Arthur in the Time of Riotimus
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Much has been said about the literary figure named Arthur. Opinions range from him being an emperor[1], a regional warlord[2], a mythological being[3], to a man based more on medieval hype than history[4]. It would be naive to think what shall be presented here will prove or disprove, beyond a reasonable doubt, the existence of Arthur as a living person. Still though, it is hoped that better clarification of this enigmatic character can be achieved. This depends on one of two things happening. The first and more definitive would be to locate additional evidence, such as a legitimate grave marker[5], or previously unaccounted and/or lost texts. The second and more tentative way would entail a reinterpretation of the current material. The purpose of this short work is the latter. A modified view on available information shall be presented.

It is the author's opinion that the modern-day, composite character known as Arthur grew from an apple seed of truth and it is this: Arthur operated as a battle commander for the British[6] on the fringe of the Roman Empire during the mid to late fifth-century. This sentiment has

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1.) Morris, John. The Age of Arthur (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), p. 132. 'He (Arthur) was the emperor, the all-powerful ruler of the whole of Britain, and the seat of his power was in the lowlands'.

2.) Bromwich, Rachel. Trioedd Ynys Prydein – The Triads of the Island of Britain – Third Edition. (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2006), p. 282 Bromwich suggests that Arthur may have been the 'first and most prominent of the many North-British heroes' and possibly 'an early Romano-British opponent of the Anglian raiders and settlers in the Catterick area of Yorkshire.'

3.) Markale, Jean. translated by Christine Hauch. King of the Celts – Arthurian Legends and Celtic Tradition. (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1977), p. 183, 'Be that as it may, there is no doubt that Arthur was regarded as a god by the Celts.'

4.) Charles-Edwards, Thomas. "The Arthur of History." In The Arthur of the Welsh: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval Welsh Literature, edited by Rachel Bromwich et al., (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 1991), p. 29. 'At this stage of the enquiry, one can only say that there may well have been an historical Arthur; that the historian can as yet say nothing of value about him, but that later conceptions of Arthur are likely to interest historians almost as much as they do students of medieval literature.'

5.) Ashe, Geoffrey. The Discovery of King Arthur. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, reprinted by Owl Books, 1987. p. 175, 'Most modern authors (not all) reject the discovery [of the inscribed lead cross announcing Arthur's passing] as a fake.'

6.) Snyder, Christopher A. An Age of Tyrants (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p. 252. Snyder states that 'the Brittonic Age is that period, the fifth and sixth centuries, when people who called themselves and were called by others "Britons" were the majority population throughout Britain, and in most areas the politically dominant one as well.'; Higham, Nicholas. Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons (London, UK: B. A. Seaby Ltd.), p. 180. On the archaeological dilemma of identifying a Briton, Higham remarks, 'It is difficult to imagine how we might identify the burial of a Briton who had adopted Anglo-Saxon styles of dress and ornamentation.'

developed directly from the ideas presented previously by Geoffrey Ashe.[1] Instead of Riotimus being a title for Arthur though, Riotimus is seen as one of the British nobles that Arthur waged war for. The possibility of Arthur being a contemporary to Riotimus is still plagued by, at least, two factors. First and foremost, why is Arthur not recorded into 'history'[2] by Gildas or Bede? Secondly, why doesn't Riotimus seem to appear in any of the Arthurian sources?[3]

To address the first part of the first question, Gerald of Wales gives the earliest recorded reason. Gerald tells of a 'highly irritated' Gildas throwing 'excellent books' into the sea due to Arthur killing his brother, Hueil, and this is why there is 'no authentic account' of Arthur.[4] For the second part of this first issue, Bede renders his own possible reasons for not mentioning

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1.) Ashe, Geoffrey. The Discovery of King Arthur. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, reprinted by Owl Books, 1987. p. 97, Ashe remarks, "In its original British form, Riothamus would have been Rigotamos. The first part of this would mean "king" if taken as a noun, "kingly" or "royal" if taken as an adjective. The second part is a superlative ending like "-est" in English, as in words like "kindest." So Rigotamos might mean the "king-most" or "supreme king", Ashe then adds later, 'Either way, my impression was it could be a title or honorific for the High King, and not, strictly speaking, his name.'; p. 110, Ashe provides the general floruit for his Rio-Arthur ranging from A.D. 454 to A.D. 470; On p. 54, Ashe states Sidonius uses 'a Latin spelling (Riothamus) which would be closer to the British original than Jordanes's (Riotimus)'. Due to the fact that Jordanes is the source being utilized in this paper though, the author will not be using Sidonius' spelling. Instead, 'Riotimus' will be used so that it matches the text being referred to and serves as a reminder that variations in the spelling existed. As this particular issue applies to the current discussion, the correct form is actually of secondary importance. It is more significant to know that these variatiations in his name did occur and that they might have influenced how his name appeared in later texts.

