Le legend of King Arthur

**Introduction**

The legend of King Arthur is a complex story that takes place over a long period (several generations). It depicts many characters and many stories intertwine. In addition, the legend is very old, it has undergone several rewrites. So it happens that some later versions contradict older, that are important symbols over time different meanings. He can seem difficult to find a real consistency in all the texts that make up the legend, however, there are still elements that allow us to position ourselves immediately in the first contexte.Tout, there is a unity of place : whatever the text and the time they were written, the legend is always held on the land of Britain, c ' ie in England and Wales and for some episodes, beyond the sea, mainland Britain (Armorica). Moreover, we always find the same main characters: King Arthur, Merlin, Queen Guinevere, Gawain, Yvain, Lancelot, Percival, etc. Their adventures sometimes vary from one text to another, but the protagonists remain the same and always keep the same character traits. Finally, broadly speaking, the overall structure of the story remains identique.On can be divided into three parts: first the establishment of the frame. This is where Merlin and Arthur lay the foundation of the new kingdom of Britain, they erect the pillars of the future society of the Round Table. Once this framework, Arthur and Merlin come second, leaving the knights s' illustrate in turn. These are then presented as the new hero of the story as Arthur and Merlin become secondary characters, anchored in the scenery. The legend therefore describes a series of individual exploits where knights as Gawain, Lancelot or Yvain rival prowess. Finally, with the arrival of Perceval and the beginning of the Holy Grail, the legend takes a more mystical and spiritual dimension. No more individual adventures and vain quest for personal glory, the company of the Round Table seeks fulfillment in spirituality, in a moral ideal that transcends the human level. The quest becomes collective and is now only morality that will determine the success of individus.Notons that the success of this quest is pretty relative. Certainly, Knights manage to find the Grail. They therefore give the company the Round Table a sacred dimension, manage to impose a Christian ideal and a feudal organization in a universe once barbaric and manage to remove the wonders of Britain. Once completed quest, Britain was once a wild and untamed land, under the influence of magic and strange creatures, is now a civilized kingdom, dominated by the law of man and God. However, the company of the Round Table, the last vestige of an ancient world, eventually collapses on itself. The king and the knights and even Merlin, are caught by their humanity, their sins, their passions, they are struggling to prove themselves worthy of the new moral values ​​that have been introduced. So, the world of the Round Table eventually disappear because of quarrels between knights, betrayal and civil wars. The adventure ends in the blood even though huge progress has been made. Knights of the Round Table have enabled a new world to be born, but they are doomed to disappear with the old.

**Summary of the legend**

Everything begins with the birth of Merlin. The son of a demon and a virgin, both woodsman and wise with all the knowledge of the world it is a character that makes the transition between the old world of the Druids, magic and ancestral beliefs and future feudal society, orderly, civilized and governed by Christian values. It has a foot in both worlds. Merlin knows all, he sees the future and anticipates future events. He knew from an early age that he must help the Kings of Britain to fulfill an important mission: unify and civilize the Kingdom.

At age seven, he approaches the usurper Vortigern that ousted the legitimate heir to the throne Uther Pendragon. Merlin pretended to help Vortigern, but thanks to his foresight, he predicted his downfall and the return of Uther. This happens only a few months after. The young Uther returned to claim his throne, declared war against Vortigern and emerged victorious in a final battle. It becomes king of Britain.

A few years later, Uther falls in love with a married woman. Her name Ygerne and is the wife of Gorlois Duke of Cornwall. She has two daughters: Morgause, who married King Lot Orcanie, and Morgane, who will become a great magician. Despite all morality, Uther desperate to conquer Ygerne. He does not hesitate to besiege it to Tintagel Castle where Gorlois living and family. Merlin condemns the attitude of the king, but he guesses the future, he nevertheless decides to help. With a spell, it allows Uther to take the appearance of the Duke. In the guise of his rival, Uther spends the night with Ygerne and generates a child. It will be Arthur.

Uther murdered the Duke and eventually married Ygerne, but in return for these reprehensible acts, Merlin requires care for education of Arthur. So he withdrew to his parents and entrusts Antor, a knight whose morality is irreproachable. It is he who will raise Arthur until his teens.

Uther has no other children with Ygerne. Accordingly, when death occurs, it leaves the kingdom without an heir. Merlin only knows about Arthur. So he invents a stratagem that he becomes king and nobody can challenge its legitimacy. In front of the cathedral where we celebrated the feast of Christmas, Merlin bewitches a block of stone in which he plants a sword. On the stone, an inscription reads, "only the rightful king of Britain will clear the sword of this stone block." All the knights of the kingdom will then try their luck and all fail. Only the young Arthur manages to achieve this feat. All subjects of the kingdom are thus obliged to recognize him as king. Even the powerful nobles who coveted the throne can not s' oppose this magical election. Who was fifteen years old, Arthur becomes king in turn Britain.

Once mounted the throne, Arthur Merlin guard as advisor. Together, they will undertake great things. On the advice of his mentor, Arthur moved his court in the city of Camelott. It attracts the best knights of the realm and brings together around common values. This allows her to unite Britain and give him a unit under his authority. He married the beautiful Queen Guinevere, King's daughter Léodagand of cameliard, and it offers to Arthur, as a wedding gift, the famous Round Table which will symbolize his reign.

