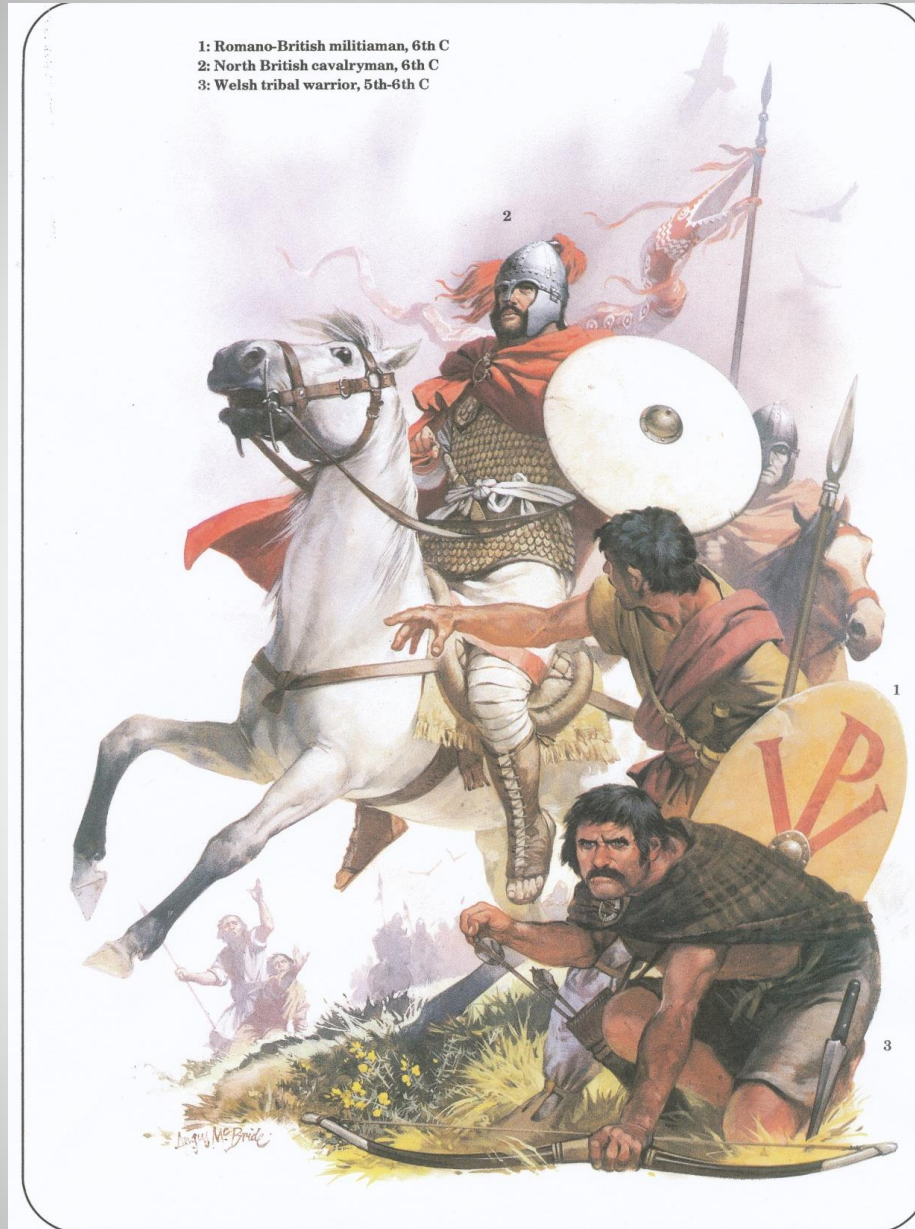


King Arthur:

Myth, Literature, History, Archaeology

- 1: Romano-British militiaman, 6th C
2: North British cavalryman, 6th C
3: Welsh tribal warrior, 5th-6th C



If there was an Arthur, he may have looked something like this.

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Available on the OLLI website: all the PowerPoint shows for “Ancient Britain” (spring 2022) and “Roman Britain” (fall 2022), including the one you are seeing now.

Available on the OLLI website

(“Course Downloads”/“2022 Fall Courses”/“Britannia”)

ARTHUR'S BRITAIN: the Post-Roman Era, 5th and 6th Centuries

REFERENCE WORKS:

- Geoffrey Ashe, **The Traveller's Guide to Arthurian Britain** (1997; first edition published as A Guidebook to Arthurian Britain, 1980).
- B. Cunliffe, R. Bartlett, J. Morrill, A. Briggs and J. Bourke, eds., **The Penguin Atlas of British and Irish History** (2001)
- Norris J. Lacy, ed., **The New Arthurian Encyclopedia** (updated ed., 1996)
- Christopher Snyder, **The World of King Arthur** (2000, rev. ed. 2011).
- Christopher Snyder, ed., **Early Peoples of Britain and Ireland: An Encyclopedia** (2 vols., 2008).

STANDARD ACCOUNTS (ACCEPTING ARTHUR'S REALITY):

- Leslie Alcock, **Arthur's Britain** (1971, reprinted with new preface and bibliography, 1989).
- Geoffrey Ashe, ed., **The Quest for Arthur's Britain** (1968)

RECENT ACCOUNTS:

- Thomas Charles-Edwards, ed., **After Rome** (“Short Oxford History of the British Isles,” 2003)
- Guy Halsall, **Worlds of Arthur: Facts and Fictions of the Dark Ages** (2013)
- Nicholas Higham, **King Arthur: Myth-Making and History** (2002)
- Ronald Hutton, **Witches, Druids and King Arthur** (2003)
...in this essay collection, see “Arthur and the Academics” and “Glastonbury: Alternative Histories.”
- Francis Pryor, **Britain A.D.: A Quest for Arthur, England and the Anglo-Saxons** (2004).
- Alice Roberts, **Buried: An Alternative History of the First Millennium in Britain** (2022)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORTS:

- Leslie Alcock, **Cadbury Castle, Somerset: The Early Medieval Archaeology** (1995).

Susan Hirst and Philip Rahtz, “Liddington Castle and the Battle of Badon: Excavations and Research 1976,” **Archaeological Journal** (153), 1996.

NOVELS:

- Alfred Duggan, **Conscience of the King** (1951).
...*fifth-century Britain, the arrival of the Saxons, and Arthur, as viewed by Cerdic, founder of Wessex, a king with no conscience at all.*
- Rosemary Sutcliffe, **Sword at Sunset** (1963)
...*very good portrayal of the Arthurian saga in an accurate sixth-century setting.*
- Gene Wolfe, **Castlevlew** (1990).
...*an Arthurian fantasy set in present-day Illinois. Very strange!*
(For a good review/explanation of this novel, see Joe R. Christopher, “A Second View of Castlevlew,” in *Quondam et Futurus* [the name for *Arthuriana* during the first three years of the journal], 3(3), Fall 1993.

WEBSITES:

Arthuriana: the Journal of Arthurian Studies
[Arthuriana](#)

Arthurian Resources
...*comprehensive website maintained by Thomas Green, Oxford University*
<http://www.arthuriana.co.uk/>

Wikipedia article: “King Arthur”
...*thorough and fully annotated.*
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_Arthur

Fred Christensen
fchriste@illinois.edu

November 2022

ed

A very good short book (120 pp.)



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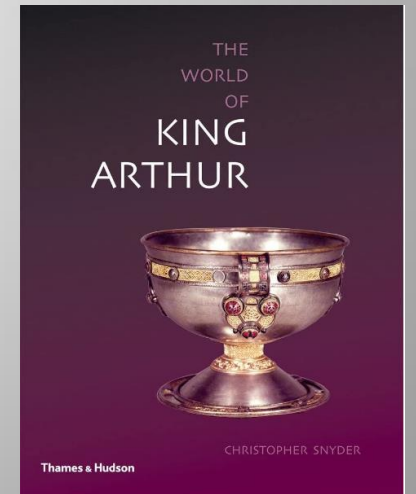
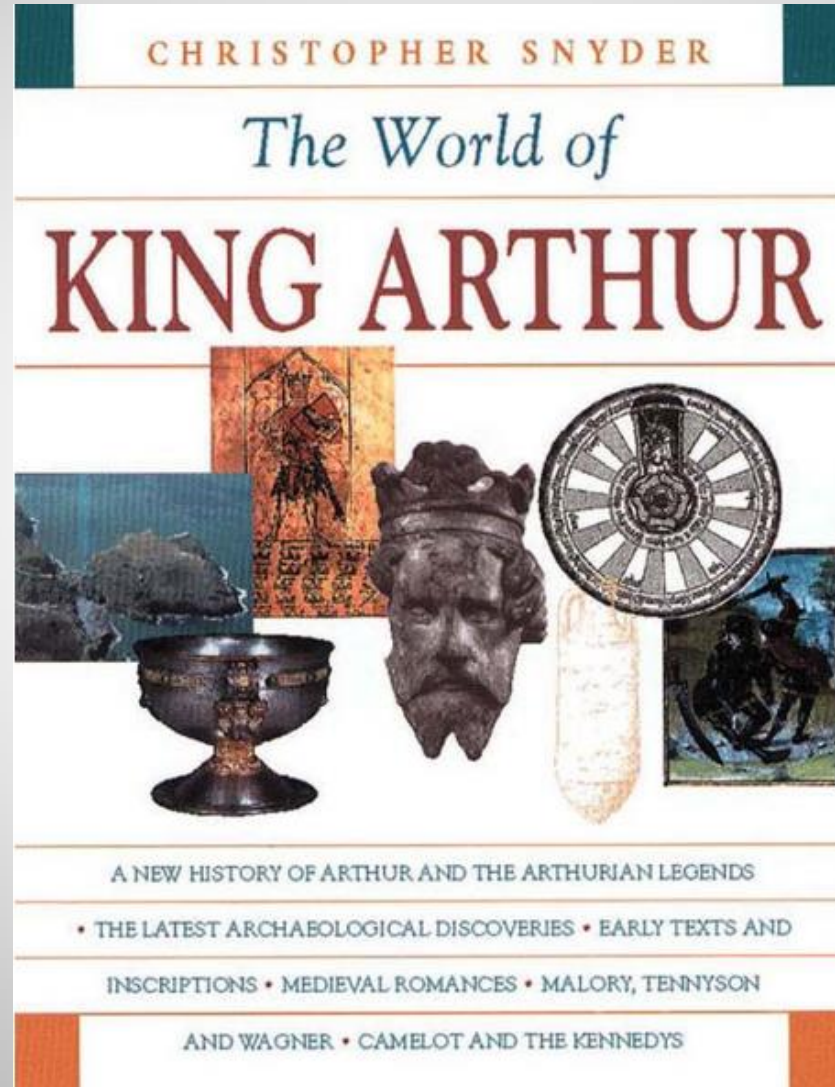
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Nick

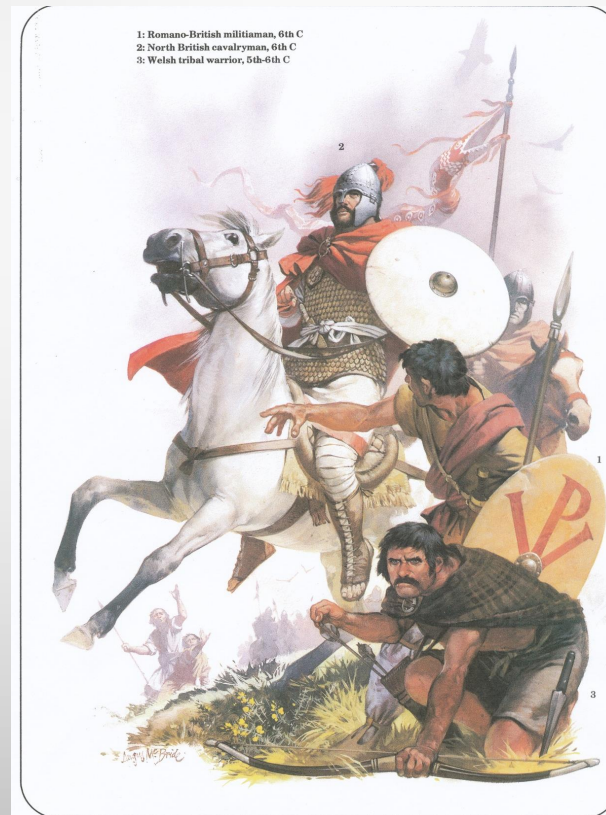
Nick Hornby

A good survey of all things Arthurian!



INTRODUCTION: WHO WAS ARTHUR?

Arthur, Myth and Reality	8
Sources of Evidence	12
An Outline History	15
Timeline	18



“King Arthur:” some basic points

—The historical documents from Britain around AD 500 are very few and very unreliable. This produces a gigantic information vacuum which is filled with numerous theories about who the real Arthur was. None of those theories has been widely accepted by scholars.

“King Arthur:” some basic points

—The wish for a hero-figure to inspire a people is very widespread in cultures throughout the world. This was certainly the case with the Celtic-speaking peoples of Britain (“Brittonic,” later Welsh and Cornish) challenged by Anglo-Saxon invaders in the early Middle Ages.

“King Arthur:” some basic points

—There is a huge disconnect between the findings and views of scholars (mostly skeptical) and the general public, who really want to believe in a real and preferably romantic version of Arthur.

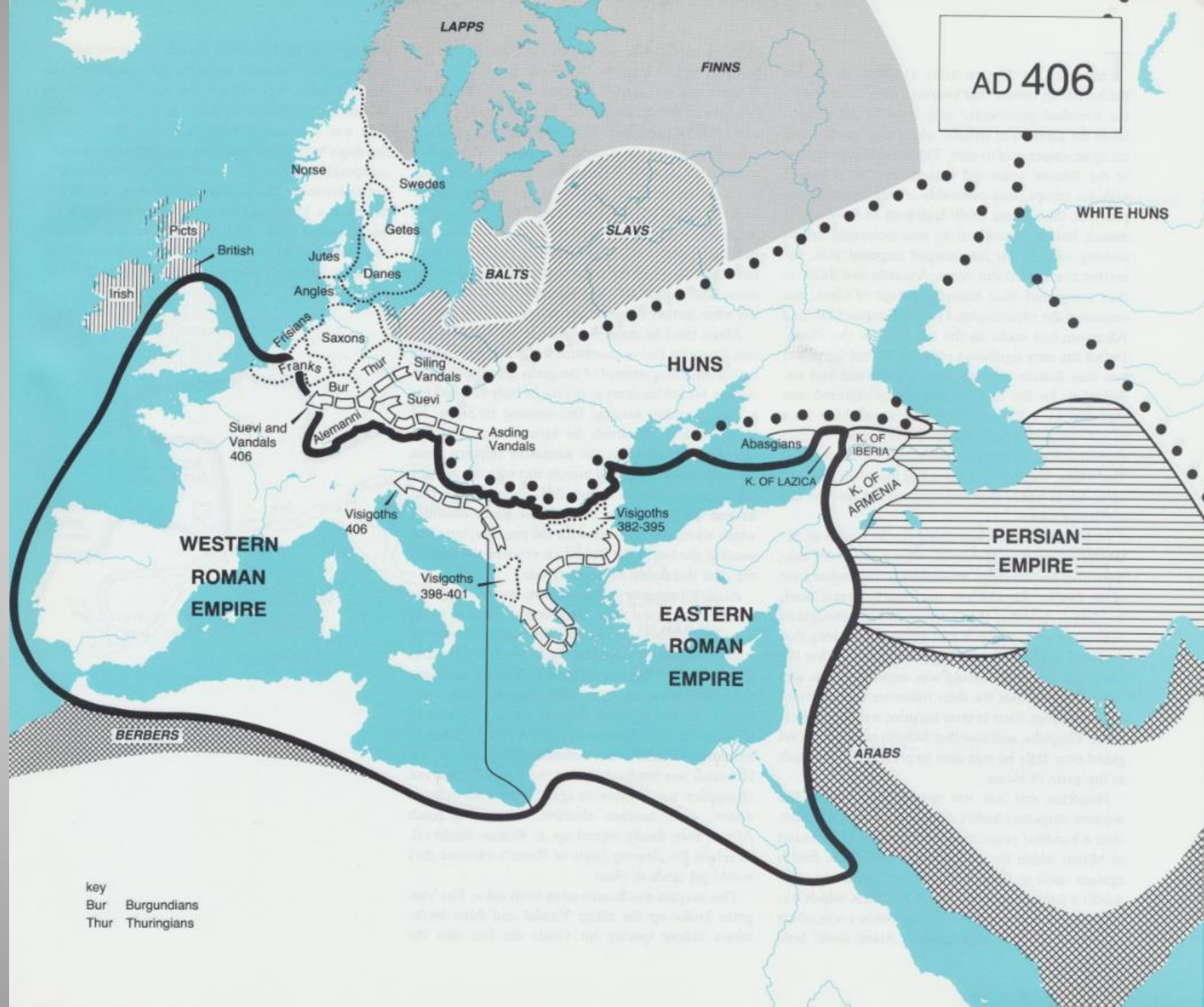
Background: the heritage of Roman Britain





The only real evidence concerning the rescript comes from Zosimus, who says;

Honorius wrote letters to the cities in Britain, bidding them to take precautions on their own behalf.



AD 406

key
 Bur Burgundians
 Thur Thuringians

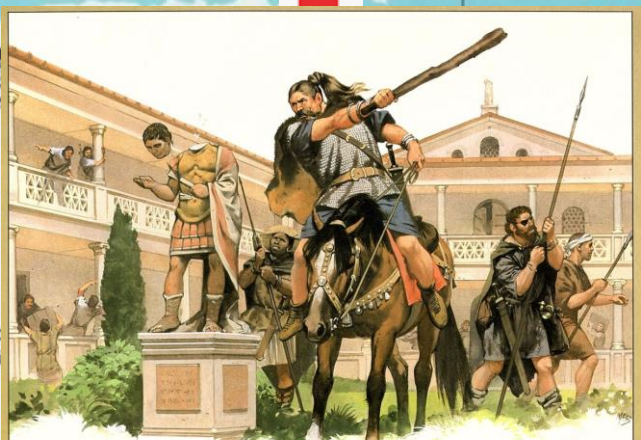


AD 420

Key
 Bur Burgundians
 Thur Thuringians



AD 420



In 410, Emperor Honorius had other things to worry about.

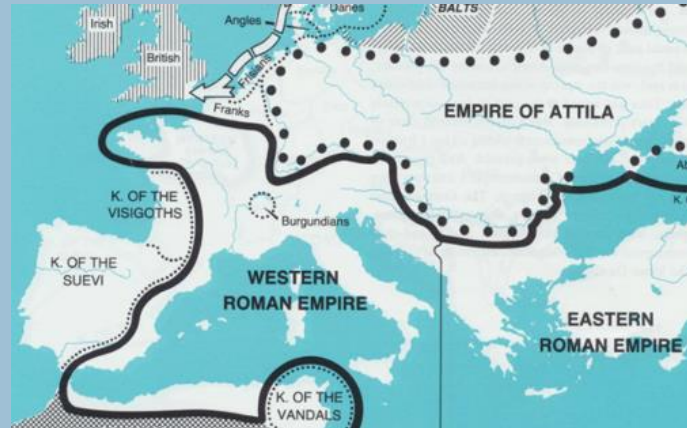


The Heritage of Roman Britain

- Christianity in the British Isles
- London: city, site, significance
- Urban locations: the sites and significance of towns and cities.



Foederati (singular foederatus) were peoples and cities bound by a treaty (foedus) to support Rome, coming to its aid when called upon.



The best-known example came in AD 451, when the forces of Attila the Hun threatened the west. Roman forces joined with foederati (Visigoths, Franks, Burgundians, Alans and Saxons) to defeat the Hun forces.

In Britain, this may have happened on a smaller scale. Writing a century later, the monk Gildas used the term “foederati” to describe Saxon mercenaries invited to Britain to aid in defense against Picts and Scots (c. AD 440).



British warlord Vortigern greeting the Saxon leaders Hengist and Horsa.

Those Saxons are said to have rebelled and brought in more of their people, beginning the Anglo-Saxon settlement (traditional view, much debated!).

The coming of the English: the great debate has finally been resolved.

Whenever something dramatically new appears in the archaeological record, the question is asked: Is this due to new peoples moving in, or new ideas and culture adopted by the people already there?



This question about post-Roman Britain has been intensely debated for many decades.

Some main themes and conclusions....

New scientific techniques continue to produce fascinating new information, sometimes answering questions that have been asked for many decades...

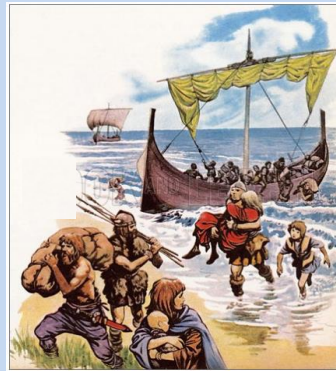
...not just new fashions, but new peoples moving in.



Neolithic farmers 4000 BC



Beaker people 2500 BC



Anglo-Saxon migration, AD 450



AD 476

key
 Bur Burgundians
 Thur Thuringians

AD 476



Britain 400 – 500 Anglo-Saxon Homelands and Settlements

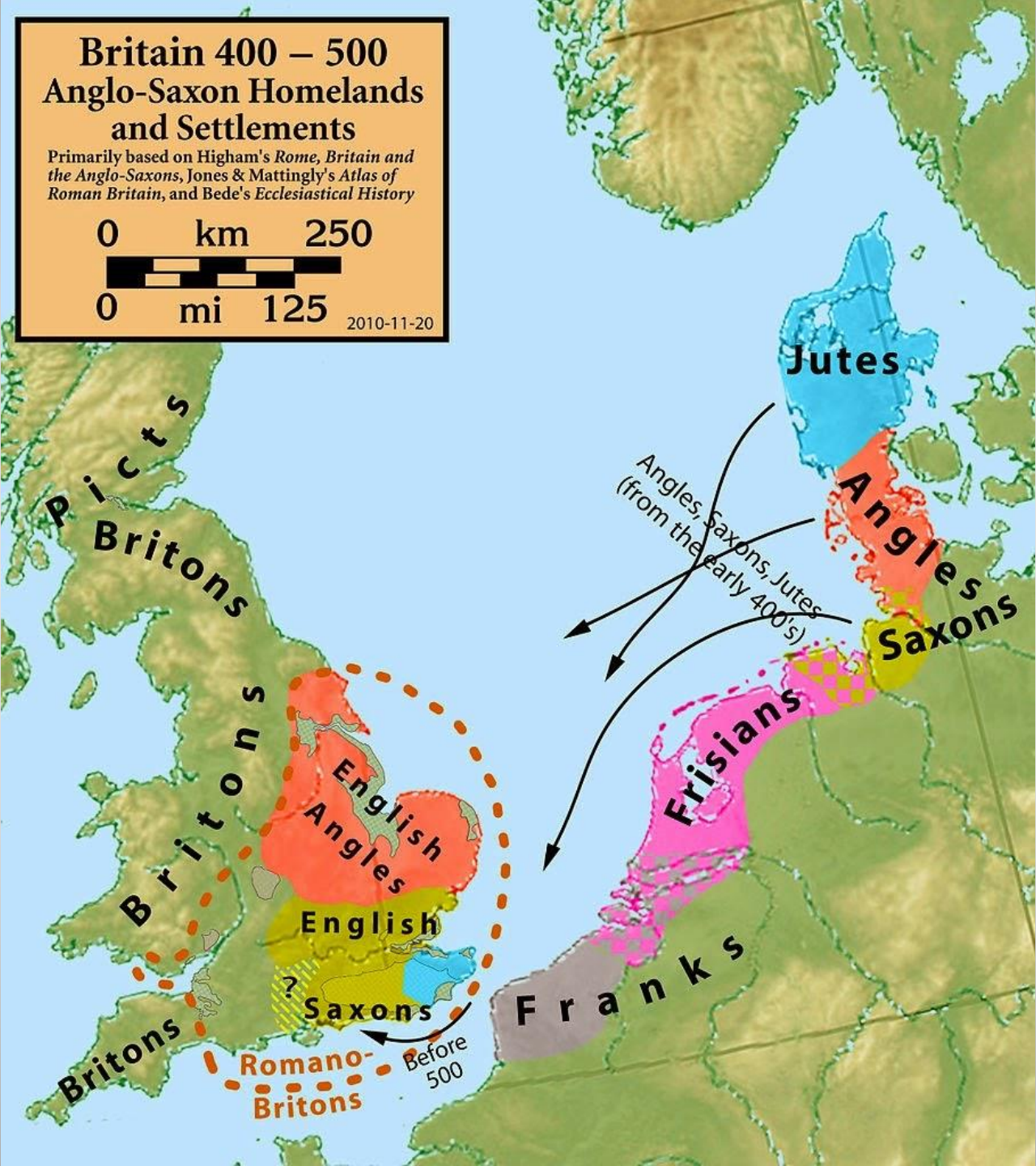
Primarily based on Higham's *Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons*, Jones & Mattingly's *Atlas of Roman Britain*, and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*

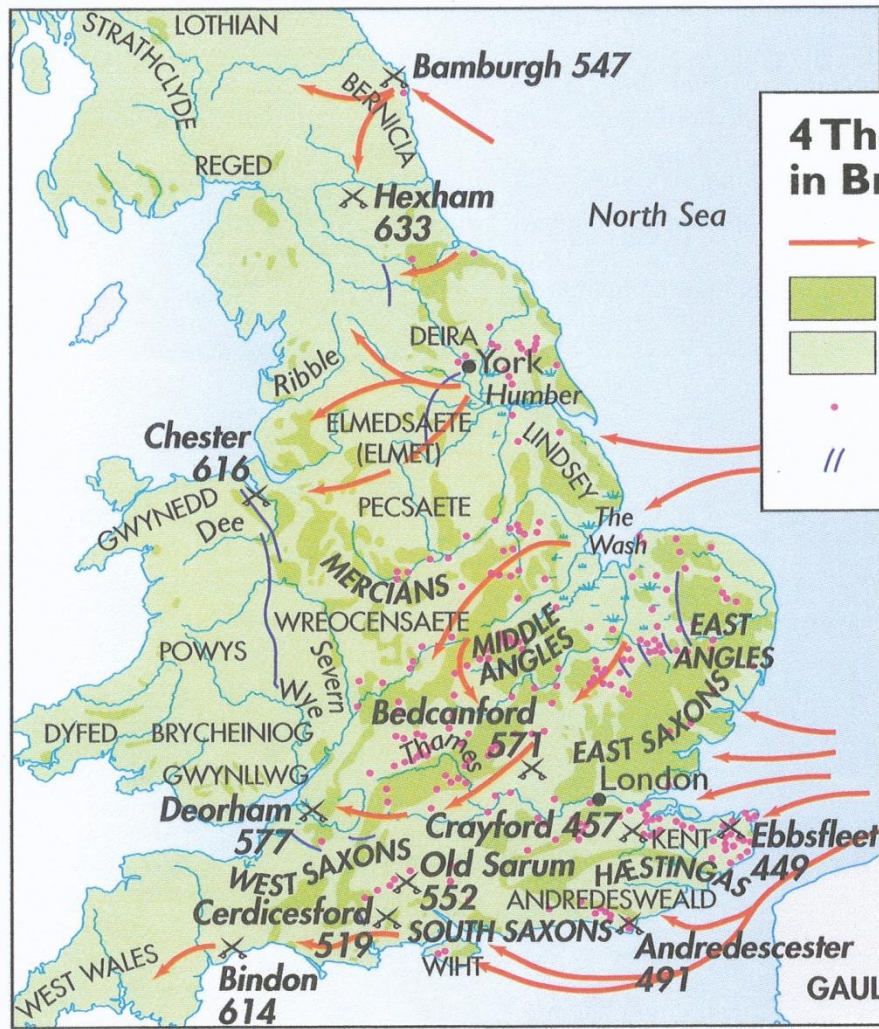
0 km 250



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2010-11-20





4 The Anglo-Saxon settlement in Britain, c. 449–650

- lines of Anglo-Saxon advance
- forest
- fenland, swamp
- Anglo-Saxon burial places c. 450–650
- // British fortifications

4 The first Germanic settlers in Britain were probably mercenaries in Roman service. In the early 5th century the last Roman legions left Britain and the numbers of barbarian incomers increased (**map above**). According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the Anglo-Saxons set up their own kingdoms from about the middle of the 5th century, establishing control of most of modern England by about 650.

