Kings and Knighthood; The Military and Political Realities behind Hartmann von Aue's Arthurian Romances

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Kings and Knighthood: The Military and Political Realities behind Hartmann von Aue’s
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Introduction

“Mout doit ester hardis et fiers…bien il siet cil hiaumes bruns Et cil hauberz et cil escuz
Et cil branz d’acier esmoluz. Mout est adroiz sor cel cheval, Bien resemble gentil vassal” –
Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec et Enide*

“For some time, I have wanted to write about Hartmann von Aue’s adaptations of Chrétien
de Troyes’ Arthurian romances. I say adaptation and not translation because, although the plots
in both versions are essentially the same, a nuanced reading reveals many substantial differences
between the two writers. For example, the two quotes above are both from the episode about
Erec’s fight with Ydiers/Iders, but our respective narrators give us two completely different
commentaries about our protagonist. In Chrétien, Erec comes to battle with the best weaponry
and armor that money can buy, distinguishing himself as a noble, wealthy knight. However,
Hartmann changes this completely; his Erec fights with ancient, awkward, and unreliable
equipment for the purpose of emphasizing his lack of wealth. We should not be surprised that
Hartmann wrote adaptations instead of mere translations, because, as we know, both he and
Chrétien wrote for separate, distinct audiences. To elaborate, the difference that I have pointed
out in this episode should be attributed to Hartmann’s connection to knighthood and the reality
that knights were not one, immutable class, but composed of different classes where some
knights had more wealth than others. In contrast, Chrétien wrote from the perspective of a
troubadour and somebody who may not have had the knowledge, necessity, or interest to provide a more realistic portrayal of knighthood. In order to realize that Hartmann’s versions are truly rewritings, we need to keep the history of our authors’ times and their respective periods in mind as we read their works. Otherwise, it would be difficult to understand, for example, why Chrétien and Hartmann treat King Arthur so differently. In both of Hartmann’s romances, he either drastically changes or removes altogether instances of Arthur’s ineptitude as a monarch that we see so clearly in Chrétien. Hartmann’s romances should be read as adaptations because so many things are changed from so many different angles, which I will demonstrate in this thesis.

This thesis has been divided into two chapters. In chapter one, I contrast King Arthur’s distinct portrayals in the Arthurian romances of both authors. These portrayals align perfectly with the politics of the authors’ respective lands, as well as their own ideals. Chrétien’s romances are reflective of his occupation as a troubadour meant to entertain his patron with exciting stories, they evince his comprehension of the monarchy in France, and they accommodate Marie de Champagne in their idealization of women for their virtue and beauty instead of berating them for their chastity and relation to Eve, as was common in preceding literature. Chrétien’s writings were also a part of a literary renaissance in France which indicated new, modern tastes over traditional, ecclesiastical literature. The vernacular was given prominence over Latin, partially because Marie was but one patron who could not read Latin very well and preferred her own language. Hartmann, however, is more interested in writing for a military audience, as his romances are replete with nuances that show his knowledge of technological innovations and calvary. He is also more concerned with glorifying Arthur: where Chrétien criticizes Arthur, Hartmann praises him or removes the criticisms. Hartmann may have
very well been a pro-Hohenstaufen figure; therefore, it was in his best interest to put over Arthur’s authority as much as he could. Religion is also given more focus in Hartmann, particularly because his Iwein stresses the fact that Kardigan is a knightly order founded on a code to fight for and protect the weak in the name of God.

Chapter two focuses on the development of Hartmann’s Erec from young, reckless kneht to an accomplished, humble ritter worthy of taking his father’s throne. Reading Hartmann’s version as a story of development is important because of the parallels between the story and his career in knighthood. Hartmann was a young man of twenty when he had composed his Erec, and thus had probably not been knighted. He was, as he tells us, still a squire, which explains why he refers to himself as a tumben kneht. The young, fledgling kneht managing to defeat older, more experienced adversaries is a dynamic unique to Hartmann’s version, partially because, as I argue, he modifies his source (Chrétien) in order to make Erec a character that he and others like him of his time could identify with. Unlike Chrétien, Hartmann’s Erec ruminates on his lack of wealth and—more importantly—his reputation. He wants to be successful in the tournament because he wants to enhance his largesse and renown. Likewise, Hartmann himself was a ministerales, a class of “unfree” knights who usually served a lord and were eager to prove themselves by competing in tournaments. These points and others will prove that both writers had certain universes in mind when they composed their texts, and it will also provide readers with detailed analyses of several passages that highlight the key differences between these two ineffably important authors.
Chapter I: King Arthur and Knighthood

1.1: Marie de Champagne’s Influence on Chretién and King Arthur

As W.H. Jackson points out, “It is thus possible that the increasingly negative traits in Arthur reflect a change in patronage and target audience in Chretién’s works, from the Plantagenet court of Henry II and Eleanor to the non-royal households of Champagne and Flanders.” As is known, Chretién, like others who had similar occupations in his time, probably received benefits for pleasing his patrons with writing. The latter, Philip of Flanders, is not particularly important here, so I will talk only about Marie de Champagne. Countess Champagne was known for holding a great literary court in the middle of the twelfth century, in which her inability to read Latin well played a role in the emergence of writing and singing in the vernacular. Moreover, because Marie’s husband, Henri the Liberal, left the throne to join a crusade, she obtained full power from her widowhood until her death: around 1179-1198. However, we know that the approximate composition of Chretién’s Erec et Enide is usually dated to 1170, meaning that Henri was still on the throne when it was written. Nonetheless, Marie was a powerful figure even with a king as her husband, as she was able to facilitate literary production in the vernacular; for example, her requests for translations of the Bible are among the oldest known. While it is known that Marie had considerable authority, perhaps the

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2See June Hall McCash’s "Chrétien's Patrons," p. 16.
3McCash, p. 16.
4McCash, p. 16.
intro of *Erec* explains why Chretién assures the reader that he is about to tell a didactic, Christian tale:

“Chrestiens de Troies Que raisons est que totes voies Doit chascuns penser et entendre A bien dire et a bien aprendre, Et trait [d’]un conte d’aventure….D’Erec, le fil Lac, est il contes, Que devant rois et devant contes Depéciert et corrompre suelent Cîl qui de conter vivre vuellent. Des or comencerai l’estoire Que toz jors mais iert en memoire Tant con durra crestientez. De ce s’est Crestiens ventez” (Fritz 28).

Unlike Marie’s taste for secular adventures, Henri preferred religious texts; therefore, perhaps Chretién wanted to assuage any fears that Henri may have had regarding the content of his story. Likewise, it is also possible that “Que toz jors mais iert en memoire Tant con durra crestientez” may have been written as a subterfuge that allowed Chretién to bypass Henri’s predilections and satisfy Marie. Consider, for example, the prologue to *Lancelot*:

“Since my lady of Champagne wishes me to begin a romance, I shall do so most willingly, like one who is entirely at her service in anything he can undertake in this world. I say this without flattery, though another might begin his story with the desire to flatter her, he might say (and I would agree) that she is the lady who surpasses all women who are alive, just as the zephyr that blows in May or April surpasses the other winds” (Kibler 207).

We don’t know for sure if Chretién truly admired Marie this much or wanted to inveigle her for his own benefit, but this does not matter—what does matter is that we are told who has the power in court. It is not the king whom Chretién wishes to please, but Marie. Women—at least in the court—were in a position of power that is shown through Chretién’s words and others. It should be no surprise, therefore, that women in Chretién’s Arthurian romances assume a very different role. They are inspirers, they are powerful, they are benevolent, and they are, in many

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5Chretién believes that men should think and do things with reason, be able to speak well, and teach others. Therefore he has made this great tale of adventure….It is about Èrec, son of Lac, a story ruined by professional poets who spin it out for kings and counts. Chretién knows that this is a story that will live forever in Christian lands.

6McCash, p. 16.

cases, the impetus of the man’s actions. Furthermore, because Chretién was serving a powerful woman, it would not be as useful to write stories about a powerful king. The king, in this political circle of France, was not as relevant as his widow, who had the authority. Now we can understand what Chretién means when he says, “Que devant rois et devant contes Depecier et corrompre sueleent Cil qui de conter vivre vuelent.” Great adventures such as Erec become corrupt when recited by poets to kings and counts—but not when told to Countess Champagne, who, not only appreciated stories of this nature, but was the dominant authoritative figure to whom Chretién wrote.

Now, we must understand what this does to the image of King Arthur and knighthood in Chretién’s romances. As we know, Arthur begins his literary career as the greatest ruler who ever lived. Specifically, in the so-called Nennius' Historia Brittonum, Arthur alone slays 960 enemies and sends the Saxons back from whence they came. Geoffrey of Monmouth embraces this delineation of Arthur in his Historia Regum Britanniae by making him somewhat of a national symbol of Britain, in that Geoffrey goes through great lengths to establish Britain as the national sovereign over Rome. Arthur is the model king: a consummate fighter, a truculent monarch, and one that leaves an indelible mark on Europe with his Round Table. However, Chrétien's Arthurian romances contrast with the bellicose “histories” of Arthur by Geoffrey and Nennius in that Arthur’s character acquiesces to the paradigms of the courtly romance. Courtly romances, for instance, “demanded that the king often step aside when challenged or insulted and permit another to redress the wrongs done to him.” Thus, Arthur is relegated to primarily a background figure, while protagonists such as Lancelot and Yvain accomplish their quests in focused adventures of peril, chivalry, and romance. But Arthur himself is powerless; for

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8See Edward Peter’s The Shadow King; Rex Inutilis in Medieval Law and Literature, 751-1327, p. 173.
example, in the beginning of *Lancelot*, Arthur immediately accepts the knight’s remark that he has “neither wealth nor power enough” (Kibler 208) to ensure the release of his abducted knights. Furthermore, after Kay and Guinevere leave to confront the knight, Arthur does nothing but lament until he is rebuked by Gawain, who insists that they hurry after them. King Arthur’s portrayal as rex inutilis in Chretién’s romances tells us a lot about the audience that Chretién had in mind—the queen and the court, not the king.

Though Arthur is supposed to be a beloved monarch, his actions and authority are scrutinized by his vassals. *Erec et Enide*, for example, begins with Arthur calling a hunt for a white stag, one based on tradition. More importantly, the story begins with Arthur being criticized by one of his most loyal knights, Gawain: “Mon seignor Gauvain ne plot mie Quant il ot la parole ole: ‘Sire, fait il, de ceste chace N’avroiz vos ja ne gre ne grace. Nos savommes bien tuit piec’a Quel costume li blans cers a. Qui le blanc cerf occirre puet, Par raison baisier li estuet Des puecles de vostre cort La plus bele, a que que[e] il tort. Maus en porroit avenir granz: Encor a il ceanz’” (Fritz 30). Gawain’s repudiation of the hunt, then, may represent Chretién’s rejection of traditional monarchy—that is, where the king’s authority must be respected at all times. After Arthur kills the stag and declares that he has earned a kiss, turmoil breaks out in Arthur’s court because Gawain realizes that all of Arthur’s knights will fight for the right to have their lady receive the honorable kiss: “Sire, fait il, en grant esfroi Sont ceanz vostre chevalier.

Tuit parolent de cest baisier: Bien dient tuit qu’il n’iert ja fait Que noise ou bataille n’i ait

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9 As I mentioned earlier, I do not have *Lancelot* in the original. Kibler’s translation will suffice.

10 Sir Gawain was not pleased by these words: “Sire, there is no chance to gain anything from hunting that beast. We know very well how this hunt works. He who kills the white stage wins the right to kiss the most beautiful girl of your court, no matter what offense any man may take to it. It can lead only to evil.

11 Sire, it is obvious that all of your knights are troubled. They talk only about this kiss. They won’t allow it, even if it will lead to arguing and combat.
Having made a terrible blunder, Arthur is exposed as a king who relies too much on tradition and needs the advice of his vassals to help rectify the situation: “Beax nies Gauvains, consoilliez m’en Sauve m’onor et ma droiture, Que je n’ai de la noise cure” (Fritz 50-51).

