



Arthur in Medieval Welsh Literature (Writers of Wales)

O J Padel

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Although the legends of Arthur have been popular throughout Europe from the Middle Ages onwards, the earliest references to Arthur are to be found in Welsh literature, starting with the Welsh-Latin *Historia Brittonum* dating from the ninth century. By the twelfth century, Arthur was a renowned figure wherever Welsh and her sister languages were spoken. O. J. Padel now provides an overall survey of medieval Welsh literary references to Arthur and emphasizes the importance of understanding the character and purpose of the texts in which allusions to Arthur occur. Texts from different genres are considered together, and shed new light on the use that different authors make of the multifaceted figure of Arthur – from the folk legend associated with magic and animals to the literary hero, soldier and defender of country and faith. Other figures associated with Arthur, such as Cai, Bedwyr and Gwenhwyfar, are also discussed here.

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