THE AGE OF ARTHUR (AD 400–600)

Tyrants and the End of Roman Britain	36
The Historical Evidence	38
Inscriptions	40
The Archaeological Evidence	41
The Peoples of Post-Roman Britain	46
The Britons	47
The Picts	54
The Irish	57
The Saxons	60

NAMES AND PLACES....GAELIC, LATIN, OLD ENGLISH, MODERN ENGLISH

CALEDONIA, CALEDONII (tribal grouping...Latin, pre-3rd C.)

PICTI (Latin: tribal grouping, replacing Caledonii in 3rd Century)

PICTAVIA (Latin), PICTLAND (Modern English),

CRUITHEN, CRUITHENACH (Irish Gaelic for Picts)

ALBA (Gaelic for Scotland), SKOTIA, SKOTLAND (Old English), SCOTLAND (modern English)

HIBERNII (Latin for Irish), HIBERNIA (Latin for Ireland)

PRYDAIN (Welsh name for Britain)

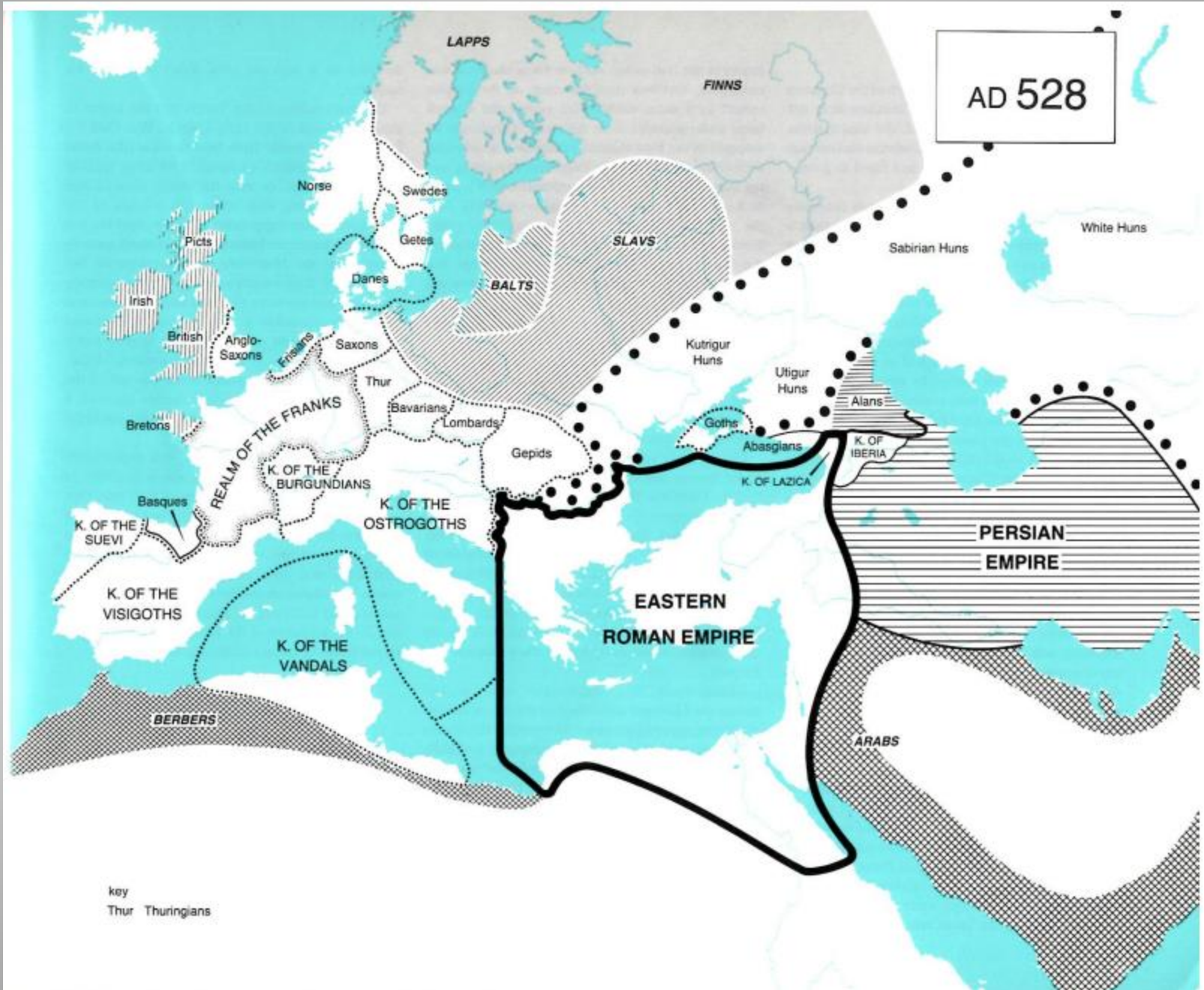
PRETANI (Celtic: "painted people?"),

PRETANNIKAI, PRETANNIKE (Greek for Britain),

BRITANNIA (Latin for Britain)

CYMRU (Welsh for Wales), CYMRY (Welsh people)

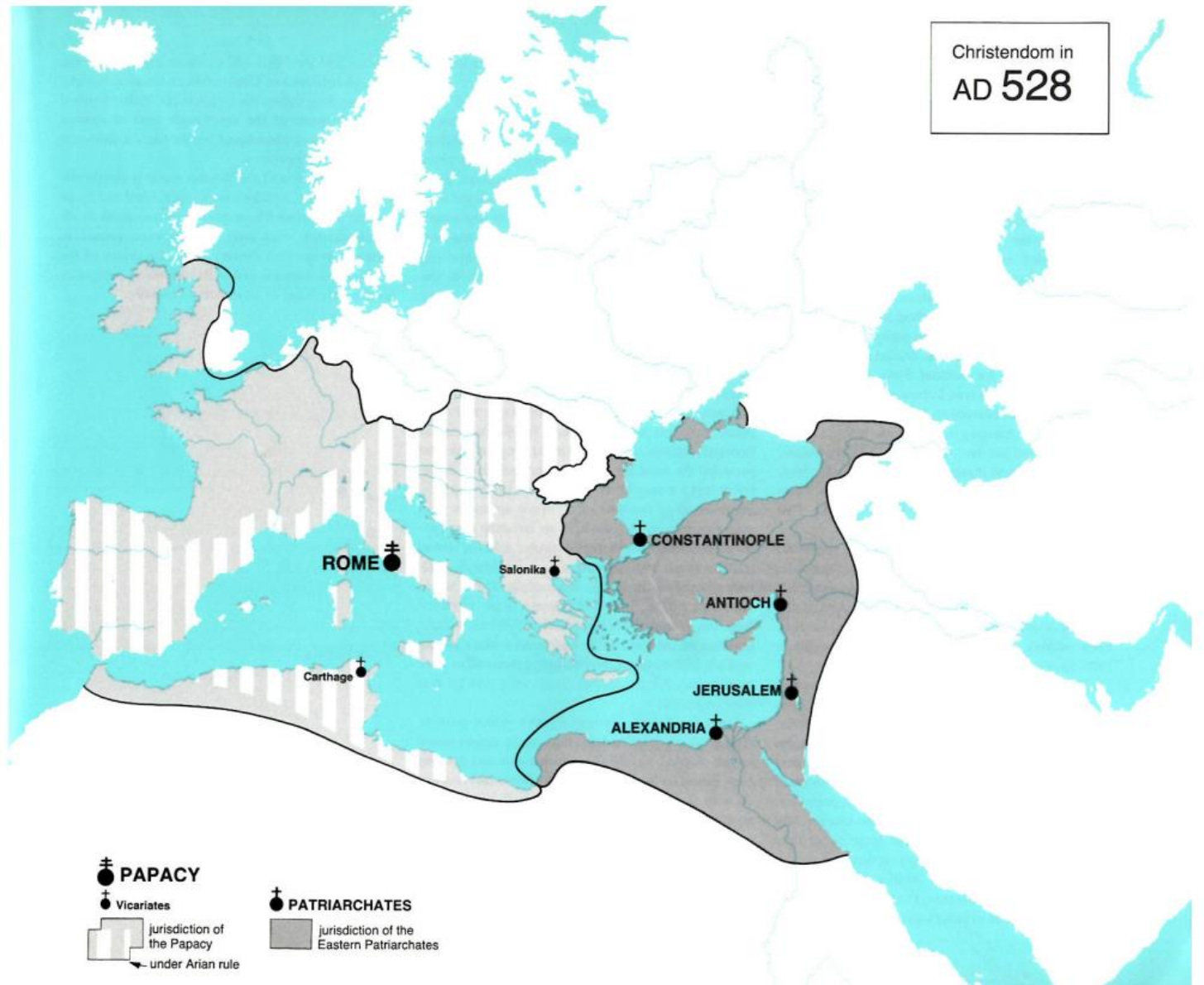
BRYTHONIAID (alternative Welsh name for Wales, or Welsh for British)



AD 528



Christendom in
AD 528



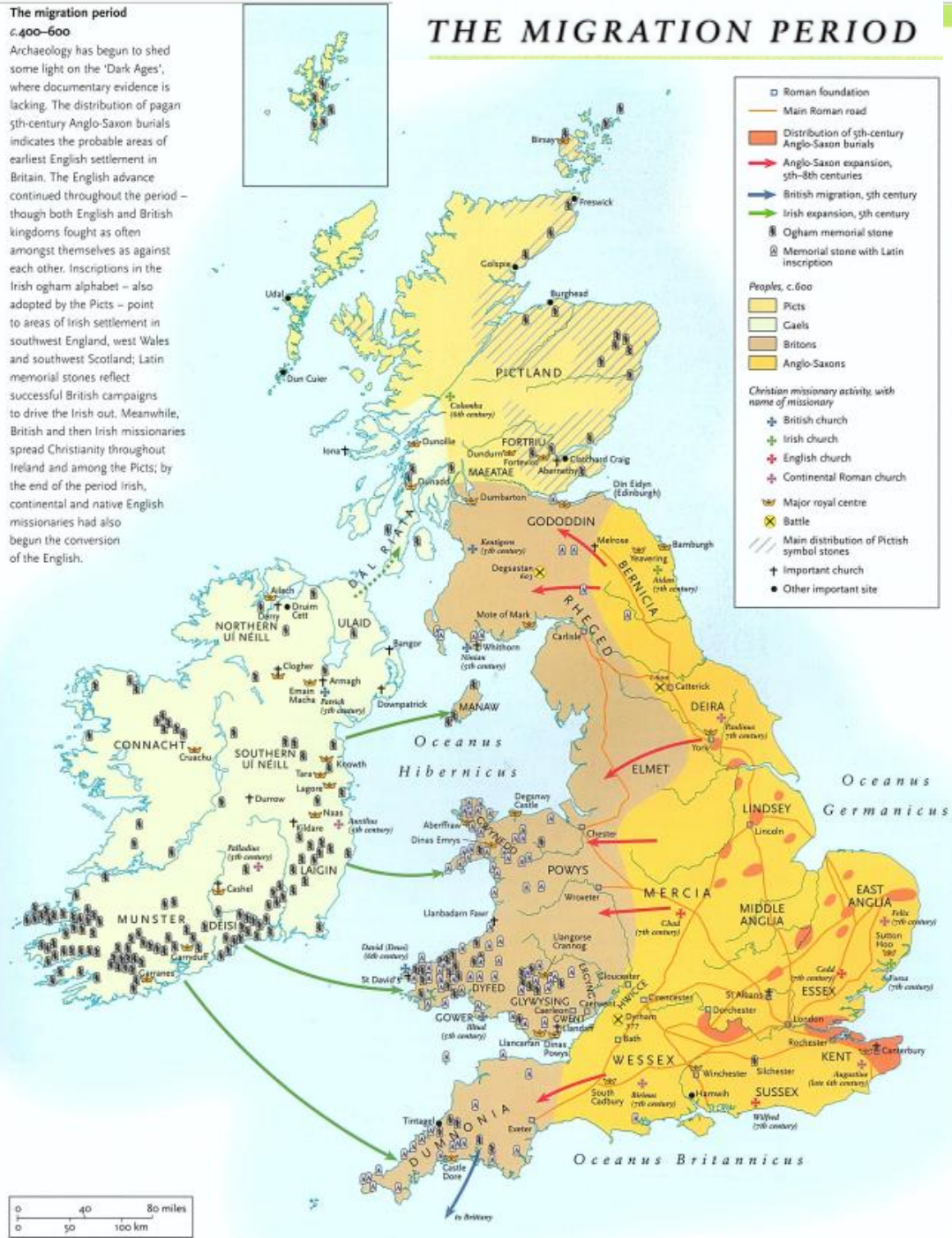
Christendom in
AD 528

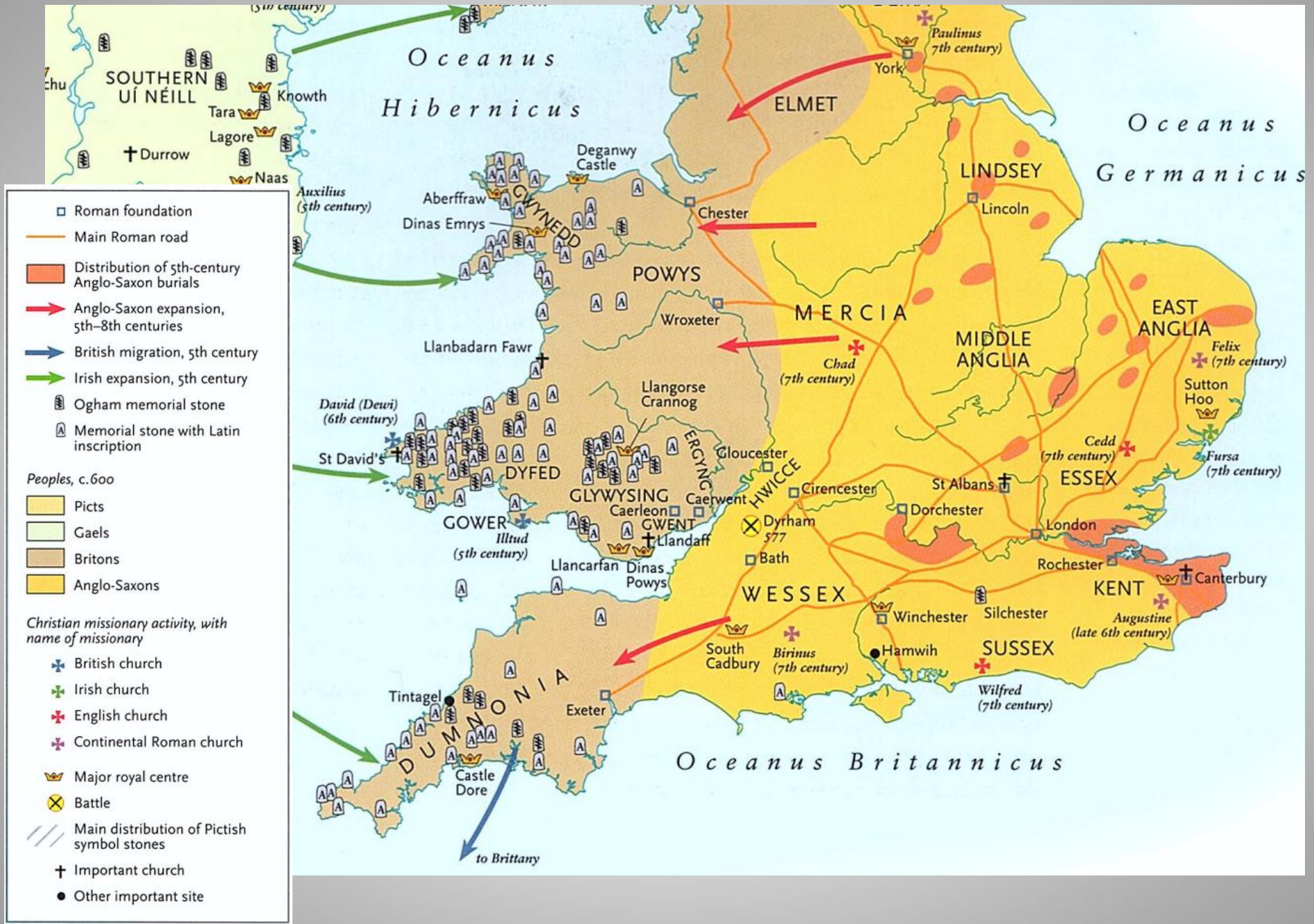


THE MIGRATION PERIOD

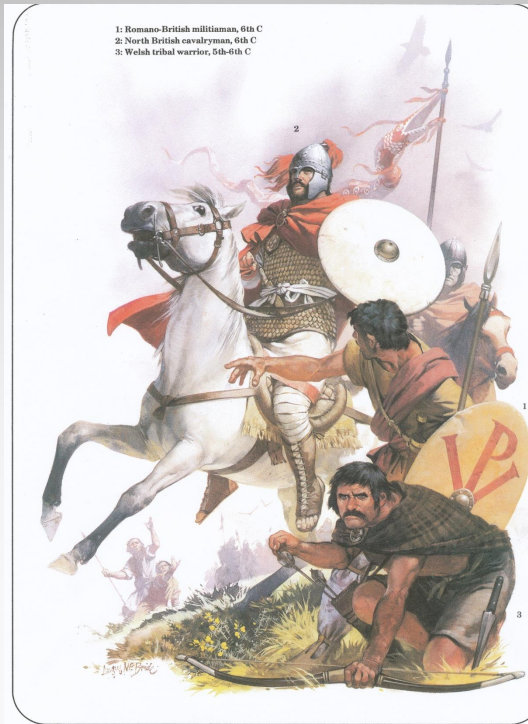
The migration period c.400–600

Archaeology has begun to shed some light on the 'Dark Ages', where documentary evidence is lacking. The distribution of pagan 5th-century Anglo-Saxon burials indicates the probable areas of earliest English settlement in Britain. The English advance continued throughout the period – though both English and British kingdoms fought as often amongst themselves as against each other. Inscriptions in the Irish ogham alphabet – also adopted by the Picts – point to areas of Irish settlement in southwest England, west Wales and southwest Scotland; Latin memorial stones reflect successful British campaigns to drive the Irish out. Meanwhile, British and then Irish missionaries spread Christianity throughout Ireland and among the Picts; by the end of the period Irish, continental and native English missionaries had also begun the conversion of the English.

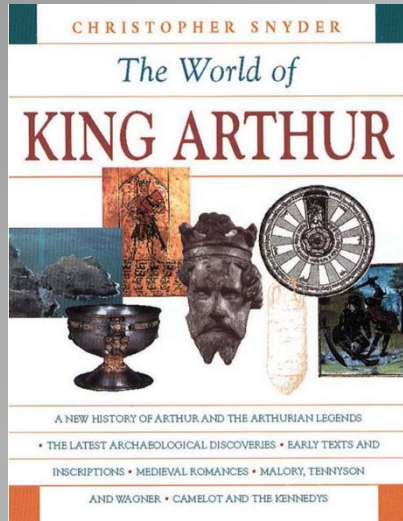



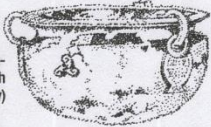

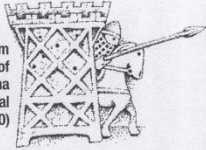


- Roman foundation
 - Main Roman road
 - Distribution of 5th-century Anglo-Saxon burials
 - ➔ Anglo-Saxon expansion, 5th–8th centuries
 - ➔ British migration, 5th century
 - ➔ Irish expansion, 5th century
 - ⊞ Ogham memorial stone
 - ⊞ Memorial stone with Latin inscription
- Peoples, c.600**
- Picts
 - Gaels
 - Britons
 - Anglo-Saxons
- Christian missionary activity, with name of missionary**
- ⊞ British church
 - ⊞ Irish church
 - ⊞ English church
 - ⊞ Continental Roman church
 - ⊞ Major royal centre
 - ⊞ Battle
 - /// Main distribution of Pictish symbol stones
 - ⊞ Important church
 - Other important site



There may well have been a warrior-leader named Arthur who did something heroic around AD 500, but we can't know anything about him. His reputation may have spread and snowballed, with deeds of others being attached to his name. The result was the Arthur of myth, who later inspired the stories of King Arthur of late medieval (and modern) romance!



	<p>Celtic torc, gold, (1st century AD)</p> 	<p>Bronze hanging-bowl (5th or 6th century)</p> 	<p>Pictish warrior gravestone inscription (8th century)</p> 	<p>Detail from archivolto of Modena Cathedral (c.1120)</p> 
BRITAIN AND IRELAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claudius invades Britain (43) • Revolt of Boudica (60/61) • Construction of Hadrian's Wall begins (122) • Lucius Artorius Castus commanded Sarmatian cavalry in Britain (175) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picts, Saxons, Scots and Atacotti harass Britain (364) • Magnus Maximus declared emperor (383) • Stilicho withdraws troops from Britain (401 or 402) • Election of usurpers Marcus, Gratian and Constantine III (406–7) • Britain devastated by Saxon incursions (408 or 410) • Britons revolt from Roman Empire (409) • St Germanus of Auxerre sent to Britain (429) • Britons ask Agitius for aid against barbarians • Patrick's mission in Ireland • <i>Superbus tyrannus</i> invites Saxon mercenaries to Britain • Ambrosius Aurelianus leads British forces against the Saxons • Battle of Mount Badon and birth of Gildas (c.485) • Entry for Battle of Badon in <i>Annales Cambriae</i> (518) • Gildas's <i>De Excidio Britanniae</i> (c.529) • Entry for the Battle of Camlann in <i>Annales Cambriae</i> (539) • Battle of Arderydd, in which Myrddin goes mad (c.573) • Battle of Dyrham (577) • Battle of Catraeth (c.590) • St Augustine arrives at Canterbury and the death of St Columba at Iona (597) • Aneirin composes <i>Y Gododdin</i> • St Kentigern's mission in Strathclyde • Kingdom of the Gododdin destroyed (638) • Bede completes his <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> (731) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harleian manuscript produced, containing <i>Historia Brittonum</i> and <i>Annales Cambriae</i> • <i>Culhwch ac Olwen</i> is written down • Geoffrey of Monmouth's <i>History of the Kings of Britain</i> (c.1136–38) • Geoffrey of Monmouth's <i>Life of Merlin</i> (c.1150) 	
	FRANCE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Witnesses in Gaul observe that part of Britain has fallen to the Saxons (c.441) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wace's <i>Roman de Brut</i> (c.1155) • Chrétien de Troyes writes five Arthurian romances (c.1170–91)
GERMANY				
REST OF WORLD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visigoths sack Rome; Honorius urges cities of Britain to see to their own defence (410) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archivolto of Modena Cathedral (c.1120)

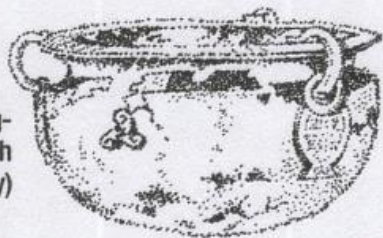
The timeline above is intended to help readers visualize the temporal span of the significant figures, historical events and creative works mentioned in this book. At the same time, it reveals how these elements may have influenced one another. Also evident from such a chart is the remarkable longevity of the Arthurian myth.