While I do not suggest that Arthur is not respected whatsoever by his court, it is clear that, in order for this story to be logical, the king must be relegated to a background figure. Arthur’s word does not always carry the absolute authority that one would expect: his weaknesses as a ruler must be explicitly conveyed so that the hero of the story, Erec, can shine more brightly. In addition to Erec, Chretién makes sure that Guinevere has as much authority as Arthur; for example, it is she who persuades Arthur to hold off the kiss out of respect for Erec during the episode in which he is whipped by the dwarf: “Sire, fait la royne au roi, Or entendez un pou a moi: Se cist baron loent mon dit, Metez cest baisier en respite Jusqu’au tier[z] jor qu’Erec reviege” (Fritz 50-52). Not only does Arthur rely on his vassals after he makes careless mistakes that endanger the otherwise halcyon court, Guinevere also assumes the role of arbiter after Arthur exhibits poor judgment. The parallel to Marie de Champagne is more than obvious here, mainly because of the power that both had. Guinevere does not have the power to usurp the king’s authority like she does in Chretién’s romances, because it was written with both the queen and the court in mind.

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12 My dear Gawain, how can I restore both honor and my realm? I was wrong to start this noise.
13 Sire, said the queen to the king. Please listen to me: if your barons will allow it, hold off this kiss for three days and wait for Erec to return.
1.2: The Politics and Military Knowledge behind Hartmann’s *Erec*

Hartmann redeems Arthur for various reasons, namely his occupation as a knight, insider knowledge of knighthood, and his relationship with his lord. As W.H. Jackson points out:

“In short, whereas Chretién’s version of the hunt for the white stag raises matters of political concern in the relationship of king and barons (consultation, counsel, the king’s attitude towards law) and envisages the possibility of armed opposition to a royal decision, Hartmann remotivates the episode to eliminate all these points which restrict the king’s independence and indicate a powerful, potentially fractious baronage, and instead he presents Arthur’s court as a place of unruffled harmony between king and knights.”

Indeed, Hartmann’s *Erec* restores the harmony between king and knights that is disrupted in Chretién. Moreover, Hartmann’s favorable disposition towards Arthur is reflective of twelfth-century politics. During his time, there was a fierce political rivalry between the Zähringen and the Hohenstaufen families in Swabia. It was often difficult to predict which family would be in control; therefore, it would be prudent for poets such as Hartmann to present the king in a favorable light, especially in the eyes of Frederick Barbarossa, who was a strong advocate of knighthood. Jackson elaborates this point more by bringing us to Otto of Freising’s *Gesta Frederici*, the biography of Barbarossa’s grandfather, Frederick of Swabia, and his son, Duke Frederick II of Swabia. This biography features supposedly the earliest reference to a tournament on German soil: “tyrocinium, quod vulgo nunc turnoimentum dicitur,” in spite of the Church’s disapprobation of the tournament, which proves not only that chivalry in Germany was not directly imported from France, but that it actually may have begun in Germany. The

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14 Jackson, p. 23.
15 Jackson, p. 31.
16 Jackson, p. 32.
17 Jackson, p. 33.
issues regarding kingship and knighthood that we read in Arthurian romances are very real indeed.

Hartmann clearly makes a diligent effort to present Arthur as favorably as possible in his Erec. Though the beginning of his version did not survive, it is possible that he changed the episode about the white stag in order to restore Arthur’s independence and eliminate any limitations that we see in Chretién. For example, Guinevere’s request that Arthur delay the kiss in both versions highlights Hartmann’s emphasis on making Arthur’s authority undisputable. Her request in Chretién is made succinctly: it is only five lines long, and afterwards Chretién makes sure to write, “N’i a nul qu’a li ne se tiegne.” All of Arthur’s knights and barons agree with Guinevere, thus disrupting the harmony between them. However, Hartmann greatly changes this part in order to redeem Arthur:


Hartmann extends this scene greatly, turning what was originally a five-line request into a nearly thirty-line lamentation about Guinevere’s concern for Erec. Moreover, there is nothing

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18The surviving story begins with Erec and Guinevere riding up to the dwarf.
19Nobody there disagreed with her request.
20She said, ‘my companion, I will cry to you: both Erec and my maid were beaten. Upset by this beating, he left me in the meadow and said, ‘Believe this, my lady. Until I rectify my shame, I will always be a stranger in Britain and in this land. Whether or not I get revenge, I will return in three days.’ Now is the third day. I have hope and concern for the young man. I could not convince him to stay. May God send him to us. My companion, please don’t make use of your privilege until you have heard tidings about him. At least wait until tomorrow: if he was successful, he will come back.’
mentioned about Arthur’s knights agreeing with Guinevere’s request immediately after she proffers it. In Chretién, Guinevere can easily disrupt the harmony of the court, but in Hartmann she must plead to him and hope that he will be generous enough to consider her request.

Hartmann also makes sure to inform the reader that Karadigan is indeed Arthur’s court by having Yders dismount by a stone placed for Arthur’s convenience: “Yders uf Karadigan gegenwurtic uber den hof reit zuo einem steine, der was breit, ein wenic uf an eine stat von der grede gesat. Der was gemachet uf dem hus daz der kunec Artus da erbeizte unde ouch uf saz” (Pfeiffer 44). And when he bows down to Guinevere, he bows down only to her; he does not bow down to Arthur or his knights, a conspicuous change that was made in order to eliminate the dissonance in Chretién. By bowing only to Guinevere, it shows that his deference stems from his guilt, which is made evident by his 50-line apology in which he exhibits compunction and regret for his transgressions (1208-1260). If one compares this to Chretién, Ydier’s apology seems to be obligatory because it is less than ten lines long and is not even an apology: “Dame, en vostre prison M’envoie ci uns gentis hon, Uns chevaliers vaillanz et prouz, Cil cui fist ier sentir les nouz Mes nains de la corgie ou vis; Outre m’a d’armes et conquis. Dame, le nain vos amain ci En prison, en vostre merci, Por faire tot quanque vos plait” (Fritz 112). He says nothing about being wrong or the grief that he inflicted on Arthur’s court. The only time Ydiers seems to be aware of courtly behavior is when he is defeated by Erec in battle and begs for mercy in order to save his life (990-1000). In Hartmann, Yders seems to be very aware that to insult the court is to

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21Yders is sometimes spelled “Iders,” probably to facilitate pronunciation for English speakers. I am using the spelling that appears in the Brockhaus edition.
22When he had reached Karadigan, Yders rode up to a stone that was broad and sat next to the steps. It was made so that King Arthur could mount and dismount there.
23My lady, a gentlemen sent me here as your prisoner. A brave and proud knight, who was struck on the face by my dwarf. He has beaten me in combat. My lady, I bring you my dwarf as your prisoner, at your mercy. Do whatever you like with him.
insult one’s own reputation as a knight. He is genuinely sorry for his egregious misbehavior, and wants to make amends. In contrast, Ydiers “apology” in Chretién shows that disrupting the harmony of a lord’s court—thereby disrupting knightly life itself—means nothing to him.

In addition to its valuable function as a parallel between Hartmann’s reality and fiction, the Gesta Frederici also aids us in understanding why exactly Hartmann moralizes so much; the difference in emotions and attitudes between the two writers is too conspicuous to be coincidental. Carol K. Bang’s “Emotions and Attitudes in Chretién de Troyes’ Erec et Enide and Hartmann Von Aue’s Erec der Wunderaere” identifies the two elements that pervade the respective texts: joie de vivre in Chretién, and schande in Hartmann. The long episodes of celebration in Chretién are either removed or considerably toned down in Hartmann. Indeed, Hartmann is concerned with humility and modesty, especially considering how there is no counterpart to Erec’s extravagant offers to Enide’s father, the vavassour, the day before he leaves for Cardigan. Instead, Hartmann rebukes characters for their arrogant abuse of knightly status; for instance, Erec specifically criticizes Yders for his excessive pride upon defeating him in combat: “wie ir redet nur so? Ir spottent min ane not. Ja enwoldet ir wan minen tot: so stuende iuch ze ringe iuwer furgedinge und iuwer grozer ubermuot.” (Pfeiffer 36). If we also compare the tournament episode in both versions, we get the sense that, in Hartmann, it is wrong to take one’s knightly status lightly, for knighthood requires great responsibility and much training. In Chretién, there is nothing mentioned about anybody’s preparation for the tournament. What precedes it is an opulent celebration that serves as a preamble for fierce fighting replete with

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24“Erec der Wunderaere” is not the actual title of Hartmann’s work, but merely a title used to distinguish its author, thus avoiding potential confusion.
25Bang, p. 305.
26How can you speak so? You mock me without reason. You wanted nothing but my death. Will your excessive confidence and insolence let you escape so lightly?
graphic descriptions. There should never be any doubt regarding the safety of our intrepid knights—this is supposed to be a contest celebrated out of \textit{joie de vivre}. But it is not so simple in Hartmann. Given his military acumen, Hartmann could have been writing for an audience that would dismiss a portrayal of a tournament that was too idyllic and artificial. It may have also reflected badly on Frederick Barbarossa if Hartmann wrote a story in which Arthur’s knights engage in violence without the appropriate preparation. Before the real fighting begins, there is dancing and a \textit{buhurt} (2142-2166), which was a popular contest in medieval Germany. Björn Böhling gives us a concise summary of what it was exactly:

"Es ist zwar auch der Meinung, der Buhurt sei eine verhältnismäßig ungefährliche Form des Kampfspieles gewesen, aber es sei eindeutig mit Lanze, Schwert oder Kampfkolben – auch wenn diese Waffen stumpf waren – gekämpft worden. Es habe zwar eine große Zahl von Teilnehmern gegeben, doch gekämpft hätten jeweils immer nur zwei Ritter zu Pferd oder zu Fuß unmittelbar gegeneinander" (par. 1).

This is not to say that the buhurt did not come with danger, but it was clearly a practice designed to hone knights’ skills and inure them to actual fighting. It is this same practice that occurs in Hartmann, and rightfully so. A young knight like Hartmann could appreciate the risk that came with violence more than Chretién, who could enjoy a good fight more easily, being a poet and not a fighter. After the buhurt is over, the knights are treated to a lavish festival, a celebration that may have been inspired by a real-life event: “It is possible that Hartmann has in mind here the great festival held by Friederich Barbarossa, Holy Roman Emperor, in 1184 (at Pentecost) to

\begin{footnote}{Chretién seemed to have a penchant for writing about violence when it came to fighting. His descriptions of Ascalon’s murder in \textit{Yvain}, for example, are far more grotesque than Hartmann’s.} \end{footnote}

\begin{footnote}{It is generally of the opinion that the buhurt was a relatively safe form of competitive fighting, but it was clearly performed with lances, swords, or cudgels. However, these weapons were blunt. There were a rather large number of participants. Fights definitely took place only between two mounted knights or on foot, where the knights would be in direct opposition to each other.} \end{footnote}
celebrate the knighting of his two sons Heinrich (later Heinrich VI) and Friedrich. Whether or not this is true is difficult to prove, but the buhurt was very real. By including it, we are given a front-row seat to the reality of knighthood. Chretién’s image of the tournament encourages us to believe that glory and defeat should be one’s only concerns, but in Hartmann it does not occur so spontaneously. In order to be successful in this kind of competition, one must undergo training that is commensurate with one’s preparation.

