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Ralph Waldo Emerson Prize 1997

# BEYOND LEGEND: ARTHUR RECONSIDERED

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## Abstract

Written from the assumption that King Arthur did indeed exist, this paper endeavors to examine this 'fictional' character's historicity, using the available resources to prove the thesis. The scope of the investigation centers on primary sources from the early medieval works of Gildas and Nennius, the definitive high medieval source Geoffrey of Monmouth, and the romances from the late Middle Ages. Secondary sources include the traditional interpretation by historians of the primary sources, placing Arthur across England. A single, more recent source supports a differing hypothesis, locating Arthur primarily in the borderlands of Scotland and northern England, creating an interesting contrast between historical theories. The conclusion reached suggests that the evidence against the traditional theory is much greater than that supporting it, and therefore that King Arthur most likely resided in Scotland. More precise conclusions focus on the location of specific castles, battles, and the connec-

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tion of the legends to known historical fact. The essay attempts to persuade the reader that King Arthur was real.

## Introduction

The legend of King Arthur is one of the most universally known of any myth, particularly in Great Britain, the kingdom of this hero. Locations including Arthur in their title abound and are liberally spread across the nation, from Great and Little Arthur in the Scilly Islands to Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh to Arthur's Chair in Wales. No name is as frequent in England, which gives evidence of his popularity. The Arthurian legends are set during an exciting period of history in the fifth and sixth centuries. At this time, the "Dark Ages" and their ancient customs were falling away and the new thoughts and ideas of the "Middle Ages" were beginning to take hold. During Arthur's reign, Britain was being abandoned by the Roman Empire as legion after legion left the most remote westerly outpost in the Empire to return to Rome to help push back encroaching barbarian invaders. This withdrawal of military force left Britain completely unable to defend herself against marauding Picts from the northern Caledonian highlands of Scotland, the Scotti from Ireland who pillaged the coasts of western England and Wales, and the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons, who as a growing power on the continent, needed more land to continue to spread out and farm. These sweeping changes added to the confusion of an unorganized people and caused them to revert from their Romanized state to their native tribal structure, making it only more difficult for individual tribes to fight off hordes of determined invaders.

Such a turbulent period in history was ripe for the rise of a new leader, one who could guide the Britons to victory over their enemies. In the legends and romances, Arthur serves as just such a figure. The legends of King Arthur lead one to consider the heroic or "Great Man" theory of history, which states that one particular individual can alter the course of history with his

actions. Arthur may have been such an individual, for he more-or-less singlehandedly slowed the onslaught of the Anglo-Saxons. The question remains, did King Arthur ever live? Evidence exists, drawn from the available resources, that leads one to believe that there is truth in the ancient texts and romances.

## Early Medieval Sources: Gildas and Nennius

The earliest known reference to King Arthur is indirect, but it serves an important purpose in discovering the historicity of the High King. Composed in 410 A.D. by the bard Aneurin, the Welsh epic poem *Gododdin* refers to the withdrawal of the last Roman garrison, followed by the invasions by the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons.[1] The bard identifies the name Arthur with courage, describing one man as being great, "although he was no Arthur."[2] Before this reference the name Arthur is unwritten; however in the late sixth and early seventh centuries, several other Arthurs can be traced, owing to the sudden popularity of the name. The time of this poem places it only one hundred years after Arthur's death, making it a highly reliable source.

Another source is the book, *DeExcidio et Conquestu Britanniae,* written by an English monk named Gildas in 540 A.D. Interestingly, Gildas never actually mentions Arthur's name in his work. This omission of Arthur in one of the few works written by men who were almost contemporaries of the king has given rise to a number of theories attempting to explain this strange oversight. One theory has the premise that Arthur was so well known at the time that it was unnecessary for Gildas to make more than an indirect reference to him. This indirect reference can be found in the description of a great man called "The Bear."[3] If the word bear is traced back to its Celtic and Latin roots, one can find that it translates to *arth* or *artos,* making it easy to see how the name could have evolved into Arthur.[4]

In any case, it is most likely that Arthur filled the position of *dux bellorum* or a military duke.[5] After the death of Ambrosius,

the Britons were left without a leader but this position was soon filled by the coming of Arthur. The Welsh monk Nennius wrote in his ninth century *Historia Brittonum* of twelve specific battles that Arthur led and won. It is these twelve battles, and more importantly their sites, that give greater aid to the corroboration of the legends with history.

