Placing 'The once and future king'

Flint F. Johnson
Independent Scholar, USA

This article is a survey of the sites normally associated with Arthur followed by an exploration as to why they were originally connected with him. It begins with the Arthurian battles listed in *Historia Brittonum*. Following is a discussion on Camlann. After that, the sites commonly associated with Arthur's capital are listed and their political, literary, or religious reason for first being linked with Arthur are given. Southern Wales, Somerset, Caerleon, Celliwig, Winchester, and Carlisle are all explored in the essay.

Keywords: Arthur; Arthurian location; Arthurian sites; *Historia Brittonum*; *Annales Cambriae*; *Y Gododdin*

A recent series of lectures and articles by Dr Andrew Breeze has reignited the longstanding debate about where the legendary Arthur might have called home (Breeze 2015: 158–181, 2016: 161–172). As the present author sees it, answering that question requires only a knowledgeable use of the Arthurian sources followed by a detailed history of the 'Arthurian' sites.

The most readily available information comes from the *Historia Brittonum*, where Arthur's battles up through Badon are listed. However, there are two clear problems with using that particular history to locate Arthur. One is that the relevant section, Chapter 56, was probably written around 616x650 (Johnson Forthcoming), around a hundred years after Arthur died and well beyond living memory. This means that the material was kept in an oral environment well after its context was forgotten. Given the nature of bards to reassociate events and people, it is very possible that one or more of them were not historically connected with Arthur.

Flint F. Johnson, *Selim* 22 (2017): 103–118.
ISSN 1132-631X

Two and even more significant, the Battle List is likely to be a composite of several chieftains' battles. There are four main reasons for this. First, the battle list includes twelve engagements placed in nine sites (both important symbolic numbers among the Celts). Second, several battles are easily located,[1] but are to be found on the far ends of the island at a time when armies could not have been so mobile and politics were still local in scale (Johnson 2014: 96–99, Johnson Forthcoming).[2] Traditionally most convincing, the rhyming schemes found in the list suggests the compiler might have taken the battles from several kings' praise poems (Lloyd 1911: 126 fn. 6, Chadwick & Chadwick 1932: 155, Crawford 1935: 279, Jackson 1959: 78, Bromwich 1976: 169).

Beyond that, fighting twelve major engagements would have been quite a feat at the time. Certainly Napoleon, Hannibal, and a host of other generals have managed it throughout history, but these were people with tens of thousands of soldiers at their command. Arthur, even if he was the most powerful man on the island (which is no certainty), could not have had a thousand warriors. The economics of agriculture, the lack of communications, and fractured political structure of the island would have rendered that number fantastic. A more likely number is a couple hundred; around a hundred in his hall and up to hundred that could be summoned among his vassals. With numbers like that two or three major battles would have strained his resources —as it did British and English chieftains of a later era.[3]

---

[1] Badon, for instance, is generally located in the southwest. Coed Celyddon is generally connected with Scotland. Any paper attempting to locate all the battles in one practical area (say a thirty mile radius in the year 500) needs to make a special argument for one or the other engagement. Professor Breeze has done this (Breeze 2016: 163) by arguing that Badon was probably not fought by Arthur. However, that solution subverts his hypothesis. Badon and possibly Tribruit are the only other battles that are elsewhere connected to Arthur so that if Badon was not his battle then very likely several other of the battles listed in *Historia Brittonum* also were not.

[2] The ability to travel from one end of Britain to another is not in dispute. In *Y Gododdin* Gereint travels from Cornwall to participate in the Battle of Catraeth. The trouble is that kingdoms of around 500 were clearly small and in flux. With relative safety a chieftain could leave his kingdom for a day raid, but to leave it undefended while traveling across several kingdoms would have been extremely tenuous.

[3] The later sixth and seventh centuries are much better recorded, and even the best known chieftains only fought in a handful of major battles.

Even if *Historia Brittonum* was older or its source material more reliable than it is, or if an older and more reliable source of information emerged (for instance something like *Pa Gur?*, which has a more ancient form of Tribruit in *Tryfrwyd* (Roberts 1992b: xxxv), there would still be the serious problem of linguistics in locating the battles. The last time a major Celtic specialist attempted to locate the battles using the *Historia Brittonum* list was seventy years ago (Jackson 1945: 44–57). His conclusions were that several of the site names were too damaged to locate an original, others were too vague to locate at all, and the sites that were locatable were too far apart to have been fought by one man during the late fifth and early sixth century. He also suggested that several of the recognizable sites were so obvious they might have been later additions. In short, the only way to make more sense out of the Arthurian Battle List was best put by Dr. Thomas Clancy —"… to make names the same that are just a little bit like each other". The problem is, as he put it, "But proper place-name scholarship does not do this" (Hannan 2015).

