

REACTIONS TO GEOFFREY'S *HISTORIA*

Wace (c. 1110 – c. 1183), from *Roman de Brut*¹ (an Anglo-Norman translation of Geoffrey)

For twelve years after his return, Arthur reigned in peace. No one dared to make war on him, nor did he go to war himself. On his own, with no other instruction, he acquired such knightly skill and behaved so nobly, so finely and courteously, that there was no court so talked about, not even that of the Roman emperor. He never heard of a knight who was in any way considered to be praiseworthy who would not belong to his household, provided that he could get him, and if such a one wanted reward for his service, he would never leave deprived of it. On account of his noble barons—each of whom felt he was superior, each considered himself the best, and no one could say who was the worst—Arthur had the Round Table made, about which the British tell many a tale. There sat the vassals, all equal, all leaders; they were placed equally round the table and equally served. None of them could boast he sat higher than his peer; all were seated near the place of honour, none far away. No one—whether Scot, Briton, Frenchman, Norman, Angevin, Fleming, Burgundian or Lorrainer—whoever he held his fief from, from the West as far as Muntgieu, was accounted courtly if he did not go to Arthur's court and stay with him and wear the livery, device and armor in the fashion of those who served at that court. They came from many lands, those who sought honour and renown, partly to hear of his courtly deeds, partly to see his rich possessions, partly to know his barons, partly to receive his splendid gifts. He was loved by the poor and greatly honoured by the rich. Foreign kings envied him, doubting and fearing he would conquer the whole world and take their territories away.

In this time of great peace I speak of—I do not know if you have heard of it—the wondrous events appeared and the adventures were sought out of which are so often told about Arthur that they have become the stuff of fiction: not all lies, not all truth, neither total folly nor total wisdom. The raconteurs have told so many yarns, the story-tellers so many stories, to embellish their tales that they have made it all appear fiction. . . .

Arthur, if the chronicle is true, received a mortal wound to his body. He had himself carried to Avalon, for the treatment of his wounds. He is still there, awaited by the Britons, as they say and believe, and will return and may live again. Master Wace, who made this book, will say no more of his end than the prophet Merlin did. Merlin said of Arthur, rightly, that this death would be doubtful. The prophet spoke truly: ever since, people have always doubted it and always will, I think, doubt whether he is dead or alive. It is true that he had himself borne away to Avalon, five hundred and forty-two years after the Incarnation. It was a great loss that he had no children. To Cador's son, Constantine of Cornwall, his cousin, he surrendered his kingdom, and told him to be king until he returned.

¹ From Judith Weiss, trans., *Wace's Roman de Brut: A History of the British* (Exeter: U of Exeter Press, 1999).

La3amon (fl. 1200), from *Brut*² (an English translation of Geoffrey)

This was the very table which the Britons boast about,
 And they tell many kinds of fiction about Arthur who was king,
 But so does every man who has great love for another:
 If he loves that man too much then he is bound to lie,
 And in his fine praise he'll say more than he deserves;
 However bad a man he is, his friend will back him up still;
 On the other hand if enmity should arise in the community,
 On any occasion between two individuals,
 Lies will be invented about the one who isn't liked:
 Even if he were the best man who ever ate bread at table
 The man who found him hateful would invent some vices for him:
 It's not all true, it's not all false which poets are proclaiming,
 But this is true fact about Arthur the king:
 There has never been a king so valiant in everything;
 It's found as fact in the annals just as it actually was,
 from the start to the end, concerning Arthur the king,
 No more and no less, just as his deeds were recorded,
 But the Britons loved him greatly and often lie about him
 And recount many things about Arthur the king
 Which never really happened in the whole of this world!
 A man can say enough, if he just tells the truth,
 Of outstanding things about Arthur the king.

² From Lawman, *Brut*, trans. Rosamund Allen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).