2.) Though Gildas did not technically write a history, his work is considered by some as a contemporary source for historical British information for the fifth and sixth centuries.

3.) The basic Arthurian sources are: Historia Brittonum – Nennius – British History and the Welsh Annals. Edited and translated by John Morris. (London: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1980); The Mabinogion, translated by Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones. (London, UK: Everyman – J.M. Dent, 1993) "Pa Gur" and "The Spoils of Annwn" in The Romance of Arthur – Third Edition. Edited by Norris Lacy and James Wilhelm. (New York, US: Routledge,2013). pp. 14-19; Trioedd Ynys Prydein – The Triads of the Island of Britain – Third Edition. Edited by Bromwich, Rachel. (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2006); Celtic Literature Collective – The Welsh Triads – Llyfr Coch Hergest Col. 588–600 http://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/triads1.html (Accessed on January 3, 2015); Geoffrey of Monmouth. History of the Kings of Britain. Translated by Lewis Thorpe. (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books Ltd., 2002); "De ortu Waluuanii nepotis Arturi" Latin Arthurian Literature. Edited and translated by Mildred Leake Day (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer 2005). Arthurian Romances – Chretien de Troyes. Translated and edited by D. D. R. Owen. (London, UK: Everyman – J.M. Dent, 1999). The Romance of Tristan (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press 1994). Other Arthurian sources have a limited bearing on this paper.

4.) Gerald of Wales, The Description of Wales (Oxford, Mississippi, 1997). Book 2, Chapter 2 'Their Living by Plunder' http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/travellers/Cambrensis_Desc/23.htm (Accessed January 2, 2015). The legendary animosity between Arthur and Hueil gives Gerald's words a ring of truth, though admittedly faint.

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Arthur. When speaking of the pagan English kings, Osric and Eanfrith, and the tyrannical British king, Cædwalla, Bede admits that 'all those who compute the dates of kings have decided to abolish the memory of these perfidious kings and to assign the year to their successor Oswald, a man beloved of God.'[1] With his own words, Bede gives two reasons 'to abolish the memory of' Arthur.[2] In addition, Bede declares that others have agreed to similar actions toward pagan kings and tyranny. With this being said, there might be other controversial elements[3] that could have caused Bede or even Gildas to omit Arthur from their works. This, in itself, no matter how slim it may be, provides the possible chance for conspiratorial silence regarding Arthur, if he was viewed as a pagan or a tyrant.[4]

At this point, it seems relevant to mention a conspiracy that failed to elevate an unspecified man up as the emperor of the western part of the Roman Empire in the floruit of Riotimus. Though poorly defined, the incident was contemporarily called the Marcellian conspiracy.[5]

1.) Bede, The Ecclesiastical History of the English People – The Greater Chronicle – Bede's Letter to Egbert. Translated by Judith McClure and Roger Collins. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 110-111

2.) It is realized that by Bede mentioning the three kings and how they were being abolished from the list of kings, that he was, in fact, recording them into history. Be this as it may, the possibility remains that Bede could have been 'completely silent' on less defined or more controversial characters that he came across during the writing of The Ecclesiastical History of the English People.

3.) Geoffrey of Monmouth. History of the Kings of Britain. Translated by Lewis Thorpe. (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books Ltd., 2002), pp. 207 An alleged bastard, Arthur's birth could be seen as being controversial.

4.) Roberts, Brynley F. "Culhwch ac Olwen, The Triads, Saints' Lives" in The Arthur of the Welsh: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval Welsh Literature, edited by Rachel Bromwich et al., (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 1991), p. 83 states, 'For the most he (Arthur) is a foil for the saint, an arrogant, grasping tryant who is humbled in ignominious defeat, not in any armed struggle but in his childish greed and even in his failure to fulfil his traditional role as giant or dragon-slayer (e.g. Lives of Padern, Carantoc, Cadoc, Efflam).'

5.) Dalton, O. M. The Letters of Sidonius – Volumes I . (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1915), pp. xx-xxi 'The candidate is conjectured to have been the gallant Marcellinus; but it seems unlikely that such a scheme can have had the consent of the person principally involved, for Marcellinus, actually commander in Dalmatia, had been the comrade of Majorian, now raised by Ricimer to the principate (April 457), and during the new reign played a part of conspicuous loyalty.' Dalton notes 'The episode of the conspiracy is obscure, and the commentators are strangely silent. It should be observed that Sidonius alludes to it as coniuratio Marcelliana (I. xi. 6), the adjective (if this is the word he really wrote), pointing rather to a Marcellus than a Marcellinus.' On p. 28, Dalton writes it as 'Marcellian conspiracy'. Adding to Dalton's points, it seems that the aristocrats of Gaul would want a fellow Gaul raised to the purple instead of conspiring to elevate someone with personal interests and lands further away than Rome. The logistics of trying to raise Marcellinus to power during those troubled times seems unrealistic, though others like W. B. Anderson feel that it did centralize around the pagan Roman officer of Dalmatia.

