

**ALL THOSE
TERRIFYING HISTORIES SERIES**

Kenneth Cavalcanti (ed.)

**Intriguing Famous
Characters and
Their Dark Secrets**

feat. King Arthur, Jacques de Molay,
Paracelsus, Casanova, Goethe, Hess, Tesla

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INTEGRAL

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ALL THOSE TERRIFYING HISTORIES

#2

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INTEGRAL

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King Arthur and The Holy Grail

According to Christian mythology, the Holy Grail was the dish, plate, or cup used by Jesus at the Last Supper, said to possess miraculous powers. The connection of Joseph of Arimathea with the Grail legend dates from Robert de Boron's *Joseph d'Arimathe* (late 12th century) in which Joseph receives the Grail from an apparition of Jesus and sends it with his followers to Great Britain. The development of the Grail legend has been traced in detail by cultural historians: It is a legend which first came together in the form of written romances, deriving perhaps from some pre-Christian folklore hints, in the later 12th and early 13th centuries. The early Grail romances centered on Percival and were woven into the more general Arthurian fabric. Some of the Grail legend is interwoven with legends of the Holy Chalice.

The word *grail*, as it is earliest spelled, comes from Old French *graal* or *greal*, cognate with Old Provençal *grazal* and Old Catalan *gresal*, meaning "a cup or bowl of earth, wood, or metal" (or other various types of vessels in different Occitan dialects). The most commonly accepted etymology derives it from Latin *gradalis* or *gradale* via an earlier form, *cratalis*, a derivative of *crater* or *cratus*, which was, in turn, borrowed from Greek *krater* (κράτηρ, a large wine-mixing vessel). Alternative suggestions include a derivative of *cratis*, a name for a type of woven basket that came to refer to a dish, or a derivative of Latin *gradus* meaning "'by degree', 'by stages', applied to a dish brought to the table in different stages or services during a meal".

In the 15th century, English writer John Hardyng invented a fanciful new etymology for Old French *san-graal* (or *san-gréal*), meaning "Holy Grail", by parsing it as *sang real*, meaning "royal blood". This etymology was used by some later medieval British writers such as Thomas Malory, and became prominent in the conspiracy theory developed in the book *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail*, in which *sang real* refers to the Jesus bloodline.

Scholars have long speculated on the origins of the Holy Grail before Chrétien, suggesting that it may contain elements of the trope of magical cauldrons from Celtic mythology and later Welsh mythology combined with Christian legend surrounding the Eucharist, the latter found in Eastern Christian sources, conceivably in that of the Byzantine Mass, or even Persian sources. The view that the "origin" of the Grail legend should be seen as deriving from Celtic mythology was championed by Roger Sherman Loomis, Alfred Nutt and Jessie Weston. Loomis traced a number of parallels between Medieval Welsh literature and Irish material and the Grail romances, including similarities between the *Mabinogion*'s Bran the Blessed and the Arthurian Fisher King, and between Bran's life-restoring cauldron and the Grail.

The opposing view dismissed the "Celtic" connections as spurious and interpreted the legend as essentially Christian in origin. Joseph Goering has identified sources for Grail imagery in 12th-century wall paintings from churches in the Catalan Pyrenees (now mostly removed to the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya), which present unique iconic images of the Virgin Mary holding a bowl that radiates tongues of fire, images that predate the first literary account by Chrétien de Troyes. Goering argues that they were the original inspiration for the Grail legend.

Psychologists Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz used analytical psychology to interpret the Grail as a series of symbols in their book *The Grail Legend*. This expanded on interpretations by Carl Jung, which were later invoked by Joseph Campbell.

Richard Barber (2004) argued that the Grail legend is connected to the introduction of "more ceremony and mysticism" surrounding the sacrament of the Eucharist in the high medieval period, proposing that the first Grail stories may have been connected to the "renewal in this traditional sacrament". Daniel Scavone (1999, 2003) has argued that the "Grail" in origin referred to the Shroud

of Turin. Goulven Peron (2016) suggested that the Holy Grail may reflect the horn of the river-god Achelous as described by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*.

