

“Lanval” and “Sir Launfal”: Evolution and Transmission

1. Compare the openings of the two versions. In what ways is Marie’s version distinctive of the Breton lai? In what ways is Thomas Chestre’s distinctive to romance?
2. Look at the opening situation in each. Describe Lanval’s relationship to Arthur and the queen in the opening lines.
3. In each version, what events cause Lanval to leave Arthur’s court?
4. Describe the situation in which Lanval first encounters his lover. How does the situation differ in each version?
5. Describe Lanval’s lady. How does she appear? What topical details does each writer describe? What gifts does she give Lanval? What conditions does she place upon him?
6. Thomas Chestre includes several scenes that are not in Marie’s version. Look at these scenes. How do they seem distinctive to romance? How might they be distinctive to a male writer?
7. Describe the scene in which Guenivere approaches Lanval in each version. How does Lanval respond? How does Arthur, when he learns of the situation, respond? How does the court respond?
8. Describe the trial in each of the versions.
9. Describe Guenivere’s and Lanval’s lover’s reactions at the end of the story.
10. How does each author conclude? What becomes of Lanval?