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From Sidonius' sole mentioning and other sources, it can be deduced that its failure most likely occurred sometime between October 456 and April 457 based on the deposition of Avitus and the elevation of Majorian.[1] And though called the Marcellian conspiracy, this does not mean that the plot was to elevate a man named Marcellus. Instead, as Ralph W. Mathisen notes, 'the motivating force in the conspiracy' could have been a man named Marcellus who was possibly based in Narbonne.[2] One may point out that there is no Arthurian connection[3] made here, but what has been established is a failed power grab at the highest level in the middle of the fifth century. Jordanes notes a Roman soldier named Ursus killing Emperor Maximus in Rome.[4] This was a year before the Marcellian conspiracy. Though making no reference to this historical Ursus, Jean Markale says that 'Gildas refers to a character who may well be Arthur simply by his nickname Ursus, the bear'[5], but Markale warns against speculating too much about this.

1.) The "Chronicle of Marius of Avenches" From Roman to Merovingian Gaul edited and translated by Alexander Callander Murray (Peterborough, ON Canada: Broadview Press Ltd., 2000), p. 101, states that in the consulship of John and Varanes ([A.D.] 456), Majorian and Ricimer toppled Emperor Avitus and forced him to become a bishop. In April 457 Majorian is recognized as emperor of the West. John of Antioch. The Age of Attila. Translated by C. D. Gordon. (Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1966), fr. 202, p. 116

2.) Mathisen, Ralph W. 'Resistence and Reconciliation: Majorian and the Gallic Aristocracy After the Fall of Avitus', Francia 7, (1979) p. 601. 'A choice of Narbonne as a center for anti-Italian sentiment is made attractive for other reasons besides the presence of a suitable Marcellus.' Mathisen adds in note 14, 'There is no a priori reason to assume that the plot was to make Marcellus emperor; he may simply have been a motivating force in the conspiracy: note the reference of Gregory of Tours (Historia Francorum 2.9) to a coniuratio Arbogastis.'

3.) There is a general Arthurian reference to Narbo/Narbonne. It occurs in "De ortu Waluuanii nepotis Arturi" (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer 2005), p. 59 'Reaching shore, they (the merchants fostering the infant Gawain) came to land two miles from the city of Narbonne.' Viamundus, a poor fisherman, kidnaps Gawain when the merchants go ashore. Then, he raises Gawain in the village near Narbonne for seven years before taking him to Rome. On p. 150 of King of the Celts – Arthurian Legends and Celtic Tradition trans. Christine Hauch (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1977), Jean Markale expresses the possibility of Gawain replacing Arthur as the central character in various Arthurian tales. Could living near Narbonne be another instance of this? In "The Spoils of Annwn" in The Romance of Arthur (New York, US: Routledge, 2013). pp. 18, Arthur partakes in several ill-fated voyages on the Prydwen, Arthur's ship. Seven of the twelve battles that Arthur is famed in winning occurred at the mouth, on the shores or on some river per Historia Brittonum (London: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1980), p. 35. Glewlwyd Mighty-grasp alludes to sharing in distant, seaborne adventures with Arthur in "Culhwch and Olwen" – The Mabinogion (London, UK: Everyman – J.M. Dent, 1993), p. 83. By these various accounts, there appears to be no precedent to restrict all Arthurian affairs to a land-based status somewhere in Britain.

4.) Jordanes, The Origin and Deeds of the Goths. Edited by Charles C. Mierow (Philadelphia, PA: D.N. Goodchild, 2007) p. 52. "Chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine" From Roman to Merovingian Gaul (Peterborough, ON Canada: Broadview Press Ltd., 2000), p. 101 tells of Maximus being killed 77 days after seizing power in [A.D.] 455.

5.) Markale, Jean. King of the Celts (Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1977), p. 120

In summary, the failure of Gildas and Bede to mention Arthur should not hinder the search for an historical Arthur due to possible kindred-based animosity and self-declared censorship. In addition, a window of possibility existed for someone to be elevated up as emperor a year after a Roman soldier named Ursus killed Emperor Maximus in Rome.

If Arthur existed in the mid to late fifth-century, any dealings he had with the empire would have been complex. The sources from this period provide a list of quarrels and factions throughout the empire, both between the Romans (Albinus/Aëtius[1] and Agrippinus/Aegidius[2]) and amongst the barbarians, such as the secret rivals of Rechiarius, a Catholic king of the Sueves[3], or the fratricide prevalent among the sons of Theodoric, king of the Visigoths[4]. This enforces the need to carefully sort through the details to determine if any connections exist between the historical sources and Arthurian folklore. As the western part of the empire collapsed, lands and provinces crumbled out of the hands of imperial authority. The rippling wave of chaos must be accounted for when studying this time period. Still, one should consider what Nicholas Higham said in reference to the terminal decline of the Roman system in Britain. Higham states, 'The chronology of that decline varies according to the nature of the evidence examined: the date at which imperial government of Britain ceased to be capable of coercion

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1.) In "The Chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine" From Roman to Merovingian Gaul (Peterborough, ON Canada: Broadview Press Ltd., 2000), p. 71, we learn that Deacon Leo restores the friendship between Aëtius and Albinus in A.D. 440.