The *Historia Brittonum* list does not come from a contemporary source, cannot be historically valid, and is largely incomprehensible from a linguistic standpoint. So what other information is to be found? Well, Arthur is located at Badon and Camlan in *Annales Cambriae*, but that source probably took its information from the same origin point as *Historia Brittonum*, the *Northern Memorandum* (Hughes 1975: 233–258). That means the material there was also written down well beyond living memory. That fact that the Badon entry strays from the annals' normally terse wording, adding unnecessary details about Arthur's bravery, suggests it was added after Arthur's legend was well-developed.[4]

On the other hand, the Camlan entry is short and fits in well with the rest of the annals notices. The only real trouble with Camlan is that 575 marks *Annales Cambriae*'s historical horizon, the date from which chronology becomes reliable for the document (Dumville 1977: 345–354, Hughes 1975: 233–258). That makes 537 an undependable date, even if its historicity and the connection of Arthur with Camlan seem to be almost universally accepted (Breeze 2016: 168).[5] More significantly and beginning with O.G.S. Crawford,

---

[4] Christopher Gidlow has alternatively suggested that the entry might be historical and the extra information was added later.

[5] Higham is of the opinion that Camlan may have been a fictional battle but this is highly unlikely. The entry is terse, like the others in *Annales Cambriae*, and there are

over the last eighty years a consensus has developed that Camlan was Camboglanna, a Roman fort along Hadrian's Wall known as modern Castleheads (Crawford 1935: 277–291, Collingwood & Myres 1937: 324, Jackson 1953: 437, Bromwich 1954: 83–136, Koch 2007: 97, Moffat 2011: 116–117).[6]

At this point it is necessary to mention a recent article by Professor Andrew Breeze, 'Arthur's Battles and the Volcanic Winter of 536–537'. This article is presented as supplementary evidence of Arthur's existence, his location in the north, and his obit around 537. The article is well-researched, reasonably argued, and written by one of the more prominent Arthurian scholars in the world. It is, however, based on two flawed foundations. First, that if all the 'Arthurian' battles can be placed in the same broad area it is proof that Arthur existed. Second, the article presumes that the Battle of Camlan was a result of the volcanic activity of 535 and the crop failure and plague that followed.

The battle list first. While it is true that if the twelve 'Arthurian' battles could **not** be placed in the same area it would be evidence that they were not fought by the same individual the reverse is not the case. In fact, any bard collating battles into a list would be more likely to borrow mainly from local history where the information would be more readily available as supplements to more prominent battles such as Badon. Not that this flaw really changes anything. As mentioned above, neither Professor Breeze nor anyone else has ever been able to **prove** where all the battles were located; the linguistic evidence is too difficult for any reasonable degree of certainty which is why there are so many proposed sites for most of the battles in the *Historia Brittonum* list.

---

no known fictional or mythological characters from the *Northern Memorandum* section in particular or this portion of the annal in general.

[6] Several recent scholars have argued that the battle is unhistorical or the site unknowable (Charles-Edwards 2013: 579; Padell 2013: 9; Halsall 2013: 20, 73–74; Hunt 2012: 211–216; Jankulak 2010: 72; Aurell 2007: 87; Higham 2002: 199, 208–209). However, the terseness of the entry and the strictly historical context of surrounding entries put the burden of proof on anyone suggesting the event is unhistorical. That accepted, the fact that so many linguists have been willing to agree on Castleheads as the correct site suggests that Castlesheads should be accepted unless some linguistic or compelling alternative evidence can be presented. To date it has not.

Second, while it is definitely possible that the volcanic activity of 535, which by Professor Breeze's research clearly affected life all over the planet, was a cause of the Battle of Camlan, there is no direct evidence of that connection. If an historian 1500 years in the future did not have access to exact dates they might very well link the bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the cause of World War II. Such, clearly, would not be the case even though that connection, too, would probably seem reasonable to our hypothetical scholar.

The *Historia Brittonum* list and Camlan are just two pieces of evidence though, and we must not forget that they come from a source well beyond the living memory of any participants. No argument about Arthur's location can be considered valid without explaining first why other possibilities are wrong and providing alternative supporting evidence. So then, the Welsh stories put Arthur's main hall mainly in southern Wales, Somerset, Caerleon, and Celliwig while the English place him at Winchester, and Carlisle. Arthur is also placed in several regions and sites only once. Perhaps that is the best place to start.

