

King arthur essay sample



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Finding Truth in the Legends Surrounding the King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table There are many reasons to believe why the great King Arthur and his mighty knights of the round table were real men and not what fairy tales are made of. Throughout the centuries, men have longed to be like the infamous King Arthur. History has told tales of great feats on the battle ground; mothers put their children to sleep with tales of this enigmatic king. However, historians have had a battle with history telling a story of its own; in regards to King Arthur being a real man, a man made of many, or even existed at all. Further research has brought about two names one, a Celtic hero named Arthur and a Roman warrior named Ambrosius; these two warriors appear in the Dark Age Britian era in historical sources (Minard). History has noted that around 540 CE a monk called Gildas penned *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* (Daybell). In Gildas writings he notes that a man called Ambrosius Aurelianus, a descendant of noble Romans led the British against extremely cruel raiders in a number of successful battles, before his greatest victory at the Battle of Mount Badon (Minard).

Not all historians agree with Gildas as they feel he is biased against the British people for moral failings and the disasters that befell Britian. Nor do the historians feel his chronological and geographical data to be correct (Minard). Some historians believe, Arthur was a hero from the Old North, the British Kingdoms of Elfed (Old Welsh: Elmet) (Minard). The reason historians believe this to be true, is due to poetry and medieval manuscripts that were left behind when the Britian's fled to Wales. Historians found one piece of evidence to be quite significant. In the Battle of Mount Badon *dux bellorum* is a title meaning the general; the general's name is Arthur (Minard). Gildas did

describe this same battle, but historians believe that Ambrosius fought alongside Arthur; and not Arthur himself. It seems what is described in the text is that Arthur was a mighty military man and not a king.

The tales of Arthur's immeasurable warrior skills on the battle field had been greatly exaggerated, this could account for his status as king; Nennius who wrote *The History of the Britons*, states that " 960 of the enemy fell at a single charge" (Minard)! Nennius wrote many stories on the subject of Arthur; which in turn set the stage for Arthurian tales to begin. However, most of the tales surrounding King Arthur and his Nights of the Round Table stem from Welshman Geoffrey of Monmouth in 1135 (Daybell). With Geoffrey's extensive tales of Arthur, this is what brought about the stories which are related in today's century; King Arthur and his Nights of the Round Table, Merlin, Guinevere, and Lancelot. Many tales were woven that told of magnificent battles fought and won, by a great warrior and his men. People of this era needed a hero and they had one in a warrior named Arthur. Geoffrey's interpretations of Arthur were rejected by historians due to the fact his tales of Arthur were so extravagant (Hargan).

On the other hand historians Graham Phillips and Martin Keatman found Geoffrey's data pertaining to King Arthur was evident in remnants of the Dark Ages (Hargan). For instance, an area called Shropshire; links a real man named Arthur who lived and ruled in Shropshire, and died there in 519 (Hargan). Additionally, Shropshire is the location where the stone circle known as Mitchell's Fold lies, and is said where Arthur drew the sword from the stone (Hargan). Nevertheless, historians battle relentlessly over the fact of his authenticity, though the point remains his name is proven in history.

No matter how strongly historians debate over whether King Arthur was man or legend; facts of his existence cannot not be denied. King Arthur and his Nights of the Round Table may have created tales of a man bigger than life, but he was loved and respected by all in his lifetime and still today. The folklore surrounding King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table has grown to the point where one cannot distinguish fact from fiction. Even though, several men throughout the centuries seem to be tied to his legend. With the help of dedicated historians, there is now documentation to help prove there is only one man which tales of the legend comes from, which is known today as, King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

Works Cited

Daybell, James. "The Arthurian Tradition." World History: Ancient and Medieval Eras. Pasco Hernando Community College. Hargan, Jim. "King Arthur Slept Here!" Linccweb. org. Pasco Hernando Community College. Minard, Antone. "The Real Men behind the Legend of King Arthur." World History: Ancient and Medieval Eras. Pasco Hernando Community College.