Hartmann’s emphasis on preparation also explains why he is so preoccupied with armor. During Erec’s preparation for combat, he ruminates on his youth because he fears reproach from having a bad reputation. He is also—with good reason—concerned about his lack of wealth: “er hete wunder getan, mohte er gehabt hat nach sinem willen volle hant. Als ez im nu was gewant, darn ach sazter sinen muot. Sin harnasch enwas so guot noch solich sin geselleschaft, als ob er hete des guotes kraft. Nach siner maht vieng er’z an” (Pfeiffer 79-80). Although he lacks enough wealth to give him an advantage, Erec still has access to some of the best equipment that knighthood can offer. Hartmann meticulously describes Erec equipping himself before the tournament begins (2285-2320), which makes the episode feel more authentic and especially realistic in comparison to his source, who describes only the fights themselves. It is also the most detailed description of knightly equipment in the story, and the fact that Hartmann includes it also shows his concern for describing the equipment befittingly used by a prince. The episode gives us an inside look at how knights prepared for combat, and how a knight should be equipped; for some of the equipment described by Hartmann carries actual parallels to military developments in twelfth-century Germany. For instance, the horse cover first appears around

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29Tobin, p. 79.
30He could have performed wonders, had he been able to act according to his will. But he had to act according to his circumstances. His armor and entourage weren’t as good as they could have been had he possessed great power.
1190, but Hartmann’s *Erec* provides an even earlier reference. He mentions it three times, referring to it as a *covertiure*: in his description of Iders’ equipment (730-750), of Erec’s (2320-2350), and of Erec’s men at the end (10020-10050). Furthermore, although for a long time hauberk, helmet, and shield constituted the knight’s essential armor, towards the end of the twelfth century, developments in armor added additional protection for a knight’s legs, hands, and face, and horse covers protected horses more than the traditional chain mail. Hartmann’s *Erec* is an encapsulation of these modern inventions made possible by innovations in armory and cavalry; for example, during the episode where Erec and Enite flee from Count Oringles and his men, Hartmann tells us that Erec, being in full armor “as a good knight should,” cannot hear or see well (“als ein guot ritter sol. Des gehorter noch gesach so wol uz der isenwaete als er blozer taete, 4150-4160), because his complete, twelfth-century armor prevents him from doing these things at full capacity. But Erec’s armor is certainly a benefit, as it protects him from being hit in vulnerable spots, like he does to the robbers who try to kill him, whose arms and legs are not protected (“in waren bein und arme bloz,” 3220-3230). Besides the emphasis on the armor worn by characters, Hartmann also includes many practical details about armor, which he adds independently from his source. For example, in the tournament episode the competitors order for their chain mail to be cleaned and fitted with straps (“si hiezen ir isengwant vegen unde riemen, 2400-2410). Later, Erec complains that his helmet is badly fitting and needs to have better straps (“ich sage iu waz im wirret: man sol in baz riemen, 3070-3080). This practical military detail is reflective of Hartman’s insider knowledge and military audience. We see none of these profound, elaborate descriptions in Chretién.

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1.3: The Dienstman’s Digression from the Feudalist Structure of Chretién’s Erec

It seems as though Chretién abides by the feudalist ideology—that is, where the king’s authority can be easily subverted by others—far more than Hartmann. This becomes even more apparent if one compares the events that lead to Erec and Enide’s wedding in both versions. After Erec returns to Cardigan with Enide in Chretién, Arthur does not kiss her until he has the approval of his men. He is, in fact, quite adamant about his position: “Seignor, Qu’en dites vos? Que vos est vis? Ceste est [et] de cors et de vis, Et de quant qu’estuet a pucele, La plus gentis et la plus bele Qui soit jusque la, ce me semble, Ou li ciel[s] et la terre assemble. Je di que droiz est entresait Que ceste l’onor dou cerf ait” (Fritz 154). It is not until Arthur’s knights assure him that Enide is indeed the most beautiful woman in his court that he decides to kiss her. He considers his vassals’ opinions as much as his own, otherwise he would have kissed her as soon as she arrived. Furthermore, Guinevere reminds Arthur that she and the others were right in advising him to wait for Erec to come back, instead of deciding to complete the tradition of the kiss prematurely (1760-1765). Had Arthur been in control the entire time, it is possible that he may have kissed somebody who was not as worthy or beautiful as Enide, thus putting the court’s efforts to waste. Rank is certainly of paramount importance to the court, given how Erec assures Arthur and Guinevere that Enide, despite her poverty, is of noble rank: “D’un povre vavassor est fille: Povredez maint prodome avillr. Ses peres est frans et cortois, Maid que d’avoir a petit pois; Et mout gentil dame est sa mere, Qu’ele a un riche conte a frere” (Fritz 138). It would be a disgrace to the feudalist structure of Arthur’s court if a woman whose rank was not

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33Sir, what do you say to this? Is this woman the most beautiful woman in my court, or is she not? I want to hear the truth from you!

34She is the daughter of a poor lord. Poverty lowers many men; nonetheless, he is proud of his rank, even though he owns only a little. And his mother is a noble lady; she is the sister of a rich and noble count.
commensurate with her gentility were to nonetheless be a part of it. This dichotomy between rank and nature is expressed by Chretién in his description of Enide, comparing her to nature itself despite her poverty (400-425). Chretién may have had certain politics in mind: around the time that Erec was written, in northern France there was a rise of a chivalric class that had their own values and ideologies. Therefore, perhaps it is no mere coincidence that we have such a contemporary crisis in the story: Chretién may have tried to cater to both audiences—the aristocracy and the feudalists who respected their lord. In regard to Arthur, Maddox and Sturm-Maddox argue that he “must ensure right and justice for all alike, but also maintain the customs and protocol of his regal heritage.” This would explain some of Arthur’s failures as a ruler, for he, too, must try to appease his court while upholding frivolous traditions such as the hunt of the white stag. Shortly before Enide receives Arthur’s kiss, the wedding is planned. Enide receives a dress from Guinevere that is more befitting of a woman from the nobility, and all of the knights of the Round Table arrive to take their seats. Chretién spends roughly thirty-five lines telling the reader their names and who they are (1681-1715), before returning to the dilemma of the kiss.

Hartmann (as expected) dramatically changes things. He removes any fears that the court may have had about Enide’s lineage, and he writes much more about Arthur’s knights. Though Enide comes from a poor family in both versions, Hartmann replaces the comparison to nature with a reminder that God was responsible for her beauty and grace: “ich waene got sinen vliz an si hate geleit vo n schoene und von saelekeit” (Pfeiffer 15). While Hartmann does moralize, he does not seem to be as judgmental as Chretién is in regard to Enide’s class. Hartmann, like,

36 p. 107.
37 God in general plays an important role in Hartmann’s Erec, due to his tendency to moralize.
38 I know that God was mindful when it came to giving her beauty and grace.
Chretién, does underscore Enite’s poverty for the sake of further highlighting her more important traits—beauty and character—but Erec does not need to defend Enite upon their arrival in Karadigan. Instead, Erec introduces Enite to Guinevere, where she is immediately given a change of clothes; there was no need for Hartmann to include Erec’s defense of Enite because characteristics such as loyalty and constancy were clearly more important to him.

The reason for this provocative change may be inspired from Hartmann’s own experiences in servitude. Hartmann was a dienstman, members of the lower nobility who performed various tasks at court, usually out of servitude to a lord. Our knowledge of what a dienstman is leads to the conclusion that Hartmann began his life in servitude to kings and lords, and did not live a life of luxury. Indeed, loyalty meant a great deal to Hartmann, if we recall his relationship with his lord, for whose death he lamented profusely in a lyric that contains his most heartfelt expression of sorrow, and arguably out of any Minnesänger: “Since the time when death Robbed me of my lord, I have taken no part in What goes on in the world. The best of my joy He took with him” (Tobin 37). Hartmann values the relationship between a lord and vassal very much because of the benefits that it obviously gave him; thus, the reason he removes the tension between Arthur and the rest of his court may be because of his relationship with his own lord: the “I told you so” from Guinevere is removed, as is Arthur’s question whether or not Enite is truly the most beautiful woman to ever graced Karadigan. Our narrator speaks for Arthur instead of his knights, as a way of ensuring that his authority is supreme over the others: “des het er unz an die stunt durch die kunegin erbiten. Nune wart niht da wider gestritten, sine waer’ diu

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40I was unable to find this particular lied in the original MHG, therefore I have used Frank Tobin’s translation.
schoeniste da und uber die werlt ouch anderswa⁴¹” (Pfeiffer 62). By doing so, Arthur’s judgment
cannot be scrutinized, for it seems as though he knew all along that the wait would be worth it.
Nonetheless, Arthur does need to ask his knights for his opinion, but because he is the wise and
incredibly-competent ruler that he should be. More importantly, Hartmann upholds the
superiority of the king, in contrast to Chretién’s democratic process of unfolding the events.

⁴¹Until this moment he had waited because of the queen, but now it was clear that she (Enite)
was the most beautiful woman there, all over the world, and anywhere else.
1.4: Arthur’s Magnanimity in Hartmann’s Version of the Tournament Episode, its Historical Significance, and the Tournament Itself

Erec is not poor, but he is concerned about his lack of wealth; luckily for him, Arthur supplies him with everything he needs for the tournament (2247-2285). It can be assumed, therefore, that Arthur’s knights depend on him for their equipment, which further highlights his importance in the story, unlike Chretién, who makes no such mention. Wealth and rank are intertwined in Hartmann, who, for example, calls the breast armor worn by the robbers *panziere*, and their helmets *isenhuot* (3220-3230), which were the kind of things worn by common soldiers and certainly not by knights who were well-off.\(^{42}\) Certainly, to equip so many knights and horses was a costly endeavor, and knighthood justly became associated with the aristocracy by the eleventh century. This is not to say that there weren’t knights from lower classes, but the knights that we read about in the Arthurian romances are in a class distinct from the majority of the population, including other knights who did not have as much wealth.\(^{43}\) The knights, known as *milites* in continental sources, were different from the lower-ranked *pedites*, who fought on foot and were thus at a disadvantage in combat; therefore, the classical conception of aristocracy— genealogy—was replaced with military capability.\(^{44}\) Knights were in a rank of their own, as the expenses to provide for them cost far more than did common soldiers. During the Second Crusade, for example, a knight needed a minimum of one mark a month to provide for himself and his dependents on campaign in Italy, as well as a much more substantial sum to prepare and

\(^{42}\)Blair, p. 32.
\(^{43}\)Jackson, p. 1.
The German army consisted of thousands of knights—all of whom needed to be paid, or else they would not have been very happy. The German emperors were largely responsible for funding their knights; to accomplish this, they promulgated a local tax known as the *fodrum*, and they also raised money by foraging and pillaging conquered territories. Though fictional, Hartmann’s *Erec* is nonetheless a very useful source on the life of the knight, as he gives us an inside look of this difference between knights of the aristocracy and warriors of lesser rank. He accomplishes this by identifying one of the biggest sources of wealth—Arthur. Arthur, like a considerate German emperor, has no limit to his magnanimity.

Erec wants to fight in the tournament because he is eager to undertake sundry exploits in order to enhance his renown, typical of a young ritter in training. But it is important to understand how and why ritter differs from similar words of the time. It is known that it originates from the Middle High German verb “ritten,” to ride, but it also denotes a certain class of fighter that is very different from the more ancient words “helt,” “degen,” “recke,” and “wigant.” In *Erec*, the word ritter occurs 134 times, which shows us that Hartmann was more interested in this modern phenomenon than he was with upholding tradition. The conception of the ritter evolved from a certain class of knight known as the *ministeriales*, a word which first appears in the eleventh century as a synonym for *miles*. Barbarba Haupt’s research on the emergence of ritter over other terminology reveals the following results: “Gemeint ist aber wohl, daß nobiles wie ministeriales zu Dienst verpflichtet sind, zu vasallitischem Dienst oder zu Dienst

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46 Loud, p. 19.
47 See Thomas Kerth’s *Lanzelet*, p. 25.
48 Jackson, p. 42-43.
49 See Barbara Haupt’s “Der Höfische Ritter In Der Mittelhochdeutschen Literatur,” p. 171.
qua Geburt. However, not only were the ministeriales’ noblemen who were bound by service to fight, they also fought for the sake of improving their prestige, as they were of a lesser rank than the milites. Likewise, Erec, though noble, does not yet have the reputation of other knights in the story, and willingly puts himself in danger by competing in the tournaments to enhance his legacy and wealth. He also acknowledges his lesser rank by refusing Arthur’s hospitality: “Erec herbergte dort von den andern an ein ort...er lebte als ein wol karger man ungiudeclichen und wolt’ sich niht gelichen einem guoten knehte, und von allem rehte” (Pfeiffer 83). At such an early stage of his knightly career, Erec cannot afford to be a spendthrift or allow himself the same benefits that his superiors receive. Hartmann’s rewriting of the tournament episode makes it very clear that prestige and rank are of paramount significance to Erec and the knightly community.