King Arthur is a legendary British leader who, according to medieval histories and romances, led the defence of Britain against the Saxon invaders in the early 6th century. The details of Arthur's story are mainly composed of folklore and literary invention, and his historical existence is debated and disputed by modern historians. The historical basis for the King Arthur legend has long been debated by scholars. One school of thought, citing entries in the *Historia Brittonum* ("History of the Britons") and *Annales Cambriae* ("Welsh Annals"), sees Arthur as a genuine historical figure, a Romano-British leader who fought against the invading Anglo-Saxons sometime in the late 5th to early 6th century, but the lack of convincing early evidence is the reason many recent historians exclude Arthur from their accounts of post-Roman Britain.

Arthur is a central figure in the legends making up the Matter of Britain. The legendary Arthur developed as a figure of international interest largely through the popularity of Geoffrey of Monmouth's fanciful and imaginative 12th-century *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*). In some Welsh and Breton tales and poems that date from before this work, Arthur appears either as a great warrior defending Britain from human and supernatural enemies or as a magical figure of folklore, sometimes associated with the Welsh otherworld Annwn. How much of Geoffrey's *Historia* (completed in 1138) was adapted from such earlier sources, rather than invented by Geoffrey himself, is unknown.

Although the themes, events and characters of the Arthurian legend varied widely from text to text, and there is no one canonical version, Geoffrey's version of events often served as the starting point for later stories. Geoffrey depicted Arthur as a king of Britain who defeated the Saxons and established a vast empire. Many elements and incidents that are now an integral part of the Arthurian story appear in Geoffrey's *Historia*, including Arthur's father Uther Pendragon, the magician Merlin, Arthur's wife Guinevere, the sword Excalibur, Arthur's conception at Tintagel, his final battle against Mordred at Camlann, and final rest in Avalon.

The 12th-century French writer Chrétien de Troyes, who added Lancelot and the Holy Grail to the story, began the genre of Arthurian romance that became a significant strand of medieval literature. In these French stories, the narrative focus often shifts from King Arthur himself to other characters, such as various Knights of the Round Table. Arthurian literature thrived during the Middle Ages but waned in the centuries that followed until it experienced a major resurgence in the 19th century. In the 21st century, the legend lives on, not only in literature but also in adaptations for theatre, film, television, comics and other media.

In the wake of the Arthurian romances, several artifacts came to be identified as the Holy Grail in medieval relic veneration. These artifacts are said to have been the vessel used at the Last Supper, but other details vary. Despite the prominence of the Grail literature, traditions about a Last Supper relic remained rare in contrast to other items associated with Jesus' last days, such as the True Cross and Holy Lance.

One tradition predates the Grail romances: in the 7th century, the pilgrim Arculf reported that the Last Supper chalice was displayed near Jerusalem. In the wake of Robert de Boron's Grail works, several other items came to be claimed as the true Last Supper vessel. In the late 12th century, one was said to be in Byzantium; Albrecht von Scharfenberg's Grail romance *Der Jüngere Titurel* associated it explicitly with the Arthurian Grail, but claimed it was only a copy. This item was said to have been looted in the Fourth Crusade and brought to Troyes in France, but it was lost during the French Revolution.

Two relics associated with the Grail survive today. The *Sacro Catino* (Sacred Basin, also known as the Genoa Chalice) is a green glass dish held at the Genoa Cathedral said to have been used at the Last Supper. Its provenance is unknown, and there are two divergent accounts of how it was brought to Genoa by Crusaders in the 12th century. It was not associated with the Last Supper until later, in the

wake of the Grail romances; the first known association is in Jacobus da Varagine's chronicle of Genoa in the late 13th century, which draws on the Grail literary tradition. The Catino was moved and broken during Napoleon's conquest in the early 19th century, revealing that it is glass rather than emerald.