2.) From "The Chronicle of Hydatius" From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, pp. 96–97, we learn in A.D. 462 that, due to the hostility between Count Agrippinus and Count Aegidius, the former handed over the city of Narbonne to King Theodoric to gain his military support against the latter. In A.D. 463, Frederic and the Visigoths attacked Orleans. The entry in Christopher Bruce's Arthurian Name Dictionary tells that Agrippe the Tall, 'a count or earl whose lands bordered on those of King Hoel of Brittany', besieged Alinge and wounded Kahedin, the son of King Hoel. http://gorddcymru.org/twilight/camelot/bruce_dictionary/index_a.htm (Accessed on January 30, 2015)

3.) From "The Chronicle of Hydatius" From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, p. 91, In August of A.D. 448, the pagan king of the Sueves, Rechila, died. His son and a Catholic, Rechairaius 'soon succeeded him to the kingship, though not without some secret rivals among his people.'

4.) Ibid. p. 92, In A.D. 453, Theodoric II and his brother, Frederic, assassinate their brother, King Thorismund, due to his hostile intentions toward the Romans. "The Chronicle of Marius of Avenches" From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, p. 101. 'In this year (A.D. 467) Theodoric, king of the Goths, was killed by his brother Euric at Toulouse.'

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differs dramatically from the date at which it relinquished the right to govern, if it ever did.'[1]

And though many accept that imperial rule of Britain ended in A.D. 410, it seems premature to think that the Romans had given up hope of, or were not trying to re-establish their hold on Britain in the fifth century. Their sense of authority is evident by the Roman Church sending Bishop Germanus to Britain nineteen years after this terminal point.[2] The reason for this terse overview of the time period is to stop from misinterpreting what little details we have. This applies directly to determining the allegiance of a British-based, Germanic leader. Possibly, the best way to review this issue is to use the life of an exiled, Germanic prince of that time period as a reference point. King Childeric the Frank, the father of Clovis, returned to Gaul after eight years of exile in Thuringia and ruled over a tribe of Franks while still providing support to an imperial authority like Aegidius.[3] It seems possible that a German leader living in Britain could have operated in a similar fashion. Though this is not a novel idea, the extent of its complexity needs further stressing. A federation in Britain at this period could have been acting on behalf of Romans, Britons, continental Germans and/or solely themselves.

Martin Carver tells how H. W. Böhme views certain evidence as 'representing the settlement of non-military free Germans with their families . . . confined to the region of East Anglia'.[4]

1.) Higham, Nicholas. Rome, Britain and the Anglo-Saxons (London, UK: B. A. Seaby Ltd.), p. 215. According to "De ortu Waluuanii nepotis Arturi" Latin Arthurian Literature (Cambridge, UK: D. S. Brewer 2005), p. 107, by allowing Gawain to go to Arthur, the Roman Emperor 'felt confident that through him (Gawain) the Kingdom of Britannia, so long separated from the Roman Empire, would be regained for himself.' Even centuries after the end of the western empire, it did not seem out of place to mention an emperor's desire to bring 'the Kingdom of Britannia' back into the imperial fold.

2.) According to "The Chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine" From Roman to Merovingian Gaul, p. 68, in A.D. 429, Pope Celestine sends Bishop Germanus of Auxerre to Britain to battle the Pelagian heresy.

3.) The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire – Volume II A.D. 395–527 by J. R. Martindale (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 285 – 286, provides the summary of Childeric. In History of the Kings of Britain (Middlesex, UK: Penguin Books Ltd., 2002), p. 213 Geoffrey of Monmouth mentions a Saxon by the name Cheldric who faintly resembles Childeric. According to Geoffrey, Cheldric is a duke. If there is any historical value to this, it makes his defeat in Britain seem like a failed attempt by the empire to reestablish the office of Dux Britanniarum in the middle of the fifth century.

4.) Carver, Martin. *Kingship and material culture in early Anglo-Saxon East Anglia* in The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms. Edited by Steven Bassett. (Leicester, UK: Leicester University Press 1989), p. 147

Carver further states that these 'East Anglian settlers can therefore have worked loose from the Roman administration while it was still effective in the surrounding territories.'[1] If these folks followed an exiled leader, where is their allegiance based? Is it to their ancesteral homeland, to their present lands and people, to the fading empire, to a combination of these elements, or something all together different? These questions bring us to the second factor that hinders the acceptance of the Arthur being presented in this paper. We are left to determine if there is a definitive appearance or a suggested existence of Riotimus within the Arthurian sources.