William of Newburgh (1136-1198), preface to *History of the English Kings*³

The history of our English nation has been written by the venerable Bede, a priest and monk, who, the more readily to gain the object he had in view, commenced his narrative at a very remote period, though he only glanced, with cautious brevity, at the more prominent actions of the Britons, who are known to have been the aborigines of our island. The Britons, however, had before him a historian of their own, from whose work Bede has inserted an extract; this fact I observed some years since, when I accidentally discovered a copy of the work of Gildas. His history, however, is rarely to be found, for few persons care either to transcribe or possess it, his style being so coarse and unpolished; his impartiality, however, is strong in developing truth, for he never spares even his own countrymen; he touches lightly upon their good qualities, and laments their numerous bad ones: there can be no suspicion that the truth is disguised, when a Briton, speaking of Britons, declares, that they were neither courageous in war, nor faithful in peace.

For the purpose of washing out those stains from the character of the Britons, a writer in our times has started up and invented the most ridiculous fictions concerning them, and with unblushing effrontery, extols them far above the Macedonians and Romans. He is called Geoffrey, surnamed Arthur, from having given, in a Latin version, the fabulous exploits of Arthur, drawn from the traditional fictions of the Britons, with additions of his own, and endeavored to dignify them with the name of authentic history; moreover, he has unscrupulously promulgated the mendacious predictions of one Merlin, as if they were genuine prophecies, corroborated by indubitable truth, to which also he has himself considerably added during the process of translating them into Latin. He further declares that this Merlin was the issue of a demon and woman, and, as participating in his father's nature, attributes to him the most exact and extensive knowledge of futurity; whereas, we are rightly taught, by reason and the holy scriptures, that devils, being excluded from the light of God, can never by meditation arrive at the cognizance of future events; though by the means of some types, more evident to them than to us, they may predict events to come rather by conjecture than by certain knowledge. Moreover, even in their conjectures, subtle though they be, they often deceive themselves as well as others. Nevertheless, they impose on the ignorant by their feigned divinations, and arrogate to themselves a prescience which, in truth, they do not possess. The fallacies of Merlin's prophecies are, indeed, evident in circumstances which are known to have transpired in the kingdom of England after the death of Geoffrey himself, who translated these follies from the British language, to which, as is truly believed, he added much from his own invention. . . .

Now, since it is evident that these facts are established with historical authenticity by the venerable Bede, it appears that whatever Geoffrey has written, subsequent to Vortigern, either of Arthur, or his successors, or predecessors, is a fiction, invented either by himself or by others, and promulgated either through an unchecked propensity to falsehood, or a desire to please the Britons, of whom vast numbers are said to be so stupid as to assert that Arthur is yet to come, and who cannot bear to hear of his death. Lastly, he makes Aurelius Ambrosius succeed to Vortigern (the Saxons whom he had sent for being conquered and expelled), and pretends that he governed all England superexcellently; he also mentions Utherpendragon, his brother, as his successor, whom, he pretends, reigned with equal power and glory, adding a vast deal from Merlin, out of his profuse addiction to lying. On the decease of Utherpendragon, he makes his son Arthur succeed to the kingdom of Britain -- the fourth in succession from Vortigern, in like manner as our Bede places Ethelberht, the patron of Augustine, fourth from Hengist in the government of the Angles. Therefore, the reign of Arthur, and the arrival of Augustine in England, ought to coincide.

³ <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/williamofnewburgh-one.html>

But how much plain historical truth outweighs concerted fiction may, in this particular, be perceived even by a purblind man through his mind's eye. Moreover, he depicts Arthur himself as great and powerful beyond all men, and as celebrated in his exploits as he chose to feign him. First, he makes him triumph, at pleasure, over Angles, Picts, and Scots; then, he subdues Ireland, the Orkneys, Gothland, Norway, Denmark, partly by war, partly by the single terror of his name. To these he adds Iceland, which, by some, is called the remotest Thule, in order that what a noble poet flatteringly said to the Roman Augustus, "The distant Thule shall confess thy sway," might apply to the British Arthur. Next, he makes him attack, and speedily triumph over, Gaul -- a nation which Julius Caesar, with infinite peril and labor, was scarcely able to subjugate in ten years -- as though the little finger of the British was more powerful than the loins of the mighty Caesar. After this, with numberless triumphs, he brings him back to England, where he celebrates his conquests with a splendid banquet with his subject-kings and princes, in the presence of the three archbishops of the Britons, that is London, Carleon, and York -- whereas, the Britons at that time never had an archbishop. Augustine, having received the pall from the Roman pontiff, was made the first archbishop in Britain; for the barbarous nations of Europe, though long since converted to the Christian faith, were content with bishops, and did not regard the prerogative of the pall. Lastly, the Irish, Norwegians, Danes, and Goths, though confessedly Christians, for a long while possessed only bishops, and had no archbishops until our own time.