The chronology is less precise in its early medieval phase than in later eras. While the historical and mythological roots of Arthuriana stretch back into antiquity, most scholars have considered the fifth and sixth centuries (shaded above) to be the most formative. For some, this is because the historical Arthur may actually have lived in this period – thus it is often known collo-

Celtic torc, gold, (1st century AD)



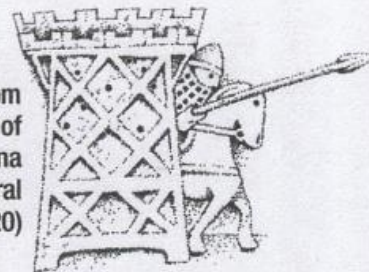
Bronze hanging-bowl (5th or 6th century)



Pictish warrior gravestone inscription (8th century)



Detail from archivolt of Modena Cathedral (c.1120)



BRITAIN AND IRELAND

- Claudius invades Britain (43)
- Revolt of Boudica (60/61)
- Construction of Hadrian's Wall begins (122)
- Lucius Artorius Castus commanded Sarmatian cavalry in Britain (175)
- Picts, Saxons, Scots and Atacotti harass Britain (364)
- Magnus Maximus declared emperor (383)
- Stilicho withdraws troops from Britain (401 or 402)
- Election of usurpers Marcus, Gratian and Constantine III (406–7)
- Britain devastated by Saxon incursions (408 or 410)
- Britons revolt from Roman Empire (409)
- St Germanus of Auxerre sent to Britain (429)
- Britons ask Agitius for aid against barbarians
- Patrick's mission in Ireland
- *Superbus tyrannus* invites Saxon mercenaries to Britain
- Ambrosius Aurelianus leads British forces against the Saxons
- Battle of Mount Badon and birth of Gildas (c.485)
- Entry for Battle of Badon in *Annales Cambriae* (518)
- Gildas's *De Excidio Britanniae* (c.529)
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- *Culhwch ac Olwen* is written down
- Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (c.1136–38)
- Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Life of Merlin* (c.1150)

1200

1300

1400

1500 ---- 1800

1900

2000



The Sword in the Stone, from a medieval manuscript illumination

Guinevere, detail from a stained glass window designed by William Morris (19th century)



Prince Valiant, created by Hal Foster in 1937

• Layamon's *Brut*

• *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

• Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1470)

• Edmund Spenser writes *The Faerie Queene* (1590–96)

• Alfred Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*

• T.H. White's *The Sword in the Stone* (1938)

• Rosemary Sutcliff's *Sword at Sunset* (1963)

• Leslie Alcock's excavations at Cadbury 'Camelot' (1966–70)

• *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975)

• John Boorman's *Excalibur* (1981)

• Geoffrey Ashe's *Discovery of King Arthur* (1985)

• Robert de Boron's *Merlin*
• The anonymous *Perlesvaus*

• French Vulgate cycle (1215–35)

• Post-Vulgate cycle (1230–40)

• Joseph Bédier's *Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut* (1900)

• Founding of the International Arthurian Society (1949)

• Hartmann von Aue's *Erec and Iwein*
• Ulrich von Zatzikhoven's *Lanzelet*

• Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzifal* (1210)

• Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan* (1210)

• Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (1865)

• Richard Wagner's *Parzifal* (1882)

• Hal Foster's *Prince Valiant* appears in American newspapers

• *Camelot* opens on Broadway (1960)

• Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Mists of Avalon* (1982)

• The NBC-TV mini-series *Merlin* (1998)

• Dante's *Inferno* (c.1310)

• Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516)

• Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889)

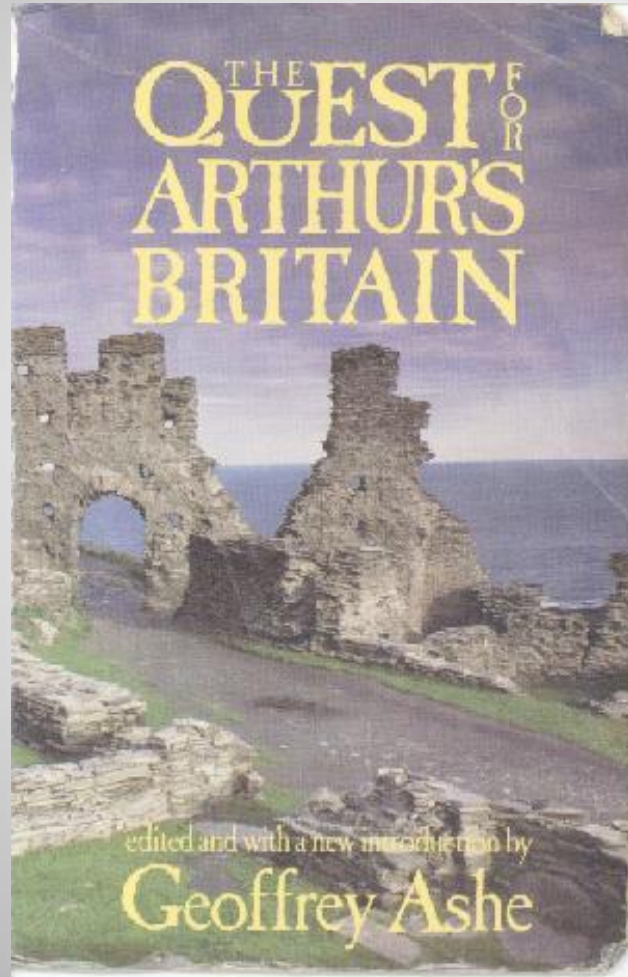
• Old Norse *Tristrams Saga*

quially as 'The Age of Arthur'; for others, because these years provided the personal names, battles and heroic ethos which form the heart of the Arthurian legends.

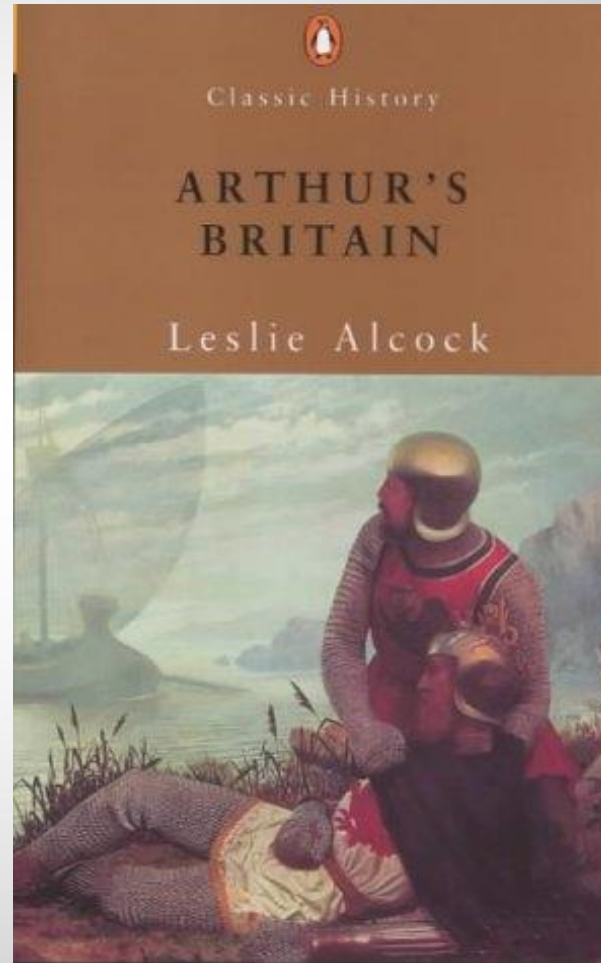
Lastly, the timeline illustrates the spatial dimension of the Arthurian tradition. From being a wholly insular figure in the early Middle Ages, Arthur came to 'conquer' much of conti-

ental Europe by the early modern period and, beginning in the nineteenth century, to capture the attention of America as well. While never entirely shedding its guise as a national British myth, Arthuriana in the twenty-first century is certainly a trans-Atlantic, if not international, phenomenon.

Two good older books, accepting Arthur's reality

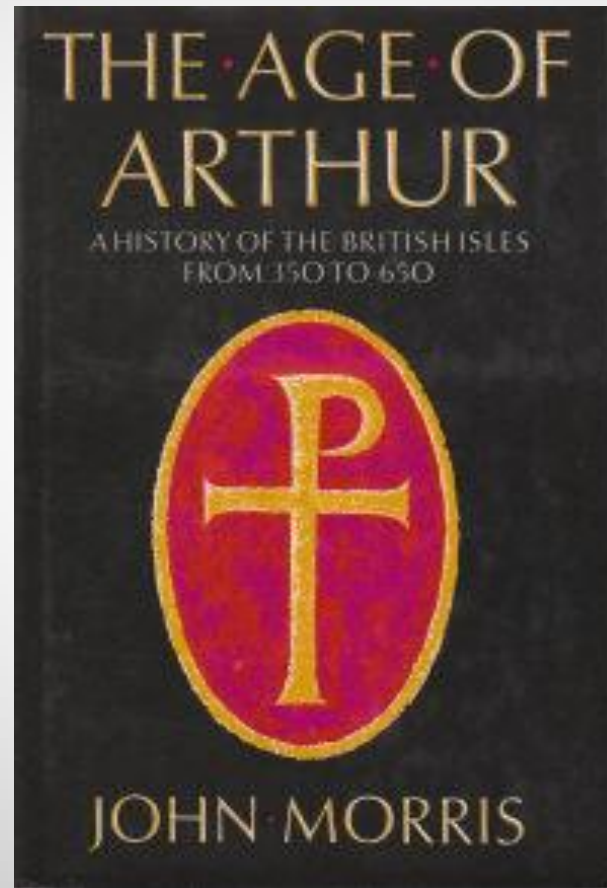


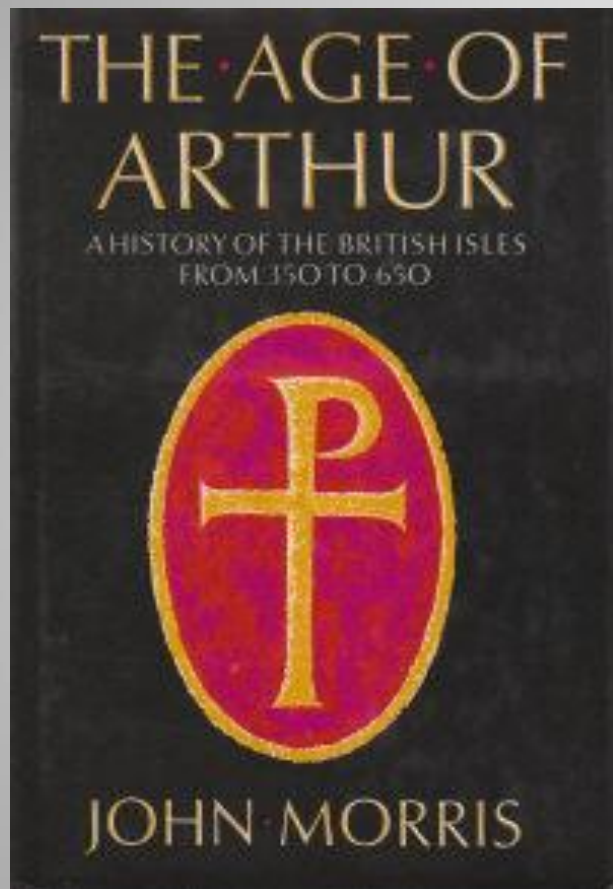
1968



1971

Still in print since 1973, still on library shelves, still being widely read....





“There are two things you need to know about Morris’ *The Age of Arthur*: one is that it is a marvellous, inspiring read; the other is that very little of it can be relied upon.”

—Guy Halsall, Worlds of Arthur

“...an outwardly impressive piece of scholarship [which] crumbles upon inspection into a tangled tissue of fact and fancy which is both misleading and misguided.”

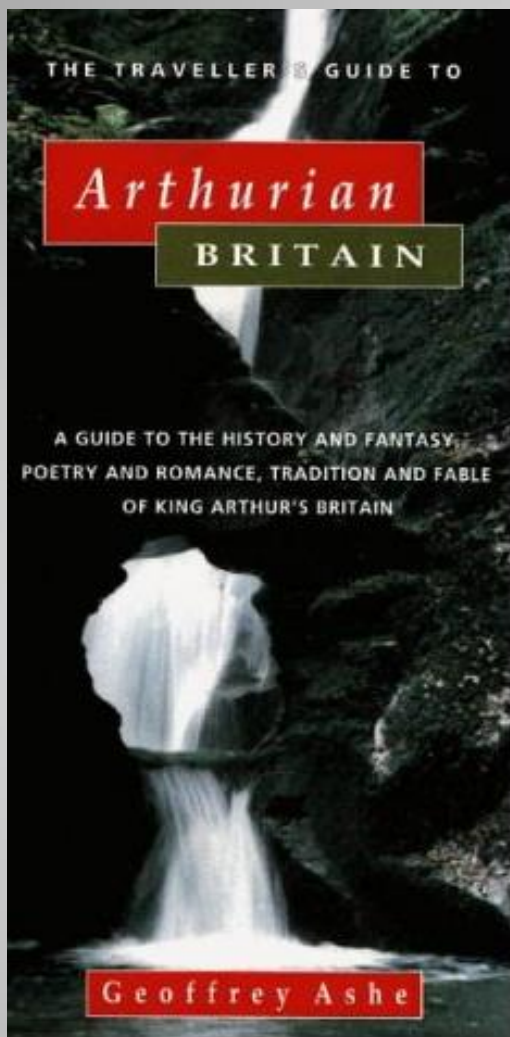
—D. Kirby and J. Williams, in a 33-page detailed review/critique in the journal *Studia Celtica* (1975)

“We come, last in the fifth century and first in the sixth, to Arthur....I think we can dispose of him quite briefly. He owes his place in our history books to a ‘no smoke without fire’ school of thought....The fact of the matter is that there is no historical evidence about Arthur; we must reject him from our histories and, above all, from the titles of our books.”

—David Dumville, “Sub-Roman Britain: History and Legend,” in History 62(205), July 1977

“It is a proverb that there is no smoke without fire. Clearly so, but it is equally clear that the human race is capable of seeing huge clouds of smoke without a single spark ever having been struck, save in the overheated furnace of the imagination.”

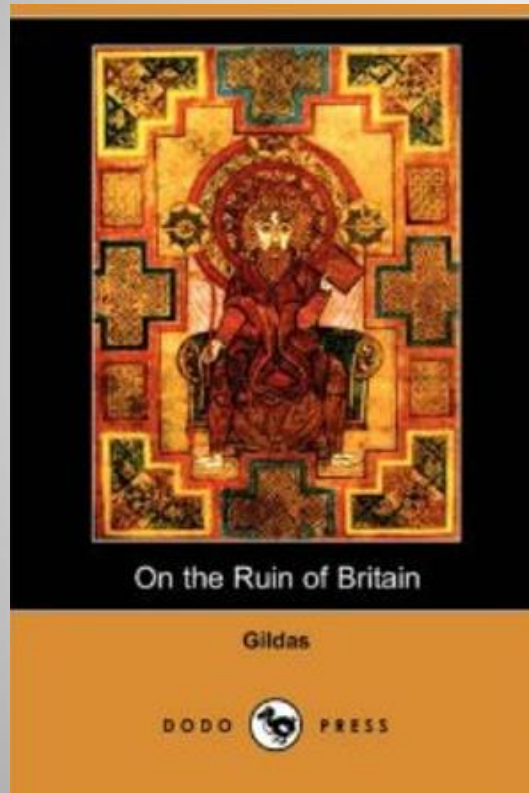
—Ronald Hutton, “How Myths Are Made,” in Witches, Druids and King Arthur (2003)



A comprehensive list of all sites in Britain connected in any way with King Arthur.

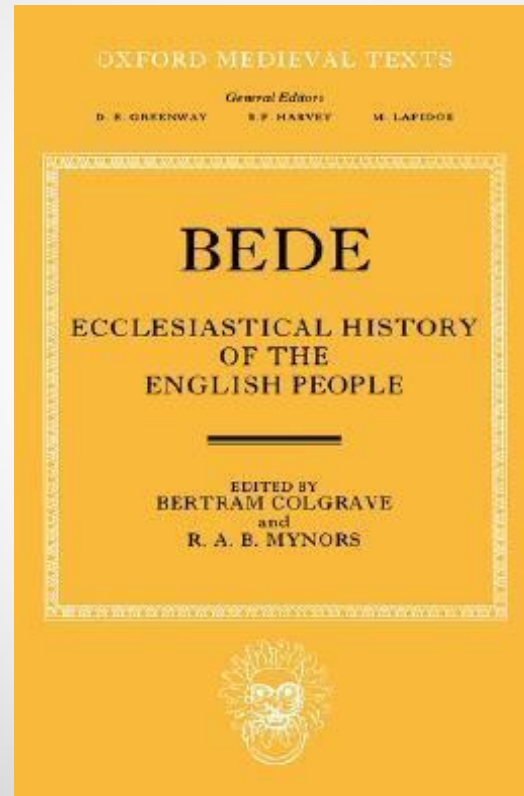
The main sources of historical information....

AD 540



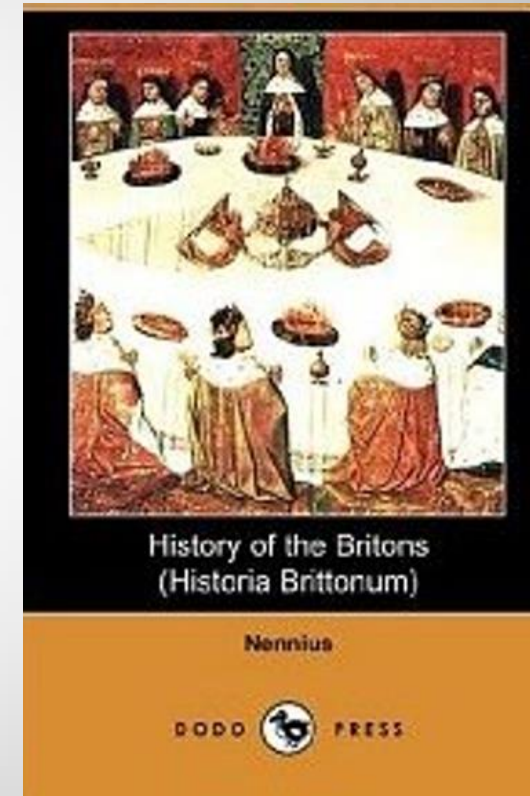
The monk Gildas wrote this fiery sermon on the sins of current rulers, with fragments (often unreliable) of earlier history.

AD 731



This famous chronicle is focused on the spread of Christianity in Britain (does not mention Arthur).

AD 828



A compilation of tradition, myth and history, this is the earliest source to mention the name of Arthur.

Arthur's Twelve Battles ...from the Historia Brittonum, AD 828

in rubro igneo secundo modo in monte q̄
draginta dieb; & q̄draginta noctib; ieiuna
uit. tertio modo similes fuer̄ ecce centū ut
gmta annis. quarto modo sepulchru' illi ne
mo scit. S; in coculo humat; nemine sci
ente. quindeci annis in captiuitate. mutesi
mo quinto anno ab amyathico sc̄o episcopo
subrogat; octingentū & quinq; annorū.
in hibernia p̄dicauit. & et aut; exagebat
ampli' loqui de sc̄o patreio. sed tamen p̄
cōpendio sermonis uoluit breuiare.
In illo tempore saxones multescebant in
multitudine & crescebant in britanniā.
Mortuo aut; hengisto octua fili' ei' transi
uit de sinistrali parte britannie ad reg
nū cantoni. & de ipso orat; reges cantōe.
unc archur pugnat; bat; cōtra illos.
in illis dieb; cū regib; breconū. s; ipse dixit
bellorū. Primū bellū fuit in ostū flumī
nis quod dicit; glein. sedm̄ & ecclū & q̄
tū & quincū. sup; aliud flumen quod
dicit; dubglas. s; in regione linnuis.
Sextū bellū sup; flumen quod uocā
t; bassas. Septimū fuit bellū
in silua celidonis. id; eae corit celidon.
Octauum fuit bellū in castello quinn
on. In quo archur portauit imāgine
sc̄e marie p̄p̄tate uirginis sup; hume
ros suos. & pagani uerū s; in fugā in
illo die. & cecidit magna fuit sup; illos.
p̄ uirtutem dñi n̄r̄ ihu xpi & p̄ uirtutē
sc̄e marie uirginis genitricis ei'. Nonū
bellū gestū; in urbe legionis. Decimū
gestū; bellū in illo flumine quod
uocāt; tribruit. In decimū; factū;
bellū in monte qui dicit; agned. In
decimū; fuit bellū in monte badonis
in quo corruer̄ in uno die n̄genti sex
aginta uiri de uno imperatū archur.

The first battle was at the mouth of the river called Glein.

The second, the third, the fourth and the fifth were on another river, called the Dubglas, which is in the country of Linnuis.

The sixth battle was on the river called Bassas.

The seventh battle was in the Caledonian Wood, that is, Cat Coit Celidon.

The eighth battle was at Guinnion fort, and in it Arthur carried the image of the holy Mary, the everlasting virgin, on his shoulder, and the heathen were put to flight that day, and there was great slaughter upon them, through the power of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Virgin Mary, his mother.

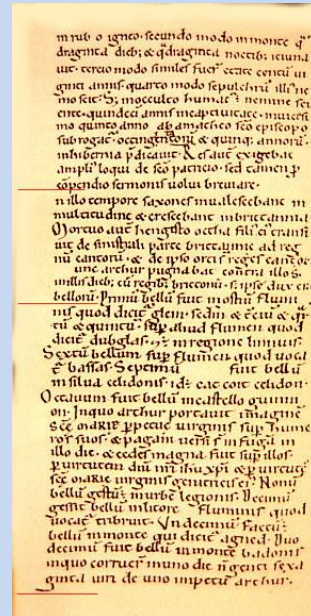
The ninth battle was fought in the City of the Legion.

The tenth battle was fought on the bank of the river called Tribruit.

The eleventh battle was on the hill called Agned [*some manuscripts say Breguoin*].

The twelfth battle was on Badon hill and in it nine hundred and sixty men fell in one day, from a single charge of Arthur's, and no one laid them low save he alone, and he was victorious in all his campaigns.

The Twelve Battles of Arthur, from the “Historia Brittonum.” In Latin, they rhyme!



The first battle was at the mouth of the river called Glein.

The second, the third, the fourth and the fifth were on another river, called the Dubglas, which is in the country of Linnuis.

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The twelfth battle was on Badon hill and in it nine hundred and sixty men fell in one day, from a single charge of Arthur's, and no one laid them low save he alone, and he was victorious in all his campaigns.

“...Wars neither ancient nor modern feature strings of battles with rhyming names. Unless Arthur’s battles were an exception (which seems extraordinarily unlikely) we are dealing here not with a record of historical events but with a poet unshackled by what actually occurred, striving for literary effect.”

—N. Higham, King Arthur (2012), p.188



Map 2. Possible locations for Arthur's battles.

Rule of Thumb:

South Cadbury Hillfort, AD 500:

Any inscription found within 300 years and 600 miles of this time and place with the letters "Art" will be claimed by somebody as proof of the real Arthur!



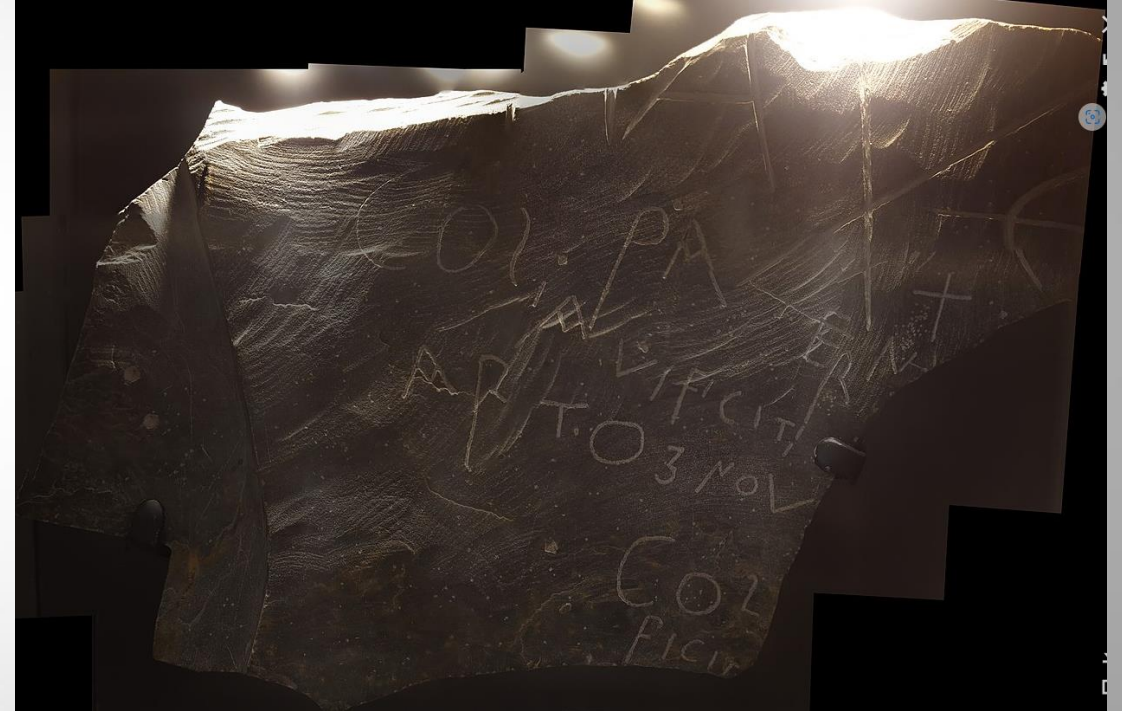
South Cadbury Hillfort, AD 500:

Any inscription found within 300 years and 600 miles of this time and place with the letters "Art" will be claimed by somebody as proof of the real Arthur!

EXAMPLES:



Tombstone of Lucius Artorius Castus, c. AD 200, a Roman officer who spent part of his career in Britain



The Artognou stone, Cornwall, 6th C. AD
"Artognou son of Paternus Colus made this."