## The Twelve Battles

The specific translation of the location of the battle sites is much disputed among Arthurian scholars due to the problem that many of the place names listed no longer exist in Britain today; therefore, their exact positions are left to individual interpretation.[6]

Historians have divided themselves over the placement of the twelve battles. More traditional scholars place the majority of the battles in the south of England, although it is true that the battle sites are spread over a wide area.[7] While it is more likely that the battles all took place in one area, most probably the north, the spread of action supports the theory that Arthur was the supreme military leader and fought the invaders wherever they were most threatening. A conflicting theory places Arthur in the extreme north of England, in the border country of Scotland.[8]

The final battle of Mount Badon is the most important to locate because it secured Arthur's military reputation and began the extended era of peaceful reign. This battle is so significant that three of the primary sources, Gildas, Nennius, and the *Annals of Wales*, go so far as to describe the location in detail.[9] The battle is even remembered by some, such as Gildas, in relation to the day of their birth. Badon has traditionally been placed at Bath because of its Roman history and because Geoffrey of Monmouth put it there; however, this is a mistaken conclusion for several reasons. Bath, a Roman spa not a fortress, does not fit the description of Mount Badon. It is also very distant from Arthur's other wars in the border country and Scotland. Goodrich gives a convincing expla-

nation for Geoffrey's mistake of placing the battle in Somerset by using linguistics to divine that "Somer" could easily be mistaken for "Cymry," the ancient Celtic name Old Wales or Strathclyde.[10]

After locating most of Arthur's battles and their sites in Scotland and the north of England, it becomes clear that naval superiority would have been required for such a victory that resulted in at least seventeen years of peace for Britain. This realization forces the historian to look closer at the landmarks described by Geoffrey in the battle of Badon Hill, the most recognizable being the huge, red lava rock of Dumbarton. As a seat of King Arthur, Dumbarton controlled the Clyde estuary and therefore the Irish Sea, was in a direct line of sight to Holyrood Palace at Stirling, and was near enough to Traprain Law and its hill fort for efficient defense.[11] Thus it is clear that Arthur stationed himself in the border country as the most militarily practical spot for a defense of Britain from invaders.

## High Medieval Sources:

## Geoffrey of Monmouth

Geoffrey of Monmouth is the definitive source for King Arthur's life. He attempted to record the events of Arthur's life in his *History of the Kings of Britain.* The *History* displays him for the first time as a romantic hero and endows him with twelfth century chivalric ideals. The main traditions of the Arthurian epic were established with Geoffrey's work.[12] Geoffrey of Monmouth has not been considered a reliable source for two reasons: one, he claims to have based his account on information from a small book lent to him by Walter, the Archdeacon of Oxford, which has never been found, and two, he appears to have made gross errors in his translation of the geography, with battles skipping from "Armorica" (Brittany) to the Boar of Cornwall in an astonishing amount of time.[13] However, many historians have been able to make sense of Geoffrey's words and create a plausible life for the High King. Geoffrey methodically divides his life of Arthur into six parts:[14]

Arthur's ancestry and birth

His battles

His coronation

The continental campaign

The defeat at Camlan, Arthur's wounding

His departure overseas to Avalon

Geoffrey relates that Arthur was elected commander in chief by the other chieftains at what Geoffrey describes as Silchester in southern England.[15] Once in command, Arthur waged six campaigns from his headquarters at York.[16] Geographically, Geoffrey has placed Arthur in the south of England with the city of London relatively close at hand. It is from these references that the legend surrounding Glastonbury arose.

## Glastonbury

Glastonbury's church was immortalized in the twelfth century by William of Malmesbury, a contemporary of Geoffrey's, in his book *De Antiquitate Glastoniensis,* William recorded the Church of St. Mary at Glastonbury as "the first church in the kingdom of Britain," but the monks were not satisfied and altered details in William's work to make Glastonbury seem more inviting to pilgrims.[17] The legend of Glastonbury as the Isle of Avalon seems rather surprising considering that today Glastonbury is nothing but a hill in the middle of England. However, there was a time when the area was an island in the then much higher Bristol Channel. Changes since then in sea level have all but drained the surrounding marshes but the mystique remains. Although William of Malmesbury never mentioned Arthur in conjunction with Glastonbury, in later versions of his book Arthur appeared as the patron of the abbey and was reported to be buried there.

Forced to find funds to rebuild the abbey after a fire, the monks began a search for Arthur's tomb, as chronicled by Gerald of Wales, guided by Henry II, who had been told by an "ancient

Welsh bard…they would find the body at least sixteen feet beneath the earth…in a hollow oak."[18] In 1191, the monks discovered a stone slab beneath which was a lead cross with an inscription identifying the grave as that of "the renowned King Arthur with Guinevere his second wife in the Isle of Avalon."[19] A sketch of the cross still survives in William Camden's *Britannia* but it makes no mention of Guinevere. The style of writing on the cross alerted historians that the cross is not from the sixth century (Arthur's time) but is more likely from the eleventh century.[20] The bones are presumably those of an Iron Age man and his wife buried in their dugout canoe.[21]

