**Arthur in History versus Arthur in Romance**

Being depicted as the once and the future king of the Great Britain, the character of King Arthur emerged from medieval Britain, an era when the cycles of conquers drove the islands into chaos and turmoil. Celtic Britons, Romans, Germanic Anglo-Saxons and French Vikings all joined in the battle to legitimate their claims to the territory of the isles, so that writers and monks produced historic documents and artistic works inspired by the exciting events and relics that remained in the memory of people. And as times went by, the heroic figure of his was spread all over the world so that the legends of King Arthur and his Round Table knights became one of the most famous and impressive set of topics in many different cultures.

However, the figures that appear in different works that were written by different writers in different cultural background can be very different from each other. Although, now generally not acknowledged as a monarch that factually exists in history, there are indeed documents that regard King Arthur as a Celtic Welsh hero, who led the natives against the Saxon invaders after being crowned. In those stories, Arthur is brave and skilled in battle that under his leadership, not only the pagans introduced by King Vortigern was defeated, Arthur also conquered Scandinavia and Gaul and even was able to battle the Roman Empire according to *Historia regum Britanniae* by Geoffrey of Monmouth. In Geoffrey's narrative of Arthur, he is so skillful in warfare that he can, with his well-known sword called Caliburn, kill more than four hundred hostile infantries in a single battle. At the end of Arthur's story, even after being betrayed by Mordred who allied with Picts, Saxons, Scots and all the other enemies of his, Arthur still defeated him and pierced Mordred with the spear. All these glorious events support a figure of King Arthur that is heroic, brave, invincible -- exactly an exceptional leader that people under oppression are promised the prophecies of Merlin.

On the other side, in continental stories like those in Chrétien de Troyes' Arthurian Romances, King Arthur is more like a leader of a group of chivalric knights that gives quests and missions instead of a general that lead soldiers to fight the enemies. Especially in stories that King Arthur is not the main character. For example, in *The Knight of the Cart*, instead of fighting Maleagant by himself to retrieve his people who were held captive, he had no other way but to send his queen and Sir Kay under Maleagant's challenge. And in *The Story of Grail*, the Red Knight can just directly get into Arthur's court and steal his golden cup and claim his territory, but what he did, again, is not to raise his army and avenge himself for this rude behavior, but only stayed in his seat and was too angry to hear Sir Perceval’s words. All these incidents make the Chrétien Arthur seem more like a knight or a normal person rather than a king, who is never emotional and can always be decisive.

The reason why the two kinds of figures of Arthur may come from several differences. First, the "king" Arthur appears in articles that are meant to be more factual and historic while the "knight" Arthur is in continental Romances. Although Nennius and Geoffery's book are now considered historically unreliable, the purpose of them is to note the major events and glories of the object they wish to depict and what matters to them are things like war and conquest that make a king respected and worshiped by his people and posterity. Rather than what kind of person Arthur was like, historians concerned more about what Arthur had achieved as a great king, a general that lead several successful wars against the pagans and foreigners. However, the Romance and Chivalric novels have very different focuses. The writers and storytellers are more interested in building a more three-dimensional character. In order to achieve this goal, the authors had to jump out of the historical events and tried to mine the everyday life, the quests and the adventures of the character. The audience shall never expect to have the vassals of the lord to arrest or kill a knight who brings challenge and claims, but to expect that there will be one-on-one combats that legitimate the winners' claims. Because what the authors wish to praise is not the power of a lord or a monarch, but the moral and faith of a knight, the way to be true to the chivalry codes.

Since Chrétien talks more about the adventures of the Round Table Knights, it can be seen that the feats of the knights, though all are praised and honored, are a lot different from the conquest of Arthur. Lancelot didn't have a great army to fight them a way to rescue Guinevere from Maleagant, he had to experience the challenges and suffer from all the difficulties all by himself to earn his love and reputation. In order to avenge his cousin's shame, Yvain went to fight the knight who was guarding the magical spring by himself. In these stories, it's more important for the knights to achieve the perfection of their personal morality as a knight, unlike the historical Arthur, who had to bring victory, peace and glory to the entire nation and the people.

Unlike historic books are created to record the great events of kings, many of the chivalric novels are produced to please the patron of the authors, who are most likely to be the aristocrats, just like the knights in Arthurian romances. By writing the details of the legendary life of a famous knight and the courtly love between handsome and brave knights and the wealthy and beautiful maidens, the writer can more easily impress these noblemen and ladies. The adventures of lively knights are always more interesting and more likely to resonate with them than a list of names of kings and locations of battles.

But of course, the two different kinds of Arthur are not necessarily exclusive, with the two sides of him, audience can see that a god-like leader can also be like a normal person like anybody else. The joy, the anger, the depression and the sorrow make King Arthur, the legendary hero, while not compromising the respect to him, more like one of us, and promoted his popularity around the world as a result.