Penguin Classics

THE DEATH OF KING ARTHUR

TRANSLATED BY JAMES CABLE

The Death of King Arthur (La Mort le Roi Artu), set in the twilight of the Arthurian world, is a French romance of the thirteenth century. The story begins with a Round Table sadly depleted in numbers after the Quest of the Holy Grail and sick at heart. It goes on to tell of Lancelot's continuing adultery with Guinevere and the arrival of the treacherous Mordred, and ends with the last battle at Salisbury, the deaths of Arthur and Lancelot, and the destruction of the Kingdom of Logres. The tale is told simply, with none of the absurd fantasy common in other French romances of the same period, and conveys all the melancholy of a legend that, centuries later, has lost none of its power to move.

The cover, designed by Germano Facetti, shows a detail from 'Arthur and the Giant of St Michael's Mount' from the Hainault Chronicle, in the Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels