

La Chastelaine de Vergi

Encounters in Medieval Literary Space

Edited by: Sophie Marnette, Helen J Swift

Traces the literary history and cultural afterlife of a thirteenth-century French romance from its medieval origins to early modern and modern reinventions.

How do you tell the story of a tale that must not be told? The thirteenth-century French courtly narrative poem *La Chastelaine de Vergi* centres on an injunction to secrecy. But the cultural fascination with this 958-line untellable tale prompted multiple retellings which this book traces materially, intertextually, geographically, and chronologically across networks of texts and artefacts. Chapters range across the Francophone Middle Ages from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, through verse and prose and across manuscript and print, offering detailed codicological and iconographic analyses, examining gendered discourse strategies and literary citation. Multimedial materiality is explored in French ivory caskets and Italian Trecento frescoes; also later interpretations in twentieth-century surrealist song and a twenty-first-century English play. This volume both establishes the *Chastelaine's* literary significance - hitherto under-recognised - and its cultural impact; and models a novel way of mapping reception history through the lens of "encounters", privileging the physical, affective, spatial, and temporal experience of the work by audiences medieval and modern. Overall, it refreshes and advances the critical conversations in medieval Francophone studies as a whole on such key issues as narrative voice, genre, material translation, the act of reading, and the writing of literary history itself.

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