Next this fabler, to carry his Arthur to the highest summit, makes him declare war against the Romans, having, however, first vanquished a giant of surprising magnitude in single combat, though since the times of David we never read of giants. Then, with a wider license of fabrication, he brings all the kings of the world in league with the Romans against him; that is to say, the kings of Greece, Africa, Spain, Parthia, Media, Iturea, Libya, Egypt, Babylon, Bithynia, Phrygia, Syria, Boeotia, and Crete, and he relates that all of them were conquered by him in a single battle; whereas, even Alexander the Great, renowned throughout all ages, was engaged for twelve years in vanquishing only a few of the potentates of these mighty kingdoms. Indeed, he makes the little finger of his Arthur more powerful than the loins of Alexander the Great; more especially when, previous to the victory over so many kings, he introduces him relating to his comrades the subjugation of thirty kingdoms by his and their united efforts; whereas, in fact, this romancer will not find in the world so many kingdoms, in addition to those mentioned, which he had not yet subdued. Does he dream of another world possessing countless kingdoms, in which the circumstances he has related took place? Certainly, in our own orb no such events have happened. For how would the elder historians, who were ever anxious to omit nothing remarkable, and even recorded trivial circumstances, pass by unnoticed so incomparable a man, and such surpassing deeds? How could they, I repeat, by their silence, suppress Arthur, the British monarch (superior to Alexander the Great), and his deeds, or Merlin, the British prophet (the rival of Isaiah), and his prophecies? For what less in the knowledge of future events does he attribute to this Merlin than we do to Isaiah, except, indeed, that he durst not prefix to his productions, "Thus saith the Lord" and was ashamed to say, "Thus saith the Devil," though this had been best suited to a prophet the offspring of a demon.

Since, therefore, the ancient historians make not the slightest mention of these matters, it is plain that whatever this man published of Arthur and of Merlin are mendacious fictions, invented to gratify the curiosity of the undiscerning. Moreover, it is to be noted that he subsequently relates that the same Arthur was mortally wounded in battle, and that, after having disposed of his kingdom he retired into the island of Avallon, according to the British fables, to be cured of his wounds; not daring, through fear of the Britons, to assert that he was dead -- he whom these truly silly Britons declare is still to come. Of the successors of Arthur he feigns, with similar effrontery, giving them

the monarchy of Britain, even to the seventh generation, making those noble kings of the Angles (whom the venerable Bede declares to have been monarchs of Britain) their slaves and vassals.

Therefore, let Bede, of whose wisdom and integrity none can doubt, possess our unbounded confidence, and let this fabler, with his fictions, be instantly rejected by all.

William of Malmesbury, d. 1143?, from *Chronicle of the Kings of England*⁴

Vortimer, the son of Vortigern thinking it unnecessary longer to dissemble that he saw himself and his Briton circumvented by the craft of the Angles, turned his thoughts to their expulsion, and stimulated his father to the same attempt. At his suggestion, the truce was broken seven years after their arrival; and during the ensuing twenty, they frequently fought partial battles, and, as the [Anglo-Saxon] chronicle relates, four general actions. From the first conflict they parted on equal terms: one party lamenting the loss of Horsa, the brother of Hengist; the other, that of Katigis, another of Vortigern's sons. The Angles, having the advantage in all the succeeding encounters, peace was concluded; Vortimer, who had been the instigator of the war, and differed far from the indolence of his father, perished prematurely, or he would have governed the kingdom in a noble manner, had God permitted. When he died, the British strength decayed, and all hope fled from them; and they would soon have perished altogether, had not Ambrosius, the sole survivor of the Romans, who became monarch after Vortigern, quelled the presumptuous barbarians by the powerful aid of warlike Arthur. It is of this Arthur that the Britons fondly tell so many fables, even to the present day; a man worthy to be celebrated, not by idle fictions, but by authentic history. He long upheld the sinking state, and roused the broken spirit of his countrymen to war. Finally, at the siege of Mount Badon, relying on an image of the Virgin, which he had affixed to his armor, he engaged nine hundred of the enemy, single-handed, and dispersed them with incredible slaughter. On the other side, the Angles, after various revolutions of fortune, filled up their thinned battalions with fresh supplies of their countrymen; rushed with greater courage to the conflict, and extended themselves by degrees, as the natives retreated, over the whole island: for the counsels of God, in whose hand is every change of empire, did not oppose their career. But this was effected in process of time; for while Vortigern lived, no new attempt was made against them. About this time, Hengist, from that bad quality of the human heart which grasps after more in proportion to what it already possesses, by a preconcerted piece of deception, invited his son-in-law, with three hundred of his followers, to an entertainment; and when, by more than usual computations, he had excited them to clamor, he began, purposely, to taunt them severally, with sarcastic raillery: this had the desired effect, of making them first quarrel, and then come to blows. Thus the Britons were basely murdered to a man, and breathed their last amid their cups. The king himself, made captive, purchased his liberty at the price of three provinces. After this, Hengist died, in the thirty-ninth year after his arrival; he was a man, who urging his success not less by artifice than courage, and giving free scope to his natural ferocity, preferred effecting his purpose rather by cruelty than by kindness. He left a son named Eisc; who, more intent on defending than enlarging his dominions, never exceeded the paternal bounds. At the expiration of twenty-four years, he had for his successors his son Otha, and Otha's son, Ermenric, who, in their manners resembled him, rather than their grandfather and great grandfather. To the times of both, the Chronicles assign fifty-three years; but whether they reigned singly or together, does not appear.

⁴ <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/malmsbury-chronicle1.html>

Gerald of Wales (c. 1146 – c. 1223)

From *The Journey through Wales*⁵

It is worth relating that in our days there lived in the neighbourhood of this City of the Legions a certain Welshman called Meilyr who could explain the occult and foretell the future. He acquired his skill in the following way. One evening, and, to be precise, it was Palm Sunday, he happened to meet a girl whom he had loved for a long time. She was very beautiful, the spot was an attractive one, and it seemed too good an opportunity to be missed. He was enjoying himself in her arms and tasting her delights, when suddenly, instead of the beautiful girl, he found in his embrace a hairy creature, rough and shaggy, and, indeed, repulsive beyond words. As he stared at the monster his wits deserted him and he became quite mad. He remained in this condition for many years. Eventually he recovered his health in the church of St David's, thanks to the virtues of the saintly men of that place. All the same, he retained a very close and most remarkable familiarity with unclean spirits, being able to see them, recognizing them, talking to them and calling them each by his own name, so that with their help he could often prophesy the future. Just as they are, too, he was often mistaken about events in the distant future, or happenings far away in space; but he was less often wrong about matters nearer home or likely to occur within the coming year. He nearly always saw these spirits standing close beside him and near at hand. They would appear in the form of huntsmen, with horns hanging round their necks, but it was human souls which they were pursuing, not animals or wild beasts. He saw them most often and in greatest numbers outside monasteries and houses of religion. Wherever man is in revolt, there they deploy their full battalions, there they need their greatest strength. Whenever anyone told a lie in his presence, Meilyr was immediately aware of it, for he saw a demon dancing and exulting on the liar's tongue. Although he was completely illiterate, if he looked at a book which was incorrect, which contained some false statement, or which aimed at deceiving the reader, he immediately put his finger on the offending passage. If you asked him how he knew this, he said that a devil first pointed out the place with its finger. In the same way, and again with a demon to help him, whenever he went into the dormitory of a monastery, he would point to the bed of any false monk whose religion was a pretext and did not come from the heart. He maintained that the vice of gluttony and greed was sordid beyond words; the vice of lust and libidinousness was perhaps more pleasing to the eye, but it was really even more foul. When he was harassed beyond endurance by these unclean spirits, Saint John's Gospel was placed on his lap, and then they all vanished immediately, flying away like so many birds. If the Gospel were afterwards removed and the "*History of the Kings of Britain*" by Geoffrey of Monmouth put there in its place, just to see what would happen, the demons would alight all over his body, and on the book, too, staying there longer than usual and being even more demanding. Barnabas, one remembers, or so we read in the stories told about him, used to place Saint Matthew's Gospel on people who were ill, and they were cured immediately. It is clear from this, and so it is, indeed, from the account which I have just given to you, how much respect and reverence we owe to each of the books of the Gospel. It is equally clear that anyone who knowingly perjures himself on one of the Gospels deviates from the path of truth with great danger to himself and with the risk of eternal damnation.

⁵ <http://www.caerleon.net/history/gerald/>

From *The Instruction of Princes*⁶

The memory of Arthur, the celebrated king of the Britons, should not be concealed. In his age, he was a distinguished patron, generous donor, and a splendid supporter of the renowned monastery of Glastonbury; they praise him greatly in their annals. Indeed, more than all other churches of his realm he prized the Glastonbury church of Holy Mary, mother of God, and sponsored it with greater devotion by far than he did for the rest. When that man went forth for war, depicted on the inside part of his shield was the image of the Blessed Virgin, so that he would always have her before his eyes in battle, and whenever he found himself in a dangerous encounter he was accustomed to kiss her feet with the greatest devotion.

Although legends had fabricated something fantastical about his demise (that he had not suffered death, and was conveyed, as if by a spirit, to a distant place), his body was discovered at Glastonbury, in our own times, hidden very deep in the earth in an oak-hollow, between two stone pyramids that were erected long ago in that holy place. The tomb was sealed up with astonishing tokens, like some sort of miracle. The body was then conveyed into the church with honor, and properly committed to a marble tomb. A lead cross was placed under the stone, not above as is usual in our times, but instead fastened to the underside. I have seen this cross, and have traced the engraved letters -- not visible and facing outward, but rather turned inwardly toward the stone. It read: "Here lies entombed King Arthur, with Guenevere his second wife, on the Isle of Avalon."

Many remarkable things come to mind regarding this. For instance, he had two wives, of whom the last was buried with him. Her bones were discovered with her husband's, though separated in such a way that two-thirds of the sepulcher, namely the part nearer the top, was believed to contain the bones of the husband, and then one-third, toward the bottom, separately contained the bones of his wife -- wherein was also discovered a yellow lock of feminine hair, entirely intact and pristine in color, which a certain monk eagerly seized in hand and lifted out; immediately the whole thing crumbled to dust.

Indeed, there had been some evidence from the records that the body might be found there, and some from the lettering carved on the pyramids (although that was mostly obliterated by excessive antiquity), and also some that came from the visions and revelations made by good men and the devout. But the clearest evidence came when King Henry II of England explained the whole matter to the monks (as he had heard it from an aged British poet): how they would find the body deep down, namely more than 16 feet into the earth, and not in a stone tomb but in an oak-hollow. The body had been placed so deep, and was so well concealed, that it could not be found by the Saxons who conquered the island after the king's death -- those whom he had battled with so much exertion while he was alive, and whom he had nearly annihilated. And so because of this the lettering on the cross -- the confirmation of the truth -- had been inscribed on the reverse side, turned toward the stone, so that it would conceal the tomb at that time and yet at some moment or occasion could ultimately divulge what it contained.

What is now called Glastonbury was, in antiquity, called the Isle of Avalon; it is like an island because it is entirely hemmed in by swamps. In British it is called *Inis Avallon*, that is, *insula pomifera* [Latin: "The Island of Apples"]. This is because the apple, which is called *aval* in the British tongue, was once abundant in that place. Morgan, a noble matron, mistress and patroness of those regions, and also King Arthur's kinswoman by blood, brought Arthur to the island now called Glastonbury for the healing of his wounds after the Battle of Camlann. Moreover, the island had once been called in British *Inis Gutrin*, that is, *insula vitrea* [Latin: "The Island of Glass"]; from this name, the invading

⁶ <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/gerald.htm>

Saxons afterwards called this place *Glastingeburi*, for *glas* in their language means *vitrum* [Latin: "glass"], and *buri* stands for *castrum* [Latin: "castle"] or *civitas* [Latin: "city"].

It should be noted also that the bones of Arthur's body that they discovered were so large that the poet's verse seems to ring true: "Bones excavated from tombs are reckoned enormous." Indeed, his shin-bone, which the abbot showed to us, was placed near the shin of the tallest man of the region; then it was fixed to the ground against the man's foot, and it extended substantially more than three inches above his knee. And the skull was broad and huge, as if he were a monster or prodigy, to the extent that the space between the eyebrows and the eye-sockets amply encompassed the breadth of one's palm. Moreover, ten or more wounds were visible on that skull, all of which had healed into scars except one, greater than the rest, which had made a large cleft -- this seems to have been the lethal one.

From *Mirror of the Church* (chapters 8-10)⁷

Cap. VIII. *Regarding the monk who, at the discovery of the tomb of Arthur, pulled out a lock of women's hair with his hand, and quite shamelessly accelerated its ruin.*

Furthermore, in our times, while Henry II was ruling England, the tomb of the renowned Arthur was searched for meticulously in Glastonbury Abbey; this was done at the instruction of the king and under the supervision of the abbot of that place, Henry, who was later transferred to Worcester Cathedral. With much effort the tomb was excavated in the holy burial-ground that had been dedicated by Saint Dunstan; it was found between two tall, emblazoned pyramids, erected long ago in memory of Arthur. Though his body and bones had been reduced to dust, they were conveyed from below into the air, and to a more dignified place.

A lock of female hair -- blond and beautiful, twisted and braided with astonishing skill -- was discovered in the same tomb, evidently from Arthur's wife, who was buried in the same place as her husband. [Standing among the crowd is a monk who sees the lock of hair.] So that he could seize the lock before all others, he hurled himself headlong into the lowest depths of the cavity. Then the aforementioned monk, that insolent spectator, no less impudent than imprudent, descended into the depths -- the depths symbolize the infernal realm, which cannot be sated. Thus the monk thought to pull it out with his hand, to take hold of the lock of hair before all others -- evidence of his shameless mind, for women's hair entangles the weak-willed, while strong souls avoid it. Hair, of course, is said to be incorruptible, for it has no flesh in it, nor any moisture mixed with it. Nevertheless, as he held it in his hand, having raised it up in order to inspect it (many watched intently and in amazement), it crumbled into the thinnest dust; miraculously it disintegrated, as if reduced to granules. [There are a few words missing here.] For it demonstrated that all things are transitory, and all worldly beauty is for our vain eyes to gaze upon, for performing illicit sensual acts, or for our moments that are susceptible to vanity -- indeed, as the philosopher said, "the splendor of beauty is swift, passing, changeable, and more fleeting than the flowers of spring."

Cap. IX. *Regarding the bones lying intact in the tomb of King Arthur, discovered at Glastonbury in our times, and about the many things relating to these remarkable circumstances.*

Furthermore, tales are regularly reported and fabricated about King Arthur and his uncertain end, with the British peoples even now contending foolishly that he is still alive. True and accurate information has been sought out, so the legends have finally been extinguished; the truth about this

⁷ <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/gerald.htm>

matter should be revealed plainly, so here I have endeavored to add something to the indisputable facts that have been disclosed.

After the Battle of Camlann . . . [A number of words are missing.] And so, after Arthur had been mortally wounded there, his body was taken to the Isle of Avalon, which is now called Glastonbury, by a noble matron and kinswoman named Morgan; afterwards the remains were buried, according to her direction, in the holy burial-ground. As a result of this, the Britons and their poets have been concocting legends that a certain fantastic goddess, also called Morgan, carried off the body of Arthur to the Isle of Avalon for the healing of his wounds. When his wounds have healed, the strong and powerful king will return to rule the Britons (or so the Britons suppose), as he did before. Thus they still await him, just as the Jews, deceived by even greater stupidity, misfortune, and faithlessness, likewise await their Messiah.

It is significant . . . [Two sentences or so are highly damaged.] Truly it is called Avalon, either from the British word *aval*, which means *pomum* [Latin: "apple"], because apples and apple trees abound in that place; or, from the name Vallo, once the ruler of that territory. Likewise, long ago the place was usually called in British *Inis Gutrin*, that is, *insula vitrea* [Latin: "The Island of Glass"], evidently on account of the river, most like glass in color, that flows around the marshes. Because of this, it was later called *Glastonia* in the language of the Saxons who seized this land, since *glas* in English or in Saxon means *vitrum* [Latin: "glass"]. It is clear from this, therefore, why it was called an island, why it was called Avalon, and why it was called *Glastonia*; it is also clear how the fantastic goddess Morgan was contrived by poets.

It is also notable that . . . [Several words are missing, obscuring the meaning of the first part of the sentence.] from the letters inscribed on it, yet nearly all, however, was destroyed by antiquity. The abbot had the best evidence from the aforementioned King Henry, for the king had said many times, as he had heard from the historical tales of the Britons and from their poets, that Arthur was buried between two pyramids that were erected in the holy burial-ground. These were very deep, on account of the Saxons (whom he had subdued often and expelled from the Island of Britain, and whom his evil nephew Mordred had later called back against him), who endeavored to occupy the whole island again after his death; so their fear was that Saxons might despoil him in death through the wickedness of their vengeful spirit.

A broad stone was unearthed during the excavating at the tomb, about seven feet . . . [A couple of words are missing.] a lead cross was fastened -- not to the outer part of the stone, but rather to the underside (no doubt as a result of their fears about the Saxons). It had these words inscribed on it: "Here lies entombed King Arthur, on the Isle of Avalon, with Guenevere his second wife." Now when they had extracted this cross from the stone, the aforementioned Abbot Henry showed it to me; I examined it, and read the words. The cross was fastened to the underside the stone, and, moreover, the engraved part of the cross was turned toward the stone, so that it would be better concealed. Remarkable indeed was the industry and exquisite prudence of the men of that era, who, by all their exertions, wished to hide forever the body of so great a man, their lord, and the patron of that region, from the danger of sudden disturbance. Moreover, they took care that -- at some time in the future when their tribulations had ceased -- the evidence of the letters inscribed on the cross could be made public.

Cap. X. *The renowned King Arthur was a patron of Glastonbury Abbey.* [Enough words are missing that the rest of this chapter heading is indecipherable.]

[The beginning of the sentence is lost.] . . . had proposed, thus Arthur's body was discovered not in a marble tomb, not cut from rock or Parian stone, as was fitting for so distinguished a king, but rather in wood, in oak that was hollowed out for this purpose, and 16 feet or more deep in the

earth; this was certainly on account of haste rather than proper ceremony for the burial of so great a prince, driven as they were by a time of urgent distress.

When the body was discovered according to the directions indicated by King Henry, the aforementioned abbot had an extraordinary marble tomb made for the remains, as was fitting for an excellent patron of that place, for indeed, he had prized that church more than all the rest in his kingdom, and had enriched it with large and numerous lands. And for that reason it was not undeserved, but just and by the judgment of God, who rewards all good deeds not only in heaven, but also on earth and in this life. [The end is very defective.] . . . and the authentic body of Arthur . . . to be buried properly . . .