Arthur was in Corn Gafallt and Ercing according to the *Mirabilia* section of *Historia Brittonum*, but there are two problems with that association. First and foremost, neither location is called Arthur's home or capital. Second, the *Mirabilia* portion of the *historia* focuses on the miraculous and seems to feed the growing Arthurian legend. In the British legends both northern and Cornish heroes were transferred to medieval Wales.

Lambert of St. Omer (1120) named Arthur's O'on near Stirling as the site of Arthur's palace. We now know that it was a circular temple built during the Roman period and destroyed in 1743. There is no evidence of Early Medieval occupation and no scholar or local legend linked the site to Arthur before 1120.

It could be argued that Arthur's O'on led to the development of the Round Table legend, but the Round Table was not mentioned before Wace in 1155. It would not have been practical for any British king; post-Roman kingship was based on a symbolic marriage between kingdom and king (O'Rahilly 1946: 7–28, MacCana 1955: 356–413). A table where everyone was equal would have undermined that fundamental part of British kingship.

Saints' lives, or *vitae*, placed Arthur all over southern Britain and into France. His home was in southeastern Wales according to the *Vita Cadoci* of Lifris (pre-1086 Llancarfan), *Vita Illtudi* (*c.* 1140 Llaniltud), and *Vita Padarni* (Llanbadarn Fawr), Somerset and Cornwall according to the *Vita Carantoci*,

Somerset alone in Caradoc's *Vita Gildae*, and Brittany according to the *vitae* of Goeznou and Eufflam.

Saint's lives were patronized by monasteries in the hope of enhancing their sanctity. They were filled with stories about miracles. The most potent of these tales involved local chieftains. More famous kings occasionally replaced them, and Arthur was the most famous of them all. Knowing that, and knowing also that no Breton histories or Frankish histories claimed that Arthur was a Breton, we can immediately dispose of the Goeznou and Eufflam *vitae*.

The testimony of the other four saint's lives is a little more complicated. It begins in 1066, when at the Battle of Hastings Duke William of Normandy became the King of England. As the founder of a new dynasty coming from a foreign region, William installed friends and family into key positions throughout Britain kingdom —both political and ecclesiastical. Within the next four years he would establish three of his closest followers as lords of the Welsh Marches, essentially southern Wales. He held a series of ecclesiastic councils around 1070 and used his power there to install Normans as English abbots and bishops as well (Bates 2001: 106–107, Barlow 1979: 59).

In southern Wales the change in political power and the movement toward Norman ecclesiastical leaders put the remaining Celtic houses in jeopardy. They found several different ways to strengthen themselves and survive.

Cadoc's life, written in Llancarfan before 1086, introduced Arthur into its story to provide a testimonial to the monstery's age and holiness. The effort failed though, and the monastery was closed in 1086.

Beginning in or after 1115, Bishop Urban of Glamorgan began editing the *Llandaff Charters* to show that Llandaff had rights to monasteries claimed by St. David and Hereford, had always been independent of St. David's archbisopric, and that its own archbishopric had been serving Canterbury ever since its foundation (Brooke 1986: 16–38). Urban's work helped Llandaff to develop into one of the most powerful Welsh monasteries.

Still other religious houses were assimilated into the new order through intelligent *vitae* writing. We know that Llanilltud was one of the most prestigious British monasteries during the early Middle Ages because of the seventh-century testimony of the *Vita Samsoni* (Rep. 2007: chapters 26 and 27, Duine 1912: 332–356, Davies 1981: 515, Wright 1984: 199 fn. 25, Sharpe 1984: 193 fn. 25, Flobert 1997). It was destroyed in 987 by the Vikings and again in the late eleventh century by the Normans. Llaniltud was a functioning monastery again by 1111. In around 1130 it became the property of

Tewkesbury Abbey, which likely commissioned a work on the monastery's founder Illtud. In the *vitae* Illtud is the son of a Breton prince and a cousin to Arthur, effectively making Llanilltud's founder a blend between the established Welsh population and the Norman-allied Bretons and making his monastery an ally of the Normans even before William conquered England.

Somerset, and mainly Glastonbury, was even more successful than the Welsh monasteries. It began using the same tools as other monasteries, including Arthur in the *Vita Carantoci* and Caradoc's *Vita Gildae*. The latter work was the first time Arthur was placed in Somerset, and the connection stuck. Arthur was again placed in the region for the *Vita Carantoci* at some point in the twelfth century. By then, though, it was an accepted link; the *Dialogue between Arthur and Gwenhwyfar*, written decades later, places Arthur there and shows no influence from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (1136). On the contrary Melwas, the would-be kidnapper, is called the lord of the "Isle of Glass", an unmistakably Glastonbury influence (Williams 38: ln A2). *Perlesvaus*, written at the end of the twelfth or the beginning of the thirteenth century, was patronized by Glastonbury and also placed Arthur nearby.