Ever since the Glastonbury legend began, archaeological excavations have been made in the vicinity, trying to determine the truth of the King Arthur myths. Nearby stands South Cadbury Castle, long considered a candidate for Camelot. On top of the hill is a British fort, known locally as Arthur's Palace, which shows signs of a sixth century occupation, making it possible chronologically for Arthur to have lived there. Excavations over the years have all pointed to habitation by Neolithic men about 3000 B.C. as well as signs of habitation during the original Roman occupation of Britain.[22] Finally in 1965, the Camelot Research Committee was formed.[23] Excavations at Glastonbury Tor by Philip Rahtz turned up sixth century amphoras, that had to have been imported at the time, which gave credence to the assumption that the Tor was the site of an important residence, perhaps a local chieftain who chose it as a signal station coordinated with Cadbury.[24] The conclusion made by the officers of the Committee was that between 300 and 500 A.D., as indicated by the building materials, Cadbury Castle had been refortified.[25]

While the above theory has been the most accepted in years past, there has always been another faction which placed King Arthur in the north of England and Scotland. Norma Lorre Goodrich is one of the historians who support this rival theory but also accept Geoffrey's description of Arthur's life and the geography of the land that Arthur conquered. She believes that through a few minor errors in translation, Geoffrey has mistakenly placed

King Arthur in a completely different area. For example, she accepts that Geoffrey was correct in recording Caerlaverock in Scotland as the place of Arthur's birth but then thinks he mistakes King Lot of Lodonesia for King Lot of "London."[26] Other mistakes such as "Brittany" for "Britain" and *Armorica* (Latin for Brittany) for *Armonica* (Latin for North Wales) can drastically change the location of a castle or battle.[27] In defense of Geoffrey, seemingly unexplainable descriptions may be due to mistakes in translation.[28]

## Arthur's Coronation

Geoffrey completes his life of Arthur with a description of his coronation as King at the end of the third book. The coronation is mostly a list of those who attended, but it plays a significant role in establishing the boundaries of Arthur's kingdom because every important figure who was loyal to Arthur or who had been conquered by him would have been present. Geoffrey chooses Caerleon in South Wales for the site of the coronation. However, Geoffrey also states that the churches of the martyrs Julius and Aaron are in the city and Gildas puts those churches in Carlisle.[29] Carlisle had a number of other reasons in its favor because it was not an ancient druidical center, a positive fact considering that Arthur was a Christian, and it was the ancestral home of the Welsh people.[30] Carlisle is therefore the more likely site of Arthur's coronation, not Caerleon.

The guests are introduced according to strict protocol, from the most to least important. The first to arrive was King Angus of Scotland or the "Rí Alban," the High King.[31] In Latin, Angus is identified as Auguselus of Albania; Albania now being recognized as eastern Scotland north of the Firth of Forth as according to W.F. Skene.[32] The geography points to Stirling as King Angus' seat, which is somewhat north of the Firth.[33] As the first guest to be announced, Angus must have been first in rank next to Arthur and his closest ally. Following Angus came four other kings of state:

King Urien of Moray, King Cadwallon Lawhir of North Wales, King Stater of South Wales, and King Cador of Cornwall.[34] The three archbishops of the ancient religious centers of Britain—London, York, and Caerleon—follow the five chiefs. The next members of the procession are the eleven noble consuls who represent different cities. The names of the cities do not correspond exactly to the Roman cities of Britain, causing confusion during translation.[35] The next guests to be announced are the six island kings who are found to be from Ireland, Islay, Scotland, the Orkneys, Argyle and the Isle of Man, and Denmark in Caithness.[36] The final member of the procession is Queen Guinevere, who enters crowned with laurel, signifying that she is by her own right a victorious battle queen and of royal lineage.[37] Four queens precede Guinevere into the church, each bearing a white dove, which is the heraldic bearing of the Grail Castle.[38] From the locations of the kingdoms of the guests, King Arthur's kingdom can be delimited to its four corners at Dumbarton, Carlisle, Stirling, and Berwick.[39]

## Criticisms of Geoffrey of Monmouth

Geoffrey of Monmouth, though credible in many respects, has his critics. The most voluble criticisms of Geoffrey came from William of Newburgh, another historian, born in 1136 A.D., who strongly condemned Geoffrey and called his life of Arthur "fables" and "fiction."[40] No one can deny the popularity of the *History* which became the primary source for all writers in the "Middle Ages."[41] Nevertheless, it cannot also be denied that the *History* was first printed during the troubled reign of King Stephen, of a Norman dynasty in danger of losing its power and influence.[42] The need for a glorious predecessor was pressing, and the *History* satisfied that need and provided a tract that demonstrated the heroic virtues of the British.[43] The decision is left to the individual as to whether Geoffrey is to be treated as an adequate source.

## Late Medieval Sources:

## The Romances

The final sources of information concerning King Arthur are the romances of the mid-twelfth century. The most well-known of all the romance authors is Chrétien de Troyes, who is famous for adding new characters, the ethereal setting and the new code of courtly love. However, the very first romance was by the Anglo-Norman poet Maistre Wace who, in 1155, wrote his verse-paraphrase *Le Roan de Brut* based on Geoffrey, which introduced the legend of the Round Table.[44] It is in the romances that Guinevere began to be portrayed as a faithless wife and as the cause of the dissolution of the Round Table.

The foremost character introduced in the romances is Lancelot du Lac, the greatest knight in the world. Lancelot takes precedence over Arthur in most of the continental romances for an obvious reason: he is French, while Arthur is English. Most of the romances deal specifically with Lancelot, such as Chrétien's *Lancelot* and the Vulgate or *Prose Lancelot* written by a group of anonymous authors. Goodrich notes that some scholars such as Jessie L. Weston have decided that Lancelot is fictional and was created by Chrétien in 1177 because no trace of him has been found before that time.[45] She, however, ignores the probability of an error in the definitive article from the Old French, brought up by the nineteenth-century Breton French scholar Count J.-C.-H. de La Villemarqué in 1841-42.[46] This leaves one with the possibility that the character's name is not Lancelot but should have the l' removed to become *Ancelot*.[47] Goodrich compares the character of Lancelot to that of King Anguselus of Albania because he is the one king who has never been fully accounted for and is yet so significantly powerful.[48] Goodrich reasons through linguistics that when the name *Anguselus* was translated from Latin into Old French, the middle syllable *gu* drops out, leaving *Anselo*.[49] Therefore, the name *Ancelot* may derive from the Latin *Anguselus*. Confirmation with the German *Lanzelet* shows that Geoffrey did not invent his High King of Scotland. One is left to wonder why

Chrétien would have called his hero "The Angus." That can be explained by a custom that remains today in Scotland: the addition of "The" to a name signifies that person as a clan chieftain and royalty.[50] From the many manuscripts including Lancelot and his adventures, Goodrich discovers that his territory was bordered on four corners by Edinburgh, Tantallon, Berwick, and Melrose.[51] Ulrich von Zatzikhoven mentions a place called Snowdon a number of times in his *Lanzelet* as Lancelot's main seat. Goodrich translates this to be Stirling Castle, which was visited frequently by members of Arthur's court who lived nearby.[52]

Information from the descriptions of four chapels in the Grail legend from the romances as well as its convenient location in the Bannockburn corridor leads one to believe that Arthur's O'on is indeed the site of worship of the Grail and of meetings of the secret military society led by Arthur himself. The end of that society came with the Battle of Camlan (Camlann); Arthur's final battle during which both he and Mordred, his illegitimate son, were wounded.

## The Battle of Camlan

The Battle of Camlan is so well remembered that the phrase itself has become common in the Welsh language, meaning a rout or terrible carnage.[53] The reference to Camlan is from the *Annals Cambriae*, "The battle of Camlann in which Arthur and Medraut were slain."[54] The word "Camlan" is likely a contraction of the Celtic word *Camboglanna*, meaning a crooked river bank, which gives rise to suspicions about river bank locations.[55] The reported causes of the battle have varied depending upon the particular source but most consider it to be Guinevere's adultery. However, today, many historians are beginning to take a second look at that conclusion and consider it to be a fictional solution to the problem of lost knowledge.[56]

The actual battle is divided into two parts, one initial skirmish at the king's port, Stranraer at Loch Ryan and another at

Camlan three days later. Goodrich summarizes the battle as a fight between Britons and Picts, as Arthur had accepted the Pictish Mordred as his heir, pronounced him, and then repudiated him.[57] One wonders why the second battle at Camlan ever took place if Arthur defeated Mordred at Stranraer, but the chronicles of Scotland suggest that Mordred blocked the path of Arthur while he was returning the body of his friend King Anguselus to his subjects in Albania.[58] Following her placement of Arthur in the north, Goodrich suggests Birdoswald as the most probable choice for Camlan as well as a strategic position from which Mordred would have been able to deny Arthur access to the Edinburgh and Stirling areas.[59]