THE LEGENDS OF THE BRITONS

- The Pseudo-Chronicles 88
The Welsh Tradition 92
The Breton Material 99
The French Romances 101
The Perceval-Grail Tradition 110
The Tristan Tradition 116
Arthurian Tradition and the Medieval World 118
The Late Medieval English Tradition 121

MONARCHY, CHIVALRY AND THE RETURN OF ARTHUR

- The Plantagenets 128
The Tudors and the Stuarts 132
The Victorian Revival 137

1200

1300

1400

1500 ---- 1800

1900

2000



The Sword in the Stone, from a medieval manuscript illumination

Guinevere, detail from a stained glass window designed by William Morris (19th century)



Prince Valiant, created by Hal Foster in 1937

• Layamon's *Brut*

• *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

• Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1470)

• Edmund Spenser writes *The Faerie Queene* (1590–96)

• Alfred Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*

• T.H. White's *The Sword in the Stone* (1938)

• Rosemary Sutcliff's *Sword at Sunset* (1963)

• Leslie Alcock's excavations at Cadbury 'Camelot' (1966–70)

• *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975)

• John Boorman's *Excalibur* (1981)

• Geoffrey Ashe's *Discovery of King Arthur* (1985)

• Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain* (c.1136–38)

• Robert de Boron's *Merlin*
• The anonymous *Perlesvaus*

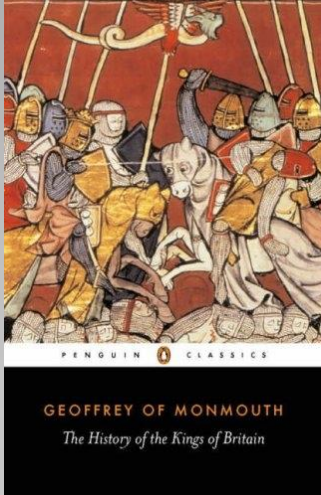
• French Vulgate cycle (1215–35)

• Post-Vulgate cycle (1230–40)

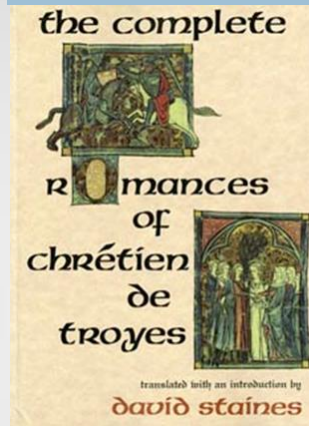
• Joseph Bédier's *Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut* (1900)

• Founding of the International Arthurian Society (1949)

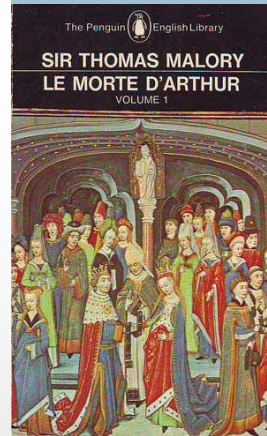
...a highly imaginative and largely fictitious pseudo-history of early Britain, providing the basic outline of the story of Arthur.



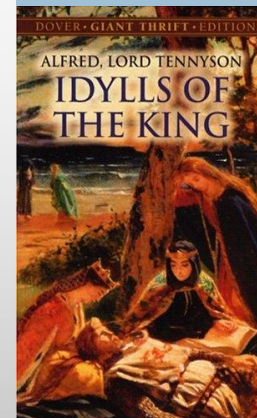
...adds romantic details: Guinevere, Lancelot, the Round Table, etc.



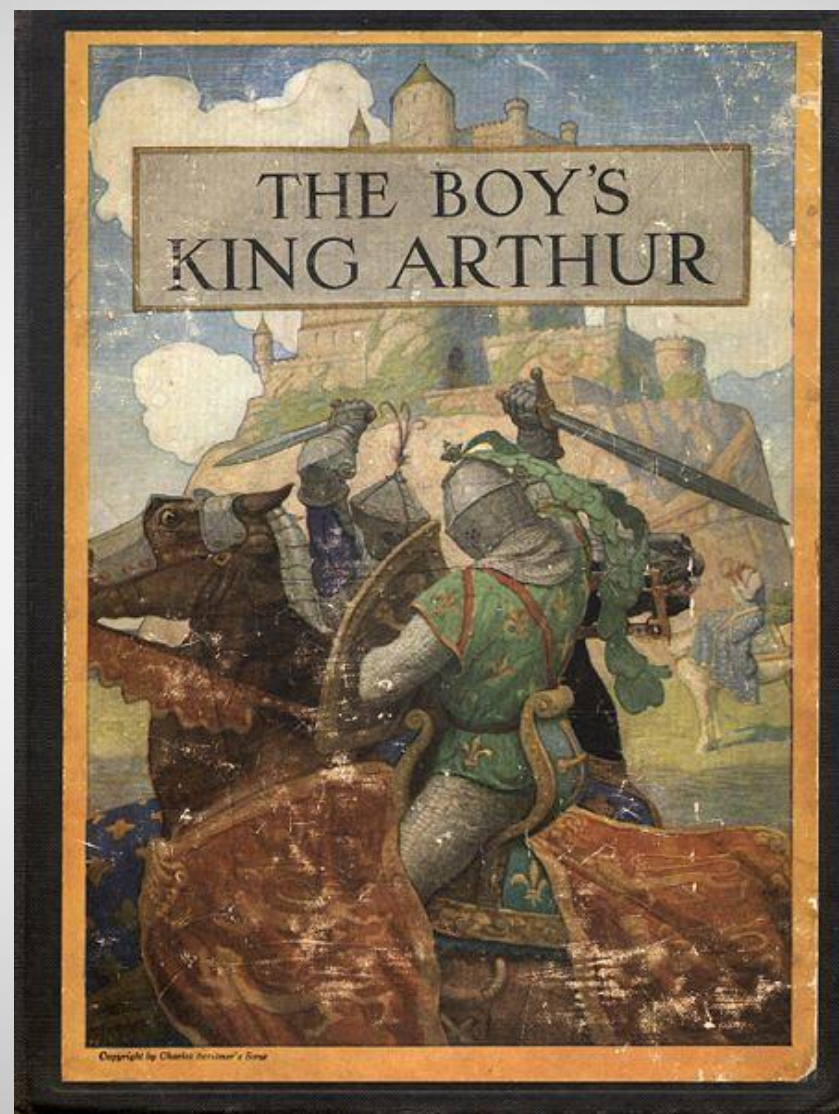
...These tales were enormously popular in the late Middle Ages, with this version widely read in early modern England.



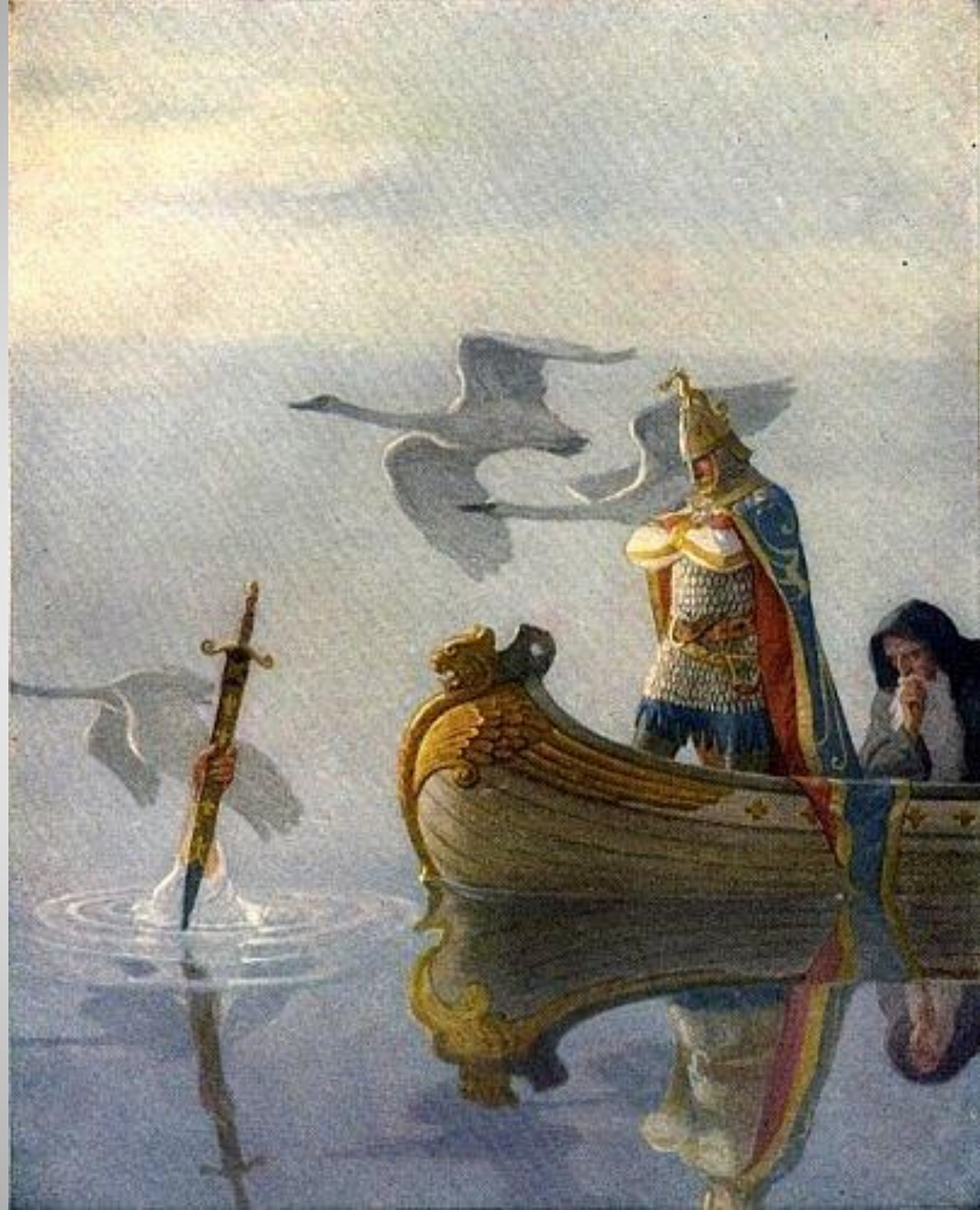
...the tales continued to inspire literary works through the 19th century...



...and the 20th and 21st!



...illustrations by N. C. Wyeth











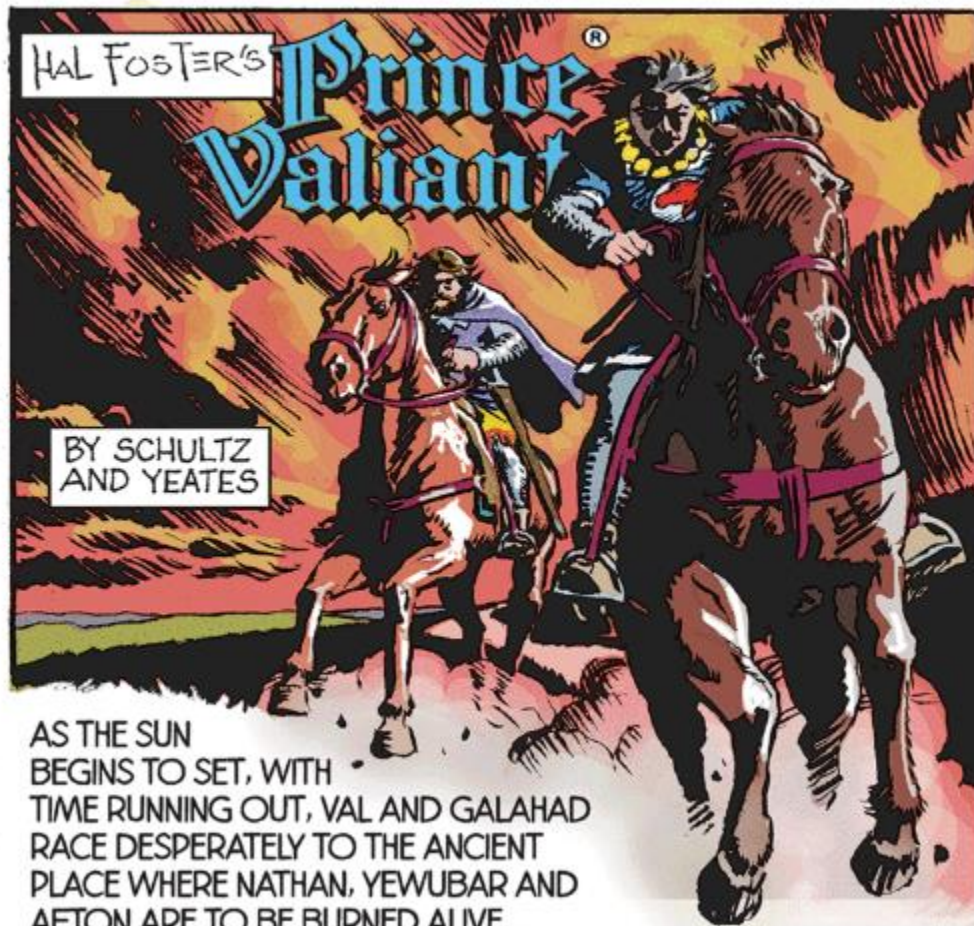
Prince Valiant's adventures in the world of King Arthur have formed a continuous unbroken narrative in Sunday papers for 85 years (since 1937!)



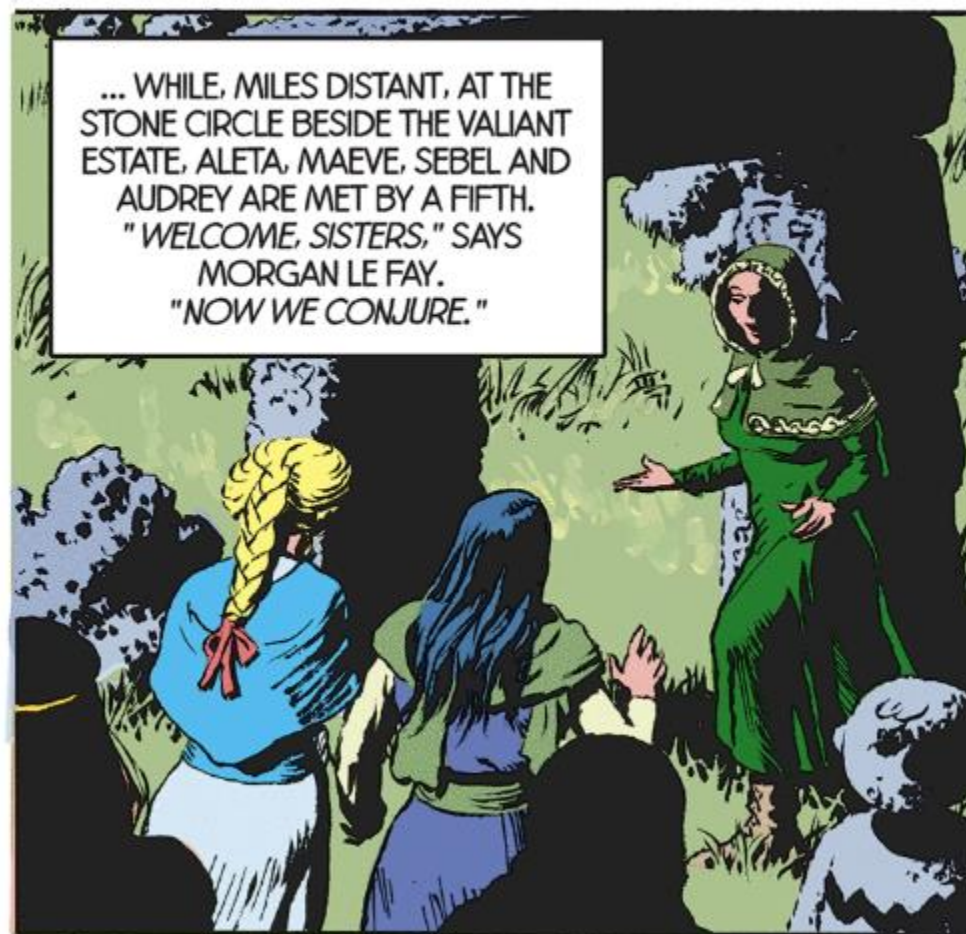
The News-Gazette dropped the strip several years ago, but each new installment (and all of the old ones) can be found at the website Prince Valiant Comics (run by Comics Kingdom).

In this week's episode, Val's young son and his friends are about to be burned at the stake by a fanatical witch-hunter!

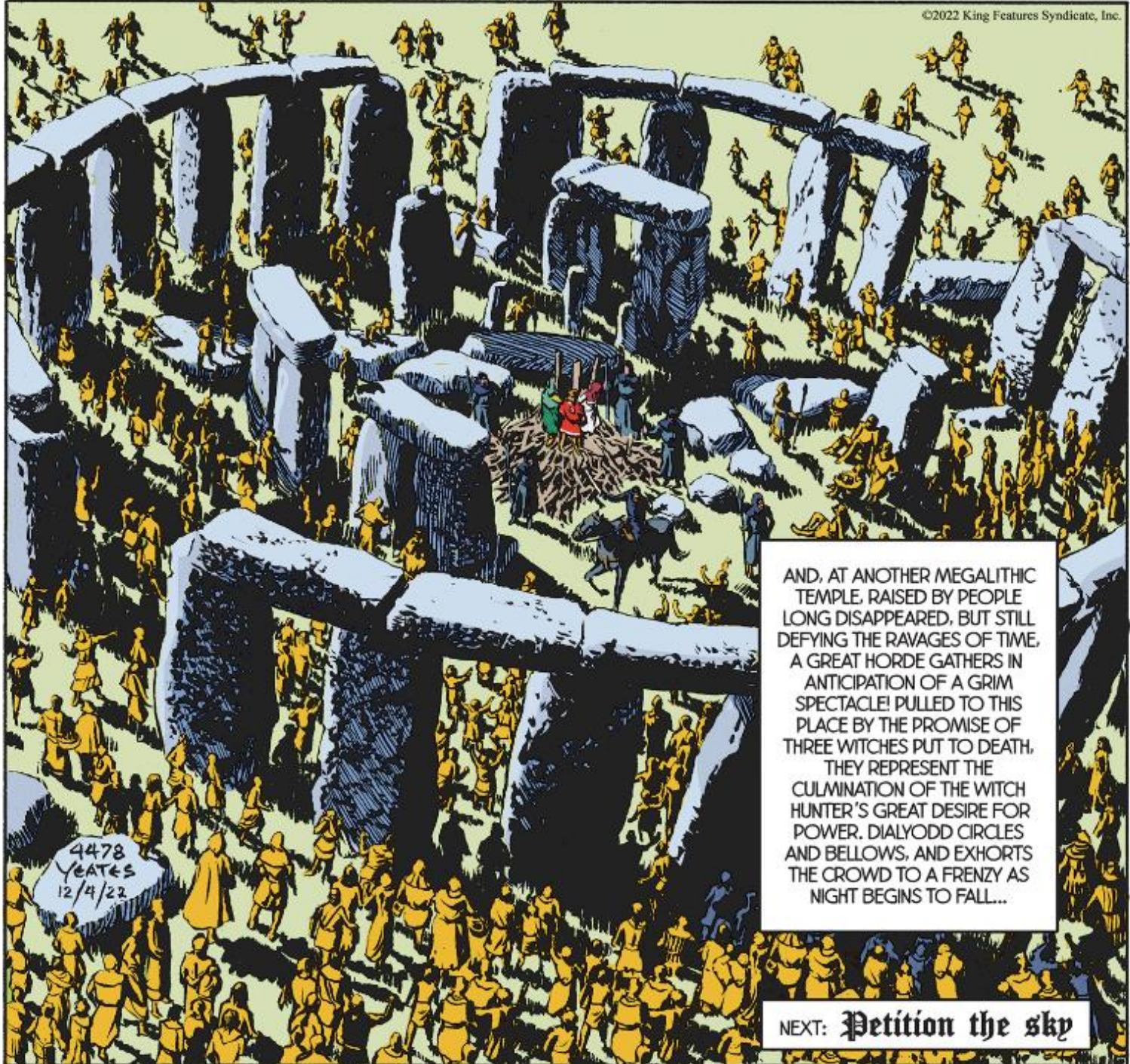
◀ SUNDAY, DECEMBER 04, 2022 📅



AS THE SUN BEGINS TO SET, WITH TIME RUNNING OUT, VAL AND GALAHAD RACE DESPERATELY TO THE ANCIENT PLACE WHERE NATHAN, YEWUBAR AND AFTON ARE TO BE BURNED ALIVE...



... WHILE, MILES DISTANT, AT THE STONE CIRCLE BESIDE THE VALIANT ESTATE, ALETA, MAEVE, SEBEL AND AUDREY ARE MET BY A FIFTH. "WELCOME, SISTERS," SAYS MORGAN LE FAY. "NOW WE CONJURE."

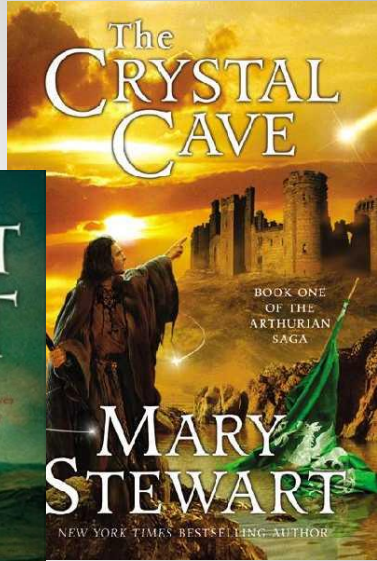
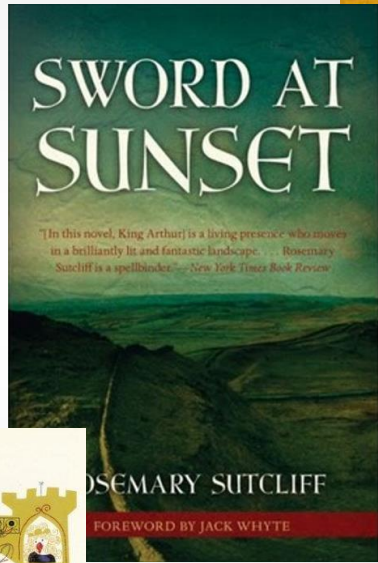
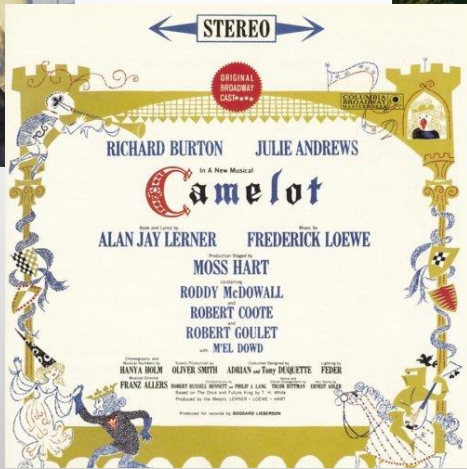
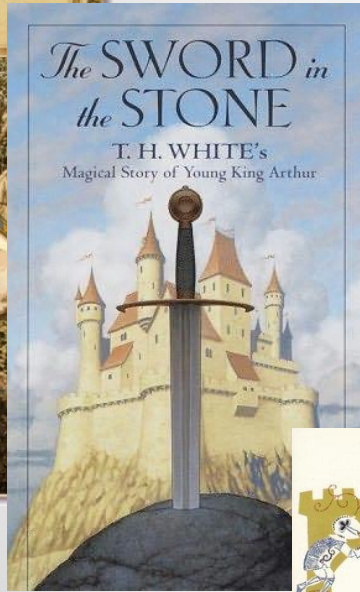


4478
Yeates
12/4/22

AND, AT ANOTHER MEGALITHIC TEMPLE, RAISED BY PEOPLE LONG DISAPPEARED, BUT STILL DEFYING THE RAVAGES OF TIME, A GREAT HORDE GATHERS IN ANTICIPATION OF A GRIM SPECTACLE! PULLED TO THIS PLACE BY THE PROMISE OF THREE WITCHES PUT TO DEATH, THEY REPRESENT THE CULMINATION OF THE WITCH HUNTER'S GREAT DESIRE FOR POWER. DIALYODD CIRCLES AND BELLOWS, AND EXHORTS THE CROWD TO A FRENZY AS NIGHT BEGINS TO FALL...

NEXT: *P*etition the sky

Arthur lives on.



NOVELS:

Alfred Duggan, **Conscience of the King** (1951).

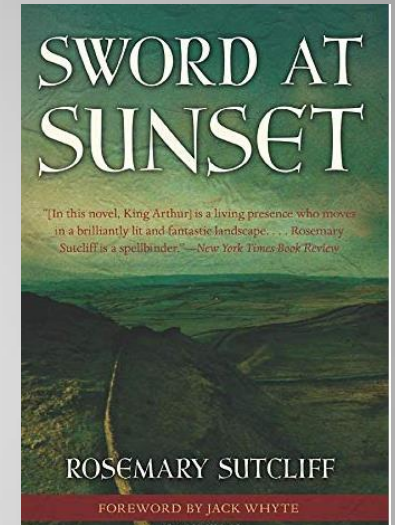
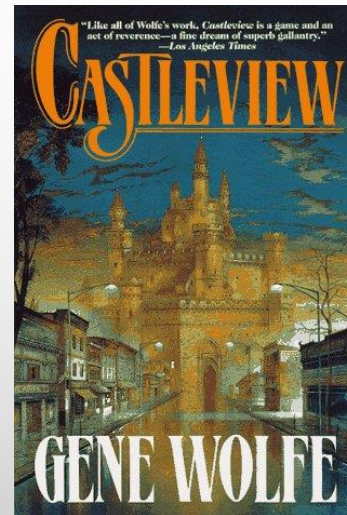
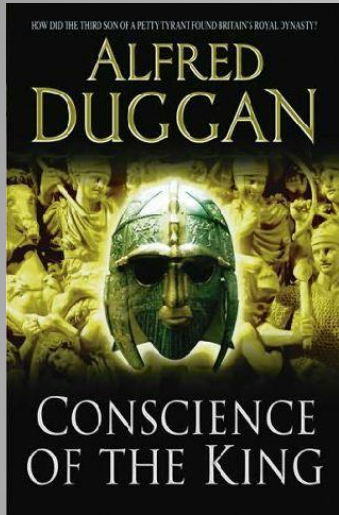
...fifth-century Britain, the arrival of the Saxons, and Arthur, as viewed by Cerdic, founder of Wessex, a king with no conscience at all.

Rosemary Sutcliffe, **Sword at Sunset** (1963)

...very good portrayal of the Arthurian saga in an accurate sixth-century setting.

Gene Wolfe, **Castleview** (1990).

...an Arthurian fantasy set in present-day Illinois. Very strange!
(For a good review/explanation of this novel, see Joe R. Christopher, "A Second View of Castleview," in Quondam et Futurus [the name for Arthuriana during the first three years of the journal], 3(3), Fall 1993.

