



SIR THOMAS MALORY

Le Morte d'Arthur

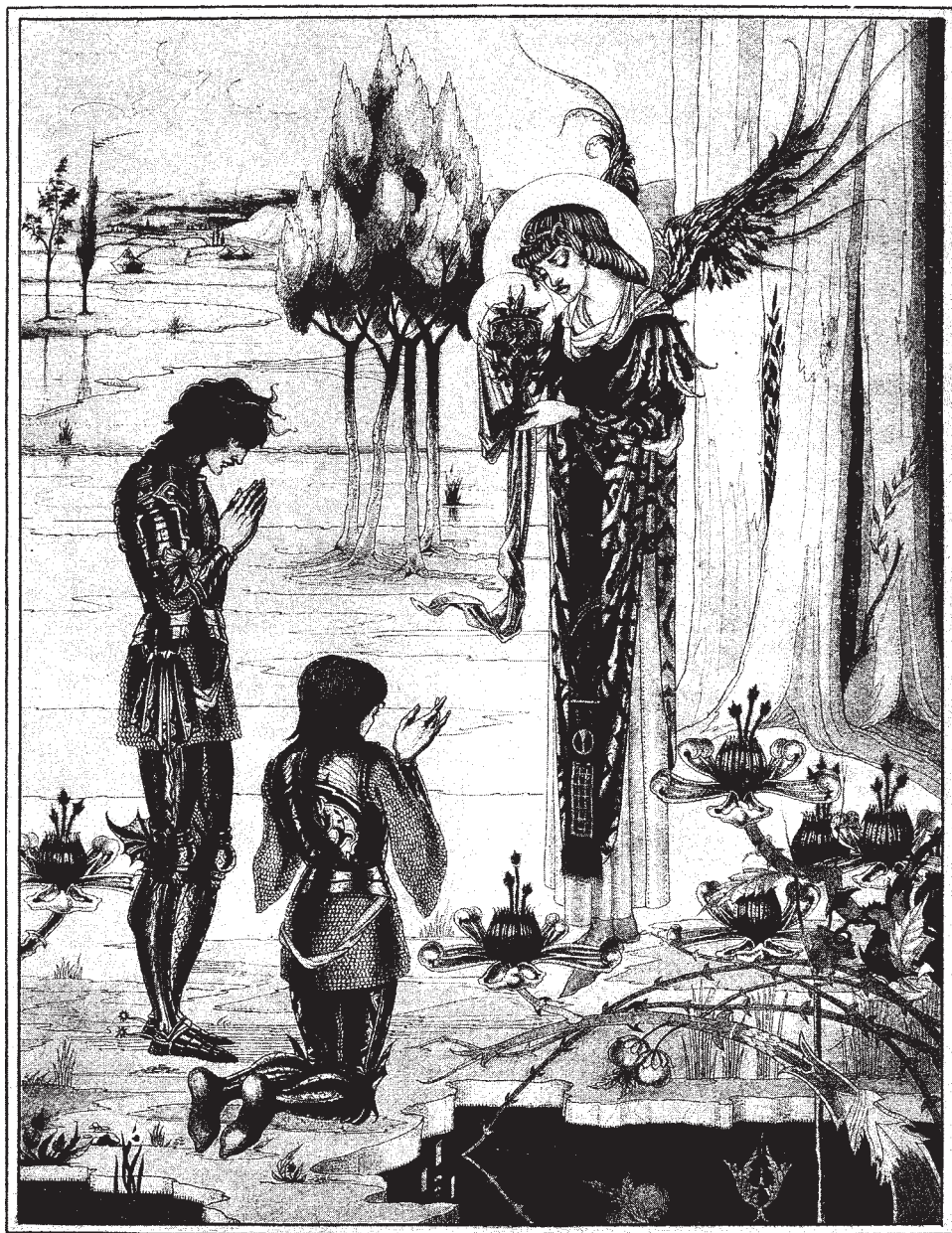


KING ARTHUR & THE KNIGHTS
OF THE ROUND TABLE

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The achieving of the Sangreal

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY
AUBREY BEARDSLEY





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Introduction to the New Edition

One of the best-known books of Arthurian legend, *Le Morte d'Arthur* tells the story of the medieval hero King Arthur, celebrated ruler of Britain and leader of the chivalrous Knights of the Round Table. While *Le Morte d'Arthur* translates as “The Death of Arthur,” its narrative encompasses the entirety of Arthur’s life story, starting before he was born and ending after his death. It also follows, through a series of interwoven subplots involving numerous characters, the lives of those closest to Arthur, including his father, Uther Pendragon; his queen, Guenever; his most trusted knight, Lancelot; his nephews, Gawaine and Gareth; his magician counselor, Merlin; and his son, Mordred. Part of the greatness of *Le Morte d'Arthur* is that it compiles many previously existing tales about knightly exploits, bringing them together into one vast text with many dynamic storylines and characters. But the book also offers its own perspective on the inner workings of Arthur’s rise and fall, often focusing on the murky ethics behind tried-and-true romance elements such as battlefield victory, quests for glory, forbidden love, and knightly loyalty. In particular, *Le Morte d'Arthur* studies the devastation brought about by irreconcilably divided loyalties: most pronouncedly, those of Lancelot and Guenever, who love each other but also need to be loyal to Arthur; Lancelot and Gawaine, faithful friends who become sworn enemies; and Arthur and Mordred, a father and son locked in a mutually destructive battle to the death. Intermingled with these characters are myriad knightly figures, many familiar from other medieval romances, such as Tristan, Ywain, Perceval, Galahad, and Kay, whose own quests, conflicts, and destinies structure and illuminate the rise and tragic fall of Arthur’s kingdom.

The author, Thomas Malory, wrote *Le Morte d'Arthur* in England at the end of the fifteenth century, at a moment that is often considered to be a transitional period between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Politically, England was every bit in flux: Malory, who died in 1471 in his mid-fifties, came of age during the Hundred Years’ War, England’s century-long conflict with France (1337–1453), and took an active role in the subsequent War of the Roses (1455–1485), the decades-long civil war over the English throne. Although his identity is not entirely certain, most scholars agree that the author was the inheritor of a provincial estate known as Newbold Revel in Warwickshire, in which case he was a politically active country gentleman: a landowner from a respected family, a knight, and a member of parliament for Warwickshire. At the same time, the last twenty years of his life are riddled with evidence of criminal activity and repeated arrests, including allegations of theft, extortion, rape, attempted murder, and a variety of dramatic prison escapes. Describing himself as “knyght presoner,” a “knight prisoner,” Malory completed the literary work known as *Le Morte d'Arthur* during a multi-year stint in London’s Newgate prison shortly before his death.

Much of Malory's reputation as a criminal was undoubtedly connected to the violent internal conflicts of the War of the Roses, a period of almost incomparable political upheaval in England whose spectacular plot twists were made into legend by William Shakespeare over a century later. It is known, for example, that Malory undertook military expeditions with one of the most powerful figures in the conflict, "the Kingmaker," Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, and that he followed Warwick's shift in allegiance from the Yorkist to the Lancastrian cause in the late 1460s. Malory's final imprisonment in 1468 coincided with Yorkist control of the throne (in the form of Edward IV), and his apparent release in 1470, several months before his death, coincided with Lancastrian control (in the form of Henry VI). While it seems clear that some of his arrests may have been politically motivated, however, it also seems clear that, from his mid-twenties, Malory was experienced in, and attracted to, violent misconduct while living in a culture wracked by lawlessness.

Perhaps because of Malory's own life experiences, the knightly adventures in *Le Morte d'Arthur* are simultaneously thrilling and melancholy; Arthur's knights bravely leap from one dangerous undertaking to another, but are also hindered by personal failings, previous actions, or overwhelming emotions. This is a world in which the valorous knight Lancelot, deemed to have "the greatest name of any knight of the world," is disqualified from fulfilling the central quest of the text, the quest for the Holy Grail, because of his own moral contamination. At the same time that Malory's text looks unflinchingly at knightly imperfections, however, it also celebrates Britain's glorified past, a mythical time when the Knights of the Round Table were legendary not only for their unsurpassed military conquests but also for the moral strength of their characters. In Book III, after Arthur marries Guenever and gathers the new knighthood together, he informs his knights of their honor code:

He gave them lands, and charged them never to do outrageousness nor murder, and always to flee treason; also, by no means to be cruel, but to give mercy unto him that asketh mercy, upon pain of forfeiture of their worship and lordship of King Arthur for evermore; and always to do ladies, damosels, and gentlewomen succor, upon pain of death. Also, that no man take no battles in a wrongful quarrel for no love, nor for no world's goods. Unto this were all the knights sworn of the Table Round, both old and young.¹

Several versions of the knightly code of chivalry existed in medieval Europe, some of them in excruciating detail. By contrast, Malory's list here is short and to the point: 1) do not undertake wrong-doing or murder, 2) avoid treason, 3) do not be cruel and always give mercy when asked, 4) always help ladies and other upper-class women, and 5) do not enter battle for love or money. Often when we see the knights in *Le Morte d'Arthur* struggle to uphold these values, it is because they are in conflict with one another, such as when helping a lady means doing something that might be perceived as treasonous.

When the myth of King Arthur originated, long before its literary popularity in high- and late-medieval Europe, it had little to do with chivalric codes of behavior. Most historiographical evidence suggests that the historical figure of Arthur was a successful warrior in sixth-century Britain, fighting against Saxon invaders. He is first described by an eighth-century Welsh monk

¹ Please note that where the current edition reads "a wrongful quarrel for no *law*," the original manuscript version has "a wrongful quarrel for no *love*" (emphasis mine). I quote here the manuscript wording, which makes more sense within the text's fifteenth-century context.

named Nennius, whose *History of the Britons* describes Arthur as a divinely sanctioned war hero—capable of combatting almost a thousand men at once—who was particularly devoted to the Virgin Mary. Subsequent histories of Britain elaborated on this narrative, particularly in the early and mid-twelfth century, when the Latin chroniclers William of Malmesbury and Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Norman poet-chronicler Wace added other mythologizing elements: Arthur's marriage to Guenever, the naming of his sword, "Excalibur," his connection to the magician Merlin, and the invention of the Round Table, where all knights are treated equally. The legend was further popularized by the French poet Chrétien de Troyes, who wrote a series of Arthurian tales using a new storytelling form, the "romance." Chrétien wrote in the late twelfth century for courtly audiences, including women: his benefactor was Marie of Champagne, powerful daughter of the most powerful and influential woman in Europe, Eleanor of Aquitaine, who was then Queen of England (and formerly Queen of France). Chrétien's stories featured the strapping knights of Arthur's court rather than Arthur himself and framed knightly exploits as individual quests that simultaneously brought honor to Arthur's kingdom and fostered individual growth and self-governance in the knight. For example, in *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* (The Knight of the Cart), Lancelot, one of Chrétien's most famous characters, undertakes a quest to save Guenever from kidnappers and in the process must suffer through a series of humiliating tests of his identity, his loyalty, and his love of his queen. At the end of the romance, Lancelot emerges from these trials a better warrior and a better lover: an impulsive, hot-headed young man newly capable of restraint on the battlefield as well as in the social sphere of male-female relations known as courtly love.