However, saints' lives and even literature were just the beginning for Glastonbury. In 1191 the monastery was crippled by a major fire. As luck would have it 1191, found Henry II in the middle of his campaigns against the Welsh. This was the same Henry who had with Eleanor of Aquitaine once held courts of romance and patronized stories about Arthur, so he would have understood that Arthur's return to protect them was a central theme in Welsh beliefs. When Glastonbury's monks "discovered" the graves of Arthur and Guinevere, they undermined the Welsh legend and gave a Henry a significant psychological edge over his enemies.[7] In return, Henry gave Glastonbury the funding it needed to rebuild.

What allowed the monastery to make such outrageous claims was its ability to give each one traction. Arthur was only its most popular subject, he was neither the earliest nor the most prestigious. As the Middle Ages continued, Glastonbury would claim that Patrick and then Christ himself had founded Glastonbury even though the site was not a monastery until the eighth century (Foot 1991: 167, 169; Finberg 1967: 346). As the result of her claims,

---

[7] For a simple essay on Glastonbury's manipulation of the Arthurian legend for its own benefit see Johnson (2014: 82–86). The most complete work on the subject to date is Abrams & Carley (1991).

and her ability to make them believed, the only religious institution in Britain more powerful would be Canterbury itself.

Glastonbury's efforts would become the genesis of a tradition that Arthur was a Somerset hero. As has been seen above, *Dialogue Between Arthur and Gwenhwyfar* would both place him there and was clearly influenced by Glastonbury. Centuries later Cadbury, the site of Leslie Alcock's famous archaeological dig, would also be connected to Arthur with John Leland's 1542 *Itinerary* (Leland 1907: 1.151).

The *Vita Carantoci*, was noted above as placing Arthur in Somerset, but also located him in Cornwall. In fact several sources, most notably the bardic triads, often put him in Celliwig, which the Welsh traditionally located in Cornwall. A little linguistics, though, puts that connection in doubt. Celliwig breaks down as celli=grove and gwig=forest. Considering that most of early medieval Britain was forest, Celliwig would have been an appropriate name for locations all over Britain. Richards came across a second Celliwig in Gwynedd decades ago (Richards 1969: 265), and logically there were many others in medieval Celtic regions during the fifth and sixth centuries.

It is true that *The Welsh Triads* placed Celliwig specifically in Cornwall, but the preeminent scholar on that collection, Rachel Bromwich, believed that the bards who had formed and kept the triads considered Celliwig a vague place that could be associated with any Celtic region (Bromwich & Evans 1992: 92). As such, Celliwig could have been more the name of Arthur's capital than the location of his hall.

In the continental romances and several Welsh stories, Caerleon is one of the more common sites for Arthur's capital. However, it too was not connected to Arthur until 1136, when Geoffrey of Monmouth named it as Arthur's capital in *Historia Regum Britanniae* for reasons of his own.[8]

Not that Geoffrey chose Caerleon completely at random. He might actually have thought the area had been Arthur's capital based on a composition of circumstantial evidence. For instance, one of the 'Arthurian' battles in the *Historia Brittonum* was the City of the Legion, normally connected with Cair Lion or modern Caerleon. Geoffrey could not have known, as we do, that the battles on the list were not all or even mostly Arthur's. Instead he probably noticed that Caerleon was the only battle site that was also listed as one of the

[8] Tatlock's main work was in showing how Geoffrey incorporated contemporary place-names into his story along with whatever traditional information he had (Tatlock 1950).

thirty-three *civitates* of medieval Britain in the same work (1980: Chapter 66). Geoffrey would have also read that Arthur was a *dux bellorum*, and would have known that Caerleon had been a Roman fort; it might have been a simple matter of connecting the man with the Roman title to one of the surviving Roman cities where one of his battles had taken place. Modern scholarship has demonstrated that each piece of his detective work is wrong, but Geoffrey would have had no reason to discount it. Alternatively Monmouth, where he wrote, is only twenty miles from Caerleon. It is reasonable that he had been there and thought it would have made a suitable home for his main hero with or without any historical evidence to support it.

Edward I, grandson of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, also made his mark on Arthuriana by offering his own Arthurian site as an avid enthusiast in his own right (Morris 2009: 164–166, Prestwich 1997: 121–122). Edward was well known by contemporaries for his interest in the subject, being compared to Arthur (Prestwich 1953: 125–127), and emulating him in creating his own Round Table at Winchester. It only made sense that contemporary English writers and those who followed would place Arthur's home at Winchester in honor of him. Winchester makes no historical sense, though. The most conservative estimates of the Germanic conquest of Britain put the entire area firmly under their control well before 500, which is roughly when Arthur was active.