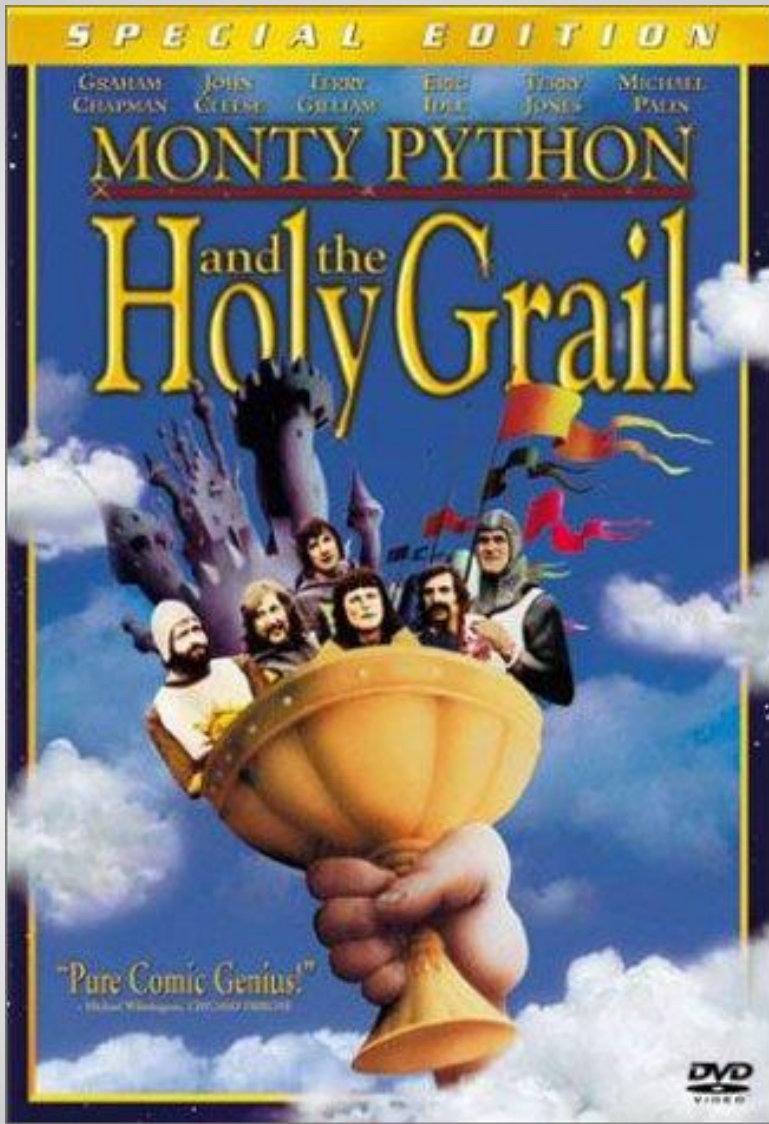


SPECIAL EDITION

GRAHAM JOHN TERRY TERC THOMAS MICHAEL
CHAPMAN GLEESON GILLIAM TICE JONES PALIN

MONTY PYTHON

and the Holy Grail



"Pure Comic Genius!"

— Richard Williams, CINECITY ENTERTAINMENT

DVD
VIDEO



N

N O R

S E A

Iona

Christianity introduced from Ireland by St. Columba 597

Roman Britain partially Christianized by 3rd Century; Christianity subsequently introduced by Anglo-Saxons in 6th Centuries

Edinburgh
Glasgow
Lindisfarne

597-603

627-631

Whitby
York

IRELAND
Christianity introduced by St. Patrick 440-493

WALLES

CORNWALL

Christianity introduced by Wight (686)
Welsh and Irish (16th Century)

WESSEX (684-6481)

SUSSEX (681)

KENT (597)

Augustine (597-604)

MERCIA (654-670)

ESSEX (653)

EAST ANGLIA (630-647)

London

Canterbury

English Channel

Rouen
Amiens
Soissons
Reims
Seine R.
Paris

Christianity introduced 496

Sites in the war fought between the Britons and the Saxons



1: Anglian king, early 7th C
2: Mercian warrior, 7th C
3, 4: Anglo-Saxon warriors, 7th C



James McBrade

- 1: Romano-British militiaman, 6th C
2: North British cavalryman, 6th C
3: Welsh tribal warrior, 5th-6th C



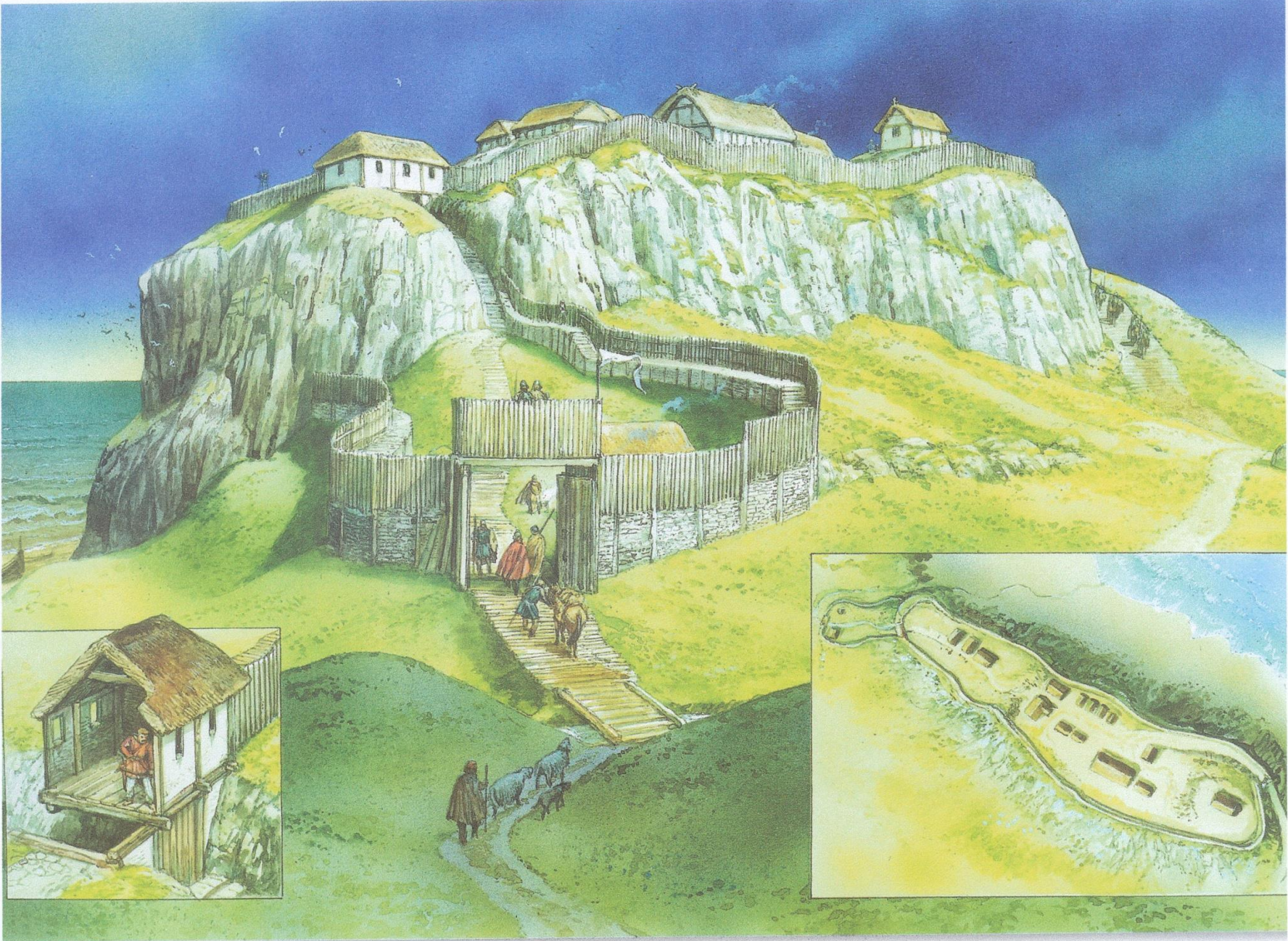


urian Romano-British landlord clashes with a Saxon raider on the outskirts of Bath, Britain, in the late fifth century.

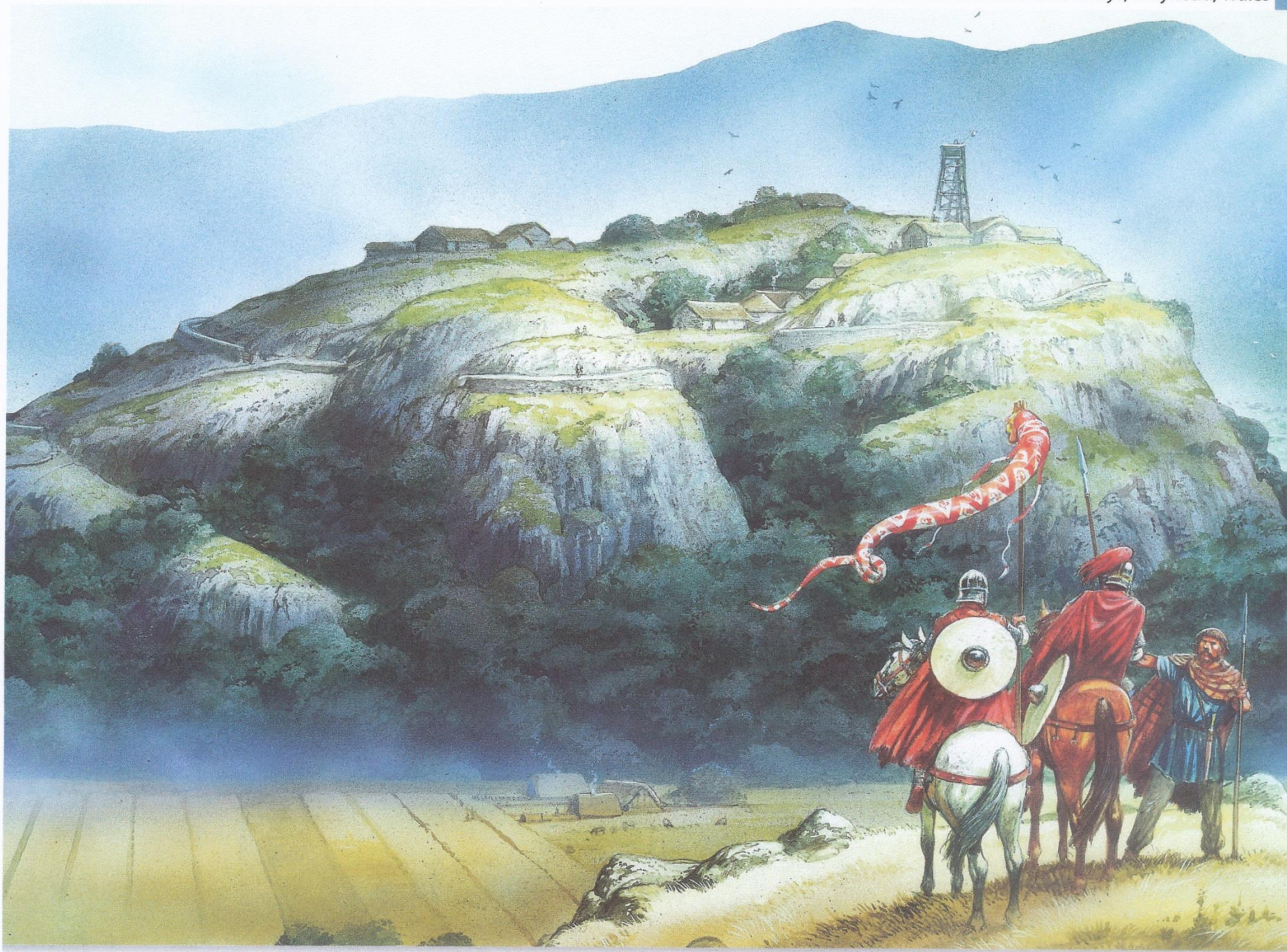
Key fortified sites in 'Arthurian' Britain



The Saxon fortress: Bamburgh (Bebbanburgh), Northumbria

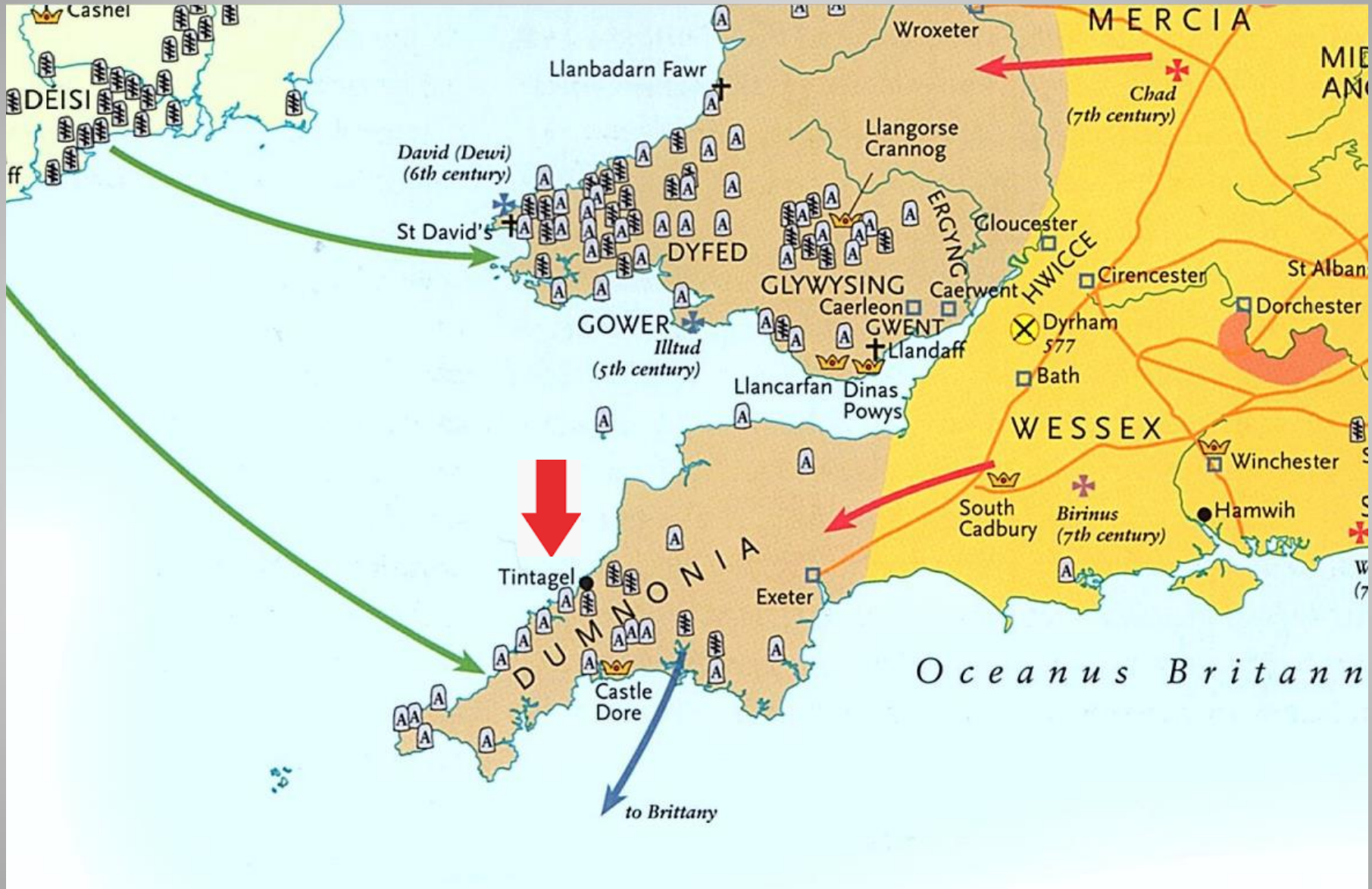


The mountain retreat: Dinas Emrys, Gwynedd, Wales



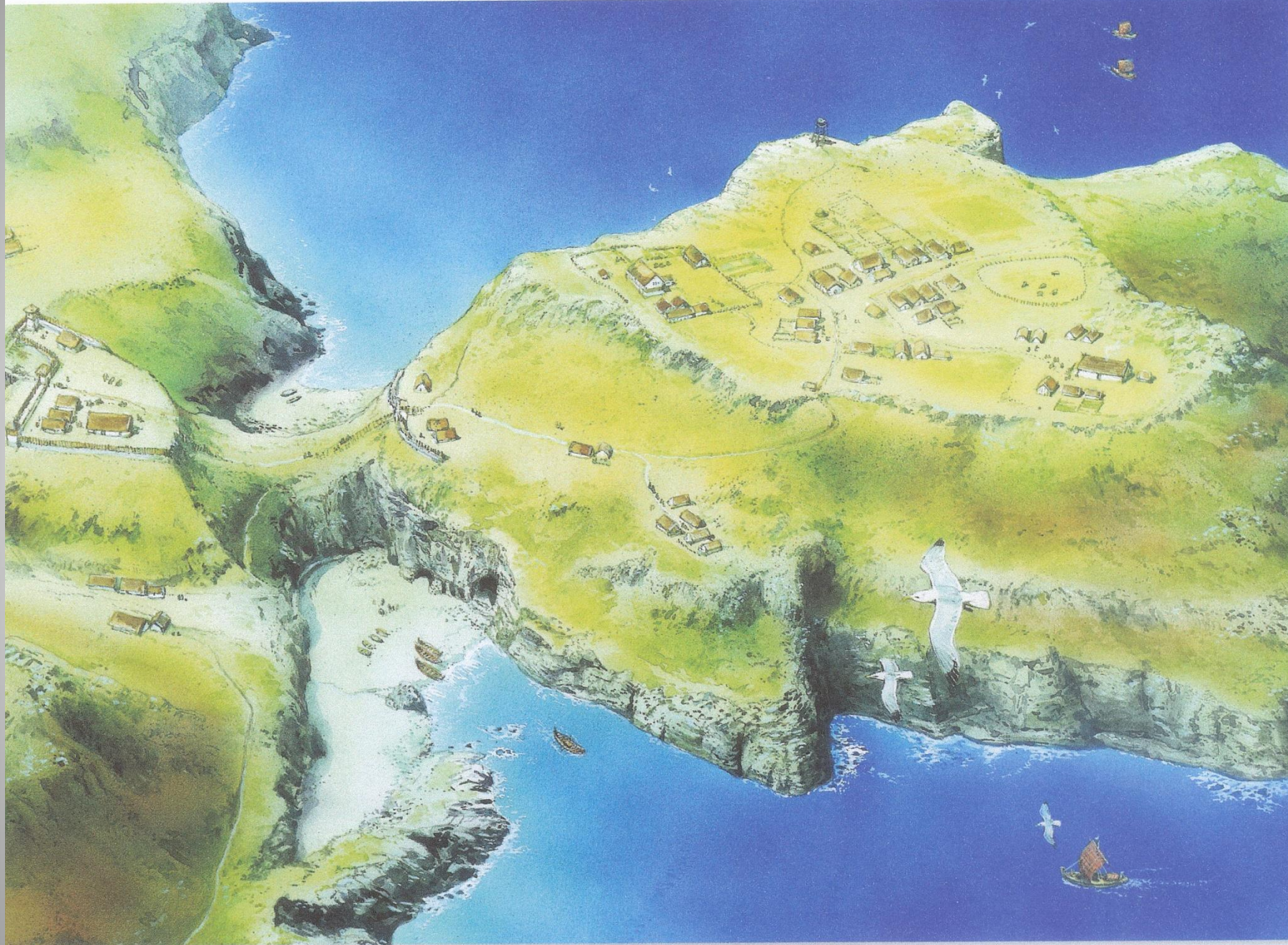


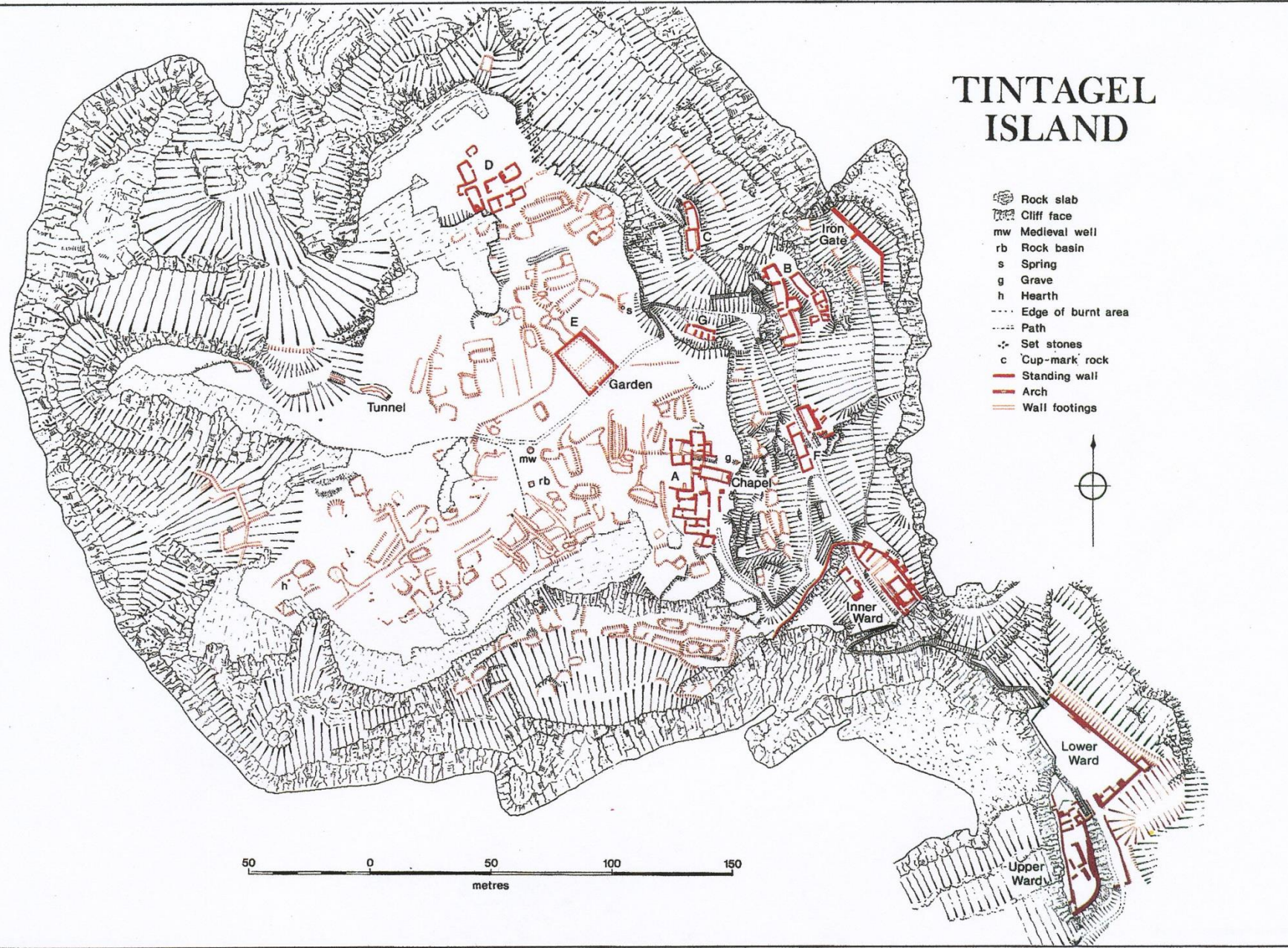




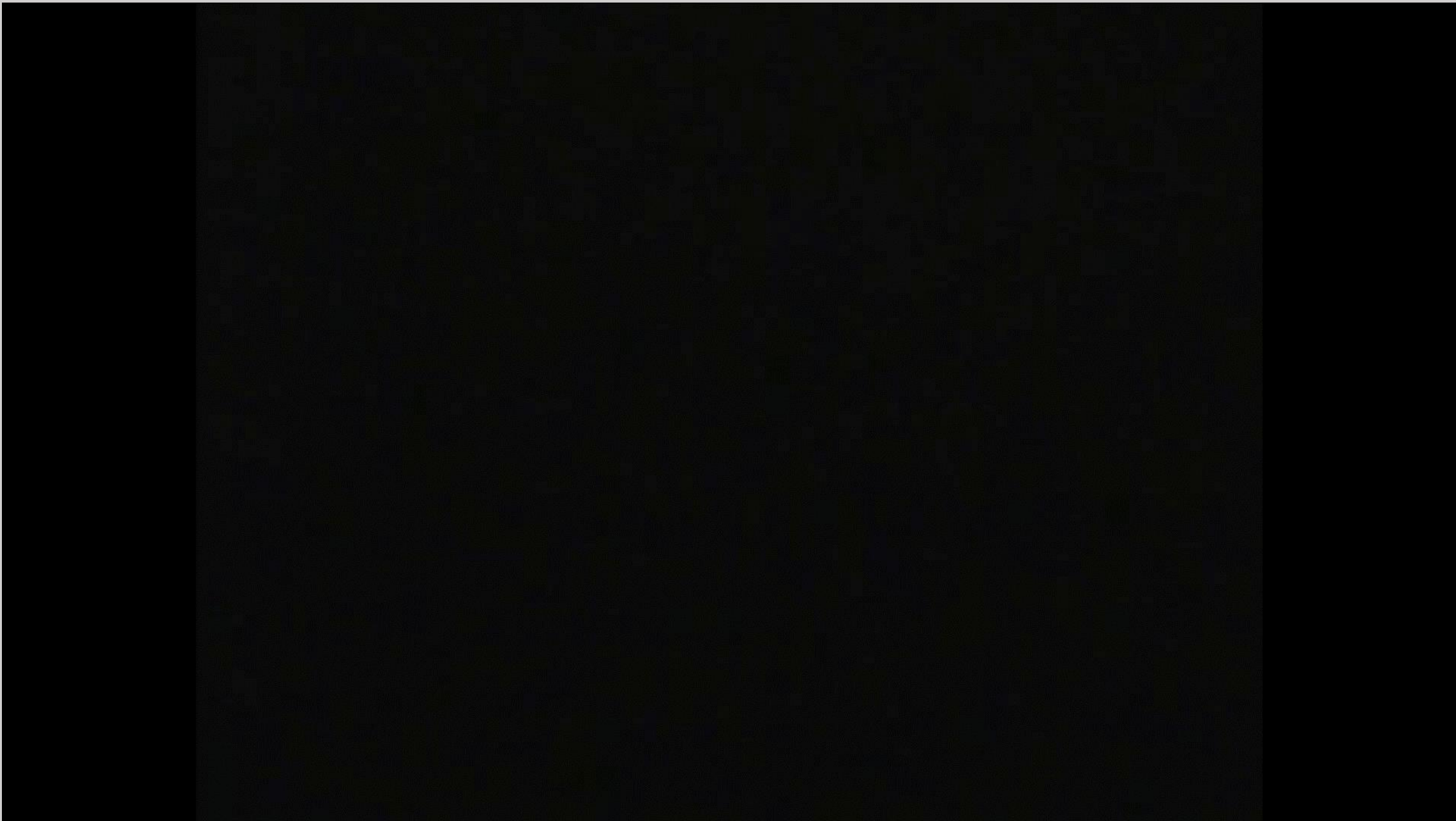


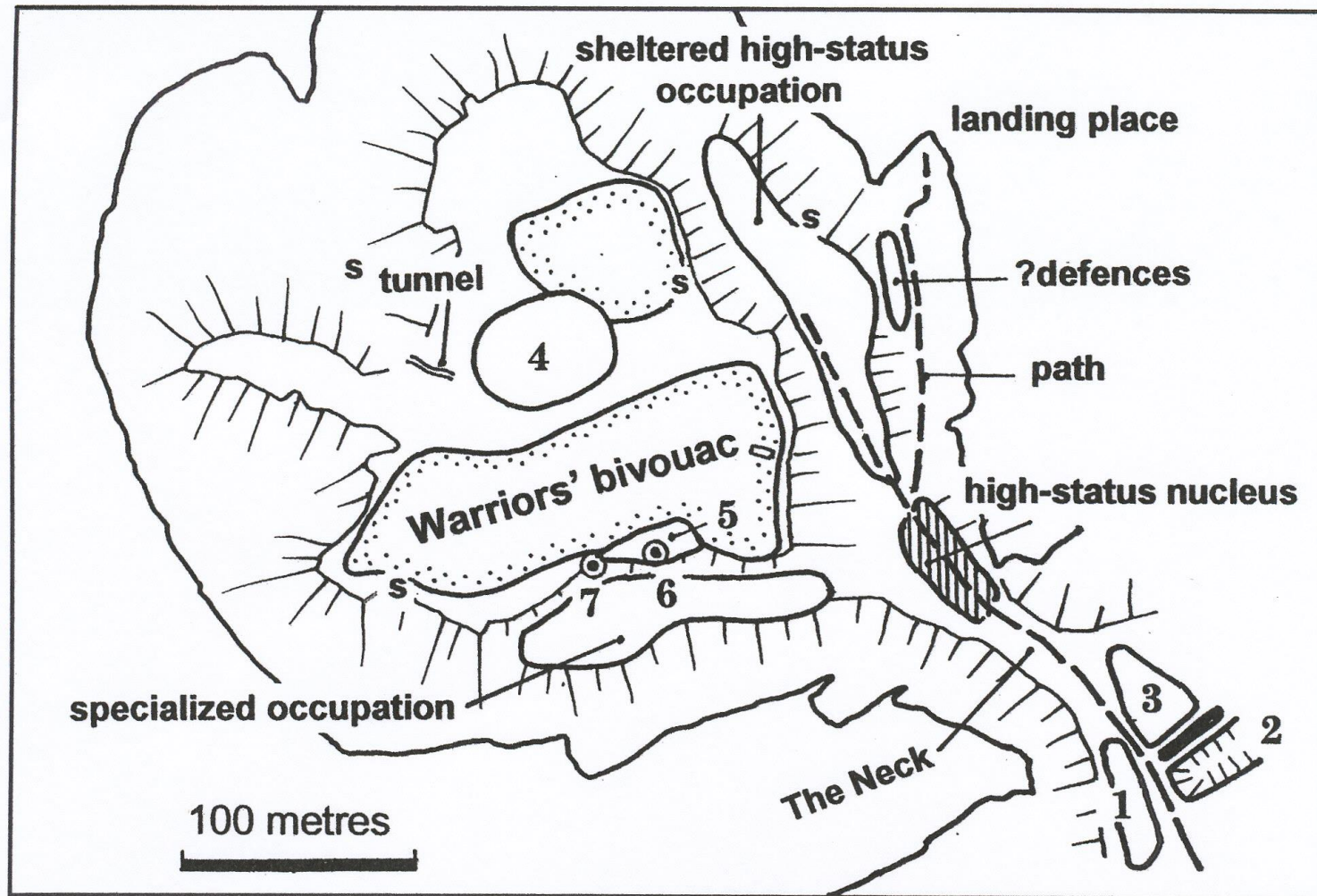
The peninsular fort: Tintagel, Cornwall



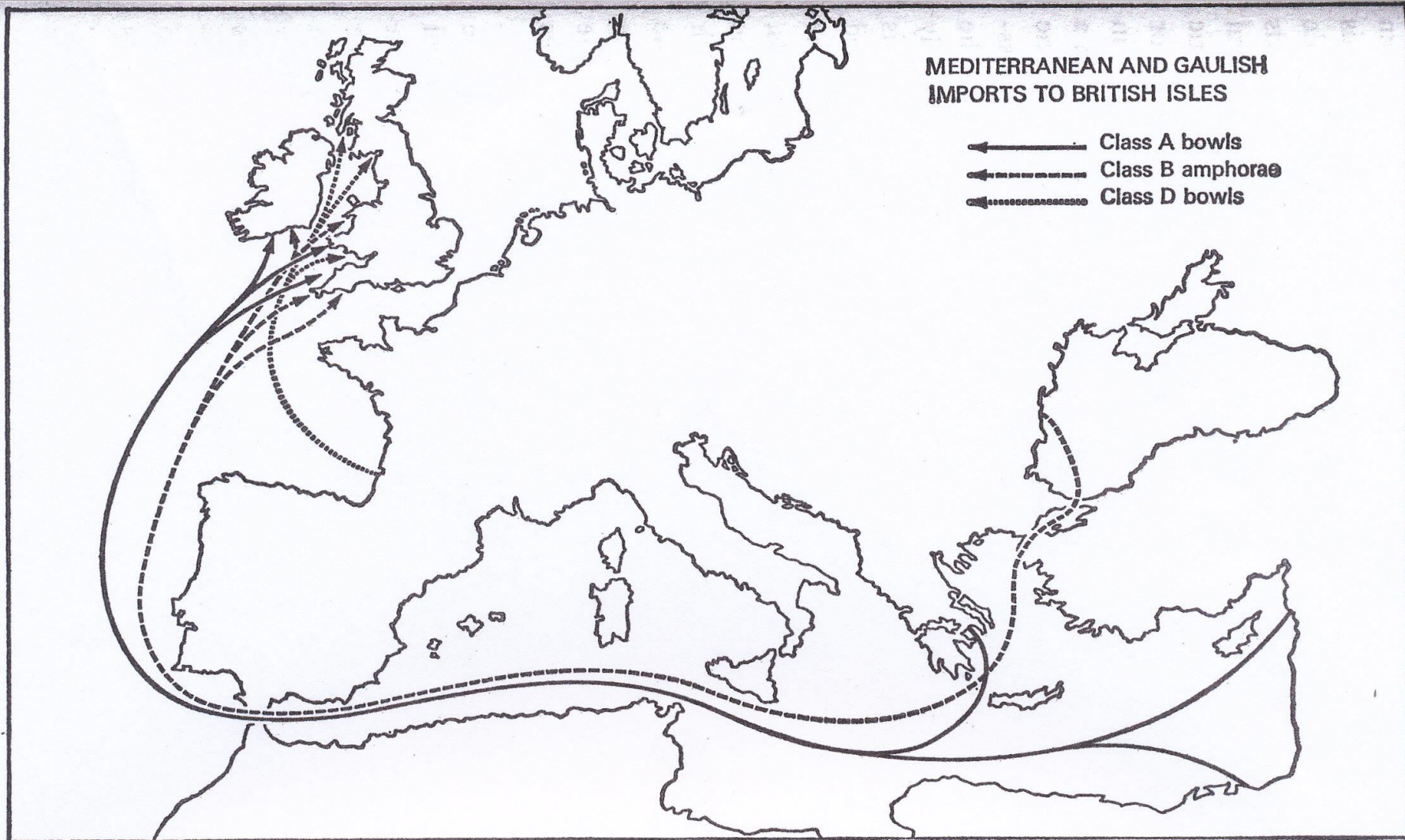


4 The RCHME plan of Tintagel, made in 1985 after the 1983 fire.



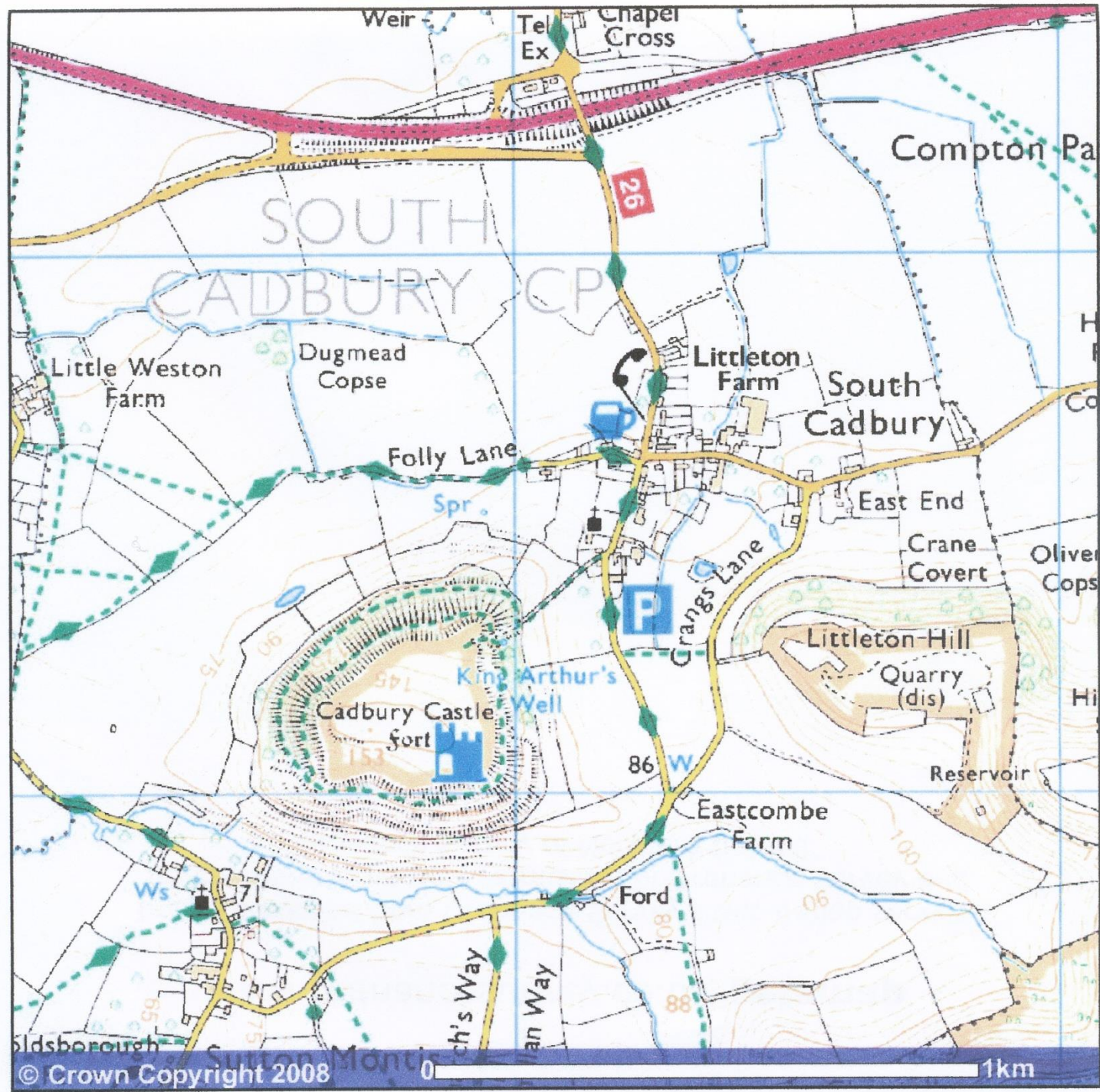


re 3.7 Tintagel: dark age functional zones. 1= walled strongpoint; 2 = defensive ditch; 3 = occupied forepart; 4 = caretaker settlement; 5 = ceremonial summit platform; 6 = King Arthur's Footprint; 7 = King Arthur's Seat; s = spring

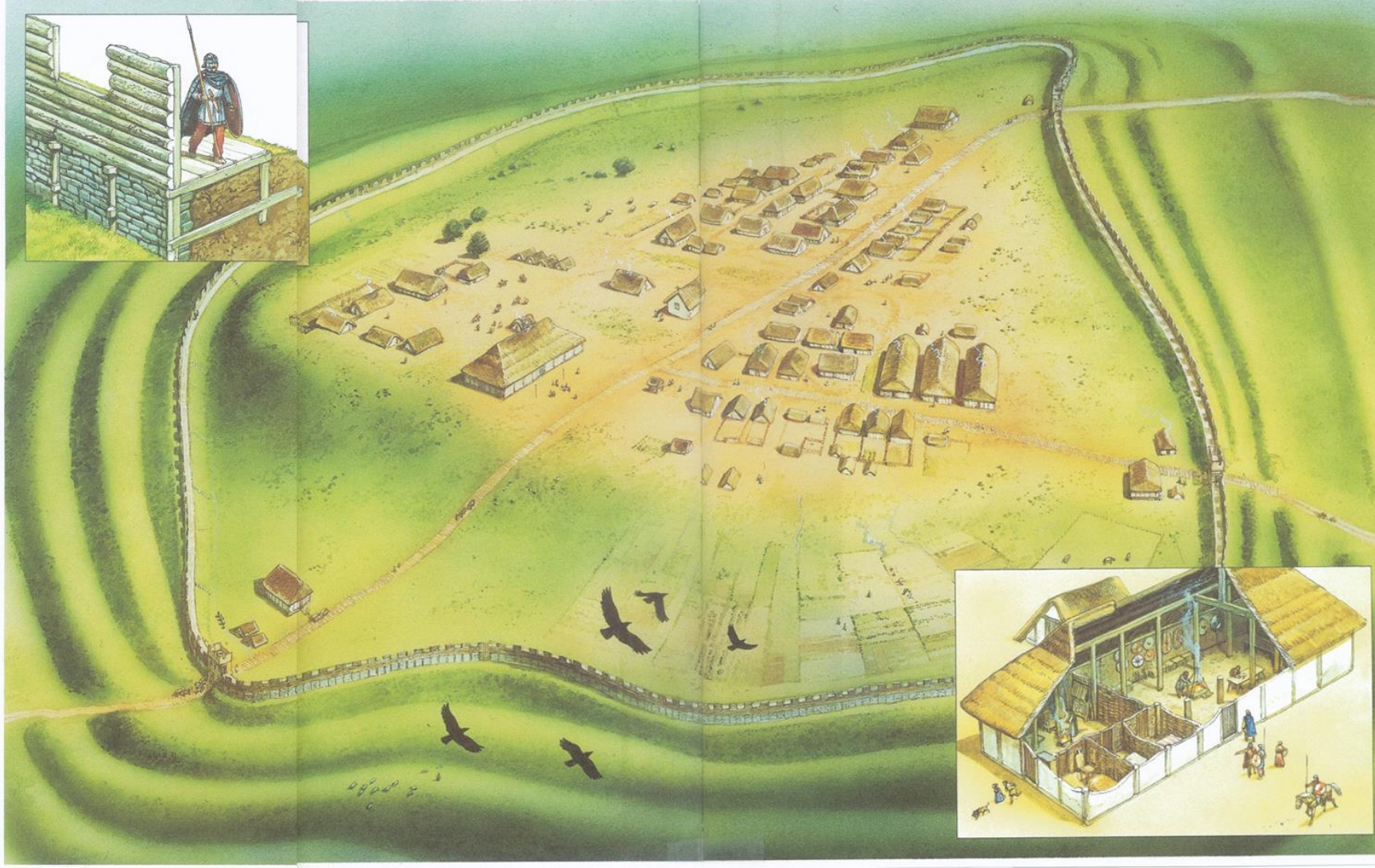


Map 5. Possible routes by which pottery of Classes A, B, and D was imported from the Black Sea, the east Mediterranean and western Gaul.