Chrétien's verse romances laid the groundwork for a series of French prose works written in the thirteenth century known as the Vulgate Cycle. These much-circulated romances were Malory's most direct inspiration, in the sense that they prominently featured the Lancelot and Holy Grail storylines and also offered a model for the prose format of his work. Often hailed as the first work of English prose fiction, Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* is as significant for its formal choices as it is for its treatment of its subject: until this work, most literature written in English had been written as poetry, not prose. Malory certainly drew on Arthurian works written in English verse, such as the anonymous fifteenth-century poems known as the Stanzaic *Morte Arthur* and the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, which he liberally reworked. But when he wrote his own, more ambitious series of Arthurian tales in English, he made the deliberate choice to break with more traditional English forms for secular literature—such as the Chaucerian style of writing used by many courtly poets in this period—and instead to turn to prose. The novelty of this formal choice not only heightened the distinctive appeal of *Le Morte d'Arthur*, but also served Malory's particular strength: his prose style. Malory's writing is direct, colloquial, and vigorous; it does not slow down to display the usual markers of literary craft, such as figures and tropes—what medieval writers called rhetorical "colors"—but rather concentrates its efforts on forward momentum and rich, conversational realism. The effect is a narrative that feels both suspenseful and disarmingly authentic, as if Malory were hurriedly (but diligently) telling a story to friends about his own recent escapades, rather than imparting grand, age-old tales about legendary heroes.

Le Morte d'Arthur was edited and printed in 1485 by William Caxton, the first printer in England and a publisher of unparalleled importance in medieval and early modern England. Two original copies of Caxton's printing exist: one complete copy at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, and an incomplete copy in the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester. Until 1934, when a handwritten manuscript of Malory's text was discovered in Winchester College Library,

Caxton's edition had been the only known version of Malory's work. The Winchester manuscript, now housed at the British Library, was copied by two scribes within a decade of Malory's death and, as scholars have now determined, was consulted by Caxton in his Westminster print shop when making his 1485 edition. In that edition, Caxton made some substantial editing decisions, such as changing the manuscript's eight main divisions with occasional smaller subsections into twenty-one separate books, which he outlines in his extensive table of "rubrysshe" (rubrics), his word for chapter headings. He also did away with several authorial statements placed as colophons throughout the text, including Malory's reference to himself as "knight prisoner" (folio 70v of the manuscript). Caxton's editing changes were an apparent attempt to give the narrative more internal logic and coherence; he also gave the text its current name: *Le Morte d'Arthur*.

In Caxton's preface to his edition, a fascinating literary artifact in its own right, he says that he decided to print *Le Morte d'Arthur* because "many noble and divers gentlemen of this realm of England" asked him over and over to publish the story of King Arthur. Caxton takes pains to establish the historical verity of Arthur and of Malory's book, recounting the many mentions of King Arthur throughout history and placing Malory's text within this genealogy. He then urges all people to read the book so that they learn virtuous behavior:

that noble men may see and learn the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honour; and how they that were vicious were punished and oft put to shame and rebuke; humbly beseeching all noble lords and ladies, with all other estates, of what estate or degree they be of, that shall see and read in this said book and work, that they take the good and honest acts in their remembrance, and to follow the same.

Caxton's passionate appeal here to all knights, noblemen, and common people to model their own "good and honest acts" on the chivalrous deeds of Arthur's realm speaks to the upheavals of his own society during the civil war. Within mere weeks of Caxton's 1485 printing of Malory's text, the final battle of the war, the Battle at Bosworth Field, effectively ended the brutal thirty-year conflict: with the death of Richard III and the crowning of Henry VII (Henry Tudor), the War of the Roses came to an end. By presenting his edition of *Le Morte d'Arthur* as a model for his own society, Caxton dares to imagine the possibility of a culture united around a single purpose: to bring glory, honor, and civility to one undivided kingdom.

This edition of Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* is based on Caxton's edition and includes Caxton's preface. As a replica of a late-nineteenth-century edition of the text published by J. M. Dent, it also includes some features not in Caxton's original, which can tell us something about the reception of Malory's text in later periods. A prologue by the author and editor John Rhys (d. 1915) explores the possibility that Malory was Welsh, a theory popular at the time of first publication that has since fallen out of favor. The most dramatic addition to the text is a series of elaborate block prints, page designs, and decorated initials by the English artist Aubrey Beardsley. The inclusion of Beardsley's illustrations in this printing of Malory's text was part of a revival of interest in medieval literature and aesthetics in this period and was meant to rival the high-end art books made by the designer and bookmaker William Morris. Morris revitalized the techniques and aesthetic sensibilities of fifteenth-century bookmaking, inspired by the artisanal resonance of illuminated manuscripts and Caxton's hand-printed books. His Kelmscott Press printed Caxton's edition of *The Order of Chivalry*, with illustrations by the pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones, in 1893, and went on to create an illustrated art-house version of

Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*: the famed Kelmscott Chaucer of 1896. Like the prints by Burne-Jones, Beardsley's block-print illustrations of 1894 add an archaic, slightly romanticized, quality to their text; characters tend to appear as extremely tall, elegant, sometimes stilted figures in flowing attire, usually in somber isolation, and often seen in profile. Beardsley's illustrations draw on Japanese wood-prints, and in their striking, fantastical uses of pattern and ornament they align themselves with the self-conscious artistry of the Aesthetic and Decadent movements in the arts. In this way Beardsley's prints do not perhaps "illustrate" Malory's text, in the sense of exemplifying it or decorating it, so much as they coincide or cohabitate with it as a kind of intertext, offering an Art Nouveau impression of Arthur's world and of Malory's storytelling.

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MORTE D'ARTHUR

BY
SIR
THOMAS
MALORY

ILLUSTRATED
BY
AVBRY BEARDSLEY

LONDON, J. M. DENT

&
CO

ALDINE HOUSE
GREAT EASTERN ST

EC

Aubrey Beardsley,

by Agmer Vallance



At the time when the late Mr. Joseph Malaby Dent commissioned Aubrey Beardsley, and the latter undertook, to furnish drawings for a new illustrated edition of the "Morte Darthur," publisher and artist were alike strangers to the public. The firm of Messrs Dent & Co. had but recently started on its career of publishing, while as to Aubrey Beardsley, his name, which was destined shortly to become a household word, was then quite unknown to fame. It happened that Mr. Dent had told Mr. Frederick H. Evans (then a bookseller in Queen Street, E.C., with whom Beardsley, in the days when he was short of cash, used to barter drawings for books) that he was contemplating an illustrated edition of the "Morte," if only he could meet with a suitable artist. Mr. Evans then remembered Beardsley and kindly recommended him to Mr. Dent, who asked Beardsley to submit a specimen drawing for the purpose. He produced the drawing which forms the frontispiece to this volume, the wonderful "Achieving of the Sangreal," and it was on the strength of it that Mr. Dent decided to give him the order for the whole book. It was Beardsley's first serious commission, for hitherto he had made practically nothing by his art. On the part of the publisher it was an exceedingly courageous venture to entrust so important a task to an obscure young man—he was not yet twenty-one years old—and Mr. Dent deserved all the credit which this his early association with Beardsley subsequently brought him.

Meanwhile Beardsley had been introduced, at the house of Mr. Wilfred Meynell in Palace Court, to the late Mr. Charles Lewis Hind, who (at that time sub-editor of the "Art Journal") was full of the project of a new artistic magazine, which eventually materialised in "The Studio." Having found Mr. Charles Holme to finance his scheme, Mr. Hind, who promptly recognised Beardsley's extraordinary genius, secured a number of Beardsley's compositions for the new publication. Before, however, the first number of the "Studio" (which bore date April 1893) saw the light, Mr. Hind had been offered the editorship of the "Pall Mall Budget." Being released by Mr. Holme from his obligation, Mr. Hind had already severed his connection with the "Studio" by the time that it made its appearance, and it fell to his successor, the late Mr. Gleeson White, to make the necessary arrangements with Messrs Dent. Nevertheless, since Mr. Hind was actual editor at the outset, it was his task to prepare the first number for publication, and it was he who was thus responsible for the immense distinction which the "Studio" obtained from the inclusion of the young artist's work in its pages. At the same time it must be allowed that Beardsley himself received a splendid advertisement from

the appearance of his designs in this popular form and through the widespread circulation which the “Studio” instantly won both for itself and for his art.

Among the examples of Beardsley’s work comprised in the first number of the “Studio” there were published four specimens from the “Morte Darthur,” viz., an initial letter I, an ornamental border, a frieze of six fighting men, and a full-page plate depicting “Merlin taketh the child Arthur into his keeping.” These four samples from the “Morte” anticipated by two months the issue of the first instalment of the book itself.

The enterprise of the new illustrated edition of the “Morte” was embarked upon, strange to say, without any regular agreement between artist and publisher having been drawn up beforehand. But it would seem that the publisher soon began to realise the impracticability of such a haphazard mode of procedure. He determined to place the work on a sound business footing; and before the second serial issue of the “Morte” came out an agreement was duly prepared and signed. This instrument is undated, but there can be no doubt, from internal evidence, as to its approximate date. It is silent regarding any conditions for Part I (for which all the requisite drawings had already been delivered), but begins with the stipulation that so much matter was to be furnished to illustrate “the opening chapters of the 4th and 5th books” of the “Morte,” “to complete Part II of the said work by the 17th day of April 1893.” The precise quantity of full-page and minor illustrations, together with the time-limit allowed to complete each succeeding instalment, was specified, part by part, until the last, which was to be provided by the 12th June 1894. The first serial issue bore the date of publication, June 1893; and the entire work comprised twelve parts in all.

Beardsley started illustrating the “Morte” with the utmost enthusiasm, but he quickly tired of it, and declared he would not go on with it. He used to put off doing it as long as he could. Toward the close of each period when the date for the delivery of the covenanted instalment of drawings approached, he would be behindhand, and it was only by dint of pressure on the part of his publisher, seconded by the persuasions and entreaties of Beardsley’s mother, that he could be induced to apply himself to the irksome task. The publisher was driven to despair. He tried first one plan and then another to save the “Morte” from being abandoned. One such expedient was the offer of other work to the artist, as a diversion to enliven the monotony. Accordingly, while the “Morte” lagged, Mr. Dent gave Beardsley a further order, that of illustrating “Bon Mots,” published in 3 volumes in 1893. He also suggested that Beardsley should try his hand at some illustrations for “Evelina,” of which, however, only the title-page by Beardsley appeared in the book.

The fact is Beardsley was constitutionally incapable of sustained effort. His moods and interests, instead of marching and developing with the leisurely passage of years, changed and leaped from one phase to another, weekly or even daily, in rapid transition. His life, as he himself was fully aware, was bound to be but short, and into that brief span had to be crowded all the manifold episodes which the average person might reasonably expect to have plenty of time to experience. What wonder, then, if, in Aubrey Beardsley’s case, mood followed mood in lightning succession? He would take up some idea or project with absorbing interest. He would discuss it and formulate it with minute precision and elaboration, and yet, long before he had had the opportunity to carry it out, his zeal would evaporate and turn to utter weariness, and he would have become absorbed in some fresh scheme.

This accounts for the extraordinary inequality of the “Morte Darthur” illustrations. The circumstance is one which can scarcely fail to strike even a casual observer, but it would have been still more evident if all the drawings had been published in the exact order in which they were produced. Some, however, were held back for a time; others were repeated in later pages of the book. The decline is thus not so noticeable as it must otherwise have been.