The Holy Chalice of Valencia is an agate dish with a mounting for use as a chalice. The bowl may date to Greco-Roman times, but its dating is unclear, and its provenance is unknown before 1399, when it was gifted to Martin I of Aragon. By the 14th century an elaborate tradition had developed that this object was the Last Supper chalice. This tradition mirrors aspects of the Grail material, with several major differences, suggesting a separate tradition entirely. It is not associated with Joseph of Arimathea or Jesus' blood; it is said to have been taken to Rome by Saint Peter and later entrusted to Saint Lawrence. Early references do not call the object the "Grail"; the first evidence connecting it to the Grail tradition is from the 15th century. The monarchy sold the cup in the 15th century to Valencia Cathedral, where it remains a significant local icon.

Several objects were identified with the Holy Grail in the 17th century. In the 20th century, a series of new items became associated with it. These include the Nanteos Cup, a medieval wooden bowl found near Rhydyfelin, Wales; a glass dish found near Glastonbury, England; and the Antioch chalice, a 6th-century silver-gilt object that became attached to the Grail legend in the 1930s.

In the modern era, a number of places have become associated with the Holy Grail. One of the most prominent is Glastonbury in Somerset, England. Glastonbury was associated with King Arthur and his resting place of Avalon by the 12th century. In the 13th century, a legend arose that Joseph of Arimathea was the founder of Glastonbury Abbey. Early accounts of Joseph at Glastonbury focus on his role as the evangelist of Britain rather than as the custodian of the Holy Grail, but from the 15th century, the Grail became a more prominent part of the legends surrounding Glastonbury. Interest in Glastonbury resurged in the late 19th century, inspired by renewed interest in the Arthurian legend and contemporary spiritual movements centered on ancient sacred sites. In the late 19th century, John Goodchild hid a glass bowl near Glastonbury; a group of his friends, including Wellesley Tudor Pole, retrieved the cup in 1906 and promoted it as the original Holy Grail. Glastonbury and its Holy Grail legend have since become a point of focus for various New Age and Neopagan groups.

In the early 20th century, esoteric writers identified Montségur, a stronghold of the heretical Cathar sect in the 13th century, as the Grail castle. Similarly, the 14th-century Rosslyn Chapel in Midlothian, Scotland, became attached to the Grail legend in the mid-20th century when a succession of conspiracy books identified it as a secret hiding place of the Grail.

Since the 19th century, the Holy Grail has been linked to various conspiracy theories. In 1818, Austrian pseudohistorical writer Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall connected the Grail to contemporary myths surrounding the Knights Templar that cast the order as a secret society dedicated to mystical knowledge and relics. In Hammer-Purgstall's work, the Grail is not a physical relic but a symbol of the secret knowledge that the Templars sought. There is no historical evidence linking the Templars to a search for the Grail, but subsequent writers have elaborated on the Templar theories.

Starting in the early 20th century, writers, particularly in France, further connected the Templars and Grail to the Cathars. In 1906, French esoteric writer Joséphin Péladan identified the Cathar castle of Montségur with Munsalväsche or Montsalvat, the Grail castle in Wolfram's *Parzival*. This identification has inspired a wider legend asserting that the Cathars possessed the Holy Grail. According to these stories, the Cathars guarded the Grail at Montségur, and smuggled it out when the castle fell in 1244.

Beginning in 1933, German writer Otto Rahn published a series of books tying the Grail, Templars, and Cathars to modern German nationalist mythology. According to Rahn, the Grail was a symbol of a pure Germanic religion repressed by Christianity. Rahn's books inspired interest in the Grail in Nazi occultism and led to Heinrich Himmler's abortive sponsorship of Rahn's search for the Grail, as well as many subsequent conspiracy theories and fictional works about the Nazis searching for the Grail.

