



# The Conte du Graal Cycle: Chrétien de Troyes's Perceval, the Continuations, and French Arthurian Romance (Gallica)

*Thomas Hinton*

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Chrétien de Troyes's late twelfth-century Conte du Graal has inspired writers and scholars from the moment of its composition to the present day. The challenge represented by its unfinished state was quickly taken up, and over the next fifty years the romance was supplemented by a number of continuations and prologues, which eventually came to dwarf Chrétien's text. In one of the first studies to treat the Conte du Graal and its continuations as a unified work, Thomas Hinton considers the whole corpus as a narrative cycle. Through a combination of close textual readings and manuscript analysis, the author argues that the unity of the narrative depends on a balanced tension between centripetal and centrifugal dynamics. He traces how the authors, scribes and illuminators of the cycle worked to produce coherence, even as they contended with potentially disruptive forces: multiple authorship, differences of intention, and changes in the relation between text, audience and book. Finally, he tackles the long-held orthodoxy that places the Perceval Continuations on the margins of literary history. Widening the scope of enquiry to consider the corpus's influence on thirteenth-century verse romances, this study re-situates the Conte du Graal cycle as a vital element in the evolution of Arthurian literature.

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