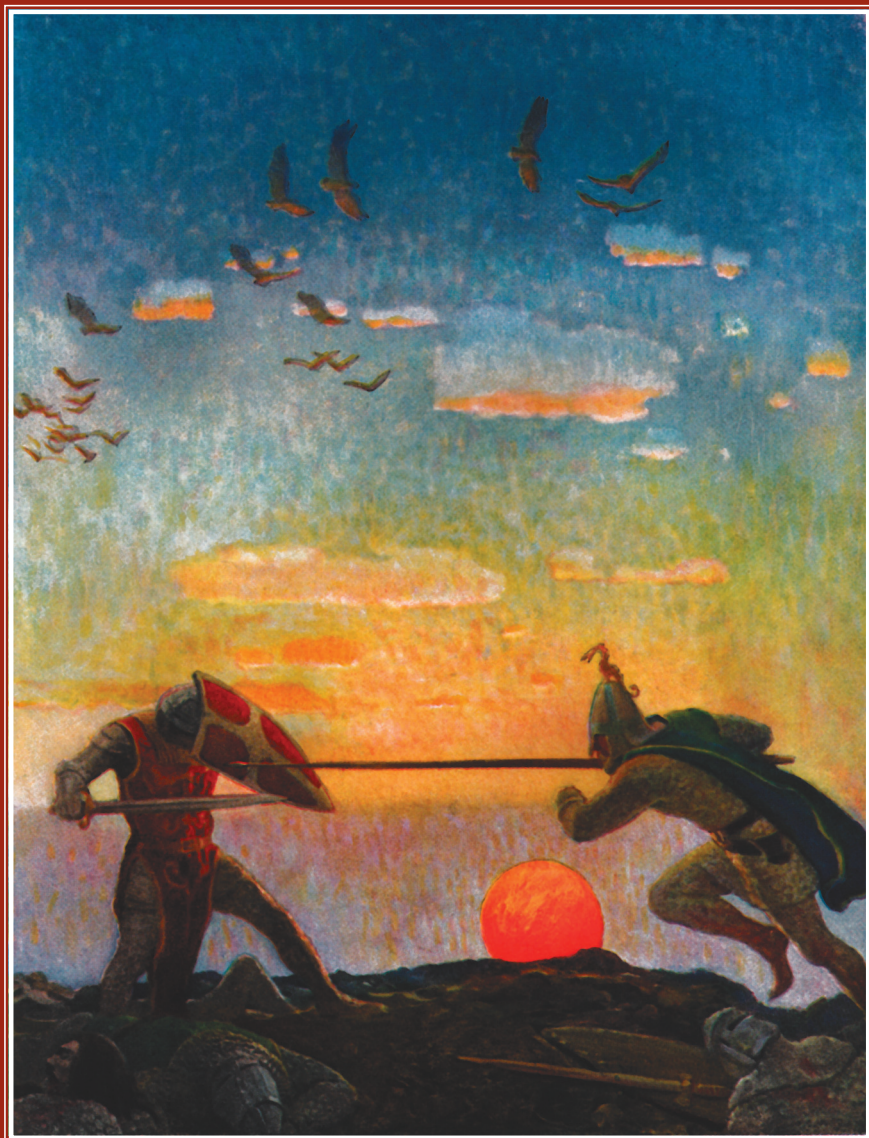


King Arthur's Children

A Study in Fiction and Tradition



Tyler R. Tichelaar, Ph.D.

King Arthur's Children
A Study in Fiction and Tradition

Tyler R. Tichelaar, Ph.D.

The Reflections of Camelot Series

M o d e r n H i s t o r y P r e s s

King Arthur's Children: A Study In Fiction and Tradition
Copyright © 2011 by Tyler R. Tichelaar. All rights reserved.
From the Reflections of Camelot Series
Cover art by N.C. Wyeth from *The Boy's King Arthur* (1917)

No part of this book may be used or reproduced by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or by any information storage retrieval system without the written permission of the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. Inquiries should be addressed to:

Modern History Press, an imprint of Loving Healing Press
5145 Pontiac Trail
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

www.ModernHistoryPress.com
info@ModernHistoryPress.com
Tollfree (USA/CAN): 888-761-6268
London, England: 44-20-331-81304

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Tichelaar, Tyler, 1971-
King Arthur's children : a study in fiction and tradition / Tyler R. Tichelaar.
p. cm. -- (The reflections of Camelot series)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN-13: 978-1-61599-066-5 (trade paper : alk. paper)
ISBN-10: 1-61599-066-6 (trade paper : alk. paper)
ISBN-13: 978-1-61599-067-2 (hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN-10: 1-61599-067-4 (hardcover : alk. paper)
1. Arthurian romances--History and criticism. 2. Arthur, King--In literature. 3. Children in literature. I. Title.
PN686.A7T53 2011
809'.93551--dc22

2010038116

Distributed by Ingram Book Group, Bertram's Books (UK),
Hachette Livre (FR), Agapea (SP), Angus & Robertson (AU).

