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Chrétien de Troyes in Prose: the Burgundian Erec and Cligés (Arthurian Studies)

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Chrétien de Troyes in Prose: the Burgundian Erec and Cligés (Arthurian Studies)
In the middle of the fifteenth century two anonymous writers "translated" into prose Chrétien de Troyes's first verse romances, Erec and Cligés (dating from the twelfth century), for the circle of Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy. For a long time unfairly dismissed as trite and slavish renderings of Chrétien's masterful narratives, the prose Erec and Cligés actually merit careful study in their own right, for these Middle French reworkings adapt the earlier romances to fit the interests of the fifteenth-century public. The authors updated not only the language but also the descriptions of chivalric exploits, tourneys, and siege warfare; furthermore, they showed real ingenuity in the way they modified the story line, clarifying motivation, rescripting characters, and shortening many of the descriptions. The romances offer valuable insights into the evolution of Arthurian romance, the history of reception of Chrétien's work, and the mentality and culture of one of the most remarkable courts to flourish in the late middle ages. This volume presents the first English prose translations of the writings, accompanied by an introduction presenting the historical, cultural, and literary context, and notes. Joan Tasker Grimbert is Professor of French at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC; Carol J. Chase is Professor Emerita of French at Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois.

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