Among the earliest batch of Beardsley’s designs for the “Morte” is a cameo depicting Merlin, which, though in some respects immature, yet remains as satisfying a specimen of book-decoration as one could wish to find. The ingenuity with which the human figure is adapted, without the slightest distortion, to the circular frame is nothing short of masterly. If this particular design has not received the recognition it deserves, it is because of the drastic reduction it was made to undergo for the published volume—a reduction which went far to rob it of its proper distinction, and rather to render it insignificant and obscure. For the merits of the “Merlin” to be appreciated it requires to be displayed on a reasonable scale; as, indeed, it did appear later, but, unfortunately, outside the pages of the “Morte,” and in a very different collection of the artist’s work. A facsimile reproduction of it will be found on p. lxxiii of this edition.

One of the qualities in which the “Merlin” drawing excels is the decorative treatment of draperies. This quality recurs in a number of the “Morte” designs, and more particularly in those which belong to the earlier period. It is admirably conspicuous in four of the full-page illustrations in Volume I, viz., “The Lady of the Lake,” “Merlin and Nimue” (surely the most remarkable achievement in the whole book), “Arthur and the Strange Mantle,” and in “La Beale Isoud nursing Sir Tristram”; and, again, in a number of chapter headings, particularly those to Chapter xii in Book I; Chapters ii, iii, and v in Book II; Chapters vii and x in Book III; and Chapter vi in Book VI.

It has already been mentioned that the “Morte” designs were not all placed in the book in the same order in which they were drawn. Some indeed were begun in the flood-tide of enthusiasm, and laid aside, but half done, to be finished later. These, though naturally they find a place toward the end of the book, yet, so far as they go, exhibit a higher standard of endeavour and efficiency than many of those whose inception and uninterrupted execution belong to the later period. Among the drawings thus projected for the “Morte,” but only half sketched in at the outset, are some which were destined never to be completed in accord with their original scheme. Thus in one instance a horseman is depicted, but only the near hindquarter of his mount is shown! Obviously Beardsley found it quicker and easier, when he took up this unfinished drawing, to fill in the unoccupied space with a wash of black, instead of supplying the full details yet needed to perfect the picture. That part of the composition, however, which is actually complete is of such a high order as to excite profound regret for what should have been and yet is lost beyond recall.

To take another instance, that of the double-page drawing of “La Beale Isoud at Joyous Gard,” it may be observed that there stands on the right of the composition a single figure. In the original draft, however, a group of figures was pencilled in; but ultimately, to spare himself the effort involved, Beardsley rubbed out all but the one figure, and then finished off the drawing in its present state, Isoud’s wide-sweeping train being made to occupy a large part of the foreground, against a patch of black, for the grass. Again, in the case of one of the chapter headings, with a fountain in the background and a peacock in front, the fountain is drawn with no little care and precision, but the bird’s legs are left out altogether, while the tail is just a shapeless lump of white. The combination here of painstaking and finish with careless indifference is startling.

If the truth must be told, it is that Beardsley did not really find the subject of the “Morte Darthur” congenial. Was it, indeed, to be expected that anyone, who could “embroider” so meticulously and so appropriately as Beardsley did his set of drawings for the rococo conceit of “The Rape of the Lock,” should have much in common with the mediævalist Malory? Not only was Beardsley out of sympathy with the “Morte,” but he was actually heard to boast that he had never taken the trouble to read it. He could not, it is true, avoid dipping into its pages now and again for such bare suggestions as were indispensable for affording themes for the more important pictures; but his reading was desultory and not deep enough to leave an enduring impression through the long-drawn-out task of designing the many drawings he had to provide for the book.

Thus, he would derive inspiration from the poems of William Blake, for instance, or from any reading that happened to engage him for the moment. One drawing, when shown to Mr. Evans, the latter, to Beardsley’s delight, instantly recognised as having been suggested by Blake’s “Piping down the valleys wild,” although Beardsley had not so titled it. Again, one of the initial letters displays a volume inscribed with the name of Boccaccio. Straws like these serve to show how the wind blew.

As Beardsley was probably the first artist to illustrate on the novel method of caricaturing an author through the medium of his own book (he did this notably in the case of the “Salome”), so perhaps he was the first to avenge himself for the tedium of his task, and to show his distaste for the author’s subject, by the introduction of all sorts of extraneous subjects instead. Thus is accounted for the intrusion of some totally irrelevant features into the “Morte” illustrations, such as cupids, fauns and satyrs. One of the chapter headings depicts a nude boy, bringing an offering of the fruits of the earth to a terminal god, a pagan incident which cannot be claimed to have even a remote connection with the “Morte.”

Examination of the list of illustrations at the beginning of each volume will show that, beside the frontispieces, the first volume comprises eleven plates, as compared with only seven in the second volume. This difference in quantity was the outcome of a compromise agreed to by the publisher, on Beardsley’s own suggestion, when the second volume was reached.

To induce the artist to proceed with the work, and at the same time to spare him the labour of having to design illustrations of so many separate subjects, it was conceded that one subject might be spread over two pages facing one another, and that one and the same border, doubled, or reversed, might do duty for both halves. The first illustration in the second volume, "How King Mark and Sir Dinadan heard Sir Palomides making great sorrow and mourning," is an instance in point. One has only to compare the jaded and feeble resource in the border of the last-named illustration, or again of that of "How La Beale Isoud wrote to Sir Tristram" with the animation and inventiveness of the border of the opening chapter of the first volume, or that of the first illustration, "Merlin taketh the child Arthur into his keeping," to realise the change in disposition that had come to pass in the interval between the earliest and the later drawings for the "Morte."

The period when Beardsley took in hand the illustration of the "Morte" was that also in which William Morris, in collaboration with his friend, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, was issuing the superb productions of the Kelmscott Press. Beardsley was, of course, acquainted with their work, and was inevitably drawn to it. Moreover, one of the very first of the celebrities of the great world of art, whom Beardsley, as a young beginner, ventured to call upon, and from whom he met with an exceedingly kind reception, was Burne-Jones himself. A certain number of the earlier "Morte" drawings, though in nowise copies, were yet so obviously influenced by Kelmscott Press designs as to arouse the indignation of William Morris, when some specimens of Beardsley's illustrations were shown to him. But Beardsley's pre-Raphaelitish phase was only transient. Before much progress had been made with the "Morte" drawings his art had undergone a change. It had responded to quite a different impulse, namely, that of Japan. Here, again, Beardsley was no servile copyist. He was too strongly individual for that. It would, therefore, be incorrect to describe him as having at that, or indeed at any other period of his career, fallen under the dominating spell of Japanese art. He merely borrowed from it whatever elements suitable for his purpose it had to impart, and then, having assimilated them, he so moulded, subordinated and transfigured them that the resultant product was characteristically his very own. No artist ever lived who knew, so cunningly as Beardsley did, how to balance contrasted masses of black and white—in a word, the artistic possibilities of silhouette. And yet his achievement in this regard could only be attained at a cost: to wit, by the sacrifice, to a great extent, of articulation of form. At an early stage Beardsley had evinced a feeling for draperies, that is, for the æsthetic arrangement and definition of folds. This gift William Morris did not fail to discern in Beardsley, and he urged the latter to cultivate it. But his adoption of the silhouette method could not fail to overpower the other, and to brush it aside. For one cannot retain draughtsmanship of detail in the same composition with broad fields of solid black and bare white. Either plan of treatment has its advantages; but, since they are mutually exclusive, one must make one's choice between the two. Beardsley chose the last named, or the Pierrotesque method, that of contrasted black washes and white spaces. A conspicuous example is the last full-page picture in the book, "How Queen Quenever made her a nun," as are also, in their degree, the headings of Chapter xvi, Book IV; Chapter ii, Book VI; Chapter xxxi, Book VIII; Chapters xx, xl, lxxv, and lxxviii, Book X; and Chapter iv, Book XIII.

There was a further circumstance which militated against the development of drapery folds; and that was what may be called the nostalgia for the crinoline. This eccentric movement, which coincides with Beardsley's own activities, and seems to have been due, partly to the cultus of early Victorian book-illustrators like Houghton, and partly to the personal preferences of artists like C. S. Ricketts and C. Shannon, followed by Laurence Housman, It goes without saying that the turgid balloon shape of the crinoline is intolerant of the grace of folds in draperies. Its influence indeed nowhere became specially marked in Beardsley's "Morte"; yet it is not too much to say that, but for this tendency, one could not have had such drawings as chapter headings xxviii and xxxiv in Book IX; and Chapter lxxxvi, Book X.

Allusion has already been made to a certain immaturity in the circular drawing of "Merlin." The lettering, for instance, is poor and lacking in decorative quality, though not so bad as the initials, which are inferior throughout the book. The tree-stumps and the herbage in the "Merlin" are distinctly crude in treatment; for Beardsley began with little or no appreciation of form in inanimate nature. Again, in the publisher's trade mark, which he designed for Messrs Dent, a canting device with a dandelion, the leaves of the plant are botanically incorrect, the lobes of their notched edges being made to point the wrong way, i.e., upward, instead of down, as nature formed them. Neither should the petals of the flower itself terminate in spikes, as represented in Beardsley's version of the subject. Further, in one of the chapter headings

occurs a peacock, in the tail of which the proper direction of the eye-feathers is reversed! But, after all, these are comparatively small matters.

Ten of the blocks which had been made from Beardsley's designs for chapter headings were laid aside at the time, though not destroyed, and when the "Morte Darthur" was reissued in a second edition they were inadvertently inserted; the mistake not being discovered for some while afterwards. All the designs omitted from the first are included in the present, the third, edition, which thus contains a larger number of ornaments than either of the previous editions.

Beardsley's design which he submitted to the publisher for the paper wrapper of the serial issue was altered considerably when he came to redraw it for actual reproduction. The original version, however, executed in yellowish green-water-colour, was given by the artist to a friend, who carefully preserved it. It is here reproduced from a facsimile photograph by Mr. Frederick H. Evans. It might be interesting to compare this drawing with that of the peacock feather design for the paper cap for "Salome." The latter is somewhat rough in execution, but its defects in this regard are more than counterbalanced by the freshness and vigour which it retains, through never having had to undergo a process of redrawing.

In conclusion it may be mentioned that Beardsley derived a certain mischievous pleasure from the fact that his designs should have been chosen to accompany the particular version of Malory's text edited, of all others, by Professor John Rhys; because that learned scholar disapproved of him, or so, at any rate, the artist himself had reason to suppose.

AYMER VALLANCE

September 1927

A Note on the Designs omitted from the First Edition, by R. A. Walker



ANYONE who is in the least degree interested in etymology has heard of “ghost” words, those mysterious words which have crept into old dictionaries through misprints of copyists and printers, and which really do not exist at all.

“Ghost” illustrations are, I think, new to bibliography, but ten of the illustrations of this Edition can only be described in this manner although they are the perfectly genuine work of Aubrey Beardsley.

The manner of their discovery is rather curious. When making my catalogue of Beardsley’s drawings, I found that previous students of his work had always begged the question of the exact number of illustrations that he executed for the *Morte Darthur*. This was natural as the Edition contained hundreds of drawings, many of which were repeated, some more than twice, and in different sizes. The difficulty, therefore, was to know how many *original* drawings Beardsley had made. The only easy method was to cut up two copies of the First or Second Edition (as illustrations appeared on both sides of a leaf) and then to sort them. The other, less feasible, but also less destructive, method was to trace the drawings and then to sort these tracings. This task took nearly nine months, and long before I had copied half, I had the most profound sympathy for Beardsley when he got in arrears with the delivery of his drawings and had clearly got tired of the task.