Contents

Figures.....	ii
Introduction	iii
Part I: The Earliest Children in the Welsh Legends	1
Chapter 1: Gwydre.....	3
Chapter 2: Amr	13
Chapter 3: Llacheu	19
Part II: Mordred.....	33
Chapter 4: Mordred's Birth and Origins.....	35
Chapter 5: The Character of Mordred.....	47
Chapter 6: Mordred and the Abduction of Guinevere	53
Chapter 7: Arthur, Mordred, and Guinevere: A Romantic Triangle.....	65
Chapter 8: The Battle of Camlann.....	77
Chapter 9: Mordred, Scotland's Beloved King.....	85
Chapter 10: Mordred's Sons.....	91
Chapter 11: Constantine	97
Part III: Arthur's Descendants	107
Chapter 12: Arthur, Cerdic, and Vortigern.....	109
Chapter 13: Arthur and the English Royal Family.....	115
Chapter 14: Smervie and the Clan Campbell.....	123
Part IV: The Forgotten and Fictional Children.....	129
Chapter 15: The Minor Children in the Middle Ages and Renaissance	131
Chapter 16: King Arthur's Children in Modern Fiction.....	139
Conclusion	173
Appendix: Mordred and Modron.....	177
Bibliography.....	181
About the Author	189
Index	191

Figures

Genealogy suggested by Geoffrey Ashe.....	110
The Ten Generations above Colin Mór	127

Introduction

The subject of King Arthur's children is not widely known even to the legend's most avid readers. Mention of these children may make readers pause for a moment, say to themselves, "What children?" and then add, "Well, of course there's Mordred, but sometimes he is King Arthur's nephew rather than his son."

My reaction was similar when I first found mention of King Arthur having any children other than Mordred. The fact is, however, that King Arthur has traditionally had children almost since the legends were first told. Over the centuries, these children were lost amid the continually increasing number of new stories, many springing up without any source in the tradition, only to be added to the legend, while the original Celtic stories were largely forgotten. Occasionally, when scholars came across obscure references to one of Arthur's children in the earlier sources, they were unsure what to make of this curiosity. As Arthurian studies have progressed, particularly over the last century, however, efforts have been made to understand the historical time period in which King Arthur lived, around the fifth to early sixth centuries; this research has resulted in many discoveries and even more theories, some of which will now allow us to make more accurate statements about King Arthur's forgotten children.

With the continual increase of interest in the Arthurian legends, it is time that a study finally be made of King Arthur's children. If we wish to discover who the historical King Arthur was, perhaps we might find out something about him by studying his children. The need to study King Arthur's children is almost as important as the study of King Arthur himself because King Arthur's children, as we will see, are what help connect us to King Arthur's time period. The

concept of King Arthur and the golden age he established fulfills a psychological yearning for many people. Comfort and satisfaction can be derived from believing in King Arthur's ethical code. People have a need to believe in a golden age as we saw during John F. Kennedy's presidency when attempts were made to compare Kennedy and the United States to King Arthur and Camelot. By discovering Arthur's children and descendants, we find a link between the age of Arthur and our own time.

At the end of *The Discovery of King Arthur*, Geoffrey Ashe asks why the spell of King Arthur continues to excite us and capture our imaginations (189). Ashe suggests King Arthur's popularity in the United States may be based in Americans' tendency to speak about their "roots." But then he comments, "I doubt if this is the whole answer, since most Americans are not British descended" (189).

Actually, estimates of Americans of British (English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh) descent run from 50-80% depending on the study. The number of studies and results on the Internet of how many Americans have British ancestry is too many to detail, but they can easily be found. Even people who identify themselves as African American often have Caucasian blood—and those descended from slaves with white blood will generally find that the Southern white slave owner in the family tree was of British descent. If we consider that King Arthur likely lived about the year 500 A.D. and we then consider how many descendants he had and how they migrated across the globe over fifteen hundred years, it is not much of a stretch to suggest that nearly everyone on earth can potentially be a descendant of King Arthur—provided he lived and did have children. DNA analysis recently has proven that everyone of European descent alive today can claim descent from anyone who lived in Europe prior to the year 1200 A.D.

In fact, as Steve Olson demonstrates in *Mapping Human History: Discovering the Past Through Our Genes*, if we go back just ten generations, we each would have 1024 ancestors, so thirty generations ago that number would be $1024 \times 1024 \times 1024$, which equals over one billion. Since that many people did not live in the world thirty generations ago—estimates for the year 1400 were 375

million—many of our ancestors repeat, meaning our ancestors married distant cousins and shared similar ancestors. In any case, we can probably all claim descent from such famous ancient people as Confucius, Queen Nefertiti, and Julius Caesar (Olson 46-47). Furthermore, even people today of predominantly Asian or African descent could be descended from King Arthur. African-American poet Elizabeth Alexander, for example, is a descendant of King John of England (reigned 1199-1216 A.D.), as recently revealed on the PBS show *Faces of America with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* broadcast in 2010. As Steve Olsen notes, “suppose an emissary from Ethiopia married a woman in the court of Henry II and had children. Today, all Europeans are descended from that Ethiopian” (46).

Anyone interested in genealogy knows that “race” does not really exist. In researching my own ancestry, I have found myself descended not only from people in every country in Europe but even China, India, and Persia. The human race is itself a melting pot. With these statistics, based in fact, not merely fancy, if King Arthur were a historical person, he is very likely ancestor to all of us. Our descent from King Arthur is obviously through his children, so we should learn more about them.