It is the opinion of this author that there is a link between the Host of Yrp and the Host of Riotimus. The circumstantial evidence for this proposed connection has been gathered mainly from the Welsh triads 35 (3 Silver Hosts) and 51 (3 Dishonoured Men) as they appear together in the Red Book of Hergest[2], the Origins of the kings of East Angles[3], and the writings of Gregory of Tours[4] and Jordanes. To provide the firmest foundation for this speculation, the relevant historical details of Jordanes shall be presented first, followed by critical comments about the Welsh triads and their possible link to historical events, then general observations about the genealogy for the kings of East Angles.

Jordanes tells that Emperor Anthemius 'asked the Brittones for aid' against the Visigoths in an attempt to break the growing hold that King Euric had on Gaul. With twelve thousand men, King Riotimus went 'into the state of the Bituriges by the way of the Ocean'.[5] Defeated in a

1.) *Ibid.* p. 148

2.) Celtic Literature Collective – The Welsh Triads – Llyfr Coch Hergest Col. 588–600 http://www.maryjones. us/ctexts/triads1.html accessed January 3, 2015. Bromwich, Rachel. Trioedd Ynys Prydein. (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2006), pp. 81–89 for triad 35 and pp. 138–145 for triad 51; The numbering of the Welsh triads in this paper is based on Bromwich's work.

3.) Historia Brittonum (London: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1980), pp. 36, 77, In section(s) 59 under the heading the Origins of the kings of East Angles/De ortu regum Estanglorum, the names pertaining to this little inquiry appear.

4.) Gregory of Tours, The History of the Franks trans. Lewis Thorpe (London, UK: Penguin Group, 1974), p. 132; "Lost Annals of Angers" From Roman to Merovingian Gaul (Peterborough, ON Canada: Broadview Press Ltd., 2000), p. 190; Jordanes, The Origin and Deeds of the Goths (Philadelphia, PA: D.N. Goodchild, 2007) pp. 52–53

5.) *Ibid.* p. 53. The author views Riotimus as having some authority in select regions on both sides of the channel. Even if he only had half the number of men stated, Riotimus commanded an army the size of a Roman legion.

long fight against 'an innumerable army' though, this king of the Brittones and his remaining host fled to the Burgundians, and 'Eurich, king of the Visigoths, seized the Gallic city of Arverna'.[1] This series of events began some time after the elevation of Anthemius in A.D. 467, but before his death in A.D. 472.[2] There is no indication that the remaining British host returned to where it had originated.

With this in mind, consider the details regarding the two above-mentioned triads. In the Red Book of Hergest after the four triads about Adam and Eve, the pair of triads appear under the heading, <u>When a Host went to Llychlyn</u>.[3] The first is the 3 Silver Hosts (Welsh triad 35) and the second is the 3 Dishonoured Men (Welsh triad 51). Rachel Bromwich states, 'The two triads together form a subsection to themselves, and it would thus seem that they are intended to bear a special relation to each other.'[4] The most important part of this subsection, as it applies to this paper, is the beginning and it appears as such:

> An army (of assistance) went with Yrp of the Hosts to Llychlyn. And that man came here in the time of Cadyal of the Blows(?) to ask for a levy from this Island. And nobody came with him but Mathuthavar his servant. This is what he asked from the ten-and-twenty Chief Fortresses that there are in this Island: that twice as many men as went with him to each of them should come away with him (from it). And to the first Fortress there came only himself and his servant. (And that proved grievous to the men of this Island.) And they granted it to him. And that was the most complete levy that ever departed from this Island. And with those men he conquered wherever he went. Those men remained in the two islands close to the Greek sea: namely, Clas and Avena.[5]

1.) *Ibid.* p. 53

2.) "The Gallic Chronicle of 511" From Roman to Merovingian Gaul (Peterborough, ON Canada: Broadview Press Ltd., 2000), p. 99

3.) The triads appear together in the Red Book after the triads dealing with Adam and Eve. The Welsh Triads – Llyfr Coch Hergest Col. 588–600 http://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/triads1.html (Accessed January 3, 2015).

4.) Bromwich, Rachel. Trioedd Ynys Prydein (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2006), pp. 140-141.

5.) *Ibid.* pp. 82–83 .

Following this in the first triad of the subsection, the usurper Maximus gathers his host, then this triad ends with the ancient army of Caswallawn pursuing Caesar's men. Caswallawn's own nephew had originally summoned Julius Caesar to Britain and marks the first of the 3 Dishonoured Men in the Red Book of Hergest. This pre-Imperial, British man of infamy was Afarwy son of Lludd son of Beli, and the nephew of Caswallawn. When discussing pre-Christian, Romano-British affairs, Gildas declares, 'it became a mocking proverb far and wide that the British are cowardly in war and faithless in peace.'[1] The second half of the subsection continues by identifying Vortigern, an alleged contemporary of Maximus.[2] Medrawd showcases the end of the triad and the subsection with his shameful uprising against Arthur.

