

33. Benson, p. 17.
34. *Erec*, p. 38.
35. The inspiration for this episode is a Celtic motif, the *aithed*, in which a woman is kidnapped and then taken to an otherworldly home. The *Vita Sancti Gildae* (before 1160) by Caradoc of Lancarvan tells of Guinevere being kidnapped by Melwas, King of the Summerworld, and imprisoned in the City of Glass. See Owen's note on p.512 to l. 641 and Roger Sherman Loomis' *Arthurian Romance and Chrétien de Troyes*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1949.
36. Owen/CdT, p. xii. Some of course would argue this point. The cart, as Chrétien says, was used at this time to transport thieves, murderers, and knights defeated in a judicial duel (p. 189).
37. *ibid*, p. xiii.
38. *Lancelot*, pp. 260, 263.
39. *ibid*, p. 264.
40. *ibid*, p. 257. In another jest at the pains suffered for love, these maidens, all longing for a husband, want Lancelot and no other; but, Lancelot's heart lies with Queen Guinevere, much to her amusement (p. 266).
41. *ibid*, p. 260.
42. *ibid*, p. 257.
43. There are three references in *Yvain* to the abduction of Guinevere and that Gawain is absent from court because he has set off to rescue her.
44. *Yvain*, pp. 317-318.
45. This would not be unusual. William the Marshal tourneyed for a year and Edward III for two.
46. *ibid*, p. 311.
47. *ibid*, pp. 321-325.
48. *ibid*, pp. 335-338.
49. *ibid*, pp. 340-342.
50. *ibid*, pp. 356-358.
51. *ibid*, pp. 363-367.
52. *Perceval*, pp. 429-430.
53. It could of course be both a Christian symbol and a magical object. On the meaning of the Grail, see Jean Frappier: *Chrétien de Troyes et le mythe du Graal. Étude sur Perceval ou le Conte du Graal*. Paris, 1972.
54. See D.D.R. Owen: *The Evolution of the Grail Legend*. Edinburgh, 1968, and Loomis' *Arthurian Tradition and Chrétien de Troyes*.
55. *Perceval*, p. 388.
56. Owen/CdT, p. xiii.
57. *Perceval*, pp. 457-460.
58. Owen/CdT, p. 525.
59. *Perceval*, p. 438.
60. *ibid*, p. 439.
61. *ibid*.
62. *ibid*.
63. Painter, Sidney: *French Chivalry: Chivalric Ideas and Practices in Mediaeval France*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1940, p. 48.
64. Keen, p. 85.
65. *Perceval*, p. 442.
66. *ibid*, p. 441.
67. *ibid*, p. 445.
68. *ibid*, p. 441.
69. *ibid*, pp. 440-441.
70. *ibid*, p. 447.
71. *ibid*, p. 448.
72. *ibid*.
73. *ibid*, pp. 441-442.

74. *ibid*, pp. 450-456.
75. The actual charge is obscure, for Greoreas is only said to have taken a damsel "by force."
76. *Perceval*, p. 468.
77. *ibid*, pp.488-491.
78. *ibid*, pp. 455-456.
79. Benson, 14.

CHAPTER 3: THE INFLUENCE OF ARTHURIAN ROMANCE ON THE TOURNAMENT:

1. Barker, Juliet R.V. *The Tournament in England 1100-1400*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1986, p. 7.
2. *ibid*.
3. *ibid*, p. 8.
4. *ibid*, p. 9.
5. *ibid*, pp. 53-54.
6. *ibid*, p. 55.
7. *ibid*, pp. 55-56. At the tournament following the coronation of Philip Augustus in 1179, the HGM (ll. 3385-3386) mentions the destruction of the vineyards by the chargers in the mêlée.
- Painter, Sidney: *William Marshal: Knight-Errant, Baron, and Regent of England*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982, p. 46.
8. *ibid*, p. 57.
9. *ibid*.
10. Keen, Maurice. *Chivalry*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 97.
11. Löseth, Eilert, ed. *Le Roman en Prose de Tristan*. Paris: E. Bouillon, 1890, p. 139.
12. Cline, Ruth Huff. "The Influence of Romance on Tournaments in the Middle Ages." *Speculum*. Vol. 20, 1945, p. 206.
13. Keen, p. 93
14. Cline, p. 206.
15. Barker, p. 88.
16. Barber and Barker, p. 30.
17. Carly, James. *Glastonbury Abbey: The Holy House at the Head of the Moors Adventuorous*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1988, pp.35-36.
18. Cline, p. 207.
19. See Roger Sherman Loomis' "Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast" in *Speculum*, Vol. 28 (1953), pp. 119-121 for Loomis' argument about Lodewijk's treatment of the events regarding this round table.
20. Loomis, p. 118.
21. See Loomis, pp. 119-121 for his reasoning of equating Irant with Scotland and Cornuaelge with Kenilworth.
22. Loomis, p. 114.
23. See Julie Vale's *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and Its Context 1270-1350*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1982.
24. Barker, p. 48.
25. Cline, p. 207.
26. Barker, pp. 93-94.
27. *ibid*. Cf. *Le Roman de Perceforest*. Trans. Jane H.M. Taylor. Geneva: Droz, 1979, ii, 120.
28. Vale, Juliet. *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context 1270-1350*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1982, p. 68.
29. *ibid*, p. 69.
30. Barker, p.86.
31. *ibid*, p. 88.
32. Cline, p. 206.
33. Keen, p. 93.

