

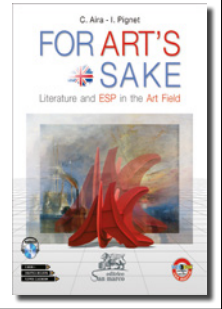
The legends of the Round Table

King Arthur has become the hero we know today thanks to Chrétien de Troyes, a French court poet who lived at the end of the 12th century, when the ideals of chivalry and courtly love started to be popular in Western Europe. These values had their origin in the Greek myths about the war of Troy and were probably brought to Europe by the Arabs. Chrétien de Troyes mixed them with Celtic legends and his own readings of the Roman poets, thus creating fresh romances which appealed¹ to the sentiment and taste of the period.

The tradition sets the Arthurian legends in Cornwall (Carlisle, Caerleon and Winchester).

The characters show similarities with the heroes of classical civilisations. For example Lancelot reminds one of Achilles and Guinevere Helen of Troy. Chrétien de Troyes had many imitators including Sir Thomas Malory, whose work is mainly a result of a translation of the French version. The legends have been a source of inspiration for films and animated cartoons like *Excalibur* (1981, director John Boorman), *First Knight* (1995, by Jerry Zucker), *The Sword in the Stone* (1963, Walt Disney Production).

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**FOR ART'S
SAKE**
Literature and ESP in
the Art Field



GLOSSARY

1 attracted

ACTIVITIES

- 1** Search for more information about the legends of the Round Table. Choose a character and an episode and give a report to the class about it.