

# I

## SCOTLAND AND THE ARTHURIAN LEGEND.

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In approaching the vast body of legends which grew up about the name of a hero called Arthur, one is faced with innumerable questions, but none looms up so promptly and so obviously as the question of historic fact: Did the Arthur of legend live, or was he a mythical figure? Not so long ago there were scholars of eminence who seriously believed that he was in origin a bear-god or an agricultural divinity, arguing from the linguistic roots *art* and *ar*.<sup>1</sup> But now there is an almost unanimous vote of both philologues and historians that he was a man of flesh and blood. Professor Kenneth Jackson, who is unsurpassed in his command of the various kinds of evidence, has expressed himself in a chapter due to be published in 1958 as follows: "Did King Arthur ever really exist? The only honest answer is 'We don't know, but he may very well have existed.' The nature of the evidence is such that proof is impossible."

In spite of this noncommittal answer Jackson does offer a good deal of testimony—some of it set down within a hundred years of the period when the hero of the Britons lived if he lived at all—and I believe that the latest and most authoritative writers on Britain in the Dark Ages—Oman, Collingwood, Hodgkin and Stenton—display no scepticism on the subject.<sup>2</sup> Though conclusive proof is lacking, it is hard to believe that the passionate devotion of the Welsh, Cornish and Bretons to the memory of Arthur was evoked by a medieval and male Mrs Harris. In spite of the silence of Gildas and others writing in the 6th century, it is far more likely than not that a British commander named Arthur flourished about the year 500, perhaps a little earlier or a little later.

The next question which I should like to raise is: Did the historic Arthur have any particular connection with what is now Scotland? Was he a Briton from the north like Cunedda? Or did he conduct campaigns like those of William Wallace (who, to judge by his name, must have been of Welsh ancestry) north of the Tweed and the Solway Firth? Skene first

<sup>1</sup> J. Rhys, *Studies in the Arthurian Legend* (Oxford, 1891), pp. 25-40. E. K. Chambers, *Arthur of Britain* (London, 1927), pp. 206-11.

<sup>2</sup> C. Oman, *England before the Norman Conquest*, 8th ed. (London, 1938), pp. 211 f. F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1943), pp. 3 f. R. H. Hodgkin, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1952), pp. 122, 182.

elaborated the thesis that Arthur's military career was confined to the North,<sup>1</sup> and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, John S. Stuart Glennie, published in 1869 an impressive essay, *Arthurian Localities*, supporting Skene.<sup>2</sup> Both relied largely on the identification of the sites of Arthur's battles, as given by Nennius, with places in Scotland. Nennius, be it remembered, was a Welsh priest who, early in the 9th century, collected a miscellaneous body of facts, and what purported to be facts, about British history. In an oft-quoted passage,<sup>3</sup> dealing with the period right after the death of Hengist, Nennius says that Arthur fought against them—apparently the Saxons and the Jutes of Kent—and defeated them in twelve battles. He gives the name of the place where each victory occurred, and, since four battles are listed as occurring in one place, there are nine names in all. It is, of course, easy to sit down with a large-scale map of Northern England and Southern Scotland and match each of the nine names in Nennius with something resembling it on the map. That is what Skene and Glennie did. But Professor Jackson submitted the list to scientific scrutiny,<sup>4</sup> and found that only one site can be placed with any certainty in Scotland, namely, *silva Celidonis* or Coit Celidon, which is, of course, the Caledonian Forest. But it is hard to see how a general, operating against the Saxons and Jutes about the year 500, could have encountered them in Strathclyde or the vicinity, where, so far as we know, there were no Germanic invaders then or later. The same objection holds against *Urbs Legionis*, i.e., Chester. Jackson concludes that the one authentic victory listed by Nennius is that of *Mons Badonis*, and that if it was won by Arthur about 500, it must have been fought on the eastern border of the Salisbury Plain, near Swindon or Faringdon. The other battle sites, wherever they actually were, may have witnessed the prowess of Arthur, or they may not. A priest of South Wales, living three hundred years later, is no trustworthy witness on matters of detail.

Glennie found corroboration for his thesis in all manner of local associations.<sup>5</sup> He maintained that "at or in the neighbourhood of every one of these battle-sites thus identified, we find existing, from the time of our oldest charters, and other documents, to this day, places with Arthur's name, or traditions of Arthur's history." There are two weaknesses in this argument. In the first place, associations which go no farther back than the 12th century—and none of them do—carry little weight, for even before 1100 the renown of Arthur was beginning to spread beyond Wales. In the second place, if such evidence is valid, Wales and the Welsh border

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Stuart Glennie, *Arthurian Localities* (Edinburgh, 1869); also published as introduction to Early English Text Soc., No. 36.

<sup>2</sup> W. F. Skene, *Four Ancient Books of Wales* (Edinburgh, 1868), I, 52-58.

<sup>3</sup> Chambers, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-12, 238 f. F. Lot, *Nennius et l'Historia Brittonum* (Paris, 1934), I, 194-6. E. Faral, *Legende Arthurienne* (Paris, 1929), III, 38 f.

<sup>4</sup> *Modern Philology*, XLIII (1945), 44-57.

<sup>5</sup> Glennie, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

would have a stronger claim, for, in the *Mirabilia* included in Nennius' book, Arthur is connected with a cairn in Brecknockshire and a burial mound in Herefordshire,<sup>1</sup> and that is about four centuries earlier than any similar topographical links with Arthur are recorded for Scotland. As for later times, Welsh toponymy and folk-tradition can match those of Scotland as evidence of interest in Arthur. But in neither country does the existence of an Arthur's Oven or an Arthur's Table mean that the historic hero ever bivouacked there.

Of course, Arthur might have been a Briton of the North, but he could with equal probability have come from Cornwall or Wales. Indeed, he might have been born in eastern England before it was overrun by the Saxons and Angles. That Arthur lived and gave the Saxons a good thrashing in the South of England about the year 500 seems pretty clear, but where he was born, no one knows nor is there the slightest probability that anyone ever will know. Some day a pillar stone marking the true place of his burial (as distinct from the hollow oak found at Glastonbury in 1191) may be dug up, but that his birth certificate or baptismal register will come to light is something that even the most sanguine cannot hope for.

Another ardent believer in Arthur's activities in the North is Professor Nitze.<sup>2</sup> For him Arthur was a Roman, Lucius Artorius Castus, commander of the Sixth Legion, who is on record as fighting in Dalmatia and Armorica, and who may have fought in Britain as well against the Picts and Scots. But he lived in the 2nd century, and I find it hard to understand how this Roman general, even though his middle name was Artorius, was converted into the champion of the Britons against the Saxons in the 5th century or slightly later, and how he came to rouse the ardent loyalty of all the descendants of the Britons—Welsh, Cornish and Bretons—for a thousand years. Lucius Artorius Castus certainly lived and made history in a small way in Britain in Hadrian's time, but he was not our Arthur.

A remarkable early reference, presumably to the Arthur of Nennius, has been brought to the fore in recent years, and it brings us, though not Arthur, back to the North again. There is a Welsh poem called the *Gododdin*, dealing with a defeat inflicted on the Britons of Southern Scotland by the Angles.<sup>3</sup> This poem, in its original form, is now accepted by Welsh scholars as a composition of about the year 600. In it a certain British warrior is said to have "glutted black ravens on the rampart of the city, though he was not Arthur." That is, he slew many Angles, but his prowess was not equal to that of Arthur. What can one infer from this fleeting allusion? Not that Arthur was a North Briton, not that he came from the same region north of the Tweed as did most of the warriors celebrated in the

<sup>1</sup> Chambers, *op. cit.*, pp. 239 f. Lot, *op. cit.*, p. 216. Faral, *op. cit.*, III, 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Pub. Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, LXIV (1949), 585-96.

