

Erec et Enide

1. Li vilains dit an son respit
2. que tel chose a l'an an despit
3. qui molt valt mialz que l'an ne cuide;
4. por ce fet bien qui son estuide
5. atorne a bien quel que il l'ait;
6. car qui son estuide antrelait,
7. tost i puet tel chose teisir
8. qui molt vandroit puis a pleisir.
9. Por ce dist Crestiens de Troies
10. que reisons est que totevoies
11. doit chascuns panser et antandre
12. a bien dire et a bien aprendre;
13. *et tret d'un conte d'avanture*
14. *une molt bele conjointure*
15. par qu'an puet prover et savoir
16. que cil ne fet mie savoir
17. qui s'escience n'abandone
18. tant con Dex la grasce l'an done:
19. d'Erec, le fil Lac, est li contes,
20. que devant rois et devant contes
21. depecier et corronpre suelent
22. cil qui de conter vivre vuelent.
23. Des or comancerai l'estoire
24. qui toz jorz mes iert an mimore
25. tant con durra chrestiantez;
26. de ce s'est Crestiens vantez.

The peasant says in his proverb
that many a thing one has in contempt
that is worth much more than one thinks;
for this he does well who turns his
study to good, of whatever kind it be;
for he who abandons his study,
may soon keep quite about such a thing
which afterwards would give much pleasure.
For this reason says Chrétien de Troyes
that it is right that always
each should think and strive
to speak well and to learn/teach well;
and he draws from a tale of adventure
a very fine conjoining
thanks to which one can test and know
that he does not do wisely
who abandons his knowledge
as long as God gives him the grace of it:
Of Erec, the son of Lac is the tale,
which before kings and counts
are used to tear apart and corrupt
those who choose to live from telling tales.
Now I will begin the story
which will always be in memory
as long as Christianity lasts;
of this has Chretien boasted.

Cligés

1. Cil qui fist d'Erec et d'Enide
2. Et les commandemanz d'Ovide
3. Et l'art d'amors an romans mist,
4. Et le mors de l'espaule fist,
5. Del roi Marc et d'Ysalt la blonde,
6. Et de la hupe et de l'aronde
7. Et del rossignol la muance,
8. Un novel conte rancomance
9. D'un vaslet qui an Grece fu
10. Del linage le roi Artu.
11. Mes ainz que le lui rien vos die,
12. Orroiz de son pere la vie,
13. Dom il fu, et de quel linage.
14. Tant fu preuz et de fier corage
15. Que por pris et por los conquerre
16. Ala de Grece an Engleterre,
17. Qui lors estoit Bretagne dite.
18. Ceste histoire trovons escrite,
19. Que conter vos vuel et retraire,
20. En un des livres de l'aumaire
21. Mon seignor saint Pere a Biauvez;
22. De la fu li contes estrez
23. Qui tesmoingne l'estoire a voire:
24. Por ce fet elle mialz a croire.
25. Par les livres que nos avons
26. Les fez des anciens savons
27. Et del siegle qui fu jadis.
28. Ce nos ont nostre livre apris
29. Qu'an Grece ot de chevalerie
30. Le premier los et de clergie.
31. Puis vint chevalerie a Rome
32. Et de la clergie la some,
33. Qui or est an France venue.
34. Dex doint qu'ele i soit maintenue
35. Et que le leus li abelisse
36. Tant que ja mes de France n'isse

He who made (the romance) of Erec & Enide
 and the Commandments of Ovid
 and put the art of love into romance=French,
 and did the Shoulderbite,
 (the tale) of King Mark and Iseut the Fair,
 and the metamorphosis of the hoopoe,
 the swallow, and the nightengale,
 Begins now a new tale
 Of a valet who was from Greece
 Of the lineage of King Arthur.
 But before I tell you anything about him,
 You will hear the life of his father,
 Whence he was, and of what lineage.
 He was so valiant and of such high heart
 That to acquire praise and esteem
 He went from Greece to Englang,
 Which at that time was caled Britain.
 We find this story written,
 That I mean to tell and recite to you,
 In one of the books of the collection
 of (the cathedral of) my lord St. Peter at Beauvais;
 From there was the tale drawn
 That testifies the story is true:
 For this reason it inspires more confidence.
 Through the books that we have
 We know the deeds of the ancients
 And of the age that was in former days.
 Our books have taught us this:
 That in Greece there was the the first praise
 Of knighthood and of clergy (learning).
 Then came knighthood to Rome
 And of clergy the height,
 Which has now come into France.
 God grant that it may be maintained there
 And that the spot may please it
 So much that never may depart from France

Prologues by Chrétien de Troyes, 3

37. L'enors qui s'i est arestee.	The honor that has established itself there.
38. Dex l'avoit as altres prestee:	God had (only) lent it to the others:
39. Car des Grezois ne des Romains	For of the Greeks and of the Romans
40. Ne dit an mes ne plus ne mains,	Nobody has a single word to say anymore.
41. D'ax est la parole remese	Talk about them has ceased,
42. Et estainte la vive brese.	And their burning ember has been put out.
43. Chrestïens comance son conte...	Chrétien begins his tale...