## Avalon

The final mystery to unravel is the location of Avalon, King Arthur's final resting place. The location of the Isle of Avalon has long been fodder for fertile imaginations and descriptions of this mystical island vary greatly. The first important clue given by Geoffrey/Merlin in the *Life of Merlin* is that Arthur was carried over the sea to Avalon which immediately rules out any site such as land-locked Glastonbury.[60] The island has also been known as the "island of apples" and was renowned for its fertility and mild climate.[61] Sir John Rhys drew up a list of ten islands that could be considered possible locations of Avalon.[62] Goodrich eliminates a number of the possibilities such as Glastonbury, Gower, and Aberystwyth for the reason that they are not true islands, and spots such as Gresholm, Tory Island, and Bardsey because they are small and rocky and therefore infertile.[63] She also considers the Scilly Islands to be too far away and not a single, isolated island.[64] Having done so, she leaves only Anglesey and Man in contention. Anglesey fits the criterion of being fertile; however, it is not far from the mainland and would not be difficult to reach. Also, it was ruled at that time by a stable Welsh dynasty led by Maelgwn Gwynedd, who fought against Arthur at Camlan.[65] It is therefore unlikely that Arthur would have been sent to an island that was ruled by an

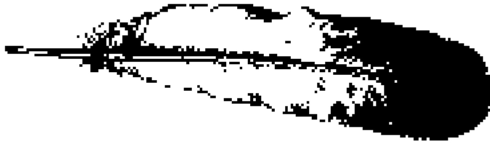
unfriendly king. Sir E.K. Chambers focuses his attention on the Isle of Man which always remained isolated and unconquered.[66]

Nennius described the island as being in the sea's navel which equates it with other very holy spots such as Jerusalem or Delphi.[67] The *Prose Lancelot* chronicles Lancelot as saying that he could see five lands from the island.[68] This is true of Man because Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, and Man itself can be seen from there.[69] Another geographical feature of Man that fits the description of Avalon is its startling subtropical climate.[70] The Isle of Man also has a history linked with a Neolithic "King Gorry" which pertains to the undiscovered land of Gorre from Chrétien's *Lancelot,* a kingdom deeply connected to the Grail Castle on Avalon.[71] The evidence points to the Isle of Man as Avalon and Peel Castle on the west coast in particular as the Grail Castle.[72]

## Conclusion

The Arthurian legends have played a prominent role in Western society for hundreds of years and a significant number of countries have been exposed to them. The earliest visual depictions of Arthur are actually Italian; one an archivolt from the Modena Cathedral from the early twelfth century (1099-1120), the other an 1165 A.D. mosaic from the floor of Otranto Cathedral.[73] As early as 1195, the inhabitants of Sicily believed that Arthur could be found under Mount Etna, which is a surprising distance for the legend to travel in a relatively short period of time.[74] Two hundred years after the first publication of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History*, the legend had spread to France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, and Greece, and King Arthur was a familiar name in such countries as Spain, Switzerland, and Scandinavia.[75] The legends have not only spanned the globe, but they have had amazing longevity as well. In the early thirteenth century, nobles entertained with tournaments known as Round Tables which were extremely popular all over Europe.[76] The popularity of the legend was increased by the 1485 printing of Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur.*[77]

The legend continued through the ages, carried on by such great authors as Chaucer, Spencer, Tennyson, and T.H. White, and in modern times by the musical *Camelot* and the movie *Monty Python and the Holy Grail.* The evidence presented suggests that the King Arthur of legend existed as a high chieftain or warrior king in north England and the Border Country. The early sources, the romances, and above all, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of England* have stood the test of historical analysis and have been found to be basically accurate. King Arthur was certainly at one time and still perhaps may be, the Once and Future King.



[1] Christopher Hibbert, The Search for King Arthur (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1969) p. 15

[2] Ibid., p. 15

[3] Ibid., p. 28

[4] Ibid., p. 92

[5] This role would have been adapted from the three earlier military titles carried by the Romans in Britain: Comes Militum Britanniarum, the Count of Britain, Comes Tractus Maritimi later Comes Litoris Saxonici, the Count of the Saxon shore, and Dux Limitum Britannicarum, the Duke of Britain. Norma Lorre Goodrich, King Arthur (New York: Harper & Row, 1986) p. 80

[6] The Latin in translation from Nennius is as follows: [Nennius, Historia Brittonum/Annals Cambriae, trans. and ed. by John Morris (London: Phillimore, 1974) p. 29]

Battle 1 -mouth of the River Glein
Battles 2,3,4,5, -by the Dubglas River in the Linnuis area
Battle 6 -the River Bassas
Battle 7 -in the Celidon Wood
Battle 8 -in Fort Guinnion
Battle 9 -in the City of the Legion
Battle 10 -on the banks of the River Tribruit
Battle 11 -on Mount Agned
Battle 12 -on Mount Badon

[7] One eminent Arthurian scholar, E.K. Chambers, in his book Arthur of Britain, places them across the island—E.K. Chambers, Arthur of Britain (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1927) pp. 202-203. He states that the River Glein is most likely the Lincolnshire River Glen or perhaps the Glen in Northumberland. The Dubglas is translated to Douglas, a common name in Scotland and Ireland, hardly so in England while Linnuis is probably the Lindsey area of Lincolnshire. The City of the Legion is almost universally recognized as Chester or Caerleon, or at least as being in the north. Hibbert concurs and adds that Celidon Wood is the forest of Caledonia and that Mount Badon could be Badbury Hill, Badbury Rings, Bath, Dorset, or a number of other locations (Hibbert, p. 82). It is however interesting to note that the battles range right across Britain, no mean feat for an army in the Dark Ages.