34. *ibid*, p. 204.
35. *ibid*.
36. Ulrich von Liechtenstein. *Ulrich von Liechtenstein's Service of Ladies*. Trans. J.W. Thomas. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1969.
37. *ibid*.
38. Boulton, D'Arcy J.D. :*The Knights of the Crown: the Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Late Medieval Europe, 1325-1520*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, p. 151.
39. Barber and Barker, p. 46.
40. *ibid*, p. 42.
41. *ibid*, p. 46.
42. *ibid*, p. 41.
43. Froissart, Jean: *Froissart's Chronicles*. Trans. and ed. John Jolliffe. New York: The Modern Library, 1968, xiv, 57.
44. Barker, p. 159.
45. Barber and Barker, p. 125.
46. *ibid*, p. 128.
47. *ibid*.
48. Comnena, Anna. *The Alexiad of Princess Anna Comnena, Being the History of the Reign of Her Father, Alexius I, Emperor of the Romans, 1081-1118*. Trans. E.A.S. Dawes. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967, X, 10.
49. Keen, p.203.
50. Barber and Barker, p. 121.
51. Keen, pp. 201-203. Cf. Barber and Barker, pp. 118-120.
52. Benson, Larry: "The Tournament in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes and *Le Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*." *Chivalric Literature*. Eds. Larry Benson and John Leyerte. Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1980, p. 22. (HGM I. 3480.) Cf. Painter, p. 41.
53. Benson, p. 22. (HGM II. 3455-3463.)
54. *ibid*. (HGM I. 3085.)
55. Painter: *William Marshal*, p. 40.
56. Geoffrey of Monmouth: *The History of the Kings of Britain*. Trans. Lewis Thorpe. London: Penguin Books, 1966, ix, 14, pp. 229-230.
57. Strickland, Matthew. Class Lecture. War, Chivalry, and Lordship. University of Glasgow. Michelmas term, 1993.

CONCLUSION:

1. *Cligés*, p. 160.
2. Cline, Ruth Huff. "The Influence of Romance on Tournaments in the Middle Ages." *Speculum*. Vol. 20, 1945, p. 208.
3. *ibid*, p. 206.
4. *ibid*, p. 207.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

abated: blunted. See *à plaisance*.

à outrage: weapons of war. In the tournament proper and in many forms of hastiludes, including the fifteenth-century *pas d'armes*, the weapons used in the sport were no different than those used in actual combat.

à plaisance: weapons of peace. A name applied to weapons with blunted edges so as to minimize the risk of injury. Almost always used in round tables and behourds.

armes courtois: see *à plaisance*.

aventuras quaerare: seeking adventure, whether it be in peaceful hastiludes or acts of war; often inspired by love and the essence of knight errantry in romance and reality.

barrier: a wooden structure which divided the paths of jousts and prevented the horses from striking one another; also referred to as the tilt from the fifteenth century.

behourd or bohort: by the fifteenth century, this was a common name for hastiludes. From the twelfth to the fifteenth century, it usually refers to an informal tournament announced at the spur of the moment. Normally it was fought *à plaisance* with only a lance and shield. It was frequently participated in by squires and held for celebratory occasions.

berfroise: the wooden spectator stands at a tournament.

commençaillies: also *encommençaillies*. The preliminary joust fought between two knights, each a member of opposing tournament teams, in the field between the two bodies.

conflictus gallici: an early term used by English chroniclers to refer to tournaments.

coronal: a lance-head used in jousts *à plaisance* instead of a pointed lance-head. The coronal had three or four blunt projections which prevented piercing and distributed the blow amidst a greater surface area, thus reducing the risk of injury

couched lance: a mid-eleventh-century development in striking with a lance, so called because the lance was tucked between the body and the upper arm. The couched lance enabled the user to carry a heavier, stronger lance, with which he could strike without having to release the weapon.

