

Who was King Arthur?

by

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The mention of King Arthur has a tendency to conjure up visions of chivalrous knights in shining armor, sallying forth to rescue fair maidens from the forces of evil.

Sadly, any hard evidence of the legendary knight and his court has vanished into the mists of time. Are the stories of Arthur's exploits and his final mysterious boat trip to Avalon true? Or is it all merely a romantic fable? Key manuscripts such as the *Northern Annals*, which disappeared in the 13th century, are no longer available to us. Consequently, the two remaining sources of the Arthurian legend are the *Histories of the Kings of Britain* and *Chronicles of Scotland*, written by the medieval historians Geoffrey of Monmouth and Hector Boece, respectively.

A consensus of writers suggest that Arthur was born circa 475 A.D.. At the time of his birth, Rome had withdrawn its occupying legions and the eastern half of Britain was under Anglo Saxon rule. Geoffrey of Monmouth places the locale of the Arthurian battles in the vicinity of Camelot Dun, now called Winchester; this presents a chronological problem, since that region of southern Britain was already occupied and settled by the Anglo Saxons at the time of Arthur's purported birth.

Some historians assert that the battles were fought in Cornwall, but this is problematical since the Anglo Saxons did not claim Cornwall, thus eliminating the potential for armed conflict. After exhaustive research, philologist Professor Norma Goodrich has concluded that King Arthur was a Romano-Briton, who fought his battles in the border country between England and Scotland.

The majority of medieval manuscript references to the fabled Camelot, located it at the northern English city of Caerleon—now known as Carlisle. This is in keeping with the exemplary research of Professor Goodrich, which leaves little doubt that a local British monarch named Arthur fought a series of battles in the border country of England, during the 6th century A.D.. But why would the exploits of a local chieftain, whose ineffectual battles fought in a remote region were not even mentioned in

the *Anglo Saxon Chronicles*, attain such heroic proportions throughout western Europe?

Something clearly is amiss with the Arthurian epic as presented by medievalist historians. Considering that these events were only committed to writing many centuries after they had occurred, the writer suggests that the medieval historians confused the activities of two different rulers who lived some four centuries apart. As a result, the King Arthur of legend is a composite of a minor 6th century border chieftain named Arthur, and Caradoc of the 1st century A.D..

The little known but true story of Caradoc has all the romance, political intrigue, heroism, not to mention blood and gore, of a major movie epic. Caradoc, known to the Romans as Caractacus, bore the tribal appellation Awiragus (Arthur). He was the Pendragon (Commander-in-Chief) of the combined Welsh and English army that fought, and won, a series of bloody battles against a Roman army under the command of Aulus Plautius, who invaded Britain in 43 A.D..

Caradoc was finally defeated at the Battle of Clune in 52 A.D., due to a bizarre incident. The offensive odor of elephants which the Romans had brought to the battle, stampeded the horses of Caradoc's charioteers. The scythes attached to the axles of the chariots inflicted terrible carnage, as the fear crazed horses stampeded back into the British ranks.

At the same moment, the hapless army of Caradoc, now in total disarray, was ambushed from the rear by members of the treacherous Coranoid tribe of Celts, who had entered into a clandestine alliance with the Romans.

Caradoc was captured and together with his family, was taken to Rome. It was customary for the Romans to publicly humiliate captured monarchs, then execute them. Curiously, this cruel fate did not befall Caradoc, even though he had been the biggest thorn in Rome's side for years. Instead, he made an eloquent speech in Latin before the Roman Senate, then was provided with four hundred servants and a villa, the latter becoming known as the Palatium Britannicum.

Caradoc's sister Gladys, was a brilliant scholar and wrote several works of prose and poetry in Greek, Latin and her native Cymric tongue. In addition, she married Caradoc's arch-enemy, Aulus Plautius!

Famed for her great beauty and intellect, Caradoc's daughter adopted the name Claudia. She became the toast of Rome's intelligentsia and married Roman Senator Rufus Pudens, prompting the writer Martial to

write: "Since Claudia, wife of Pudens, comes from the blue set Britons, how is it that she has won the hearts of the Latin people?" The Pudens took up residence at the Palatium Britannicum.

Curiously, the Palatium Britannicum became the first Christian Church. Confirmation comes from Cardinal Baronius, a curator of the Vatican Library, who wrote; "It is delivered to us by the firm tradition of our forefathers that the house of Pudens was the first—and that of all our churches the oldest is that which is called after the name Pudens."

Caradoc's son Linus, became the first Bishop of Rome. The popularity in Rome of Caradoc's family, together with the rapid growth of Christianity, posed a clear threat to the Roman oligarchy, since it was a case of the Celtic tail wagging the Roman dog. In the ensuing waves of anti-Christian persecutions, Linus, Pudens and Claudia's four children were executed.

The Celtic religion was remarkably similar to Christianity, espousing the immortality of the soul, and a holy trinity comprised of Hesus, Taranis and Teutates. By promoting Christianity in Britain (Caradoc's other daughter Eurgain becoming Britain's first Christian saint) Rome was able to usurp the political clout of Britain's druids, who controlled both the Celtic religion and the nation's very lucrative gold trade.

Caradoc purportedly had another sister in addition to Gladys. Her name was Anna, who married Aaron Rheged. He bore the appellation "*Lychlyn*," meaning "lake," thus possibly making Anna the legendary "Lady of the Lake."

The Arthur/Caradoc of the 1st century A.D. probably realized that the druidic priesthood had been unable to inspire and unify the British with a spiritual zeal, thus prompting him to accomplish the task through his promotion of Christianity (the early British form of Christianity is exalted throughout the Arthurian literary corpus).

Even though the ravages of time has severely distorted the Arthurian legend, we are still bestowed with the legacy of a magnificent individual, a righter of wrongs, who triumphed in the face of extreme adversity and even today, still grips our imagination.