The copy I used for making the tracings was the Second Edition, and when collating these tracings with the First Edition, I discovered to my amazement that I had ten drawings over. Further diligent search proved conclusively that they had never appeared in the First Edition. The extraordinary thing that happened was that, unknown to publisher or printer, the Second Edition of the book had been published containing ten more drawings than had appeared in the First Edition.

No exact explanation is possible at this distance of time; one can only imagine that with such a mass of blocks that were prepared for the First Edition, ten of them got put aside or lost and were never printed from. If lost, they must have been found after the First Edition was issued, and were then put away with the published blocks and were all kept together until the Second Edition was called for.

In addition to these ten, which appear in the Third Edition on pages 189, 202, 209, 210, 230, 249, 265, 268, 290, 310, the original Drawing for the Cover, which was executed in wash, is also published in the *Morte Darthur* for the first time. This Cover was published by me in *Some Unknown Drawings of Aubrey Beardsley* in 1923, by permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.

In addition an eleventh Chapter Heading is printed on page 385 which has never been issued before in the *Morte Darthur*. The reason for its exclusion was probably because the drawing overlapped the quadrilateral borders which are invariably found in all the other Drawings.

Finally the Merlin Drawing, which was originally much reduced, is here reproduced *facsimile*.

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Note on the Text here used



THE object aimed at in this edition of *Le Morte Darthur* is to present a version of the incomparable story which, whilst following accurately and completely the best text, shall be modernized in spelling and punctuation. Great care has nevertheless been taken that the grammar of the period in which it was written shall be adhered to.

The text here given is that printed by Caxton in 1485: the copy that has been used is the edition published in 1817 under the direction of Robert Southey. In that version, as Sir Edward Strachey, the Editor of the Globe Edition, has pointed out, there are a number of passages which differ from the Caxton text; these have been corrected by comparison with the careful word for word reprint issued by Mr. D. Nutt, under the editorship of Mr. Oskar Sommer, to whom the publishers hereby acknowledge their indebtedness.

The plan upon which the present text has been prepared is as follows:—the above-named reprint of Caxton being taken as a basis, every word has been retained, and none added thereto except in the few cases where it appeared plain that the sense was incomplete from some word having been omitted in the original, or in a very few passages, where the grammar of the present day needed the insertion of a pronoun to prevent ambiguity and to preserve the correct meaning. Though the spelling has been modernized, the earliest forms in use in current literature have, as far as possible, been employed; for instance, any spellings occurring in the Bible, but not now general, have been considered preferable to such as are essentially modern in flavour and not in character with the context. Words which are now entirely obsolete have not been replaced by modern ones, but have been retained in the text with a glossary at the end of the book. The only other liberties taken consist in some slight differences in the division of Chapters; as in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters of the First Book, which Caxton, although he calls them three chapters in *The Table or Rubrysshe of Contents of Chapters*, yet prints without break: these have been here divided as the contents seemed to warrant. In the spelling of proper names uniformity has been aimed at, but from the constant variations in the copy, some inconsistency has no doubt crept in.

F. J. SIMMONS



Introduction



IR THOMAS MALORY has given us no account of himself or his family, but he has left his name and his work. The name Malory is found connected with estates in Yorkshire in the sixteenth century, and with estates in Leicestershire in that which follows. As the name of the knight to whom we owe the *Morte Darthur*, it is found written not only Malory or Malorye, but also Maleore. It occurred to me some years ago that this fact lent countenance to the statement ascribed to Leland and others, that Sir Thomas Malory was a Welshman; for Maleore reminded me of *Maylawr*, *Maelawr*, or *Maelor*, the name of two districts on the confines of England and Wales: a 'Welsh Maelor' is included in the County of Denbigh, and an 'English Maelor' in that of Flint. How such a name could readily become a surname may be seen from the designation, for instance, of a lord of the two Maelors in the twelfth century, namely *Gruffud Maelawr*. Literally rendered, this would mean 'Griffith of Maelor.' Similarly, the name of a Welsh poet of the fifteenth century, Edward ab Rhys Maelor, might now be rendered 'Edward Price of Maelor.'

Since then Dr. Sommer, in a Supplement to the second volume of his great edition of the *Morte Darthur*, has called attention to the following passage in Bale's *Illustrium Maioris Britannie Scriptorum*, fol. 208 verso:—

"Thomas Mailorius, Britannus natione, heroici spiritus homo, ab ipsa adolescentia uariis animi corporisque dotibus insigniter emicuit. Est Mailoria (inquit in *Antiquarum Dictionum Syllabo* Joannes Lelandus) in finibus Cambriæ regio, Deuæ flumini uicina. Quam et alibi a fertilitate atque armorum fabrefactura commendat. Inter multiplices reipublicæ curas, non intermisit hic literarum studia, sed succisiuis horis uniuersas dispersæ uetustatis reliquias, sedulus perquisiuit. Vnde in historiarum lectione diu uersatus, ex uariis autoribus undique selegit, de fortitudine ac uictoriis inclytissimi Brytannorum regis Arthurii."

The first edition of Bale's work was published at Ipswich in 1548, while Malory's *Morte Darthur* was only completed by him in 1469. These dates are not so far apart that we must suppose either Bale or Leland unable to obtain reliable information concerning Malory's history and origin. Bale's statement that Malory was *Britannus natione*, that is to say, Welsh, brings with it the solution of what was my difficulty,—to wit, the relation between the name *Malory* and the dissyllabic form *Maleore*; for one can hardly help seeing that while the latter postulates the Welsh place-name Maelor, the former more naturally connects itself with the derived Latin *Mailorius*.

Thus far of Malory's name: we now come to his work, which, as already mentioned, was finished in 1469. It was, however, not printed till 1485, when its publication was undertaken by Caxton. Then followed two editions by Wynkyn de Worde in 1498 and 1529, and before the middle of the seventeenth century four more editions appeared: all these seven were in black letter. The eighteenth century appears to have been content with what the three previous ones had done for the text of Malory; but the nineteenth century has already seen it edited no less than six times, notably by Southey, Wright, Sir E. Strachey, and H. Oskar Sommer. Dr. Sommer's edition is comprised in three stately volumes, published in London by David Nutt: the first volume, consisting of the Text, appeared in 1889; then followed a volume of Introduction in 1890, and one of Studies on the Sources in 1891. This edition marks an era in the history of the *Morte Darthur*, seeing that special pains have been taken to make it reproduce the Caxton original, which is not known to exist in more than two copies, one of which is not quite perfect. This latter copy belongs to the Althorp Library, while the other, the perfect copy, once belonged to the Harleian Library. As regards its later history, we are told that it was purchased by the Earl of Jersey for his library at Osterley Park, and that in 1885 it became the property of a citizen of the United States, Mrs. Abby E. Pope of Brooklyn.¹ Lastly, I must add that no trace of Malory's own manuscript has ever been found.

The question of the sources of Malory's work is no new one, and it had been to some extent discussed by M. Gaston Paris and M. J. Ulrich, in the introduction to their *Merlin*, edited from a manuscript belonging to Mr. Alfred Huth, London, and published in Paris in 1888 by the *Société des anciens Textes français*; but the exhaustive treatment of the subject was reserved for Dr. Sommer, who has devoted to it his third volume. The space at my disposal will only allow of my mentioning his conclusions² in the briefest manner possible. Most of Malory's originals prove to have been romances written in French, which he, as a rule, reduced greatly in length in the process of giving the work an English garb. His sources, however, were not exclusively French; thus, for instance, he used for his fifth book of the *Morte Darthur*, a poem composed by the Scotch poet Huchown, which is extant in a manuscript of Thornton's in the library of Lincoln Cathedral. Here and there Malory alters the sequence of the incidents given in his originals, and in some cases he interpolates facts not contained in them, while in other instances he omits certain incidents which he did not find to his purpose; but he is rarely found to have inserted entire chapters of his own. Taking the work as a whole, Dr. Sommer has succeeded in assigning with more or less precision the originals forming the groundwork of the whole, with one remarkable exception: I allude to Malory's seventh book, which relates the adventures of Sir Gareth, the story of his first coming to Arthur's court, of his being fed for a year in the kitchen, and of his



¹ See Sommer's *Malory*, ii. 1–3.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 6–12.

receiving the nickname of Beaumayns at the hands of Syr Kay. Dr. Sommer admits that he has failed to trace any part of the contents of this book in any of the numerous manuscripts studied by him. He is inclined to regard it as a folk-tale which had no connection with the Arthurian cycle, until Malory, or some unknown writer before him, adapted it from a French poem now lost, as he conjectures.

After this brief reference to the works used by Malory, we come to a much larger and harder question of source, namely, the origin of the whole cycle of Arthurian stories and romances. For the most fruitful speculations on this subject in our day, one has to thank Dr. Zimmer, professor of Sanskrit in the University of Griefswald. He believes the romances to be based on stories of Breton rather than of Welsh origin. Briefly described, his theory³ sets out with the facts of the permanent conquest of a considerable tract of the east of Brittany by the Normans in the first half of the tenth century, and the intimate relationship which eventually grew up between the great families of Brittany and Normandy. Now, if we suppose the Bretons in their migration from Great Britain to their new country, called after them the Lesser Britain, to have carried with them the stories current about Arthur in the southern districts of this country, it may be further supposed that, ages later, those of their descendants who submitted to the Normans in the eastern portion of Brittany must have translated their popular stories about Arthur into their adopted Norman French. Thus a channel would be opened for Breton stories to reach the ears of Normans and Frenchmen. It is natural, further, to infer that, in the transition from the one language to the other, the Celtic names of most importance in the stories would inevitably undergo a considerable modification of form. This would seem to be countenanced by the circumstance, that certain of these names in the romances cannot be identified with the Welsh ones by merely allowing for the errors in copying and reading incident to the manuscripts of the time in question. Such is the fact, for example, with *Galvain*, *Perceval*, *Calibor*,⁴ as compared with the Welsh *Gwalchmei*, *Peredur*, and *Caletwlch*. For my own part, I have found this to be much less marked in the case, for example, of the Grail legend, the proper names in which lend themselves, on the whole, more readily to identification with their originals in Welsh. In other words, Professor Zimmer's views led me to draw the following two-fold conclusion:—(1) The older romances relating chiefly to Arthur and his Men are of Breton rather than of Welsh origin, while (2) the reverse is the case with the Grail romances. The Welsh origin of the Grail legend has been discussed by me elsewhere,⁵ so that I think it needless to endeavour to prove it here. But as to the alleged Breton origin of the romances about Arthur, it is to be observed that if the picture presented in them of Arthur and his Men be mainly Breton, one may expect to find those warriors represented differently in Welsh literature, especially such Welsh literature as one finds to be fairly free from the influence of the romances when they reached the Welsh. So one could, perhaps, not do better than devote the rest of this introduction to a review of the more important passages concerning Arthur in manuscripts which have come down to us from Welsh sources. I have, however, to confess at the outset that those of them which happen to be in Welsh, as most of them are, prove to be couched in very obscure language, so that my rendering must be regarded as only tentative.

³ See Zimmer's review of the thirtieth volume of the *Histoire littéraire de la France* in the *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* for October 1, 1890, pp. 802–4. But M. Loth in the *Revue Celtique*, xiii. 480–503, has justly charged Zimmer with underrating the Welsh element.

⁴ See Zimmer's review, *ibid.*, p. 830.