In the late 20th century, writers Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Henry Lincoln created one of the most widely known conspiracy theories about the Holy Grail. The theory first appeared in the BBC documentary series *Chronicle* in the 1970s, and was elaborated upon in the bestselling 1982 book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. The theory combines myths about the Templars and Cathars with various other legends and a prominent hoax about a secret order called the Priory of Sion. According to this theory, the Holy Grail is not a physical object, but a symbol of the bloodline of Jesus. The blood connection is based on the etymology reading *san greal* (holy grail) as *sang real* (royal blood), which dates to the 15th century. The narrative developed here is that Jesus was not divine, and had children with Mary Magdalene, who took the family to France where their descendants became the Merovingians dynasty. While the Catholic Church worked to destroy the dynasty, they were protected by the Priory of Sion and their associates, including the Templars, Cathars, and other secret societies. The book, its arguments, and its evidence have been widely criticized by scholars, but it has had a vast influence on conspiracy and alternate history books. It has also inspired fiction, most notably Dan Brown's 2003 novel *The Da Vinci Code* and its 2006 film adaptation, starring Tom Hanks.

King Arthur himself is a matter of intense debate. The *Historia Brittonum*, a 9th-century Latin historical compilation attributed in some late manuscripts to a Welsh cleric called Nennius, contains the first datable mention of King Arthur, listing twelve battles that Arthur fought. These culminate in the Battle of Badon, where he is said to have single-handedly killed 960 men. Recent studies, however, question the reliability of the *Historia Brittonum*.

The other text that seems to support the case for Arthur's historical existence is the 10th-century *Annales Cambriae*, which also link Arthur with the Battle of Badon. The *Annales* date this battle to 516–518, and also mention the Battle of Camlann, in which Arthur and Medraut (Mordred) were both killed, dated to 537–539. These details have often been used to bolster confidence in the *Historia's* account and to confirm that Arthur really did fight at Badon.

Problems have been identified, however, with using this source to support the *Historia Brittonum's* account. The latest research shows that the *Annales Cambriae* was based on a chronicle begun in the late 8th century in Wales. Additionally, the complex textual history of the *Annales Cambriae* precludes any certainty that the Arthurian annals were added to it even that early. They were more likely added at some point in the 10th century and may never have existed in any earlier set of annals. The Badon entry probably derived from the *Historia Brittonum*.

This lack of convincing early evidence is the reason many recent historians exclude Arthur from their accounts of sub-Roman Britain. In the view of historian Thomas Charles-Edwards, "at this stage of the enquiry, one can only say that there may well have been an historical Arthur [but ...] the historian can as yet say nothing of value about him". These modern admissions of ignorance are a relatively recent trend; earlier generations of historians were less sceptical. The historian John Morris made the putative reign of Arthur the organising principle of his history of sub-Roman Britain and Ireland, *The Age of Arthur* (1973). Even so, he found little to say about a historical Arthur.

Partly in reaction to such theories, another school of thought emerged which argued that Arthur had no historical existence at all. Morris's *Age of Arthur* prompted the archaeologist Nowell Myres to observe that "no figure on the borderline of history and mythology has wasted more of the historian's time". Gildas' 6th-century polemic *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* (*On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain*), written within living memory of Badon, mentions the battle but does not mention Arthur. Arthur is not mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or named in any surviving manuscript written between 400 and 820. He is absent from Bede's early-8th-century *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, another major early source for post-Roman history that mentions Badon. The historian David Dumville wrote: "I think we can dispose of him [Arthur] quite briefly. He owes his place in our history books to a 'no smoke without fire' school of thought ... The fact of the

matter is that there is no historical evidence about Arthur; we must reject him from our histories and, above all, from the titles of our books”.

Some scholars argue that Arthur was originally a fictional hero of folklore—or even a half-forgotten Celtic deity—who became credited with real deeds in the distant past. They cite parallels with figures such as the Kentish Hengist and Horsa, who may be totemic horse-gods that later became historicised. Bede ascribed to these legendary figures a historical role in the 5th-century Anglo-Saxon conquest of eastern Britain. It is not even certain that Arthur was considered a king in the early texts. Neither the *Historia* nor the *Annales* calls him "rex": the former calls him instead "*dux bellorum*" (leader of battles) and "*miles*" (soldier).