Local legends have also been used to connect Arthur with Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Cumberland, and Brittany while the MacArthur clan of the Highlands claims descent from him. However, there is no record that many of these stories existed until centuries after Geoffrey of Monmouths' book had made Arthur a universally popular figure that people throughout Britain were claiming for their own.

Our brief survey leaves us with only Carlisle, which stood as the western anchor of Hadrian's Wall during the Roman period, as a possible Arthurian location. Granted, Carlisle was first named specifically by Chrétien only in the twelfth century (Chrétien de Troyes 1989a: 281, Chrétien de Troyes 1989b: 378), but it had already been suggested in *Historia Brittonum* when Arthur had been connected with Rome when he was named a *dux bellorum* (1980: Chapter 56). In several Welsh tales Arthur is located at the intersection of Roman roads. Caerleon, the most commonly used Welsh site, had five. Only Carlisle and a few other legionary fortresses (like York and Chester) and the economic center of London could boast as many (Margary 1967: 316, 359). None of these other places have ever been connected with Arthur.

All of the other sites discussed above either served a personal or monastic purpose from the very beginning of that their connection with Arthur or their association with Arthur was made centuries after Geoffrey of Monmouth's work of 1136. Carlisle has neither of those issues. No known patron would have benefited from Carlisle between the years 800 and 1200, meaning that there was no political, economic, or personal reason for it to be named as Arthur's capital during the time frame when it was being connected to Arthur by Welshmen and continentals using British sources. Carlisle is named early in Arthurian development, and is suggested centuries earlier.

However, there is much more. The classic reason to place him in the north is that Arthur is mentioned as a model of warrior prowess in *Y Gododdin* (1997: B2–38). The original poem possibly dates to the sixth century,[9] and features mainly northern persons and northern geography. There have been scholars who have argued against the passage being part of the original poem (Charles-Edwards 1991: 15), but the person most intimately familiar with it, John T. Koch, had no linguistic qualms with the idea. The main issue is that the poet did not locate Arthur for us and the other individuals named in the poem are not exclusively from the north; Cadwal son of Sywno fought against Gwynedd men during his career (1997: A–19), Gwanannon spent his career in Gwynedd, and Gereint is from the South (1997: A–84). Though the vast majority of the people named there were from the north, in all fairness it is possible that Arthur could have been from the south too. Realistically, *Y Gododdin* is more of a suggestion that Arthur was northern than a point proving he was from Carlisle.

What seems to this scholar more telling are the characters that Arthur is early and often associated with, or at least people he is consistently linked with. Mabon son of Modron is originally named in the early poem *Pa gur?*.[10] He is later found in *Culhwch ac Olwen* and the Beddau stanzas. In all these pieces of literature he is either not located or his activities placed in Wales, but historically Mabon son of Modron was a god specifically of the Hadrian's Wall area and France (Ross 1967: 368–370). As Arthurian associations to figures

[9] John T. Koch's reconstruction of the two (he says three) extant versions into one possible original represents the most thorough examination of the language to date, but several scholars have commented that the poem itself might not have been written at the same period as the Battle of Catterick which it celebrates.

[10] Marged Haycock has placed the date of composition, by internal evidence, to no later than 950 (Haycock 1984: 52–77).

outside of Britain did not occur until after Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* made Arthur an international celebrity, it is a safe assumption that the Modron from Hadrian's Wall is the one that was attracted to the Arthurian orbit.

The figure Beli is also named in *Culhwch ac Olwen*'s Court List (1992a: 224). It would be easy to assume this is the Beli Mawr who is credited with founding many of the Welsh dynasties but he is not given the epithet "Mawr", or hunter. He is probably not the British/Gallic god Belenus (Delamarre 2003: 70–72), or the Gallic chieftain Belgius/Bolgios (Koch 2006: 200), either. Belenus was a solar deity, and we are given no indications that the Beli in the Court List is. It is feasible that he might have been a Gallic chieftain, but that theory would involve first demonstrating that Belgius/Bolgios was known in pre-Roman British culture.

What seems more likely is that Beli represents Belatacudros/Belatucadros (Johnson 2012: 94–95), a British fertility god (Webster 1986: 74–75, Irby-Massie 1999: 104). The theory accepts the name as given in the list and requires less pleading than a foreign king. Beli in other forms is to be found throughout Arthuriana, and in most cases is associated with fertility. More specifically, Beli is associated with the grail, which has been shown to be a symbol of the British fertility cults (Johnson 2012: 75–136); Pelles was the keeper of the grail, Pellam was his brother, and Pellinore was Pelles' nephew and the father of Perceval. Interestingly, Belatacudros was a god of northern Britain and especially Cumberland and Westmoreland.