⁵ See my *Arthurian Legend*, pp. 300–27.

The first passage to demand attention is written in Latin, for it occurs in the *Historia Brittonum* with which the name of Nennius is associated. The year of the composition of the *Historia Brittonum* was, according to M. A. de la Borderie, no other than A.D. 822,⁶ and the words relating to Arthur read as follows⁷:—

In illo tempore Saxones invalescebant in multitudine, et crescebant in Britannia. Mortuo autem Hengisto, Octha ejus filius transivit de sinistrali parte Britanniae ad regnum Cantiorum, et de ipso orti sunt reges Cantiorum. Tunc Arthur pugnabat contra illos in illis diebus cum regibus Brittonum, sed ipse dux erat bellorum. Primum bellum fuit in ostium fluminis quod dicitur Glein; secundum, et tertium, et quartum, et quintum, super aliud flumen, quod dicitur Dubglas, et est in regione Linnuis. Sextum bellum super flumen quod vocatur Bassas. Septimum fuit bellum in Silva Celidonis, id est, Cat Coit Celidon. Octavum fuit bellum in castello Guinnion, in quo Arthur portavit imaginem Sanctae Mariae perpetuae virginis super humeros suos, et pagani versi sunt in fugam in illo die, et caedes magna fuit super illos per virtutem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et per virtutem Sanctae Mariae virginis genetricis ejus. Nonum bellum gestum est in Urbe Legionis. Decimum gessit bellum in littore fluminis, quod vocatur Tribruit. Undecimum factum est bellum in monte, qui dicitur Agned. Duodecimum fuit bellum in monte Badonis, in quo corruerunt in uno die nongenti sexaginta viri de uno impetu Arthur; et nemo prostravit eos nisi ipse solus, et in omnibus bellis victor exstitit. Et ipsi, dum in omnibus bellis prosternebantur, auxilium a Germania petebant, et augebantur multipliciter sine intermissione, et reges a Germania deducebant, ut regnarent super illos in Britannia, usque ad tempus quo Ida regnavit, qui fuit Eobba filius, ipse fuit primus rex in Beornicia, id est, im Berneich.

As regards a historical Arthur, the words here cited are very suggestive, for without explicitly saying that Arthur was one of the kings of the Brythons, they make him the general or *dux bellorum*, in whom one readily recognises the superior officer, known in the time of Roman rule as the *Comes Britanniae*. This office, it may be presumed, was continued after the Roman forces left, with the only difference that the man filling it would be himself supreme, having no longer any lord, such as the Roman emperor, over him. This position seems to have been Arthur's, and one has accordingly no difficulty in understanding how he came to fight battles at places so far apart from one another. For, though the majority of the twelve battles were fought in what we now call the North of England or the South of Scotland, some of them undoubtedly took place in the south of the Island, such as the battle of *Urbs Legionis*, which must have been either Chester on the Dee or Caerleon on the Usk; and still farther south must have been that of *Mos Badonis*. In a word, Arthur moved about in Britain just as Agricola or Severus would have done, and without necessarily being one of the kings of the Brythons, he would seem to have been over and above them. This must have been a position which would in time cause all kinds of heroic legends to be associated with the name of the man filling it. Add to this the numerous opportunities for the display of valour on behalf of a bleeding country provided by the invasions of Germanic tribes from the Continent, and by the incursions of Picts and Scots from the outlying portions of the British Isles, and we have the full explanation of no inconsiderable part of the wondrous fame of Arthur and his Men in subsequent ages.

The next references to Arthur, which deserve to be mentioned, occur in the *Annales Cambriae*, the oldest existing manuscript of which was completed in 954 or 955.⁸ The first entry occurs under the year 516, and reads as follows:—

⁶ See *l'Historia Britonum* attribuée à Nennius et *l'Historia Britannica* avant Geoffroy de Monmouth, par Arthur de la Broderie (Paris and London, 1883), p. 20. Since the above was written Zimmer's work, entitled *Nennius Vindictus* (Berlin, 1893), has reached me, and in it he gives it as his conclusion, p. 82, that the *Historia Brittonum* was put together as early as the year 796.

⁷ *Nennii Historia Britonum ad fidem codicum manuscritorum recensuit Josephus Stevenson* (London, 1838), pp. 47–9.

⁸ See Phillimore's edition in the *Cymmador*, vol. ix. p. 144.

Bellum Badonis in quo Arthur portavit crucem domini nostri Ihesu Christi tribus diebus et tribus noctibus in humeros suos et Brittones uictores fuerunt.

The next entry in point comes under the year 537, and runs thus⁹—

Gueith cam lann [i.e., the Battle of Camlan] *in qua Arthur et Medraut corruerunt. et mortalitas in Brittainia et in Hibernia fuit.*

The *Bellum Badonis* of the *Annales Cambriæ* is the same battle undoubtedly as Nennius' *bellum in Monte Badonis*. But the statement as to Arthur carrying the cross of Christ on his shoulders has been surmised to be a mistranslation of Welsh words representing him carrying a figure of the cross in his shield; since the Welsh for shoulder would have been written *iscuit* or *iscuid* which would also be spellings of the word for a shield.¹⁰ This seems to shew that there was a Welsh tradition as to Arthur's personal appearance at one of his great battles. The other entry is remarkable as representing the death of Arthur and Medraut or Medrod (the Modred and Mordred of the romances) as an ordinary event of war.

The next two passages to be cited occur in the *Mirabilia* usually associated with the *Historia Britonum*; and most of them are probably to be referred to the same date as the *Historia* itself.¹¹ The words in point read as follows:—

Est aliud miraculum in regione quæ dicitur Buelt. Est ibi cumulus lapidum, et unus lapis superpositus super congestum, cum vestigio canis in eo. Quando venatus est porcum Troit,¹² impressit Cabal, qui erat canis Arthuri militis, vestigium in lapide, et Arthur postea congregavit congestum lapidum sub lapide in quo erat vestigium canis sui, et vocatur Carn Cabal. Et veniunt homines et tollunt lapidem in manibus suis per spacium diei et noctis, et in crastino die inveniunt super congestum suum.

Est aliud miraculum in regione quæ vocatur Ercing. Habetur ibi sepulchrum juxta fontem qui cognominatur Licat Amir, et viri nomen, qui sepultus est in tumulo, sic vocabatur. Amir¹³ filius Arthuri militis erat, et ipse occidit eum ibidem, et sepelivit. Et veniunt homines ad mensurandum tumulum; in longitudine aliquando sex pedes, aliquando novem, aliquando quindecim. In qua mensura metieris eum in ista vice, iterum non inuenies eum in una mensura; et ego solus probavi.

The *Porcus Troit* occupies a great place, as *Twrch Trwyth*, in the story of Kulhwch and Olwen, where *Cabal*¹⁴ also occurs in its ordinary Welsh form of *Cavall*; but the lesson these two passages in common teach us is, that at a comparatively early date Arthurian names had begun to figure in the topography of Wales.

Attention is next claimed by some of the references to Arthur in Welsh literature, and here the Black Book of Carmarthen is entitled to the first place. The manuscript may be supposed to have been written in the reigns of Stephen, Henry II., and Richard.¹⁵ One of the allusions to

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹⁰ In later Welsh the words are *ysgwydd*, "a shoulder," and *ysgwyd*, "a shield."

¹¹ This is Zimmer's view in his *Nennius Vindicated*, p. 115.

¹² Stevenson seems to have found two readings of this word, namely, *Troit* and *Troynt*, and he selected for his text the latter, which is gibberish: see his *Nennius*, p. 60. In Welsh literature the word has the two forms *Trwyd* and *Trwyth*.

¹³ The same manuscript E, which reads *Troit*, and is supposed by Stevenson to have been written about the beginning of the thirteenth century, reads here *amirmur*; but, as was to be expected, he inserted in his text a *vox nihili*, namely *Anir*: *Amirmur*=*Amir mur* "the Great Amir," and in the *Liber Landavensis*, *Amir* is written *Amyr*; but a man's name *Amhyr* occurs also in that manuscript, while the name of Arthur's son in question is given as *Amhar* in the Welsh, romance of *Gereint and Enid*: I do not recollect meeting with it elsewhere.

¹⁴ It is to be noticed that *Cabal* with its *b* and single *l* belongs to the same school of orthography as the ninth century triplets beginning with *Nigurocosam*: see Skene's *Four anc. Books of Wales*, ii. 2.

¹⁵ See Mr J. G. Evans' preface (p. xvi.) to his Autotype Facsimile of the Black Book, Oxford, 1888.

Arthur in this manuscript consists of a triplet occurring in the Stanzas of the Graves, apprising the reader of the futility of looking for Arthur's grave, as follows¹⁶:—

*Bet y march. bet y guythur.
bet y gugaun cletyfrut.
anoeth bid bet y arthur.*

A grave for March, a grave for Gwythur,
A grave for Gwgawn of the ruddy Sword,
Not wise (the thought) a grave for Arthur.¹⁷

It might be objected that these lines are of no value here, as the idea suggested by them might have been derived from the romances which represent Arthur departing to the Isle of Avallon to be healed of his wounds, and not dying at all. But it may as reasonably be regarded as an expression of the native belief fixed in various localities, that Arthur and his knights were slumbering in a cave awaiting the destined hour of their return. This prevailed among Arthur's countrymen from Cadbury to the Eildon Hills, and has never been more charmingly sung than by the poet Leyden, when he speaks of the enchanted sleep to be broken at length by somebody

“That bids the charmèd sleep of ages fly,
Rolls the long sound through Eildon's caverns vast,
While each dark warrior rouses at the blast,
His horn, his falchion, grasps with mighty hand,
And peals proud Arthur's march from Fairyland.”

The time likewise is not long past when the shepherds of North Wales used to entertain one another with stories describing one of their number finding his way to the presence of Arthur and his Men, all asleep in a Snowdonian cave resplendent with untold wealth of gold and other treasure: the armed sleepers were believed to be merely awaiting the signal for their return to take an active part in the affairs of this world. In South Wales an elaborate but popular story lodges Arthur and his Knights in a cave at Craig y Ddinas, in Glamorgan,¹⁸ while the peasantry of South Cardiganshire, relating the same story, locate it elsewhere, and call the sleeping hero not Arthur but Owen,¹⁹ a name the memory of which used to be kept fresh by ballad singers, who made country fairs ring with such strains as the following:—

*Yr Owen hwn yw Harri 'r Nawfed,
Sydd yn trigo ngwlad estronied.*

This Owen is Henry the Ninth,
Who lives in the land of strangers.

The Owen of the Cardiganshire legend is known as Owen Lawgoch or Owen of the Red Hand, and he is represented as a man of seven feet in stature with a right hand which was all red. The whole story reminds one of him of the red beard, Frederic Barbarossa. I mention this lest anyone should suppose such stories had anything originally to do with the historical Arthur. Some light is shed on

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 34^a.

¹⁷ I believe that such is the sense of the third line of the triplet, but I cannot attain to any certainty approaching the assurance with which Prof. Zimmer categorically declares that, “sie sagt bloss aus, dass man Arthur's Grab nicht kenne”: see the *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache and Litteratur*, xij. 238.