The consensus among academic historians today is that while there is no solid evidence for his historical existence, as the 'history' Geoffrey of Monmouth told in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* is false, "there was almost certainly an actual Arthur who inspired the legend". However, because historical documents for the post-Roman period are scarce, a definitive answer to the question of Arthur's historical existence is unlikely. Sites and places have been identified as "Arthurian" since the 12th century, but archaeology can confidently reveal names only through inscriptions found in secure contexts. The so-called "Arthur stone", discovered in 1998 among the ruins at Tintagel Castle in Cornwall in securely dated 6th-century contexts, created a brief stir but proved irrelevant. Other inscriptional evidence for Arthur, including the Glastonbury cross, is tainted with the suggestion of forgery.

Several historical figures have been proposed as the basis for Arthur, ranging from Lucius Artorius Castus, a Roman officer who served in Britain in the 2nd or 3rd century, to sub-Roman British rulers such as Riotamus, Ambrosius Aurelianus, Owain Ddantgwyn, and Athrwys ap Meurig. However, no convincing evidence for these identifications has emerged.

The origin of the Welsh name "Arthur" remains a matter of debate. The most widely accepted etymology derives it from the Roman *nomen gentile* (family name) Artorius. Artorius itself is of obscure and contested etymology, but possibly of Messapian or Etruscan origin. Linguist Stephan Zimmer suggests Artorius possibly had a Celtic origin, being a Latinization of a hypothetical name **Artorijos*, in turn derived from an older patronym **Arto-rīg-ios*, meaning "son of the bear/warrior-king". This patronym is unattested, but the root, **arto-rīg*, "bear/warrior-king", is the source of the Old Irish personal name *Artrí*. Some scholars have suggested it is relevant to this debate that the legendary King Arthur's name only appears as *Arthur* or *Arturus* in early Latin Arthurian texts, never as *Artorius* (though Classical Latin *Artorius* became *Arturius* in some Vulgar Latin dialects). However, this may not say anything about the origin of the name *Arthur*, as *Artorius* would regularly become *Art(h)ur* when borrowed into Welsh.

Another commonly proposed derivation of *Arthur* from Welsh *arth* "bear" + *(g)wr* "man" (earlier **Arto-uīros* in Brittonic) is not accepted by modern scholars for phonological and orthographic reasons. Notably, a Brittonic compound name **Arto-uīros* should produce Old Welsh **Artgur* (where *u* represents the short vowel /u/) and Middle/Modern Welsh **Arthwr*, rather than *Arthur* (where *u* is a long vowel /u:). In Welsh poetry the name is always spelled *Arthur* and is exclusively rhymed with words ending in *-ur*—never words ending in *-wr*—which confirms that the second element cannot be *[g]wr* "man".

An alternative theory, which has gained only limited acceptance among professional scholars, derives the name Arthur from Arcturus, the brightest star in the constellation Boötes, near Ursa Major or the Great Bear. Classical Latin *Arcturus* would also have become *Art(h)ur* when borrowed into Welsh, and its brightness and position in the sky led people to regard it as the "guardian of the bear" (which is the meaning of the name in Ancient Greek) and the "leader" of the other stars in Boötes.

The familiar literary persona of Arthur began with Geoffrey of Monmouth's pseudo-historical *Historia Regum Britanniae* (*History of the Kings of Britain*), written in the 1130s. The textual sources for Arthur are usually divided into those written before Geoffrey's *Historia* (known as pre-Galfridian

texts, from the Latin form of Geoffrey, *Galfridus*) and those written afterwards, which could not avoid his influence (Galfridian, or post-Galfridian, texts).

The earliest literary references to Arthur come from Welsh and Breton sources. There have been few attempts to define the nature and character of Arthur in the pre-Galfridian tradition as a whole, rather than in a single text or text/story-type. A 2007 academic survey led by Caitlin Green has identified three key strands to the portrayal of Arthur in this earliest material. The first is that he was a peerless warrior who functioned as the monster-hunting protector of Britain from all internal and external threats. Some of these are human threats, such as the Saxons he fights in the *Historia Brittonum*, but the majority are supernatural, including giant cat-monsters, destructive divine boars, dragons, dogheads, giants and witches. The second is that the pre-Galfridian Arthur was a figure of folklore (particularly topographic or onomastic folklore) and localised magical wonder-tales, the leader of a band of superhuman heroes who live in the wilds of the landscape. The third and final strand is that the early Welsh Arthur had a close connection with the Welsh Otherworld, Annwn. On the one hand, he launches assaults on Otherworldly fortresses in search of treasure and frees their prisoners. On the other, his warband in the earliest sources includes former pagan gods, and his wife and his possessions are clearly Otherworldly in origin.