<sup>3</sup> *Gododdin*, ed. I. Williams (Cardiff, 1938). Discussed by Williams, *Lectures on Early Welsh Poetry* (Dublin, 1944), pp. 65-70, and by K. H. Jackson in *Antiquity*, XIII (1939), 25-34.

poem, but simply that his reputation had reached the North and become established there round the year 600. There is nothing in the *Gododdin* to force us to reject the historic probability that Arthur had achieved his pre-eminence by his campaigns against the Saxons in Southern England.

In fact, it seems to me very significant that the other early Welsh poems, which are roughly contemporary with the *Gododdin* and which deal with historic figures of the same general area, King Urien of Rheged and his son Owein, there is no further mention of Arthur.<sup>1</sup> This silence would be unnatural if he had won any great victories in the North two or three generations earlier. This silence would be quite natural if one thinks of Arthur as one who fed the ravens with the carcasses of Saxons in the Thames Valley or on the Berkshire Downs, where about 500 the Saxons would be found. It is the reputation of Arthur in the North which is attested by the *Gododdin*, not his activity in any particular part of Britain. Even Nennius' specific reference to the victory of the Wood of Celyddon must be discounted on Nennius' own testimony that Arthur fought against Oetha, King of Kent.

There is a long gap between Nennius and the next author to link Arthur with Scotland. A Flemish cleric, Lambert of St Omer, in a work entitled *Liber Floridus* and dated 1120 makes the following remarkable statement:<sup>2</sup> "There is in Britain, in the land of the Picts, a palace of the warrior Arthur, built with marvelous art and variety, in which the history of all his exploits and wars is to be seen in sculpture. He fought twelve battles against the Saxons who had occupied Britain." Lambert then gives a list of the twelve victories of Arthur according to Nennius. What could have suggested this reference to the sculptures in the land of the Picts? We do not know but we can guess. A Corpus Christi Cambridge manuscript, a century or so later in date than Lambert's work, has a gloss on Nennius which states that Carausius, the emperor, built a round house with polished stones (*politius lapidibus*) on the bank of the River Carron.<sup>3</sup> Dr Steer of the Ancient Monuments Commission points out that this gloss refers to the Roman temple which was known as early as 1293 as the Oven of Arthur, for it too was round and made of polished stones and lay near the River Carron.<sup>4</sup> Did Lambert find a similar gloss in his copy of Nennius—a gloss which connected this building with Arthur rather than Carausius? Could he then have converted the polished stones into sculptures and found a subject

<sup>1</sup> I. Williams in *Proc. of Brit. Acad.*, xviii (1932), 270 ff. Morris-Jones in *Y Cymmrodor*, xxviii (1918), 64-71, 151-99.

<sup>2</sup> Faral, *op. cit.*, I, 256 n. Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, clxiii, col. 1012. R. S. and L. H. Loomis, *Arthurian Legends in Medieval Art* (New York, 1938), p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Lot, *op. cit.*, I, 165, n. 8. John Leslie, bishop of Ross, expressed the opinion in *De Origine Moribus et Rebus Gestis Scotorum* (1578) that Arthur was the builder of a stone house formerly existing not far from the River Carron.

<sup>4</sup> Glennie, *op. cit.*, pp. 42 f.

for the sculptures in Nennius' list of Arthur's victories? These questions cannot be answered in the affirmative or the negative; but such efforts to elaborate the scanty materials available were characteristic of other authors than Lambert of St Omer. Geoffrey of Monmouth was writing a few years later, say in the early eleven-thirties, and it is abundantly clear that the *Historia Regum Britanniae* is largely compounded of the rough stones of tradition freely shaped and adorned by Geoffrey's imagination.

In 1125, five years after the composition of the *Liber Floridus*, William of Malmesbury completed the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* and testified<sup>1</sup> that Arthur was the subject of fantastic tales told by the Bretons: "Artur de quo Britonum nugae hodieque delirant"—very significant testimony to the role played by Breton story-tellers in the diffusion of the fascinating but wild and incoherent traditions which had gathered about Arthur. William did not associate Arthur in any way with Scotland, but he did mention Arthur's nephew Gawain under the name Walwen, and said that he had reigned over Walweitha, that is, Galloway.<sup>2</sup> First, it should be observed that the form Walwen is not Welsh; nothing resembling it ever appears in a Welsh text, and it is most probable that the chronicler heard it from Breton lips—a corroboration of his testimony about the circulation of Breton tales about Arthur. All this, of course, is easy to understand when one realizes that many Breton lords fought for William the Conqueror<sup>3</sup> at Hastings and were rewarded with lands, and others followed after. Sir Frank Stenton declared: "There is hardly an English county in which the Breton element is not found, and in some counties its influence was deep and permanent." For example, there was the great Breton earldom of Richmond in Yorkshire.<sup>4</sup> Breton lords would be followed, of course, by Breton entertainers and would welcome professional story-tellers to relieve the tedium of long winter evenings when there was no television and no radio. Bédier was clear on the point: after the battle of Hastings "toute la civilisation normande se trouva brusquement transplantée telle quelle dans les châteaux d'Outre-Manche, et les jongleurs armoricains y suivirent leurs patrons: jongleurs armoricains, mais plus qu'à demi romanisés, mais vivant au service de seigneurs français, et contant pour leur plaisir."<sup>5</sup> This is a fact of capital importance. Breton story-tellers and singers would be bilingual and could address Anglo-Norman audiences as well as Breton. Devoted to the memory of their ancestral hero, they drew heavily on the Welsh store-house of romantic fiction about Arthur. They adapted it to

<sup>1</sup> Chambers, *op. cit.*, p. 250. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Series, I, 11. R. S. Loomis, *Wales and the Arthurian Legend* (Cardiff, 1956), pp. 183-5.

<sup>2</sup> Chambers, *op. cit.*, p. 250. William of Malmesbury, *op. cit.*, II, 342.

<sup>3</sup> F. M. Stenton, *1st Century of English Feudalism* (Oxford, 1932), pp. 24 f., 28.

<sup>4</sup> *Victoria History of the County of York, North Riding*, ed. W. Page (London, 1914), pp. 2 f. *Annales de Bretagne*, XLIII (1935), 265 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas, *Tristan*, ed. J. Bédier (Paris, 1905), II, 126 f.

the taste of Anglo-Normans and Frenchmen and thus spread his fame and that of his Round Table throughout the western world.<sup>1</sup>

The fact, however, that William of Malmesbury made Gawain king of Galloway probably has no significance. In the Middle Ages no principle of historiography was more solidly established than the idea that places took their names from persons. The early history of Rome was sufficient guarantee for it, and so was Vergil's *Aeneid*. William, therefore, had no difficulty in believing that Walweitha, Galloway, took its name from Walwen, Gawain. But there is nothing to support this derivation, and I have elsewhere presented ample evidence to show that the name Walwen or Gawain had an origin which completely eliminates the possibility of a connection with Galloway.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, two scholars of eminence, J. D. Bruce and Edward Brugger,<sup>3</sup> agree that the association is no better than Geoffrey of Monmouth's linking King Leir with Leicester and Coel with Colchester.

As for Geoffrey himself, everyone knows that he was the perpetrator of one of the most successful hoaxes in the world's history, the *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1136). Though born probably at Monmouth, and for a large part of his life a resident of Oxford, he was almost certainly of Breton extraction. Sir John Lloyd, Sir Edmund Chambers and Tatlock all came to this conclusion in view of his marked bias in favour of the Bretons as against the Welsh,<sup>4</sup> and in one manuscript he actually refers to himself as Brito.<sup>5</sup> That in the 12th century did not mean a Welshman, for he says himself that after the time of Cadwallader the Welsh "non vocabantur Britones sed Gualenses."<sup>6</sup> He conceived the bold idea of fabricating a history of Britain from the beginnings, taking advantage of the enormous prestige which the Breton story-tellers had built up around their ancestral hero. In the phrase of William of Newburgh, he even made the little finger of Arthur thicker than the loins of Alexander the Great.<sup>7</sup> But he did his work so cleverly that William was one of the very few who saw through the sham. Almost everyone else accepted the *Historia Regum Britanniae* as a veracious chronicle.