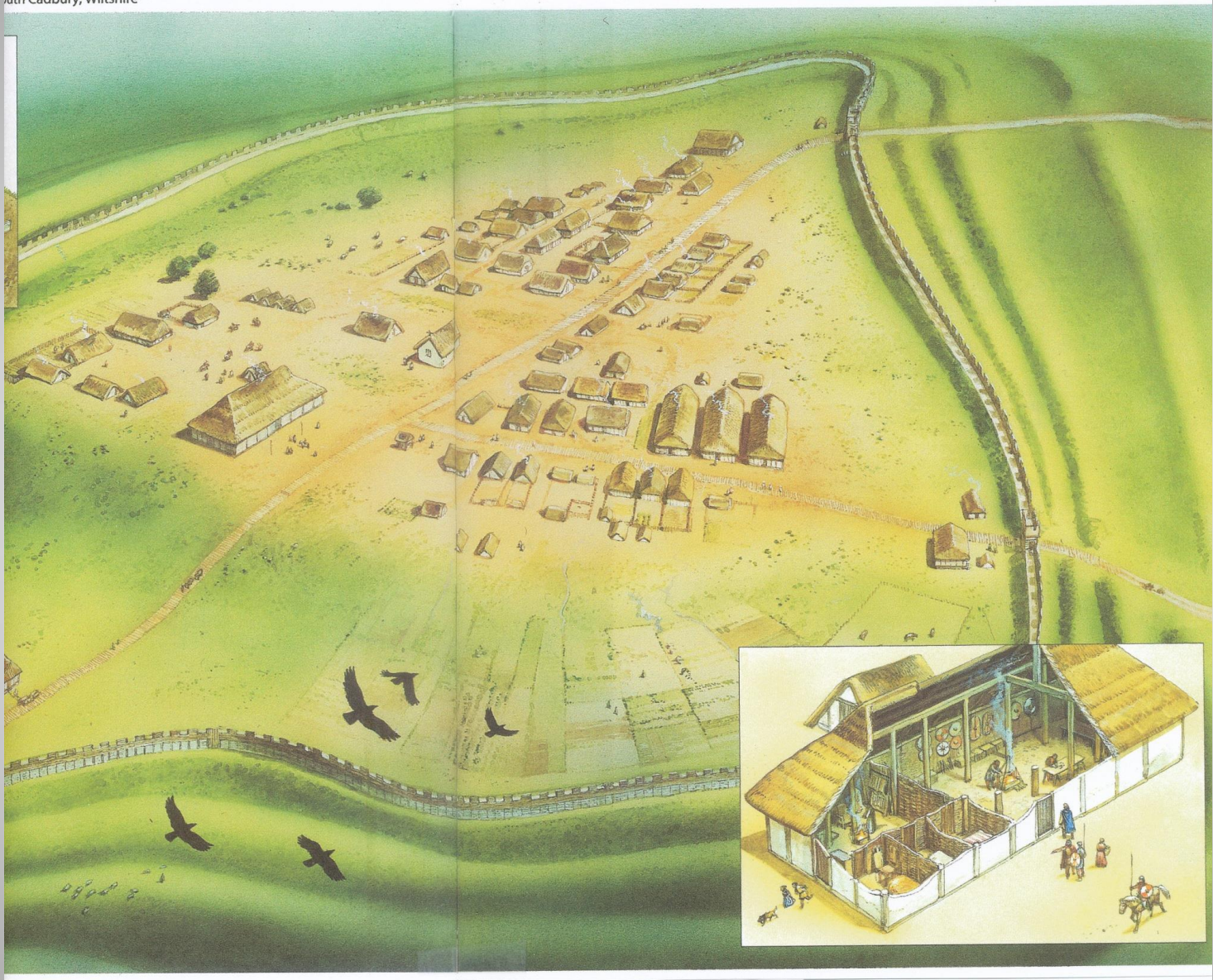


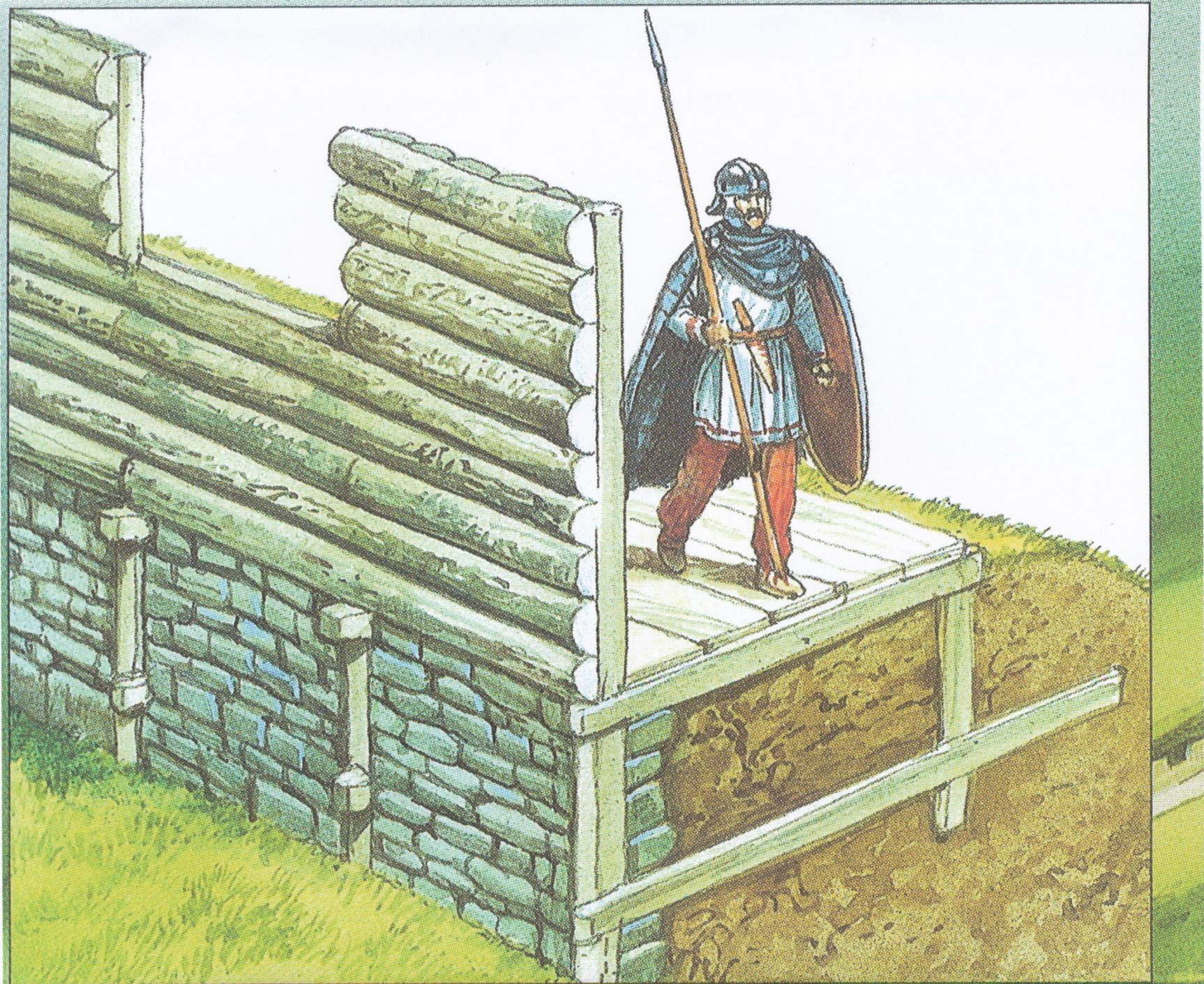


D The site of Camelot? The 'Arthurian' hill-fort of South Cadbury

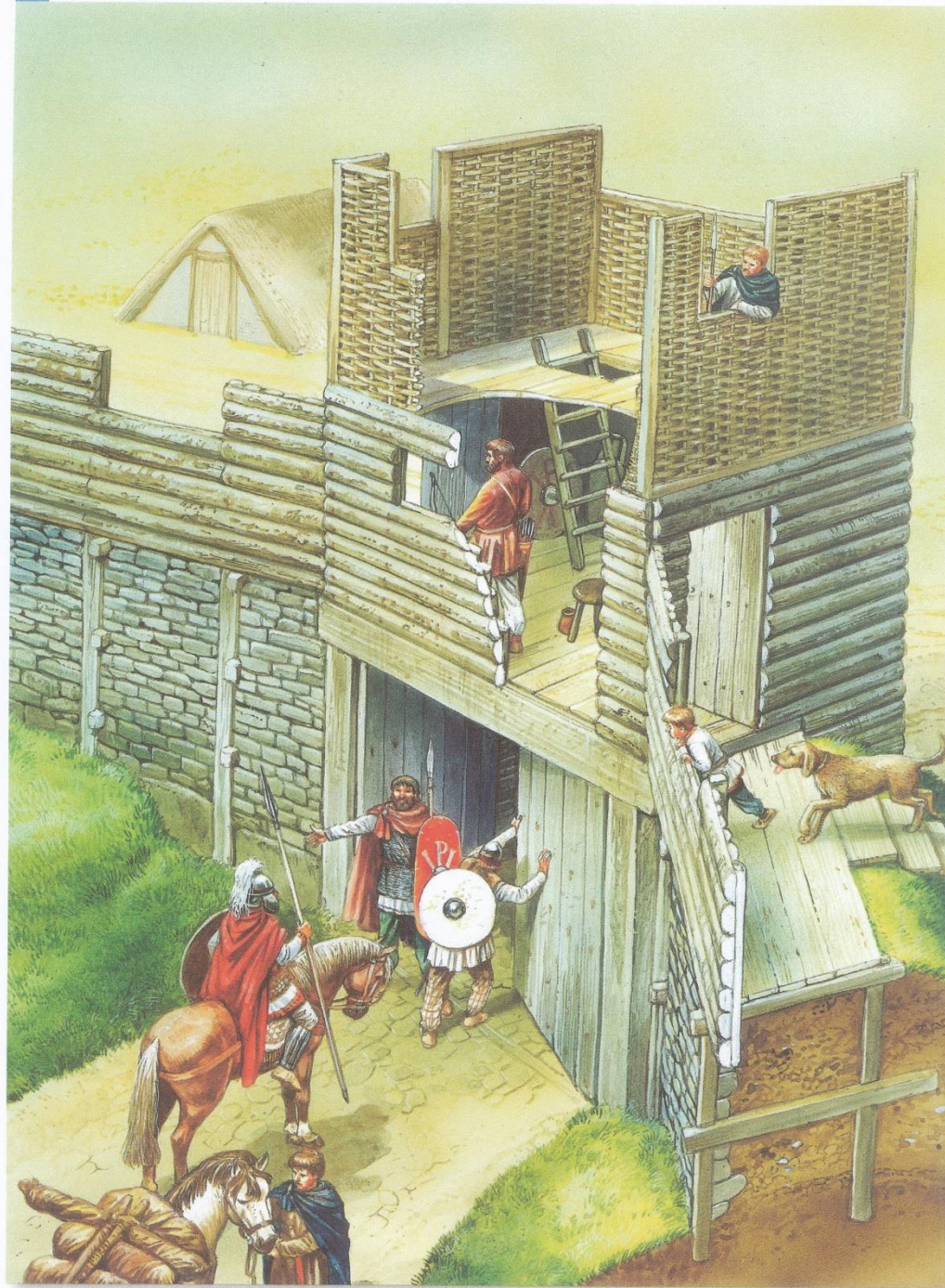


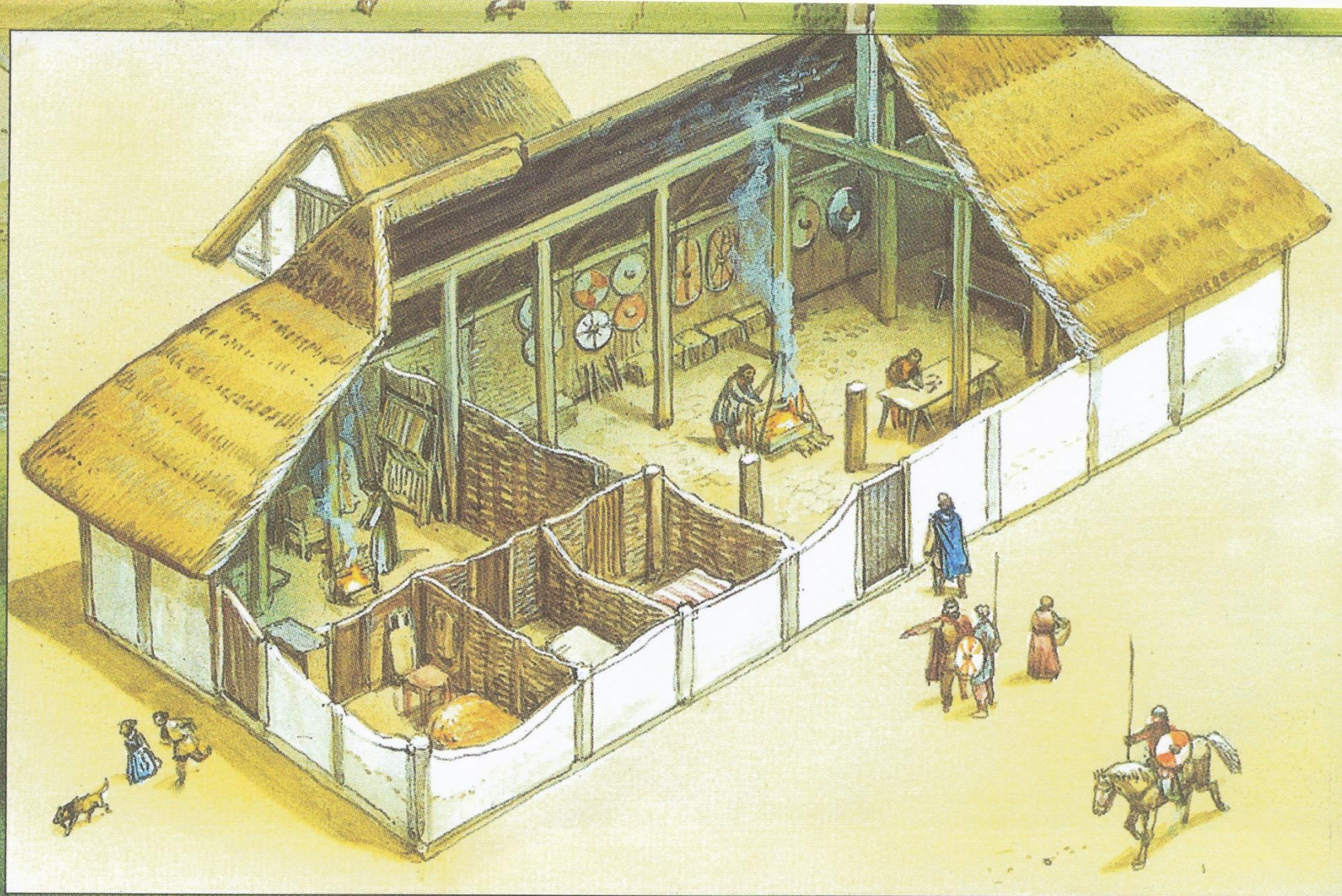


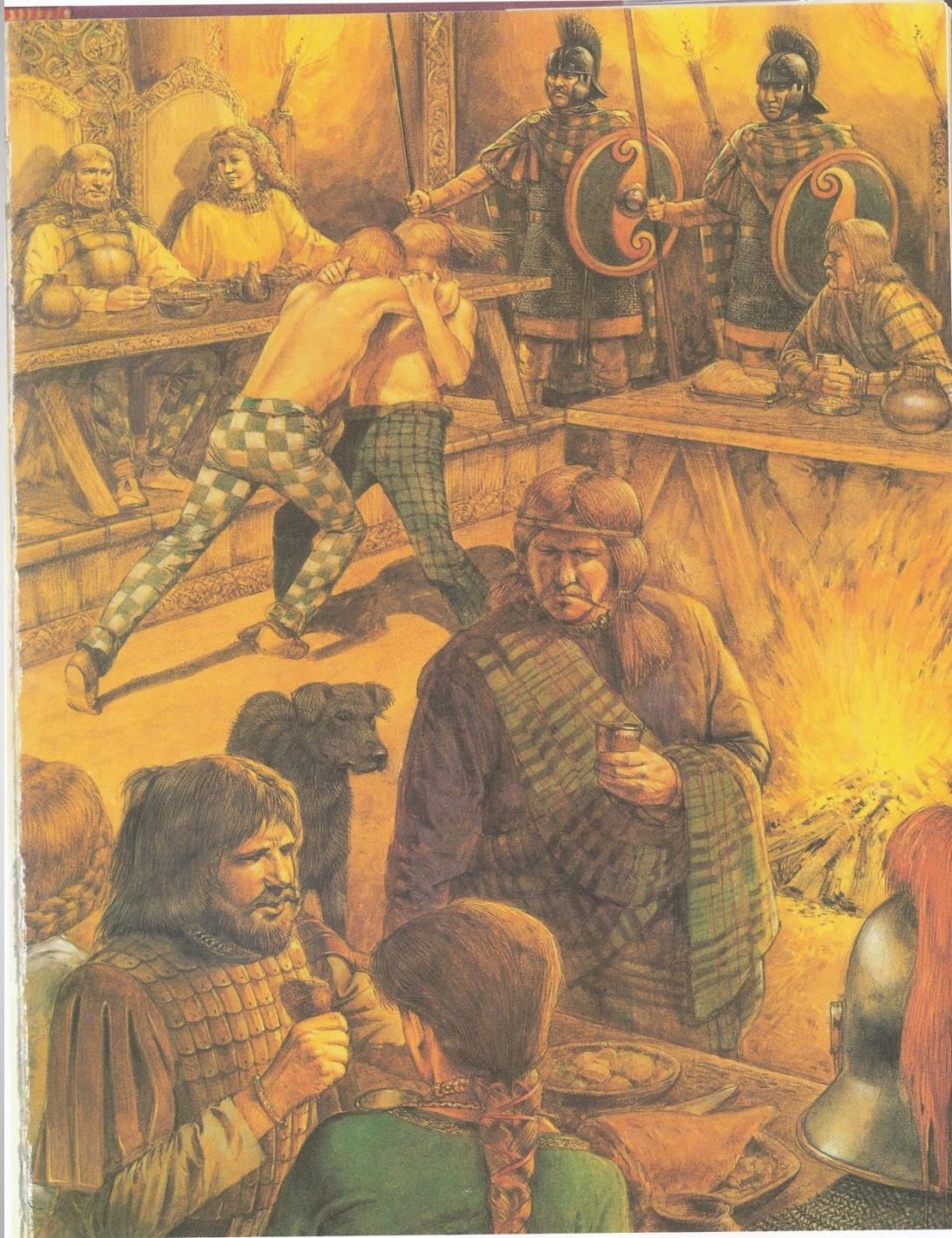


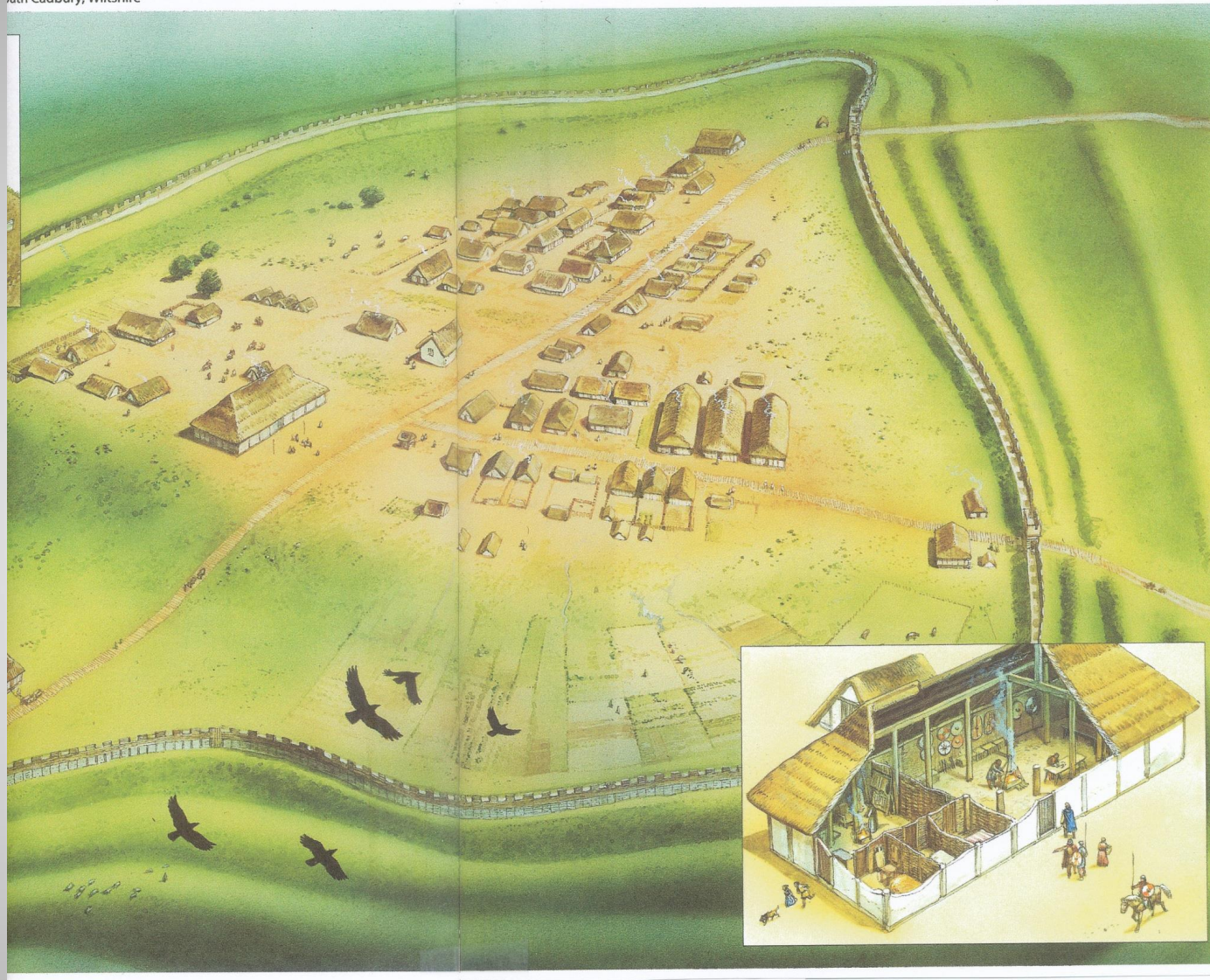


F The 'Arthurian' gateway: the main gatehouse, South Cadbury, Wiltshire











Map 2. Possible locations for Arthur's battles.



Map 2. Possible locations for Arthur's battles.

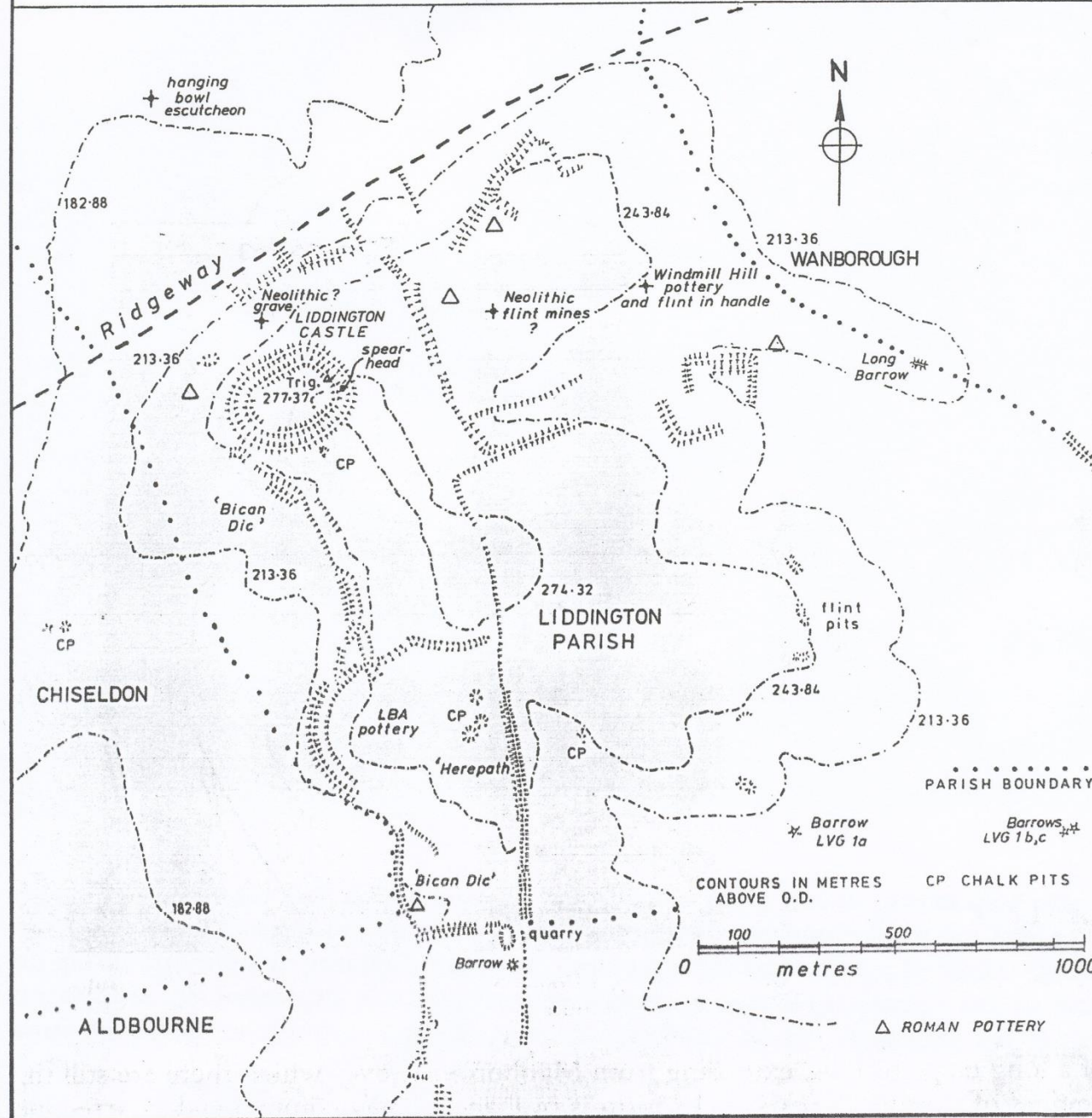


www.FrankLaumen.de

Liddington Castle

Liddington Castle area

after 1:2500 OS maps
SU 27 and 28



RIDGE
WAY

208

209

210

LIDDINGTON CASTLE

A-E and Z : EXCAVATIONS 1976

799

799



chalk
pit

798

798

797

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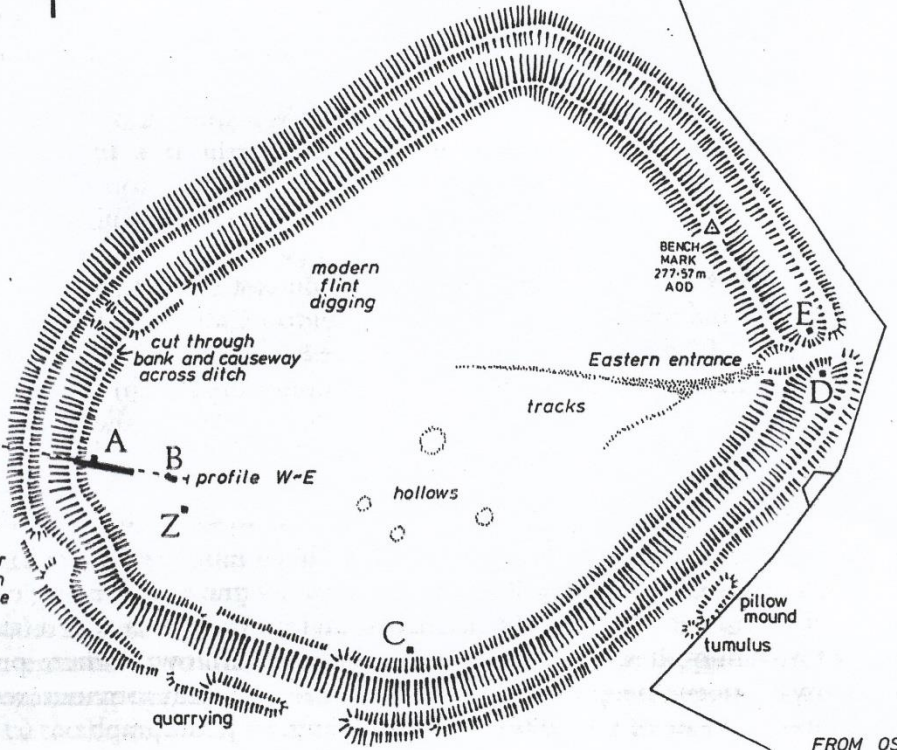
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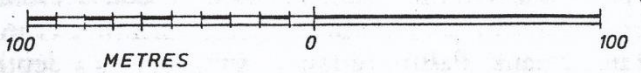
210



A B profile W-E
Z

BENCH
MARK
277.57 m
AOD

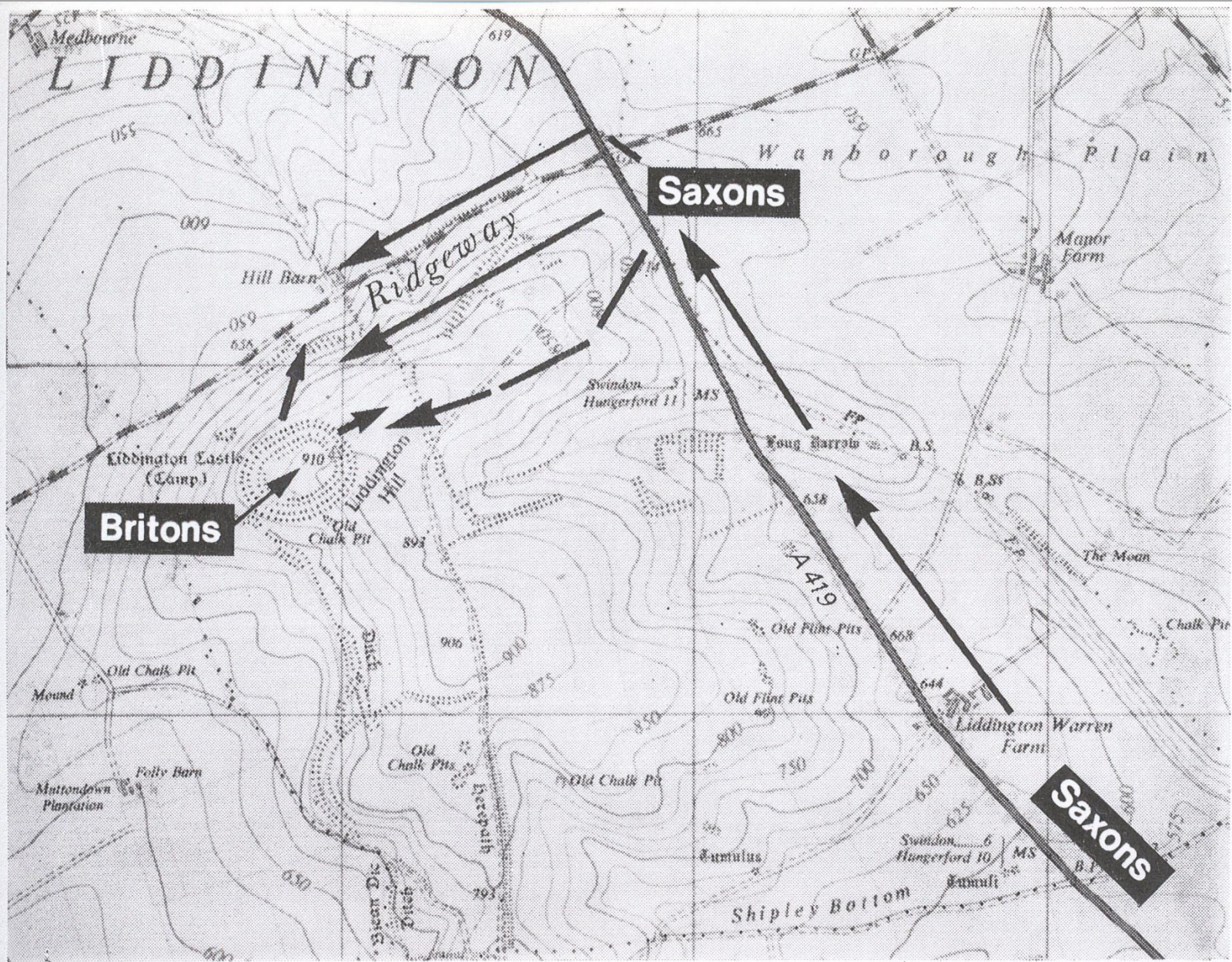
FROM OS 1:2500
MAP SU 2079-2179
with additions



'Bican Dic'

PAR 1990





I Mount Badon, 516 (Wiltshire)