course: in the *pas d'armes* or in a challenge, a course refers to a single blow. Therefore, if the combat called for 10 courses fought with sword, ten blows would be exchanged. In a joust, a course refers to a single pass of the combatants, regardless of whether contact was made.

feste: a jousting competition lasting usually lasting one or two days, followed by feasting, dancing, religious services, and processions. A leader (*roi*) would be chosen, and he and his predecessor would be the two principle figures in the hastiludes. The tournament at Le Hem (1278) was called a feste, as tournaments were then illegal. The name first appears in the last quarter of the thirteenth century and becomes increasingly more frequent. These were regular occurrences in Ghent, Lille, and Bruges.

hastilude: a game with spears, and therefore a generic term for tournaments of all types.

Hohenzeuggetsch: a fourteenth-century German style of jousting of which the object was to splinter lances. Therefore, light lances were used and the knight rode in a standing position in a waist-high saddle which extended down to cover the legs and which was held in place by a bar around the thighs.

joust: refers to an encounter fought with couched lance between two knights. By the mid-thirteenth century, the joust had replaced the *mêlée* as the principle form of combat in a tournament.

largesse: (ME *largesse*, from OF *large*;) to the knight, the chivalric quality of giving liberally.

lists: the area of combat in a tournament. For the tournament proper, the lists would extend over several miles. In jousting it refers to the enclosed area where the joust would take place. By the fifteenth century it refers to the long, path on which the joust was run.

matter of Britain: the three matters of medieval literature are those of Britain, France, and Rome, referring to the legends and stories of Arthur, Charlemagne, and Alexander, respectively.

mêlée: the centerpiece of the tournament proper; an encounter between two teams of armed combatants both in tournament and in war.

pas d'armes: passage of arms. A fifteenth-century combat in which an individual or group would proclaim to defend a pass, natural or artificial, against all comers. Like the round table, the participation of women in the spectacle was frequent and feasting traditionally followed the close of the event. Generally, these were fought *à outrance* and were normally held for chivalric love, but often for nationalist attitudes. The fourteenth-century usage of the term refers simply to a feat of arms.

pavo: another name for the *quintain*.

peacock: another name for the *quintain*.

perron: a pillar which is frequently found in *pas d'armes* and on which hung shields, the striking of which would indicate the opponent to be fought and the weapon to be used.

pile: another name for the *quintain*.

prowess: (ME *prouesse*, from OF *proesse*;) to the knight, a chivalric ideal referring to extraordinary ability in feats of arms.

quintain: a pole with one or two arms from which hung a target. The *quintain* provided training in striking with a couched lance.

recets: roped-off safe havens in *mêlée*-oriented tournaments where a participant could seek refuge, rest, tend wounds, or take prisoners.

recreance: cowardly, or weak. In medieval literature being *recreant* often refers to a man who has abandoned the pursuit of combat at his wife's command or because, like Erec, he does not want to leave her side.

roche or rochet: see coronal.

round table: a chivalric gathering at which *hastiludes* occurred. Feasting was central to the round table and singing, drinking, and dancing usually followed the combat which was generally fought *à plaisance* due to its celebratory nature. The attendance was usually of international character and Arthurian imitation was frequent.

Scharfrennen: a fourteenth-century German style of jousting of which the object was to unhorse one's opponent. A heavy lance was used and there were no front or rear saddle supports.

socket: see coronal.

solempne jousts: a name sometimes used by chroniclers to refer to a joust fought *à plaisance* and held in celebration of noble births and marriages.

tenant or tenans: in the various forms of the tournament, a name applied to those who would defend an area, usually the individual or group who proclaimed the event.

tilt: an English term meaning to joust. From the fifteenth century it refers to the barrier which separated the two jousters and their horses.

tournament: a generic name which often refers to a wide variety of forms of planned martial combat, such as the *mêlée*, the round table, and jousting, fought between two teams under set rules which governed conduct.

tournament proper: a modern name used to distinguish the original tournament of the eleventh century in which the principle event was the *mêlée* from the generic usage of the term "tournament" which can refer to a vast array of *hastiludes*.

vavasour: a feudal lord who has vassals beneath him but who holds his land under a superior lord or knight.

venant or venans: the opposite of *tenant*; the besiegers.

vespers: often held in the evening before the tournament proper, this was sort of practice run for the main event. To minimize the risk of injury, weapons and armor were limited. Younger and less-experienced knights found this to be an opportunity to gain experience. also referred to as vigils.

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