Arthur is also consistently tied to five individuals who were roughly contemporaries: Hueil, Urien, his son Owain, Peredur, and Myrddin.[11] These are also consistent in placing Arthur. Hueil is mentioned in the *Vita Gildae* and a pair of old stories involving Arthur. He is also found independently in a genealogy. All of them place him in the north and most name Hueil as a Pict. Urien is the Reged king from *Historia Brittonum* and the Taliesin poems who led the northern British against the Germanic peoples. He is also named in

---

[11] In *Evidence of Arthur* the author also noted Drutwas son of Tryffin, from Dyfed, fit into this category (Johnson 2014: 50–53). Having had more time to ponder him, the author realizes now that there is a significant difference between the Drutwas story on one hand and the tales involving Hueil, Urien, Owain, Peredur, and Myrddin on the other. There is a great deal of the fantastic with Drutwas' extraordinary bird, whereas the stories surrounding the five mentioned here contain none of that in the earliest stories.

several local legends as Arthur's enemy. His son and successor is remembered for fighting the Germanic tribes but is also in *Culhwch ac Olwen* and figures in many later romances. Reged has never been precisely located but was broadly in Cumbria, Dumfries, and/or Galloway.

Peredur is associated with the York area and participated in several major northern battles. He was also a later addition to the Arthurian orbit, first appearing in *Peredur* somewhere in the twelfth century.

Myrddin first appears as a wandering madman who survived the Battle of Arfderyð and wandered the forests of Strathclyde. He later transformed into Arthur's wizard Merlin with Geoffrey of Monmouth. What is important here is that all four historical near-contemporaries were from the north; one from Pictland, two from Rheged (northern England or southern Scotland), one from York, and one from Strathclyde. Interestingly, the characters from Rheged and Pictland seem to have been the earliest of the group.

The simple fact that Arthur is connected to materials coming from the *Northern Memorandum* in *Historia Brittonum* and *Annales Cambriae* is interesting for locating Arthur as well.[12] The Arthurian battles listed in Chapter 56 of *Historia Brittonum* might not have been fought by Arthur but they are associated with him and the chapter they are in is considered part of the *Northern Memorandum*, strongly suggesting that Arthur was also a northern figure. Similarly, both Badon and Camlann in *Annales Cambriae* are inserted at the beginning of a section devoted almost exclusively to northern materials, where the only interruptions are for churchmen and the death of Maelgwn.

Over two decades ago, Kenneth Dark made his mark on Arthurian studies with a simple article that suggested one extremely powerful chief or an alliance of chiefs were operating around Hadrian's Wall in 500 (Dark 1992: 111–120).

---

[12] See Bromwich (1975–1976: 175–176), Bruce (1923: 9), Thurneysen (1896: 85, 87). Jackson opposed the inclusion of this text in the Northern History on the basis of Beulon's request that the Anglo-Saxon genealogies (meaning also the Northern History) be omitted from his copy. This was done to his satisfaction, though Arthuriana was left intact. Therefore, so the reasoning goes, Arthuriana is not a part of the Northern History. The author believes it more accurate to say that Beulon did not believe that Arthuriana was a part of the Northern History. His opinion carries no more weight than that of a modern historian. Most probably, he understood it less well than modern scholarship. Dumville has debated the point of creation for the northern materials but not its contents (1977: 345–354).

His reasoning was simple and compelling; the archeology supported the claim that several forts were reoccupied around that period and no major reoccupation of Roman forts occurred in any other region during that same time frame.

His conclusions have serious ramifications. In 500, control over Hadrian's Wall would have made a person one of the most powerful kings on the island, if not the dominant power. Arthur is the most likely person there at that time (Johnson 2012: 137–178), so if Dark was right would have been a unique figure of the period. His position would have made him all the more inspiring among the bards of his time. It may even have been the reason why he was the most famous king of the British Heroic Age.

In fairness, none of the above evidence provides concrete proof that Arthur was a northern figure. On the other hand, the other possibilities are based on poor foundations; either they used Arthur's fame to strengthen a monastery's standing, to please a ruler, or are the result of an honest confusion of facts and details. On the other hand, locating Arthur in the north, and specifically Carlisle, served no political or monastic purpose. Nor is there any fortunate connection of unrelated facts and details that would have suggested Carlisle to a medieval writer. In short, Carlisle is far and away the most reasonable place to locate the "once and future king".