My own interest in King Arthur began when I first read *The Boy's King Arthur* at the age of fourteen. At twenty-one, I also began to take an interest in genealogy and traced my family back to King Edward III of England, among whose ancestors, of course, was Cerdic, King of Wessex, credited with being one of Arthur's greatest enemies. Imagine my surprise and interest when I read Geoffrey Ashe's suggestion that Cerdic was a possible son of King Arthur (199). If this relationship were true, then I would be a direct descendant of King Arthur! Something of a boyish pride swelled up in my heart, something that perhaps non-genealogists or non-lovers of Arthurian literature would not understand, but who would not like to claim descent from King Arthur? Later, I will discuss whether or not Cerdic is a possible son of King Arthur, but Geoffrey Ashe's suggestion was enough to spark my interest, especially when I learned King Arthur also had other children. The descendants of these other children must have multiplied so that by the 1600s,

when Americans' British ancestors began journeying to the New World, several of them may have been carrying Arthurian blood over the seas with them. Not only I but thousands if not millions of other Americans would therefore be descendants of King Arthur!

If there were a King Arthur, then his descendants are probably more numerous than can ever be thoroughly traced. We may never know whether Arthur's descendants are living among us (or are us), as we may never know whether Arthur was a real person. However, both are pleasant thoughts, and I personally believe both may be more than just possibilities.

Even if it is not through blood, then through culture Americans are the descendants of Arthur and his times. The popularity of Arthurian literature can quickly transport anyone who reads a book or watches a film back to the Arthurian age. The ideals with which we credit Arthurian times, whether the period received those ideals from our time, or our time from the past, still serve to connect us.

Arthur's children are of interest to us, whether it is through genealogy or by cultural heritage. In *King Arthur's Daughter*, Vera Chapman makes this point nicely when she writes about the growth of Arthur's descendants:

Not by a royal dynasty but by the spreading unknown and unnoticed, along the distaff line—mother to daughter, father to daughter, mother to son. Names and titles shall be lost, but the story and the spirit of Arthur shall not be lost. For Arthur is a spirit and Arthur is the land of Britain.
(144)

Anyone who would be a descendant of King Arthur need not have a fifteen hundred-year-old pedigree to prove it; we need to tell the tales about Arthur, and when people hear these stories, he will then live on in their hearts and his line and descendants will continue to grow.

In the following pages, I will attempt to explore all the figures said to be descended from King Arthur, from the legend's earliest versions to the most modern novels. Often these modern novels are based on earlier traditions, or they are making their own

interpretations of what could have happened. Arthurian studies always leave us the problem of trying to separate what is fact from fiction, and even the most respected Arthurian stories of the Middle Ages often become as suspect as the modern novels, and the modern novels today often try to be more authentic than their medieval counterparts; therefore, we must consider all interpretations and possibilities considering Arthur's children, whether they appear believable or not. In many cases, we will discover that what might have happened if Arthur were a historical person is not as important as how people have chosen to interpret or even rewrite Arthurian literature.

This book represents the first time King Arthur's children will all be assembled together, along with the various tales about them, as the subject of study. After looking more closely at the children of King Arthur, we will come to a better understanding of the purpose Arthurian literature has served over the centuries and perhaps we will even become more closely connected to King Arthur and his times.

Part I: The Earliest Children in the Welsh Legends

Before Mordred made his appearance in the Matter of Britain and began to dominate it as the only son of King Arthur, just as he had tried to dominate Arthur's kingdom, the Welsh may have had the tradition that King Arthur had three sons. These three sons could be the earliest of Arthur's children to appear, but we have the least information about them, doubtless because much of it has been lost. Only one son, Llacheu, has any clear lines drawn as to where he may rightfully be integrated into the Arthurian legends. Another son, Amr, may have been the original of Mordred, while Gwydre's story comes down to us as faint as his ending is grim.

At times, scholars have either ignored or at least brushed these three sons aside as unimportant since no scholar has known what to think of them. Those scholars in the past who did not believe in a historical Arthur were more interested in studying the traditions and mythological background that went into forming the Matter of Britain. Since Arthur's three Welsh sons had such sketchy legends, little mythology survived for scholars to study the sons' origins. Furthermore, tradition says all three sons died before Arthur's passing, so none of them inherited his kingdom, and therefore, they have been considered of little importance. However, the belief in a historical King Arthur has continued to grow in recent years, and if there is any historical basis for his having had children, it seems only obvious, that if these are the earliest sons, they are the most likely to have existed in history. By closely exploring the traditions surrounding each of these sons, we may find a more solid place for them in Arthurian tradition.

Chapter 1: Gwydre

The only mention of Gwydre, the son of King Arthur, in any chronicle, appears in *The Mabinogion* tale of “Culhwch and Olwen.” Arthur and his men are out hunting Twrch Trwyth, a prince who has been turned into a giant boar for his sins, because they need to obtain the comb between his ears as one of the tasks Culhwch must accomplish before Olwen’s father will let him marry her. Arthur’s men hold the boar at bay, which causes him to slay four of Arthur’s champions, and “after he had slain those men, again he stood at bay against them there, and slew Gwydre son of Arthur” (Jones, *The Mabinogion*, 132). This passage is the only place in the tale that Gwydre, son of Arthur, is mentioned. He is not even listed earlier in the tale as being among Arthur’s companions. When Gwydre dies, no mention is made of anyone weeping over his death, even though he is the son of a king; nor is there a story of his funeral. Norris J. Lacy and Geoffrey Ashe, judging from Gwydre’s seeming insignificance, suggest that since neither Arthur nor anyone else seems to be upset over Gwydre’s death, he was probably illegitimate (Lacy, *Arthurian Handbook*, 357).

Although nothing else is written about Gwydre in the Arthurian legends, Jennifer Westwood notes that Welsh tradition holds that the hunt for Twrch Trwyth took place in Powys, Wales where a monument stands to Arthur’s sons who were killed in the hunt. This place is the Ty-newydd, also known as Cerrig Meibion Arthur, “The Stones of the Sons of Arthur” in the parish of Mynach log-Ddu, Dyfed (Westwood 338). Where this tradition of plural sons arises from is unknown. “Culhwch and Olwen” only mentions one son, so if more than one son was killed by Twrch Trwyth, those sons’ names have disappeared into oblivion.

Even Gwydre's tale is so small that if more of it ever existed, it has long since been lost and forgotten. However, considering that Gwydre is a king's son, his story could have once been both significant and well-known. In many cases, certain Arthurian characters have been tracked back to mythological roots or stories that were cast onto them. Although no scholar has suggested it before, Gwydre may be such a case if we look at some characters from earlier Celtic myths and legends who have similar names and stories.

In his *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance*, R.S. Loomis compares the Celtic tale of Gwri to that of Mordred, and he states that the story was later cast onto Pope Gregory. Loomis describes Gwri's tale as one of illegitimate birth, which is exactly what Lacy and Ashe suggest for Gwydre. However, Loomis is only conjecturing about this illegitimate birth existing in a lost source since *The Mabinogion* version of the tale does not include an illegitimate birth. Loomis further describes Gwri's story as being one of exposure, fosterage by fishermen, enchainment on an island, and eventually deliverance from this imprisonment (335). This story does have obvious similarities with Mordred's tale, but perhaps we should also explore the idea that Gwydre's tale is based upon Gwri's.

One simple reason for believing that Gwydre and Gwri have a connection lies in the resemblance between their two names. One can easily see the spelling similarities between Gwri and Gwydre, and the connection becomes even more obvious when we learn that Gwri also had the name of Pryderi. If we conjecture that Gwri and Pryderi were combined to form a now forgotten name of Gwyderi, might it not be possible that the name was later condensed to Gwydre? The spelling similarity between Gwydre and Gwri is fairly obvious; however, if the tale comes from an oral tradition, we must look beyond the spelling to the pronunciation of the two names. If there had been the form of Gwyderi, could local dialect or rapid speech have caused the middle syllable to be omitted, leaving us with Gwydre? Perhaps Gwydre simply became confused with the character Gwri because their names sounded alike. Another possibility is that if the name of Gwydre were rapidly spoken, the

“d” might not have been fully pronounced so that Gwydre would have sounded like Gwri to the undiscerning ear. We might even consider that Gwri is the earlier form of Gwydre because an intrusive “d” is not uncommon in English. Such possibilities would allow a closer connection between the two names, besides the similarity in their stories.

Gwri/Pryderi’s tale is told in “Pwyll Prince of Dyfed” in *The Mabinogion*. Pwyll and his wife Rhiannon were without an heir to their kingdom. Pwyll’s nobles urged him to take another wife. Pwyll said he would wait one more year, and if there were no heir by then, he would do as his nobles wished. Before the year was over, Rhiannon gave birth to a son. Six women sat up to watch over the mother and infant at night, but as morning approached, they all fell asleep. When the women awoke, the infant was gone. The women, in fear of being punished, concocted a terrible plot in which they killed the cub of a staghound, laid the bones by Rhiannon, and smeared her face and hands with blood. When Rhiannon awoke, the ladies told her that she had devoured her child in the night and overpowered all her women when they tried to stop her.

Despite Rhiannon’s alleged crime, Pwyll still refused to have his wife put away. Instead, she was made to do penance every day by sitting at the gate of the castle, telling her tale to every stranger who came, and then carrying them on her back to the castle.

Meanwhile, Teirnyon of Gwent Is Coed had the most beautiful mare in the world, but although the mare foaled on the night of every 1st of May, no one ever knew what became of the colts. Teirnyon finally decided to find out what was happening, so he sat up on the night of the next colt’s birth. As he was admiring the newborn’s strength, he heard a great noise outside. Then a long, clawed arm came through the stable’s window and laid hold of the colt. Teirnyon cut off the arm at the elbow with his sword so that it fell into the barn. He then heard a great wailing outside, but when he ran out of the barn, he could see nothing because of the night’s darkness. He followed the noise for a short distance, but he finally returned to the stable where he found an infant, wrapped in swaddling clothes and a mantle of satin, lying by the door.

Teirnyon brought the infant to his wife, who was childless. She told her women she had given birth to it in the night, and so she adopted it as her own. The child was named Gwri of the Golden Hair, “for its hair was yellow as gold; and it grew so mightily that in two years it was as big and strong as a child of six” (Rolleston 364).

While the child was growing up, Teirnyon heard the tale of Rhiannon and noticed that Gwri resembled Prince Pwyll. Teirnyon then rode to the palace with the child. There he told the royal couple his story and how he suspected his foster son, Gwri, was really their child. Upon hearing this, Rhiannon cried, “I declare to heaven that if this be true there is an end to my trouble.” Then a chief named Pendaran said, “Well hast thou named thy son Pryderi (‘trouble’) and well becomes him the name of Pryderi son of Pwyll, Lord of Annwn” (Rolleston 365).

Unlike Loomis’ version of the tale, Pryderi/Gwri does not have an illegitimate birth in *The Mabinogion* version; however, the same tale of exposure seems to exist here, and in both cases, the child is raised by foster parents, although in *The Mabinogion* tale, they do not appear to be fishermen. The tale of Gwri may be the source for the lost tale of Gwydre; whether or not it definitely is, we cannot say, but for the moment, let us leave it open to possibility. We should also notice that in Gwri’s tale, Rhiannon is barren at first, which must suggest to us the barren Guinevere. Secondly, we have another connection between Pryderi and Mordred; Tiernyon’s baby colt disappears on the night of every May 1st. Although the text does not state the exact night that Pryderi was born, the night of his birth appears to be the same night that he was stolen. Doubtless, the creature who stole Pryderi was returning from his first theft via Tiernyon’s home to steal the colt. Therefore, it can be assumed that Pryderi was born and stolen the same night the colt was born and stolen, on the night of May 1st, the same day that is the traditional birthdate of Mordred (Loomis, *Celtic Myth*, 339). Pryderi may then be a mythological ancestor to two of King Arthur’s sons, both Gwydre and Mordred.

Now let us continue our comparison between Gwydre and Pryderi by looking at the tales of Pryderi's life as an adult. After the death of Pryderi's father, Pwyll, Pryderi's friend Manawyddan marries Pryderi's mother, Rhiannon. Pryderi and Manawyddan then make several failed attempts to gain their livelihood before they finally become hunters.

One day they started a wild white boar, and chased him in vain until he led them up to a vast and lofty castle, all newly built in a place where they had never seen a building before. The boar ran into the castle, the dogs followed him, and Pryderi, against the counsel of Manawyddan, who knew there was magic afoot, went in to seek for the dogs.

He found in the center of the court a marble fountain beside which stood a golden bowl on a marble slab, and being struck by the rich workmanship of the bowl, he laid hold of it to examine it, when he could neither withdraw his hand nor utter a single sound, but he remained there, transfixed and dumb, beside the fountain. (Rolleston 374)

Notice the similarities between Gwydre's hunting and being slain by a boar, and Pryderi's hunting of the boar. Pryderi is not slain by this boar, but it is the boar who leads him into the castle, the result of which is his touching the bowl and becoming like a statue; this state does not seem too dissimilar to death.

The tale continues with Manawyddan entering the castle, seeing what has happened, and returning home to tell Rhiannon. Being a mother, she rebukes Manawyddan for not stopping her son and his friend. The next day, Rhiannon visits the castle, and still seeing Pryderi clinging to the bowl, unable to move or speak, she also grabs hold of the bowl and joins him in his fate. Immediately afterwards is heard a peal of thunder and then a heavy mist falls. When the mist clears, the castle has vanished, along with Pryderi and Rhiannon.

The boar leading Pryderi into the castle has caused not only his immobility, but also his vanishing, which we might equate with death, thus saying that like Gwydre, Pryderi was killed by a boar.

However, Manawyddan accidentally stumbles upon the cause of his friend and wife's disappearance, and through his cunning, Pryderi and Rhiannon are restored to him. Therefore, the boar really was not the end of Pryderi in this tale.

Pryderi ruled over one-and-twenty cantrevs of the south at the same time that Math was King of Gwynedd. King Math had two nephews, Gilvaethwy and Gwydion, and Math allowed them to run his kingdom while he "lay with his feet in the lap of the fairest maiden of the land and time, Goewin daughter of Pebin of Dol Pebin in Arvon" (Rolleston 378). Now Gilvaethwy fell in love with Goewin, and when he confided his love to his brother, Gwydion decided to help Gilvaethwy have his desire. Gwydion then went to Math and asked his leave to visit Pryderi and ask, as a gift for Math, for the herd of swine that Pryderi had received from Arawn, King of Annwn. Math gave his permission and Gwydion went to Pryderi's court. Pryderi, however, told Gwydion he was under a compact with his people neither to sell nor give the swine away until they had produced double their number in the land.

"Thou mayest exchange them, though," said Gwydion, and thereupon he made by magic arts an illusion of twelve horses magnificently caparisoned, and twelve hounds, and gave them to Pryderi and made off with the swine as fast as possible. (Rolleston 379)

The intended result then happened—Pryderi invaded the land to regain his swine and Math went to meet him in battle, which gave Gilvaethy the opportunity to make Goewin his wife, although she was unwilling. The war was decided by single combat between Gwydion and Pryderi.