From the Round Table, the central point of his power, Arthur sends his knights throughout the kingdom in order to accomplish feats and exploits. Their mission is to bring justice, order and civilization all over Britany. For this, Gawain, Yvain, Lancelot and the others will face spells and enchantments, giants and dragons, monstrous creatures and traitorous knights witches, evil dwarves, etc. They will cross the wild and haunted forests, magnificent castles with a thousand dangers, deserted places could lead to the borders of the Other World, and many other events. Through all these adventures, knights spread throughout the ideals of the Round Table and chivalrous values ​​in the name of King Arthur.

Alongside their prowess, most knights also live love stories, often tormented. Under the rules of courtly love, the women they are courting of noble birth, always beautiful, but not always available. These idylls combine great happiness and terrible disappointments which sometimes lead the Knights to the limits of madness. Owain is thus forced to kill Esclados Rufus Laudine to marry, and he became half mad when the latter turns away from him. Lancelot is even worse because it has the misfortune to be in love with the queen herself. So it is always torn between this irresistible passion for Guinevere and his loyalty to the king. As for Gawain, things are easier for him because it ' is an inveterate seducer who prefers to conquer many women rather than focusing on a seule.Toujours is it that these numerous love affairs are often the engine of extraordinary adventure and its many surprises romantic. They are often the starting point of corporate quests by the Knights.

Individual adventures where knights measure their value exploits Strength and honor are continuing until the day Perceval arrives at the court of King Arthur. Perceval is a young man whose boorish and naive stupidity can smile but it is promised a great destiny. Indeed, during a trip he undertook to get to visit his mother in Wales, the young man discovers the mystery of the Grail. The Grail is a magical and sacred cup that has the power to heal and to bring prosperity. However, if it is not found by one to be his guardian and protector, great misfortunes can befall and devastate an entire country, such as the Fisher King. For failing to keep the Grail when he had the opportunity, Perceval has therefore made a great mistake and places a curse on the kingdom. so it must at all costs find the Grail.

All the knights of the kingdom will then embark on this mystical quest.

The Holy Grail is not for knights in attaining a new personal prowess. Those who believe are also quickly disqualified. It is a collective and spiritual quest, for men to forget their vanity and ambition to be at the service of a common cause greater than themselves. Find the grail is Arthurian allow any company to rise above the human level, to be open to spiritual and moral values, to access a heroic and sacred dimension.

Until then based on human values, Arthurian society becomes with the Holy Grail, a mythical society, closer to the celestial kingdom of the world of men.

To find the Grail, it is not enough to be brave and good fighter, you have to be pure, charitable, modest. We must not seek personal glory but forget for the success of the quest. We must learn to question, to redeem his sins be washed from their sins, too, only a select few-they have a small chance of success. So close a long wandering, three knights only manage to approach the Grail Perceval, Bors and Gilead. Only Galahad, Lancelot's son may, thanks to its exceptional purity look inside of the cup and observe its mystery, but it will not survive and will be carried by the angels in a moment of ecstasy.

Once found the Grail, the kingdom is purified, freed of the wonders of Britain. Christian values ​​have overcome the dark forces lurking wild places, there is no magic, spells, creatures of enchanting and ready to terrorize the people. This can now live in the light of God, he need not fear the dark forces. With the Grail, nature is tamed, civilized world, unified Britain and Christianized. Unfortunately, the Arthurian society will not long survive in this new world.

Apart from some elected officials, members of the Round Table will not know to prove themselves worthy of the new legal requirement of the kingdom. Knights are caught by their sins, their passions or their past misdeeds. So despite its promises, Lancelot falls into the arms of Guinevere, Merlin himself succumbs to the charm of the Lake Lady and withdrew from the visible world to remain at his side in an air prison. As for Arthur, he sees emerging unexpected enemy, Mordred, a son he did not know about the fruit of a guilty relationship with his own sister Morgause he had not known then. Mordred, treacherous and deceitful use the link Lancelot and Guinevere adultery to go up against the Knights each other, it thus causes a terrible civil war precipitated the kingdom to its destruction. In a final battle, Mordred is killed by his own father. Arthur, he was mortally wounded, but then he lies dying, his sister Morgana, the sorceress, comes looking to bring in Avalon, the sacred island of the Druids, that he rests in peace. Not without making his sword Excalibur to the Fairy Lake who had entrusted to him, Arthur then left the world of men to reach the paradise of the heroes of ancient tradition. He thus finds the invisible world of legends. Sacred Island of the Druids, that he rests in peace. Not without making his sword Excalibur to the Fairy Lake who had entrusted to him, Arthur then left the world of men to reach the paradise of the heroes of ancient tradition. He thus finds the invisible world of legends. Sacred Island of the Druids, that he rests in peace. Not without making his sword Excalibur to the Fairy Lake who had entrusted to him, Arthur then left the world of men to reach the paradise of the heroes of ancient tradition. He thus finds the invisible world of legends.