Geoffrey also linked Gawain with Scotland and in a similar, though not the same, way as William of Malmesbury. He decided that Lothian

<sup>1</sup> R. S. Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition and Chrétien de Troyes* (New York, 1949), pp. 15-22, 27-32. *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, 1890, pp. 788 ff. *Kultur der Gegenwart*, ed. P. Hinneberg (Berlin, Leipzig, 1909), Teil I, Abt. XI, I, 11-15, 60-65. *Zeits. f. franz. Sprache u. Literatur*, XX<sup>1</sup> (1898), 79-162; XLIV<sup>2</sup> (1922), 78-87.

<sup>2</sup> J. D. Bruce, *Evolution of Arthurian Romance* (Baltimore, Halle, 1923), I, 21 n. *Zeits. f. franz. Sprache*, XXXIII<sup>2</sup> (1908), 59 f.

<sup>3</sup> *English Historical Review*, LVII, 466 f. Chambers, *op. cit.*, pp. 23 f., 90. J. S. P. Tatlock, *Legendary History of Britain* (Berkeley, Calif., 1950), 396-402, 439 f., 443.

<sup>4</sup> Faral, *op. cit.*, III, 189, variants.

<sup>5</sup> Loomis, *Wales and the Arthurian Legend*, pp. 181-4. Giraldus Cambrensis says (*Opera*, ed. Dimock, Rolls Series, VI, 179): "Usque in hodiernum, barbara nuncupatione et homines Wallenses et terra Wallia vocitatur."

<sup>6</sup> *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett, Rolls Series, I, 11.

got its name from a certain Loth,<sup>1</sup> known in Breton tradition as the father of Gawain.<sup>2</sup> So Gawain became for Geoffrey and his translators heir to the lordship of Lothian. Nothing much came of this, however. A rival tradition was soon in the field, which made Loth king of Orkney, and as a result Gawain and his brothers are much more commonly associated in the romances with the Orkney Isles than with Lothian.<sup>3</sup>

Geoffrey arbitrarily took over Urien, historic king of Rheged in the late 6th century and ancestor of the present Lord Dynevor,<sup>4</sup> made him a contemporary of Arthur, and represented him as restored to his royal throne of Moray by the generous Arthur.<sup>5</sup> Likewise Angusel, king of Albania, that is, Scotland between Lothian and Moray, was restored by Arthur to his kingdom.<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey later makes it quite plain that Urien held Moray and Angusel held Albany as Arthur's vassals; they were invited to the coronation as "reges subditi."<sup>7</sup> There can be no doubt of the implications of this claim, and the history of Scotland might have been somewhat different if it had not been made. For when Edward I in 1301 had his secretaries draw up a statement of his rights to the overlordship of Scotland, they based it largely on Geoffrey's *Historia*.<sup>8</sup> It is not unlikely that the Oxford *magister*, sitting at his desk, had a fatal influence on Scottish-English relations, and it was all done by scribbling a few lines with his quill pen.

But Geoffrey's book had a more immediate and romantic effect in Scotland. Characteristically, he had created from the Welsh name for the city of York, Ebrauc, a king of Britain named Ebraucus,<sup>9</sup> and placed his reign to synchronize with that of King David of Judea. Geoffrey credited Ebraucus with the foundation not only of York but also of three other towns: Alclud, Castellum Puellarum and Mons Dolorosus—four foundations in all.<sup>10</sup> Alclud, defined as lying in the direction of Albany, is easily recognised as Dumbarton on the Clyde, but what did Geoffrey mean when he wrote Castellum Puellarum? He gives it as an alternative name for *Oppidum Montis Agned*, but that does not help us much, for though Nennius placed Arthur's eleventh battle at Mons Agned, Professor Jackson assures us that it is impossible to identify the site<sup>11</sup> and the *Historia* merely implies that it, like Alclud, was "versus Albaniam." However, we do know that in 1141 King David of Scotland came down into England to fight on behalf of his niece, the Empress Matilda, against the supporters of King Stephen.<sup>12</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Faral, *op. cit.*, III, 225, 237.

<sup>2</sup> Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, pp. 148-50.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71 f.

<sup>4</sup> See early editions of Burke's *Peerage* under Dynevor.

<sup>5</sup> Faral, *op. cit.*, III, 237.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 242, ". . . reges etiam et duces sibi subditos ad ipsam festivitatem convocare. . . ."

<sup>8</sup> T. Rymer, *Foedera*, ed. Clerke and Holbrooke (London, 1816), I, 932. *Speculum*, xxviii (1953), 121 f.

<sup>9</sup> Tatlock, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Faral, *op. cit.*, III, 97.

<sup>11</sup> *Modern Philology*, XLIII, 52.

<sup>12</sup> *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, etc.* ed. Howlett, III, 75-83.

this enterprise he was allied with his nephew, Robert of Gloucester, and spent several weeks at Oxford. Now Robert was the principal dedicatee of Geoffrey's *Historia*<sup>1</sup> and must have possessed a copy. Geoffrey was living at Oxford.<sup>2</sup> It is hard to believe that Robert did not mention the sensational new history to King David, and call his attention to the many references to Scotland. One can well imagine that he proposed that such a knowledgeable man as the author be summoned to the royal presence and that a dialogue ensued, somewhat like this: "Master Geoffrey, I see that Ebraucus founded three cities in the North. I recognise Alclud, the fortress on the Clyde; but where and what is this Castellum Puellarum?" Geoffrey replied: "Sire, it is your own royal fortress of Edinburgh." This dialogue, of course, is vouched for by no contemporary, but it is certain that in the next year, 1142, King David began using Castellum or Castrum Puellarum as an alternative title for his castle of Edinburgh.<sup>3</sup> The name remained for centuries an official designation in chronicles and documents, and in at least two French texts composed within a decade or two of 1200, *Fergus* and *Doon*, the identification of the Château des Pucelles with Edinburgh is clear.<sup>4</sup>

The title has always been a mystery; why should Auld Reekie be known as the Castle of Maidens?<sup>5</sup> The *Chronicle of Lanercost* offered the explanation that King Edwin, the founder, placed his seven daughters there for safety.<sup>6</sup> In recent times it has been urged that the name was due to a nunnery established by St Monenna.<sup>7</sup> But this is a mere guess, for there is no record of such a house of virgins. Furthermore, why would David suddenly start using Castellum Puellarum in the year 1142, when the saint had been in her grave for over 250 years? It is far more likely that the title was derived from Geoffrey.

It is probable, moreover, that Geoffrey did not invent the title and arbitrarily apply it to Edinburgh. For early in the 13th century the author of the Breton lai of *Doon* not only identified the Château des Pucelles with Daneborc, but he also told a story of a beautiful and proud virgin, mistress of the country, who dwelt there with her maidens.<sup>8</sup> She was won, however, by the hero Doon and gave birth to a son, whose story bears a marked resemblance to that of Gawain:<sup>9</sup> he is born out of wedlock; after he is grown up, his

<sup>1</sup> Chambers, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> A. C. Laurie, *Early Scottish Charters Prior to A.D. 1153* (Glasgow, 1905), pp. 112, 123, 146. G. Chalmers, *Caledonia* (Paisley, 1887-92), IV, 555-9.