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50Haupt, p. 171.
51Jackson, p. 41.
52Erec took lodgings in a place far away from the others. He lived like a very thrifty man. He did not live like a good knight, and rightfully so.
1.5: Arthur and the Efficacy of Oaths in Hartmann’s Iwein

The portrayal of Arthur remains a controversial subject in Chretién’s Yvain and Hartmann’s Iwein respectively. Similar to Erec, Arthur’s role is minimal compared to the protagonists, but he is still an important character in certain episodes, particularly in the one that refers to Guinevere’s abduction. In Chretién, after Yvain finds Lunete shut away in the chapel as a prisoner, she tells him how she ended up in her pitiful state and situation. She pleads her case at many courts, including Arthur’s, but is turned away: “Puis ai este en maintes cours. A la court le roy Artur fui: Ne trouvai conseil de nului, Ne ne trouvai qui me deist De vous chose qui me seist, Car il n’en savoient noueules” (Hult 278). But Lunete has more to say about Arthur, a king whom she believes commits a negligent transgression for allowing Guinevere to be abducted in the first place: “Mais la royne en a menee Un chevalier, che me dist l’en, Don’t li rois fist que hors du sen Quant aprês li li envoia Et Kex, je cuit, le convoia Jusqu’au chevalier qui l’en maine” (Hult 280). Lunete exhibits no apprehension in telling Yvain that his lord is a downright fool to acquiesce to the demands of a stranger, even if it technically would have made him a hypocrite. The question here, however, is why Arthur would allow a stranger to endanger his realm so easily in the first place. Perhaps he did not consider that he would be just as heavily criticized—if not more—if he allowed his wife to be abducted for the sake of upholding a superficial sense of “honor.” Yvain has no defense for his lord’s negligence. Hartmann, however, is sure to change these things in Arthur’s favor. When Yvain finds Lunete, she does

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53 Then I went to many courts, including the court of King Arthur. However, I found nobody who would help me, nor could they give me any word of you.
54 But I was told that the queen had been abducted by a knight. The king must have been crazy to have allowed that to happen. Afterwards, she was escorted by Kay to meet that knight.
55 Lancelot begins with a knight named Melegeant who comes to Arthur’s court and tests his munificence by seeing if he truly would grant him anything he asked for. He asks for Guinevere, and Arthur feels that he has no choice but to comply, for he gave Melegeant his word that anything he asked for would be his.
not say that she has traveled to multiple courts; rather, the only court she considers traveling to is Arthur’s: “daz ich ir dewderz vant den man noch diu maere, wa er ze vinden waere. Ouch suochte ich den kunech Artus, und envant da nieman ze hus, der sich ez wolde nemen an. Sus schiet ich ane kampfen dan” (Edwards 198). Furthermore, it is not the court that Lunete refers to, but Arthur himself—the king is given priority over the rest of the court. And, conveniently, Lunete’s scathing criticism of Arthur is removed altogether.

Most notably, however, Hartmann also emphasizes the importance of oaths far more than Chretién, possibly because of its historical significance in medieval Germany. Long before Hartmann’s time, for example, oaths were given as a way to prevent further fighting between enemies, and they also ascertained the oath-givers’ faith in God. Oaths, however, were just as relevant during Hartmann’s prominence as they were during the times of Charlemagne and Otto I. Furthermore, had Hartmann been as aware of Hohenstaufen politics as is suspected by many—or even had a cursory knowledge of these affairs—then he would have known about Frederick Barbarossa’s contention with Pope Alexander III’s ascension to the head of the Papacy. The popes and the Hohenstaufens were as diametrically opposed as to whom truly held supreme authority. Particularly, in 1164, there was political strife over who should have been consecrated pope. Though most cardinals supported Alexander, Victor had the support of Rome, much to the chagrin of Alexander. Alexander eventually became elected pope, but Victor soon died and needed a replacement; his party elected Paschal, a choice so resented by Frederick and those allied with him that, in 1165, the oath of Würzburg took place. Frederick and his nobles

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56 I searched in other lands, but found neither of them (Iwein or Gawein), nor did anybody know where they were. Then I sought out King Arthur, but nobody in his retinue would take on the challenge.
promised never to recognize Paschal or any other pope elected by the opposing party, and the Diet of Würzburg made sure that the oath would be renewed in the event of Frederick’s death for the purpose of stymying the rise of a new, possible threat to the empire. In this instance, the oath of Würzburg tested both the fealty and faith of its people. Frederick had no qualms with comparing himself to God, for he makes such a statement in his response to Adrian IV—a staunch pro-papacy figure—castigations of the empire in an 1157 manifesto:

“And, inasmuch as the kingdom, together with the empire, is ours by the election of the princes from God alone, who by the passion of His Son Christ subjected the world to the rule of the two necessary swords; and since the apostle Peter informed the world with this teaching, ‘Fear God, honour the king’; whoever shall say that we received the imperial crown as a benefice from the lord pope, contradicts the divine institutions and the teaching of Peter, and shall be guilty of a lie."

Oaths were intertwined with temporal and spiritual authority in the middle ages, especially in Germany.

Hartmann uses the oath as a trope to tell his audience that Arthur indeed adheres to the oral authority that was ubiquitous in the politics of the time. For instance, after Iwein defeats the knight of the fountain (Ascalon), the fountain itself is left vulnerable to enemy attacks. Concerned for the safety of his beloved knight, Arthur sends a message to Laudine that, in twelve days, he will bring his men with him into the fountain. Unlike in Chretién, the motive for Arthur’s decision stems from a sworn oath as much as it does for Iwein’s well-being: “Do der truhsaezze getet siner frouwen rede nach ir bet, und do si ouch horten sagen, ez choeme in vierzehn tagen der kunech Artus dar mit her—funde er den brunnen an wer, so wearer benamen

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59 Henderson, p. 410-419.
verlorn, wan er het der verte gesworn (Edwards 114). Arthur, being a magnanimous ruler, may not have wished to invade the fountain, but merely occupy it so that he could search for Iwein. However, if he were to go back on his oath, then it would reflect poorly on him, as to lie after swearing an oath would be to lie to both one’s people and God. If Arthur is the equivalent of the Holy Roman Emperor, then he is also closer to God than any other character in the story. The inclusion of the oath in Hartmann tells us that Hartmann’s Arthur is more politically grounded than Chretién’s, and that he is a great king whose trust should never be doubted.

Although Arthur’s oath to Melegant is explicitly known in Chretién, it is a thoughtless oath that exemplifies Arthur’s shoddy judgment. However, while it is possible that Chretién’s audience may have already known the story of *Lancelot*, Hartmann may have been one of the only few Germans to have known about Chretién’s work at all. It would cause no confusion to remove a reference to another work that may not have been known at all in Germany, especially a reference that would have portrayed the king negatively. Redeeming Arthur was not very difficult for Hartmann to do.

In Hartmann, Lunete attempts to make use of the oath’s reliability in order to persuade a knight to take on her case: “des swuere ich wol einen eit, min frouwe ist ein so edel wip, daz er niemer siden lip bestaeten uf der erde chan ze hoherm werde” (Edwards 200). Lunete’s plea of needing a brave knight to fight three at once is not quite enough to coerce someone to fight for her freedom; there must not only be something to be won, but a promise that can be trusted. It is no coincidence that, after swearing an oath about Laudine’s beauty and the honor that it will

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60 The steward said what his lady wanted him to, as per her request. They also heard that, in fourteen days, King Arthur would arrive with his retinue. If he found the fountain defenseless, then it would be lost because he swore an oath to go there.

61 I would definitely swear an oath that my lady is so noble, no man will earn greater honor anywhere on this earth.
bestow upon Iwein, Iwein realizes who she is: “Do sprach er: ‘Heizzet ir Lunet?’” (Edwards 200). It is the oath that demystifies the ambiguity surrounding Lunet’s identity to Iwein. After Lunete swears the oath and both reveal their identities to each other, Iwein laments over breaking his oath to Laudine that he would return to her before the designated year would pass, then promising that he will defeat the three knights: “Jane muet mich niht wan daz ich lebe. Ouch sol ich schiere tot geligen. Doch so truwe ich wol gesigen an den ritern allen drin” (Edwards 200). He makes this promise with great conviction, ostensibly because our hero is a great knight, but moreso because he must redeem himself for having betrayed Laudine, the knightly community itself for his violation of trust, and God Himself. Fealty ultimately prevails in this episode, but in Chretién it reads quite differently. Yvain accepts the challenge without unleashing his harbored feelings for his previous iniquity: “A nul besoing que vous aies. Bien sai que mout vous esmaies, Mais, se Dix plaist en cui je croi, Il en seront honni tout troi” (Hult 282). Yvain wants to help Lunete because she saved his life earlier in the story, but tells us that his success in combat is contingent upon God’s protection. Iwein, in contrast, promises that he will, without doubt, defeat the three knights; his promise may be politically motivated, whereas Yvain’s decision to fight is derived from a more personal, romantic aspect. But the oath from Lunete in Hartmann acts as a reminder to Iwein that he must not betray his lady for a second time. Failure is no option. He doesn’t need to pray to God for victory because he has already complied to Him by fighting for Lunete.

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62 Then he said, “Are you Lunete?”
63 It troubles me greatly that I am still alive. I should lie dead soon, but I trust that I can easily defeat all three of those knights.
64 No matter what you would have need for. But with God’s assistance, and I trust him, I will trounce those three.
The concept of the oath is intertwined with the knight’s reputation, which is also of paramount importance in Hartmann. The additional oaths in his versions are but one way that he stresses the necessity for a retinue full of reputable knights. Specifically, after Arthur arrives to the fountain and pours water on the stone, the new guardian, Iwein, emerges and attacks Arthur’s most sharp-tongued knight, Key, who makes the request to Arthur that he receive the first chance to defend his king. In Hartmann, Key gives Iwein a run for his money and, more noticeably, our author redeems both him and Arthur:

“Ouch sagich iu ein maere, swie schalchaft Key waere, er was doch vil unerforht. Her in sin zunge niht verworht, so gewan der hof nie tiurern helt. Daz mugt ir kiesen, ob ir welt, bi sinem ampt des er pflac. Sin het anders niht einen tac geruochet der kunech Artus ze truhsaezzen in sinem hus. Nu waren si under in beiden des willen ungescheiden: ir ietweder gedahnte sire uf des andern ere—ir gelinge wart aber mislich. Diu tjost wart guot unde rich, und der herre Key, swie boese ir waent daze r si, er verstach sin sper unz an die hant” (Edwards 122).

It is puzzling as to why Arthur would even have such a base knight as Key as part of his court, which is supposed to be the most noble and generous in the world. Hartmann informs his audience that Arthur’s judgment should not be scrutinized, for Key, despite his poisonous tongue, is an accomplished knight who has rightfully earned his place amongst Arthur’s best. Even Key has a remarkable reputation, and Hartmann makes this very clear. Chretién, however, does not emphasize Keus’ skills; instead, they clash very quickly, with no comment about how good of a joust it really is. Yvain soundly defeats Keus, who receives no praise from anybody—not even Chretién himself: “De tex coupz molt se merveillierent Que andeus les lances pecoierent, Et vont desques au poinz fendant. Mesire Yvains cop si puissant Li donna que de sor

65I will tell you that, despite how horrible Kay was, he was certainly not a coward. It’s too bad his tongue always betrayed him, otherwise the court would never have gained a better knight. That you can judge, if you’d like, by the rank he cultivated. If not for his status, King Arthur would never have tolerated him in his court. Now, both of these knights had the same goal in mind: assail the other’s honor. The joust was good and rich, and lord Kay, in spite of his depravity, shattered his spear down to the hand. What Hartmann means here is that Kay fought to the very end. He did not back down.
la celle A fet Keus la tournebouele, Et li hiaumes en terre fient\textsuperscript{66} (Hult 188). Some people may be led to believe that Keus’ come-uppance should reflect poorly on Arthur. To gain Arthur’s approval, Keus exhibits behavior that is not very comely with a knight from the aristocracy—such as Gawain, for example: “Et mesire Keus out talent Qu’il demanderoit la bataille, Car, quex que fust la definaille, Il voloit commencier tout jors Les mellees et les estourz, Ou il y eust grant corrouz\textsuperscript{67}” (Hult 187-188). The other knights aren’t given a chance to request the fight, but they are not so bereft of tact like Keus is to challenge an outsider so recklessly. It is most interesting that Hartmann would expand the fight scene in such a way, mostly for the sake of redeeming Kay. Clearly, what is a brief encounter in Chretién that was written for entertainment reads more like a subversive political commentary in Hartmann.