[8] Norma Lorre Goodrich begins her explanation by stating that the Glein River of Battle 1 as well as the Dubglas River of Battles 2–5 have yet to be officially located (Goodrich, p. 65). She continues that while there is now no Bass River of Battle 6,

there is a Bass Rock near the entrance to the Firth of Forth which gives rise to speculations about how Arthur would have defended the firth, making this a likely site for that battle (Ibid., p. 65). Goodrich continues with a description of battles 7 and 8 as according to a linguist and historian, Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson (Ibid., p. 65). Jackson places Fort Guinnion near Hadrian's Wall in the form of the Roman city of Binchester. He then goes on to discover that Celidon Wood most likely points to the modern city of Glasgow. The positioning of these battles makes much more sense strategically because it places Arthur in between two major sea access areas, the Firth of Clyde in the west and the Firth of Forth in the east, as well as at the narrowest point on the island, making it the best place to make a stand. Goodrich disagrees with other historians about the placement of the City of the Legion at Chester, arguing that Carlisle is a much better choice. She focuses on Carlisle due to its extensive set of Roman forts extending all the way to Solway Firth, as well as the fact that it is a major junction point for several Roman roads (Ibid., p. 68). Battle 11 at Mount Agned has long been thought to have taken place in the Edinburgh area because of its hill fort near Edinburgh Castle Rock, known as Arthur's Seat, that overlooks a plain (Ibid., p. 68). This is an acceptable choice for the reason that so far, all of Arthur's other battles have been placed in the surrounding areas. Goodrich cites O.G.S. Crawford for her linguistics of the River Tribruit in Battle 10 (Ibid., p. 68). Crawford divines from the word two meanings: a sandy shore of a river and a system of three rivers flowing into an estuary. Crawford finds the system of three rivers as the River Frew (possibly once *bruit*) in Scotland.

[9] The aggregate depiction is of a mountain with a fortress on the summit, against which a siege was mounted by the Saxons but was repeatedly broken by Arthur and his northern allies. Arthur is represented as a Christian fighting against religious pagans and the number three (symbolizing the trinity) is characteristic of all the accounts, concurring with the religious aspects of the battle. Finally, the death and destruction were so massive, and Arthur's win was so decisive that two generations of Saxons were killed. (Goodrich, p. 70)

[10] Ibid., p. 73

[11] Ibid., p. 79

[12] Geoffrey of Monmouth, The Historia Regum Britanniæ, ed. by Acton Griscom and trans. by Robert Ellis Jones (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1929) p. 446

[13] Goodrich, p. 42

[14] Ibid., p. 43

[15] Ibid., p. 58

[16] Ibid., p. 59

[17] Hibbert, p. 98

[18] Helen Hill Miller, The Realms of Arthur (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969) p. 176

[19] Hibbert, p. 105

[20] Ibid., p. 106

[21] The reasons for a fraud on the part of the monks are numerous. The monks needed the money and gifts which were to be gained by pilgrims visiting the monastery and Henry II needed to prove Arthur's death. Trouble had arisen in Wales and the possibility of a rebel calling himself Arthur was too real to be ignored. However, in 1962 an archeological team found the grave site and hypothesized that the cross could have been placed there when the grave was marked as Arthur's in the tenth century, as that type of cross was common in the tenth century. (Ibid., p. 107)

[22] Ashe et al., pp. 157-158

[23] Ibid., p. 158

[24] Hibbert, pp. 114-115. Extensive digging at South Cadbury during the summer of 1966 and 1967 brought little of significance to light other than shards of sixth century pottery and pieces of imported Mediterranean wine jars (Ashe et al., p. 173). Such discoveries suggest a sort of refortification of the hill fort in the sixth century, perhaps to defend against the Saxon invaders. Excavations continued, and in July of 1967, a cruciform trench was found in the shape of a Greek cross (Hibbert, p. 124). This unexpected discovery was clearly the plan of a church with the design being a common one used in the late fifth century in the Middle East (Ibid., p. 127). However the design was uncommon in Arthur's time and there were no traces of mortar or stone suggesting that work on the chapel had been stopped soon after the foundations were laid, which could have been as late as the eleventh century (Ibid., p. 127).