And by force of strength and fierceness, and by the magic and charms of Gwydion, Pryderi was slain. And at Maen Tyriawc, above Melenryd, was he buried, and there is his grave. (Rolleston 379)

After the battle, Math returned home to discover what Gilvaethwy had done. Math took Goewin to be his queen, while

Gwydion and Gilvaethwy had to submit to Math for their punishment. Math then turned them into deer for a twelvemonth and told them to return at the end of that time. They returned with a young fawn, which was transformed into human shape and baptized. Then Math turned them into swine for a year, and again they came back with a young one who was treated as the fawn had been. The two brothers then underwent one more year of punishment as wolves, again returning with a young wolf. This time their penance was deemed complete, and they were returned to their human forms.

In this second tale of Pryderi, no boar hunt occurs, but there is a battle over swine, and since it resulted in his death, it could be said that the swine killed Pryderi. More striking, however, is that Gwydion, the murderer of Pryderi, as punishment for his crimes, was transformed into various animals, including a swine. This story almost perfectly resembles that of *Gwydre*, with the exception that his slayer, *Twrch Trwyth*, is a prince, son of King *Taredd*, who has already been transformed into a boar for his sins; here Gwydion is transformed after he commits murder because the transformation is his punishment for the murder.

Probably, the motif used in the case of Pryderi's murder is based on the classical or universal motif of a young man dying while still in his prime. In this case, if Pryderi's tale were used as a source for *Gwydre's* tale, obviously the same motif was used; however, the writer chose to be creative and reverse some elements of the motif so the killer of *Gwydre* is already a boar rather than someone turned into a boar after committing murder. No explanation is given of the sin the prince committed that led to his transformation into *Twrch Trwyth*, but it may not be too much of a stretch to assume that *Gwydre* and *Twrch Trwyth's* tale is the fragment of a larger tale that may go back to Pryderi and Gwydion.

One final point that must be made again connects *Gwydre* to Mordred. In almost every version of Mordred's story, he fights King Arthur in single combat, and the two end up slaying each other. Both *Gwydre* and Mordred are said to be King Arthur's sons, and if we accept *Gwydre* as being Pryderi, both are killed in single combat.

Rolleston, among others, has tried to make the connection that Arthur has a mythological source in Gwydion (349). However, although Gwydion and Arthur both slay someone, Pryderi is no relation to Gwydion, unlike the blood relation that usually exists between Arthur and Mordred. There seems to be little evidence to make a case for Arthur being some form of a solar god as Gwydion seems to be, so although the connection between Arthur and Gwydion is possible, it is not likely.

Gwydion and Pryderi's combat may be a tale that the Welsh writer of "Culhwch and Olwen" chose to adapt rather than use as a direct source for the tale of Gwydre since both Mordred and Gwydre would then be related to Arthur, with whom they do combat. Another possibility is that Gwydre never was Arthur's son until the writer of "Culhwch and Olwen" simply decided to attach this connection to him. One reason why the character of Gwydre could have been connected with Arthur may lie in another Gwydre mentioned in "Culhwch and Olwen" in the list of Arthur's companions. This Gwydre is not Arthur's son, but rather "Gwydre son of Llwydeu by Gwenabwy daughter of Caw, his mother (Hueil his uncle stabbed him, and thereby there was feud between Hueil and Arthur because of the wound)" (Jones, *Mabinogion*, 103). The recorder of the "Culhwch and Olwen" tale may have made the connection between Gwydre being stabbed by his uncle, Hueil, and Arthur and his nephew, Mordred, fighting each other. Perhaps the writer thought it would be clever to make this Gwydre Arthur's son and have him killed by a boar. The author, however, was not consistent in then changing the tale of the earlier Gwydre, son of Llwydeu.

The creation of a son of Arthur who is killed by a boar could be significant if the boar were meant to represent Arthur. King Arthur is often referred to as "The Boar of Cornwall," so could it not be said that Mordred, like Gwydre and Pryderi, was slain by a boar? Is Mordred's story then a later version of Gwydre's, which itself goes back to Pryderi? Or is it possible that the writer of "Culhwch and Olwen" knew nothing of Pryderi's tale, and simply borrowed Gwydre whose name already existed in "Culhwch and Olwen"? If

such is the case, since *The Mabinogion* as we now have it was not written down until the late fourteenth century, then Mordred's tale could be older than Gwydre's rather than vice versa.

Geoffrey of Monmouth is our first known written source for Arthur being called the Boar of Cornwall. Where Geoffrey came up with this name for Arthur is unknown. Perhaps it existed in oral Welsh tradition, which is where Geoffrey may have derived it; it did not come from any written Welsh source that is extant today; in fact, *The Mabinogion* form of "Culhwch and Olwen" as we now have it is probably not the original Welsh story. Since *The Mabinogion* tales were not written down until the late fourteenth century, the scribes who recorded them could have been familiar with Geoffrey of Monmouth's work, and they might have even allowed it to influence them when for the first time, the oral Welsh tales were committed to paper. Consequently, a clever scribe, who knew that Arthur slew Mordred and that Arthur was often called the Boar of Cornwall, may have taken the character of Gwydre, who was killed by a boar, and decided to turn him into Arthur's son. Gwydre may have been chosen over the other characters slain by boars to be Arthur's son because he already had an existing Welsh story of being in conflict with his uncle. If such were the case, then perhaps Gwydre had no earlier story as Arthur's son that would link him to the character of Gwr/Pryderi. Mordred, as we will see in Part II, also may have not been Arthur's son, or even any relation to Arthur. He may have originally been simply a name in the legends whom writers adopted to be Arthur's son. The same may have been true for Gwydre. The possibility therefore exists that rather than Gwydre being a son of Arthur with an earlier story than Mordred, Mordred's tale could have influenced the creation of Gwydre as Arthur's son. Of course, it is possible that Gwydre also developed as a character, independent of Mordred, but considering Mordred's popularity, it seems more likely that Mordred influenced the creation of his reputed brother. However, we cannot decide with any certainty which son influenced the other's tale.

Another possibility, which does not have to concern Geoffrey of Monmouth, is that the writer of "Culhwch and Olwen" knew of

Nennius' story of Amr as a son of Arthur slain by his father (see Chapter 2), and at the same time a Welsh tradition existed of Arthur as the Boar of Cornwall. This information might inspire the writer to create Gwydre as Arthur's son, playing off Nennius' statement that Arthur slew his own son, while using the symbolism of the boar representing Arthur. It is possible, then, that the writer of "Culhwch and Olwen" developed the tale without any influence from Geoffrey of Monmouth, which would lead to the conclusion that Amr influenced the creation of Gwydre, and then both Amr and Gwydre were merged to help form the character of Mordred. Still, we have no proof of an existing Welsh tradition that calls Arthur the Boar of Cornwall, so it is probably unlikely to see Gwydre as having been created without some sort of influence from Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Other tales of heroes slain by boars and ladies abducted from their spouses or lovers may equally have influenced Gwydre's tale. The most notable tale in Celtic literature is that of Diarmuid and Grainne, which will be discussed in Chapter 3. The Welsh of this time period were also familiar with classical tales, so they may have borrowed the tale of Adonis being slain by a boar as a source for Gwydre's story. The Celtic tales may have been influenced by classical motifs, or they may simply employ universal motifs derived from one original prehistoric tale. It is beyond the reach of modern scholars to discover what the original sources of all these tales could have been. Of course, an obvious source for Gwydre's tale could be that people were commonly killed by boars during the Middle Ages in Wales, so the writer of "Culhwch and Olwen" was simply drawing upon the life he knew, and then he exaggerated it to turn a realistic event into a fascinating story.

Whether Gwydre was actually King Arthur's son or merely the creation of some writer, who could have been influenced by any number of sources, his being Arthur's son may have far more significance in "Culhwch and Olwen" than any scholar until now has pointed out. Whatever the evidence may show, he probably has some connection to Mordred, whether as a source or a result of Arthur's best known son.

- Marie, Countess of Champagne, 57
 Mark, King, 72
 Mark, King of Cornwall, 72, 99
 Math, King of Gwynedd, 8, 9
 Medraut (Mordred), 35, 50, 77, 153, 154, 155, 164, 165
 Meleagraunt, 74
 Melehan, 92, 168
 Melora, 134, 135
 Melou, 92, 168
 Melwas, 66, 72, 73, 75, 158
 Guinevere, 72, 73
 Mordred, 74
 Merlin, 19, 20, 31, 37, 39, 49, 51, 58, 77, 86, 87, 90, 95, 100, 125, 135, 136, 139, 140, 146, 155, 156, 162, 163
 as wild man, 134
 Guinevere, 147
 prophecy of Mordred, 43
 Uther, 89
 Mervin, 125
 Midir, 35, 65, 66, 68, 73
 Mordred, 4, 33, 37, 48, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 61–64, 65–75, 77–83, 82, 88, 89, 95, 96, 102, 103, 104, 105, 109, 112, 127, 131, 133, 137–51, 157, 161, 162, 163, 164, 167, 168, 169, 170, 173, 174, 177, 178, 179
 Agravaine, 79
 Amr, 12, 17, 31, 168
 Anna, 90
 Arthur, 11, 15, 31, 36, 49, 65, 70, 71, 79, 94
 Arvandus, 81
 birth, 39, 42, 43
 birthdate, 6
 birthday, 68
 Camlann, 50, 80
 conception, 15
 death, 24, 83
 death at Camlann, 81
 Dylan, 38, 67
 Gawain, 69, 80, 87
 Geoffrey of Monmouth, 39, 40, 49
 Guinevere, 31, 53–64, 53, 66, 72, 75
 Gwydre, 9, 10, 12
 Hywain, 81
 incest, 38, 41
 King, 89
 Lancelot, 43, 44
 Llacheu, 32, 44
 Lugh, Irish God of Light, 66
 lust, 49
 marriage to Guinevere, 54
 Medraut, 50, 154
 Melwas, 73
 Morgana, 145
 mother of, 41
 nephew, iii, 37
 nephew of Arthur, 41
 only son, 1
 origin, 15, 35, 36
 regent, 73
 Roland, 160
 Scotland, 85–90
 sons, 90, 91, 93, 94, 96, 97, 151
 sons, death of, 92
 Susannah Dean, 160
 Tortolina, 137
 traitor, 83
 Ursulet, 149
 Uther, 87
 wars with Arthur, 64
 Welsh, 36
 wife of, 94, 95, 96
 Ygern, 41
 Mordryth (nephew of Arthur), 157
 Morgaine, 167, 168
 Morgan le Fay, 36, 43, 51, 81, 119, 145, 147, 177, 179
 Morgause, 37, 41, 43, 99, 102, 154, 164, 166, 167, 168, 179
 Morwenna, 163
 Mount Badon, 95
 Mt. Ambrii, 17
 Mynach log-Ddu, Dyfed, 3

Myvyrian Archeology, 26**N**

Nennius, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 78, 86

O

Oengus, 31

Olwen, 3, 10, 11, 12, 26, 35, 48, 98,
179**P**

Pendaran, 6

Percival, 78, 117, 135, 158

Perlesvaus, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 30,
31, 64, 135

Perseus, 43, 67, 70

Picts, 54, 85, 87, 88, 104

Powys, Wales, 3, 23

Prince Valiant, 178

Prydein, Isle of, 19, 79

Pryderi (son of Pwyll), 4, 5, 6, 7, 8,
9, 10, 11, 179

Pwyll, Prince, 5, 6, 7, 69, 73

Q

Queen Elizabeth I, 119

Queen Elizabeth II, 40, 120

Queen Maeve, 62

R

Rhiannon, 5, 6, 7, 8, 179

Rhiwallon, 22

Rhonabwy, 19, 37, 47, 78

Rhys, J., 22, 23, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30,
35, 36, 44, 54, 69, 72, 74, 77, 97

Riothamus, 81, 109, 110, 120, 173

Robert of Gloucester, 55, 80

Roc, 31

Round Table, 117, 118, 119, 145,
166, 168

Rustem, 68

SSarah (daughter of Arthur), 155
Saxons, 64, 79, 87, 91, 95, 96, 103,
109, 110, 112, 116, 123, 148,
150, 151, 162, 164, 167, 168
alliance with Briton, 96
Smerevie, 123, 125, 126
Sohrab (son of Rustem), 68
Stonehenge, 16, 17**T**

Taredd, 9

Teirnyon, 5, 6

Telemakos (son of Mordred), 164,
165

The Hurlers, 16

Tortolina, 137

Tower of London, 54, 82

Treasures of Britain, 163

Tristan, 72

Twrch Trwyth, 3, 9

Ty-newydd, 3

UUrsulet (daughter of Arthur), 148,
149, 150Uther, 13, 40, 82, 86, 87, 90, 99,
100, 101, 102, 124, 126, 133,
161
Merlin, 89**V**von Zatzikhoven, U., 20, 21, 22, 147
Vortigern, 77, 95, 109, 110, 112,
113
Cerdic, 109
Vortimer, 112**W**

Wales, 1

Walwin, 37

Westwood, J., 3, 16, 82

William III, 40

William the Conqueror, 71, 116

William the Marshall, 118

Winchester, 56, 89, 91, 96, 118, 119

Y

Yder, 58

York, 56, 185

Literary Criticism: English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh

Did you know King Arthur had many other children besides Mordred?

Depending on which version of the legend you read, he had both sons and daughters, some of whom even survived him. From the ancient tale of Gwydre, the son who was gored to death by a boar, to Scottish traditions of Mordred as a beloved king, Tyler R. Tichelaar has studied all the references to King Arthur's children to show how they shed light upon a legend that has intrigued us for fifteen centuries.

King Arthur's Children: A Study in Fiction and Tradition is the first full-length analysis of every known treatment of King Arthur's children, from Welsh legends and French romances, to Scottish genealogies and modern novels by such authors as Parke Godwin, Stephen Lawhead, Debra Kemp, and Elizabeth Wein. *King Arthur's Children* explores an often overlooked theme in Arthurian literature and reveals King Arthur's bloodline may still exist today.

Arthurian Authors Praise *King Arthur's Children*

"Author Tyler R. Tichelaar has performed impeccable research into the Arthurian legend, finding neglected details in early sources and reigniting their significance. Great brainstorming fun! I am proud to add this to my personal collection of Arthurian non-fiction."

— Debra Kemp, author of *The House of Pendragon* series

"Tyler R. Tichelaar's in-depth analysis of the plausibility of King Arthur's children reaffirms the importance the King Arthur legacy continues to have for society and the need of people all over the world to be able to connect to and believe in King Arthur and Camelot."

— Cheryl Carpinello, author of *Guinevere: On the Eve of Legend*

About the Author

Tyler R. Tichelaar, Ph.D., is the author of several historical novels, most notably *The Marquette Trilogy* and the award-winning *Narrow Lives*. *King Arthur's Children* reveals his findings into the Arthurian legend as a precursor to his upcoming novel *King Arthur's Legacy*.



www.ChildrenOfArthur.com
Cover art by NC Wyeth