¹⁸ The story is given in the *Brython* for 1858, p. 162.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 179. The editor, who was, I believe, no other than the Rev. Canon Silvan Evans, adds in a note that this sort of story might be found current also in Cumberland.

their genesis by a passage in the writings of an ancient author who lived in the first century of our era, namely Plutarch. In his work *De Defectu Oraculorum*, xviii., he uses words to the following effect²⁰—the Italics are mine:—

“Demetrius further said, that of the islands around Britain many lie scattered about uninhabited, of which some are named after deities and heroes. He told us also, that, being sent by the emperor with the object of reconnoitring and inspecting, he went to the island which lay nearest to those uninhabited, and found it occupied by few inhabitants, who were, however, sacrosanct and inviolable in the eyes of the Britons. Soon after his arrival a great disturbance of the atmosphere took place, accompanied by many portents, by the winds bursting forth into hurricanes, and by fiery bolts falling. When it was over, the islanders said that some of the mighty had passed away. For as a lamp on being lit, they said, brings with it no danger, while on being extinguished it is grievous to many, just so with regard to great souls, their beginning to shine forth is pleasant and the reverse of grievous, whereas the extinction and destruction of them frequently disturb the winds and the surge as at present; oftentimes also do they infect the atmosphere with pestilential diseases. Moreover, there is there, they said, an island in which Cronus is imprisoned, with Briareus keeping guard over him as he sleeps; for, as they put it, sleep is the bond forged for Cronus. *They add that around him are many deities, his henchmen and attendants.*”

To return to the Black Book, I may mention that another of the Stanzas of the Graves is worth citing here, though it does not name Arthur. It alludes, however, to Camlan, the Camelot of Malory and the romances, and that in the same strain of apparently historical definiteness as the entry in the *Annales Cambriæ* cited as mentioning Camlan. The lines in question run thus²¹:—

*Bet mab osvran yg camlan.
gvydi llauer kywlavan.
Bet bedwir in allt tryvan.*

Osvran's son's grave (is) at Camlan,
After many a slaughter,
Bedwyr's grave (is) in Allt Tryvan.²²

We next come to a poem headed *Gereint filius Erbin*, which describes a battle at a place called Llongborth. Gereint is the poet's hero, but he introduces Arthur as Gereint's superior and lord, as follows²³:—

*En llogporth y gueleise. y arthur
guir deur kymynint a dur.
ameraudur²⁴ llywiaudir llawur.
En llogporth y llas y gereint.
guir deur o odir diwneint.
a chin rillethid ve. llatisseint.*

At Llongborth saw I of Arthur's
Brave men hewing with steel,
(Men of the) emperor,²⁴ director of toil.
At Llongborth there fell of Gereint's
Brave men from the border of Devon,
And ere they were slain they slew.

²⁰ For the original see the Didot edition of Plutarch, vol. iii. p. 511 (*De Defectu Oraculorum*, xviii.); it is also to be found printed in my *Arthurian Legend*, p. 367.

²¹ Evans' Facsimile, fol. 32^b.

²² There are several mountain tops in the Snowdon district called *y Tryfan*, “the Tryvan,” and *Moel Tryfan*, “the round-topped hill of Tryvan.” Lady Charlotte Guest (*Mabinogion*, ii. 167) has been misled by somebody to indulge in the impossible spelling *Trivaen*.

²³ Evans' Facsimile, fol. 36^b.

²⁴ I am not certain what documents exactly Prof. Zimmer had in view when he wrote as to Arthur, “Nirgends führt er den Titel *amherawdyr*”; or whether he would regard *ameraudur* here as a title or not: see the *Gött. gel. Anz.* for 1890, p. 524.

In these triplets the position of Arthur seems to be very clearly indicated: the men fighting on his side are Gereint's men from Devon. That is to say, Arthur is Gereint's superior: he fills in fact the rôle assigned him in the *Historia Brittonum* when he is there termed a *Dux Bellorum*. This raises the question of Arthur's title; for passing on from the description of him as a *Dux Bellorum*, we have him twice in the *Mirabilia* called *Arthur Miles*. Further the *Vita Gildæ*, sometimes ascribed to the twelfth century author, Caradoc of Llancarvan, in giving the story of the carrying away of Guenever by Melwas,²⁵ speaks of the latter as *rex*, or king, reigning over the *Æstiva Regio* or Somerset, while it styles Arthur a *tyrannus*. To this must be added the fact that in the story of Kulhwch and Olwen the hero salutes Arthur as *Penteyrned yr Ynys honn*, or "the Head of the Princes of this Island," and one should notice that, in common with all these, the passage last cited from the Black Book avoids calling Arthur a king. On the other hand the word *ameraudur* which it applies to Arthur is one of the forms given in Welsh to the Latin word *imperator* borrowed; but as it is used of him commonly in the stories of Peredur, Owein, Gereint and others which betray the influence of the French romances, it might perhaps be supposed that its presence in Gereint's Elegy was due to that influence. There is, however, no evidence, and the way in which the word is used rather inclines me to regard it as spontaneous on the part of the poet: I am only doubtful whether instead of rendering, as I have done, "emperor, director of toil," it would not have been more correct to write "commander, director of toil": that is to say, to suppose the word to retain here the meaning which it had primarily in Latin. In any case, the instances which have been adduced will suffice, it seems to me, to shew that it was not due to accident that other terms than that of king were thought more suitable in speaking of Arthur. In that fact one seems to trace one of the logical consequences of Arthur's having, as I have ventured to suppose, occupied the historical position of the *Comes Britanniae*, in other words, that of the *Imperator* himself, which it became when Britain ceased to form a part of the dominions of Rome.

We next have a poem consisting of a dialogue between Arthur and Glewlwyd Gavael-vawr, who in the Welsh stories about Arthur is represented as one of his chief porters; but here he seems to have a castle of his own, the gates of which he appears in no hurry to open for Arthur and his companions. He asks Arthur who he is and what followers he has, which Arthur is made to seize as an opportunity for describing some of them, especially Kei, Malory's Sir Kay the seneschal. Unfortunately, the poem is so obscure that I can only guess its meaning, as follows²⁶:—

Pa gur yv y porthaur.
Gleuluid gavaelauur.
Pa gur ae gouin.
*arthur. a chei guin.*²⁷
Pa imda genhid.
Guir goreu im bid.

Who is the porter?
 Glewlwyd Gavaelvawr.
 Who asks the question?
 Arthur and worthy Kei.
 What following (?) hast thou?
 The best of men are mine.

²⁵ For the text of that story, see San-Marte's *Nennius et Gildas*, pp. 122, 3, also the *Romania*, vol. x. 491, where it is given by M. Gaston Paris.

²⁶ Evan's Facsimile, fol. 47^b–48^b.

²⁷ *Guin*, now written *gwyn*, means as a colour adjective *white*, but it is a very difficult word to render, one of its uses being somewhat like that of French *beau* in *beau pere*. On the banks of the Dovey in Mid-Wales a stepfather is respectfully called *tad gwyn*, literally "white father," and I surmise that it had a somewhat similar force here. It is to be borne in mind that Kei is, so far as I can remember, elsewhere called *Kei guin* only in the story of Kulhwch. See *Red Book Mabinogion*, p. 105, and for further remarks on *gwyn* see my *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 527–8.

Ym ty ny doi.
 onys guaredi.
 Mi ae guar[e]di.
 athi ae gueli.
 Vythneint elei.
 Assivyon ell tri.
 Mabon am mydron.
 quas uthir pen Dr.agon.
 Kysceint · mab · Banon.
 A guin godybrion.
 Oet rinn vy gueisson
 in amuin ev detvon.
 Manawidan ab llyr.
 oet duis y cusil.
 Neustuc manauid
 eis tull o trywruid
 A mabon am melld.
 maglei guaed ar guellld.
 Ac angwas edeinauc.
 a lluch · llauynnauc.
 Oetin diffreidauc
 ar eidin cyminauc
 Argluit ae llochei
 my nei ymtiwygei
 Kei ae heirirolei.
 trae llathei pop tri
 Pan colled kelli.
 caffad cuelli.
 Aseirolei kei
 hid trae kymynhei.
 Arthur ced huarhei
 y guaed gouerei.
 In neuat awarnach
 in imlat ew a gurach.
 Ew a quant pen palach.
 in atodeu dissethach.
 Ym minit eidin
 amuc · a · chinbin.
 Pop cant id cuitin.
 id cuitin · pop cant.
 rac beduir bedrydant.
 Ar traethev trywruid.
 in amuin a garvluid.

To my house thou shalt not come
 Unless thou plead (?) for them.
 I will plead (?) for them.
 And thou shalt see them:—
 Wythneint of Elei,
 And the wise men three—
 Mabon son of Modron,
 (Uther Pendragon's man)
 Kyscaint son of Banon,
 And Gwyn Godyvrion.
 Sturdy would be my men
 In defence of their laws—
 Manawydan son of Llyr
 Profound in counsel;
 (Manawyd brought home
 A pierced buckler from Tryvrwyd).
 And Mabon son of Melld
 Who stained the grass with gore;
 And Angwas the Winged,
 And Lluch Llawynnawc,
 Who were protective
 Against Eidyn²⁸ the gashing.
 His lord would shelter him,
 My nephew would amend (?),
 Kei would plead for (?) them,
 While slaying them three at a time.
 When Kelli was lost
 Savagery was experienced.
 Kei would plead for them (?)
 Until he might hew them down.
 Though Arthur was playing
 The blood was dripping.
 In Awarnach's hall
 A-fighting with a hag,
 He slew Pen-palach
 In the tasks (?) of Dissethach.
 On Eidyn's mountain
 He combated with champions (?),
 By the hundred they fell—
 They fell a hundred at a time
 Before Bedwyr . . .
 On the shores of Tyrvrwyd;
 Combating with Garwlwyd.

²⁸ Mention is made of this man in Triads i. 38, 39; iii. 47, 48 (Myv. Arch., vol. ii. 9, 65), where he is described as the slayer of the bard Aneurin.

Oet guythir y annuyd.
o cletyw ac yscuid.
Oet quaget bragad
vrth kei ig kad.
Oet cletyw ighad.
oe lav diguistlad.
Oet hyneiw quastad
ar lleg ar lles gulad.
Beduir. A Bridlav.²⁹
Nau cant guarandau.
chuechant y eirthau.
a talei y ortinav.
Gueisson am buyint
oet quell ban uitint.
rac rieu emreis.
queleise · kei ar uris.
Preitev gorthowis.
oet gur hit in ewnis.
Oet trum y dial.
oet tost y cynial.
Pan yuei o wual
yuei urth peduar
ygkad pan delhei.
vrth cant id lathei.
Ny bei duv ae digonhei
Oet diheit aghev kei.
Kei guin a llachev.
digonint we kadev.
kin gloes glas verev.
yguarthaw ystawingun.
kei a guant nav guiton.
Kei win aaeth von
y dilein lleuon.
y iscuid oet mynud
erbin cath paluc.
Pan gogiuerch tud.

Victorious was his wrath
 Both with sword and shield.
 It were vain to boast
 Against Kei in battle.
 His sword in battle was
 Not to be pledged from his hand.
 He was an equable lord
 Of a legion for the state's good.
 Bedwyr son of Bridlaw,
 Nine hundred to watch,
 Six hundred to attack
 Was his onslaught (?) worth.
 The young men I have—
 It is well where they are
 Before the kings of Emrys
 Have I seen Kei in haste.
 Leader of the harryings,
 Long would he be in his wrath;
 Heavy was he in his vengeance;
 Terrible in his fighting.
 When from a horn he drank
 He drank as much as four men;
 When he came into battle
 He slew as would a hundred.
 Unless it should be God's act³⁰
 Kei's death would be unachieved.
 Worthy Kei and Llacheu
 Used to fight battles,
 Before the pang of livid spears,
 On the top of Ystavingun
 Kei slew nine witches.³¹
 Worthy Kei went to Mona
 To destroy lions.
 His shield was small
 Against Palug's Cat.
 When people shall ask

²⁹ This should probably give the parentage of Bedwyr, and it is natural to suggest as an emendation *Beduir ab Bridlav*; but in *Gereint and Enid* he is described as son of *Bedrawt*: see *Red Book Mab.*, p. 265.