<sup>4</sup> *Fergus*, ed. E. Martin (Halle, 1872), p. 106. *Romania*, VIII (1879), 61.

<sup>5</sup> On places called Maiden Castle, see R. E. M. Wheeler, *Maiden Castle, Dorset* (Oxford, 1943), pp. 8-11. J. Rhys, *Celtic Folklore, Welsh and Manx* (Oxford, 1901), I, 156 f.; Camden, *Britannia*, rev. E. Gibson (London, 1753), II, 822; Leland's *Itinerary*, ed. L. Toulmin Smith (London, 1909), IV, 31; V, 147.

<sup>6</sup> *Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. J. Stevenson (Edinburgh, 1839), p. 179; trans. H. Maxwell (Glasgow, 1913), pp. 144 f.

<sup>7</sup> *Speculum*, XVII (1942), 253. W. J. Watson, *Place Names* (Edinburgh, 1926), p. 156.

<sup>8</sup> *Romania*, VIII, 61-64.

<sup>9</sup> Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, pp. 112 f. *Romania*, XXXIX (1910), 19-23. H. O. Sommer, *Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances* (Washington, 1909-16), II, 317.



mother sends him away with a ring as a recognition token; he meets his father incognito in combat, overthrows him, and only when his father asks his name, does recognition follow. Now in early French romance Gawain's mother was named Morcades, and Morcades also appears as a queen in a castle of ladies.<sup>1</sup> Most important is the fact that in four romances Morcades is the wife of King Loth of Lothian.<sup>2</sup> Other facts show that Morcades is simply a variation on the name Morgain la Fée.<sup>3</sup>

So we know that the Castle of Maidens was Edinburgh. We know that the mistress of the Castle of Maidens was Morgain la Fée. We know that, though she had various lovers and at least two husbands, one of them was King Loth of Lothian. As Queen of Lothian, Morcades or Morgain could have dwelt in several castles with her attendant maidens, but none would have suited her so well as the great fortress of Edinburgh. Once the tradition was established that Morgain la Fée was wooed and won by Loth, the eponymous king of Lothian, it was a matter of plain logic that Edinburgh was the Castle of Maidens.

What happened then was this, as I see it. In the early years of the 12th century and later, Breton *conteurs* came across the Tweed to find a welcome from the Breton and Norman lords. It is not without significance that the first Scottish ancestor of the Stuart line was a Breton, whom David I appointed his *dapifer* or steward. The Breton entertainers were only too ready to localise their tales wherever they found patrons, and they have left their traces in three Breton lais centered in Scotland—*Doon*, already mentioned, *Desiré* and *Gurun* (preserved only in a Norse translation).<sup>4</sup> They were presumably responsible for linking Morgain la Fée to King Loth, for linking Loth to Lothian, and for thus placing Morgain and her maidens in Edinburgh castle. I have little doubt that Geoffrey, himself a Breton, had picked up this tradition when he boldly placed the Castellum Puellarum among King Ebraucus' foundations in the North. It is proof of his astuteness that he so often appropriated to his uses traditions which already enjoyed a certain currency.

A remarkable confirmation of this inference regarding the connection of Morgain la Fée with Edinburgh comes from the ballad, *The Queen of Scotland*,<sup>5</sup> collected by Peter Buchan, corresponding member of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. Scholars recognised over sixty years ago that the latter part of this poem told a story obviously parallel to a story of Caradoc of the Short Arm related in the first continuation of Chrétien de Troyes's

<sup>1</sup> *Romania*, xxxix, 19-23. J. L. Weston, *Legend of Sir Perceval* (1906-9), I, 193.

<sup>2</sup> Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112-6, 302-6, 451-7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112-6, 269-72, 290 f. *Desiré, Graelent, and Melion*, ed. E. M. Grimes (New York, 1928), pp. 52-75. *Studia Neophilologica*, xiv (1942), 1-24.

<sup>5</sup> F. J. Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, v, 176 f. P. Buchan, *Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1828), I, 46-49.

*Perceval*.<sup>1</sup> The ballad, therefore, contained Arthurian material dating back to the year 1200. What about the first part of the *Queen of Scotland*? Three points are noteworthy: 1. The Queen's abode is "Reekie's towers," i.e., Edinburgh Castle; 2. Her bower has "pictures round it set." 3. She tries to seduce the young hero, in vain. Now we have seen that Morgain was the mistress of the Castle of Maidens; three medieval authors give elaborate descriptions of the mural paintings in her palace;<sup>2</sup> she repeatedly tried to seduce knights of Arthur's court, and was rebuffed. All of these traditions are represented in the French *Mort Artu*, which places Morgain's castle, where she had tried to seduce Lancelot in vain, within two days' ride of Edinburgh (Taneborc), describes its mural paintings, and tells how Arthur was served at table and attended to his bedchamber by damsels only.<sup>3</sup> This French romance and the Scottish ballad, though separated by an interval of more than six centuries, preserve variant versions of the same tradition. The association of Morgain with Edinburgh was, therefore, very old and very persistent, even though her name was early lost and she became the anonymous Queen of Scotland.

One may be struck by the inconsistency of these traditions about the mistress of the Castle of Maidens. Can it be that the betrayed and deserted virgin of the lai of *Doon*, the wife of King Loth of Lothian, mother of Gawain, and the lustful temptress of the Scottish ballad were originally one and the same, were all avatars, as it were, of Morgain la Fée? Anyone who makes the slightest investigation of this fascinating figure in medieval literature will find that she is an extreme example of Vergil's characterisation of her sex: "varium et mutabile."<sup>4</sup> And Mark Twain's Connecticut Yankee, who had made her personal acquaintance, declared: "I have seen a good many kinds of women in my time, but she laid it over them all for variety."

Not only was Geoffrey's Castellum Puellarum taken seriously as a name for the Scottish capital, but the third of King Ebraucus' foundations, Mons Dolorosus, was also identified with what was probably the most imposing Roman ruin in all Scotland, the fort of Trimontium in the parish of Melrose.<sup>5</sup> The author of *Fergus*, Guillaume le Clerc, writing early in the 13th century, shows a detailed and accurate knowledge of Scottish geography from Carlisle and Jedburgh in the south to Dunnottar Castle in the north.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Language Notes*, XIII (1898), 417 ff. *Romania*, xxviii (1898), 214-31. *Continuations of the Old French Perceval of Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. W. Roach (Philadelphia, 1949), I, liii, 169-223.

<sup>2</sup> R. S. and L. H. Loomis, *Arthurian Legends*, pp. 16 f., 24 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Mort le Roi Artu*, ed. J. Frappier (Paris, 1936), pp. 44-47.

<sup>4</sup> R. S. Loomis, *Wales and the Arthurian Legend*, pp. 105-30.

<sup>5</sup> J. Curle, *Roman Frontier Post and Its People, the Fort of Newstead in the Parish of Melrose* (Glasgow, 1911).

<sup>6</sup> Brugger in *Miscellany of Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures in Honour of L. E. Kastner* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 94-107. M. D. Legge, "Some Notes on the *Roman de Fergus*," in *T. Dumf. and Gall. A.S.*, xxvii (1950), 165-7.

He makes it quite plain that he identified Mont Dolerous with a fortress, overhanging a deep ravine, and that an alternative name was Maros (Melrose).<sup>1</sup> When I inquired of Mr Angus Graham, the Secretary of the Ancient Monuments Commission for Scotland, as to what this could mean, he promptly recognised it as a description of Trimontium. Surely anyone seeking to identify the remains of a city or fortress, allegedly founded in remote antiquity, could not have done better than to pitch on the imposing ruins of Trimontium, even though they did not actually go back to the days of Geoffrey's Ebraucus or the biblical David. Not only did the author of *Fergus* know Trimontium as Mont Dolerous, but even earlier, in 1171, the abbot of Melrose was referred to as the abbot of Mons Dolorosus,<sup>2</sup> obviously because the original site of Melrose Abbey lay not more than a mile or two from the great Roman fort on the Tweed.

Whereas the connection of King Loth and his wife Morcades or Morgain with Edinburgh was due to the artificial and comparatively late association of Loth with Lothian, there were earlier and rival traditions, and one of them linked Lothian to the Arthurian hero, Yvain or Ewain. Chrétien de Troyes referred about 1170 to an Yvain de Loenel, and Loenel is easily recognised as a corrupt form of Loeneis, a French name for Lothian.<sup>3</sup> Now, as a matter of historic fact, Owein, the original of Yvain, was the son of Urien, King of Rheged, and fought with his father against the sons of Ida, kings of Bernicia, late in the 6th century.<sup>4</sup> The authorities cannot place Rheged with certainty,<sup>5</sup> but Owein's activities would surely have taken him, if not into Lothian, at least into neighbouring territory. Apparently a tradition connecting Owein the son of Urien with what is now the Scottish Border Country lasted from the 6th to the 12th century. It is found not only in the name, Yvain de Loenel, but also in a *Life of St Kentigern*,<sup>6</sup> written between 1147 and 1164, which records that Ewen, son of King Urien, celebrated by the *histriones*,<sup>7</sup> that is, professional story-tellers, wooed the step-daughter of Leudonus, King of Leudonia (Lothian), surprised her beside a brook, ravished her, and begat on her the future St Kentigern. Leudonus is, of course, a fictitious character, invented to account for the name of his kingdom, Leudonia, just as Brutus of Trojan descent was invented to account for the name Britannia, and as Albanact was invented by Geoffrey of Monmouth to explain the name Albania. So we have the testimony of the *Life of St Kentigern* that in the middle of the 12th century

<sup>1</sup> *Fergus*, ed. E Martin, Halle, (1872), p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> A. O. Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1922), II, 275.

<sup>3</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec*, ed. W. Foerster (Halle, 1890), vs. 1707. *Modern Philology*, xxxviii, 282-6. For various forms of Lothian see *ibid.*, xxii, 186-91.

<sup>4</sup> F. Lot, *Nennius*, I, 73-75, 202, 224. Faral, *op. cit.*, III, 43.

<sup>5</sup> *Proc. of the Brit. Acad.*, xviii, 292. Watson, *op. cit.*, p. 156. H. M. Chadwick, *Early Scotland* (Cambridge, 1949), pp. 144-60.

<sup>6</sup> *Lives of St Ninian and St Kentigern*, ed. A. P. Forbes (Edinburgh, 1874), 245-7.

<sup>7</sup> "Histrionum" is the correct reading of the manuscript, not "historiarum." *Romania*, xx (1893), 536.

a story was current that Owein or Ewen, son of Urien, was the lover of the step-daughter of the King of Lothian.

Still another and highly elaborated form of this tradition is preserved in Chrétien de Troyes's poem *Yvain*, composed between 1176 and 1181.<sup>1</sup> Chrétien not only refers in *Erec* to Yvain de Loenel, but in the later poem he tells how Yvain, son of Urien, setting out from Carlisle, came to a spring, killed the champion who defended the spring, and married his widow. This widow, we are told, was named Laudine and was the daughter of Duke Laudonez or Laudunet. Is it not obvious that Chrétien has preserved in the name of Yvain's bride, Laudine, and in that of her father, Laudonez, the very same tradition which the *Life of St Kentigern* gives us as to Ewen's amour with the step-daughter of the King of Leudonia? Though the nature of the amour differs widely in the two accounts, there can be little doubt that both have their origin in a legend that Owein was the lover of the King of Lothian's daughter.

We have two other versions in Arthurian romance of what must have been a vigorous tradition about the wooing and winning of the Lady of Lothian. In both the author has substituted his own hero for the traditional lover Owein. The author of *Fergus* relates that his hero, like Yvain, set out from Carlisle, soon after met "la dame de Lodien," and after many adventures wedded her at Jedburgh (Gedeorde).<sup>2</sup> Significantly, two *puceles* from a castle near by were invited to the nuptials, presumably in reference to Edinburgh as the Château des Puceles. Thus the romance of Fergus and the Lady of Lothian gives us a third form of the tradition which appears in the *Life of Kentigern* and in Chrétien's *Yvain*.

A fourth form is to be found in Malory's tale of Gareth of Orkney in the seventh Book of the *Morte d'Arthur*. Gareth takes the place of Yvain as hero, and his adventures at several points resemble those of Fergus, particularly in the great tournament which precedes the wedding.<sup>3</sup> Now Gareth's bride is Dame Lyones, and Lyones is Malory's form of Lothian. Quite clearly, then, a common tradition underlies the love stories of Fergus and "la dame de Lodien" and of Gareth and Dame Lyones.

It is highly probable that Malory's source for his seventh Book was an Anglo-Norman romance at least as old as *Fergus*, even as old as Chrétien's *Yvain*.<sup>4</sup> There existed, then, in the 12th century a flourishing tradition, first attached to the historic Owein, son of Urien, telling how he won the hand of the Lady of Lothian. The author of the *Life of Kentigern* refers explicitly to the tales of the *histriones* about Ewen, and one may safely

<sup>1</sup> Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, pp. 291, 301-3. Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, Everyman's Lib., pp. 180-208.

<sup>2</sup> *Fergus*, ed. E. Martin.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 177-89. Malory, *Morte d'Arthur*, Bk. VII, ch. 27-31. Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, pp. 115 f.

<sup>4</sup> Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, pp. 439 f.

infer that this romantic legend, with its variations, was popularised by professional raconteurs, who, like actors, would employ intonation and gesture to give life and fire to their narratives. We can imagine that stories of the Lady of Lothian would be listened to with particular attention in the halls of the Anglo-Norman families who settled in the Lowlands of Scotland in the reign of David I. It is no wild fancy that Walter the Breton, ancestor of the Stuarts, with lands in Renfrewshire, was one of those who extended hospitality to the *histriones*, also of Breton extraction, who could tell him tales of Ewen and the Lady of Lothian or sing a lai of Doon and the mistress of the Castle of Maidens.

Chrétien followed his *Yvain* with his last and incomplete poem, *Perceval* or the *Conte du Graal*, composed about 1182. After about 6500 lines he interrupted the adventures of Perceval to take up those of Gawain and brought him to the borders of Galvoie.<sup>1</sup> Gawain was warned of the danger of crossing the border but insisted on proceeding. He came to a river, was ferried across to a magnificent castle inhabited by ladies, and after some strange adventures in this Castle of Ladies, was ferried back across the river and succeeded in vanquishing the knight who guarded the water-crossing of Galvoie.

Now Galvoie is unquestionably Galloway, and one remembers that William of Malmesbury as early as 1125 represented Gawain as King of Galloway. Moreover, Galloway was bounded by the River Nith. The late Professor Ritchie in his very informative lecture on *Chrétien de Troyes and Scotland*<sup>2</sup> pointed out that Robert Manning of Brunne, writing in 1328, identified the Castle of Maidens, not with Edinburgh, but with Caerlaverock, and Caerlaverock stands at the mouth of the Nith. It looks as if Ritchie had a strong case for identifying Chrétien's Castle of Ladies, situated on the border river of Galloway, with Caerlaverock.

But there is a stronger case, I believe, against it. If Gawain was conceived as King of Galloway, he should have had no difficulty in entering his own kingdom. Wolfram von Eschenbach, who, though dependent largely in his *Parzival* on Chrétien, had other traditional sources, called the river on which the Castle of Ladies stood Sabins,<sup>3</sup> and this has been recognised

<sup>1</sup> Chrétien de Troyes, *Percevalroman*, ed. A. Hilka (Halle, 1932), vss. 6600-8648.

<sup>2</sup> R. L. Graeme Ritchie, *Chrétien de Troyes and Scotland* (Oxford, 1952), pp. 10, 23. Compare Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, p. 502, index sub Scottish Tradition. Though admiring Ritchie's lecture and feeling no prejudice against Scottish influence on Arthurian romance, I believe several of his suggestions erroneous. His derivation of Esclados from Calathros (the Carse of Falkirk) and his equation of Calathros with Calatir are questionable. See Loomis, *ibid.*, pp. 112, 282. His statement that Chrétien never referred to a real person is mistaken. *Ibid.*, p. 492. There is no evidence that anyone acquainted with British geography of the 12th century called the Britons of Cumbria *Walenses* or *Waleis*. Estregales is not Strathclyde but South Wales. *Ibid.*, p. 71. The name Erec does not derive from Rhydderch but from Breton Guerec. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-74. There are three Welsh place-names in Chrétien's *Perceval*: Carlion, Gomeret, and Scaudone representing scribal corruptions of Caerleon, Gwynedd and Snowdon. *Ibid.*, pp. 481, 484, 490. The Roche de Sanguin is not likely to be Sanchar. *Ibid.*, p. 490.

<sup>3</sup> Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, p. 451.

by Germanists as the Severn, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Sabrina flumen*. The Severn was well known in the Middle Ages as the old boundary between England and Wales.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the French romance, *La Queste du Saint Graal*, confirms this identification of the river by telling how Galahad, like Gawain, was warned against crossing the borders, came to the River Severn, where stood the Castle of Maidens, overcame the knights who guarded the boundary, and was welcomed by the maidens.<sup>2</sup> Thus Wolfram and the author of the *Queste*, writing within a generation or so of Chrétien, agree that the boundary was the Severn, and this is corroborated by the Welsh *Peredur*, of about the same date, which makes Kaer Loyw, Gloucester, the abode of nine enchantresses,<sup>3</sup> and, of course, Gloucester is on the Severn. The converging testimony of Wolfram, the *Queste du Saint Graal*, and *Peredur*, pointing toward the Severn, proves that besides the tradition which localised Morgain's Castle of Maidens at Edinburgh, there was another which placed it on the border stream between England and Wales. Chrétien seems to have erred, then, in placing it on the border not of Gales (Wales) but of Galvoie (Galloway).

For this departure from tradition Ritchie provides an adequate and realistic motive.<sup>4</sup> The patron for whom Chrétien undertook the composition of *Perceval* was Philip, Count of Flanders, who supported William the Lion against Henry II and in 1173 sent troops to aid him. But after the King of Scots was captured in 1174, the sons of Fergus of Galloway revolted against his authority, slew all the strangers whom they could lay hands on, and destroyed the royal castles. For several years the Nith was a frontier between Galloway and the rest of Scotland, and a very dangerous one to cross. It is quite understandable, therefore, why Chrétien would have shifted the adventures of Gawain at the Castle of Maidens from the border of Gales to the border of Galvoie, and described the latter as one that no knight could pass and expect to return. To Philip of Flanders in 1182 the border of Galloway meant much more than the border of Wales. If Robert Manning one hundred and fifty years later identified the Castle of Maidens with Caerlaverock, he may well have come to this conclusion on the basis of Chrétien's poem or some derivative from it.

From the 13th-century documents we get new evidence of the tendency to make Arthurian connections with Scotland. A marginal note in a manuscript of Nennius tells how Arthur brought back from the Holy Land an image of the Virgin which he carried on his shoulders at the victory of Castellum Guinion, and how the fragments of this image were held in great veneration at Wedale.<sup>5</sup> A later hand added the information that Wedale

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Queste del Saint Graal*, ed. A. Pauphilet (Paris), pp. 46-51. Malory, *Morte d'Arthur*, Bk. XIII, ch. 14, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, p. 455. J. Loth, *Mabinogion*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1913), II, 75 f.

<sup>4</sup> Ritchie, *op. cit.*, pp. 17 f.

<sup>5</sup> F. Lot, *op. cit.*, I, 195, n. 8.

was a town in Lodonesia (Lothian) six miles from the noble monastery of Melrose. There is a consensus of opinion that this refers to Stow in the valley of Gala Water, where the church and a spring nearby are dedicated to St Mary.<sup>1</sup>

Stuart Glennie cited a document of the year 1293, referring to a "furnus Arthuri" or oven of Arthur, and he identified it with the building, already mentioned, on the bank of the River Carron, which was known centuries later as Arthur's O'on.<sup>2</sup> Evidently the notion that any unexplained ancient structure went back to the days of Arthur was as well established in Scotland as it was in Wales or Cornwall.

From 14th-century documents Glennie collected further examples of the same tendency. In 1339 David de Lindesay made a grant to the monks of Newbattle of certain lands bounded on the west by a line starting at the "fons Arthuri," the spring of Arthur.<sup>3</sup> From a parliamentary record of 1367 we learn that Dumbarton was called "castrum Arthuri."<sup>4</sup>

One of the most curious and important of all the Arthurian localisations in Scotland is the identification of Sinadon with Stirling, which I have already treated elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> This alternative name for Stirling is first given by Froissart, who was secretary for Queen Philippa of England between 1361 and 1368. In 1365 he made an excursion into Scotland, sedulously gathering material, and when he visited Stirling he was gravely informed that this castle was in the old times of King Arthur called Sinaudon, and there on occasion the knights of the Round Table resorted.<sup>6</sup> Now we have plenty of records about Stirling before 1365, but nowhere can one discover any verification of the claim that Sinaudon was an ancient name for Stirling.<sup>7</sup> It was, in fact, a name which turns up, not infrequently, in Arthurian romance in various but recognisable forms.<sup>8</sup> In Biket's *Lai du Cor*, an Anglo-Norman poem which goes back to Chrétien's time, a King of Sinadoune was present at one of Arthur's feasts. In a continuation of Chrétien's *Perceval* the boy hero declares that he was born at Sinadon. Bérout, the author of a poem about Tristan (c. 1200), represented Isolt's squire as departing from Tintagel in Cornwall, coming to Caerleon in South Wales, and arriving at Isneldone, where he found Arthur seated at the Round Table. *Le Bel Inconnu*, dealing with the career of Guinglain, Gawain's son, describes Sinadon as a ruinous town.<sup>9</sup> In it the daughter of the King of Wales was imprisoned in the form

<sup>1</sup> Glennie, *op. cit.*, pp. 76 f. F. J. Snell, *King Arthur's Country* (London), p. 213. Faral, *op. cit.*, I, 148 f.

<sup>2</sup> Glennie, *op. cit.*, pp. 42 f. Chalmers, *Caledonia*, I, 425.

<sup>3</sup> Glennie, *op. cit.*, pp. 83 f.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> Loomis, *Wales and the Arthurian Legend*, pp. 1-18.

<sup>6</sup> Froissart, *Oeuvres*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (Brussels, 1867), II, 313.

<sup>7</sup> W. C. Mackenzie, *Scottish Place-names* (London, 1931), p. 81.

<sup>8</sup> Loomis, *Wales and the Arthurian Legend*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11 f. Renaut de Beaujeu, *Bel Inconnu*, ed. G. P. Williams (Paris, 1929).

of a dragon. The hero broke the spell by kissing the monster, she was at once transformed into a matchless beauty,<sup>1</sup> and the two were wedded in the city of Sinadon, now restored from its ruinous state. We are told that it was the capital of Wales. If we glance once more at Malory's seventh Book, we discover that Gareth was wedded to Dame Lyones at Kynke Kenadonne, described as a city and a castle "on the sands which marched nigh Wales."<sup>2</sup> It requires no Sherlock Holmes to perceive that Malory created the form Kenadonne by mistaking the *C* of a form Cenadonne for a hard *c* and, as he did elsewhere, substituting *k*.<sup>3</sup>

Such indications as we have, therefore, indicate that Sinadon or Senadon was in Wales, and several great scholars—Sir John Rhys, Gaston Paris, and J. D. Bruce—recognised in the word a form of Snowdon.<sup>4</sup> They were right as far as they went, but they did not go far enough. After all, Snowdon is a mountain, not a town or a castle. The name Snaudon, however, was current in slightly different spellings as an appellation of the whole region about the mountain, as Snowdonia is to-day. What we should look for is a town in that region which was sufficiently imposing as to impress beholders as worthy to be the capital of Wales in Arthur's time. Gaimar, the chronicler, writing about 1150, gives us the clue.<sup>5</sup> He says that there were three renowned cities of Wales, and the first and second named by him are easily identified as Caerleon and Caerwent, the Roman walled towns of South Wales. The third Gaimar called "la cité de Snauedun." This can apply only to the important Roman fortress of Segontium, situated on a hilltop, overlooking the Menai Strait, where at low tide the sandy flats are conspicuous. Even as early as Nennius' day legends had begun to attach themselves to the ruins of Segontium, and the Welsh tale, the *Dream of Maxen*, is partly localised there.<sup>6</sup> Just as Caerleon in South Wales became famous as a resort of Arthur, so apparently did Segontium in North Wales under its Anglo-Norman name of "la cité de Snaudon," and in its forlorn state it offered a perfect setting for the eerie story of the dragon princess of Wales.

But when one visits the site of Segontium to-day, though one may still look down from it on the sands of the Menai Strait, only the foundations remain. Edward I is known to have removed ashlar in 1283 from the Roman ruins and to have used it in the building of the stately castle we see at Caernarvon to-day.<sup>7</sup> The "cité de Sinadon" no longer existed except as

<sup>1</sup> For the history of this motif see *Studi Medievali*, xvii (1951), 104-13, and Ulrich von Zatzikhoven, *Lanzelet*, trans. K. G. T. Webster (New York, 1951), pp. 224-6.

<sup>2</sup> Malory, *Morte d'Arthur*, ed. H. O. Sommer (London, 1889), I, 213, 269 f.

<sup>3</sup> Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition*, p. 116, n. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Rhys, *Celtic Folklore*, II, 562. *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, xxx (1888), 174 n. Bruce, *Evolution*, II, 196.

<sup>5</sup> Gaimar, *Estorie des Engles*, ed. Hardy and Martin, Rolls Series (London, 1888), I, 285.

<sup>6</sup> Loomis, *Wales and the Arthurian Legend*, pp. 3-9. *Mabinogion*, trans. G. and T. Jones, Everyman's Lib., pp. 79-85.

<sup>7</sup> *Cymmrodor*; xxxiii (1923), 94.



heaps of rubble and grassy mounds. In a generation or two nobody had any idea where it was, and anyone who wanted to could claim it. The Scots were the first to put in their claim; in fact, they put in two claims. Barbour in his *Bruce*, Book IV, says that Kildrummy Castle, near Aberdeen, was called Snawdoune.<sup>1</sup> That was in 1375. Ten years earlier Froissart heard the other claim at Stirling.

It was this latter claim which has reverberated down the years. William of Worcester in the 15th century asserted: "Rex Arturus custodiebat le round table in Castro de Styryng, aliter Snowden West Castell."<sup>2</sup> Sir David Lindsay, in the *Complaint of the Papingo* (after 1530) carried on the pleasant illusion:<sup>3</sup>

Adew, fair Snawdoun, with thy towris hie,  
Thy Chapell-royall, park, and Tabyll Round.

Sir Walter Scott recalled in the *Lady of the Lake* that "Stirling's tower of yore the name of Snowdoun claims." At this very day, as I have been informed by Mr Angus Graham, the title of Snowdon Herald is customarily bestowed on the Lyon King of Arms on his retirement. The title, mentioned first in 1448, doubtless derives from the romantic name of Stirling Castle, but ultimately it goes back to the Anglo-Norman name for the Roman fort overlooking the Menai Strait, "la cité de Sinadon."

Stuart Glennie mentioned, of course, the most familiar testimonial to the vogue of Arthurian romance, namely, Arthur's Seat, and carried the name back to the end of the 15th century.<sup>4</sup> Kennedy in his flying with Dunbar refers to "Arthur's Sate or ony Hicher Hill." If there has ever been any legend linked to those magnificent crags, it has not come to my notice. Of one thing we can be sure: the name has no evidential value for Arthur's campaigning against the Angles in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh.

A famous figure associated with Arthur is Merlin, and by 1150, when Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote the *Vita Merlini*, the wizard was already represented as resorting in a fit of madness to the Caledonian Forest, and until very recently his supposed grave was to be seen at Drummelzier.<sup>5</sup> It is possible, moreover, that between 850 and 1150 a Welsh poem was composed, *Afallennau* (*The Appletrees*), in which Myrddin speaks of his miserable state in the Coed Celyddon. But the connections of Merlin with Scotland and the Scottish legend of Lailoken are far too complex to be discussed here, and I must refer the reader to H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, I, pp. 105-14, 123-32, 453-57, and to a chapter by Mr Jarman in *A History of Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages*, to be published in 1958, for the best-informed opinion on the subject.

<sup>1</sup> *Bruce*, Bk. IV, vs. 181.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72 f.

<sup>2</sup> Glennie, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Though, far into the 15th century, the Scots were eager to share with England in the glories of Arthur, it seems that with the accession of the Tudors Arthur's prestige was so successfully manipulated in the interest of the dynasty that one mode of attack on England was to debase Arthur and to undo the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth. In 1527 Hector Boece, first Principal of the University of Aberdeen, published the *Scotorum, Historia*, and proved himself a patriot indeed, but as a historian he stooped to the level of the Oxford *magister*. His method is quite obvious. First, Arthur was a bastard. To quote from the translation by Bellenden,<sup>1</sup> "the treuth is, that Uter gat him on ane othir mannis wife." Loth, on the other hand, is King of the Picts, and, as husband of Uter's legitimate daughter Anna, was "richt commovit that Arthur, gottin in adultrie, suld be preferrit to his childrin, gottin in lauchfull bed, and just heritouris of the crown of Britane."<sup>2</sup> It was Arthur who, it is said, instituted the practice of gormandising for thirteen days after Christmas, and as a consequence his army became so effeminate and soft that for many years they did little "displeasure" to the Saxons. When, at the great battle which Boece does not name but which is easily identifiable as that of Mount Badon, the Saxons under Colgern and Childrik fled or surrendered to Arthur, the credit for the victory is not his but belongs to the Picts under Loth. Doubts, amply justified of course, are cast on Arthur's conquests. When, after Loth's death, the Britons recognised not Modred but Constantine as Arthur's heir, Modred protested, and it was in a lawful quarrel, not in rebellion, that he met Arthur in the fatal battle. The Humber, not the Camblan River, ran red with blood; Arthur, Modred, and Walwan were slain; Guanora, her ladies, and her knights were captured and brought to the castle of Dundee. At Meigle is her sepulchre, held in special reverence of the people, "as the title writtin thairupon schawis: 'All wemen that strampis on this sepulture sall be ay barrant, but ony frute of thair wamb, siclike as Guanora was.'" Apparently, then, a local tradition was already in existence before Boece wrote, and by the time that the poet Gray visited Meigle in 1765 and saw the tomb, the women of the place were prepared to assert that Queen Wanders "was riven to dethe by staned-horses for nae gude that she did."<sup>3</sup> Thus in the interests of Scottish nationalism Arthur and his fair spouse were loaded with ignominy and Modred was whitewashed and exalted, much as Richard III has been in recent times.

Up to this point my paper seems to consist mainly of negatives. Arthur himself, so far as we know, never crossed the Tweed. Gawain never reigned

<sup>1</sup> Boece, trans. J. Bellenden (Edinburgh, 1821), II, 66-86. See R. H. Fletcher, *Arthurian Material in the Chronicles, Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, x (1906), 246.

<sup>2</sup> Already Fordun (1384-7) had made this point, but justified the choice of Arthur in preference to Galwanus and Modred as dictated by necessity, since the latter two were mere children when Uther died.

<sup>3</sup> *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. P. Toynbee and L. Whibley (Oxford, 1935), II, 891.

in Galloway. His father Loth had no connection with Lothian except through the accidental similarity of the two names. The identification of the Castle of Maidens with Edinburgh was nothing but a false inference from the supposition that Morgain la Fée, as King Loth's wife, must have resided in the principal fortress of Lothian. Sinadon was not Stirling, but the city of Snowdonia, the Roman fort of Segontium. Gawain's adventures at the perilous border river of Galloway had, originally, no connection with the Nith but with the Severn. But I have shown that the probabilities are strongly in favour of the activities of the historic Owein, son of Urien, as well as the romantic affairs of Yvain, having extended into regions included in the old Lothian.

After all these denials and doubts, I may conclude on a more positive, more affirmative note. Tristan or Tristram was a historic personage, a King of the Picts, and that means, of course, that Scotland can claim him as one of its most famous sons. Probably no statement about him in the great romance of the Middle Ages is true; he did not live in or near Arthur's time; even his tragic love for Isolt is the invention of a later age. But that Drust, son of Talorc, was a Pictish king of the Dark Ages and that he was the original of the Tristan of romance is not a private opinion of mine, but is now the widely accepted view of Arthurian specialists. First broached by Heinrich Zimmer, the theory has been adopted by Ferdinand Lot, Joseph Loth, Deutschbein, Brugger, Bruce, Bédier, and Mrs Bromwich.<sup>1</sup> I do not know of any scholar who is familiar with the texts and the evidence who rejects it.

In the *Chronicle of the Picts* a Drust, son of Talorcan, is recorded as reigning about the year 780.<sup>2</sup> Apparently his reign was uneventful and short. But it is demonstrable that a romantic story of the Perseus and Andromeda type grew up about him which is reflected, not only in the Irish saga of *The Wooing of Emer*, but also in the French romance of Tristram.<sup>3</sup> As Bédier long since worked out the itinerary,<sup>4</sup> the tradition passed from Scotland through Wales, Cornwall and Brittany into France and England. Drust, son of Talorcan, appears in Welsh as Drystan, son of Tallwch. He becomes the lover of Epyllt, wife of March, and eventually a contemporary of Arthur's. Miss Schoepperle proved that the tragic tale of adultery was elaborated under the influence of the Irish saga of Diarmaid and Grainne.<sup>5</sup> From Wales the legend passed on to the SW., King Mark became King of

<sup>1</sup> *Zeits. f. franz. Sprache u. Literatur*, XIII<sup>1</sup> (1891), 58 ff. *Romania*, XXV (1896), 15. *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, 1924, p. 128. *Beiblatt zur Anglia*, XV (1904), 16-21. *Modern Philology*, XXXIII, 231. J. D. Bruce, *Evolution*, I, 178 f. Thomas, *Tristan*, ed. Bédier (Paris, 1905), II, 105-8. R. Bromwich in *Trans. Hon. Soc. of Cymmrodorion*, 1953, pp 38 f.

<sup>2</sup> A. O. Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History* (Edinburgh, 1922), I, cxiii, cxxvii, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Beiblatt zur Anglia*, XV, 16-21. Thomas of Britain, *Romance of Tristram and Isolt*, trans. R. S. Loomis (New York, 1951), p. XX.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas, *Tristan*, ed. Bédier, II,

<sup>5</sup> G. Schoepperle, *Tristan and Isolt*, II, 395 ff. J. F. Campbell had already noticed the relationship in his *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* (London, 1890-3), IV, 240. See also *Romania*, LIII (1927), 92-95.

Cornwall, and his castle was identified with Tintagel, where the shattered walls, the cliffs, and the little cove are forever associated with the star-crossed lovers. Thence to Brittany, where we find a Tristan, lord of Vitré, in the first half of the 11th century.<sup>1</sup> There the story of the Second Isolt, Isolt of Brittany, was added, and the death of Tristram was localised;<sup>2</sup> there, as late as the 19th century, vestiges of the tradition survived in the form of folk-tales.<sup>3</sup> In the course of the 12th century the long romance of Tristram and Isolt was fully formed, was popularised by Breton *conteurs*, and taken up by poets of remarkable power. By the 13th century there was no branch of the Arthurian cycle more familiar throughout Europe, and Tristram and Isolt had become proverbial as ideal lovers.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of the migration of the legend through Wales, Cornwall and Brittany, two place-names embedded in the French romances still remained to suggest its Scottish origin. From these French texts through Malory comes the familiar association of Tristram with Lyonesse, the land of his birth. Most of us have been brought up to believe that Lyonesse was a region lying W. of Land's End and long since sunk beneath the Atlantic waves. Mr Bivar, however, in his penetrating article, "Lyonesse: the Evolution of a Fable,"<sup>5</sup> has demonstrated that this notion arose in the 17th century as the result of curious confusions, and Arthurian students have been aware for more than fifty years that Lyonesse was one of Malory's spellings of Leonois, and that Leonois or Loonois was a common French name for Lothian. Though, of course, Drust, the Pictish king of the 8th century, could not have known Lothian except as a troublesome neighbour, then settled by the Angles, it is probable that the association of Tristram with that region means that the derivation of the romance from Scotland was not completely forgotten.<sup>6</sup> This probability is strengthened by the fact that the poems of Eilhart von Oberg and Béroul state that when Tristram and Isolt were banished from King Mark's court, they fled to the forest of Morrois, and the only likely identification of Morrois is Moray—a very natural retreat for an exiled Pictish hero. I believe that the great majority of Arthurian scholars would agree with Bédier that Scotland was not only the birthplace of the historic Drust, but also of his legend.

By the early 13th century the romances of the Round Table, in oral and written form, had spread throughout Latin Christendom from Iceland to the Holy Land. Now they form an integral part of Western culture. But they are peculiarly the heritage of the English-speaking peoples, and this heirloom has deeply impressed upon it the mark of Scotland. Unless

<sup>1</sup> *Revue de Bretagne*, XVIII, 435-9.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas of Britain, *Romance of Tristram*, trans. Loomis, pp. XXVII f.

<sup>3</sup> *Annales de Bretagne*, LVI (1949), 203-10.

<sup>4</sup> For popularity of Tristan romance in medieval art see R. S. and L. H. Loomis, *Arthurian Legends*.

<sup>5</sup> *Modern Philology*, L (1950), 162-70.

<sup>6</sup> *Romania*, xxv (1896), 16 ff. J. D. Bruce, *Evolution*, I, 179, 180, n. 42.

the late Professor Ritchie and I are completely mistaken, this Scottish impress on Arthurian literature is mainly due to professional reciters and singers of the 12th century who found a welcome in Scotland and who gave their tales and their *lais* a setting that would appeal to their auditors. Even when they returned to England or to France, they retained the Scottish localisation.

May I be so bold as to suggest that a translation into English of the unfamiliar and almost inaccessible (except in large libraries) Breton *lais*—*Desiré*, *Doon* and *Gurun* (Norse)—and of the romance of *Fergus*, accompanied by an introduction and commentary, would be a service to Scotland, even perhaps a profitable publishing venture?