Crown Copyright Reserved





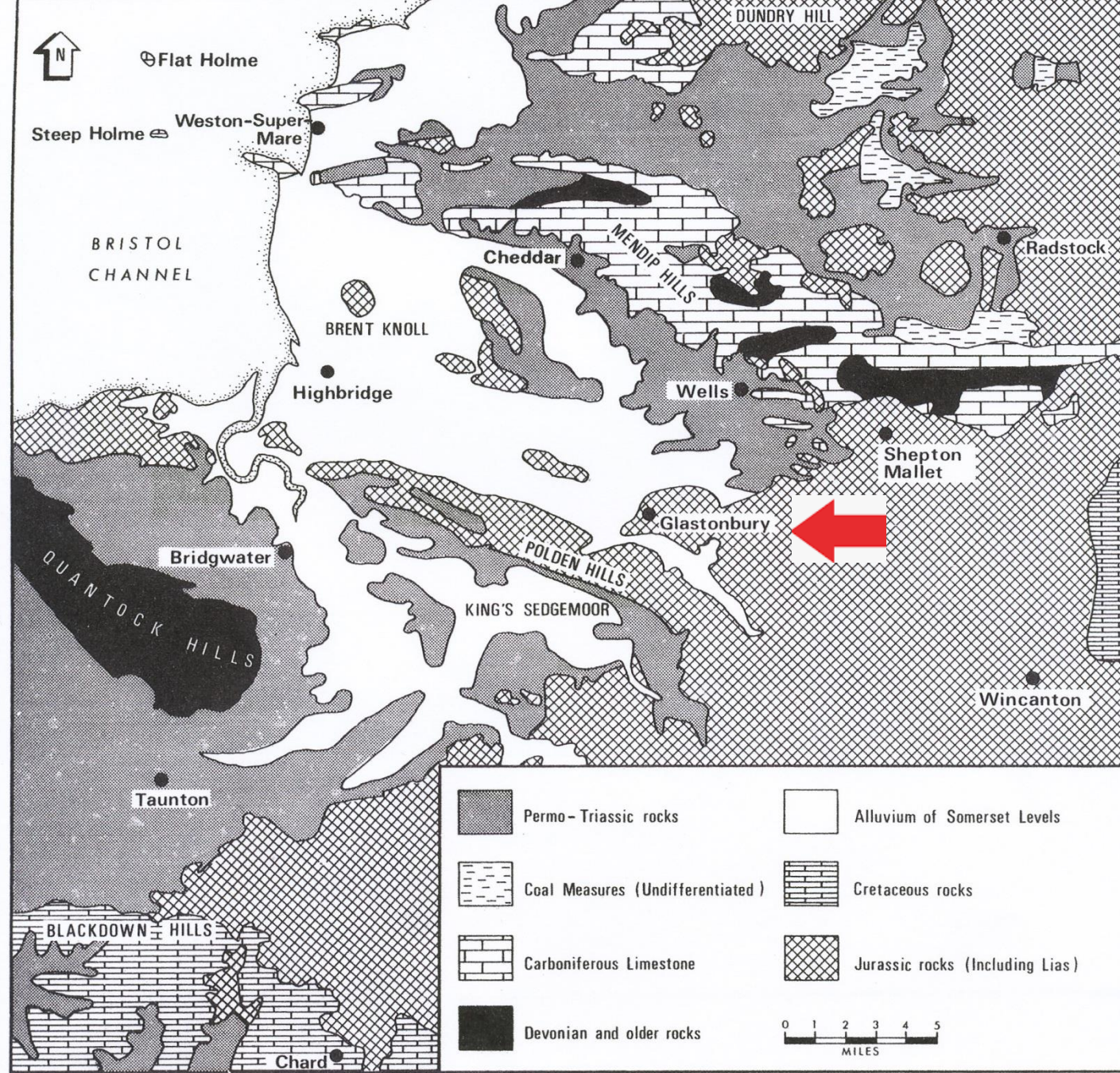
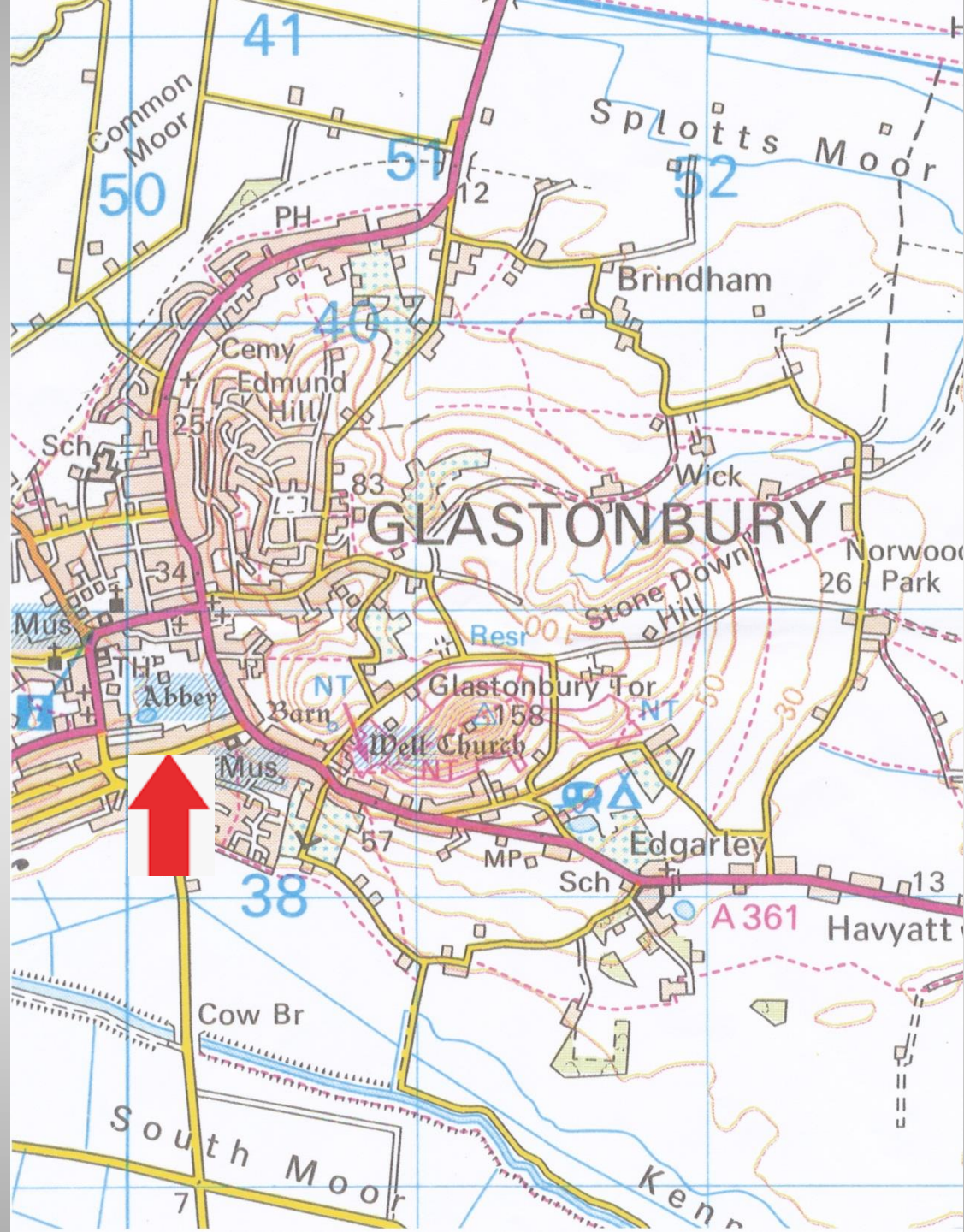
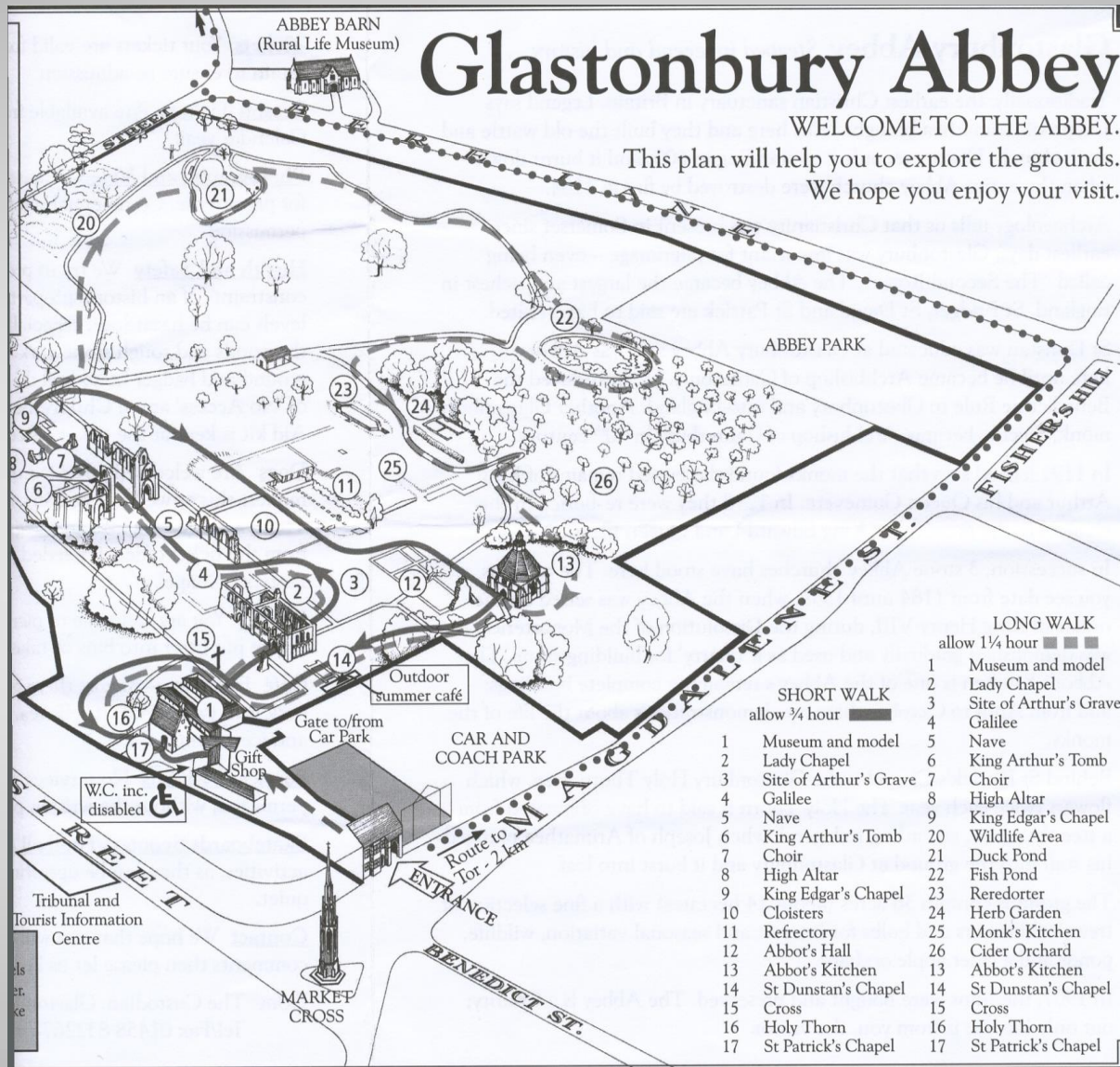


Fig. 43. The structure of the Mendips and the Somerset Levels area.



Glastonbury Abbey

WELCOME TO THE ABBEY.
This plan will help you to explore the grounds.
We hope you enjoy your visit.



LONG WALK

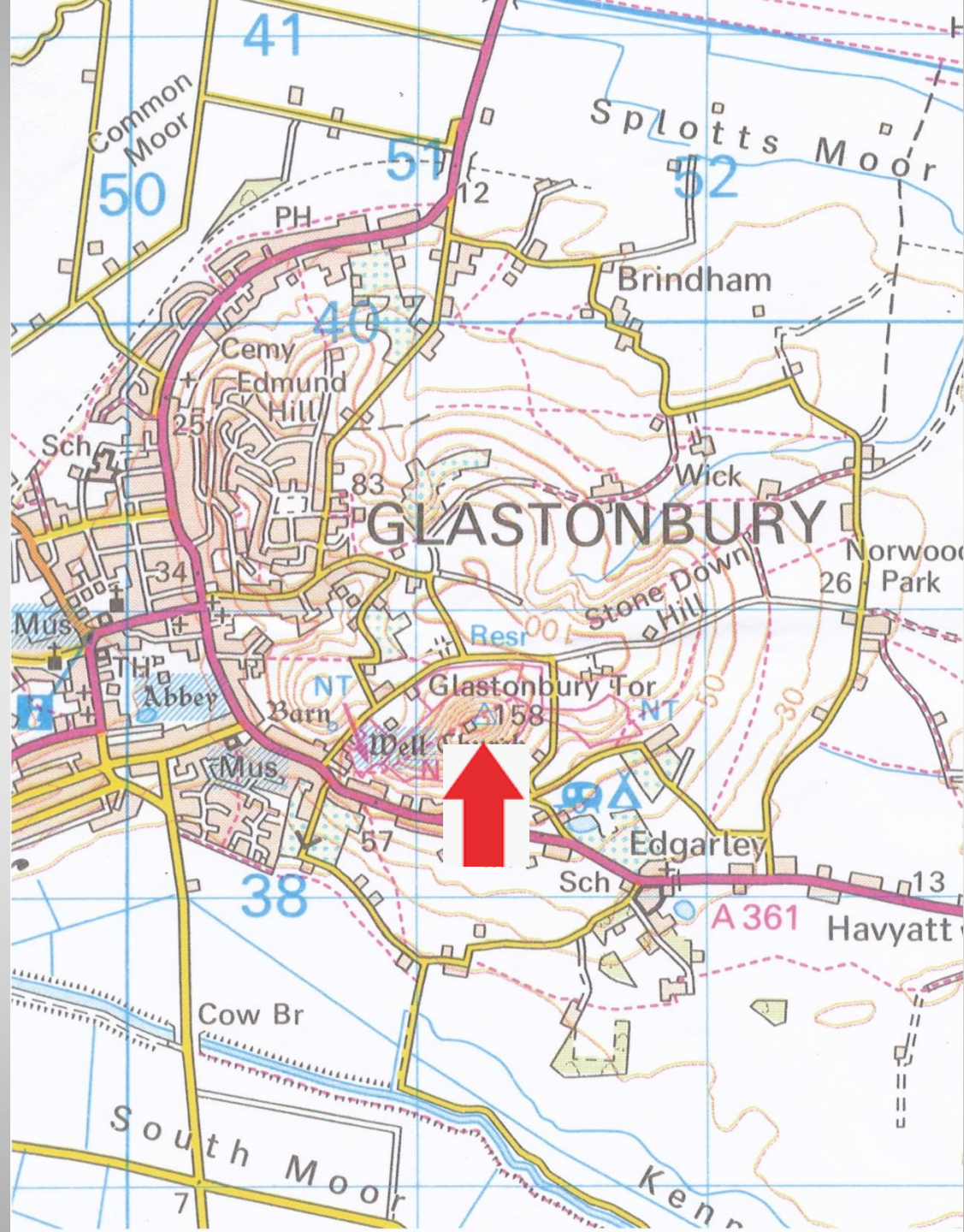
allow 1 1/4 hour ■■■■

- 1 Museum and model
- 2 Lady Chapel
- 3 Site of Arthur's Grave
- 4 Galilee
- 5 Nave
- 6 King Arthur's Tomb
- 7 Choir
- 8 High Altar
- 9 King Edgar's Chapel
- 20 Wildlife Area
- 21 Duck Pond
- 22 Fish Pond
- 23 Reredorter
- 24 Herb Garden
- 25 Monk's Kitchen
- 26 Cider Orchard
- 13 Abbot's Kitchen
- 14 St Dunstan's Chapel
- 15 Cross
- 16 Holy Thorn
- 17 St Patrick's Chapel

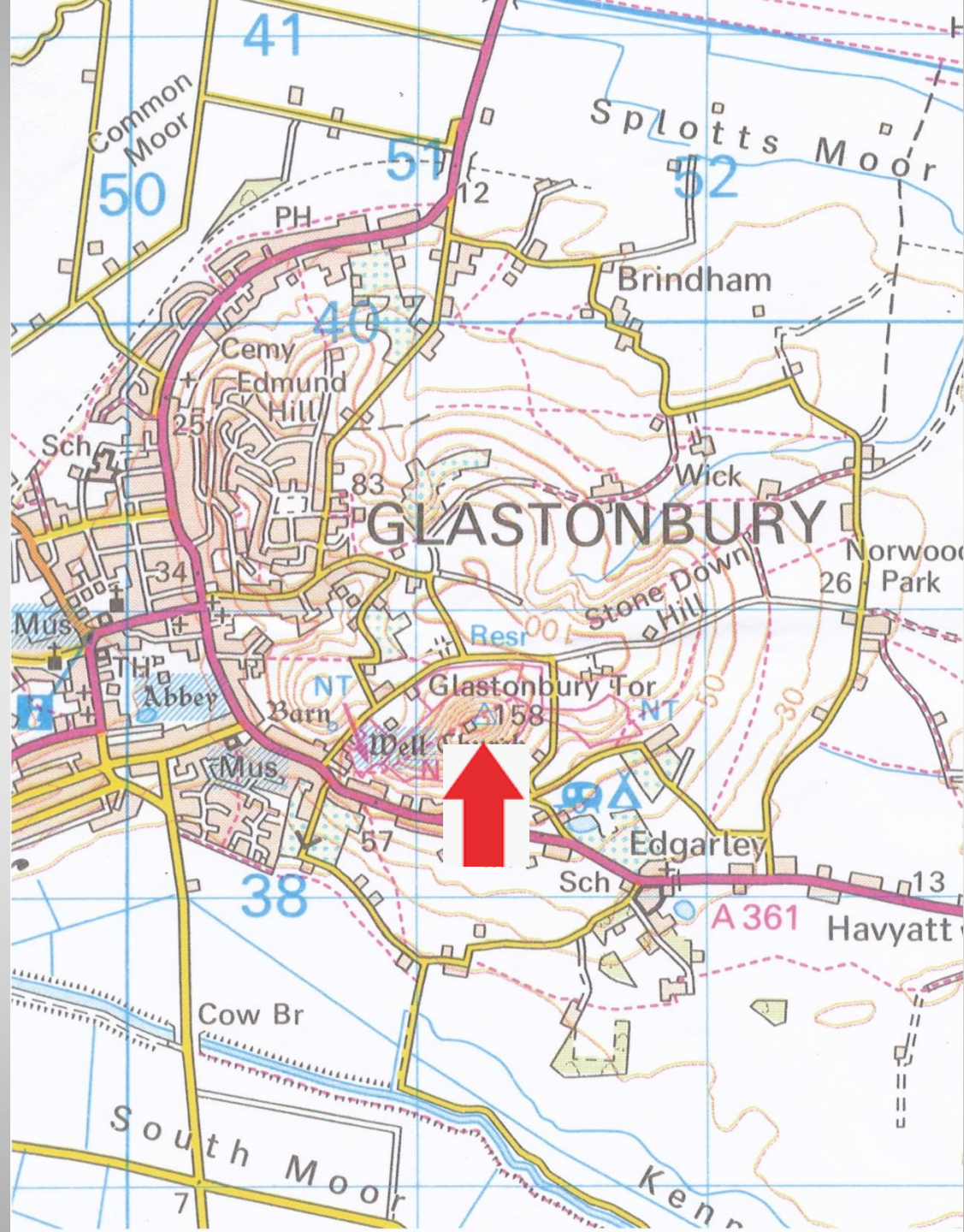
SHORT WALK

allow 3/4 hour ■■■

- 1 Museum and model
- 2 Lady Chapel
- 3 Site of Arthur's Grave
- 4 Galilee
- 5 Nave
- 6 King Arthur's Tomb
- 7 Choir
- 8 High Altar
- 9 King Edgar's Chapel
- 10 Cloisters
- 11 Refectory
- 12 Abbot's Hall
- 13 Abbot's Kitchen
- 14 St Dunstan's Chapel
- 15 Cross
- 16 Holy Thorn
- 17 St Patrick's Chapel







SIGNAL STATIONS AND BEACONS



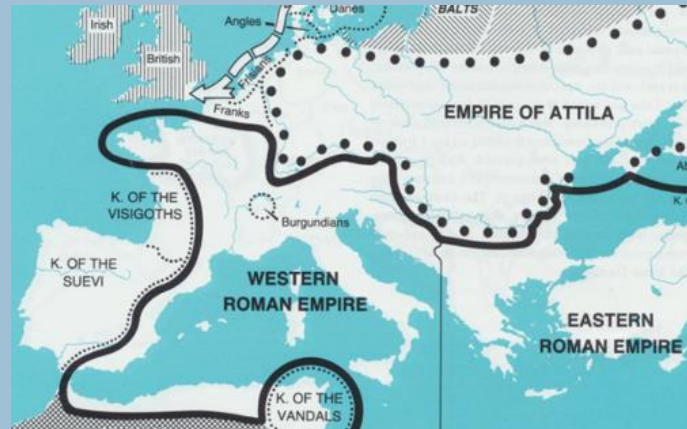
The gap between beacons, where the terrain allowed, was six to eight miles, the chains heading to a climacteric beacon at the most widely visible point of a shire, e.g. Lewesdon (993 feet) in Dorset, and on the Malverns the Herefordshire Beacon (1,114 feet) and the Worcestershire Beacon (1,394 feet). Faggots of brushwood or furze were often piled on the beacon site for fuel, to be lit sometimes on stone hearths or in a stone fire-turret such as survives on Culmstock Beacon in Devon. However, from the 14th century the standard hilltop gear was an iron fire-basket, or cresset, with a pitch-pot inside, raised up on a pole, to which one mounted by a pole-ladder.

The Shell Country Alphabet

From Apple Trees to Stone Circles, How to Understand
the British Countryside

Geoffrey Grigson

Foederati (singular foederatus) were peoples and cities bound by a treaty (foedus) to support Rome, coming to its aid when called upon.



The best-known example came in AD 451, when the forces of Attila the Hun threatened the west. Roman forces joined with foederati (Visigoths, Franks, Burgundians, Alans and Saxons) to defeat the Hun forces.

In this example, a realm corresponding to the Byzantine Empire is threatened by barbarian invaders.

That realm called upon its foederati to come to its aid. The system of beacons was used....







An Arthurian connection???

Both Aragorn and Arthur begin with the letters "Ar"



RaySingh LovelyBones74 11 years ago

I love how Aragorn, Eowyn, Eomer and Legolas are all looking expectantly at Theoden!

Then he goes: "And Rohan will answer! Muster the Rohirrim!"

I'm thinking: Yes! Finally!



1 Reply



Axel Hunt 9 years ago

That method has been used for centuries in my country(Georgia) too, and i must say we've mountains of those sizes too and little groups of armies were located with their families in their beacon towers and they were always living there and they were given food and supplies from the valley villages every month or something.



Awful Waffle 9 years ago

I always get chills at the end of the clip



Reply

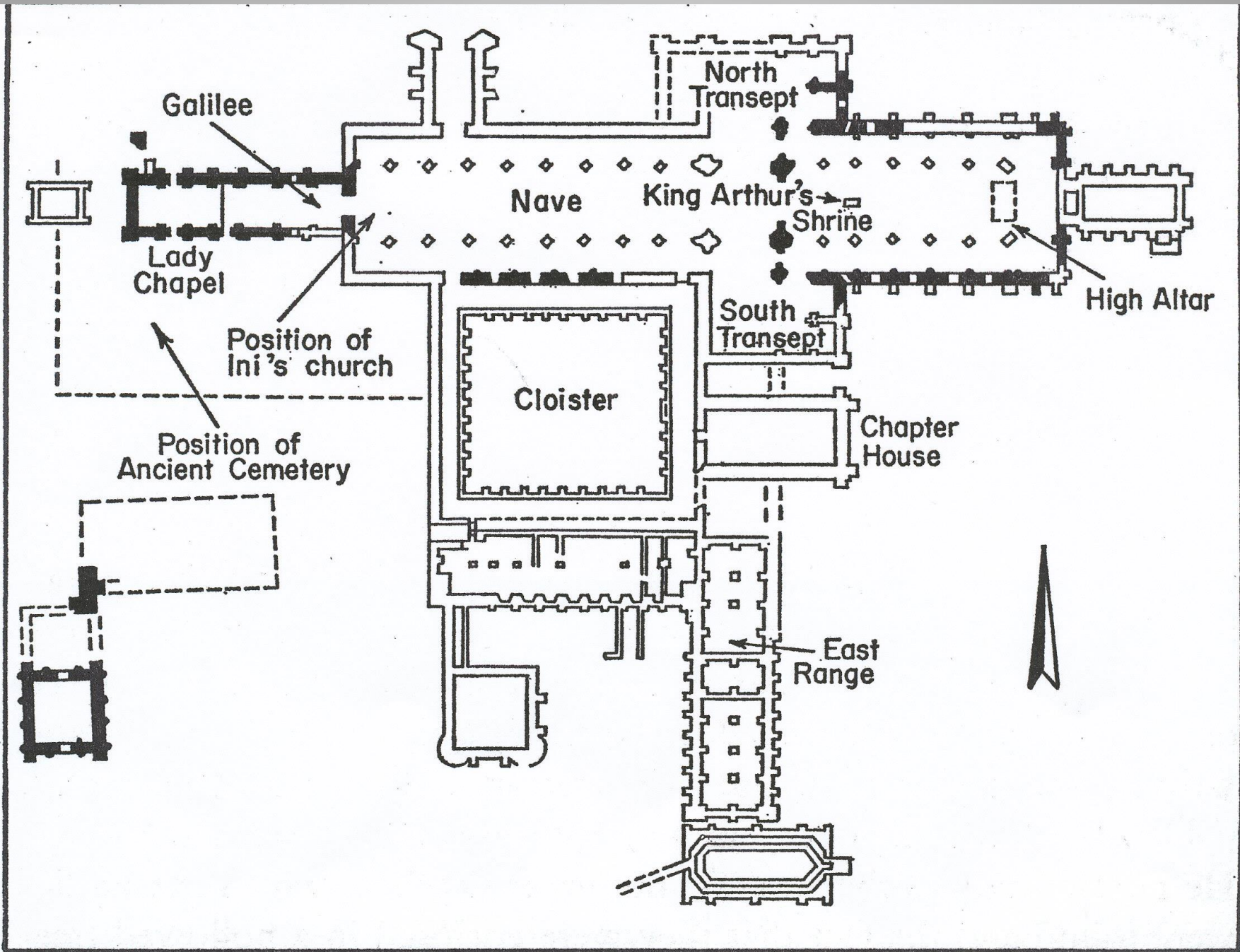


TheSaerwen 10 years ago

This is so epic!!! But everyone should be happy it hadn't rained and the wood wasn't wet.



Reply

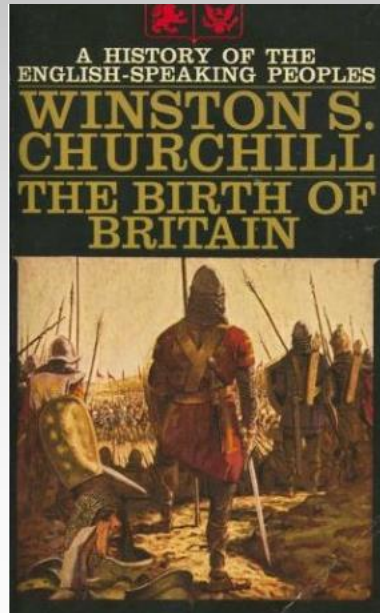




6. Camden's drawing of the Glastonbury lead cross, from the 1607 edition of *Britannia*.

“Arthur is not historically ‘true’ today. Nor was he when first dreamed up.... His ever-changing story provides insights to the world-views and purposes of those who have written about him, portrayed him, imagined and reimagined him, loved him and denied him, in the process adding ever more layers to his long, long tale.... We can now agree to discount King Arthur as a ‘real’ figure of the past, leaving him and his deeds to the ‘smoke’ and ‘highland mist’ of make-believe and wishful thinking; it is there that he properly belongs.”

—Nicholas Higham, King Arthur: The Making of the Legend (2018)



It is all true, or it ought to be; and more and better besides. Let us then declare that King Arthur and his noble knights, guarding the Sacred Flame of Christianity and the theme of a world order, sustained by valour, physical strength, and good horses and armour, slaughtered innumerable hosts of foul barbarians and set decent folk an example for all time.