³⁰ With this sentiment compare the following passage put into the mouth of Llew in the *Mabinogi* of Math son of Mathonwy: *Onym llad i duw hagen nyi hawd vy llad i*. "Unless God slay me, however, it is not easy to slay me." See the *Red Book Mabinogion*, p. 75, also Lady Charlotte Guest's *Mab.*, iii. 242, where she imparts to her translation a Christian tone not to be detected in the original, thus: "But until Heaven take me I shall not easily be slain."

³¹ This looks as if it might be the incident in which the story of Peredur makes that hero take a leading part: he encounters the witches of *Caer Loyw* at a castle on a mountain, and he together with Arthur and his Men afterwards kills them all at the end of the story: see the *Red Book Mab.*, pp. 210–1, 242–3, and Guest's *Mab.*, i. 322–3, 369–70.

Puy guant cath paluc.
Nau ugein kinlluc.
a cuytei in y buyd.
Nau ugein kinran
A . . .

“Who slew Palug’s Cat?”
 Nine score . . .
 Used to fall for her food
 Nine score leaders
 Used to . . .

The manuscript is imperfect, and it breaks off just where one should have heard more about Cath Paluc, or “Palug’s Cat,” a monster, said in the Red Book Triads to have been reared by the Sons of Palug, in Anglesey. The contests here mentioned with monsters, hags and witches, form also a feature of the story of *Kulhwch and Olwen*, not to mention Irish stories, such as that of *Bricriu’s Feast*,³² which abound in them. Moreover, the majority of Arthur’s followers in the Black Book poem, figure as such in the *Kulhwch* also, namely Glewlwyd, Kei, Mabon son of Modron, Gwyn Godyvron, Mabon son of Mellt, Angwas Edeinawc, Llŵch Llawyniawc, Bedwyr, and Arthur’s son Llacheu; not to mention Manawyddan, who is forced into Arthur’s train in both poem and story. On the other hand, only two of Arthur’s men enumerated in the former evade identification elsewhere, namely, Wythneint and Kysceint.³³ Perhaps the most remarkable thing in the Black Book poem, is the position which it assigns to Kei, who there towers far above all the rest of the Arthurian train: he is, in fact, not to be conquered by man or beast, so that his death could only be attributed to the direct interference of the Almighty. The next in importance to Kei was Bedwyr, the Bedewere or Bedyuere of Malory’s *Morte Darthur*, and the positions of both heroes are relatively the same in the *Kulhwch* story.

Another allusion to Arthur occurs in the Black Book, to wit in an elegy to Madog son of Meredydd, prince of Powys, who died in the year 1159. The poem is ascribed to Madog’s contemporary, the well-known Welsh poet Cynddelw, who, in alluding to the mourning and grief among Madog’s men, characterises the uproar as being—*Mal gavr toryw teulu arthur*.³⁴

“Like the shout of the multitude of Arthur’s host.”

This leads, however, to no inference of any importance in this context. The same remark may be made concerning a mention of Arthur in a poem called *Gorchan Maelderw* in the Book of Aneurin, a manuscript of the latter part of the thirteenth or of the beginning of the fourteenth century: the passage is unfortunately obscure.³⁵

The next manuscript to be mentioned is one of approximately the same data as the last-mentioned: I allude to the Book of Taliessin, where an obscure poem occurs, headed *Kat Godeu*. There, near the end, we have the following couplet:—

derwydon doethur.
darogenwch y Arthur.

Druids erudite,
 Prophecy for Arthur.

³² The Irish text is given at length in Windisch’s *Irische Texte*, pp. 254–303.

³³ *Kysceint* is probably a miscopying of *Kysteint*, the Welsh form of *Constantius*; a name *Wytheint* appears in the Book of Taliessin, as that of one who fights with Gwydion son of Dôn: see Skene’s *Four anc. Books of Wales*, ii. 158.

³⁴ Evans’ Facsimile, fol. 52^a.

³⁵ For the text see Skene’s *Four anc. Books of Wales*, vol. ii. 106, and for the translation, vol. i. 436. Both will also be found in Thomas Stephens’ *Gododin*, pp. 352–3; but I am convinced that the meaning of the words still remains to be discovered.

Another allusion to Arthur in the Book of Taliessin runs thus³⁶:—

*heilyn pascadur.
treded dofynd doethur
y vendigaw Arthur.
Arthur vendigan
ar gerd gyfaenat*

Heilyn of the Passover
One of three deeply wise
To bless Arthur.
Arthur they will bless
In elaborate song.

Who the Heilyn mentioned here was does not appear, but he may be supposed to have been a priest or a bard.

Other references to Arthur occur in the Book of Taliessin, but the most important by far is the poem known as *Preiddeu Annwfn*, or the Harryings of Hades, which I subjoin, so far as it is in point, with an attempt to translate into English, as follows:—

*Golychaf wledic pendeuic gwlat ri.
py ledas y pennaeth dros traeth mundi.
bu kyweir karchar gweir ygkaer sidi.
trwy ebostol pwyll aphryderi.
Neb kyn noc ef nyt aeth idi.
yr gadwyn tromlas kywirwas ae ketwi.
A rac preideu annwfyn tost yt geni.
Ac yt urawt parahawt yn bard wedi.
Tri lloneit prytwen yd aetham ni idi.
nam seith ny dyrreith o gaer sidi.*

I adore the noble prince and high king
Who extended his sway over the world's strand.
Perfect was the captivity of Gwair in Caer Sidi,
Through the warning³⁷ of Pwyll and Pryderi.
Before him no one entered into it,
Into the heavy dark chain a trusty youth guarded;
And at the harryings of Hades grievously did he sing,
And till doom will he remain a bard afterwards.
Three freights of Prydwen went we into it—
Seven alone did we return from Caer Sidi.

*Neut wyf glot geinmyn cerd o chlywir.
ygkaer pedryuan pedyr y chwelyt.
ygkynneir or peir pan leferit.
Oanadyl naw morwyn gochyneuit.*

³⁶ See Skene, ii. 456: vol. i. 259, gives a translation differing considerably from the one proposed here with great diffidence.

³⁷ As to this meaning of the word *ebostol*, see *Llyvyr Agkyr Llandewivrevi* (in the *Anecdota Oxoniensia*), p. 159. It is *epistola* borrowed and sometimes confounded with *abostol* from *apostolus*: the sequence of meanings seems to have been a letter, a message or admonition by letter, a warning. See a note on the word by Prof. Powel in the *Cymmrodor*, ix. 199.

*Neu peir pen annwfyd pwy y vnut.
 gwrym am yoror a mererit.
 ny beirw bwyd llwfyd ny rtyghit.
 cledyd lluch lleawcidaw rydyrchit.
 Ac yn llaw leminawc yd edewit.
 Arac drws porth vffern llugyrn lloscit.
 Aphan aetham ni gan arthur trafferth lethrit.
 namyn seith ny dyrreith o gaer vedwit.*

I am a seeker (?) of praise, if (my) song be heard:
 In Caer Pedryvan . . .
 . . . from the cauldron it would be spoken
 By the breath of nine maidens it would be kindled.
 The head of Hades' cauldron—what is it like?
 A rim it has, with pearls, round its border:
 It boils not a coward's food: it would not be perjured.
 The sword of Lluch Lleawc would be lifted to it,
 And in the hand of Lleminawc was it left.
 And before the door of Hell's gate lamps were burning,
 And when we accompanied Arthur, a brilliant effort,
 Seven alone did we return from Caer Veddwt.

*Neut wyf glot geinmyn kerd glywanawr.
 ygkaer Pedryfan ynys pybyrdor.
 echwyd amuchyd kymysgetor
 gwin gloyw eu gwirawt rac eu gorgord.
 Tri lloneit prytwen yd aetham ni ar vor.
 namyn seith ny dyrreith o gear rigor.*

I am a seeker (?) of praise, (my) song being (?) heard:
 At Caer Pedryfan in Quick-door Island,
 At dusk and in the blackness (of night) they mix
 The sparkling wine, their drink before their retinue.
 Three freights of Prydwen went we on sea:
 Seven alone did we return from Caer Rigor.

*Ny obrynafi lawyr llen llywyadur
 tra chaer wydyr ny welsynt wrhyt arthur.
 Tri vgeint canhwr a seui arymur.
 oed anhawd ymadrawd ae gwlyadur.
 tri lloneit prytwen yd aeth gan arthur.
 namyn seith ny dyrreith o gaer golud.*

I merit not the laurel of the ruler of letters—
 Beyond the Glass Fort they had not seen Arthur's valour.
 Three score hundreds stood on the wall:

Hard it was found to converse with their sentinel.
 Three freights of Prydwen (were they that) went with Arthur,
 Seven alone did they return from Caer Goludd.

*Ny obrynaf y lawyr llaes eu kylchwy.
 ny wdant wy py dyd peridyd pwy.
 py awr ymeindyd y ganet cwy.
 Pwy gwnaeth arnyt aeth doleu defwy.
 Ny wdant wy yr ych brych bras ypenrwy.
 Seith vgein kygwng yny aerwy.
 A phan aetham ni gan arthur aurydol gofwy.
 namyn seith ny dyrreith o gaer vandwy.*

I merit not the laurel of them of the long shields (?):
 They know not which is the ruler's day (or) who (he is),
 At what hour of early day he was born (or) where (?),
 Who made . . . went not . . .
 They know not the Speckled Ox with the stout halter,
 With seven score joints in his collar.
 When we went with Arthur, anxious visit,
 Seven alone did we return from Caer Vanddwy.

*Ny obrynafy lawyr llaes eu gohen
 ny wdant py dyd peridyd pen.
 Py awr ymeindyd y ganet perchen.
 Py vil a gatwant aryant y pen.
 pan aetham ni gan arthur afyrdwl gynhen
 namyn seith ny dyrreith a gaer ochren.*

I merit not the laurel of those of long . . .
 They know not which is the day of the ruler (and) chief,
 At what hour of early day was born the owner,
 (Or) what myriad guards the silver of the head.
 When we went with Arthur, anxious contest,
 Seven alone did we return from Caer Ochren.