\textsuperscript{66}Both of them came into each other and shattered their spears; the pieces scattered about. My lord Yvain hit Kay so hard that he fell from his saddle and flipped down onto the ground, and his helmet fell with him.

\textsuperscript{67}And my lord Kay demanded the battle. If he wasn’t the one to start the melee, he would have been incredibly angry.
1.6: In the Name of God: Arthur’s Knights and Twelfth-Century Orders

The ending of *Yvain/Iwein* showcases the rigidity of the Arthurian world, in which a dispute between two sisters over their deceased lords’ inheritance must be settled. The younger sister did not wish to resort to litigations, but her older, depraved sister wants everything to herself, refusing the moral solution of splitting the inheritance evenly between them. The older sister arrives at Arthur’s court first and tells her story, obtaining the service of Gawain, for it would be dishonorable to turn her down. The Arthurian code lies on the problematic foundation that everyone who asks for help must be helped; unfortunately for Gawain, he fights for the sister who is in the wrong. The roles between Yvain and Gawain could have easily been reversed if the younger sister was the one who arrived at court first. Had Yvain fought for the older sister, he would not have been at fault, because he would merely be doing his job as a knight bound by this code to help those weaker than them. The Arthurian code is connected to the socioreligious bent of the Church in which the knight was legitimized as the defender of peace and justice, the very swords of God who defended the weak in order to strengthen their bonds with Him.  

The claim that the knight was viewed this way in ecclesiastical circles is supported by various documents between the tenth to twelfth centuries, as well as the motivation behind the inception of the Templar Order of the early twelfth century. Templar ideals permeate throughout a great deal of ecclesiastical literature; for example, Pope Innocent II exhorts the order in an 1139 bull, *Omne datum optimum*, addressing them as “beloved sons in the Lord…true Israelites and warriors most versed in holy battle…defenders of the Church and assailants of the enemies of Christ.”  

Another famous order created in Germany, the Teutonic Knights, was modeled after

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68 Jackson, p. 86.
69 See Sophia Menache’s “The Templar Order: A Failed Ideal?,” p. 3.
the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem for its program for the poor and sick. Though the Arthurian legend is a mystical world full of fantasy of adventure, the parallels between the very essence of Arthur’s court—help the weak and needy in the name of God—and the actual knightly establishments of the time are too obvious to ignore.

The Templars, Teutonic Knights, and Arthur’s court are all dedicated to upholding the medieval premise. As Hartmann was a knight himself, he may have been more familiar with these famous orders, especially the Teutonic Knights, which was established not too long before he wrote Iwein. Hartmann is more explicit than Chrétien about what happens when an anti-Christ figure such as the older sister goes against this premise with her turpitude. Both versions are very similar, but there is one detail in Hartmann that highlights the importance of Arthur’s role in the magnificent battle between Gawein and Iwein, a fight in which one or both knights may have died for the sake of the anti-Christ itself. His men beseech him to interject before it’s too late: “Den kunech si alle baten, und begunden raten, daz erz durch got taete, und die altern baete, daz si der jungern doch…” (Edwards 348). Arthur’s men implore him in the name of God to rectify this horrible situation, and with good reason: as the leader of a retinue founded on the medieval knightly premise, Arthur must fulfill his religious duty, which is intertwined with his kingly duty in maintaining the harmony of his court. We as readers should associate the older sister as the “other,” because Arthur’s rare display of anger (“er was so harte erbolgen,” Edwards 348) represents the older sister’s dissociation from God, which is anathema to the essence of the Arthurian world. She is wicked enough to have actually angered the most generous king in the world—now she must be ostracized, for she does not belong in this idyllic

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70See Indrikis Sterns’ “Crime and Punishment among the Teutonic Knights,” p. 84.
71They all entreated the king, and began to advise them that he should, for God’s sake, advise the older sister to give to the younger sister.
paradise. Arthur’s ingenious way of deceiving her and saving his beloved vassals is the true conclusion of Iwein. Despite his role as a background figure, Arthur ends up becoming the most important character of the story.
Chapter II: The Emphasis of Development in Hartmann’s *Erec* and *Iwein*

2.1: From Jungelinge to Wunderaere: Hartmann’s Treatment of Erec

In *Erec*, there are two occasions in which Hartmann describes himself as a “*tumben knehte*” in the midst of his narration: “*was des gebrist mir tumben knehte*” (1590-1600) and “*daz wurde ze swaere eime als tumben knehte*” (7480-7490). In the case of the second line, Frank Tobin’s otherwise superb translation surprisingly misses the meaning of “*tumben knehte*,” referring to Hartmann as a “simple fellow:” “If I wanted to tell you exactly how this saddle was made, that would be too difficult for such a simple fellow like me” (135). A *kneht* does not denote an uncouth individual or a “fellow,” but something like “squire” or a youth who had not yet been knighted.\(^72\) Knowing this, we can conclude that Hartmann is saying that he, himself, was not a knight when he had composed *Erec*, but was still a young, humble squire, as he was just twenty-years-old or so.\(^73\) Backing up W.H. Jackson’s findings is the scholarship of Franz Pfeiffer on this subject, who notices a difference between a *ritter* and a *kneht* as seen by Hartmann’s choice of terminology in *Erec* and his later works: “Daß Hartmann als ganz junger Mann den Erec dichtete, ersieht man deutlich aus V. 1590 – 1602 und aus V. 7479. Hier nennt er sich noch einen *tumben kneht*, während er sich im *Armen Heinrich* und im *Iwein* schon als *ritter* einführt\(^74\)” (xv). As *Erec* was his earliest extant creation, Hartmann was not yet a *ritter*, which he became by the time he composed *Der Arme Heinrich* and *Iwein*. Hartmann’s *Erec* was written from the perspective of a young man in the knightly community, just as his adaptation is about a young *kneht* who is concerned with enhancing his reputation and

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\(^72\) Jackson, p. 35.

\(^73\) Most scholars date Hartmann’s birth around 1160, and his *Erec* around 1180.

\(^74\) That Hartmann composed the *Erec* as a very young man is made evident from lines 1590-1602 and from line 7479. Here he names himself as a “humble squire,” while in *Der Arme Heinrich* and *Iwein*, he names himself as a knight.
overcoming his lack of wealth, making it very different from his source. Most notably, Hartmann emphasizes Erec’s youth.

In Hartmann, after Erec defeats Iders and meets King Arthur, he receives effusive praise—especially because of his youth: “Von disen maere wurden do vil herzelichen fro Artus und diu kunegin und lobten’s unsern trehtin daz im sin erstiu ritterschaft mit lobelicher heiles kraft iedoch also gar ergie: wand’ er begundes vor nie” (Pfeiffer 46). Erec performs a chivalrous deed, but Hartmann underscores his youth and lack of knightly experience. In Chretién, the episode reads quite differently. Erec was already respected before defeating Ydier, as Ydier informs the queen: “Dame, en vostre prison M’envoie ci uns gentis hon, Uns cheavaliers vaillanz et prouz” (Fritz 112). Chretién does acknowledge Erec’s youth by informing his audience how impressive he is despite his young age of twenty-five, “Mout estoit beax et prouz et genz, Se ‘n’avoit pas .xxv. anz.” (Fritz 34), but the description does not make us think that Erec is not already a proven knight.

In the episode where Erec vows to fight Ydier in order to win Enide’s hand, her father is very happy to find out that it is indeed the son of King Lac with whom he has spoke. Despite his young age, Erec’s reputation already precedes him: “Bien avomme oi De vos parler en cest pais. Or vos ain plus assez et pris Car mout estes prouz et hardiz” (Fritz 74-76). Also, Erec informs Enide’s father that he has already served at King Arthur’s court for three years; his experience is explicitly stated by Chretién, who seems to be more interested in adventure than maturation when compared to Hartmann. Erec is already respected for his strength and courage to the point

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75 Arthur and the queen were delighted by this news and were pleased that Erec, despite being so young, was already highly successful. His first knightly deed was praiseworthy and successful, especially because he had never done anything like that before.

76 Lady, a noble person sent me here as your prisoner. A brave and strong knight.

77 He was beautiful, strong, and brave, but only twenty-five.

78 Oh, we’ve heard talk of you alright! I love and respect you for your strength and courage.
where Enide’s father already gives him her hand, as he must feel that strongly about Erec’s chances of winning. The episode is very different in Hartmann. First, Koralus (Enide’s father) becomes despondent upon learning who Erec is, weeping over his lack of wealth that would not make Enite a suitable wife for Erec; and, nowhere does he express his admiration or knowledge of Erec’s skills. He only knows Erec’s father, King Lac, because they were both knighted together: “ich han gesehen den tac daz iuwer vater der kunec Lac mich gesellen nande. Wir namen in sinem lande bede mit ein ander swert” (Pfeiffer 22). Of Erec, however, he knows nothing except that, deep down, he may make a good match for Enite, as it was customary for young men who were raised together to be knighted at the same time, which Lac and Koralus were. Nonetheless, at this point in the story, nothing is known about Erec except for who is father is; he must forge his own legacy.

Not only is *Erec* a story about the development of a young knight, it evinces Hartmann’s self-identification with knightly practice and customs. The story of a young man from the aristocracy leaving home in order to become a knight was an actual phenomenon in the Middle Ages. For example, it is known that children of noble descent would normally be raised by their parents until about the age of seven, where they would be sent to a court and become a page, a squire, and finally a knight. *Erec* begins with the protagonist as a part of King Arthur’s retinue in the middle of his training, and as somebody who is eager to leave an indelible mark on his community. To facilitate his accumulation of honor via chivalrous deeds, Erec decides to participate in the tournament after successfully defeating Iders and winning the hand of Enite. But to better understand the tournament’s significance in Hartmann, we need to understand its

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79 I have seen the day when your father, king Lac, was my companion. We were knighted together in the same land.
80 See Frank Tobin’s *The Complete Works of Hartmann von Aue*, p. 60.
significance in general. In his analysis of Gislebert of Mons’s *Chronicon Hanoniense*, Jackson states the real function of the tournament. It was associated with luxury, as, for example, the horses that the competitors rode were studded with jewels, decked with silks, and had their legs painted. Moreover, we also know that, as early as the eleventh century, knights were frequently associated with the aristocracy, as it was an expensive venture to become one. To dress a horse with this much superfluous ostentation is but one mark of status that knights proudly wore for various reasons. Although tournaments were a sign of wealth, they were nonetheless a valuable part of the medieval world: they were entertaining, they could settle feuds between neighboring communities, they gave lords a venue to scout possible military aid, and—most importantly—they gave knights the opportunity to attain both glory and profit. Knights who did not have as much wealth as others were given the chance to enhance their largess and renown. As was discussed earlier, these “lower” knights were known as *milites*, and the difference between this knight and the more wealthy *miles* is undisputable proof that knights were becoming symbols of prestige.