One of the most famous Welsh poetic references to Arthur comes in the collection of heroic death-songs known as *Y Gododdin* (*The Gododdin*), attributed to 6th-century poet Aneirin. One stanza praises the bravery of a warrior who slew 300 enemies, but says that despite this, "he was no Arthur" – that is, his feats cannot compare to the valour of Arthur. *Y Gododdin* is known only from a 13th-century manuscript, so it is impossible to determine whether this passage is original or a later interpolation, but John Koch's view that the passage dates from a 7th-century or earlier version is regarded as unproven; 9th- or 10th-century dates are often proposed for it. Several poems attributed to Taliesin, a poet said to have lived in the 6th century, also refer to Arthur, although these all probably date from between the 8th and 12th centuries. They include "Kadeir Teyrnon" ("The Chair of the Prince"), which refers to "Arthur the Blessed"; "Preiddeu Annwn" ("The Spoils of Annwn"), which recounts an expedition of Arthur to the Otherworld; and "Marwnat vthyr pen[dragon]" ("The Elegy of Uther Pen[dragon]"), which refers to Arthur's valour and is suggestive of a father-son relationship for Arthur and Uther that pre-dates Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Other early Welsh Arthurian texts include a poem found in the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, "Pa gur yv y porthaur?" ("What man is the gatekeeper?"). This takes the form of a dialogue between Arthur and the gatekeeper of a fortress he wishes to enter, in which Arthur recounts the names and deeds of himself and his men, notably Cei (Kay) and Bedwyr (Bedivere). The Welsh prose tale *Culhwch and Olwen* (c. 1100), included in the modern *Mabinogion* collection, has a much longer list of more than 200 of Arthur's men, though Cei and Bedwyr again take a central place. The story as a whole tells of Arthur helping his kinsman Culhwch win the hand of Olwen, daughter of Ysbaddaden Chief-Giant, by completing a series of apparently impossible tasks, including the hunt for the great semi-divine boar Twrch Trwyth. The 9th-century *Historia Brittonum* also refers to this tale, with the boar there named Troy(n)t. Finally, Arthur is mentioned numerous times in the Welsh Triads, a collection of short summaries of Welsh tradition and legend which are classified into groups of three linked characters or episodes to assist recall. The later manuscripts of the Triads are partly derivative from Geoffrey of Monmouth and later continental traditions, but the earliest ones show no such influence and are usually agreed to refer to pre-existing Welsh traditions. Even in these, however, Arthur's court has started to embody legendary Britain as a whole, with "Arthur's Court" sometimes substituted for "The Island of Britain" in the formula "Three XXX of the Island of Britain". While it is not clear from the *Historia Brittonum* and the *Annales Cambriae* that Arthur was even considered a king, by the time *Culhwch and Olwen* and the Triads were written he had become *Penteyrnedd yr Ynys hon*, "Chief of the Lords of this Island", the overlord of Wales, Cornwall and the North.

In addition to these pre-Galfridian Welsh poems and tales, Arthur appears in some other early Latin texts besides the *Historia Brittonum* and the *Annales Cambriae*. In particular, Arthur features in a