[25] Ashe et al., p. 181

[26] Goodrich, p. 43

[27] Ibid., pp. 46-47

[28] One such case is Geoffrey's relation of the legend of Merlin building Stonehenge. The text states that Ambrosius asked Merlin to bring the giants' healing stones from Ireland: *mitte pro chorea gigantum* (Ibid., p.53) The phrase is repeated during a description that Ambrosius was interred in Guintonia near Salisbury: *prope cenobium ambrii infra choream gigantum* (Geoffrey of Monmouth, p. 419). The significant problem with this statement is that it is not likely that a Christian would be building a circle of stones to pagan gods. The only explanation is either that Geoffrey misunderstood his source, or he mistranslated *choreia* (dance) for *choros* (choir) (Goodrich, p. 54). Geoffrey's translation reads that Ambrosius built a 'dance of the giants' (ironically, Stonehenge is often known by this phrase). Geoffrey must have meant that Ambrosius was buried underneath the choir of a church where royal graves are traditionally placed. Clearly, just a few, insignificant mistakes in spelling or translation can completely divide historians who have to work without specific sources centuries later.

[29] Ibid., p. 86

[30] Ibid., p. 88

[31] Geoffrey of Monmouth, p. 453

[32] Ibid., p. 453 and Goodrich, p. 90

[33] Goodrich, p. 90

[34] Geoffrey of Monmouth, p. 453

[35] The cities have generally been settled upon as Gloucester, Winchester, Salisbury, Warwick, Leicester, Canterbury, Badon, Silchester, Oxford, Chichester, and Dorchester or Dorset (Goodrich, p. 91). Historians think that Badon undoubtedly means Bath again, but it, as well as all the other cities, lies west of the line of Anglo-Saxon advance into Britain so it is unlikely that any of these cities would send representatives to an enemy's coronation. Goodrich goes back to the original Latin in Geoffrey to try to decipher it herself (Geoffrey of Monmouth, pp. 453-454):

1. Claudiocestrie
2. Wigornensis, or Guigornensis
3. Salesberiensis
4. Guerensis, or Warewic
5. Legecestria
6. Kaicestria

7. Dorobernie, or Galluc Guintoniensis

8. ex Badon, or Badone

9. dorocestrensis, or dorchestrensis

10. ridochemsis, or Ridocesis

11. Oxenfordie, or Oxinfordie

Goodrich first locates four of the cities as Roman forts, or *castra* (numbers 1, 5, 6, and 9) and then goes on to correspond those to three forts on Hadrian's Wall, Chesters, Chesterholm, and Great Chesters, with the fourth fort being on the Antonine Wall, Castle Cary (Kaicestria, Kaercestria). (Goodrich, p. 92) One of the remaining names can be identified as a Roman *vicus* (Warewic), a vicus being a "large city garrisoned and fortified by Rome" (Ibid., p. 92) As Carlisle has already been recognized in the past as a Roman vicus, it is not surprising to discover that Warwick is the name of Carlisle's eastern suburb. (Ibid., p. 92) Badon had previously been identified as Dumbarton Rock in the Glasgow area, and Goodrich returns to her reference of Salisbury and Guintonia being alternate names for Edinburgh and Holyrood. (Ibid., p. 92) City number 2 is easily dispatched by the reference to white in the names Wigornensis/Guigornensis, leading to the match with Whitley Castle on the main road to Carlisle. (Ibid., p. 92) Through an impressive display of linguistics, Goodrich divines that ridochemsis and Oxenfordie are most likely the same place, that being the castle of Arthur's mother, Caerlaverock, which would certainly send a formal delegate to the coronation. (Ibid., pp. 92-94)

[36] Ibid., p. 95

[37] Ibid., p. 100

[38] Ibid., p. 101

[39] Now that Arthur's kingdom has definite boundaries, the location of his castles can be more specifically pinpointed. There are four major royal residences as compiled from conglomerate manuscripts by Norma Goodrich chosen based upon the frequency of their names occurring in sum total. Goodrich lists them as (pp. 269-271):

"1. Caerleon and eight variants in 35 MSS, as the residence of Arthur and the place of his coronation. [Goodrich looks at the variants in alphabetical order and comes to the conclusion that the word is a compound of the word for castle *caer* and the name of the particular castle.]