Of the eight castles or strongholds mentioned in this poem not a single one has been identified with any real place, and the Isle of the Active Door belongs probably to the same sort of geography as *Anmwyn* or Hades, and *Uffern* or Hell. The poem evidently deals with expeditions conducted by Arthur by sea to the realms of twilight and darkness; but the one in quest of the cauldron of the Head of Hades reminds me of that described in the *Kulhwch* as having for its object the cauldron of Diwrnach the Goidel: Arthur set out with a small number of men on board his ship Prydwen, and after severe fighting brought away the cauldron full of the money of the country, which was, however, according to the *Kulhwch*, not Hades but Ireland. But with this difference the stories agree, not to mention that *yr Ych Brych*, or “the Speckled Ox,” of the poem figures also in the *Kulhwch*. To do justice to this part of the comparison, and to complete

the outline which I have suggested, I should have here to append at length the story of *Kulhwch*; but as that is out of the question, I will only add that a translation of it into English will be found in the second volume of Lady Charlotte Guest's *Mabinogion*. The *Kulhwch* is contained in the Jesus College manuscript, the *Red Book of Hergest*, which belongs to the latter half of the fourteenth century; but the present version carries with it some evidence that it was copied from a manuscript written in the Kymric hand usual in Wales before the Norman Conquest and its influence had introduced another hand. On the whole, one cannot go far wrong in supposing that it was composed in the tenth century; and as to its contents, it has been pronounced purely³⁸ Kymric by Professor Zimmer,—that is to say, as contrasted with stories in which the influence of the romances cannot, as he thinks, be mistaken.

It is not to be supposed, however, that other manuscripts, whether belonging to the same period as that of the *Kulhwch* or to later dates, relate nothing concerning Arthur but the echo of incidents occurring in the French romances. Instances could readily be cited to the contrary: take for example the episode in which the Welsh Triads³⁹ bring Arthur in contact with Drystan the *gal-ofydd* or “war-leader” of March and the lover of Essyllt, that is to say, Malory's *Tristram*, *kyng Mark*, and *Isoud* respectively. Drystan is represented sending March's swineherd on an errand to Essyllt, Drystan in the meantime taking upon himself the charge of the swine. The story then makes Arthur, assisted by March, Kei and Bedwyr, attempt to get possession of some of the swine by every means in their power, but all in vain, so that Drystan came to be styled one of “the Three stout Swineherds of the Isle of Britain.” Or take another instance, namely the statement that Arthur had not one wife Gwenhwyvar, Malory's Guenever, but three wives in succession, all called Gwenhwyvar. This strange piece of information likewise comes from the Triads,⁴⁰ and I should be surprised to learn that it found its way into them from the French romances rather than from some far older source.

Speaking generally of the Arthur of Welsh literature, one may characterise him in few words:—His first appearance is found to conform itself with the rôle of a *Comes Britanniae*, on whom it devolved to help the inhabitants of what was once Roman Britain against invasion and insult, whether at the hands of Angles and Saxons or of Picts and Scots: so we read of him acting for the kings of the Brythons as their *dux bellorum*. We next find his fame re-echoed by the topography of the country once under his protection, and his name gathering round it the legends of heroes and divinities of a past of indefinite extent. In other words, he and his men, especially Kei and Bedwyr, are represented undertaking perilous expeditions to realms of mythic obscurity, bringing home treasures, fighting with hags and witches, despatching giants, and destroying monsters. How greatly this rude delineation of the triumph of man over violence and brute force differs from the more finished picture of the Arthur of Malory's painting, it would be needless to try to shew to any one bent on the pleasure of perusing the *Morte Darthur*. Such a reader may be trusted to pursue the comparison unassisted, in the fascinating pages of this incomparable book.

JOHN RHYS

OXFORD, Nov. 7, 1893.



³⁸ In the *Göttingische gel. Anzeigen* for June 10, 1890, pp. 517, 523–4.

³⁹ Triads i. 30, ii. 56, iii. 101: see the *Myv. Arch.*, vol. ii. pp. 6, 20, 72–3.

⁴⁰ Triad i. 59, ii. 16, iii. 109: see the *Myv. Arch.*, vol. ii. pp. 12, 14, 73.



Caxton's Preface to the Edition of mccccxxxv



FTER that I had accomplished and finished divers histories, as well of contemplation as of other historical and worldly acts of great conquerors and princes, and also certain books of ensamples and doctrine, many noble and divers gentlemen of this realm of England came and demanded me, many and oftentimes, wherefore that I have not do made and imprinted the noble history of the Sangreal, and of the most renowned Christian king, first and chief of the three best Christian and worthy, King Arthur, which ought most to be remembered among us English men tofore all other Christian

kings. For it is notoriously known through the universal world that there be nine worthy and the best that ever were. That is to wit three paynims, three Jews, and three Christian men. As for the paynims they were tofore the Incarnation of Christ, which were named, the first Hector of Troy, of whom the history is come both in ballad and in prose; the second Alexander the Great; and the third Julius Cæsar, Emperor of Rome, of whom the histories be well-known and had. And as for the three Jews which also were tofore the Incarnation of our Lord, of whom

the first was Duke Joshua which brought the children of Israel into the land of behest; the second David, King of Jerusalem; and the third Judas Maccabæus: of these three the Bible rehearseth all their noble histories and acts. And sith the said Incarnation have been three noble Christian men stalled and admitted through the universal world into the number of the nine best and worthy, of whom was first the noble Arthur, whose noble acts I purpose to write in this present book here following. The second was Charlemagne or Charles the Great, of whom the history is had in many places both in French and English; and the third and last was Godfrey of Bouillon, of whose acts and life I made a book unto the excellent prince and king of noble memory, King Edward the Fourth. The said noble gentlemen instantly required me to imprint the history of the said noble king and conqueror, King Arthur, and of his knights, with the history of the Sangreal, and of the death and ending of the said Arthur; affirming that I ought rather to imprint his acts and noble feats, than of Godfrey of Bouillon, or any of the other eight, considering that he was a man born within this realm, and king and emperor of the same; and that there be in French divers and many noble volumes of his acts, and also of his knights. To whom I answered, that divers men hold opinion that there was no such Arthur, and that all such books as be made of him be but feigned and fables, by cause that some chronicles make of him no mention nor remember him no thing, nor of his knights. Whereto they answered, and one in special said, that in him that should say or think that there was never such a king called Arthur, might well be credited great folly and blindness; for he said that there were many evidences of the contrary: first ye may see his sepulture in the Monastery of Glastonbury. And also in Polichronicon, in the fifth book the sixth chapter, and in the seventh book the twenty-third chapter, where his body was buried and after found and translated into the said monastery. Ye shall see also in the history of Bochas, in his book *De Casu Principum*, part of his noble acts, and also of his fall. Also Galfridus in his British book recounteth his life; and in divers places of England many remembrances be yet of him and shall remain perpetually, and also of his knights. First in the Abbey of Westminster, at Saint Edward's shrine, remaineth the print of his seal in red wax closed in beryl, in which is written *Patricius Arthurus, Britannie, Gallie, Germanie, Dacie, Imperator*. Item in the castle of Dover ye may see Gawaine's skull and Craddock's mantle: at Winchester the Round Table: in other places Lancelot's sword and many other things. Then all these things considered, there can no man reasonably gainsay but there was a king of this land named Arthur. For in all places, Christian and heathen, he is reputed and taken for one of the nine worthy, and the first of the three Christian men. And also he is more spoken of beyond the sea, more books made of his noble acts than there be in England, as well in Dutch, Italian, Spanish, and Greek, as in French. And yet of record remain in witness, of him in Wales, in the town of Camelot, the great stones and marvellous works of iron, lying under the ground, and royal vaults, which divers now living hath seen. Wherefore it is a marvel why he is no more renowned in his own country, save only it accordeth to the Word of God, which saith that no man is accept for a prophet in his own country. Then all these things foresaid alleged, I could not well deny but that there was such a noble king named Arthur, and reputed one of the nine worthy, and first and chief of the Christian men; and many noble volumes be made of him and of his noble knights in French, which I have seen and read beyond the sea, which be not had in our maternal tongue, but in Welsh be many and also in French, and some in English, but no where nigh all. Wherefore, such as have late been drawn out briefly into English I have after the simple conning that God hath sent to me, under the favour and correction of all noble lords and gentlemen, emprised to imprint a book of the noble histories of the said King Arthur, and of certain of his knights, after a copy unto me delivered, which copy Sir Thomas Malory did take out of certain books of French, and reduced it into English. And I,

according to my copy, have done set it in imprint, to the intent that noble men may see and learn the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honour; and how they that were vicious were punished and oft put to shame and rebuke; humbly beseeching all noble lords and ladies, with all other estates, of what estate or degree they be of, that shall see and read in this said book and work, that they take the good and honest acts in their remembrance, and to follow the same. Wherein they shall find many joyous and pleasant histories, and noble and renowned acts of humanity, gentleness, and chivalries. For herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin. Do after the good and leave the evil, and it shall bring you to good fame and renown. And for to pass the time this book shall be pleasant to read in; but for to give faith and believe that all is true that is contained herein, ye be at your liberty; but all is written for our doctrine, and for to beware that we fall not to vice nor sin, but to exercise and follow virtue; by which we may come and attain to good fame and renown in this life, and after this short and transitory life, to come unto everlasting bliss in heaven, the which he grant us that reigneth in heaven, the blessed Trinity. Amen.



HEN to proceed forth in this said book, which I direct unto all noble princes, lords and ladies, gentlemen or gentlewomen, that desire to read or hear read of the noble and joyous history of the great conqueror and excellent king, King Arthur, sometime king of this noble realm, then called Britain. I, William Caxton, simple person, present this book following, which I have emprised to imprint; and treateth of the noble acts, feats of arms of chivalry, prowess, hardiness, humanity, love, courtesy, and very gentleness, with many wonderful histories and adventures. And for to understand briefly the content of this volume, I have divided it into twenty-one books, and every book chaptered as hereafter shall by God's grace follow. The first book shall treat how Uther Pendragon gat the noble conqueror King Arthur, and containeth twenty-eight chapters. The second book treateth of Balin the noble knight, and containeth nineteen chapters.

The third book treateth of the marriage of King Arthur to Queen Guenever, with other matters, and containeth fifteen chapters. The fourth book, how Merlin was assotted, and of war made to King Arthur, and containeth twenty-nine chapters. The fifth book treateth of the conquest of Lucius the emperor, and containeth twelve chapters. The sixth book treateth of Sir Lancelot and Sir Lionel, and marvellous adventures, and containeth eighteen chapters. The seventh book treateth of a noble knight called Sir Gareth, and named by Sir Kay, Beaumains, and containeth thirty-six chapters. The eighth book treateth of the birth of Sir Tristram the noble knight, and of his acts, and containeth forty-one chapters. The ninth book treateth of a knight named by Sir Kay, La Cote Male Taile, and also of Sir Tristram, and containeth forty-four chapters. The tenth book treateth of Sir Tristram and other marvellous adventures, and containeth eighty-eight chapters. The eleventh book treateth of Sir Lancelot and Sir Galahad, and containeth fourteen chapters. The twelfth book treateth of Sir Lancelot and his madness, and containeth fourteen chapters. The thirteenth book treateth how Galahad came first to King Arthur's court, and the quest how the Sangreal was begun, and containeth twenty chapters. The fourteenth book treateth of the quest of the Sangreal, and containeth ten chapters. The fifteenth book treateth of Sir Lancelot, and containeth six chapters. The sixteenth book treateth of Sir Bors and Sir Lionel his brother, and containeth seventeen chapters. The seventeenth book treateth of the Sangreal, and containeth twenty-three chapters. The eighteenth book treateth of Sir Lancelot and the queen, and containeth twenty-five chapters. The nineteenth book treateth of Queen Guenever and Lancelot, and containeth thirteen chapters. The twentieth book treateth of the piteous death of Arthur, and containeth twenty-two chapters. The twenty-first book treateth of his last departing, and how Sir Lancelot came to revenge his death, and containeth thirteen chapters. The sum is twenty-one books, which contain the sum of five hundred and seven chapters, as more plainly shall follow hereafter.

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