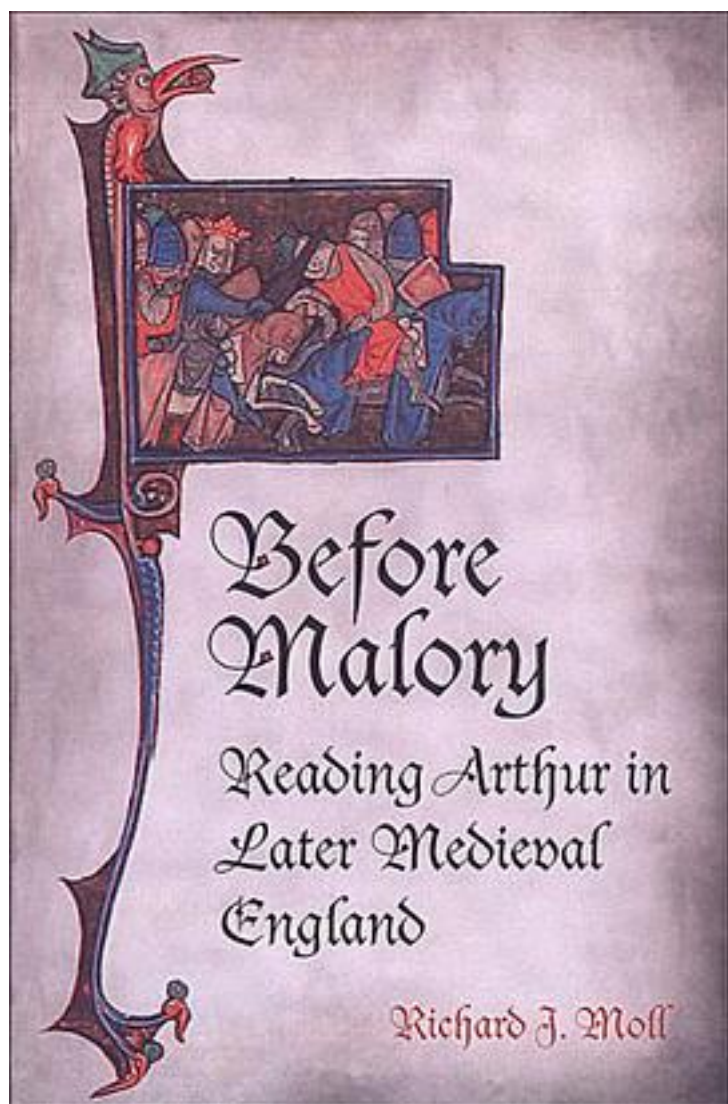


Before Malory



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出版者:Univ of Toronto Pr

出版时间:2003-12

装帧:HRD

isbn:9780802037220

Although most modern scholars doubt the historicity of King Arthur, parts of the legend were accepted as fact throughout the Middle Ages. Medieval accounts of the historical Arthur, however, present a very different king from the romances that are widely studied today. Richard Moll examines a wide variety of historical texts including Thomas Gray's Scalacronica and John Hardyng's Chronicle to explore the relationship between the Arthurian chronicles and the romances. He demonstrates how competing and conflicting traditions interacted with one another, and how writers and readers of Arthurian texts negotiated a complex textual tradition. Moll asserts that the enormous variety and number of existing chronicles demonstrates the immense popularity of the historical Arthur in medieval England. Since these chronicles were the dominant source of Arthurian information for the late medieval reader, they provide an invaluable, and neglected, interpretive context for modern readers of Malory and other later medieval romances. The first monograph to look at the impact of these historical texts on Arthurian literature, Before Malory is also the first to show how canonical vernacular romances interacted with chronicle texts that have since dropped out of the canon.

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