Hartmann was certainly aware of this hierarchy of knights, given how he places great importance on things such as wealth and reputation. Indeed, this episode is different than what we read in Chrétien for numerous reasons, whose telling of the tournament does not give us such a profound understanding of Erec’s psyche, or the consequences of performing badly. Firstly, Erec is anxious before the fighting begins for two reasons: it is his first tournament (“wander

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81 See W.H. Jackson’s “Knighthood and Nobility in Giselbert of Mons’s ‘Chronicon Hanoniense’ and in Twelfth-Century German Literature,” p.804.
82 Jackson, p. 797.
83 Chrétien says nothing about Erec’s tournament experience. In fact, the action begins immediately after it is declared that it would be a good idea to have a tournament, with nothing said about Erec’s feelings or desire to succeed despite not using an ineffably useful resource in King Arthur to its fullest potential. What Chrétien is more interested in is action, not drama,
vor der stunde turnieren nie begunde,⁸⁴” Pfeiffer 79), and he is deeply concerned about his reputation (“vil dicke gedah’t er dar an in swelhem werde ein junger man/ n den ersten jaren stat daz er daz immer gerne hat⁸⁵” (Pfeiffer 79). Once again, there is an emphasis on Erec’s youth and lack of experience that we do not see in Chrétien, possibly because Hartmann could relate to the anxiety felt by a knight before a tournament hosted by the most revered king in the world. For Erec, a first impression means everything—if he is successful, he will finally earn his own reputation instead of living in his father’s shadow; but, if he fails, he may never win the favor of kings and knights, for they might very well look down at him for his military ineptitude.

The tournament is Erec’s chance to make a name for himself, but in order to make an impact in the most efficacious way possible, he must heed his environment and exhibit maze. Therefore, while Erec graciously accepts Arthur’s gifts, he is also sure to be considerate and not ask for too much, lest he come across as being too greedy or wasteful (2247-2280). Furthermore, Erec puts himself at a disadvantage by not taking advantage of Arthur’s munificence to the fullest extent because he is actually not as wealthy as we may think he is, despite his noble descent: “sin harnasch enwas so guot noch solich sin geselleschaft, als ob er hete des guotes kraft⁸⁶” (Pfeiffer 80). Then, on the Saturday before the tournament, Arthur and his retinue check into their lodgings, but Erec is conscientious enough to take lodgings in a separate house, because he has not yet earned his place among the other knights (2368-2400).

because while he does not fail in providing copious details of the fighting, he has nothing to say about the “backstage” aspect of the tournament, which Hartmann, being a knight, has quite a bit to say about.

⁸⁴Before this hour he had never competed in a tournament.
⁸⁵Hour after hour, Erec, son of king Lac, thought about how one’s reputation as a young man can always be one’s reputation.
⁸⁶Neither his armor nor his entourage were as good as they could have been had he also good wealth.
Just as the knights in *Erec* are not one, unified, immutable group, there were also different classes of knights that were identified according to their specialization and wealth. Recognizing these actual barriers aids us greatly in understanding the purport of Hartmann’s meticulous revisions to his source.

The vesper tournament itself is very different in both versions. As per Chrétien’s motive, he is more interested in making Erec the quintessential figure of knighthood. At the event, no knight performs better than Erec. Of the many great knights to compete, only Gawain rivals Erec’s courage and strength, but Erec is by far the most successful knight, says Chrétien: “Si bien le fist Erec le jor Qu’il fu li mieudres de l’estor; Mais mout le fist mieuz l’endemain” (Fritz 188). His energy does not flag during the second day, where he is just as unsurpassed as he is in the first. But nowhere is it implied that our protagonist competes in the tournament because he sees it as a chance to prove himself. In fact, nothing more is said about the tournament other than it was agreed upon, possibly out of honor to Erec, who commands enough respect to have been given a tournament in his name (2000-2100). As one would expect, things are quite different in Hartmann, who makes it an important episode in Erec’s development as a knight by showing his ardent desire to compete. Hartmann makes it clear that Erec is much more eager to fight, for he arms himself before any other knight has the chance so that he can compete in the first joust (2400-2420). After he is praised for jousting five times, the vesper tournament begins; once again, Hartmann emphasizes Erec’s precocity: “‘Erec fil de roi Lac der ist der baz tuonde man den unser lant ie gewan von sinen jaren” (Pfeiffer 86). However, while Erec distinguishes himself from most knights in the tournament, he is still not as great as Gawein, who is the model of virtue and the chivalrous spirit (2720-2750). In addition to Gawein, there is a day

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87Erec performed better than anyone there.
88Erec, the son of Lac, was the best man in his land of his years.
in the tournament where Erec’s success must take the backseat to not one, two, but three knights—Gawein, Fil Dou Gilules, and Segremors: “dise dri enthielten vaste wider si. Si taten’z da, wizzet daz, so nie dri ritter baz” (Pfeiffer 92). Notice how Hartmann does not use the word kneht to describe the three, but ritter—once again, the tournament exemplifies the inherent distinction between knights of different classes. Of these three ritters, nobody matches their success on this day, a fact which gives the young Erec further motivation to be even more successful. By the end of the tournament, he squares off against Boydurant, an edeln ritter. Despite the difference of rank, Erec defeats him and is lauded for his effort (“guot wort bejagete er da”). The tournament ends with Erec having won much honor and glory, but even then, Gawein’s equal still has not arrived; however, Erec is well on his way, says Hartmann, who could feasibly reach Gawein’s level one day: “man saget, sin gelich ze Britanje enkoeme nie: kom ab er dar ie, daz mohte Erec wol sin: daz was an sinen tugenden schin” (Pfeiffer 95). In Chrétien, the tournament is just another episode about Erec’s unsurpassed greatness, but Hartmann rewrites it and makes it an important part of his development as a knight, all while adhering to the actual barriers that encompassed the knightly world.

Though Erec is at a disadvantage in the tournament, it is not unfamiliar territory for him. Hartmann, unlike Chrétien, is fascinated with the theme of the disadvantaged knight who still manages to overcome an appropriately equipped foe, if only because of his emotional fervor and superior disposition. Erec’s fight with Iders is a testament to his precocity and extraordinary courage for someone so young. Specifically, his courage gives him the determination necessary to fight the older, experienced knight despite his ineffectual arms, as Hartmann tells us in great

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89 You should know that nobody was better than these three knights.
90 One says that a better knight never came to Britiaien; however, if there were such a knight, it could very well be Erec.
detail: “sin schilt was alt swaere breit, siniu sper unbehende groz, halp er und daz ros bloz, als im’z sin alter sweher lech” (Pfeiffer 29). Superior arms is not enough to defeat Erec, however, who resembles a true *degen* (“daz Erec degenes ellen truoc”) in every sense of the word, effectively overcoming his lower class and throwing down Iders with unsurpassed courage and strength, much to the shock of the onlookers. Although Erec has the bearing of a great knight, Iders thinks he’s clashing with a mere child: “sin hochvertiger wan: er wande ein kint bestanden han” (Pfeiffer 29), a thought that presumably stems from Iders’ arrogance, but is also not terribly insulting because Hartmann wants us to realize just how young Erec really is, and how much more amazing that makes his knightly prowess. In this fight, Hartmann gives Erec the title of “Erec dem jungelinge” (750-760), a provocative name whose purpose is two-fold: it further masks his abilities, and serves as a harbinger for his eventual maturation. After Iders is fallen and his life falls into Erec’s hands, he does not kill the vulnerable knight because there are onlookers present—it would look very bad if he were to kill a fallen, defenseless man, for it would contradict everything that a good knight should stand for.

In addition to the onlookers, Erec is concerned about his reputation, as Hartmann informs us: “er wolde bezzer wort bejagen” (Pfeiffer 32). Erec allows Iders to stand up and resume the fight from where they left off. The joust having been ended, they resume the fight with swords, where one person acknowledges Erec as Iders’ equal: “Do sach man si vehten glich zwein guoten knehten” (Pfeiffer 32). Two equally brave knights continue their fierce battle in which Hartmann uses the word “kneht” to underscore the youth of both—but especially Erec—who is

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91 His shield was very old, his spear was big and wide, his charger wasn’t protected as much as it should have been, and the rest of his stuff came from his old father-in-law.
92 This was one of the ancient German expressions used to call someone a hero.
93 His arrogance gave him the impression that he was standing against a child.
94 He wanted to win himself a better word.
95 One man saw how both fought like two brave knights.
only a “jungelinge,” yet goes blow-for-blow with a man whom we are to assume is a distinguished knight because of his opulent armor alone (724-746). Hartmann also describes the fight as manly (“ir vehten was manlich”), signaling the beginning of Erec’s ascent into manhood.

Erec’s miraculous feat of winning despite his inadequate equipment and youth, and the emotional attitudes of the fight are all lost if one reads Chrétien, who, again, does not fail to satiate one’s thirst to read the gripping account of a fight between two marvelous young men, but whose descriptions are lacking when it comes to providing specific details about Erec and his opponent’s ranks, and the difference between their equipment (which, however, is understandable given Chrétien’s lack of military knowledge compared to Hartmann, being a troubadour). The fight is not a harrowing narrative of a David-versus-Goliath esque encounter; rather, Erec’s armor is as magnificent and modern as it should be for a fight like this: “Qui est? Qui est il cheavliers? Mout doit ester hardis et fiers…bien il siet cil hiaumes bruns Et cil hauberz et cil escuz Et cil branz d’acier esmoluz. Mout est adroiz sor cel cheval, Bien resemble gentil vassal” (Fritz 80-82). The onlookers are shocked to see such a well-bred knight equipped with some of the finest weaponry and armor known to man. Moreover, they note that he already has the countenance of a “gentil vassal,” or well-bred knight. These descriptions eliminate most of the emotions present in Hartmann, creating a different story altogether. Where one is a story of how a young man’s strength and courage can supersede his ancient equipment and lack of experience, this is merely a gripping account of the virtuous knight freeing his damsel from the clutches of the base knight who disrespects King Arthur.

\[96\]Who’s that? Who’s that knight? Boy, he looks strong and fierce! His helmet sure is beautiful, and his hauberk, and the steel lance in his hands. Look at how adroitly he sits on his horse; how well he resembles a well-bred knight.
The story could have easily ended after Erec’s success in the tournament: he had earned a name for himself, won a beautiful bride, and completed his “coming-of-age” by returning home after a long time spent training to reach his exalted status. But the story is not over yet because Erec is not yet a man upon returning to his court, for he is still too young to apply maze to his life, degenerating into uxoriousness. As is known, Erec chooses one extreme (domestic duties) over the other (chivalry), much to the umbrage of his court. Now, he must find maze between ritterschaft (knighthood) and minne (love). Both Chretién and especially Hartmann criticize Erec for his new-found happiness: “Erec was biderbe und guot, ritterliche stuont sin muot, e er wip genaeme/und hin heim kaeme/nu so er heim komen ist/do kerter allen sinen list/an froun Eniten minne/sich vlizzen sine sinne/wie’r alle sinne sache/wante ze gemache/sin site er wandeln began/als er nie wurde der man” (Pfeiffer 101). However, Chretién seems to be more sympathetic towards Erec, and he certainly does not question whether or not his virility is intact: “Mais tant l’ama Erec d’amors Que d’armes mais ne li chaloit, N’a tornoiement mais n’aloit. N’avoit mais soing de tornoier: A sa fame aloit dosnoier, De li fist s’amie et sa drue; Tot met son cuer et s’entendue En li acoler et baisier, Ne se queroit d’el aisier” (Fritz 201-202). Indeed, “als er nie wurde der man” is important because it tells us that Erec, even though married and renowned, still has not reached manhood. He has not found his compromise between knighthood and loyalty, instead choosing an extreme—that being uxoriousness—and curtailing his duties as a knight. More importantly, Hartmann’s specific criticism is another sign that he is more interested in a story of development; his comment about Erec’s manhood is an immediate clue

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97 Erec was content and happy, chivalry occupied his mind. However, after coming home, he focused all of his attention on Lady Enite’s love. He changed so much that it was as if he was never a man.
98 Erec loved his woman so much that he no longer cared about arms or tournaments. He stopped attending tournaments; he only cared about his woman, with whom he spent his time hugging and kissing. He didn’t need anything else.
that the story is far from over. Even people in his own court begin to cast aspersions towards him: “Erec wente sinen lip grozes gemaches durch sin wip die minnet er so sere daz er aller ere
durch si einen verphlac unz daz er sich so gar verlac daz nieman dehein ahnte uf in gehaben mahte
des begunde mit rehte ritter unde knehte" (Pfeiffer 102). To rectify his degeneration, Erec
must regain the respect of his court and complete the synthesis of ritterschaft and minne.