number of well-known *vitae* ("Lives") of post-Roman saints, none of which are now generally considered to be reliable historical sources (the earliest probably dates from the 11th century).^[1] According to the *Life of Saint Gildas*, written in the early 12th century by Caradoc of Llancarfan, Arthur is said to have killed Gildas' brother Hueil and to have rescued his wife Gwenhwyfar from Glastonbury. In the *Life of Saint Cadoc*, written around 1100 or a little before by Lifris of Llancarfan, the saint gives protection to a man who killed three of Arthur's soldiers, and Arthur demands a herd of cattle as *wergeld* for his men. Cadoc delivers them as demanded, but when Arthur takes possession of the animals, they turn into bundles of ferns. Similar incidents are described in the medieval biographies of Carannog, Padarn, and Eufflam, probably written around the 12th century. A less obviously legendary account of Arthur appears in the *Legenda Sancti Goeznovii*, which is often claimed to date from the early 11th century (although the earliest manuscript of this text dates from the 15th century and the text is now dated to the late 12th to early 13th century). Also important are the references to Arthur in William of Malmesbury's *De Gestis Regum Anglorum* and Herman's *De Miraculis Sanctae Mariae Laudensis*, which together provide the first certain evidence for a belief that Arthur was not actually dead and would at some point return, a theme that is often revisited in post-Galfridian folklore.

Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, completed c. 1138, contains the first narrative account of Arthur's life. This work is an imaginative and fanciful account of British kings from the legendary Trojan exile Brutus to the 7th-century Welsh king Cadwallader. Geoffrey places Arthur in the same post-Roman period as do *Historia Brittonum* and *Annales Cambriae*. He incorporates Arthur's father Uther Pendragon, his magician advisor Merlin, and the story of Arthur's conception, in which Uther, disguised as his enemy Gorlois by Merlin's magic, sleeps with Gorlois's wife Igera (Igraine) at Tintagel, and she conceives Arthur. On Uther's death, the fifteen-year-old Arthur succeeds him as King of Britain and fights a series of battles, similar to those in the *Historia Brittonum*, culminating in the Battle of Bath. He then defeats the Picts and Scots before creating an Arthurian empire through his conquests of Ireland, Iceland and the Orkney Islands. After twelve years of peace, Arthur sets out to expand his empire once more, taking control of Norway, Denmark and Gaul. Gaul is still held by the Roman Empire when it is conquered, and Arthur's victory leads to a further confrontation with Rome. Arthur and his warriors, including Kaius (Kay), Beduerus (Bedivere) and Gualgvanus (Gawain), defeat the Roman emperor Lucius Tiberius in Gaul but, as he prepares to march on Rome, Arthur hears that his nephew Modredus (Mordred)—whom he had left in charge of Britain—has married his wife Guenhuuara (Guinevere) and seized the throne. Arthur returns to Britain and defeats and kills Modredus on the river Camblam in Cornwall, but he is mortally wounded. He hands the crown to his kinsman Constantine and is taken to the isle of Avalon to be healed of his wounds, never to be seen again.

How much of this narrative was Geoffrey's own invention is open to debate. He seems to have made use of the list of Arthur's twelve battles against the Saxons found in the 9th-century *Historia Brittonum*, along with the battle of Camlann from the *Annales Cambriae* and the idea that Arthur was still alive. Arthur's status as the king of all Britain seems to be borrowed from pre-Galfridian tradition, being found in *Culhwch and Olwen*, the Welsh Triads, and the saints' lives. Finally, Geoffrey borrowed many of the names for Arthur's possessions, close family, and companions from the pre-Galfridian Welsh tradition, including Kaius (Ceii), Beduerus (Bedwyr), Guenhuuara (Gwenhwyfar), Uther (Uthyr) and perhaps also Caliburnus (Caledfwlch), the latter becoming Excalibur in subsequent Arthurian tales. However, while names, key events, and titles may have been borrowed, Brynley Roberts has argued that "the Arthurian section is Geoffrey's literary creation and it owes nothing to prior narrative." Geoffrey makes the Welsh Medraut into the villainous Modredus, but there is no trace of such a negative character for this figure in Welsh sources until the 16th century. There have been relatively few modern attempts to challenge the notion that the *Historia Regum Britanniae* is primarily Geoffrey's own work, with scholarly opinion often echoing William of Newburgh's late-12th-century comment that Geoffrey "made up" his narrative, perhaps through an "inordinate love of lying". Geoffrey Ashe is one dissenter from this view, believing that Geoffrey's narrative is partially