2. Camaalot, Camaloth in 15 MSS including the Chrétien romances and the Prose Lancelot.

3. Cardueil, Cardoeil, the capital city of a kingdom called 'Galles,' in over 70 MSS.

4. Tintagel, the birthplace of Arthur in 3 MSS"
Goodrich goes on to prove Carlisle as the site of Caerleon, and Cardueil as Arthur's primary seat. (p. 272) The mystery of Camelot remains and the castle has always been thought to be fictitious but Goodrich points out that in many manuscripts the description of Camelot differs, leading some to suggest that it is fictitious but others to hypothesize that the name Camelot refers not to one specific castle but to any castle where King Arthur was in residence. (p. 272) She concludes her discussion by stating that there were probably two major Camelots, one at Carlisle and the other at the King's Knot near Stirling. (p. 276)

[40] Joseph A. Robinson, Two Glastonbury Legends: King Arthur and Joseph of Arimathea… (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926) p. 5

[41] Hibbert, p. 21

[42] Ibid., p. 20

[43] Ibid., pp. 20-21

[44] Ibid., p. 21

[45] Goodrich, p. 171

[46] Ibid., p. 171

[47] Ibid., p. 171

[48] Ibid., p. 172

[49] Ibid., p. 172

[50] Ibid., p. 173

[51] Ibid., p. 174

[52] Ibid., p. 179

In the Modern form of the legends, Lancelot was known as the best knight in the world and was set as the chivalric example in the Knights of the Round Table. What the Round Table actually was has long been a source of mystery for Arthurian scholars and many theories attempting to describe it have arisen. The simplest and most logical is that the Round Table was just that, a table. According to this theory, the table was round so that no one person took precedence over another by sitting at the head although this is somewhat surprising because there are references to Lancelot sitting at the same level as the King. Medieval art work shows that no one had a very good idea of what the Round Table was supposed to look like or how many people it was meant to seat. There are some

examples of the table being ring-shaped to accommodate servers in the center, and some drawings show it as a solid piece of wood. One "Round Table" actually exists and hangs on the west wall of the Great Hall of Winchester Castle. No one is sure how long it has been there and the first reference to it, from John Hardyng's Chronicle in 1464, implies that it had been hanging there long before that (Andrea Hopkins, Chronicles of King Arthur (London: Collins & Brown Limited, 1993) p. 35). The painting of Arthur and his knights is much later than that date and is known to have been ordered by King Henry VIII in 1516. (Ibid., p. 35) Rather than being a gift from Guinevere's father as in the legends, the Round Table was more likely made by Merlin for Uther Pendragon and was probably stone, not wood. (Goodrich, p. 282) Goodrich considers it possible that the Round Table was actually a round building, perhaps a chapel, used for meetings of the secret society of the Knights of the Round Table. (Ibid., p. 292) The building she focuses upon is that of Arthur's O'on or Oven which was in his lifetime a circular temple with a round opening at the top and was used to shelter and display a tomb and holy relics in imitation of the Treasury of Atreus and Constantine's Martyrion of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. (Goodrich, p. 285) Goodrich translates the original Wace, *fist Artus la Roönde Table* to "Arthur made (or built) a tabled rotunda." (Goodrich, p. 286 from Wace, v., 9747) The date for Arthur's O'on given by Reverend Dr. William Stukeley, made famous for his work at Stonehenge, is A.D. 290-93 and it may have been built by a Roman named Carausius. (Goodrich, p. 287)

[53] Ibid., p. 257

[54] Hibbert, p. 88 and Hopkins, p. 183

[55] Hopkins, p. 183

An actual Camlan exists in Wales but Geoffrey of Monmouth identified the battle as being on the Camel River in Cornwall where it has been found that a battle did occur but not until A.D. 823, too late for Arthur. (Ibid., p. 183) Another suggestion has arisen that the battle could have taken place on the River Cam near Cadbury Castle. (Ashe et al., p. 59) Camlan has also been hypothesized to be the fort of Camboglanna on Hadrian's Wall, now modern Birdoswald. (Hopkins, p. 183)

[56] Goodrich, p. 259

[57] Ibid., p. 262

[58] Ibid., p. 262

[59] Ibid., p. 265
[60] Ibid., p. 294
[61] Ibid., p. 294
[62] The list of ten is as follows: (Ibid., p. 295)

1. Glastonbury
2. Gower
3. Aberystwyth
4. Gresholm
5. Scilly Isles
6. Bardsey
7. Puffin Island
8. Man
9. Tory Island
10. Anglesey

[63] Ibid., p. 295
[64] Ibid., p. 295
[65] Ibid., p. 296
[66] Ibid., pp. 296, 300
[67] The suggestion of a supreme holiness is reinforced by the Manx flag, which has three legs within a wheel, symbolizing the tripod used at Delphi and other holy references such as the trinity, the three legs of the sun, the three hours in a medieval day (*terce, none, vespers*), the three Fates, and others. (Ibid., p. 300)
[68] Ibid., p. 300
[69] Ibid., p. 300
[70] Ibid., p. 302
[71] Ibid., p. 304
[72] Ibid., p. 322
[73] Hibbert, p. 23
[74] Ibid., p. 23
[75] Ibid., p. 26
[76] Ibid., pp. 26, 28
[77] Ibid., p. 31

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