Let us analyze the six items (3 hosts/3 men)[3] in the triads making up the subsection entitled <u>When a Host went to Llychlyn</u>. Two items (1 host/1 man) form a contemporary pair and seem to imply a chronological pattern for the subsection. This is seen by looking at the center of the subsection which is the end of triad 35, item c – the Host of Caswallawn, and the beginning of triad 51, item a – Caswallawn's nephew, and viewing them as a contemporary pair. Item b for the two triads are the Host of Maximus and Vortigern. It does not seem out of place to view them as a contemporary pair. This leaves item a of triad 35 (the Host of Yrp) and item c of triad 51 (Medrawd) as the only unpaired items in the subsection. If viewed as the third contemporary pair, the subsection would descend back in time from the last British Host (Yrp) to the first (Caswallawn), then ascend from the first Dishonoured Brit (Afarwy) to the last (Medrawd).

The second part of the subsection (Welsh triad 51) reveals the basic time frame. By naming

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1.) Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and Other Works. Edited and translated by Michael Winterbottom. (West Sussex UK: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 2002), p. 18, section 6.2, last sentence

2.) According to the Valle Crucis pillar, Vortigern might have married Severa, daughter of Maximus, and bore him the son named Brydw/Britu. A Welsh Classical Dictionary – People in History and Legend up to about A.D. 1000 by Peter C. Bartrum (The National Library of Wales 1993), p. 672

3.) At times in her work, Rachel Bromwich refers to the three corresponding parts of a triad as **item a**, **item b**, and **item c** in the order that they appeared. For triad 35, the three corresponding items are: **item a** – <u>Host of Yrp</u>, **item b** – <u>Host of Maximus</u>, **item c** – <u>Host of Caswallawn</u>. For triad 51, the three corresponding items are: **item a** – <u>Afarwy, Caswallawn's nephew</u>, **item b** – <u>Vortigern, son-in-law of Maximus</u>, **item c** – <u>Medrawd, traitor to Arthur</u>.

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an ally of Julius Caesar (Afarwy), then mentioning a contemporary in-law/relative of Maximus (Vortigern), and finishing the triad with a traitor to Arthur (Medrawd), the subsection is tentatively marked. It starts about $54_{B.C.}$ when Caesar began to impact British affairs[1], moving to the Age of Maximus, then ending in a period beyond $^{A.D.}$ 388, the year Maximus died.[2] As previously noted, there should be little controversy in pairing up two of the items in Welsh triad 35 with two contemporary items in the Welsh triad 51. The only hindrance in achieving unity within the subsection hinges on whether or not the Host of Yrp is contemporary to Medrawd, therefore contemporary to Arthur. Though Bromwich viewed the Host of Yrp as being invented[3], it has been established that a host of twelve thousand Brittones was levied sometime after the death of Maximus ($^{A.D.}$ 388), but before the death of Emperor Anthemius ($^{A.D.}$ 472). In principle, this event could be seen as a possible way to maintain the general unity of the subsection, if the Host of Yrp is somehow linked to the Host of Riotimus.

At this point, it is necessary to examine who Yrp was, if truly anyone at all. In her summary of the character, Bromwich remarks that 'the name Yrp does not occur elsewhere, nor is there any other reference in Welsh sources to this character.'[4] She lists 'Yrp, Urp, Irp' as the published variants of the name in the triads and provides the following comparative forms: 'Erp, Erip, Irb' (Yrb), names among the kings in the Pictish Chronicle, and 'Urbf', a name in a list of Irish ancestors for the mother of St. Cadoc. Though not mentioned by Bromwich in regards to Yrp, the following names, 'Ritigirnus and Rimetel'[5], also appeared in the saint's genealogy and might

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1.) Bromwich, Rachel. Trioedd Ynys Prydein (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2006), pp. 305-306, Bromwich says that it is generally accepted that Caswallawn is the historical figure Cassivellaunos, who attacked Julius Caesar on his second expedition to Britain in 54 BC.

2.) From "The Chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine" From Roman to Merovingian Gaul (Peterborough, ON Canada: Broadview Press Ltd., 2000), p. 63, we learn that Maximus was condemned to death in $^{A.D.}$ 388. Most people view that the Age of Arthur occurred in the fifth and/or sixth century.

3.) Bromwich, Rachel. Trioedd Ynys Prydein (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2006), p. 88

4.) *Ibid.* p. 516.

5.) Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae – The Lives and Genealogies of the Welsh Saints. Edited and

have bearing on this paper. Peter Bartrum points out that 'Yrp is represented as a man of Llychlyn [Scandinavia]'.[1] Bartrum tells how 'Lewis Morris thought that Cadial ab Eryn was perhaps Cadell ap Geraint.' Such an association would make him a fictitious British king based in pre-Imperial times, but if he was Cado son of Geraint ab Erbin then this would further link Yrp to the Age of Arthur. Additional guesswork about Cadial and Mathuthavar shall be reserved for a later discussion. Instead, the focus shall remain on Yrp.

In a general reference to Hryp, Thomas A. Bredehoft points out that this name appears as Rippan in *Historia Brittonum* and suggests 'the possibility of an early form such as *Hryppa.'[2] Hryp appears as an ancestor/father of Wilhelm Guechan, who was 'the first to rule over the people of the East Angles.'[3] Both Martin Carver and Sam Newton call the name, Hryp, 'etymologically problematic as it stands' and note Mats Redin as the source of their opinions.[4] Newton remarks that 'the form Hryp (or Hreope) in the place-names [Ripon, Yorkshire and Repton, Derbyshire] appear to be an otherwise unknown Old English folk-name.'[5] In other observations on the matter, Newton states that Hroðmund's pairing with Hryp within the Origins of the kings of the East Angles may 'imply that the two could have been associated with an East

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translated by A. W. Wade-Evans, new edition edited by Scott Lloyd. (Cardiff, UK: Welsh Academic Press, 2013), p. 119; A possible variant of Ritigirnus appears to be Ritigern. According to the web article, The Name of Vortigern by Robert Vermaat, Ritigern (Rotigernos) means 'Great Lord'. (Accessed on January 31, 2015 http: //www.vortigernstudies.org.uk/artwho/name.htm)

1.) A Welsh Classical Dictionary – People in History and Legend up to about [A.D.] 1000 by Peter C. Bartrum (The National Library of Wales 1993), pp. 739-40 for Yrp, 82 for Cadell, 96 for Cadwy/Cado.

2.) Textual Histories: Readings of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles by Thomas A. Bredehoft (Toronto, CA: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 19. The actual modern English (Hryp) and Latin (Rippan) forms appear in Historia Brittonum. – Nennius – British History and the Welsh Annals. Edited and translated by John Morris. (London: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1980), pp. 36, 77, respectively.

3.) Historia Brittonum. – Nennius – British History and the Welsh Annals. Edited and translated by John Morris. (London: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1980), p. 36.

4.) Carver, Martin The Age of Sutton Hoo – The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe. (Essex, UK: Boydell Press, 1994), p. 74. Newton, Sam. The Origins of Beowulf. (Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1993), p. 80. Both Carver and Newton cite: Redin, Mats. Studies in Uncompounded Personal Names in England (Uppsala, A.-b. Akademiska bokhandeln, 1919), p. 31.

5.) Newton, Sam. The Origins of Beowulf. (Cambridge, UK: D.S. Brewer, 1993), p. 80.

Anglian dynastic foundation-legend' either as a father/son or as a brother/brother combination. Newton remarks that Hroðmund might share the first element of his name with the sixth-century, East Anglian king, Rædwald. Newton states, 'its Old English form could have been *Hrædwald, 'glorious ruler'. If so, it would have been linked with the name Hroðmund by back-variation.'[1] It is worth noting that Rædwald had a son named Eorpwald[2] if Newton is correct in his assumption. This might have been Rædwald's attempt to mimic the name-giving pattern of Hroðmund by utilizing the name-element, *Eorp, for his own son's name. It seems useful to summarize the variants and comparitives of the personal names discussed up to this point.

'Yrp, Urp, Irp' are the published variants of the name in the Welsh triads.

'Erp, Erip, Irb' (Pictish Chronicle), and 'Urbf' (Irish/St. Cadoc) are comparative forms to Yrp.

'Hryppa, Hreope, Eorp' are possible variants to Rippan/Hryp.

'Rothmund, Rodmunt, Roðmund, Hroðmund' are variants for Rippan/Hryp's father-brother.

'Riatam, Rigotamos, Riotimus, Riothamus' are some of the variants for the king of the Brittones.

'Rimetel, Ritigirnus, Ritigern, Rotigernos' are names and variants for Irish ancestors of St. Cadoc's mother.

It is pure speculation to use the variants and comparatives for the names Yrp and Hryp to establish that Erip (the Pictish Chronicle comparative of Yrp) is Rippan (as in *Historia Brittonum*) or that Roðmund is a muddling of Riotimus. What the above summary seems to show is a tentative possibility for it occurring. As it has been pointed out, Yrp fails to appear in any other Welsh myth while Hryp is viewed as 'etymologically problematic'. Normally this would not be viewed as good for anything. Still though, due to the similarity between the two names (Yrp/Hryp), and the lack of clarity but apparent importance of each individual, one may wonder if Yrp/Hryp is the same person being inconsistently recorded in two sources.

