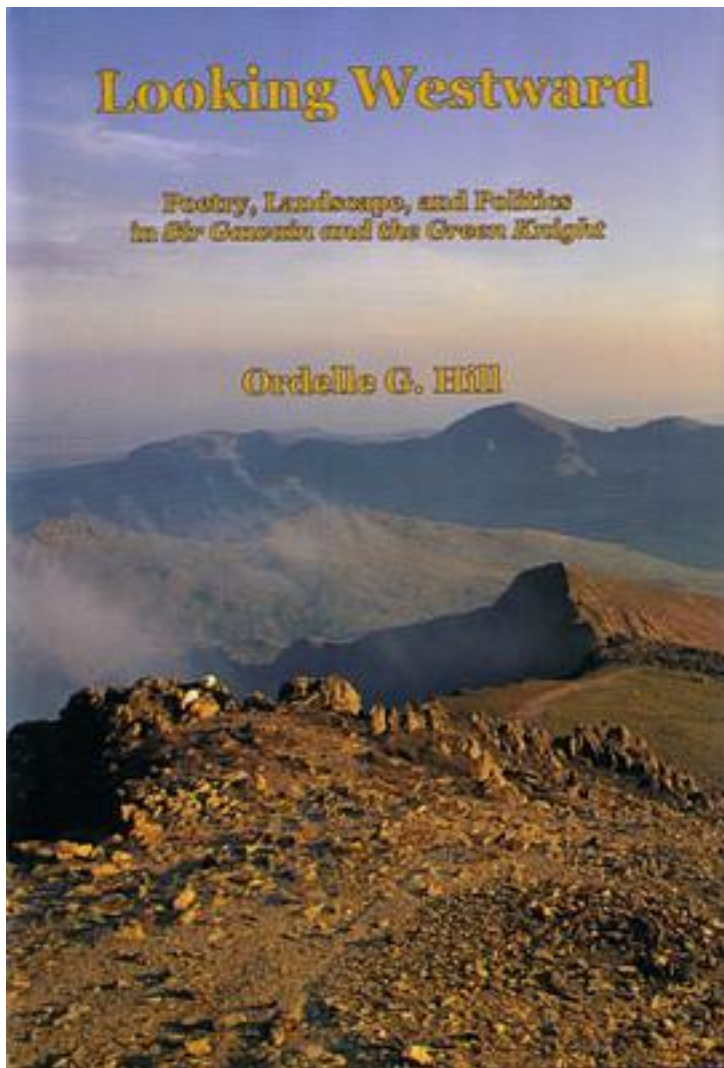


Looking Westward



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出版者:University of Delaware Press

出版时间:2009-4-1

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780874130492

In Looking Westward, the author argues that a close study of the poetry, landscape, and politics of late thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Wales and the Welsh March is important to a fuller understanding of the Gawain poet and his poem. Although the poem was likely composed in the northwest Midlands, little attention has been paid to the influences of the west: the Welsh alliterative poets and Henry Grosmont, the physical landscape of Wales and the March, and the political tensions that generated a historical beheading tradition, especially between 1265 and 1330, a tradition that gave way in the court of Edward III to the desire for a harmonious Camelot. This new literary, geographical, and historical perspective provides a better understanding of Sir Gawain and the virtues he embodies and acquires, as well as the relevance of these virtues in the turbulence of the poet's contemporary world.

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