

## The Norris J. Lacy Prize for Outstanding Editorial Achievement in Arthurian Studies

The Norris J. Lacy Prize for Outstanding Editorial Achievement in Arthurian Studies is presented by the International Arthurian Society-North American Branch every one or two years. The Lacy Prize recognizes distinction in editing. Such editing might include not only not only primary texts but also collections of scholarly material. Sometimes the award recipient has been notable for both types of editing.

The 2019 Norris J. Lacy Prize goes to Mr. **Nigel Bryant** of Woodstock, Oxfordshire (in absentia). Nigel's research interests and literary production are impressively broad, with publications ranging from dramatic texts (*The Play of Oliver Twist*, 1995) to Young Adult Fiction (*Merlin's Mound*, 2004). As theater director and radio drama producer he has worked on Arthur-related plays and series by writers including C.S. Lewis, Rosemary Sutcliff, Susan Cooper and Kevin Crossley-Holland. He is particularly well known as a translator of Old French texts, many of them absolute firsts in the English language, and all of them important works that have deepened our knowledge of medieval literature and culture. These include Jehan Wauquelin's *The Medieval Romance of Alexander: The Deeds and Conquests of Alexander the Great* (2012); *The True Chronicles of Jean le Bel, 1290 – 1360* (2015); *The History of William Marshall* (2016 – first translation into English of 12<sup>th</sup>-c biography of this famous knight); and his translation of Cuvelier's *The Song of Bertrand Du Guesclin* (forthcoming May 17, 2019).

Today, however, we wish to give special emphasis to Nigel's work in translating an insanely large corpus of Old French Arthurian texts. First published in 1978 is his *The High Book of the Grail: A Translation of the Thirteenth-Century Romance of Perceval*. This was followed in 1982 by *Perceval: The Story of the Grail* (translations of all of Chrétien's version and selections from Chrétien's continuators with summaries of omitted passages). In 2001 he published *Merlin and the Grail: Joseph of Arimathea; Merlin; Perceval: The Trilogy of Romances Attributed to Robert de Boron*; (2004), and in that same year as well *The Legend of the Holy Grail* (medieval French grail romances combined with minimal changes to create a reasonably coherent tale). 2011 saw the publication of the monumentally massive *Perceforest: The Prehistory of King Arthur's Britain*. This is an *abridged* translation, running to 791 pages in small type. A year later Nigel published an abridgement of the abridgement in *A Perceforest Reader; Selected Episodes from Perceforest: The Prehistory of Arthur's Britain*. Rounding out Nigel's contributions to Arthuriana (so far) is his 2015 *The Complete Story of the Grail: Chrétien de Troyes' Perceval and its Continuations*. Nigel's presentation of the Grail material here is especially innovative in that it includes Chrétien's text and thus represents how most medieval readers would have encountered it.

This is an impressive body of work by any standard. Nigel Bryant is described on the Boydell & Brewer website, where the majority of his translations have been published, as an "Arthurian Hero." We wholeheartedly agree with this sentiment, and for bringing the medieval French Arthurian canon to a wider audience, we are all in Nigel's debt. The Executive Committee of the IAS-NAB is pleased to recognize Nigel Bryant's considerable editorial work in helping to expand the Arthurian canon by making Old French Arthurian romance more widely available to students and scholars alike. His considerable scholarly achievements have earned him the prestigious Norris J. Lacy Prize for Outstanding Editorial Achievement in Arthurian Studies for 2019.