Regrettably, it can be said that the subsection of the Red Book has other corruptions. The

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1.) Ibid., p. 79

2.) Bede, The Ecclesiastical History of the English People (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 98

name of the subsection, <u>When a Host went to Llychlyn</u>, possibly contains one. Llychlyn/Lochlann/Lothlind is the 'name that commonly denotes Scandinavia in Celtic sources' and it is possible 'that Llychlyn in the triad is a corruption of Llydaw (Armorica)', at least as it pertains to Maximus.[1] Still though, the essence of Scandinavia lingers within the triad, but fails to express its significance. Noting Martin Carver, Barbara Yorke also tells of the early settlement of East Anglia, and how there exists the iconographic similarities and the shared rite of ship-burial between East Anglia and Scandinavia.[2] This seems to provide a potential location for Yrp of Scandinavia in Britain. Ultimately, he might have links with the twelve hostages of Llychlyn[3] and Odovacar taking hostages from Angers and other places, but details are too few to elaborate any further.

In regards to the two islands 'Clas ac Auena or Glas ac avena' where the Host of Yrp ended up, Bromwich declares that 'these names have not been identified. It seems likely that they are corruptions of forms found in some late Latin source. Galis occurs for Galicia (French Galice); Spain hardly fits the specification given in the triad.'[4] With a possible corruption in 'Clas ac Auena/Glas ac avena', one may wonder if it somehow developed from 'Gallic city of Arverna'.

As the final words on the Host of Yrp, the author cites Bromwich as saying that 'it is difficult to account for R's [the Red Book of Hergest's] substitution of porth in item a [the Host of Yrp], since this stresses the idea of assistance which has no counterpart in triad 36 (triad 36 is in fact omitted from texts of the WR [White Book/Red Book] versions).'[5] By comparing Yrp's army of assistance to the host of twelve thousands Brittones giving aid to 'the Greek Emperor', the <u>word choice no longer seems difficult to explain.</u>

1.) Bromwich, Rachel. Trioedd Ynys Prydein (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2006), p. 88.

2.) Yorke, Barbara. Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England. (NY, US: Routledge, 1997), p. 61

3.) On p. 83 of "Culhwch and Olwen", Glewlwyd mentions in passing the twelve hostages from Llychlyn; Gregory of Tours, The History of the Franks trans. Lewis Thorpe (London, UK: Penguin Group, 1974), p. 132 tells of Odovacar taking hostages.

4.) Bromwich, Rachel. Trioedd Ynys Prydein (Cardiff, UK: University of Wales Press, 2006), p. 85

5.) *ibid.*, p. 84.

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A few comments shall be added about Hryp's placement within the genealogy of the East Angles. In general, he predates the first king of the East Angles, Wilhelm Guechan, but appears to be his father. Can we further define who Hryp was? Where was he born, where did he die? Was he ever in Britain? If yes, then where? Can we answer confidently 'East Anglia' for any of these questions? Does it exclude him from being a king? For the East Angles it would seem so, but could he still be a noble of the Britonnes? Hryp appears to stand at a point of transition in the history of East Anglia. And if he actually lived in Britain, he could have been still functioning within or in conjunction with a British system like the one headed by Riotimus.

It does not seem too extreme to view Hryp as a man from Scandinavia with allegiance to where he lived, a place in Britain that would be eventually ruled by the first king of the East Angles, his son. If this was the case, then maybe this is why nothing is know about Hryp/Yrp. Who would make the effort to remember an Angle with British sympathies? The possible scenerios and questions go beyond the scope of this paper. And in the maze of assumptions, it is easy to lose one's way. Luckily, we near the end and the moment allows for time to reflect upon the matters discussed, and determine if anything can be gained from them.

Poetically speaking, unity is found for an otherwise confusing subsection in the Red Book of Hergest, if the Host of Yrp is tied to the Host of Riotimus. This bond between Yrp and Riotimus could have been through blood, kindred spirits, or common social concerns. The internal chronology of the subsection half-heartedly supports a possible connection. And through comparative and variant name-forms, it has been shown how Yrp and Hryp might be the same person inconsistently recorded in two sources. Easily, one can fall down the slippery slope of speculation by seeking answers based on possible corruptions.

Through the fifth and sixth-century sources though, it has been shown that two British hosts were levied, went to Armorica, marched into other parts of Gaul, but failed to return in notable numbers. These two armies were the Host of Maximus ([A.D.] 382/383) and the Host of Riotimus ([A.D.] 467/472). The latter had been originally gathered to give aid to the 'Greek Emperor',

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but its defeat resulted in the loss of the Gallic city of Arverna. These same sources present the Age of Caesar before the Age of Maximus. Based on these time markers, a period over five hundred years long, ranging from 54 $_{B.C.}$ to no later than $^{A.D.}$ 472, can be tentatively assigned to the subsection. Along with this, a natural flow can be perceived within the first Arthurian triads as they appear in the Red Book of Hergest. The subsection descends back from the end of imperial affairs to their beginning, then reascends to the collapse of the empire. It is hoped that by this sudden, poetic unity within the subsection and other provided details that a strong possibility can be established for Riotimus, Yrp/Hryp, Medrawd, and Arthur being contemporaries, even though Gildas and Bede fail to mention any of them.

Leon Mintz
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