What separates the two authors in this episode is that, deep down inside, Hartmann is
rooting for Erec to snap out of the doldrums of his indolence and resume his knightly activities,
given his comment on Erec still providing his entourage with equipment for tournaments: “ich
lobe an im den selben site” (Pfeiffer 102). Hartmann understands that the knight is a crucial
member of the medieval world, and is glad to see that Erec still understands the value of the
tournament. There is still hope for him. There is still hope for him to complete his maturation;
and so, after learning of what his court thinks of him through Enite, Erec puts on his armor and
the two ride into the open world with no warning whatsoever of an impending adventure. There
is no destination in mind, only the opportunity for Erec to regain his lost honor. In these bizarre
episodes, Erec exhibits unremitting cruelty towards his wife, demanding that she keep quiet
while the two ride under the threat of harm, and even death. When Enite, who rides behind Erec,
notices the three robbers, she reasonably violates her vow of silence to Erec and tells him that
he’d better prepare himself for a fight. Erec defeats the robbers, and afterwards shows that he
has chosen an extreme—prowess—over his duties as an honorable knight: “und moht’ man

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99 Erec experienced great love for comfort because of his wife. Now he now longer cared at all
about his honor; he laid around so much that nobody respected him. The knights and squires
were rightly upset by his behavior.

100 I praise him for this conduct.
dehein ere an wiben began, ez’n solde niht so ringe stan ich ennaeme iu hie zehant den lip. In what reads like a fit of madness, Erec would kill even his own wife if it would gain him honor. This is a ghastly thing to say, and it further demonstrates Erec’s dissociation with Christianity. Unlike Chretién, Hartmann explicates the religious dilemma that results of this unhealthy relationship between the two, as is made evident by Enite’s vehement supplication to God to spare Erec’s life after his wounds from combat cause him to collapse and nearly die: “ein wort daz du (God) gesprochen hast, und bite dich daz du’z staete last, daz ein man und sin wip sulen wesen ein lip” (Pfeiffer 192). This is eerily similar to Genesis 2:24, which states, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh, because to kill Erec would be to kill Enite—she loves her husband that much. Her constancy will serve as an inspiration to him.

Hartmann tells us that Erec’s irrational behavior was a test all along to see if she is as loyal as she should be, a test which she passes with flying colors (6790-6790). After finally reviving from his critical state, Erec kills Duke Oringles and leads Enite to safety; afterwards, he realizes how wrong he is for putting her through so much grief and irksome torment. This is a very significant scene because, for the first time in the story, Erec decides to put his military expertise to use for Enite’s sake. He finally begins to grow up and realizes how much he owes his pious, loyal wife. The scene is very physical in Hartmann: Erec presses his head to her breast, kisses her profusely, and—most of all—promises her a better life (“bezzerunge er ir gehiez, die er benamen war liez”). Thus this Christian reunion is completed, and Erec’s

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101 And would it be possible to gain honor by fighting a woman, I should not hesitate in ending your life.
102 A word that YOU said, that you left alone, is that a man and his wife must share one life. About this line: Enite’s use of the informal “du” instead of the formal “iuwer” demonstrates her intimate connection with God.
103 See *The King James Bible*, p. 3.
“coming-of-age” begins with a proclamation of selflessness. He puts his own ambitions to enhance his own reputation aside and vows to treat his soul mate better. Shortly after, when Erec and Enite run into Guivreiz, the knight who wounds Erec earlier in the story, Erec displays humility over his insatiable desire to attain honor at the expense of him and all of his knights, even after trespassing on his own territory: “ich alters eine iwer aller ere wolde han: ich solde baz ze buoze stan” (Pfeiffer 230). If we recall the tournament episode, Erec was deeply concerned about his reputation and how one’s success or failure early in life could leave an indelible perception in the minds of others. Even though Erec was soundly defeated by another knight and failed to increase his honor, he not only takes the loss very maturely, but is fully aware how foolish it was of him to be so reckless to begin with. Erec’s character towards the end of the story is a far cry from the young, ambitious mercenary at the beginning. Now, Erec knows he must be more judicious in the future because he has a wife to worry about.

Erec’s compunction for his previous iniquities exists only in Hartmann. As would be expected, these two episodes do not accomplish the sense of development in Chretién. In Hartmann, we read about how guilty Erec is for putting his wife through such unreasonable hardship, but he does not even apologize in Chretién. Instead, he is one who forgives Enide for the “things that she may have said:” “Je le vos pardoing et claim quite Et le forfeit et la parole” (Fritz 378). Although the reasons for their traveling is to test Enide’s loyalty in both versions, that’s all it is in Chretién; our protagonist does not realize how unethical his actions are, eliminating any possibility of his development as a character. Likewise, after Guiveret and Erec are reunited, Erec does not show any modesty towards Guiveret’s attack, but forgives him—even though Guiveret’s assault is in concordance with the normality of the knightly world: “De cest

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104 I, alone, tried to gain honor at the expense of all of you. I should be punished more harshly.
105 I pardon you and your words are forgotten.
Brice 47

forfait quites soiez” (Fritz 390). Guiveret should not be blamed for attacking Erec for two reasons; firstly, because the latter’s pride gets the best of him, compelling him to charge forward when he should have kept his distance. Erec could have very well been killed in this battle, if not for Enite’s interjection, rebuking him for attacking a wounded opponent. Secondly, Erec’s identity is concealed under his armor, but Guiveret recognizes Enite and knows that she is married to Erec. Guiveret attacks Erec out of loyalty: to him, it looks like a kidnapping. Yet, Erec is the one who does the forgiving; by doing so, we are told that there is nothing he needs to learn.

Erec’s maturation culminates towards the end of the story, when he and Guivreiz decide to ride to Britain and find King Arthur. Guivreiz declares that they will find him at Tintajol, where, upon reaching their destination, Hartmann refers to Erec as *King Erec* for the first time (“kunec Erec”); in contrast, Chretién does not refer to Erec in this way until his official crowning at the very end. Thus, for Hartmann to call the protagonist King Erec much earlier than he should means that the title of “king,” in this context, represents another stage of Erec’s development from reckless prince to competent ruler. However, he still shows his youth by wanting to seek the adventure known as *joie de la curt*, despite the more experienced King Guivreiz’s admonishments to turn back before it’s too late. It seems as though Erec places no value on his life (“sleht er mich, so bin ich tot: daz ist der werlde ein ringiu not” (Pfeiffer 263), but—on the contrary—his desire for adventure is linked to his ardent belief in God, to whom he places trust in (8100-8130). In addition to Erec’s faith, Hartmann includes an emotional scene about Mabonagrin’s prisoners, the twenty beautiful widows of the knights slain by him in battle. Their heartfelt sorrow and tears cause him to join in their crying (8290-8320), and they also make him realize that he has much to gain from battling Mabonagrin. One should not consider
Erec immature for seeing this fight as the greatest opportunity he’s ever had to increase his fame and honor (8520-8570): unlike in Chretién, Erec is driven to sadness by the despondence of the widows, and he is determined to give Enite a better life. The unfathomable amount of honor excites Erec because the honor here is associated with his religious obligations as a miles Christi and to fight for these weaker people who can’t defend themselves on their own. Additionally, although Erec says that, should he fail, his life would be of little loss, he begs God fervently that He watch over him before the fight, another scene that does not exist in Chretién. Erec is concerned for his well being because he realizes that the happiness of both Enite and the suffering widows are contingent upon his success. But he is confident, because, according to him, the strength that he gains from Enite’s love allows him to withstand adversary, no matter how fearsome: “swenn’ mich der muot iwer ermant, so ist sigesaelic min hant: wand’ iuwer guote minne die sterkent mine sinne, daz mir den vil langen tac niht wider gewesen mac106,” (Pfeiffer 288). Enite’s strong, religious feelings for Erec are reciprocated, consummating their Christian unity in accordance to the medieval world. He must now fulfill his Christian duties for the betterment of everyone around him, also completing his maturation by doing so. The final battle is one clearly fought with noble intent.

In Erec’s first battle, he is called “Erec der jungelinge,” but during his fight with Mabonagrin he earns the title of “Erec der wunderaere” (9305-9310). No longer the young, reckless, unproven prince of his land, Erec’s maturity culminates as he defeats Mabonagrin and restores peace to Destrigales. In order to highlight his maturity even more, Hartmann digresses from his source once again by making Erec the symbol of a responsible knight. He tells Mabonagrin that spending so much time in his castle with his wife was not the wisest decision to

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106Whenever my mind is occupied by you, my hand is victorious. Your great love strengthens my mind; therefore, nothing bad can happen to me the whole day long.
make, because a man needs to withdraw from his woman from time to time: “so sol man waerlichen den wiben doch entwichen ze eteslicher stunde. Ich habe ez uz ir munde heimlichen vernomen daz bin varn und wider komen ane ir haz mac geschehen” (Pfeiffer 306). This confirms Erec’s maze, his “coming-of-age” within the realm of the knightly world. It was, after all, his unmaze that led to his need to embark on adventures after the wedding, and Hartmann masterfully emphasizes this change in Erec’s attitude.

Hartmann rewrites the ending that we get in Chretién with his military audience in mind, replacing the joy with gloom and sorrow. Indeed, the word joie occurs over twenty times from line 5820 to the end alone, and nothing prevents Erec from partaking in the grandiose festivities. However, Hartmann gives more attention to the eighty grieving widows than to the celebration, and Erec is afflicted with so much sorrow that he is deprived of any joy he would have had (“doch was er ane froude hie, also daz er sin herze nie von swaerem kumben brahte,” 9780-9785). As the women are all widows of knights slain by Mabonagrin, Hartmann rewrites this episode so that these fallen warriors can be given the respect that they deserve. In addition to the grieving, the knights are also given a proper burial in Hartmann, an act made possible thanks to Erec taking their heads off the poles and summoning priests to perform the burial rites (9740-9760). There is little, if nothing, mentioned about the celebration; instead, Erec acts as a noble knight should, consoling the widows in their time of need and doing whatever he can to assuage their sorrow. Erec’s behavior is so exemplary that he is the one who tells the widows to come with him to King Arthur’s court, and earns effusive praise from Arthur by doing so: “du solt von schulden immer sin gepriset unde geeret: wan du hast wol gemeret unsers hoves wunne”

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107 Truly ought man withdraw from his wife every now and then. I have heard it from their own mouths that coming and going won’t hurt.

108 You should always be praised and honored, for you have increased the joy of our court.
Brice 50

(Pfeiffer 322). Finally, joy is talked about in this depressing episode—because of Erec’s selflessness and proper behavior. Erec wins honor and praise from the greatest king in the world, thereby undisputably earning the name for himself that he works so hard to get throughout the story. With great honor to his name, Erec returns to his father’s court once again, after hearing the news of his death. Therefore, what begins as a story about a young knight-in-training who leaves home—like so many noblemen did during this time—ends with a king returning home as an accomplished, mature knight. To remove any doubt from a skeptical reader in regard to Erec’s judgment at this point, Hartmann ensures his audience that king Erec lives an honorable life from here, pleasing his wife to the best of his abilities, but not to the point where he will spend all of his time in bed and taint his honor: “der kunec selbe nu huoter ir willen swa er mohte, und doch als im tohte, niht sam er e phlac, do er sich durch si verlac: wand’ er nach eren lebte” (Pfeiffer 328). By doing this, Hartmann not only rewrites the ending, but adds onto it by giving us a definitive one. Chretién ends the story during the lavish celebration made for Erec’s homecoming, but Hartmann ends it by telling us that Erec, having gained so much honor, lives happily into old age with Enite under God’s grace (10110-10120). Thus, we are given the ultimate assurance that Erec has recognized his past mistakes, completed his development, and—most importantly—will be a competent ruler, a concern that would more likely be on the mind of a knight serving an empire more than a troubadour whose purpose was to entertain and please.