References

1980: *Historia Brittonum. Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals*. ed. and trans. John Morris. London, Phillimore and Co. Ltd.

1988: *Aneirin, Aneirin: Y Gododdin – Britain Oldest Heroic Poem*. trans. and ed. Alfred Owen Hughes Jarman. Llandysul, Gwasg Gomer.

1992a: *Culhwch ac Olwen: An Edition and Study of the Oldest Arthurian Tale*. trans. and ed. Rachel Bromwich & D. Simon Evans. Cardiff, University of Wales Press.

1992b: *Pa gur?*. trans. and ed. Brinley F. Roberts. *Culhwch ac Olwen: An Edition and Study of the Earliest Arthurian Tale*. ed. and trans. D. Simon Evans. Cardiff, University of Wales Press: xxxv.

1997: *The Gododdin of Aneirin*. trans. and ed. John T. Koch. Cardiff, University of Wales Press.

Rep. 2007: *The Life of St Samson of Dol*. trans and ed. Thomas Taylor. Whitefish, Kessinger, LLC.

Abrams, L. & J. P. Carley (eds.) 1991: *The Archaeology and History of Glastonbury Abbey: Essays in Honour of the Ninetieth Birthday of C. A. Ralegh Radford*. Woodbridge, Boydell Press.

Aurell, M. 2007: *La Légende du Roi Arthur 550–1250*. Paris, University of Paris.

Barlow, F. 1979: *The English Church, 1066–1154: A History of the Anglo-Norman Church*. New York, Longman.

Bates, D. 2001: *William the Conqueror*. London, G. Philip.

Breeze, A. 2015: The Historical Arthur and Sixth-Century Scotland. *Northern History* 52.2: 158–181.

Breeze, A. 2016: Arthur's Battles and the Volcanic Winter of 536–537. *Northern History* 53.2: 161–172.

Bromwich, R. 1954: The Character of the Early Welsh Tradition. In N. Chadwick ed. *Studies in Early British History*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 83–136.

Bromwich, R. 1976: Concepts of Arthur. *Studia Celtica* 10/11: 163–181.

Bromwich, R. 1992: *Culhwch ac Olwen: An Edition and Study of the Oldest Arthurian Tale*. Cardiff, University of Wales Press.

Brooke, N. J. 1986. *The Church and the Welsh Border in the Central Middle Ages*. Woodbridge, Boydell Press: 16–38.

Bruce, J. D. 1923: *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance, from the Beginnings Down to the Year 1300*. Gottingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Chadwick, H. & N. Chadwick 1932–1940: *The Growth of Literature*. Cambridge, University of Cambridge Press.

Charles-Edwards, T. M. 1991: The Arthur of History. In Rachel Bromwich, Alfred O.H. Jarman & Brynley F. Roberts eds. *The Arthur of the Welsh*. Cardiff, University of Wales Press: 15-32.

Charles-Edwards, T. M. 2013: *Wales and the Britons 350–1066*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Thomas Clancy quote in M. Hannan, Academia up in arms over King Arthur's Glasgow roots. *The National*. Glasgow: March 6, 2015.

Chrétien de Troyes 1989: Yvain. *Arthurian Romances*. trans. and ed. D. D. R. Owen. London, J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd: 281–373.

Chrétien de Troyes 1989: Le Conte du Graal. *Arthurian Romances*. trans. and ed. D. D. R. Owen. London, J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd: 374–496.

Collingwood, R. G. & O. G. S. Crawford 1937: *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Crawford, O. G. S. 1935: Arthur and his Battles. *Antiquity* 9: 277–291.

Dark, K. R. 1992: A Sub-Roman Re-Defense of Hadrian's Wall. *Britannia* 23: 111–120.

Davies, W. 1981. Property Rights and Property Claims in Welsh "Vitae" of the Eleventh Century. In Evelyne Patlagean & Pierre Riché eds. *Hagiographie, Cultures, et Sociétés Ive-xiie Siécles*. Paris, University of Paris: 515–533.