109.The king pleased her whenever he was able, but not like he did earlier, when he lay in bed. Now he lived for honor’s sake.
2.2: Iwein and His Wiser, More Experienced Friend

Towards the end of his life, Hartmann composed his Iwein, which interestingly reverses the dilemma in Erec: whereas Erec must devote himself entirely to Enite and degenerate into uxoriousness, Iwein abandons Laudine shortly after their wedding to fight in tournaments for an entire year. By this point, Hartmann would have been even more familiar with many of the problems that knights like himself would have encountered at some point during their careers; that is, being forced to make the choice between knighthood and romance. Now an older, experienced knight who had fought in a crusade, Hartmann could reflect on his own experiences as he wrote his final and greatest work. Similar to Erec, Iwein tells the story of a young, inexperienced knight who wishes to gain honor by challenging Ascalon, the guardian of the fountain. Iwein learns about the fountain through his kinsman, Kaleogrant, who ventures over there in search for adventure. Despite the warning he receives not to pour water on the stone, he does so anyway in order to satiate his lust for adventure, thereby causing a terrible storm and destroying the forest. Ascalon, the defender of the fountain, appears and justly attacks Kaleogrant for encroaching upon his territory out of his own frivolous curiosity. Realizing that an opportunity to gain honor has presented itself, Iwein decides to avenge his kinsmans’ defeat in combat: “Do recent der here Iwein die kunneschaft under in zwein” (Edwards 40). H.B. Willson rightly argues that the difference in composure between Ascalon and Iwein is shown between the former’s maze and the latter’s unmaze: Ascalon had every right to kill Kaleogrant for negligently destroying part of his kingdom, but had enough to control to spare his life after felling him from his horse. Iwein, however, is not yet mature enough to have such restraint, as he mercilessly hunts down the fountain knight even after delivering a mortal wound, but only

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110Then Sir Iwein considered the kinship between the two (he and Kaleogrant).
because he is afraid of Key insulting his “honor” (1060-1070). Thus, our hero is determined to bring back proof of his victory, even at the possible expense of his life, as he is nearly crushed by the gates of the nearby castle town to which the knight flees. Iwein is preoccupied with his reputation and perception from people in his court, even if it means being an intruder and murdering a knight who is merely doing his job as a guardian.

The early portion of the story in both versions is mostly the same, but Hartmann gives Gawein a far more important role, making him Iwein’s wiser, more experienced friend, possibly to further accentuate Iwein’s inexperience and immaturity. In Chretién, Gawain is anything but mature, as we see in the episode after the wedding. He flirts with Lunete in accordance to the courtly love ideal of the time, which questions the durability of love. Gawain is a truly a character of his time, for he even puts Laudine’s constancy into question by arguing that love itself can be merely nothing more than a petty state of transition, and that he would be just as attached to her as Yvain is if their roles were reversed (2490-2535). He doesn’t blame Yvain for feeling the way he does, yet puts their friendship on the line by making an ultimatum: if Yvain doesn’t compete in tournaments with him, their friendship is over. Gawain’s demand stems from his own hedonistic desires, as his argument is simple: Yvain must compete in tournaments because he needs to live for pleasure and not be lazy: “Or ne deves vous pas songier, Mais les tournoiemenz ongier Et emprendre a fort jouster” (Hult 204).

In contrast, however, Gawein is much more mature and experienced in Hartmann than he is in Chretiën; for example, he does not flirt with Lunete, but thanks her sincerely for helping Iwein. Moreover, to express his gratitude, Gawein uses the word friunde and not geselle to describe Iwein: “Min frou Lunet, iuwer rat und iuwer bet hat mir vil liebes getan an dem besten

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112 You must not be lazy, but instead compete in tournaments and enjoy some strong jousts.
113 A geselle is a companion in a more professional sense.
Gawein is happy for his friend because of the wealth, land, and the beautiful wife that he now has; his own interests are irrelevant to him in comparison to Iwein’s happiness. Hartmann does away with Chretién’s hedonism and courtly humor to deepen the bond between Gawein and Iwein, and to present Gawein as a thoughtful friend. He must be thoughtful because he is the more experienced of the two knights, and we know that there is a difference in their rank because Gawein calls Iwein a guot kneht (2890-2900), while Hartmann calls Gawein a ritter (80-90). As the experienced ritter, Gawein does his best to guide his friend in the right direction; therefore, unlike his French counterpart, he does not tell Iwein that he must ride with him for the sake of pleasure, but because he must prove his worth to others and especially his wife: “Nu durch wen mohte ein biderbe man garner wirden sinen lip danne durch sin biderbez wip?” (Edwards 136). Whereas Chretién’s Gawain questions woman’s constancy, Gawein warns Iwein that, should he degenerate into uxoriousness, not even his loyal wife will say anything because she loves him too much to upset him. In fact, because he now has land and a wife, it is essential that Iwein maintain his honor (2850-2860). Gawein’s mentioning of Erec demonstrates his experience in these matters, and that he does not want to see his best friend become disgraced because of his inexperience. Gawein realizes that the community—and possibly his own court—will look down on him if he spends his time laying in bed with his wife. It is a story that Gawein does not want to hear again. Although Yvain’s request to Laudine that he be given permission to leave her for a year occurs in both versions, Hartmann shows Gawein’s wisdom by making him the one who suggests that Iwein ask the queen for her consent to leave: “Herre Iwein, da gedenchet an, und vart mit uns von

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114 My Lady Lunete, your sound counsel and judgment have given me great happiness for the sake of the best friend that I have.
115 Now, for whom should a worthy man prove the worth of his life any more than his worthy wife?
hinnen, und gewinnet mit minnen der kungein ein urloup abe seinem tage, der fuoge habe^{116} (Edwards 136). In Chretién, Yvain makes this decision on his own, but only after succumbing to Gawain’s incessant begging (2530-2550).

^{116}Sir Iwein, think about this and leave with us, and win, with love, consent from the queen permission to leave on a fitting day.
2.3: “Adultery is More Interesting:” The Courtly Model and Chretién’s *Yvain*

Gawain seems to be just as young and negligent, if not moreso, than Yvain, but we must remember that both writers had certain universes in mind when they wrote this episode. We know that Chretién had a patroness to write for, whose court was eager to hear stories that took love into a more secular direction; his universe was fascinated with the concept of a “true” kind of love that can exist only outside of marriage. Though there is nothing adulterous about Gawain or his relationship with Lunete, it demonstrates how easily we should expect one to fall in love. Love is contemplated in a more adventurous, fun light by Chretién, his patrons, and his contemporaries; what we get as a result are writings about adultery or, at the least, writings that don’t condemn it as much as we would expect, given the time period. For example, if we recall, shortly after Chretién finished his *Cliges*, which tells the story about a man who falls in love with his uncle’s wife, Andreas the Chaplain completed his *Art of Courtly Love*, a treatise on love of the courtly kind, written especially for Marie de Champagne. Andreas excludes the affection between married people in his treatise of courtly love, because Marie’s court was more interested in the “secret” kind of love, usually adulterous in nature. In this universe, love is maintained if nobody hears word of it, but at the same time the lover most come to his beloved’s aid whenever she is need of assistance.117 This is exactly what Gawain does when he meets Lunete. He falls in love with her so easily and pledges his services to her like he does with so many other women, and Lunete reciprocates Gawain’s feelings by consenting to his flirtations without so much as a slight hesitation (2410-2440). The episode is written with the courtly model in mind. Similarly, adultery was an actual problem in the courts of twelfth-century France. Marie’s mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, was known for the effect that her beauty and charm had on others.

117See Andreas the Chaplain’s *The Art of Courtly Love*, p. 151.
Louis Capet, her husband, was always very suspicious when Eleanor invited men to the court.\textsuperscript{118} In particular, Louis did not approve of the non-sexual relationship between Eleanor and her childhood friend, a troubadour named Marcabru, which quickly turned ugly when Louis discovered his impassioned verses about his unattainable patroness.\textsuperscript{119} Later, during a crusade, Bishop Hugh of Lincoln told Giraldus Cambrensis that Eleanor had an adulterous affair with Geoffrey of Anjou, because she may have doubts about the validity of her marriage, as she was born into it.\textsuperscript{120} By the time Marie was an adult, her mother became a victim of adultery herself, when, in 1165, Henry VII began his notorious affair with Rosamund de Clifford, which, interestingly enough, may not have bothered her so much because she tolerated the presence of Geoffrey, her bastard son.\textsuperscript{121} Whether or not Marie and Eleanor even had a good relationship has been discussed, but chronicles suggest that they did know each other after Marie grew up. Furthermore, several chronicles prove that Marie had a good relationship with some of Eleanor’s sons from her other marriage, and Eleanor was the one who personally recommended Berengaria to be Richard’s wife, who was Marie’s son.\textsuperscript{122} Marie must have known her mother well enough; at the very least, she was certainly exposed to the literary renaissance that her mother started, in which there were a prolific amount of adulterous stories written and recited in the court.

\textsuperscript{118} See Alison Weir’s \textit{Eleanor of Aquitaine}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{119} Weir, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{120} Weir, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{121} Weir, p. 165, 173.
\textsuperscript{122} See June Hall Martin McCash’s “Marie de Champagne and Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Relationship Reexamined,” p. 706.
2.4: From Kneht to Ritter: Iwein’s Maturation

Iwein expresses his dissociation from knighthood by describing his dream, in which he is once again a great knight (3535-3570). Hartmann intensifies the didactism of this episode by having Iwein realize that he has learned an important lesson by allowing himself to abandon the responsibilities of knighthood in favor of wandering astray: “Mich hat geleret min troum—des si er geret” (Edwards 168). This episode marks the beginning of Iwein’s transition from a young, reckless man who risks life and limb to enhance his reputation to a mature knight who demonstrates selflessness. After he is given the opportunity to resume knightly activity thanks to the mysterious young woman who spots him lying naked, he displays noble behavior by vowing to serve her (3620-3630). Thus, his motivation to fight Count Aliers does not stem from his own ambition to enhance his reputation, but because he swears an oath and wants to fight for the well-being of others for a change. Before, Iwein undermines the importance of loyalty by not returning to Laudine before the specified time is up; he must learn to keep his promises through experience. Iwein shows his experience later on, in the episode about the giant, where he generously offers his services in order to right a great wrong, but also makes sure not to violate his promise to Lunete. He displays his selflessness by promising to fight the giant who kidnaps the lord’s daughter, who happens to be Gawein’s sister—but only after he finds out that she is, indeed, Gawein’s sister. Before this revelation, Iwein does not make the task a priority, informing the lord that he would fight the giant only if the brute came before midday, as he had already promised to fight for Lunete’s life earlier. However, after learning this, Iwein is still worried about the time constraint, but vows to try his hardest to accomplish both arduous tasks.

123 I have learned a lesson from my dream, may it be honored for that.
for Gawein’s sake: “ich sol unde wil gedienen immer mere” (Edwards 226). Though he wants to help both, Iwein still prioritizes the promise he has already made to Lunete; if not for the promise, he would easily choose Gawein’s sister over the other, as he tells us by comparing the loss of one’s life over the other: “Doch waere diu eine magt harte schiere verclagt wider dem schaden, der hie geschiht, giengez mir an die triuwe niht” (Edwards 232). The loss of one life over the other may be more devastating to him; if he wanted to, he could renege on his promise and help his friend instead, but he realizes that such a decision would be a disgrace to knighthood. Nonetheless, as we know, he is able to come to the aid of both like a good ritter—no longer an inexperienced kneht. After his victory against the three knights who wish to burn Lunete, Iwein hides his identity and calls himself *der riter mit dem leun* (5500-5505), giving himself the title of ritter. However, it is not just Iwein who says this: the woman who finds Iwein does (3630-3635), as does Hartmann (6255-6260). Most importantly, Iwein is not called a ritter until after he is cured of his insanity and begins his maturation. Like *Erec*, *Iwein* is written with rank in mind, something that Hartmann’s knightly audience would appreciate.

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124 I should and will evermore serve

125 Certainly the loss of one maiden would be forgotten quickly in comparison to the shame that would occur if my loyalty was not in jeopardy.
Bibliography