Delamarre, X. *Dictionnaire de la Langue Gauloise*. Paris, Errance.
Duine, F. M. 1912–1913: La Vie de S. Samson, à Propos d'un Ouvrage Recent. *Annales de Bretagne* 28: 332–356.
Dumville, D. N. 1977. On the North British Section of the Historia Brittonum. *Welsh History Review* 8: 345–354.
Finberg, H. P. R. 1967: St. Patrick at Glastonbury. *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 107.5: 345–361.
Flobert, P. (trans. and ed.) 1997: *La Vie Ancienne de Saint Samson de Dol*. Paris, CNRS.
Foot, S. 1991: Glastonbury's Early Abbots. In Leslie Abrams & James P. Carley eds. *The Archaeology and History of Glastonbury Abbey*. Woodbridge, Boydell Press: 163–190.
Halsall, G. 2013: *Worlds of Arthur: Facts and Fictions of the Dark Ages*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
Haycock, M. 1984: 'Preiddeu Annwn' and the Figure of Taliesin. *Studia Celtica* 14–15: 52–77.
Higham, N. J. 2007: *King Arthur: Mythmaking and History*. London, Routledge.
Hughes, K. 1975. The Welsh Latin Chronicles: Annales Cambriae and Related Texts. *Proceedings of the British Academy* 59: 233–258.
Hunt, A. 2012. *The Arthur of History: A Reinterpretation of the Evidence*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, Charleston.
Irby-Massie, G. 1999: *Military Religion in Roman Britain*. Boston, Brill.
Jackson, K. H. 1945: Once Again Arthur's Battles. *Modern Philology* 43: 44–57.
Jackson, K. H. 1953: *Language and History in Early Britain*. Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh Press.
Jackson, K. H. 1959: The Arthur of History. In Roger S. Loomis ed. *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press: 1–11.
Jackson, K. H. (ed.) 1969: *The Gododdin: The Oldest Scottish Poem*. Edinburgh, University of Edinburgh Press.
Jankulak, K. 2010: *Writers of Wales: Geoffrey of Monmouth*. Cardiff, University of Wales Press.
Johnson, F. F. 2012: *Origins of Arthurian Romances*. Madison, McFarland and Co., Inc., Publishing.
Johnson, F. F. 2014a: *Evidence of Arthur*. Madison, McFarland and Co., Inc., Publishing.
Johnson, F. F. 2014b: *Hengest, Gwrtheyrn, and the Chronology of Post-Roman Britain*. Madison, McFarland and Co., Inc., Publishing.
Johnson, F. F. Forthcoming: *A History of Britain from the Fourth to the Seventh Centuries*. Madison, McFarland and Co., Inc., Publishing.
Koch, J. T. 2006: *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO.
Koch, J. T. 2007: *An Atlas for Modern Studies*. Oxford, University of Oxford.

Leland, J. 1907: *Leland's Itinerary*. ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith. Vol. 1. London, G. Bell and Sons.
Lloyd, J. E. 1911: *The History of Wales*. Cardiff, University of Wales Press.
Loomis, R. S. 1953: Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast. *Speculum* 28: 114–117.
MacCana, P. 1955: Aspects of the Theme of the King and Goddess. *Étude Celtique* 6: 356–413.
Margary, I. D. rev. 1967: *Roman Roads in Britain*. London, John Baker.
Moffat, A. 2011: *The Faded Map – Lost Kingdoms of Scotland*. Edinburgh, Birlinn Ltd.
Morris, M. 2009: *A Great and Terrible King: Edward I and the Forging of Britain*. London, Pegasus.
O'Rahilly, T. F. 1946: On the Origins of the Names Érainn and Ériu. *Ériu* 14: 7–28.
Padel, O. J. 2013: *Arthur in Medieval Welsh Literature*. Cardiff, University of Wales Press.
Prestwich, M. 1997: *Edward I*. New Haven, Yale University Press.
Richards, M. 1969: Arthurian Onomastics. *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*: 265.
Ross, A. 1967: *Pagan Celtic Britain*. New York, Columbia University Press.
Sharpe, R. 1984: Gildas as Father of the Church. In David N. Dumville & Michael Lapidge eds. *Gildas: New Approaches*. Woodbridge, Boydell Press: 193–205.
Sims-Williams, P. 1991: The Arthur of History. In Rachel Bromwich, Alfred O. H. Jarman, & Brynley F. Roberts eds. *The Arthur of the Welsh*. Cardiff, University of Wales Press: 33–72.
Tatlock, J. S. P. 1950: *The Legendary History of Britain: Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia Regum Britanniae and Its Early Vernacular Versions*. Berkeley, University of California Press.
Thurneysen, R. 1896: Zimmer, Nennius vindicates. *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie* 28: 80–113.
Webster, G. 1986: *The Pagan Celts and their Gods under Rome*. London, Batsford.
Williams, M. 1938. An Early Ritual Poem in Welsh. *Speculum* 13: 38–51.
Wright, N. 1984: Gildas's Geographical Perspective: Some Problems. David N. Dumville & Michael Lapidge eds. *Gildas: New Approaches*. Woodbridge, Boydell Press: 85–105.

Author's address
Independent Scholar, USA
e-mail: tallhwch@yahoo.com

received: 19 March 2016
revised version accepted: 16 March 2017